BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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Christ's Commission

"FOR THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST." Luke 19:10.

Zacchaeus the publican had climbed a tree to see Jesus, and at Jesus' call he came down from the tree to begin a new life as a Christian. Then Jesus was harshly criticized for going to Zacchaeus' house, to be the guest of "a sinner." But our Lord answered this criticism by saying that He had come to seek and to save that which was lost.

"The Son of Man"

This was the title by which our Lord commonly referred to Himself. The title "Son of man" is not a mere designation of our Saviour's humanity; such is a very common but erroneous and superficial view of the title "Son of man." Rather, it designates the divine Messiah, as shown by Daniel 7:13,14, where the Messiah is first called "Son of man"; the emphasis of this passage in Daniel is not on the humanity of Christ but on His exaltation and eternal glory. The title "Son of man" designates Jesus as the Saviour, who though truly human, is truly divine and came from the glory of heaven.

"Is Come."

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

"To Seek That Which Was Lost."

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

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

"To Save That Which Was Lost."

As sinners, we need not merely finding, but salvation. We are not merely missing to God; we are on the road to hell. The person who is unsaved is on the way to eternal perdition; he is not merely lost; he is under the wrath of God; the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36).

But we can be saved from the wrath of God by Jesus Christ, who came to save that which was lost. Christ saves sinners by becoming their Substitute. In his sufferings and death on the cross, He suffered the wrath of God as the sinner's Substitute. The righteous judgment of God was visited upon Jesus Christ, so that God can forgive and justify the believer in Christ without denying His own perfect justice. (Romans 3:26).

"Has Christ Sought and Saved You?"

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

—J. G. Vos

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Studies in the Epistle to the Romans

LESSON 92

PRACTICAL DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 12:1 to 15:13, Cont.

G. It is the Duty of all Christians to Imitate the Unselfishness of Christ. 15:1-13

In this first section of Chapter 15 the apostle enforces the doctrine taught in the preceding chapter by appropriate arguments. In reality, Chapter 15 continues the thought of Chapter 14 without any break.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (15:1). This verse forms a summary or conclusion drawn from the whole argument of Chapter 14. The strong Christian, who is not troubled by doubts or scruples about the lawfulness of various kinds of food, is right, whereas the weak Christian is wrong. But this does not imply that the strong Christian can do as he pleases regardless of the effect of his actions on the weak brother. As far as the lawfulness of foods is concerned, the strong Christian has a right to eat anything (14:14). But for him to insist upon exercising this right regardless of the bad effect on the weak brother, would be a selfish disregard of the obligation of Christian love. Something which is legitimate **in itself** may be improper under certain circumstances by reason of the effect on the weak brother.

The strong Christian, therefore, is to "bear the infirmities of the weak", rather than selfishly insisting on doing as he pleases. That is, Christian self-denial may be called for and if it is called for, it should be willingly and cheerfully accorded. What real profit is there in being right in questions about foods if a person is wrong in his attitude toward his Christian brethren? In comparison with the spiritual welfare of the weak brother, the liberty to eat specific foods fades into insignificance.

Yet is must be remembered here, as all through this section of the epistle, that the weak brother is mistaken and his ideas are wrong. They are **weakness**, they are "infirmities"; that is, they result from an incomplete grasp of the principles of Christianity. The tragedy is that the weak brethren so often regard their own weakness as their strength, and not only retain it with conviction as a matter of religious principle, but even attempt to enforce their scruples upon the whole church, including the strong Christians whose conscience is not burdened by such scruples about things which are not really moral questions at all. We may repeat here a few sentences from Lesson 83 of this series: Paul in Romans 14 regards those who felt they ought to obey the ceremonial regulations as the exception in the Church. He is concerned that these weak brethren be treated with love, sympathy and forbearance. But at the same time he makes it clear that these brethren's special ideas are wrong, they are the result of being "weak in the faith". **Since the weak brother's ideas are wrong, they must not be made into a creed or rule to be imposed upon the church as a whole.**

"Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification" (15:2). Instead of insisting on pleasing ourselves, we should aim to please others; "we are not simply to ask what is right in itself, or what is agreeable, but also what is benevolent and pleasing to our brethren. The object which we should have in view in accomodating ourselves to others, however, is their good" (Charles Hodge). "For his good to edification" means that we are to seek to act so that our brethren will be edified (built up as Christians) and so truly benefited. We are not merely to try to please our brethren; what we are to seek is their true welfare, their religious or spiritual benefit.

There may be circumstances, of course, when the true edification of our brethren will be promoted by opposing their mistaken ideas rather than by yielding to their scruples. We find an example of this kind in Paul's own conduct with reference to his fellow-apostle, Peter. It is recorded in Galatians 2:11-16, and it is interesting to note that it concerns a matter closely related to the question of clean and unclean foods discussed in Romans 14. Peter first ate freely with Gentile Christians; then later "he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of circumcision". Under these circumstances Paul did not say: "Peter is a weak brother on this question of eating with Gentiles; to avoid offending him, I will refrain from eating with Gentiles during this visit to Antioch; I will not even mention the embarrassing subject." Paul did not say anything like that. On the contrary, he tells us that he

"withstood him (Peter) to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Gal. 2:11). But certainly we are to understand that Paul's conduct on this occasion was motivated not by selfishness but by Christian love and a sincere desire to be spiritually helpful to Peter and the others who were of the same opinion. In this particular case, not only the interests of truth but the spiritual welfare of Peter himself required open opposition and rebuke. In other cases, Paul was willing unselfishly to deny himself for the spiritual benefit of others. Our action must always be unselfish, our motive must always be love, for our brother's edification. But the particular course of conduct to be used in seeking his edification must be decided according to circumstances.

Questions:

1. What is the general subject of 15:1-13?

2. Of what argument is 15:1 the conclusion?

3. What kind of conduct, on the part of the strong Christian, would amount to a selfish disregard of the obligation of Christian love?

4. What is the relative importance of the strong Christian's liberty to eat foods and the weak Christian's spiritual welfare?

5. What tragedy is often involved in the attitude of weak Christians toward the kind of problems Paul has been discussing?

6. Why may not the special ideas of the weak brethren be made into a creed or rule for the whole church?

7. What is the meaning of the word "edification"?

8. What is the difference between pleasing our neighbor, and pleasing our neighbor for his good to edification?

9. Will the edification of weak brethren always be promoted by refraining from conduct concerning which they have scruples?

10. What lesson is taught by Paul's rebuking Peter as recorded in Galatians 2:11-16?

LESSON 93

PRACTICAL DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 12:1 to 15:13, Cont.

G. It is the Duty of all Christians to Imitate the Unselfishness of Christ. 15:1-13, Cont.

"For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me" (15:3.) Jesus Christ is the perfect example of unselfishness. "The example of Christ is constantly held up, not merely as a model, but a motive" (Charles Hodge). The point of the reference to Christ here is His unselfishness: He unselfishly surrendered His own will to the will of His heavenly Father; He underwent sufferings for the glory of His heavenly Father; He underwent sufferings for the glory of God. The "reproaches" that fell on Christ were really reproaches on God; it was because of His identification with the will and purpose of God that He suffered them.

In speaking of the unselfishness of Jesus Christ, Paul quotes from Psalm 69:9. This is one of the Messianic Psalms, that is, it is a prophecy of Jesus Christ the Messiah. As such it is cited several times in the New Testament (note John 2:17; 15:25; 19:28; Acts 1:20). This fact should be pondered by those who glibly tell us that "there is nothing about Christ in the Psalms".

Just as Jesus Christ was supremely unselfish in surrendering Himself to the will of God, so the Christian should be unselfish in seeking the accomplishment of God's will and purpose in his Christian brethren. He should put the spiritual welfare of others, and the edification of the church, above all merely personal considerations. If our Christian love is real, it will not be merely abstract; it will take concrete form, it will be manifested in our unselfish attitude toward others.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (15:4). By "whatsoever things were written aforetime" the apostle clearly means the Old Testament Scriptures, the Old Testament as a whole, as shown by the word "whatsoever". The Old Testament as a whole (and, of course, the New Testament likewise) is the infallible Word of God, given by divine revelation for the salvation and spiritual benefit of men. From the Scriptures we learn patience, we receive consolation (or comfort) and so we have hope.

We should note well what this implies concerning the Scriptures. First of all, it implies their historical truthfulness. We cannot receive patience, comfort and hope from the Scriptures unless they are true. The record of God's mighty works and His dealings with His people of old cannot help us unless it is a true record. If a large part of the Old Testament is unreliable and even historically false, as the liberal critics claim, then its religious value is destroyed.

The "Neo-orthodox" theologians of the pres-

ent day claim that Scripture can be historically false and at the same time religiously true. One of these men is quoted as saying that whether or not the serpent in the Garden of Eden actually spoke is a matter of no importance; the important thing is not whether the serpent spoke, but what the serpent said. We reject this attitude toward the Scriptures as an absurd sophistry. The Scriptures are either historically true, or they are religiously worthless. We affirm, as the Bible itself affirms, that the Scriptures are true.

Secondly, this verse that we are considering implies the organic unity of the Scriptures. It implies that the Old Testament, no less than the New, is the word of God with a direct message for Christian people. Not part but all of the Scriptures were written for our learning: "**whatsoever** things were written aforetime were written for our learning." The extreme Dispensationalism which isolates one part of Scripture from another part of Scripture, saying "This promise is for Israel; that promise is for the Church; this portion is for the Jews; that portion is for Christians" — this system is false. Every part of Scripture is for all of God's people. Every promise of God is for all who are in Christ. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1:20). If ALL the promises of God are "yea" in Christ, then all the promises of God must be for all those people who are in Christ.

In the third place, this text (Rom. 15:4) implies that we ought to be earnest students of Scripture. If all Scripture was written for our learning, then we ought to be busy about learning it. The Bible is not a lazy man's book. We cannot expect to get much from it by reading it two minutes a day (or two minutes a week). If we expect to get something out of Bible study we will have to put something in — some time, some effort, some eagerness, some thinking. We should get over the worship of "inspiration" and go to work in earnest to get some **information** by learning what is in the Bible. We can never have real "inspiration" in a mental vacuum; we have to know the truth.

"Hope" in this verse means, of course, religious hope in the Christian sense. It does not mean a hope of gaining the object of worldly ambitions, such as wealth or business success; it means a sure confidence that ultimately we shall receive all the blessings that Christ has purchased for us and promised to us. Christian hope means a sure confidence that God's goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. It means that we are assured of our complete, absolute redemption from sin and all its consequences — its guilt, its defilement, its enslaving power, the sufferings it causes, and its very presence in our environment. On the positive side, it means communion with Christ in glory to all eternity. This is the hope to which we may attain by patiently learning what is in the Scriptures of God.

Questions:

1. What Psalm is quoted in 15:3?

2. What class of Psalms does this Psalm belong to?

3. What is the meaning of the statement quoted from the Psalm: "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me"?

4. Of what does Paul hold Christ up as an example?

5. How can the Christian follow Christ's example?

6. What does the apostle mean by the expression "whatsoever things were written aforetime"?

7. What does Paul's statement imply concerning the character of the Scriptures?

8. What absurd claim do the Neo-orthodox theologians make concerning Scripture?

9. What does Paul's statement imply concerning the relation of the various parts of Scripture to each other?

10. What promises of God are for those who are in Christ?

11. What does Paul's statement in 15:4 imply concerning the Christian's habits of Bible study?

12. What is the meaning of "hope" in 15:4? What does it include?

LESSON 94

PRACTICAL DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 12:1 to 15:13, Cont.

G. It is the Duty of all Christians to Imitate the Unselfishness of Christ. 15:1-13, Cont.

"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus" (15:5). In this verse, the expression "to be likeminded one toward another" does not mean that there must be no differences of opinion among the members of the church, but rather that the members are to have a harmonious feeling and attitude toward each other. It is possible to differ in opinion about

minor matters and still preserve a mutually harmonious attitude. "According to Christ Jesus": that is, following the example of Christ, and obeying His command. The "strong" and "weak" brethren might differ about the question of eating foods, but in spite of this difference of opinion they were to seek harmony and unity in their relation to each other.

But this attitude of harmony and unity does not come by will power or human planning. It is a gift of God — of God who is the source and Author of patience and consolation. Hence the apostle prays that God may GRANT to the members of the Church of Rome to have a right attitude toward each other. We should remember this when we try to heal divisions and envious party spirit in a church of the present day: real harmony and unity does not come by human planning; it is a spiritual gift granted by God, and to be sought from Him.

"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (15:6). "This harmony and fellowship among Christians is necessary, in order that they may glorify God aright. To honor God effectually and properly, there must be no unnecessary dissensions among his people" (Charles Hodge).

"Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (15:7). Here the apostle exhorts the Roman Christians to mutual fellowship. The word "receive" here means, of course, receive to Christian fellowship; compare 14:1. The whole body of believers are to receive each other to Christian fellowship; there must be no individuals or groups within the church withholding fellowship from other individuals or groups within the church. It is perfectly plain that such mutual fellowship is a simple Christian duty. Yet how often this obligation is disregarded at the present day! How often Christian fellowship is marred and broken by a selfish, stubborn spirit on the part of some in a church! Sometimes some members of a church will hardly speak to certain other members, and if they do speak, it may be in such a cold and formal tone that they might better have remained silent. All such conduct is a violation of the command to receive one another.

The apostle urges two reasons why Christians should receive one another. First, Christ has received us. Our Saviour in His great kindness and love has received us sinners as His own. Shall we who are the recipients of this amazing grace, presume to refuse to receive our brethren who like ourselves have been received by Christ? If Christ has received us, we ought also to receive one another.

Secondly the glory of God demands that we receive one another. A church which is torn by internal faction and party strife cannot glorify God as it should. Some differences of opinion may be unavoidable, for the time being, but if God is to be glorified there must at least be a kind and friendly feeling of the members toward each other. If there is bitterness and strife God's Spirit is grieved, God is not glorified but dishonored.

Questions:

1. Is it wrong for differences of opinion on minor matters to exist among the members of a church?

2. What is the real meaning of the expression "to be likeminded one toward another"?

3. In spite of their differences about questions of foods, what were the "strong" and the "weak" brethren all to seek for?

4. How does an attitude of harmony and unity come to church?

5. Why can real harmony not come by human planning or effort?

6. What is the meaning of the word "receive" in 15:7?

7. What conditions in a church are forbidden by 15:7?

8. What two reasons does Paul give why Christians should receive one another?

9. How is the fact that Christ has received us a motive for us to receive one another?

10. Why can a church torn by party strife not glorify God properly?

LESSON 95

PRACTICAL DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 12:1 to 15:13, Cont.

G. It is the Duty of all Christians to Imitate the Unselfishness of Christ. 15:1-13, Cont.

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (15:8). "The apostle intends to show how it was that Christ had **received** those to whom he wrote. He had come to minister to the Jews, verse 8, and also to cause the Gentiles to glorify God, verse 9 (Charles Hodge). These two classes made up the membership of the church at Rome: Paul undertakes to

show that Christ has received both.

The expression "a minister of the circumcision" means "a minister sent to the Jews". The word "minister", of course means "servant". For the truth of God" — that is, to maintain God's truthfulness in fulfilling His promises, as the apostle presently explains.

"The truth of God is his veracity or fidelity. Christ had exhibited the greatest condescension and kindness in coming, not as a Lord or ruler, but as an humble minister to the Jews, to accomplish the gracious promises of God. As this kindness was not confined to them, but as the Gentiles also were received into his kingdom, and united with the Jews on equal terms, this example of Christ furnishes the strongest motives for the cultivation of mutual affection and unanimity" (Charles Hodge).

"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" (15:9). The mercy for which the Gentiles were to glorify God is, of course, the great mercy of salvation through Christ, with all the blessings that accompany and follow it; in a word, the mercy which changed the Gentiles from being strangers and foreigners and made them citizens of the Kingdom of God. Christ by His work of redemption has accomplished two things: He has maintained God's truthfulness by fulfilling the promises made to the fathers; and He has brought the Gentiles into His Kingdom so that they too praise and glorify God for His mercy.

"As it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" (15:9b). This is quoted from Psalm 18:49. It is one of a number of Old Testament passages which predicted that the knowledge and worship of the true God was at some future time to be extended to the Gentiles. "In Psalm 18:49, David is the speaker. It is he that says: 'I will praise thee among the Gentiles.' He is contemplated as surrounded by Gentiles giving thanks unto God, which implies that they were the worshippers of God" (Charles Hodge).

"And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people" (15:10). This is a quotation from the Septuagint (Greek version) of Deut. 32:43; a parallel, and nearly identical, passage is Psalm 67:3, 5.

"And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people" (15:11). This verse is quoted from Psalm 117:1.

"And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust" (15:12). This verse is quoted from Isaiah 11:1, 10. This passage of Isaiah very clearly and definitely predicts that the coming Messiah would reign, not only over the Jews, but also over the Gentiles. Paul's quotation is again taken from the Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament, though the meaning is identical with that of the original Hebrew. "The promise of the prophet is, that from the decayed and fallen house of David, one should arise, whose dominion should embrace all nations, and in whom Gentiles as well as Jews should trust. In the fulfilment of this prophecy Christ came, and preached salvation to those who were near and to those who were far off. As both classes had been thus kindly received by the condescending Saviour, and united into one community, they should recognize and love each other as brethren, laying aside all censoriousness and contempt, neither judging nor despising one another" (Charles Hodge).

By four different quotations from the Old Testament Paul has shown that it was God's plan from of old to save and receive the Gentiles, as well as the Jews. The fact that Christ has saved and received both, should be a powerful motive toward mutual love and harmony in the church, which is Christ's body.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost". (15:13). Paul here prays for the Christians at Rome. He prays that they may be filled, not only with joy, but with "all joy" — that is, all possible joy, the utmost joy; not only with "peace", but "all peace" — the fulness of peace. Being filled with all joy and peace in believing, they were to abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit. To believe, to abound in hope, etc., were the duty of the Roman Christians. Yet Paul prays that "the God of hope" may fill them with these graces. "Thus constantly and intimately are the ideas of accountableness and dependence connected in the sacred Scriptures. We are to work out our own salvation. because it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, according to his good pleasure" (Charles Hodge).

"That ye may abound in hope". The fulness of joy and peace in Christian people causes them to "abound in hope". And all these graces and attainments are "through the power of the Holy Ghost", who is the Author of all good and the source of all blessings. Thus the apostle concludes this section of the Epistle with a reminder that we are completely dependent upon the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Questions:

1. What two classes of Christians made up the membership of the Church of Rome?

2. What is the meaning of the word "minister" in 15:8?

3. What was the purpose of Christ's coming as a "minister" to the Jews?

4. What is meant by the "truth" of God?

5. What is the mercy for which the Gentiles were to glorify God?

6. How many Old Testament passages does Paul quote in 15:9-12?

7. What is implied concerning the Gentiles in Psalm 18:49?

8. What is predicted concerning the Messiah in Isaiah 11:1, 10?

9. What Christian duty is emphasized by the fact that Christ has saved and received both Jews and Gentiles?

10. In 15:13, what does Paul pray that the Roman Christians may be filled with?

11. What is the connection between our duties and our dependence upon the Holy Spirit?

12. With what thought does the apostle bring this section of the Epistle to a close?

LESSON 96

PAUL'S MISSIONARY WORK AND PLANS FOR FURTHER SERVICE. 15:14-33

A. Paul's Work as Missionary to the Gentiles. 15:14-21.

As the apostle Paul approaches the end of his Epistle to the Romans, he assures them of his confidence in their Christian standing and character, and then goes on to say something about his own work as a missionary to the Gentiles, and then adds something about his plans and purposes concerning future work. We shall now take up this section.

"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another", (15:14). This statement means, of course, that the Roman Christians are full of goodness, etc., by the grace of God through Christ. It cannot mean that in themselves, apart from Christ, they are full of goodness, for this would be a contradiction of the whole teaching of the first part of the Epistle. Note that Paul addresses them as "brethren", that is, Christians. It is because they are Christians that they can be said to be full of goodness; the goodness spoken of is that produced by the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification in their lives.

"Neverthless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God" (15:15). Paul does not imply, in writing the truths of this Epistle to the Roman Christians, that they are totally ignorant of these truths; rather, his aim is to call to their minds truths which they already know, in an effort to emphasize, expound and apply these truths. However well the Roman Christians might understand the truths of the Christian Faith, their understanding would not equal that of the apostle Paul, who was specially inspired of the Holy Spirit and who received direct revelations from God. So Paul's writing these truths to the Romans implied neither any presumption on his part nor any gross ignorance on their part. Every Christian has his place and function in the body of Christ, and Paul's place and function, as an apostle, was to be an inspired, authoritative teacher of truth. However well grounded in the truth of Roman Christians might be, they could still learn much from what Paul wrote to them.

"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (15:16). The word here translated "minister" (leitourgos) is a Greek word which means a public official or "civil servant", but this same Greek word is frequently used in the Scriptures to describe the office of a priest (Deut. 10:8; Heb. 10:11). Paul of course was not a priest in the literal sense; his office was not that of a priest but of an apostle. Christian ministers are not priests except in the sense that every Christian is a priest (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 5:10). But the verse we are dealing with is figurative language. It represents Paul the apostle as a priest. Every priest, of course, must have a sacrifice which he offers up to God. And in the text, the Gentile Christians are represented as Paul's sacrifice, which he as a priest offers to God. Literally, of course, the Gentiles were not a sacrifice, any more than Paul was literally a priest. But by speaking of the Gentiles as a sacrifice, a certain truth is brought out. The Gentiles who had been deeply involved in sin, were offered as a holy offering to God, "being sanctified by the Holy Ghost". "As the sacrifices were purified by water and other means, when prepared for the altar, so we are made fit for the service of God, rendered holy or acceptable, by the influences of the Holy Spirit. This is an idea which Paul never omits; when speaking of the success of his labors, or of the efficacy of the gospel, he is careful that this success should not be ascribed to the instruments, but to the real author. In this beautiful passage we see the nature of the only priesthood which belongs to the Christian ministry. It is not their office to make atonement for sin, or to offer a propritiatory sacrifice to God, but by the preaching of the gospel to bring men, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, to offer themselves as a living

sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Charles Hodge).

It is improper to speak of a minister of the Gospel as a "priest" in any other sense than the sense in which all Christians are priests; Scripture teaches the universal priesthood of believers, but among believers, there is no special class holding an office of priesthood. It is one of the corruptions of Roman Catholicism that in this system the Christian minister has become a priest, while the sacrament of the Lord's Supper has become the sacrifice of the mass. Those Protestant denominations which tend to speak of the minister of the gospel as a "priest" should take care lest they think of the minister as a sacrificing priest and of the sacrament as a sacrifice.

Questions:

1. As Paul approaches the end of his Epistle, of what fact does he assure the Roman Christians?

2. What is the source and nature of the goodness of which the Romans are said to be full in 15:14?

3. How do we know that this does not mean that they were in themselves good by nature?

4. Did Paul's writing this Epistle to the Roman Christians imply that they were ignorant of the truths taught in the Epistle?

5. Why was it not presumptuous on Paul's part for him to write an Epistle to the Romans instructing them in the truth?

6. What is the common meaning of the word translated "minister" in 15:16?

7. What religious office does this word often describe in Scripture?

8. Why was Paul not a priest in the literal sense?

9. Name two New Testament passages that speak of all Christians as priests.

10. In the figurative language of 15:16, what sacrifice is offered up to God?

11. Why could the Gentile Christians appropriately be called a sacrifice offered to God?

12. How were the literal sacrifices of Old Testament times purified for offering upon the altar?

13. How were the Gentiles purified from their sin to make them a sacrifice suitable for offering to God?

14. When speaking of the success of his labors, or the efficacy of the gospel, what truth is Paul careful to guard?

15. What are the errors of Roman Catholicism concerning the office of the ministry and the sacrament of the Lord's supper?

LESSON 97

PAUL'S MISSIONARY WORK AND PLANS FOR FURTHER SERVICE. 15:14-33, Cont.

A. Paul's Work as Missionary to the Gentiles. 15:14-21, Cont.

"I have therefore whereof I may glory through Christ Jesus in those things which pertain to God" (15:17). As Paul has been appointed by God to be an apostle and missionary to the Gentiles, and as God had also made his efforts for the conversion of the Gentiles successful, he had a God-given right to teach and exhort the Roman Christians with the authority and confidence which characterize the Epistle. But this "glorying" was not a sinful human boasting, rising from human pride or conceit. On the contrary, it was only "through Jesus Christ" that Paul had any ground for glorying or boasting. The credit, after all, belonged to Christ; Paul was the servant of Christ. Paul's glorying is a glorying "in those things which pertain to God". Paul would not boast of himself, his worldly attainments, his educational advantages, but only of "those things which pertain to God" — the preaching of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit which accompanied that preaching. Paul's was not a proud but a humble kind of glorying; it was a glorying which took no credit to self, but gave all the credit to the Lord.

"For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (15:18, 19). In verse 18 Paul carefully explains that he had no intention of claiming any credit for himself; he would not even dare to speak of anything except what Christ had done through him. "He would not glory in the flesh, or in anything pertaining to himself, but only in Christ, and in what he had accomplished. The conversion of the Gentiles was Christ's work, not Paul's; and therefore Paul could glory in it without self-exaltation. It is to be remarked that the apostle represents himself as a mere instrument in the hands of Christ for the conversion of men; the real efficiency he ascribes

to the Redeemer. This passage, therefore, exhibits evidence that Paul regarded Christ as still exercising a controlling agency over the souls of men, and rendering effectual the labors of his faithful ministers. Such power the sacred writers never attribute to any being but God" (Charles Hodge).

"To make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed" (15:18b). To make the Gentiles obedient, of course, means to make them obedient to the requirements of the Gospel of Christ. They were made obedient, not merely "by word", but also "by deed". That is, not merely was the truth of the Gospel preached to them, but this preaching was accompanied by the inward operation of the Holy Spirit which alone could make it truly effectual for their salvation. The outward preaching of the Gospel, though necessary, is not of itself sufficient to bring men to salvation. There must be in addition the effective operation of the Holy Spirit. Compare Acts 16:14, where it is said of Lydia that the Lord opened her heart, so that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul. The fact that the outward preaching of the message is powerless by itself should remind us of our dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit for real results. Mere campaigns and programs of evangelism or missionary work will not bring a single soul to salvation unless the power of the Holy Spirit gives new life. Therefore we should always pray that this life-giving operation of the Spirit may accompany the preaching of the Word.

"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God" (15:19a). The Greek words of this text may be literally translated: "In power of signs and of wonders, in power of the Holy Spirit". (The correct Greek text has "the Holy Spirit", not "the Spirit of God" as in the King James Version). Thus two forms of power are mentioned as making Paul's preaching effective for the conversion of the Gentiles. First, there was the power of miracles, here called "signs and wonders". Secondly, there was the power of the Holy Spirit's working in the hearts of the hearers.

Miracles are called "signs" because they are manifestations of the direct working of God in human history. A miracle is an instance of the creative, direct working of God, as distinguished from His ordinary mode of working through the laws of nature. To provide food for people through natural conditions of soil and climate, sunshine and rain, which permit planting and harvest, milling of grain into flour and baking of it into bread, is truly a work of God, but it is not a miracle, for it is accomplished through natural means; it is a work of God's providence, but it is not a miracle, To feed five thousand people by the instantaneous multiplication of five loaves and two fishes, on the other hand, is a miracle. The laws and forces of nature cannot account for it; it proceeds from the direct operation of God. The miracles of the Bible are supernatural events; they are not products of the natural order, and cannot be explained by nature or science.

Miracles are called "wonders" because of the effect which they produce on the minds of those who witness them. They cause people to wonder, to stop and think, to recognize that here is the direct working of God. Miracles, therefore, serve as credentials of the Gospel message. As only God could bring the miracle to pass, the message which the miracle accompanied must be of God.

On the miracles performed through the apostle Paul, see Acts 19:11, 12.

Besides the power of miracles, Paul mentions the power of the Holy Spirit. In addition to the miracles (which themselves were works of the Holy Spirit), there was the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit in human hearts, by which the conversion of the elect was accomplished. Compare 1 Corinthians 2:4, where Paul says, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power". Paul did not place any reliance in his own ability as an orator or preacher, but only in the power of the Holy Spirit which accompanied and followed the preached message.

Paul adds that "from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum", he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ (15:19b). Illyricum was the region across the Adriatic Sea from Italy; today this territory is occupied by Yugoslavia and Albania. We should remember that at the time Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, he had never visited Rome. At this time Illyricum was the western limit of the territory he had reached with the Gospel message. "In this wide circuit had the apostle preached, founding churches, and advancing the Redeemer's kingdom with such evidence of the divine cooperation, as to leave no ground of doubt that he was a divinely appointed minister of Christ" (Charles Hodge).

Questions:

1. What God-given right did Paul have as an apostle and missionary to the Gentiles?

2. Why was Paul's glorying not a sinful boasting?

3. What kind of things did Paul boast of?

4. Why did Paul not claim any credit for himself?

5. What truth concerning Jesus Christ is implied by Paul's words in 15:18?

6. To what were the Gentiles made obedient?

7. What did Paul mean by saying that the

Gentiles were made obedient "by word and deed"?

8. Why is the outward preaching of the Gospel not sufficient to bring men to salvation?

9. What truth concerning Lydia is taught in Acts 16:14?

10. Of what should we be reminded by the fact that the outward preaching of the Gospel is powerless by itself?

11. What should we pray for to accompany the preaching of the Word?

12. How may the first part of 15:19 be literally translated?

13. What two forms of power made Paul's preaching effective?

14. Why are miracles called "signs" in the Bible?

15. What is the difference between a miracle and an event which is not a miracle?

16. Why can the miracles of the Bible not be explained by natural laws or science?

17. What does Acts 19:11, 12 tell us of miracles performed through the apostle Paul?

18. Besides the power of miracles, what other power made Paul's preaching effective?

19. Where is Illyricum, and what countries occupy the region today?

20. What were the eastern and western limits of Paul's preaching at the time he wrote this Epistle?

LESSON 98

PAUL'S MISSIONARY WORK AND PLANS FOR FURTHER SERVICE. 15:14-33, Cont.

A. Paul's Work as Missionary to the Gentiles. 15:14-21, Cont.

"Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (15:20a). The Greek word here translated "strived" means literally "to love honor"; hence it signifies "to do something as a matter of honor". Paul regarded it as a matter of honor to do pioneer missionary work. He made it his business to preach the Gospel where Christ had previously been unknown. He had no ambition or desire to build upon another man's foundation. Others would follow him, and would build upon the foundation which Paul had laid; but it was Paul's special honor and privilege to do the pioneer missionary work.

For a preacher of the Gospel to build upon another man's foundation is not necessarily wrong. As Wesley said, God buries His workman but He carries on His work. In 1 Corinthians 3:10 Paul solemnly warns those who shall build upon the foundation laid by him, that they must take heed how they build thereupon.

Yet there is a kind of building on another man's foundation which is certainly wrong and contemptible, namely, when a minister or missionary comes in contact with people who are already Christians, and attempts to persuade them to leave their own church and join his church, so that he can have the credit for gaining new members for his church. Unfortunately this kind of "sheep stealing" is very common indeed, and it is often the small and comparatively pure and faithful denominations that are the victims of the practice.

There can of course be no objection to Christian people changing their church membership on the basis of sincere conviction of truth. It is every Christian's duty to join that church which he believes to be closest to the Scripture pattern. If ministers who cultivate members of other churches would make their appeal upon this high plane of conviction of truth, no one could rightly complain. Such competition between churches would be ethical and honest. But it is to be feared that the attempt to proselyte members of other churches is seldom conducted on such a high plane at the present day. Lower and more worldly motives are appealed to, or bait of some sort is offered as an inducement to people to leave a strict and faithful church for one that is larger and of a more popular type. This is a form of building on another man's foundation that should be regarded with contempt by all right-minded people. Small denominations that struggle hard to maintain Biblical standards of faith and life are constantly up against this unethical competition.

"But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand" (15:21). The Old Testament reference here is Isaiah 52:15, where it is prophesied that the Christ shall be preached to the Gentiles. Thus Paul's missionary work among the Gentiles was fufilment of Old Testament prophecy. Here as so often in Paul's Epistles, having stated a point, he cites the Old Testament Scripture to show its harmony with his own teaching.

B. Paul's Hope to visit Rome on the way to Spain. 15:22-33

"For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you" (15:22). The meaning of this verse is, that Paul's intention of visiting Rome has been delayed by his desire to engage in

pioneer missionary work, preaching the Gospel where Christ had not been named. In Rome, of course, there was already a church; the Gospel had been preached there. For Paul to preach in Rome could not be called pioneer missionary work, for the foundation there had already been laid by others.

"But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you" (15:23). What does Paul mean by "having no more place in these parts"? Some scholars understand the word "place" as opportunity, as in Hebrews 12:17 ("no place of repentance"). The meaning then would be that Paul nc longer had any opportunity for preaching the Gospel at Corinth, where he was at the time of writing Romans; or, that he had no more opportunity for preaching in that region. The more probable meaning is, however, that he had already covered the ground, so that there remained no more unevangelized territory; "having no longer a place in these parts where Christ is not known" (Charles Hodge). This does not mean, of course, that Paul in his missionary work covered every town and village of a region. From the book of Acts we know that Paul selected the strategically important centers for his preaching — such cities as Ephesus, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth. In these cities he would be heard by people from the entire surrounding area, and the Gospel of Christ would soon be known throughout the region. Paul did not stay on indefinitely in any one center of work; having established a church with its officers and members, he left it to carry on the local work, while he pressed on to new territory.

"A great desire" is a very strong expression in the Greek. It means a longing, a very earnest desire, a supreme desire. Paul tells the Roman Christians that for many years he had had this intense longing to visit them. We can see from this that the church at Rome had been in existence for several years already.

Questions:

1. What is the literal meaning of the word "strive" in 15:20?

2. What did Paul regard as a matter of honor?

3. What does Paul mean by building on another man's foundation?

4. Is it always wrong for a preacher of the Gospel to build on another man's foundation?

5. What warning does Paul give in 1 Cor. 3:10?

6. What form of building on another man's foundation is wrong and contemptible?

7. On what basis is it right for Christian people to change their church membership?

8. When is the attempt to proselyte members of other churches wrong?

9. What truth does Paul cite from Isaiah 52:15?

10. What had delayed Paul's intended visit to Rome?

11. What is the probable meaning of Paul's statement that he had "no more place in these parts"?

12. Does Paul's statement mean that in his missionary work he had covered every town and village of the region where he was?

13. What kind of centers did Paul select for his preaching?

14. How would the Gospel message soon become known throughout the area?

15. What was Paul's practice with regard to staying in a place where he had founded a church?

16. What kind of desire did Paul have to visit the Roman church?

17. How long had Paul had this desire? What does this show as to the length of time there had been a church at Rome?

LESSON 99

PAUL'S MISSIONARY WORK AND PLANS FOR FURTHER SERVICE. 15:14-33, Cont.

B. Paul's Hope to visit Rome on the Way to Spain. 15:22-23, Cont.

"Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you" (15:24a). "Whether Paul ever accomplished his purpose of visiting Spain, is a matter of doubt. There is no historical record of his having done so, either in the New Testament, or in the early ecclesiastical writers; though most of these writers seem to have taken it for granted. His whole plan was probably deranged by the occurrences at Jerusalem, which led to his long imprisonment at Caesarea, and his being sent in bonds to Rome" (Charles Hodge). Clement of Rome, who wrote from Italy about the year 96, states that Paul "reached the bounds of the west". Spain was the western limit of the Roman world. The "Tarshish" spoken of in the Old Testa-

ment was probably a part of southern Spain. Rome had held power in Spain since about 200 B.C., and in Paul's day the civilization and culture of the southern part of Spain was thoroughly Romanized, and had been so for nearly a century.

The fact that Paul purposed to visit Spain, the western limit of the Roman world, shows how seriously he took his commission as the apostle of the Gentiles. He was not satisfied with the great accomplishments already achieved, but longed to press on to the regions beyond. Even so the church of the present day should not be willing to settle down complacently in its existing limits, but should eagerly press on to the regions beyond, as God gives opportunity and ability to do so.

"For I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company" (15:24b). Paul's intention was, first, to visit the church at Rome, the capital of the Empire, that he might enjoy mutual Christian fellowship with the members of the church; and secondly, that the final preparations for the journey to Spain should be made at Rome, with the help of the Roman Christians. "To be brought on my way" is an expression which implies not only the courtesy of a send-off, but the making of some sort of provision for the journey. See Acts 15:3; 1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16.

"But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints" (15:25). To "minister" here means to provide for the needs of the saints. The Greek word can mean any kind of service. Paul's trip to Jerusalem was a part of his service to the Christians there.

"For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (15:26). "Them of Macedonia and Achaia" means, of course, the Christians in those places. As compared with the condition of the Christians in Palestine, those in the Gentile world were well-off. The word here translated "contribution" is the Greek **koinonia,** elsewhere translated "communion" or "fellowship". The phrase "to make a certain contribution" may be literally translated "to bring about a certain communion" or "to bring about a certain participation". The Christians in Palestine were victims of persecution and consequent economic distress. The apostolic council at Jerusalem (Acts 15) had requested that Paul, in his missionary work among the Gentiles, would collect funds for the relief of the needy Christians in Palestine (see Galatians 2:9, 10). This task Paul undertook and carried out very faithfully. This financial relief was one way of promoting goodwill between the Jewish and Gentile elements in the early Church, and of helping to eliminate the prejudice of the Jewish Christians against their Gentile brethren in Christ.

"It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things" (15:27.) Paul represents the gifts of the Gentile Christians for the relief of the needy Christians of Palestine as not merely a freewill offering ("It hath pleased them"), but also as a moral obligation ("their debtors they are"). Salvation came to the Gentiles through an Israelitish channel. The Christ on whom the Gentiles believed was, as to his human nature, a Jew. Such spiritual obligations must not be forgotten. The Gentile Christians must remember that they were wild olive branches grafted into the good olive tree. In recognition of this spiritual benefit, the Gentile Christians ought gladly to share their material possessions with the needy Jewish Christians of Palestine. Any gift of money could be at best only a very small and inadequate recognition of their indebtedness. In short, Paul in asking the Gentile Christians to contribute money for the relief of the Jewish Christians of Palestine was not begging for charity but was only asking the Gentile Christians to do what was right — he was only asking them to show their gratitude and Christian love in a practical way. From the references to this matter in Paul's various epistles it is evident that for the most part the Gentile Christians cooperated wholeheartedly in this enterprise.

Questions:

1. What do we know about whether Paul ever visited Spain?

2. What event may have interfered with his plan to visit Spain?

3. What statement of Clement of Rome may imply that Paul did reach Spain?

4. What name is given in the Old Testament to a part of Spain?

5. When did Rome begin to hold power in Spain?

6. What was the position of Spain in the Roman world?

7. What does Paul's intention to visit Spain show about his attitude toward his missionary task?

8. What should the church of the present day learn from Paul's attitude toward the missionary task?

9. What was Paul's two-fold purpose in his plan to visit Rome?

10. What is implied in the expression "to be brought on my way" in 15:24?

11. What is the meaning of the word "minister" in 15:25?

12. What is meant by "them of Macedonia and Achaia" in 15:26?

13. How may the expression "to make a certain contribution" be literally translated?

14. What was the condition of the Christians in Palestine at this time?

15. What request was made of Paul by the apostolic council of Acts 15?

16. How would goodwill between Jewish and Gentile elements in the church be promoted, and prejudice eliminated?

17. Was the contribution to the needy Christians of Palestine merely a freewill offering?

18. Why were the Gentile Christians the "debtors" of the Jewish Christians of Palestine?

19. How did the Gentile Christians cooperate in contributing money for the saints in Palestine?

LESSON 100

PAUL'S MISSIONARY WORK AND PLANS FOR FURTHER SERVICE. 15:14-33, Cont.

B. Paul's Hope to visit Rome on the way to Spain. 15:22-23, Cont.

"When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you in Spain" (15:28). Here Paul speaks of the money contributed by the Gentile Christians as "fruit". Ordinarily we would not speak of money as fruit. But in this case it really was fruit. The wild olive branches, having been grafted into the good olive tree, now bear fruit — the fruit of Christian love, unselfishness and good works. This money that Paul was taking back to Jerusalem was evidence of the real Christian faith and life of the Gentiles. It has been said that money is the acid test of a person's Christianity. If his purse has not been converted to Christ, there may be reason to doubt that a person's soul has been truly saved. Real salvation produces real fruits. The contributions Paul was carrying to Jerusalem would be more than merely a material help to the needy Christians there — they would be a testimony and tribute to the mighty work of God's Spirit among the Gentiles to whom Paul had preached.

Those professing Christians of the present day who are selfish and stingy about financial support of Christ's church and kingdom should consider seriously whether they have really passed from death into life. Faithful and generous support of Christian work is one of the evidences of real spiritual life in a person. Those who grudgingly contribute as little as they feel they can decently do, are not evidencing the real work of the Spirit in their lives. Some who think that one dollar is a liberal offering to put in the collection plate at church, do not hestitate to spend several times that amount on some unnecessary luxury or entertainment that they want. God, however, is not mocked.

Paul speaks of "sealing" the fruit (money) to the Christians at Jerusalem. To "seal" here means to deliver it safely to them. The handling and transmission of this money was a serious responsibility, and Paul took it very seriously. We may well believe that he felt relieved when the fund had been safely handed over to the proper officers of the church in Jerusalem. Paul not only took the preaching of the Gospel seriously — he also took the handling of church funds seriously. Not only the spiritual, but the material things belonged to God and were to be so regarded. There is no room for carelessness or slipshod methods in the financial affairs and business transactions of the church. Church officers who handle church business or property in a slipshod manner are not performing their duty as God requires it to be performed. The faithful servant of God will conduct himself in an efficient and responsible manner, as Paul did. Paul, the great apostle and former pupil of Gamaliel, did not consider himself above attending to financial matters.

When this important business had been completed, Paul intended to visit Rome enroute to Spain.

"And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (15:29). At the beginning of this Epistle to the Romans (1:11, 12) Paul had expressed his desire to see the Roman Christians, that he might impart to them some spiritual gift, and that they and he might be encouraged by their mutual faith in Christ. Now at the end of the Epistle he states his confidence that when he does visit them, it will be with abundant blessing from Christ. Paul had experienced such rich blessings in other places where he had labored, that he felt assured that the Lord would continue these blessings to him in the future. The Gospel of Christ is the source of blessings; and as Paul's one purpose in visiting Rome would be the promotion of the Gospel, he could confidently predict abundant blessings to accompany his visit.

Questions:

1. What word does Paul use, in 15:28, to describe the money contributed by the Gentile Christians?

2. Why could contributions of money be spoken of as "fruit"?

3. What is meant by saying that money is the acid test of a person's Christianity?

4. Of what was the money Paul was taking to Jerusalem an evidence?

5. If a professing Christian is selfish and stingy about contributing to Christ's church and kingdom, what should he seriously consider?

6. What does Paul mean by the word "sealed" in 15:28?

7. How would Paul probably feel when the money was safely delivered to the proper officers of the church in Jerusalem?

8. Besides the preaching of the Gospel, what matter did Paul take very seriously?

9. Why is there no room for careless or slipshod methods in the financial affairs and business transactions of the church?

10. What wish did Paul express at the beginning of this Epistle?

11. What confidence does Paul express in 15:29?

12. On what ground did Paul's confidence rest?

LESSON 101

PAUL'S MISSIONARY WORK AND PLANS FOR FURTHER SERVICE. 15:14-33, Cont.

C. Paul asks for the Prayers of the Roman Christians. 15:30-33

"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (15:30). "Prayer (and even intercessory prayer) has a real and important efficacy; not merely in its influence on the mind of him who offers it, but also in securing the blessings for which we pray. Paul directed the Roman Christians to pray for the exercise of the divine providence in protecting him from danger, and for the Holy Spirit to influence the minds of the brethren in Jerusalem. This he would not have done, were such petitions of no avail" (Charles Hodge). The apostle Paul realized his need of the prayers of his fellow-Christians.

Paul urges two reasons why the Roman Christians should pray for him. First, they should pray for him "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake"; that is, because of their devotion to Christ. If they loved Christ, and really wished to see Christ's kingdom prosper, they would pray for Paul, who was Christ's servant. Secondly, they should pray for Paul because of "the love of the Spirit"; that is, because of that Christian love of which the Holy Spirit is the author and source. "He appeals, therefore, not only to their love of Christ, but to their love for himself as a fellow Christian" (Charles Hodge). If we really love our fellow Christians, we will pray for them.

"That ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (15:30b). The Greek word for "strive" in this verse is the word from which our English word "agonize" is derived. It implies a very earnest effort, a very deep concern. Our hasty, formal prayers could hardly be described by such a word. Only a deep spiritual earnestness could lead to such praying as Paul speaks of. Note the word "together"; they were to strive together with Paul. As he would go through hardships and dangers for the sake of the Gospel, the Roman Christians were to participate in this conflict by their prayers.

"That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea" (15:31a). This is the first of three special objects that Paul asks the Roman Christians to pray for. They are asked to pray that the apostle will be delivered from the wrath and violence of the non-Christian Jews at Jerusalem. We should realize that the apostle was about to enter territory where Christianity was persecuted. It was at Jerusalem that Stephen had been stoned and James beheaded a few years before. While violent persecution had subsided the bitter opposition remained beneath the surface, and might flare up again at any time. Paul well knew what he had to fear from his fellow Jews. All through his career as an apostle they persecuted him and tried to kill him.

"And that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints" (15:31b). This is the second thing that Paul asks the Roman Christians to pray for — the successful completion of his business on his trip to Jerusalem. There was need to pray for this, too. For it was not only the non-Christian Jews that were opposed to Paul; there were also those among the Christian Jews who regarded him with suspicion and bitterness. The fact that he was engaged in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles would lead the more narrow-minded of the Jewish Christians to be prejudiced against him. "Paul desired that the work of love on which he was to go to Jerusalem might be favorably received by the Chris-

tians of that city. Paul labored for those whom he knew regarded him with little favor; he calls them **saints,** recognises their Christian character, notwithstanding their unkindness, and urges his brethren to pray that they might be willing to accept of kindness at his hands" (Charles Hodge).

"That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed" (15:32). This is the third object for which Paul asks the Roman Christians to pray. "Paul seemed to look forward to his interview with the Christians at Rome, as a season of relief from conflict and labor. In Jerusalem he was beset by unbelieving Jews, and harrassed by Judaizing Christians; in most other places he was burdened with the care of the churches; but at Rome, which he looked upon as a resting-place, rather than a field of labor, he hoped to gather strength for the prosecution of his apostolic labors in still more distant lands" (Charles Hodge). The work of the apostle Paul would have been difficult even under favorable circumstances; actually, it was rendered much more difficult by the conflicts and opposition which he constantly faced. And nothing is harder to bear that the opposition of those who ought to be one's friends and supporters in the work of the Lord. Paul knew from experience the bitter taste of opposition by, not only the world, but many in the church. No wonder he looked forward to his visit at Rome as a time of much-needed relief from conflict. So he urges the Roman Christians to pray that he may come to them with joy.

"Now the peace of God be with you all. Amen" (15:33). This is Paul's prayer for the Roman Christians — a brief prayer, but a very inclusive one. **"The peace of God,** that peace which God gives, includes all the mercies necessary for the perfect blessedness of the soul" (Charles Hodge). Christianity is the one and only religion which brings men the peace of God. It does this by first of all bringing men **peace with God** (Rom. 5:1). Through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, the awful enmity between man and God is canceled and removed, and the sinner is reconciled to God. Thereupon the peace of God comes into the person's life. He is at war with sin — in bitter conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil — but through it all he has the peace of God. The Gospel does not promise us freedom from conflict but it does promise us the peace of God in our lives.

Questions:

1. What is the efficacy of prayer, apart from its influence on the mind of the person who prays?

2. Why did Paul feel the need of the prayers of the Roman Christians?

3. What is the first reason which Paul urges why the Roman Christians should pray for him?

4. What is the second reason which Paul urges why the Roman Christians should pray for him?

5. What is meant by urging them to pray "for the love of the Spirit"?

6. What English word is related to the Greek word for "strive" in 15:30?

7. What truth is implied by the word "together" in 15:30?

8. What three things does Paul specially ask the Roman Christians to pray for?

9. Why should Paul need prayer that he be delivered from the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem?

10. Why would Paul need prayer that his business at Jerusalem might be successfully completed?

11. How did Paul regard his anticipated visit to Rome?

12. What kind of opposition is the hardest to bear?

13. What is Paul's prayer for the Roman Christians?

14. What is meant by "the peace of God"?

15. How does the Gospel bring the peace of God to men?

LESSON 102

CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE: PERSONAL GREETINGS. 16:1-27

A. Paul Commends Phebe, a servant of the Church at Cenchrea. 16:1, 2

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea" (16:1). Cenchrea was one of the two harbors or seaports of Corinth, in Greece, located about nine miles from the city of Corinth. Paul had visited this place, we learn from Acts 18:18. Phebe was "a servant" of the Christian Church in this town. The word "servant" may also be translated "deacon" or "deaconess". Whether Phebe was a deacon in the technical sense, that is, an ordained officer of the church, has been debated by New Testament scholars. Some have held that both men and women were ordained as deacons, while others consider it more probable that "deaconesses" such as Phebe held a different position; in other words, that a "deaconess" is not the same thing as "a woman deacon". Charles Hodge states:

"It appears that in the apostolic church, elderly females were selected to attend upon the poor and sick of their own sex." 1 Timothy 3:11 is a possible reference to women deacons (note that in this text the word "their" is in italics, not being in the Greek; and the word "wives" may equally well be translated "women").

At any rate, Phebe was a servant of the church at Cenchrea, whether or not "servant" be understood in the official sense as "deacon". Apparently Phebe was about to journey to Rome, and would arrive there soon, before Paul himself could expect to be there. Hence he takes advantage of the opportunity afforded by writing the Epistle, to "commend" her to the church at Rome. The word translated "commend" means literally "to place together", hence it means "to introduce", implying, of course, to introduce someone with approval.

"That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also" (16:2). The Roman Christians are asked to receive Phebe "in the Lord", that is, as Christians welcoming a fellow Christian. This is to be done "as becometh saints"; in other words, it was their Christian duty to welcome such a person as Phebe with proper friendliness and hospitality. Paul expresses his confidence in the Christian character of the members of the church of Rome when he asks them to welcome Phebe "as becometh saints".

We do not know the occasion of Phebe's visit to Rome, nor the nature of her business there. But there evidently was business, for Paul mentions it, and asks that the Roman Christians assist her in it according to need. It would be interesting if we could know what Phebe's business at Rome was. But the Bible does not satisfy our curiosity on this point. However, we may be sure that a foreigner arriving at Rome would need considerable assistance from someone before becoming able to find her way around in the capital and largest city of the Roman Empire. Phebe may have been sent by the church on special business of some kind, which would involve need for local assistance. Those who have served as foreign missionaries know how much a little timely help by local residents can mean.

Paul adds that Phebe had been a succorer, or helper, of many people. As Phebe lived at Cenchrea, one of the seaports of Corinth, it may be that she had made it her special business to help strangers disembarking there from ships. Possibly in this way she was able to bring people in contact with the preaching of the Gospel in her church. Or possibly it was especially Christians embarking or disembarking at Cenchrea that were helped by Phebe. In the absence of information in the Bible, we can only guess at the exact nature of her work. But we can be sure that it was a worthy and helpful work.

"And of myself also". Again we can only wonder just how Phebe had helped Paul. But he gratefully acknowledges her help. People like Phebe smooth the path of missionaries today, as of old, and their good works are an honor to God's name. It was not only apostles like Paul and martyrs like Stephen that made Christianity so successful in the ancient world, but also humble workers like Phebe, who made it their business to provide help where they found need. And at the present day it is not only the missionaries and ministers who advance the cause of Christ, but the rank and file of "lay" Christians who, when they see a need, set themselves to do something about it.

Questions:

1. Where was Cenchrea, and what was its importance?

2. How may the word "servant" in 16:1 also be translated?

3. What question exists as to the office and work of "deaconesses"?

4. What journey was Phebe apparently about to undertake?

5. What does the word "commend" in 16:1 mean?

6. How were the Roman Christians asked to receive Phebe?

7. Why would Phebe need help while at Rome?

8. What may possibly have been the special work of Phebe at Cenchrea?

9. Why can we not know definitely about the nature of her work?

10. What is needed besides ministers and missionaries to make Christianity successful?

LESSON 103

CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE: PERSONAL GREETINGS. 16:1-27, Cont.

B. Greetings to many Christians at Rome. 16:3-16

In verses 3 to 16 Paul sends greetings to no less than 26 persons whom he mentions by name,

besides others included in their households. From this we gain a view of the breadth of Paul's friendship. Though the apostle himself had never been in Rome, he nevertheless knows by name more than two dozen Christians then at Rome. Presumably Paul was personally acquainted with these people, having met them elsewhere than at Rome. Or is it possible that in the case of some of these people he knew them indirectly, through others, or by correspondence. But it is more likely that he knew them personally, as he gives details about a number of them. If Paul knew this many people in the one city of Rome, how many Christian friends he must have had in various other parts of the Empire! This warmth of personal friendship shows how false is that idea of Paul held by some people, according to which he was a scholar who was interested only in academic arguments or "theological hair-splitting". "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Prov. 18:24), and the large number of Paul's friends proves him to have been a very friendly person.

This was **Christian** friendship. These were Paul's friends **in Christ.** He recognizes them as friends, fellow-workers, etc., **in the Lord.** Their relation to Christ was more important to Paul than any other social relation such as their race or their nationality. Like Paul, we today should cultivate and value the friendship of the saints. We should not choose worldly people, to whom Christ means nothing, to be our special friends. We should rather rejoice in the fellowship of the saints.

This passage of the Epistle also shows us how much women helped in the cause of the Gospel. "From the beginning females have taken an active and important part in the promotion of the gospel. They seem, more than others, to have contributed to Christ of their substance. They were his most faithful attendants, 'last at the cross, and first at the sepulchre'" (Charles Hodge). Besides Phebe, several women are mentioned in this list of Paul's friends: Priscilla, Mary, Junia, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, the mother of Rufus, Julia, and the sister of Nereus. Of some of these Paul says that they "labored in the Lord", or "labored much in the Lord". Priscilla with her husband Aquila was one of Paul's "helpers in Christ Jesus". The present writer has heard Paul called "a woman hater" because of his instructions concerning women in connection with public ministry and ruling office in the church (1 Cor. 14:34, 35; 1 Tim. 2:11-15). But Paul was far from being a "woman hater", and it is clear that he welcomed, appreciated and highly valued the services of women in the promotion of the Gospel. As in Paul's day, so in the churches of the present day, there is a wide field for Christian service open to women apart from the offices of minister and ruling elder which it is clearly not Scriptural for women to hold. We may be sure that the Christian women mentioned in Romans 16 did not seek to hold those positions in the church which God has limited to men, but devoted themselves whole-heartedly to those forms of Christian service which were appropriate for women. There are indeed forms of Christian service in which women can far excel men, and some forms of service which must be performed almost exclusively by women.

"Salute one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you" (16:16). The principle underlying this precept is valid and binding today, but the precise form of application of the principle is not binding. We are to salute or greet one another, but we are not bound to do it by a kiss. Kissing was a common manner of expressing friendship in those days; it is different today. "The exercise and manifestation of the feeling, but not the mode of its expression, are obligatory on us" (Charles Hodge). A friendly handshake and cheerful word of greeting will satisfy the obligation of 16:16 very well. On the other hand, where some members of a church have a grudge against other members and will not speak to them, or if they do speak, speak in tones of icy formality, they are breaking the God-given precept of Romans 16:16, and committing a sin against God.

Questions:

1. To how many people does Paul send greetings by name?

2. What is shown by the fact that Paul, who had never himself been in Rome, knew by name more than two dozen Christians in that city?

3. How do we know that Paul was a friendly person?

4. What kind of friendship existed between Paul and the people mentioned in 16:3-16?

5. Why should we not choose worldly people as our special friends?

6. How many women are mentioned by name in 16:3-16?

7. What was Paul's attitude toward women as Christian workers?

8. Why is it unfair to Paul to speak of him as a "woman hater"?

9. In what respect is the precept of 16:6 binding on us today?

10. Why are we not required to greet our fellow Christians by actually kissing them today?

11. How can the obligation of 16:16 be fulfilled today?

12. How do church members sometimes violate the God-given precept of 16:16?

LESSON 104

CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE: PERSONAL GREETINGS. 16:1-27, Cont.

C. Warnings against Divisions and False Doctrines. 16:17-20

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (16:17). "While he urges them to the kind reception of all faithful ministers and Christians, he enjoins upon them to have nothing to do with those who cause divisions and offences. There were probably two evils in the apostle's mind when he wrote this passage: the divisions occasioned by erroneous doctrines, and the offences or scandals occasioned by the evil conduct of false teachers. Almost all the forms of error which distracted the early church, were intimately connected with practical evils of a moral character" (Charles Hodge). We should note that false doctrine, and teachers of false doctrine, are to be avoided. Today many people think that differences about doctrine are not important, as long as there is no serious wrong conduct in a person's life. But right living comes from truth, not from falsehood, and false doctrine will result in evil living in the end.

Teachers of false doctrine are, first, to be "marked", and thereupon they are to be "avoided". Christian love does not require a soft tolerance of false doctrine, any more than Christian love requires us to allow a burglar to rob our home or attack our family. Really, Christian love — love for the church and its members — requires that false doctrine be rejected.

If we are to "mark" those who promote false doctrine, we must first of all know what the true doctrine is. Many Christians of the present day cannot tell the difference between true doctrine and false. Many cannot tell accurately what the doctrinal difference between their own church and some other church is. To mark and avoid false doctrine, we must make sure that we have an adequate and accurate knowledge of the true doctrine set forth in God's Word.

"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (16:18). The word "simple" here means "unwary", the person who is not alert to questions of truth and error in religion. According to God's Word, "The simple believeth every word" (Prov. 14:15). Hence "the simple', the doctrinally unwary person, is constantly liable to be deceived. The false teachers of the present day, as of Paul's day, are selfish, crafty and deceptive. The serious Christian will be on guard against them.

"For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (16:19). The Roman Christians must be not only good, but prudent. They "must not only avoid doing evil", but also be careful that they do not suffer evil (Charles Hodge). They should be "too good to deceive, too wise to be deceived" (Grotius). As Augustine prayed, "Let the Scriptures be my pure delights; let me not be deceived in them, nor deceive others out of them". "Paul would have them wise to know how to take care of themselves; and yet harmless" (Charles Hodge).

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (16:20). Every true Christian and every true church gains the victory over Satan by the grace and power of God, through Christ. This victory is promised to the Roman Christians. Satan is always working against the kingdom of Christ. Satan would soon become furiously active in stirring up persecution against Christians in Rome. Yet the promise would hold true, and did hold true, that the God of peace would bruise Satan under their feet shortly. For by grace they gained the victory over Satan.

D. Greetings of Paul's Companions to the Christians at Rome. 16:21-23.

Several of Paul's companions and fellow-workers are mentioned here. Among them is Erastus, the "chamberlain", that is, the treasurer, of the city of Corinth, an important official who had become a Christian. Tertius, mentioned in verse 22, is the one who wrote the Epistle from Paul's dictation. These various people were associated with Paul in the work of Christ, presumably at Corinth.

E. Concluding Doxology. 16:24-27

Verses 25-27 form a long and complicated sentence in the Greek. The teaching, however, is clear. It is the power of God that establishes the Christian, and this power of God is exerted according to (through) the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is referred to as "the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest . . . " (16:25, 26). Thus the Gospel "is not a system of human philosophy, or the result of human investigation, but it is a revelation of the purpose of God. Paul often presents the idea that the plan of redemption was formed from eternity, and is such as no eye could discover, and no heart conceive" (Charles Hogue). From eternity the Gospel was in the mind of God, until finally it was revealed to men, partly in the Old Testament, and fully in the New.

This Gospel, which from eternity had been

in the mind of God, was finally "by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (16:26). Here we note the harmony and essential unity of Paul's Gospel with the teaching of the Old Testament prophets. The Gospel is not something new and different from what is in the Old Testament; it is the same truth come to a fuller stage of realization in the world. For in Paul's day and our own, unlike the days of the Old Testament prophets, the Gospel is indeed "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith".

"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (16:27). In this Epistle which ascribes the entire salvation of man wholly to God and His grace, it is fitting that the closing sentence be an ascription of glory to God through Christ. And God is here described as "God only wise", for He is the Being whose infinite, perfect wisdom is displayed in all His works, and particularly in the Gospel concerning His Son.

Questions:

1. What does Paul warn the Roman Christians against in 16:17?

2. What is the relation between true doctrine and right living?

3. What is to be done about teachers of false doctrine?

4. Why is it wrong to say that Christian love requires us to tolerate false doctrines?

5. What must we know if we are to "mark" those who promote false doctrine?

6. What is the meaning of the word "simple" in 16:18?

7. Why is the "simple" person liable to be deceived in matters of religion?

8. What does Proverbs 14:15 say about the "simple" person?

9. What was the character of the false teachers of Paul's day, as described in 16:18?

10. Concerning what did Paul wish the Romans to be wise, and concerning what did he wish them to be "simple"?

11. What victory does every true Christian and every true Christian church gain?

12. By what power is this victory gained?

13. What position did Erastus hold in the city of Corinth?

14. What is the meaning of "chamberlain" in 16:23?

15. What is the meaning of the statement that Tertius wrote the Epistle, 16:22?

16. What does Paul mean by saying that the Gospel was a mystery kept secret since the world began?

17. What is the connection of the Old Testament Scriptures with the Gospel, according to 16:26?

18. Why is God called "God only wise" in 16:27?

19. To whom is the entire work of salvation ascribed in this Epistle?

20. In what work of God is His infinite wisdom particularly displayed?

The End

Reviews of Religious Books

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

THE MARROW OF MODERN DIVINITY, by Edward Fisher, 1978, reprint of 1646. Hardbound, pp. 370. $10.95. Reiner Publications, Swengel, PA 17880.

This book revives an old, long-buried and forgotten controversy of 17th and 18th century Scotland. It was "Modern" in 1646, but it is certainly not modern today. The situation that originally called for its publication has long been forgotten. This book is not geared to present-day conditions in the world of Christian belief and literature, and the reviewer questions the wisdom of spending money reprinting it as Reiner Publications has done.

The "Marrow" men were traditionally orthodox on the intention of Christ's atonement with reference to the elect. Their peculiarity was that they stressed the general reference of it to all mankind. Christ did not die with the intention of saving all men. But He is "dead," i.e., **available** for all men.

Those wishing an additional comment are referred to A. A. Hodge, **Outlines of Theology**, one volume edition, pages 417-418. The volume under review contains some notes by Thomas Boston (died 1732).

—J. G. Vos

ROYAL COMMANDMENTS, by Frances Ridley Havergal. No date, no price stated. Reiner Publications, Swengel, PA 17880. Paperback, pp. 106.

A beautiful color photo of flowers is on the cover. The author was an English lady of exemplary Christian character and attainments, who died in 1879. The present volume is obviously a reprint of a much earlier issue, but the date of original publication is not stated.

Miss Havergal's poems and hymns have been loved by many Christians. This little book contains excellent devotional material. Recommended.

—J. G. Vos

THE TROUBLE WITH PARENTS, by Tim Stafford. 1978, paperback, pp. 159. $3.95. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Hey, kids! Did you ever wonder what's gotten into your parents? Or parents, have you ever said to yourself, "What did we do wrong?" This book will provide food for thought for both teenager and parent.

Many of the chapters are reprints from other publications. Some are by Tim Stafford, the author. They deal with feelings of both teenager and parent, with rules, trust, annoyances, shattered families and all sorts of hassles. Try it; you'll like it. I did.

—Marian M. Vos

SPIRITUAL CARE: THE NURSE'S ROLE and **SPIRITUAL CARE WORKBOOK**, by Sharon Fish and Judith Allen Shelly. 1978, pp. 178 and 61. InterVarsity Press, Downer's Grove, IL 60515. Price for the two books together, $4.95.

This book, written by two registered nurses, addresses itself to the nurse's role in spiritual care. It was prepared under the aegis of the Nurses Christian Fellowship, a branch of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Using a series of 27 case studies, the authors bring into focus man's spiritual needs and the ways that nurses may intervene in a spiritual crisis by using Self, Prayer, Scripture and the Clergy. Of particular interest to any who are involved with the care of the sick is the chapter "Spiritual Needs and the Nursing Process," sure to delight many "fundamentals of nursing" experts.

The companion workbook should serve well for both individual and group studies. This book, with its companion helper, should prove valuable not only to the nurse in a Christian setting but also to the nurse in the secular world who desires to "give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

—Elizabeth E. Wilcox, R.N.

THE GOSPEL AND ITS MINISTRY, by Sir Robert Anderson. 1978, reprint of earlier British edition. Pp. 213, paperback, $3.50. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607. Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

The author affirms the Biblical doctrine of election and warns against misuse of it. It must be held in balance with human responsibility. This book, though a product of the 19th century and hence not in touch with some of the more serious forms of today's unbelief, contains much truth and value. On the cover the word **Its** is incorrectly printed as **It's**.

—J. G. Vos

THE LORD FROM HEAVEN, by Sir Robert Anderson. 1978, pp. 118, paperback, $2.95. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

A brief but very helpful survey of the Biblical evidence that Jesus Christ is no mere man but is indeed "the Lord from Heaven." Much needed in these days of unbelief and general apostasy. Recommended.

—J. G. Vos

THE CHARISMATICS: A DOCTRINAL PERSPECTIVE, by John F. MacArthur, Jr. 1978, pp. 224, hardbound. $7.95. Zondervan Publishing House, 1415 Lake Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

A broadly based, thoroughgoing critique of the mainstream of the contemporary "Charismatic" movement, from the standpoint of evangelical Christianity. The author may be classified as a Fundamentalist of the type represented by many leading Bible institutes in America. His premillennial eschatology surfaces here and there. Apparently the author is unaware of the fact that to many of his readers his eschatological views are just as unsound as the "Charismatic" tenets that he criticizes.

The author gives many examples, case histories, etc. He argues that the "tongues" spoken today are basically different from those spoken in the apostolic and early Church. Today's "tongues" are not foreign languages, but "gibberish"—collections of somewhat stereotyped nonsense syllables pouring out of the person's mouth.

Taking the "Charismatic" movement as a whole, and admitting that there may be some exceptions, the author shows overwhelmingly that the basic error of the movement is that it makes the center and structure of Christianity subjective rather than objective. Attention is shifted from the Biblical revelation to the "revelations" alleged to come today; from what God has done through prophets, apostles and Jesus Christ, to what the present day "Charismatic" Christian "feels" or "experiences." One "Charismatic" believer wrote on the flyleaf of his Bible: "I don't care what the Bible says. I have had an experience." This tends to drift into a subjective mysticism, away from the solid rock of what God has done once-for-all in the great redemptive facts of sacred history. Bible study then becomes, not a searching for truth, but an effort to interpret Scripture in such a way as to bring it into line with what the individual person has "experienced."

Incidentally, this subjectivism explains why both Protestants and Catholics can become involved in the "Charismatic" movement. Both the Protestant and the Catholic "Charismatic" believer have by-passed the real question of authority—the one by-passes the authority of Scripture (in favor of a "self-validating" experience), and the other by-passes the authority of the Church, hierarchy and pope (in favor of a "self-validating" experience). The question of the seat of authority in religion, which historically has divided Protestants from Catholics, is quietly by-passed and both groups deal in allegedly self-validating mystical experiences.

It is totally impossible to argue with a "Charismatic," because he holds that his experiences are absolute, ultimate and self-validating. Therefore, they cannot be criticized or evaluated in terms of conformity to Scripture.

The author shows that this subjectivism has been characteristic of Barthianism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and various other varieties of modern theology in which it is denied that the Bible is in itself the Word of God, but affirmed instead that it "becomes" the Word of God to a particular person when it grips him in a crisis experience.

The author brings out that in the Bible, tongues came spontaneously, whereas the present-day movement cultivates them earnestly and makes them the norm or test of a vital and valid Christian experience. The apostolic statement in 1 Cor. 13, "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease," is shown by the author to be distorted or ignored by the movement.

There is also some space devoted to a critique of "Charismatic" claims to effect miracles of healing. Where the healing fails to come, it is always possible to say that the sick person did not have enough faith.

The author finds that in some sectors the "Charismatic" movement is "coming of age" and that extreme positions and practices are being modified. There is hope that the Holy Spirit will lead these brethren to a more Biblical position and practice. There is also a chapter devoted to "What can we learn from the Charismatic movement?" It is shown that this movement arose as a reaction to the sinful deadness and lethargy of traditional Christianity. We can discern and imitate the good while learning to avoid the evil.

This book is heartily recommended to our readers. Prevention is better than cure. Put a copy in your church library and get it read and studied before the "Charismatic" fanaticism and subjectivism has made serious inroads.

—J. G. Vos

TYPES IN HEBREWS, by Sir Robert Anderson. Reprint of earlier British edition. Pp. 184, paperback. $3.50. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

Apparently photographed page by page from the British edition of years ago. Sir Robert Anderson was an Irish statesman and Christian leader who lived 1841-1918. He was vigorous and forthright in defending Biblical Christianity against liberals, higher critics and other unbelievers. This book shows careful scholarship and will prove truly edifying to the Christian reader. The title "Types" may be a bit too narrow—the contents deal with the teachings of Hebrews in general, not merely types and their antitypes. In general this book is Biblical and will be found edifying.

—J. G. Vos

THE SILENCE OF GOD, by Sir Robert Anderson. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, MI 49501. 1978, reprint of British edition of 1907, pp. 215, paperback. $3.50.

This book is a discussion of the Biblical miracles; their nature, meaning, purpose, and value. Over against the modern materialistic world-view the author defends the classic Christian doctrine of miracles. The absolute uniqueness of Christianity is well brought out and defended. Recommended.

—J. G. Vos

POCKET GUIDE TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Francis Foulkes. Inter-Varsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, IL 60515. 1978, pp. 160, pocket size, $2.25.

A good evangelical introduction to the New Testament Scriptures. A few pages are devoted to each of the 27 books. The author wisely does not commit himself on who wrote Hebrews. He rightly states that Mark 16:9-20 was probably not an original part of the Gospel of Mark, not being found in any of the many early manuscripts. On the whole a wealth of important and valid information in a pocket-sized book. One objection: in the Bibliography on the Book of Revelation, William Barclay's book is listed. Barclay is known to be a universalist and should not be considered orthodox. This "pocket guide" is recommended.

—J. G. Vos

POCKET GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN BELIEFS, by L. Howard Marshall. Inter-Varsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, IL 60515. Pp. 144, paperback, pocket size. $2.25.

"Every Christian ought to have a working knowledge of Christian doctrine" (back cover). This little book sets forth the main heads of Christian doctrine as follows: 1. Why study Christian doctrine? 2. Our knowledge of God. 3. What can we know about God? 4. God and the universe. 5. The Person and work of Jesus. 6. The life of the Christian. 7. The Christian community. 8. The last things.

For the most part, author Marshall presents standard evangelical doctrine very well. As is to be expected in a book intended for use by various denominations and issued by a non-denominational publishing house, there is some vagueness on controversial doctrines. For example, he is not clear on predestination and election. On the millennium he sets forth the rival views, hesitates to commit himself, but states that in his view the millennium is a symbolic picture of the victory and joy of heaven. This book is recommended but should be used along with some definitely Reformed study guide such as, for example, G. I. Williamson on the Westminster Confession of Faith (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.).

—J. G. Vos

MUCKLE KATE; THE HIGHLAND KITCHEN MAID, Free Presbyterian Publications, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE, Scotland. Price not stated. Paperback, pp. 14.

This pamphlet contains two stories. Good print, and the contents suitable for children. Story of two Scottish Christians of past times. Recommended.

—J. G. Vos

EPHESIANS, by G. B. Wilson. The Banner of Truth, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, PA 17013. 1978, pp. 142, paperback. $1.95.

A worthy treatment of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, treated in terms of the recognized truths of the Reformed Faith. Ephesians is quoted and then commented on paragraph by paragraph. Recommended.

—J. G. Vos

LETTERS OF A. W. PINK, by A. W. Pink. Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, PA 17013. Paperback, 1978, pp. 135. $1.95.

Arthur W. Pink was an American who chose to live most of his life in Scotland. He had some outstanding eccentricities, but was a faithful Christian scholar who knew and loved the Lord. These letters date from 1924 to 1951. Much Christian truth and counsel is provided. Recommended.

—J. G. Vos

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, edited by S. W. Carruthers. Free Presbyterian Publications, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE, Scotland. 1978, pp. 24, paperback, price not stated.

In this reviewer's opinion, Dr. S. W. Carruthers of Edinburgh is the most learned and expert scholar in dealing with textual questions and variant readings in the various editions of the Westminster Confession. This little paperback is prepared by Dr. Carruthers "from the original manuscript written by Cornelius Burges in 1646." Free Presbyterian Publications also has a large type edition of the same selling at three and a half pounds Sterling. Unfortunately the print in the copy we received from them for review is small for steady reading, but satisfactory for checking a reading by. We recommend both this booklet and the large print edition heartily.

—J. G. Vos

VOX REFORMATA, Australasian Journal for Christian Scholarship. No. 30, May, 1978. Faculty of the Reformed Theological College, 55 Maude St., Geelong, Victoria, Australia 3220. Paperback, pp. 50. Published twice yearly. Per year, U.S. $4.00.

This is a very worthy periodical. All solid meat and no waste. About half of this issue is devoted to book reviews. The two principal articles are entitled, "Common Law and the Church or Graceful Law" (B. Bayston), and "Critical Reflections on a Christian Philosophy" (Van der Laan). Recommended.

—J. G. Vos

SATAN'S DEVICES, by Kurt Koch. Translated from previous German edition. 1978, pp. 340, paperback. $5.95. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

The title, "Satan's Devices," seems to be intended as a blanket categorization of a broad sweep of phenomena discussed by the author. The table of contents lists 71 "Forms of Satan's Devices" and 20 "Effects of Satan's Devices." The subjects discussed include not only spiritism, demon possession, reincarnation and many other clearly forbidden practices, but also quite a number of things which may be ethically neutral, for example, hypnotism, clairvoyance, extra-sensory perception. In other words, the author is much too ready to identify everything paranormal with the Satanic occult.

In the later years of the 17th century in Scotland there was a godly minister named Alexander Peden. He was forced out of his church and had to live in hiding in the wildest parts of the north of Scotland. The faithful Christians could not worship in churches; they were liable to arrest, torture and death. Alexander Peden had a faculty of clairvoyance. He could see a scene several miles away. Several times he warned assembled worshippers at a "conventicle" to disperse, because the king's soldiers were coming. He had seen them miles away. Over and over again Peden averted a massacre of Christian people by his power of clairvoyance. How mistaken it is, then, to rate clairvoyance as necessarily one of "Satan's Devices"!

Over against the extreme teachings of this book, the reviewer would place two other books by strictly evangelical authors: (1) **Man in the Process of Time**, by John Stafford Wright (Eerdmans), and (2) **Principalities and Powers** by John Warwick Montgomery (Bethany Fellowship). These both are at pains to distinguish clearly between the psychic **as such** (ethically neutral) and the **occult** (always evil). Of course in a sinful world anything can be used for evil. The devil can quote Scripture but that does not make the Bible a bad book. To say that something can be used for evil is quite different from saying that it is evil in itself, or as such. The reviewer regards Koch's book as extreme in lumping things which differ together.

—J. G. Vos

THE SOVEREIGN GOD, by James Montgomery Boice. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 60515. 1978, pp. 252, paperback, $5.25.

GOD THE REDEEMER, by James Montgomery Boice. InterVarsity Press, 1978, pp. 273, paperback. $5.25.

Dr. Boice, the pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, has completed the first two volumes of a four-book series ("Foundations of the Christian Faith") that will be a layman's guide to theology. This reviewer has found much that edified his soul, but he also found some deficiencies, which he will now outline.

Dr. Boice bases some of his teaching concerning the Trinity in the Old Testament on the Hebrew word **elohim** (Vol. 1, pp. 209-210). A better approach to the Old Testament teaching on the Trinity would be the distinction of the persons in the Godhead (see Herman Bavinck, **The Doctrine of God**, pp. 99-100, 255-258).

In the chapter entitled "The Creation of Man," Dr. Boice sets forth the trichotomist view of man (Vol. 1, pp. 193-204). But in the light of the usage of the words "soul" and "spirit" in the Bible, it must be pointed out that they signify **the whole man** (see A. A. Hodge, **Outlines of Theology**, 223-224; also **The Collected Writings of John Murray**, Vol. II, 23-33).

A rather common interpretation of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 is stated in the chapter entitled "The Spirit World," but this interpretation is very dubious (Vol. I, 218-228). It is often taught that these passages tell us of the fall of Satan, but the context would teach us otherwise. In the Isaiah passage the person referred to is clearly the king of Babylon. Ezekiel is not teaching us about the fall of Satan, but is taking up a lamentation over the king of Tyre.

One more shortcoming of these books is found in Dr. Boice's discussion of the Fourth Commandment. He believes that the Sabbath was "a uniquely Jewish institution." Therefore it does not need to be observed today by any other race or nation. We need to remember that the Sabbath was instituted long before the Jewish ceremonial law (Genesis 2:2,3). Also we have the example of our God, who created everything in six days and rested on the seventh day. Man was made in the image of God, and his duty is seen in the divine example. One more thing that is important is that the Fourth Commandment is part of the moral law and not of the Jewish ceremonial law. (See G. I. Williamson, **The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes**, 170-173).

In spite of these criticisms, this reviewer found these books very helpful, and recommends them to the discerning reader.

—Samuel Sterrett

HELP FOR A DESPAIRING WORLD, by Philip E. Hughes. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. 1977, pp. 125. $3.95.

Dr. Hughes, visiting Professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, has written a book seeking to answer the question: If God is a holy and just God, then why does He allow evil in His world? In answering this question Dr. Hughes does an excellent job of presenting basic Biblical theology. In spite of what men say, God is in control, bringing about His will in this world. Evil is in the world because man (in Adam) has sinned, but God has provided a way of salvation: the cross of Christ. The cross is a sign both of redemption and of judgment. We are living in "the last days," "the end times"—this is the gracious period of God's forbearance. The Gospel is being given time to accomplish the plan of God, but soon the day of God's judgment will come.

—Samuel Sterrett

IN TWO MINDS, by Os Guinness. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 60515. 1976, pp. 305, paperback, $4.95; hardbound, $8.95.

Jude, the brother of James, wrote to those who are called by God and kept for Jesus Christ. There were some things that he wanted them to remember. One of these is in verse 22, "And have mercy on some, who are doubting." Os Guinness' book will help all Christians, those who have doubts and those who need to be merciful. The book is divided into four parts: (1) Purpose of writing this book: to clarify some misconceptions. (2) Discussion of the seven most common categories of doubt. (3) Examination of what is involved in caring for and counseling a person in doubt. (4) Finally, Dr. Guinness looks at two specific types of doubt.

—Samuel Sterrett

A STEP FURTHER, BY Joni Eareckson and Steve Estes. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. Hardback, pp. 185, $6.95.

A Step Further was written partially in response to the spate of letters that poured in after the release of her first book, **Joni**. Joni and her dear friend, Steve, deal movingly with the subject of the sovereignty of God. They have searched the Scriptures concerning pain, disease, disasters, etc., as it pertains to her, to you and to me.

Through God's word, through examples and through her own experience she brings each of us to **let God be God**, to submit to His mercies, to honor Him in our life and to await Heaven "where former things are passed away."

—Marian M. Vos

Religious Terms Defined

CANON OF SCRIPTURE. The list of the books which are recognized as Holy Scripture.

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

CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH. The universal character of the Church, as a body not limited to any particular times, places or denominations, but including all who profess the true religion, together with their children.

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

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

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

CHARACTER. The moral quality of a person's inner nature or "heart," from which the issues of life spring, and by which decisions and conduct are determined.

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

CHILIASM. The doctrine of a thousand year reign of Christ; commonly used as equivalent to

Premillennialism, or the doctrine of a thousand year reign of Christ on earth after His second coming.

CHRISTIAN. One who believes on Christ as his Saviour from sin, and obeys Christ as the Lord of His life. This means not merely Lord of his religious life, but Lord of his whole life. Since Christianity is the way of salvation from sin, it is improper, manifestly, to speak of Jesus Christ (who was sinless) as a Christian.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS. The branch of theological science which deals with what the Bible teaches concerning the motive, standard and purpose of human action.

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

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

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

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

CHRIST'S ESTATE OF EXALTATION. "Christ's exaltation consisteth in His rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day." (Shorter Catechism, 28).

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Later contributions will be acknowledged 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 less than half of the amount needed. Many thanks to all who have helped. Your contributions are deductible from your Federal taxable income if you live in the United States. Documentary proof of this is available if needed by any contributor.

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The Offense of the Cross

By J. G. Vos

"If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased." (Gal. 5:11)

The word here translated "offense" is the Greek "skandalon," which first meant the trigger of a trap or snare, then an occasion of stumbling. Our word "scandal" is derived from it. The offense of the cross is the stumblingblock that keeps people from becoming Christians. It is the offense of the cross that makes Christianity different from all other religions. Only Christianity presents a crucified Saviour as the center of its system. It is the presence or absence of the offense of the cross that determines whether a movement or organization is truly Christian or not. If the offense of the cross is by-passed or toned down, it is not Christianity but a counterfeit.

It is the cross of Christ, not our cross, that is spoken of. The "cross" means the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ for sinners. This implies human guilt, depravity, inability to save self. It implies that salvation is not an attainment but a gift of free grace. It reduces us all to paupers before the holy God.

The cross of Christ is not a sentimental idea, but a horribly realistic one. There is nothing beautiful or lovely about the cross of Christ in itself; it is unspeakably dreadful. It stands for the righteous judgment and awful wrath of God against human sin. It stands for the curse of God upon the sinner. Christ was made a curse for us: for it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). But the cross also stands for the love and mercy of God. At Calvary, divine love and divine wrath meet. God so loved this wicked world that He gave His Son to suffer and die for sinners on the accursed cross.

The cross is an offense not merely because of its crudity, its cruelty and its shame. It is an offense to unsaved sinners even more because of what it implies concerning them. It cuts the root of human pride, pretension and self-righteousness. It eliminates all ground of human boasting. It leaves us nothing to claim, nothing to congratulate ourselves about. The cross will not let a man stand on his own feet before God. It will not let a man claim slavation by "doing his best" or "keeping the golden rule." All this is cut off at the root.

The cross is an offense to all non-Christian religion, to all apostate religion, to all pseudo-Christianity, to all legalism and moralism, to all formalism, to all Christless schemes of "character-building," and to all the rest of the dismal array of human substitutes for salvation by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Today, more than ever, the cross is an offense. Men seek to evade it by theories that take the blood out of salvation and leave us a Jesus who was only an example, a martyr, a teacher. Thousands of theological books have been written in these attempts to get rid of the offense of the cross—the bare, bald truth that the Son of God suffered and died, His blood was shed, in bearing the wrath and curse of God as the Substitute of guilty and helpless sinners. Our age retains the name of the cross, but explains away its reality and power. Modern religion is really a bloodless faith. Because it is bloodless, it is also hopeless, and cannot save guilty men from sin and hell.

What the world hates, the saved Christian glories in. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14). The offense of the cross, the hated sign of the substitionary atonement, is the sign of genuine Christianity. We should never tone it down, minimize it, soft-pedal it, apologize for it. It must always be dominant in our religion. Christ is not preached aright unless His shed blood is emphasized as the only way guilty human beings can find peace with the righteous God. We can never advance beyond the cross; we can never outgrow it and go on to other things. It will always be central.

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Man Tried To Go It on His Own

By the Rev. Marlon L. McFarland

An Expository Message Based on Genesis 3:1-7,21 (New International Version) Reproduced from a Tape Recording

(Reprinted by permission from *The Covenanter Pastor*)

The first man, Adam, and his wife tried to "go-it-on-their-own," and man is still trying to go-it-alone. In the garden, God gave the first man a choice: to obey or not to obey. To do that which God desires merely because man could not do otherwise has no moral value. Therefore, God did give man a choice; he could obey or he could disobey. Man was free to choose. It was not Satan who made man disobey. We cannot say as a well known comedian retorts, "Well, the devil made me do it," because the devil never makes us do anything wrong. However, Satan makes "wrong" appear very, very **nice**. Satan did this to Adam and Eve; he did not make them disobey but he **did** make it look very nice.

God's true wisdom is not in making man and **locking** him into a certain course of action, but His true wisdom is that He provided redemption in order that man could continue to serve Him in spite of his **horrible** disobedience.

We consider four things. You will notice that there are four persons involved in this event recorded in Genesis 3. The first is Satan. We will consider the other three in turn. But first:

I. SATAN RAISES DOUBTS ABOUT GOD'S RIGHT TO LIMIT MAN

This Satan was doing when he asked his questions; he was seeking to raise doubts in Eve's mind about God's right to limit man. The Scripture records that the serpent was more crafty than the other creatures. This means that it was a clever creature and not necessarily immoral. Satan used this serpent because it was more crafty or clever.

Satan asked a seemingly innocent question which caused Eve to doubt God's right to limit them. These are the words of the serpent: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?' " Satan did not come right out and say, "Listen, it doesn't sound fair, Eve, for God to say that you can eat of the fruit of all of the trees but one." But he does raise a question as to the truth of God's not allowing them to eat of all the fruit in the garden. Now we find that Eve's serious departure from God's directive begins at this very point. The **first** activity of hers that was a tragic error was to listen to the serpent. Why is that? We look back to Genesis 1:26,28,

> "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. . . . God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' "

There are a number of important facts in these verses, but one thing which stands out is the fact that God had placed man **over all living creatures.** God had said to Adam and Eve, "You are to **rule** over all creatures on the earth." God gave man the responsibility to "subdue" all living creatures. This means that when the serpent began to talk to Eve and raise any question, her **immediate** response should have been, "Serpent, you just be quiet—you go on your way, I don't want to listen to anything you have to say—any questions you have about God or any questions you have about anything, because God has established that my husband and I are to have rule over everything—which means that we are to have rule over you—so you just be quiet."

At the point that Eve did **not** silence the serpent, Satan knew that he was well on the way to some kind of victory. Why? Because Eve did not exercise her

God-given authority to rule over the serpent. Furthermore, God had given Adam the task of naming all of the creatures (Gen. 2:19). Adam had given the reptile its name and now it dares to speak to his wife about God's authority. We see very clearly from Scripture that God had placed man to be over all the creatures on the earth. Eve most certainly should have put the serpent in his place—but she didn't—and the serpent's question causes Eve to doubt God's authority to limit them. That was precisely what Satan wanted. Eve now wonders, "Why **are** we limited by God?" Is not this one of the questions that people are raising today? A very modern question. "Why are we limited—why can't we do anything we want?" asks the modern man. Some people **are** doing anything they want—to their own destruction. The answer to this question for Eve is the answer to the same question of modern man—the answer is that we are a creation of God—we are His handiwork—we did not make ourselves. At this point Evolution is very attractive to man because he wants to cut off any and all implied connections with God.

As Creator, God has every right to limit man. God is God and man was created—God having no creator—He is eternal, self-existent.

Modern man cannot stand this kind of God. He must have a god made by himself or he must be his own god—but certainly not a self-existent God who is his sovereign ruler. Pagan man made gods from wood, stone, gold, and silver. The point is that man made his own gods with his hands. Modern man is still making his own gods. Today he is making them with his **mind.** These are his "created" gods. These gods made in man's mind are not the God of Scripture because he does not want any god telling him what to do. Man wants to go-it-on-his-own and have gods that **he** can tell what to do. He will have nothing to do with the God of revelation. He wants to be his own god.

Satan was very successful in causing Eve to have doubts as to God's right to set limits on her and her husband.

The next person we look at in this very sad and tragic historic drama is Eve. In looking at Eve we notice, secondly, that:

II. EVE CHANGES GOD'S WORD ON HER OWN

When people hear the Word of God and then make slight modifcations—they are well on their way to their own destruction.

Eve added words and she left out one. We **cannot** change the Word of God and expect to find truth. "You shall know the **truth** and the truth shall make you **free**." Eve's changing of God's Word indicates her desire to be "free" from it and to go-it-on-her-own. She had rejected God's Word and had submitted her own modification. In doing so she made God's Word to be more restraining than what God had said. This is a likely indication that she was bothered by God's right to limit them.

We look now at Eve's changes. In chapter 2, verses 16 and 17, God said: "You are free to eat from **any** tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . ." The word which she left out is "any," or in the King James it is "all." It might be said that God's word "any" is implied in what she did say. Nevertheless, Eve is not as clear as God's word was. He said "any" tree except one is to be eaten—Eve glosses over the "any."

Then she adds to what God's had said in Gen. 2:17. She adds, "and you must not touch it," as recorded in Gen. 3:2. **God did not say that at all.** Man was **not** forbidden to touch the fruit. The fact that she added words seems to reflect an attitude of her mind that the one tree which is "off-limits" is far greater than all the others which God has given. According to Eve, "We can't even touch it."

At this point Satan is about ready to "jump in glee." He has her right where he wants her. She has doubted God's authority and Word and now she is modifying God's Word.

Satan, seeing this, moved right in. At first he was most cautious and merely asked a question. But notice in verses 4 and 5 of our text we observe that Satan, sensing Eve's desire to be autonomous, calls God a liar. In verse 4 we read, "You will not surely die. . . ." The father of lies is so saturated with lying that, in effect, he even calls God a liar. He knew that God was not a liar and that God's Word was true. However, he does not want Eve to know that. God has said, "You **will** die," and Satan said, "You will **not** die." Whom will Eve believe? God or the serpent whom God had created and over which man had the rule?

Satan sees Eve doubting God's Word and therefore has the audacity to say that God told her a lie. Here we notice that Satan's attacks center on God's Word. This attack by Satan on the Word of God began in the garden and continues to the present day. At this point Eve's trust in God is rapidly disappearing, if not completely gone. Hence, man feels himself free to go-it-on-his-own. Eve is ready to cut any ties with God and is open to the idea that God's Word is not to be trusted. She is willing to accept any avenue available which would lead to a course of "freedom" from God's Word. In a sense she is using any excuse she can to be able to go-on-her-own.

However, notice that Satan is vague about where eating the forbidden fruit will lead. We see this vagueness in verse 5: "For God knows that when you

eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." This sounds very alluring: "Your eyes will be open." But what does that mean? Eve did not really know—it just sounded good. "You will be like God. . . ." What does that mean? Vague but attractive. Here Satan appeals to man's desire to be his own god. "Knowing good and evil." Just how important is it to know good and evil? Sounds good, but it is vague. Satan charms by a tangle of truth and error in vagueness—and Eve was deceived (1 Tim. 2:14) but Adam was not. Eve fell for this deception but she was part of it because she modified God's Word.

We move to the next person involved in this tragic event—and that person is Adam. Thirdly:

III. ADAM DISOBEYS GOD AND GOES-ON-HIS-OWN

Adam was evidently ready and willing to go-it-on-his-own—to be autonomous—to be separate from his Creator.

Now to Adam and Eve the fruit not only looked harmless, but it even appeared to be most appealing. In verse 6, we read, "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye . . ." Our first parents are the ones about to be picked—they are ripe. Satan is on the verge of a momentous victory. He is merely standing back and watching Eve's mind and appetite evaluate the fruit of the tree. In her evaluating she concluded that the fruit was "also desirable to make one wise." Since when can one gain wisdom from eating the fruit of a tree, especially the fruit which Creator-God had forbidden? Wisdom comes only from God. Satan knew that but he did not in any way care what lies were believed. Adam and Eve fully expected to gain wisdom by eating from a tree of which God had instructed them not to eat. By going on their own they expected to be free from God and to gain wisdom from some other source.

Therefore, Eve took and ate and gave to her husband and he also ate. This was the final act of their sin. For Eve, it began when she refused to silence one of God's creatures which He had given them to subdue. For Adam, his doubts may have begun sometime before, and now that Eve made the first move he, **without any resistance or hesitation**, quickly followed. Why? Possibly because he now had someone to blame if it did not work out. After their shame and guilt was evident and God confronted them, Adam responded by saying (verse 12), ". . . the woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Adam ate willingly because he could now turn the blame on his wife. The Scripture records that Adam was **not** deceived—he knew this was disobedience, but he had possibly wanted out from under God's authority and to go-it-on-his-own. Now with Eve taking the first step he had someone else to blame. The fact that he ate it without any hesitation indicates that he was more than ready to go-it-on-his-own.

Hence, Adam and Eve behaved as though God had intended ill for them and Satan intended only good for them. They believed that God was hemming them in and keeping them from advancing. Whereas, according to Adam and Eve, "the serpent is showing us a way to have freedom and wisdom."

Observe the consequences of their action—their eyes are opened (v. 7). This is as Satan said it would be—but they saw that they were **naked**. They saw something that made them ashamed. Their physical condition had not changed—it is a new awareness of shame. They possibly feel that the very **fountain** and **source of human life** is **contaminated** by their disobedience.

What did they do about it? They made coverings for their nakedness and shame by sewing together fig-tree leaves. Even today, man tries to cover his shame by various "man-made" methods. Sigmund Freud and others, for example, held that man only has **guilt feelings.** Take away moral laws and man will no longer have guilt feelings. However, it does not work because guilt is in the conscience and soul of man since the Fall. Nevertheless, man is still seeking to cover his shame by his own devices—the shame that came when Adam tried to separate from God and go-it-on-his-own.

This brings us to the fourth person in this tragic story of man's misguided attempt to go it alone. It is God Himself. We consider, fourthly:

IV. GOD PROVIDES A COVERING FOR MAN'S SHAME AND SIN

God has Adam and Eve discard their covering of fig-tree leaves and provides in their place garments made from animal skin. We look now to verse 21 and chapter 3, "The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them."

One of the bright spots in the whole sordid event is when Adam and Eve were ashamed and then hid from God because of their shame. Can you imagine what it would have been like if they had **not** felt shame? If they had disobeyed God and gone "on their own way" without feeling any shame and then when God came to talk with them, as was His custom, they had confronted Him with abuse and retorts for allowing them to become embroiled in this "mess"—there would have been no hope for them whatsoever? Forgiveness came because they first were ashamed for their disobedience.

They **were** made to feel shame and to be vividly

aware of their guilt. There is no question that God, by the Holy Spirit, was at work in their heart and soul. We see God's grace even at this point in time by the fact that they knew their guilt and were ashamed. In grace, God had **made** them ashamed. Furthermore, God took the initiative and sought them out. He **found them hiding** in the garden.

We see something else—we see that God rejects the covering they made with their own hands. This is what God is doing today—He is rejecting the covering that people make apart from His grace. In personal evangelism, one of the common responses is something like this: "I am hoping that the good which I do, such as helping my neighbor, will outweigh the bad, because I am not as good as I should be—but I **do** go to church—and I was baptized." People claim all of these efforts on their part. What they are doing is seeking to weave a covering for their shame from the fig-tree laves of this life—in order to cover their guilt. Man has devised all kinds of activity to cover his shame and to placate the "gods." But God rejects all of these superficial attempts at "works righteousness." The fact that God provides something other than "fig-tree leaves" to cover man's shame reveals that He rejects his mundane efforts at works righteousness. Keep in mind that God is not arbitrary in rejecting man's work at covering his shame. God knows that man's efforts will never cover the horrible crime and sin committed against His holy being. When God rejects man's attempts at self-righteousness, He is acting again in grace towards fallen man. God would do man no favor by accepting an unworkable substitute in place of the complete covering He provides.

What is God's provision? He either takes an animal or has Adam and Eve take an animal and after taking its life, skins it, and uses this skin to make garments to cover their shame. This death was the first death upon the earth. Furthermore, it was the death of a creature Adam had named and with whom he had been at peace. This is also the first time Adam and Eve had seen blood—they were probably horrified. Then from this dead animal garments were made.

It is possible that this marks the beginning of animal sacrifice. We do not know precisely when it began but we do know it did—because later Cain's sacrifice of fruits and vegetables is rejected and Abel's animal sacrifice is accepted. The clear implication is that both brothers knew the proper sacrifice commanded by God.

Nevertheless, we can be assured that the death of the animal has impressed itself on the heart and soul of Adam and Eve. They must now realize that their sin was more serious than they had thought, because it cost the life of one of God's dear creatures.

Adam and Eve did not fully realize that the death of this animal was the fore-shadowing of the death of the lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world. God is showing them a fore-taste of the death of **His** lamb. He indicated this in verse 15 of chapter 3, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." This is God's glorious prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. What a wonderful thing it is for us—that bruise on the heel, but how agonizing it was for the Messiah!

God **has** provided a covering for our shame—it is the death of Christ on the cross. There Christ, the eternal Son of God, experienced shame in our place and we received His righteousness. Now God looks upon us as shameless and without sin, whereas, He looks on His Son as one who bore our shame and guilt.

We cannot go-it-on-our-own. We find freedom, wisdom and peace only in God's way. Let us walk in it!

Studies on Prayer

Larger Catechism

LESSON 1

The Nature of Christian Prayer

Q. 178. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit; with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Scripture References:

Psalm 72:8. We are to offer up our desires unto God.

John 16:23. Prayer is to be offered in the name of Christ.

Rom. 8:26. We are to pray by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 32:5, 6. Dan. 9:4. In prayer, we are to confess our sins.

Phil. 4:6. In prayer, we are to thank God for His mercies.

Questions:

1. What kind of prayer is defined in this question and answer of the Catechism?

In this statement the Catechism gives a definition of true prayer, or Christian prayer; that is, prayer offered to God according to His revealed will by a person who has been reconciled to Him through the redemptive work of Christ.

2. Besides Christian prayer, what other kinds of prayer are there?

Prayer is practically universal in the human race. Even atheists have been known to pray when thoroughly alarmed or in deep trouble. All the non-Christian religious systems involve the practice of some kind of prayer. Non-Christian prayer, however, is not addressed to the true God but to some false divinity or misrepresentation of God. The only true God is the Triune God of the Scriptures, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; all others are false and have no real existence. Non-Christian prayer, moreover, does not approach God through Christ as Mediator. It is not offered in the name of Christ but simply in the name of the person praying, or perhaps in the name of some other mediator than Christ. Thus non-Christian prayer lacks the guarantee of acceptance with God (John 14:6). That God in His great mercy may sometimes hear and answer the prayers of non-Christians, in spite of their spiritual ignorance and lack of a Mediator, we should not deny. But such prayers differ essentially from Christian prayer, as explained above.

3. Why should we offer up our desires unto God?

We are God's creatures, and it is our nature to be dependent upon Him for the supply of our needs, physical, mental, social and spiritual. Even before the human race fell into sin, man was dependent on God and there was need for prayer. The fall into sin greatly increased our need and our dependence upon God. Since no human being is able to face life by his own abilities and power, prayer is necessary if we are truly to glorify and enjoy God.

4. What kind of desires are we to offer to God in prayer?

In prayer, we are to offer to God only lawful desires, that is, desires that are in harmony with the moral law of God and that are offered in submission to the secret will of God. See the Shorter Catechism, Q. 98 ("for things agreeable to his will"), and the Larger Catechism, Q. 184 ("For what things are we to pray?"). We may not pray for anything we please; we must pray according to the Word of God and in submission to the will of God.

5. Why must we pray only in the name of Christ?

Because we are sinners, and only through Christ can we be reconciled to God and have access to His holy presence. Even a Christian sins against God daily in thought, word and deed, and his very prayers are stained by elements of sin. Therefore it is only through Christ's mediation, on the basis of His blood and righteousness, that we and our prayers can be acceptable to God.

6. Why must we pray only by the help of the Holy Spirit?

Romans 8:26 gives the key to the answer to this question. In the first place, we are too ignorant to pray without the help of the Holy Spirit. We do not know how to pray as we ought, nor what to pray for. We are also hindered by infirmities; that is, we are too weak and lacking in spiritual power to pray adequately. Instead of being filled with earnestness and zeal in approaching God in prayer, how often we are cold or lukewarm, and our minds distracted with all kinds of wandering thoughts! How often we consider prayer a burdensome duty rather than a real privilege! Clearly there can be no real prayer apart from the help of the Holy Spirit.

7. Why must we confess our sins in praying to God?

Over and over again the Bible stresses the truth that to approach God acceptably in prayer we must confess our sins. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). Because of God's holiness and absolute intolerance of even the least sin, we cannot company with God unless we sincerely desire to part company with sin. The person who approaches God in prayer without feeling his own sinfulness and without confession of sin is a proud and self-righteous Pharisee rather than a Christian.

8. Why should we include thanksgiving for God's mercies in our prayers?

We are debtors to God for everything in life except our own sinfulness. Life itself and all the things that make the continuance of life possible and pleasant are gifts of God's kindness and love. Besides the natural blessings of life, such as rain and sunshine, food and clothing, peace and plenty, a Christian is under a far greater obligation to render thanksgiving to God by reason of the great blessings of God's gracious salvation. The Christian has had his soul delivered from eternal death, his eyes from tears and his feet from falling. He has been rescued from the horrible pit and miry clay and has been set firmly upon that great Rock, Christ Jesus. Redeemed from Satan's kingdom, he has been made a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and an heir of all things. Surely the Christian has abundant reason for thankfulness to God. Accordingly the Word of God teaches us that even in times of affliction, we are to remember to give thanks to God: "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:17, 18).

LESSON 2

To Whom are We to Pray?

Q. 179. Are we to pray unto God only?

A. God only being able to search the hearts, hear the requests, pardon the sins, and fulfill the desires of all; and only to be believed in, and worshipped with religious worship; prayer, which is a special part thereof, is to be made by all to Him alone, and to none other.

Scripture References:

1 Kings 8:39. Acts 1:24. Rom. 8:27. God alone knows the hearts of all human beings.

Psalm 65:2. God is the one who is able to hear our prayers.

Mic. 7:18. God is the one who is able to pardon our sins.

Psalm 145:18, 19. God is the one who is able to fulfill the desires of all who call upon Him.

Rom. 10:14. Matt. 4:10. Acts 10:25, 26. Rev. 22:8, 9. God alone is to be believed in and worshipped with religious faith and worship.

1 Cor. 1:2. Prayer is a special part of religious worship.

Ex. 20:3-5. Psalm 50:15. Men are to pray to God alone.

Questions:

1. What large and influential religious body teaches that it is right to pray to others besides God?

The Roman Catholic Church, which teaches that it is proper to pray to the Virgin Mary, the saints and the angels, as well as to God.

2. Why does the Church of Rome teach that it is proper to pray to Mary, the saints and angels, as well as to God?

Because of a correct feeling of the need of a mediator in approaching the holy God, together with a failure to realize that Christ is the one and only mediator between God and men, who alone can give us access to the Father's presence, and acceptance with Him. The Church of Rome does indeed regard Christ as a Mediator between God and men, but goes beyond this and regards Mary, the saints and angels as mediators between us and Christ.

This false teaching results in an adoration of Mary, the saints and angels, which virtually amounts to idolatry. A common Roman Catholic catechism contains an appendix with 19 hymns, of which six are addressed to Mary, two to Joseph the husband of Mary, and the remaining eleven, so far as they are addressed to anyone in particular, are addressed to God the Father, Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit. The same catechism states that we know that the saints hear our prayers, because they are with God, and God will make our prayers known to them! To say the least, this seems a roundabout way of reaching God with our prayers.

3. Why is God the only one who is able to hear our prayers?

Only God is omniscient, therefore only God is able to search and know the hearts of men; only God is omnipresent, therefore only God is able to hear the prayers of His creatures wherever they may be. Apart from the question of power to ANSWER prayers, only God has the certain, sure power to HEAR our prayers, discern the desires of our hearts and understand what our real needs are.

4. Why is God the only one who is able to pardon people's sins?

People's moral responsibility is to God, who is their Creator and Judge. The Jews were entirely correct in their belief that none can forgive sins, but God only. God is the Person whom our sins have offended, and only the offended party can forgive the sins. Our repentance and prayer for forgiveness are to be directed to God, not to some third party. We live in a day when many people think of sin only in terms of its effects on human society; we should remember that the effects on human society are only a side-issue or by-product of sin; the real and great evil is the offence committed against God; only God can forgive that.

5. Why is God alone able to fulfil the desires of all?

Because God alone is omnipotent, that is, only God has absolute and unlimited power. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. With God there is no such thing as impossibility. We are to pray only to Him who really has the power to answer our prayers. God is almighty; He is in complete control of all that comes to pass, in accordance with His own great eternal plan; therefore our prayers must be addressed to Him alone.

6. What does the Catechism mean by saying that God only is to be believed in?

By this statement the Catechism means that God only is to be believed in as the object of religious faith. We believe in the sun, moon and stars; we believe in angels and devils; we believe in ourselves and the human race; that is, we believe that all of these exist, and we believe certain things about them. But we do not believe in them as objects of religious faith, but only as ob-

jects of general knowledge, and sometimes as objects of general or non-religious faith. If we mail a letter at the post office, we have faith in the postal service; we believe that it is reliable and will deliver the letter to the addressee in due time. That is general faith, but not religious faith.

As for God, we not only believe that He exists, that He is almighty, infinite, eternal, unchangeable etc., but we believe IN Him with religious faith; that is, we take Him as OUR God, and entrust ourselves to Him for time and eternity, and confess that our destiny is in His hands, and that our chief end is to glorify and enjoy Him.

7. Why is God alone to be worshipped with religious worship?

This follows from the great truth that God alone is God. Religious worship, by definition, is that which is due to Him who is the object of our religious faith. If we believe that there is only one God it follows that this one God alone is to receive religious worship or devotion.

8. What king in the Bible tried to usurp God's prerogative of alone receiving religious worship?

Darius. Daniel 6:6-9.

9. Is it everyone's duty to pray to God?

Yes. Only the Christian can really pray, for only the Christian has the help of the Holy Spirit in prayer. Yet it is everyone's duty to pray. The prayers of non-Christians, who try to approach God without coming through Christ as their Mediator, cannot be pleasing to God; yet for them to neglect to pray is even more sinful and displeasing to God.

LESSON 3

Praying in the Name of Christ

Q. 180. What is it to pray in the name of Christ?

A. To pray in the name of Christ is, in obedience to his command, and in confidence on his promises, to ask mercy for his sake; not by bare mentioning of his name, but by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and his mediation.

Scripture References:

John 14:13,14. John 16:24. Dan. 9:17. We are to pray in the name of Christ, asking mercy for His sake.

Matt. 7:21. A merely formal mentioning of Christ's name in prayer is not what is meant by praying in Christ's name.

Heb. 4:14-16. 1 John 5:13-15. We are to pray through Christ as our Mediator, by whom we have access to God's presence and acceptance with Him.

Questions:

1. How is Christian prayer distinguished from all other kinds of prayer?

Christian prayer is distinguished from all other kinds of prayer in that it is addressed to the true God, who is revealed in the Bible, through the God-man Jesus Christ as Mediator. All non-Christian prayer is either addressed to a non-existent false god, or attempts to approach the true God directly, without a mediator, or attempts to approach the true God through some other mediator than Jesus Christ.

2. Is it proper to mention the name of Jesus Christ in our prayers?

Certainly it is proper, and we should always remember to do so; but we should realize that praying in the name of Christ means something more than merely mentioning His name in some form of words at the end of our prayer.

3. Did God's people in Old Testament times pray in the name of Christ?

Yes, insofar as they prayed with faith in the coming of the promised Redeemer, and with an obedient observance of the appointed sacrifices which pointed forward to Him. The pious Israelite of Old Testament times approached God in prayer on the basis of the Covenant of Grace as truly as we do today; his prayers were offered to God on the basis of the redemptive work of the coming Messiah. This does not imply that all Old Testament saints understood this truth with equal clearness, but only that they had some understanding of it. And in God's sight their prayers were acceptable because of the future mediatorial work of Christ.

4. What is meant by asking mercy for Christ's sake?

To ask God for mercy for Christ's sake means to ask God to deal with us in love and favor, in spite of our great sins, because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. Because of Christ's perfect life of righteousness, which is reckoned to our account as if it were ours, and because of His shed blood which cleanses away our sins, God can receive us as His children and treat us with love and kindness instead of in wrath and judgment. To ask mercy for Christ's sake, then, means to ask God for mercy on the basis of Christ's work as our Saviour.

5. What wrong attitude of mind and heart prevents people from really praying in the name of Christ?

The attitude of self-confidence or self-righteousness, which causes people to put their trust in themselves their own righteousness or good life, works or character, so that they really trust in themselves rather than in Christ. Such people may mention the name of Christ in their prayers, but they are really praying in their own name, not in Christ's name, for they really think that they can stand on their own feet before God, and they do not realize their need of Christ's redemption.

6. What character in one of Jesus' parables prayed a self-righteous prayer?

The Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, who publicly thanked God that he was so much better than other people, always performed his religious duties, and so forth.

7. Why do we need encouragement to pray?

We need encouragement to pray because the sinful corruption of our hearts has inclined us to discouragement and spiritual sluggishness. Our knowledge and experience of Christ and His salvation should encourage us to engage in prayer in spite of our natural lack of inclination to it.

8. What is meant by drawing our boldness, strength and hope of acceptance in prayer from Christ and His mediation?

We could never have any real boldness or confidence in approaching God in prayer except for our faith in Christ as our Redeemer, for our hearts would always be filled with doubts and fears, wondering whether God would hear and accept our prayers or not. The person who is not a Christian may sometimes pray, and under stress of great affliction is likely to try to pray, but he can never enjoy any real boldness or confidence in prayer, because he does not know Christ, and consequently he does not have any certainty of acceptance with God. This lack of faith in Christ's mediation must always leave his mind in a cloud of doubt and uncertainty; he can never be sure that his prayers will be accepted and answered. This feeling of doubt and uncertainty must always have the effect of preventing a person from praying with his whole heart. It is only when we have, through Christ, the assurance of being accepted with God that we can really pour out our heart to God in prayer.

9. Why does the Catechism specially mention Christ's mediation?

There are multitudes of people who have only a vague, sentimental attachment to Jesus, thinking of Him as a great teacher, a great leader, a great ideal of humanity, and the like. Such people are not really Christians, and their prayers, though they may mention the name of Christ, are not really Christian prayers. We are not saved by Christ's teaching, but by His work — His blood and righteousness. Without faith in Christ's work of mediation, there can be no truly saving Christian faith. A sentimental admiration of Jesus as a human being is not sufficient, and does not constitute Christian faith.

LESSON 4

Why Must Prayer be in the Name of Christ?

Q. 181. Why are we to pray in the name of Christ?

A. The sinfulness of man, and his distance from God by reason thereof, being so great, as that we can have no access unto his presence without a mediator; and there being none in heaven or earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious work but Christ alone, we are to pray in no other name but his only.

Scripture References:

John 14:6. Isa. 59:2. Eph. 3:12. Man's sinfulness has separated him so far from God that he can have no access to God's holy presence except through a mediator.

John 6:27. Heb. 7:25-27. 1 Tim. 2:5. Acts. 4:12. Christ, and he alone, is qualified for the work of a mediator between God and man.

Col. 3:17. Heb. 13:15. We are to pray only in the name of Christ.

Questions:

1. What is the reason for the distance which separates man from God?

There are two reasons for the distance which separates man from God: (1) God is the infinite Creator, whereas man is a finite creature; (2) God is absolutely holy, whereas man is guilty and corrupted in sin.

2. When God created mankind, what was the reason for the distance which separated man from God?

At the creation of the human race, man was separated from God, his Creator, only by reason of the fact that he was a creature. This distance between Creator and creature was so great that man could not fully glorify and enjoy God except by God's bridging the chasm between Himself and mankind, which He did by the establishment of the Covenant of Works. As long as the human race had not yet fallen into sin, a COVENANT

was necessary for fully glorifying and enjoying God, but a MEDIATOR was not necessary.

When the Covenant of Works was broken by Adam's disobedience, the distance between God and man was increased by the fact of human sinfulness. Therefore from that time onward human beings could not have fellowship with God without BOTH A COVENANT AND A MEDIATOR (see the Confession of Faith, VII. 1).

3. Why is a mediator needed for sinful human beings to have access to God's presence?

Because absolute holiness is one of God's attributes, and this means that God is and must be infinitely removed from all that is sinful. The Bible teaches that God cannot deny Himself. If sinful human beings could, without a mediator, have access to the presence of the holy God, that would amount to God denying Himself; that is, it would mean that God would deny or disregard His own holiness, which is inseparable from Himself. If it were possible for human beings to come into God's presence without a mediator, it would bring them instantly under judgment and condemnation by reason of the intensity of God's wrath against sin.

4. Why is none but Christ qualified to be the mediator between God and man?

For a full answer to this question the student is referred to **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, Vol. 1, No. 7 (July-September 1946), pages 125-127. The mediator must be God, he must also be man, and he must be God and man in one person. Clearly none but Jesus Christ possesses these qualifications. Angels could not serve as mediators, for they are neither God nor man. God the Father could not serve in this capacity, for He is only God and not man. No human being except Christ could serve, for others are only man and not God. Moreover, all human beings except Jesus Christ are sinners, and therefore they are themselves in need of someone to be their mediator; therefore they could not serve as mediators for others.

5. Why can we not pray in the name of the Virgin Mary or the saints?

Because neither the Virgin Mary nor any of the saints possesses the qualifications for the work of mediation between God and ourselves. As a matter of fact, Mary and the saints themselves were saved and reconciled to God only through the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We may and should honor Mary and the saints for their faithful service, witnessing and suffering for the cause of Christ, but we may not give them any of the honor that belongs to Christ alone. They are of the company of the saved, but they are not co-saviours with Christ.

6. Why does the Catechism refer to the work of mediation between God and man as "that glorious work?"

Because the work of mediation manifests the glory of God in the salvation of man, and has its consummation in the eternal glory of the redeemed.

7. How does this answer of the Catechism contradict modern "liberal" views of Jesus Christ?

In this answer the Catechism sets forth the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ. He is represented as the only possible Saviour of the human race. There neither is, nor ever can be, anyone alongside of Him. But the popular modern "liberal" view of Jesus Christ regards Him as essentially only human, the same as other men, differing from others only in degree, not in nature. Modernists may regard Jesus as the best man that ever lived, but according to their belief the human race, by its evolutionary progress, may some day produce a more perfect individual than Jesus Christ. The thorough Modernist, insofar as he believes in Jesus Christ at all, believes in him as "a" Saviour, not as THE ONE AND ONLY Saviour of the human race.

8. How is the command to pray in the name of Christ most commonly violated?

This command is most commonly violated by people ignorantly supposing that they can approach God's presence directly, without Christ as their Mediator. This is extremely common among those who have not been instructed in the truths of the Christian faith. Such people have no genuine consciousness of sin nor of their need for a mediator. They will address God as "Father", which they have no right to do apart from faith in Christ, and will then close their prayer by simply saying "Amen," without so much as mentioning the name of Jesus Christ. This amounts to people praying IN THEIR OWN NAME. The person who tries to approach God without a mediator is trying to pray in his own name.

LESSON 5

The Help of the Holy Spirit in Prayer

Q. 182. How doth the Spirit help us to pray?

A. We not knowing what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, by enabling us to understand both for whom, and what, and how prayer is to be made; and by working and quickening in our hearts (although not in all persons, nor at all times, in the same measure) those apprehensions, affections, and graces which are requisite for the right performance of that duty.

Scripture References:

Rom. 8:26, 27. The Holy Spirit helps us to pray aright.

Psalm 10:17. God prepares the hearts of His people, that they may pray aright.

Zech. 12:10. God imparts to His people the desire and ability to pray by bestowing His Holy Spirit upon them.

Eph. 6:18. Jude 20. We are to pray in the Spirit.

Questions:

1. Why do we need the help of the Holy Spirit to pray?

We need the help of the Holy Spirit because of our spiritual ignorance, by reason of which we do not know what we should pray for, nor how to pray aright, and because of our spiritual weakness and sluggishness, by reason of which we feel disinclined to pray, and tend to engage in prayer in a formal and perfunctory manner, rather than in an earnest and spiritual manner.

2. How does the Holy Spirit remedy our spiritual ignorance?

The Holy Spirit remedies our spiritual ignorance, not by revealing to us any truth apart from or in addition to the Bible, but by opening our spiritual eyes so that we can discern the true meaning of what is already revealed in the Bible, and thus be enabled to know the will of God concerning prayer.

3. Does the Holy Spirit reveal to us that God has chosen a particular person for eternal life, and therefore we should pray for the salvation of that individual with assured confidence that our petition will be granted?

No. Only God knows who the elect are, and neither through prayer nor through any other shortcut can this information be obtained in advance of the actual salvation of elect persons. We have no right to say positively that a particular person must be one of those whom God has chosen for eternal life because the Holy Spirit has "laid it on our heart" to pray for that person's salvation.

It is true that the Holy Spirit, by His own mysterious working, may stir up one or more of God's children to pray long and earnestly for the salvation of a particular unsaved person. In such a case we may be justified in cherishing a probable hope that that person will eventually come to Christ in repentance and faith. But we are not warranted in asserting this in advance of the person's actual experience of salvation. All such praying must always be done in humble submission to the sovereignty and secret counsel of God. We are to pray for the salvation of God's elect, and we are to pray that IF a particular person is one of the elect he will come to Christ and be saved.

God's decree of election was completed from all eternity, before the creation of the world; it cannot be changed or set aside by our praying. Even if the person we pray for is never saved, such prayers are not wasted or useless. They will be for the honor and glory of God at the Judgment Day, and will leave the unsaved sinner even more without excuse than he otherwise would be.

In this connection the history of the conversion of Augustine of Hippo is most interesting. It is related in his "Confessions," especially Book III. 19-21 and Book VIII. 25-30. Augustine's mother Monica prayed for his salvation continually for many years, until he was finally converted to Christ at the age of 32 years.

4. Why do we need the Holy Spirit's "working and quickening in our hearts" in order to pray as we should?

"Quickening" means life-giving or stimulation. We need the Holy Spirit's working and quickening in our hearts in order to pray as we should, because even those who have been born again are of themselves very sluggish and spiritually lukewarm, and apart from the special help of the Holy Spirit they would never pray as they should. By the special work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's heart, this sinful sluggishness and indifference are in a measure overcome, so that real prayer becomes possible.

5. Does the Holy Spirit always work uniformly in helping Christian people to pray?

No. Every real Christian receives the help of the Holy Spirit for prayer, but this work of the Spirit is "not in all persons, nor at all times, in the same measure." That is, some persons receive more of this help than others; and the same person receives more help at one time than at another.

The reasons for this lack of uniformity in the working of the Holy Spirit are reserved to the secret counsel of God. We may be sure that there is a wise purpose behind it, but what that purpose is, has not been revealed to us. It may be that in some cases the Holy Spirit largely withdraws His inward working for a time in order that we may be humbled and made to realize our dependence upon Him, and our helplessness of ourselves.

6. What is the meaning of "apprehensions" in this answer of the Catechism?

Here the word "apprehensions" means items of knowledge. that is, items of truth which the Holy Spirit enables us to grasp and understand in order that we may pray aright.

7. What is the meaning of "affections"?

"Affections" here means feelings and desires which the Holy Spirit stirs up in our hearts that

we may pray aright, such as love for God, thankfulness to Him, a desire that His name may be glorified and His will done, etc.

8. What is meant by "graces" in this connection?

By "graces" the Catechism here means the spiritual qualifications which we must have, apart from right apprehensions and affections, in order to pray in a manner pleasing to God. Such "graces" are humility, self-denial, faith in God's promises, and persistence which enables us to overcome obstacles and keep on praying even when our sinful flesh would rather incline us in some other direction. These "graces" are definitely the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; we do not have them of ourselves, and we cannot get them by human planning, good resolutions or will power.

9. What should be our attitude toward "prayer books" and written forms of prayer?

The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony speaks as follows on this matter: "Public prayer is to accompany the word preached: written FORMS of prayer, whether read or repeated, are not authorized in the Scriptures — are not calculated to exercise the mind in the graces of the Holy Spirit — are not adapted to the varieties of the state of the Church and its members, and are not to be used in approaching the throne of grace" (XXIV. 9).

Certainly we may learn something of value by reading and studying the prayers of eminent Christians of past times; but we should not depend on them in our own approach to the throne of grace. Rather, we should seek the grace of the Holy Spirit that we may frame acceptable and fervent prayers in our own words. We must always be on our guard against the tendency to religious formalism.

LESSON 6

The Classes of People for whom we are to Pray

Q. 183. For whom are we to pray?

A. We are to pray for the whole church of Christ upon earth; for magistrates, and ministers; for ourselves, our brethren, yea, our enemies; and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those that are known to have sinned the sin unto death.

Scripture References:

Eph. 6:18. Psalm 28:9. We are to pray for the whole Church of Christ on earth.

1 Tim. 2:1, 2. Col. 4:3. We are to pray for all who occupy positions of authority in Church and State.

Gen. 32:11. Isa. 38:1-5. It is proper to pray for ourselves.

James 5:16. Gen 20:7, 17. Job 42:7, 8. Matt. 5:44. We are to pray for our brethren, our friends, and even our enemies.

1 Tim. 2:1, 2. John 17:20. 2 Sam. 7:29. We are to pray for all sorts of men living, or that shall live in the future.

Questions:

1. Why must we pray for the whole Church of Christ on earth?

We must pray for the whole Church of Christ on earth because of the spiritual unity of the Church as one body under Christ the head. Our prayers are not to be limited to our own congregation nor even to our own denomination; they are to include all branches of the Church of Christ. This does not mean, of course, that we are to pray in detail for all branches of the Church; but it does mean that we are not to limit our intercessions to that branch of the Church of which we ourselves are members. We are to pray for Christ's Church and Kingdom as a whole; we are not to be near-sighted or denominationally-minded in the matter of intercessory prayer. We should of course pray especially for our own denomination, for which we have a special concern and responsibility; but this should never exclude the larger outlook of pleading with God for the whole Church of Christ in all the world.

2. Why are we commanded to pray for magistrates?

We are commanded to pray for magistrates and ministers, that is, for persons in positions of authority in both State and Church, because both the State and the Church are divine institutions for the accomplishment of God's purposes in the world, and both need His help and blessing for the proper accomplishment of their tasks. Magistrates and ministers need wisdom, courage, honesty and integrity as well as other gifts of God's common and special grace; therefore Crristian people should pray for them.

3. Is it right to pray for ourselves?

Certainly it is right. To pray for ourselves is not the same thing as to pray selfishly. We may pray unselfishly for ourselves. The person who prays a selfish prayer sins in doing so, and will not receive any blessing from God in answer to his prayer (James 4:3). But there is a right way of praying for ourselves, as is exemplified many times in the Bible. (1) We may pray for legitimate temporal blessings for ourselves, such as health or healing, food, clothing, material prosperity,

success in business, etc., and God will give us these blessings, in answer to our prayers, so far as is in accordance with His glory and our own true welfare. (2) We ought always to pray for spiritual blessings for ourselves, and when we do so sincerely and humbly we may be confident that God will answer our prayers, either by granting our requests, or in some other way that is even better, according to His own wisdom and love.

4. Why are we commanded to pray for our enemies?

It is sad but true that it is impossible to go through life and do our duty without incurring the enmity of some people, that is, without having some enemies. The best and holiest of God's saints have found this to be true; think, for example, of David, Elijah, Paul, Martin Luther, John Knox, Andrew Melville and James Renwick. In the present sinful state of the world it is also inevitable that nations sometimes be at enmity one with another. We should note that the Bible does not say that we should not have any enemies, but that we should love and pray for our enemies; this implies that we cannot avoid having them.

Even those who may unavoidably be our enemies are still human beings created in the image of God, and like ourselves they are sinners such as Christ died to redeem. Even though they are our enemies, they are not beyond the power of Christ to save. Therefore we should pray for them. This does not mean to pray that they will succeed in wrongdoing, but to pray for their true welfare.

5. Does the duty of praying for our enemies imply that we should not resist them?

By no means. We are to pray for our enemies, but at the same time it is also our duty to defend ourselves, our families and our country against injustice and violence. To pray for our enemies means chiefly to pray for their repentance, conversion to Christ, and salvation. It may also be our God-given duty to resist their aggressions or injustice. If possible this is to be done by appeal to law; but if this is not possible, it may be our real duty to resist violence by force. If a criminal breaks into our house and threatens to murder our family, we should not hesitate to try to overpower him, or if necessary even to shoot him. Similarly it may be our duty to use force in resisting the public enemies, domestic or foreign, of our country; but even so we are not to hate them, but to pray that God will have mercy on them and save them from their sins.

6. Why are we to pray "for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter"?

All human beings, both those living today and those yet to be born, are created in the image of God and for the purpose of glorifying God. Also many of those living today and those who shall live in the future are the elect of God, for whom Christ died, who shall in time be saved and become heirs of eternal glory. We are to pray that God will be glorified in them and that His elect, down to the end of time, will be gathered into one in Christ.

LESSON 7

The Classes of People for whom we are not to Pray

Q. 183. For whom are we to pray?

A. We are to pray . . . not for the dead, nor for those that are known to have sinned the sin unto death.

Scripture References:

2 Sam. 12:21-23. We are not to pray for the dead.

1 John 5:16. We are not commanded to pray for those who have sinned "a sin unto death."

Question:

1. Why is it wrong to pray for the dead?

Briefly, it is wrong to pray for the dead because the redeemed are with Christ in heaven, where they no longer need our prayers, and the lost are in hell, where our prayers can no longer avail to help them. As the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness (Heb. 12:23) and are enjoying perfect rest and peace with Christ in heaven while they wait for the resurrection of their bodies and the Judgment Day (Rev. 6:11; 14:13), it is clear that they do not need our prayers; there is no blessing we could ask God to give them, that they do not already have. As for the lost, Scripture teaches with the utmost plainness that death is the end of all opportunity for repentance, conversion and salvation; after death there is "a great gulf fixed" and there remains no possibiliity of the lost ever being reconciled to God (Luke 16:24-26; Rev. 22:11).

2. Why does the Roman Catholic Church sanction prayers for the dead?

The Roman Catholic Church sanctions prayers for the dead because of its unscriptural belief in purgatory as "the state in which those suffer for a time who die guilty of venial sins, or without having satisfied for the punishment due to their sins." The Roman Church teaches that the prayers of living believers can help the souls in purgatory. If the whole idea of purgatory is unscriptural, as

we believe it to be, then of course prayers for the souls in purgatory are also excluded.

3. Are there Protestants who believe in praying for the dead?

There are some Protestants who believe in praying for the dead. This is not because they believe in purgatory, but because of a lack of faith in the Scriptural teaching that death is the end of all opportunity for salvation. Those who do not believe in heaven and hell as absolutely separate destinies, but simply believe in "the other world", will naturally not see any reason why they should not pray for the dead. Also those who believe that after death there will be a "second chance" for salvation may tend to believe that it is right to pray for the dead. As we believe that all these teachings are wrong and contrary to the Bible, we reject the idea of praying for the dead in all its forms.

4. Do we find any examples of prayers for the dead in the Bible?

No. There is not a single instance of such in the Word of God.

5. What is meant by "the sin unto death?

This expression, which is taken from 1 John 5:16, is usually understood to be equivalent to the "unpardonable sin" or the "sin against the Holy Spirit" mentioned in Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:29. This sin is unpardonable, not because it is too great to be forgiven, but because in its nature it inevitably cuts off the possibility of repentance and saving faith, and therefore of salvation.

It is understood to be a stubborn, permanent and complete resistance to the pleadings of the Holy Spirit which finally results in the Holy Spirit abandoning the person to his own sin, and totally ceasing to influence that person. Since true repentance is the gift of God, and comes by the working of the Holy Spirit in a person's heart, it is no longer possible when the Holy Spirit has finally abandoned a person. Such a person becomes utterly "hardened," and no longer shows the slightest interest in spiritual things or the salvation of his soul.

Since the salvation of such a person is impossible, because not in accordance with the purpose of God, it is clearly wrong to pray for such a person. We should not pray for a person who is known to have sinned the sin unto death, any more than we should pray to God for those who have died in sin.

However, we should be extremely cautious about saying that any particular individual has sinned the sin unto death. It is improbable that this is a common sin. We should note the exact words of 1 John 5:16: "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it." The text does not say: "I say that he shall NOT pray for it"; it simply refrains from commanding us to pray for such a person: "I do not say that he SHALL pray for it." If there is any reasonable doubt as to whether the person has committed "the sin unto death", we may properly pray for such a person, that if it is God's purpose God in His mercy will save him from sin and eternal death.

LESSON 8

What we are to Pray for

Q. 184. For what things are we to pray?

A. We are to pray for all things tending to the glory of God, the welfare of the Church, our own or others' good, but not for anything that is unlawful.

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:9. In our prayers, we are to think first of what will tend to glorify God.

Psalm 51:18; 122:6. We are to pray for the welfare of the Church.

Matt. 7:11. We are to pray for whatever will be for our own good.

Psalm 125:4. We are to pray for what will be for the good of others.

1 John 5:14. Psalm 66:18. We are not to pray for anything unlawful, or contrary to the will of God.

Questions:

1. What is the most important consideration in deciding what things to pray for?

The most important consideration must be the glory of God. The preface to the Lord's Prayer teaches us this, as well as many other parts of the Bible. Our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him. We are not to think first of our own needs, problems and desires, but of God and His honor and glory.

2. How can we know what things tend to the glory of God?

There is only one way to learn what things tend to the glory of God, and that is by studying the Bible which is the revealed will of God. Apart from the light of Scripture, men have always gone astray and thought that many things would glorify God which are really contrary to God's will and even hateful to God. Jephthah thought he was glorifying God by offering his daughter to God as a burnt offering (Judges 11:29-40). This however was contrary to the will of God, and it was Jephthah's ignorance of the Scripture (the Law of God in the Books of Moses) which allowed him to go so far astray. In the Middle Ages and the period of the Reformation, the Inquisition took the lives of countless faithful, God-fearing Chris-

tians, and all in the name of the glory of God. When men deviate from the written Word, they will commit all kinds of errors in the name of the divine glory. We cannot pray aright unless we also study the Bible aright.

3. Why must we pray for the welfare of the Church?

The Church is not merely a human organization; it is the house of God, a divine institution, the body of which Christ is the Head. The true welfare of God's people, and even the peace and prosperity of the nations of the world, really depend on the spiritual welfare and security of the Church. This of course does not mean merely one denomination, but the whole visible Church of God on earth. The Bible teaches that God deals with the nations in accordance with their treatment of His covenant people, His Church. God said to Abraham: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Much later God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah and predicted the destruction of the Babylonian Empire by the Medes and Persians because of Babylon's cruel treatment of God's covenant people. "Thou art my battle-ax and weapons of war; for with thee I will break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms; and with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; with thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid; I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers. **And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the Lord"** (Jer. 51:20:24). This remarkable statement does not mean that the Church is to attack the nations and their people with force of arms; it means, rather, that because of their persecution, oppression and mistreatment of Zion (the Church), God in His providence will bring about the judgment and destruction of the nations. From this it follows that the true welfare and prosperity of the Church are very closely related to the peace and prosperity of the nations of the world. It is still true that God will bless them that bless Zion, and curse them that curse Zion.

4. How do we know what things are for our own good?

In some matters, we can be sure that certain things are for our own good, because they are so revealed in Scripture. For such blessings we can always pray with the fullest confidence. For example, we know that it is always for our own good to "depart from evil, and do good, seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14). It is always for our own good to "draw near unto God" (Psalm 73:28). It is always for our own good that we be sanctified and made holy and Christlike in our character. In all matters which are thus revealed in the Bible, we are to pray confidently.

There are, however, other matters concerning which we have no positive revelation in the Bible. Business and financial prosperity, bodily healing, success in any particular undertaking — such things as these may or may not be for our true welfare. God has not revealed in His Word whether it is for His glory and our own good, in any particular case, that we receive such blessings as these. In such matters we are always to pray in submission to the will of God, saying as our Saviour did in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Not my will, but thine, be done." These blessings will be given to us IF they are in accordance with God's will, and they are in accordance with God's will IF they will best serve to promote His glory and our own good. But only God knows WHETHER they will do so; consequently we must pray in humble submission to God's will. The promoters of the present-day "divine healing" movement tell us that we are to pray for healing BECAUSE it is God's will; this is unscriptural. Rather, we are to pray for healing IF it is God's will.

5. What is meant by praying for the good of others?

By praying for others' good we mean, first of all, praying for their salvation, in submission to the sovereignty and secret counsel of God. In the second place, we mean praying for temporal blessings to be bestowed on others, insofar as God will be truly glorified in bestowing them.

6. Why is it wrong to pray for anything that is unlawful?

In the Bible, the distinction between right and wrong is an absolute one. Right is always right and wrong is always wrong. Anything that tends to obliterate or obscure this absolute distinction between right and wrong is wicked and displeasing to God. Consequently the Bible teaches that we may not "do evil that good may come;" that is, we may not try to accomplish good by doing something that is wrong. For example, we may not tell a lie to further a good cause. Similarly, we may not pray that we will win money in a lottery in order to contribute it to the Church or to foreign missions. We may not pray that anything which is dishonest or morally wrong will be blessed with success or prosperity.

There have been people who have conceived the idea that God's glory may require some utilization of evil on the part of God's people. A group of gangsters about to rob a bank would have no warrant for praying for God's blessing on their efforts. This is of course an extreme case, but the principle is valid in all cases. We may never seek God's blessing upon evil or wrongdoing. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not

hear me" (Psalm 68:18). God in His divine sovereignty can permit evil to exist and He can turn it to His own glory, but this does not mean that God ever approves of evil; He always hates it because it is contrary to His nature, and His people are always to hate evil and to abstrain from it.

LESSON 9

Right Attitudes in Prayer

Q. 185. How are we to pray?

A. We are to pray with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God, and deep sense of our own unworthiness, necessities, and sins; with penitent, thankful, and enlarged hearts; with understanding, faith, sincerity, fervency, love, and perseverance, waiting upon him, with humble submission to his will.

Scripture References:

Eccles. 5:1, 2. In prayer we are to realize and remember the majesty of God.

Gen. 18:27; 32:10. We are to pray with a sense of our own unworthiness in God's sight.

Luke 15:17-19. We are to pray with a sense of personal need.

Luke 13:13, 14. We are to pray with a sense of personal sin.

Psalm 51:17; 32:5, 6; 38:18. We are to pray with a spirit of repentance.

Phil. 4:6. We are to pray with an attitude of thankfulness to God.

1 Sam. 1:15; 2:1. We are to pray with enlarged hearts, having a deep desire to receive blessings from God.

1 Cor. 14:15. We are to pray with understanding, or intelligently.

Mark 11:24. James 1:6. We are to pray with faith in God and His promises.

Psalm 145:18; 17:1. James 5:16. 1 Tim. 2:8. We are to pray with sincerity, fervency and love to God.

Eph. 6:18. Micah 7:7. We are to pray perseveringly, waiting on God to answer in His own time.

Matt. 26:39. 1 John 5:14,15. We are to pray with humble submission to God's will.

Questions:

1. What is meant by "an awful apprehension of the majesty of God"?

In this expression, the word "awful" means "having reverential fear;" compare Heb. 12:28,29, ". . . let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (ARV, reverence and awe): for our God is a consuming fire." The word "apprehension" means "realization." "The majesty of God" means God's absolute and infinite greatness, by which He is far above and beyond all created beings. We might paraphrase the Catechism's statement as follows: "We are to pray with a reverential realization of God's absolute, infinite greatness and separation from all created beings."

2. Why should we pray "with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God"?

Because of who and what God is, as He is revealed to us in the Bible. God and man are not equals. We could not approach God with acceptance at all if God had not opened the way for us by condescending to establish His covenant with us. Even before the human race fell into sin, when Adam and Eve lived in their original righteousness in the Garden of Eden, they could not have enjoyed communion with God if God had not taken the initiative in bridging the chasm between Creator and creature by establishing the Covenant of Works (see the Confession of Faith, VII.1). If this was true even before the human race fell into sin, how much more true it is today, when we are separated from God not merely by our finitude as creatures, but also by our sinfulness as members of a fallen and corrupted race.

3. Is a reverent realization of the majesty of God often lacking in present-day prayers?

Yes. Even those who give evidence of being true children of God often fail to approach God in prayer with proper reverence. Even public prayers are sometimes offensively familiar in addressing God. This wrong attitude is doubtless a product of the one-sided emphasis on the love of God which has become more or less prevalent in modern Protestantism. Modern religion in stressing the love of God has failed to remember that love is only one aspect of God's being. We must never forget the majesty, holiness and justice of God. We should always remember that God is not a casual acquaintance to whom we may speak in any manner we please; God is the infinite, eternal, Unchangeable Creator and Ruler of the universe.

4. Why has modern religion tended to emphasize only the love of God, while forgetting His majesty and holiness?

Because the modern view of life is man-centered, not God-centered. This perverse man-centered view of life has even invaded many churches and the religious life of their members. The result has been a tendency to cling to those aspects of the Christian doctrine of God which are regarded as useful to mankind, while forgetting and neglecting those aspects which do not appear to

have a value for mankind. Sinful men can see how the love of God can benefit mankind, so they stress the love of God; they cannot see how the majesty of God can benefit mankind, so they neglect the majesty of God. The result is a one-sided idea of God and a lack of reverence in addressing God.

5. What does the Catechism mean by "a deep sense of our own unworthiness"?

This expression means a true consciousness of the fact that God owes us nothing; we have no valid claims on God's goodness and mercy. Even if we were not sinners, it would still be true that we would be UNWORTHY of God's blessings. God did not make the Covenant of Works with Adam because He had to; it was an unmerited act of grace and condescension on God's part. Still more are we unworthy of God's blessings by reason of our sinfulness; as sinners we are not only undeserving, but actually ill-deserving. When we approach God in prayer, we must realize this. The person who thinks that God owes him something, that he has some rights that God is obligated to respect and pay attention to, cannot pray aright.

6. What is meant by "a deep sense of our necessities"?

This means a true consciousness of our condition of personal need. Unless we have a true consciousness of our need, prayer is foolishness. If we have no sense of need, how can we sincerely ask God for anything? The Pharisee's prayer is an example of a "prayer" lacking the consciousness of need; he asked nothing of God; he only congratulated himself on his own attainments (Luke 18:11,12).

7. Why must we pray with "a deep sense of our own sins"?

Our guilty, sinful condition is real. If we do not have a full realization of it, our entire approach to God will be on the wrong basis. We can never approach God aright in prayer unless at the same time we recognize the real truth about ourselves. The person who lacks a deep sense of his own sinfulness will inevitably pray a self-righteous prayer which can only be an abomination to God. The person who prays lacking this deep consciousness of personal sin only deceives himself. Such prayer cannot be acceptable to God.

8. Why must we pray with "penitent, thankful, and enlarged hearts"?

We must pray with penitent hearts because God's mercy is promised to those who not only confess their sins, but sincerely desire to forsake them. To pray with an impenitent heart — a heart that proposes to keep on sinning — is to add presumption to all our other sins (Psalm 19:13; 68:18).

We must pray with thankful hearts because we have received many blessings from God; to fail to feel thankful for these would be to add the sin of ingratitude to our other sins.

By "enlarged hearts" the Catechism means hearts with a deep longing and desire to receive God's blessings and experience communion with Him. We are not to pray as if we had only a slight desire for God and His blessings, but with an intense, earnest longing for nearness to God and blessings from Him. Only such an attitude in prayer can be acceptable to God.

9. What is meant by praying "with understanding"?

As used in the Catechism, this expression means praying with an intelligent insight into God's revelation in His Word, and our own personal needs, as well as the needs of others. There is such a thing as foolish prayer, and even wicked prayer. Some people try to make prayer a substitute for Bible study and for the functioning of their own intelligence and conscience. Faced with a choice between right and wrong, they will try to evade the issue by "making it a matter of prayer." When prayer is regarded as a substitute for obedience to the revealed will of God, it is not prayer that God will accept. When God commanded Abraham to offer his son, Isaac as a sacrifice, Abraham did not say, "I will pray about this for a few days to ask God's guidance as to what I should do." He obeyed the will of God which had already been revealed to him. When people "pray" to get "guidance" as to whether they should obey the Ten Commandments or not, they are on dangerous ground. Such praying is both stupid and wicked.

10. Why is faith necessary for right prayer?

The Bible states that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). God has been pleased to make faith the instrument of our salvation and the means by which we are to get blessings from Him. When the Catechism speaks of faith in this connection, of course it means faith in the true God and His Word and promises. Only such a faith has any value whatever in prayer. In our day the word "faith" is often used to describe such human attitudes as optimism, self-confidence, confidence in our fellow-men, etc. Such is not religious faith in the Bible sense. Only God can properly be the object of religious faith.

11. Why must we pray with sincerity, fervency and love to God?

If we do not pray thus, our prayers will not be real prayers; they will merely be hypocritical and mechanical pronouncing of words. Only if we are dead in earnest can we really pray.

12. What should be our expectation as to God's time and way of answering our prayers?

We should expect and believe that God will

answer our prayers in His own appointed time and way according to His holy will. That is, in all our praying we must be careful to maintain an attitude of submission to the sovereignty of God. We may never presume to dictate to God as to when and how our prayers are to be answered. If God in His sovereignty chooses to delay the answer to our prayers, we are not to become discouraged and give up praying; we are to exercise Christian patience, and keep on praying with "perseverance, waiting upon him." Luke 18:1-8 is very instructive in this connection.

If God does not answer our prayers in the way we desired, we should realize that this is not unkindness or lack of love on God's part, but because to grant our requests as we asked would not really be for God's glory and our own good. God may answer our prayer by withholding what we have asked Him for, either for a time or permanently. The apostle Paul prayed three times that his "thorn in the flesh" might depart from him, but God did not grant this request; instead, He said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Paul then understood that God had a purpose in permitting His servant to continue to suffer from this "thorn in the flesh;" it was to keep him from becoming proud and self-confident (verse 7).

LESSON 10

God's Rule for Direction in Prayer

Q. 186. What rule hath God given for our direction in the duty of prayer?

A. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in the duty of prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which our Saviour Jesus Christ taught his disciples, commonly called "The Lord's Prayer."

Scripture References:

1 John 5:14. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in the duty of prayer.

Matt. 6:9-13. Luke 11:2-4. The prayer Christ taught His disciples, commonly called "The Lord's Prayer."

Questions:

1. Why do we need a rule for our direction in the duty of prayer?

We need a rule for our direction in the duty of prayer because the fall of the human race into sin has so affected our hearts and minds that we could never pray aright without a God-given rule. In order to pray aright, we need to know the truth about God, about ourselves, and about how we can be reconciled to God; besides this, we need special knowledge about prayer, without which our prayer would inevitably be ignorant and wrong.

2. What is the source of the knowledge we need to pray aright?

The Holy Bible, the written Word of God, is the only adequate source of this knowledge. God's revelation in nature is not sufficient to guide us in prayer, nor is it suited to our need as sinful human beings. The heathen, who do not have the light of Scripture, but only the light of nature, invariably pray ignorantly and wrongly.

3. In what three ways does the Bible serve as our rule for direction in prayer?

The contents of the Bible, as our rule for direction in prayer, may be divided into three classifications, as follows: (a) The teachings of the Bible in general; that is, the sum total of what the Bible teaches about God, man, salvation and duty. Since these teachings concern our relation to God, they have a bearing on the subject of prayer. (b) The teachings of the Bible on the specific subject of prayer. There are many portions of the Old Testament and especially of the New Testament that deal directly with the special subject of prayer. From these we are to learn how we should pray. (c) The form of prayer which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called "The Lord's Prayer." In this model prayer we have the Bible's teachings on the subject of prayer presented in concrete form; this is a prayer that embodies what the Bible teaches about prayer.

4. Is the prayer commonly called "The Lord's Prayer" really the Lord's prayer?

Of course not. It is the prayer that our Lord taught His disciples. It neither was nor could be our Lord's own prayer. Jesus Christ could not have used this form of prayer as His own personal prayer, for it contains a petition for forgiveness, which implies a consciousness of guilt and sinfulness which He did not have. The New Testament records certain prayers that Jesus actually prayed. The longest is in John chapter 17; it should be noted that it reveals no consciousness of sin, and contains no petition for forgiveness. The prayer commonly called "The Lord's Prayer" has been called by this name so long that it would be very difficult to change its name now. We may continue to call it by that name, but at the same time we should realize that Jesus Himself never prayed this prayer.

5. Where in the Bible is "The Lord's Prayer" found?

In Matthew 6:9-13, and in a slightly different form in Luke 11:2-4.

6. How can we account for the differences between the form of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and the form of it in Luke?

Probably Jesus taught this prayer to His disciples on more than one occasion. The record given in Luke may be, and probably is, a record of a different occasion from that recorded in Matthew. Thus the two forms are to be regarded as equally correct.

There is a question about the textual genuineness of the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew ("For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen"). Some of the most important Greek manuscripts lack these words, while others vary in the wording of the conclusion. This problem must also be taken into consideration in comparing the form of the prayer in Matthew with that in Luke. The conclusion of the prayer is not given in Luke.

LESSON 11

The Proper Use of the Lord's Prayer

Q. 187. How is the Lord's prayer to be used?

A. The Lord's prayer is not only for direction, as a pattern, according to which we are to make our prayers; but may also be used as a prayer, so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer.

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:9. The Lord's Prayer is to be used as a pattern or model for making our own prayers.

Luke 11:2. The Lord's Prayer may properly be used as a prayer.

1 Cor. 14:15. The Lord's Prayer is to be used with understanding.

Heb. 11:6. The Lord's Prayer is to be used with faith.

Questions:

1. How can we use the Lord's Prayer as a pattern or model for making our own prayers?

We can use the Lord's Prayer as a pattern or model for making our own prayers by noting its characteristics and its contents, and framing our own petitions accordingly. We should note, first, the reverence of the Lord's Prayer; it is free from the objectionable familiarity with God which is common in modern prayers; it addresses God as "Father," but immediately adds "which art in heaven" so that the greatness and majesty of God are stressed.

In the second place, we should note the simplicity and directness, as well as the brevity, of the Lord's Prayer. Here is no flowery language, no display of oratory, no long, involved sentences. It is simple, short, to the point; we will realize the propriety of this when we consider that God knows our desires and our needs even before we present them to him.

In the third place, we should note the God-centered character of the Lord's Prayer. It does not start with ourselves and our needs, but with God, His name, His kingdom, His will. Only after these have been considered are our needs mentioned; clearly the Lord's Prayer is formed on the plan of "God First."

Finally, we should note that the Lord's Prayer includes our material needs as well as our spiritual needs, and that it does not commit the error, common in many modern prayers, of failing to ask for forgiveness of sins. In all these various respects the Lord's Prayer is to serve as a pattern or model according to which we can frame our own prayers in a manner that will be acceptable to God.

2. How may the Lord's Prayer properly be used as a prayer?

The Lord's Prayer may properly be used as a prayer, either by itself, or in connection with a prayer framed by ourselves, with the provisions laid down by the Catechism, "that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer." That is, we are always to guard against and avoid the danger of a merely mechanical and formal use of the Lord's Prayer.

3. How has the Lord's Prayer sometimes been misused?

The Lord's Prayer has been misused, as suggested in the previous question, by being used in a merely mechanical and formal manner. Those who have thought that there is merit in repeating the words of the Lord's Prayer over and over, fifty or a hundred times, do not have the slightest understanding of its real nature and proper use. Many who avoid this extreme error, yet use the Lord's Prayer in a mechanical or irreverent manner, by repeating its words hastily and without thinking of their meaning and importance.

4. What objections have been raised to the use of the Lord's Prayer as a prayer?

Some Protestant Christians have been opposed to the use of the Lord's Prayer as a prayer on the ground that it is liable to mechanical and formalistic abuse. They cite the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:9 ("After this manner therefore pray ye") and say that this shows that the Lord's Prayer is intended to be used as a pattern for prayer, not as a prayer in itself. Such people fail to note that Jesus' words in Luke 11:2 ("When ye pray, say, Our Father," etc.) fully warrant the use of the Lord's Prayer as a prayer. The fact

that something is liable to abuse does not constitute an argument against its proper and legitimate use.

More important is the objection raised by a certain type of the teaching called Modern Dispensationalism, exemplified by the notes in the Scofield Reference Bible. This teaches that the Lord's Prayer, used as a form of prayer, belongs exclusively to the Old Dispensation (the Dispensation of Law, before the crucifixion of Christ), and is on legal ground and not suited to the New Testament people of God (Scofield Reference Bible, pages 1002, 1089-90). The Scofield Bible adds that the Lord's Prayer is not a prayer in the name of Christ, and that it makes our forgiveness of others the condition of God forgiving us, which, it is said, is characteristic of "law" in contrast to "grace" (page 1090). Accordingly, those Dispensationalists who follow this teaching of the Scofield Reference Bible refuse to use the Lord's Prayer as a form of prayer.

5. How can this Dispensational objection to the use of the Lord's Prayer as a prayer be answered?

(a) It is based on the error that the period from Moses to Christ was an era of law rather than an era of grace. The truth is that the Covenant of Works, or opportunity of gaining eternal life by legal obedience to God's will, came to an end when Adam and Eve sinned. Salvation by divine grace was announced in Gen. 3:15 and has been the only basis of approach to God ever since then. The period from Moses to Christ was not a period of approaching and serving God on a "legal" basis. It was a period of divine grace and redemption, followed by obedience to God's commandments as the fruit of salvation and as a token of gratitude to God. See the preface to the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1, 2), which shows that obedience to the commandments is based on prior redemption, that is, on grace. Therefore the Lord's Prayer, even though given by Jesus before He was crucified, is not to be regarded as "legal" or connected with the idea of salvation by works.

(b) Even though it is true that the Lord's Prayer is not formally a prayer in the name of Christ, yet it really is a prayer in the name of Christ. It addresses God as "our Father." How can anyone call God "Father" except through Christ, on the basis of Christ's redemption? See John 14:6, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

(c) It is not true that the Lord's Prayer makes our forgiveness of others the condition of God forgiving us. "Forgive us our debts AS we forgive our debtors" is not the same thing as saying "Forgive us our debts BECAUSE we forgive our debtors." The Catechism in Q. 194 gives the correct interpretation of the clause, which will be discussed in a subsequent lesson.

Note: The teaching of the Scofield Reference Bible on the subject of "law" and "grace" in the period from Moses to the crucifixion of Christ is very difficult to ascertain with accuracy, and appears to be inconsistent with itself. It is stated that at Sinai Israel "rashly" accepted the Law, and even that Israel exchanged grace for law (page 20, note 1). Yet Dr. Scofield freely rcognizes that there was grace and redemption in the period from Moses to Christ; for instance, he calls Exodus "the book of redemption," states that this redemption is wholly of God, by the blood of Christ, etc. (page 88, note 1). The result of this apparent inconsistency has been great confusion in the minds of many Christian people.

For an explanation of the function of the Law in the period from Moses to Christ that is self-consistent and in line with the theology of the Westminster Standards, the student is referred to pages 141-145 of **Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments**, by Geerhardus Vos, published 1948 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan.

LESSON 12

The Structure and Preface of the Lord's Prayer

Q. 188. Of how many parts does the Lord's prayer consist?

A. The Lord's prayer consists of three parts: a preface, petitions, and a conclusion.

Q. 189. What doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer (contained in these words, "Our Father which art in heaven") teacheth us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and our interest therein; with reverence, and all other child-like dispositions, heavenly affections, and due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension: as also, to pray with and for others.

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:9. The preface of the Lord's Prayer.

Luke 11:13. Rom. 8:15. We are to approach God with confidence in His fatherly goodness.

Isa. 64:9. We are to approach God with a reverent attitude, as His children.

Psalm 123:1. Lam. 3:41. We are to pray with heavenly affections.

Isa. 63:15, 16. Neh. 1:4-6. We are to pray realizing God's sovereign power, majesty and gracious condescension.

Acts 12:5. Matt. 18:19. James 5:16-18. We are to pray with and for others.

Questions:

1. How is the Lord's Prayer divided?

The Lord's Prayer is made up of a preface ("Our Father which art in heaven"), six petitions, and a conclusion ("For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.").

2. What lessons can we learn from this division of the Lord's Prayer?

From this division of the Lord's Prayer, we can learn that our own prayers should be similarly composed. There should be order and progress in our prayers; they should not have everything thrown together and mixed up without order or arrangement. First of all, every prayer should have an introduction or "preface," recognizing God's infinite majesty and greatness; we should not rush into God's holy presence and begin to talk about our personal needs, without first addressing Him in reverent and worthy manner. Secondly, the petitions of our prayers ought to be properly arranged. Those dealing with God, His honor and glory, His kingdom, etc., should come first, and those dealing with ourselves, our needs and desires, etc., should come afterwards. Thirdly, our prayers should have a fitting conclusion.

3. What two main ideas are taught in the preface of the Lord's Prayer?

(a) The truth that God is the Father of His people; (b) The truth that God and His people are not equals, for God exists far above His people, in the majesty and glory of heaven.

4. Who can rightly call God "Father"?

Only Christian people, who have been reconciled to God through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6, "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"). No person who is not a believing Christian has any right to use the Lord's Prayer. To encourage those who do not believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour to use the Lord's Prayer is to encourage them in a sinful delusion, making them think that they are the children of God when really they are not.

5. Are not all human beings the children of God?

It is quite true that all human beings are children of God in the NATURAL sense, because they are God's creatures and He is their Creator. The Bible sometimes speaks of people as children of God in this natural sense (Acts 17:28, 29). But most places in the Bible which speak of God being a Father of people, or of people being children of God, use the terms "Father" and "children" not in the natural sense but in the RELIGIOUS sense; they mean that there is a special religious relationship between God and certain people.

It is in this religious sense that the term "Father" is used in the Lord's Prayer. In the religious sense, it is not true that all people are children of God. Jesus told some of the Jews that they were not children of God but children of the devil (John 8:42-44). See also 1 John 3:10; 5:18, 19, where we are taught that some people are children of God, while the rest are children of the devil.

6. What attitude should Christian people have toward their heavenly Father?

An attitude of confidence in His fatherly goodness, and their interest therein. By "interest" the Catechism means their SHARE of the benefits of God's goodness. We are to realize that our heavenly Father loves us and cares for us, and that it is not a vain or useless thing to approach His throne in prayer. Such an attitude of confidence in God as our Father comes from the special work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (Rom. 8:15).

7. Why should we draw near to God with reverence?

Because the fact that God is our Father does not mean that God and ourselves are on a plane of equality, nor that we can approach God just as we please, or just as we would talk with an earthly friend. The Fatherhood of God does not cancel the majesty, glory and sovereignty of God; it does not mean that we can approach God with careless familiarity. The casualness and near-flippancy of some modern prayers is extremely irreverent, and very offensive. The Fatherhood and love of God make a poor excuse for irreverence in prayer.

8. What is meant by "heavenly affections"?

The scripture verses cited by the Catechism show that this expression is used in the sense of HEAVENWARD affections, that is, affections directed towards heaven, where God dwells in light and glory. That is, in prayer we are to separate our thoughts for a time from their common preoccupation with our own earthly concerns, and to think of heaven, of the greatness, glory, power and wisdom of God, and to concentrate our thoughts and desires on God and heaven.

9. What is meant by "due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension"?

By "due apprehensions" the Catechism means realizing and feeling these truths as we should, and acting accordingly. The person who refers to God as a "pal" lacks a due apprehension of the majesty, power and gracious condescension of God.

By God's majesty, the Catechism means His infinite, absolute greatness above all created beings. By His power it means His almighty power, by which He can do anything which is not contrary to His own nature. By God's gracious condescension the Catechism means God's voluntarily doing for His people what He is not under any obligation or necessity to do. God did not have to send His Son into the world to die for sinners; He

did this because He CHOSE to do it; therefore it was an act of "gracious condescension" on God's part, something to which His creatures had no claim whatever. In approaching God in prayer, we must keep these truths about God in mind, if we would pray aright.

10. What can we learn from the plural pronoun "our" in the expression "Our Father which art in heaven"?

From this plural pronoun we can learn that we are to pray with and for others. Prayer is not only an individual matter; there is also such a thing as joint or united prayer, as well as intercessory prayer. Each individual Christian is part of a great organism, the invisible Church, or body of Christ; each Christian is related to the other members of this spiritual organism; each must have a concern for the welfare of the others. God's relation to us as Father is something which we share with all other Christian people; therefore we should pray with and for others, as occasion may require and as opportunity may exist.

LESSON 13

Prayer that God's Name may be Hallowed

Q. 190. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, (which is, "Hallowed be thy name"), acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, word, works, and whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word and deed; that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and whatsoever is dishonorable to him; and by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:9. Luke 11:2. The first petition of the Lord's Prayer.

2 Cor. 3:5. Psalm 51:15. No man of himself can honor God aright.

Psalm 67:2, 3. We are to pray that God would enable and incline men to know and praise Him.

Psalm 8:1-9; 83:18; 86:10-15; 138:1-3; 145:1-10; 147:19-20. 2 Cor. 2:14, 15. 2 Thess. 3:1. We are to pray that God would enable and incline men to know, acknowledge and highly value all the ways by which He makes Himself known.

Psalm 19:14; 103:1. Phil. 1:9, 11. We are to pray that God would enable and incline us and others to glorify Him in thought, word and deed.

2 Kings 19:15, 16. Psalm 67:1-4; 74:18, 22, 23; 97:7 Eph. 1:17, 18. We are to pray that God would prevent and remove whatever dishonors Him.

2 Chron. 20:5, 6, 10-12. Psalm 83:1-5, 13-18; 140:4, 8. We are to pray that God by His providence, would direct and dispose of all things to His own glory.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "hallowed" in the Lord's Prayer?

It means "regarded and treated as holy." For God's name to be hallowed means for all God's revelation of Himself to be regarded and treated as holy. God's "name" does not mean merely the divine names such as "God," "Lord," "Jehovah," etc., but all by which God makes Himself known. This includes His names in the narrower sense, and it also includes His titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, works, etc. All these constitute God's revelation of Himself, therefore they are to be regarded and treated as holy.

2. Whose duty is it to hallow God's name?

To hallow God's name is the duty of all His rational creatures, that is, angels and men, but especially it is the duty of His saints, whom He has redeemed from sin and death. All rational creatures are bound to hallow God's name because He is their Creator; but the redeemed have an added obligation to hallow His name, because besides being their Creator, God is also their Redeemer. They have been bought with a price, to serve and honor God.

3. Which of God's rational creatures are able to hallow His name aright?

The angels that have never sinned and the saints that have departed this life and entered the state of glory are able to hallow God's name aright, for they have no sinful nature which could prevent them from doing so. The angels that have fallen into sin can never hallow God's name, nor will they ever have the slightest desire to do so. Of human beings in this world, those who have not been born again cannot hallow God's name, nor do they have any real desire to do so for God's sake. Only the saints, who have been born again by the power of the Holy Spirit, can hallow God's name, and they only imperfectly, because their remaining corruption of nature causes them to fall into many temptations and sins, and renders even their best service partial and imperfect.

The Catechism speaks of "the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright." This teaching of human sinfulness and inability is an unpopular teaching,

but still it is true. Even real Christians have neither the ability nor the inclination, of themselves, to honor God as He should be honored; and even the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart does not in the present life remove this "inability and indisposition" wholly, but only partially.

4. What do we mean by praying "that God would, by his grace, enable and incline" us to honor Him aright?

In this sentence, God's grace means the special, powerful work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, by which our natural "utter inability and indisposition" is overcome. This takes place, first, through the new birth, or regeneration, and secondly, through the process of sanctification by which Christians are made more and more holy in heart and life. Following the Bible, the Catechism teaches that both the desire and the power to please God come from the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (Phil. 2:13).

5. How do Christian people fail to hallow God's name?

Of course all Christian people fail to hallow God's name perfectly; only the saints and angels in heaven can really do that. But many Christian people are habitually or occasionally involved in grossly irreverent failure to hallow God's name.

This includes all violations of the first four commandments, especially such sins as profane swearing and cursing, use of minced oaths ("Gosh," "Gee," "Heck," "Darn," "Jeepers," "Cripes," "Dickens," etc.), profane use of God's attributes ("Goodness," "Mercy," "Gracious," etc.), neglect and misuse of God's ordinances (such as family worship, church services, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, church discipline, official positions in church and civil government), neglect and misuse of God's Word (failure to read and study it, failure to take it seriously, misinterpreting it, using it for a wrong purpose, criticizing or ridiculing it, failure to believe its statements and obey its commands).

It also includes misuse of God's works in the realm of nature (regarding nature as existing and functioning of itself by impersonal natural law, trying to interpret and understand nature by human science without taking God into account, attempting to maintain an educational system which is "neutral" toward God and Christianity, interpreting human history otherwise than as the working out of the eternal plan of God for human redemption).

Clearly many — indeed all — Christian people are involved in at least part of these ways of failing to hallow God's name. Hallowing God's name involves more than a few minutes morning and evening and some time on the Sabbath devoted to religious worship; it really includes all our life, in thought, word and deed. By all we do or leave undone, by all we think or leave unthought, we either hallow or fail to hallow God's name. It is a matter not only of religious worship in the narrow sense, but of our whole philosophy of life in the broadest sense.

6. What specially hinders the hallowing of God's name?

All forms of sin hinder the hallowing of God's name, but some kinds of sin hinder it more than others. The Catechism mentions atheism, ignorance, idolatry and profaneness as especially hindering the hallowing of God's name. Atheism in its various forms is the denial of, or failure to believe in and worship, the true God who is revealed in the Bible. Ignorance is a lack of knowledge of the true God and His will, which makes it impossible to hallow His name. Idolatry consists in giving to any other the honor which belongs to God alone. Profaneness consists in regarding and treating what is holy as if it were common or ordinary; it is a life and attitude lacking in faith, reverence and the fear of God. All these, in their various forms, constitute obstacles to the proper hallowing of God's name; therefore when we pray "Hallowed be thy name," we are praying that these various forms of sin may be prevented and removed.

7. What should be the Christian's attitude toward the world's failure to hallow God's name?

The Christian should always be on guard against falling into a complacent agreement with or indifference to the world's failure to hallow God's name. Christian people must always stir themselves up to remember that they are radically different from worldly people and must never assent to the world's easy by-passing of God. Through the whole range of life in all its realms and in every fact, every experience and every detail of life, the Christian must always take God into account. There is no place in a Christian's life where God does not matter; there is no place where God's name need not be hallowed. Christians are to glorify God — hallow His name — in their every thought, word and deed; they may never copy the world in regarding God as irrelevant, and leaving Him out of consideration (Psalm 10:4).

8. How does God hallow His own name?

God hallows His own name — regards and treats it as holy — by His providence which controls all things that come to pass. God's providence is all-inclusive; from the fall of a sparrow to the rise of an empire, it embraces all that occurs in the universe. God controls and directs all things so that they work out for His own glory. Thus God perfectly hallows His own name; by His providence He displays His own nature and perfections. When we pray "Hallowed be thy name," we pray that God, by His providence, would order all events in such a way that His own glory will be manifested.

Religious Terms Defined

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

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

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

CHRIST'S ESTATE OF EXALTATION. "Christ's exaltation consisteth in His rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day." (Shorter Catechism, 28).

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

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

CHURCH, THE. The body of people who are distinguished from the rest of mankind by either a vital or an external participation in the dispensation of the Covenant of Grace.

CHURCH CENSURES. The progressive steps by which Church Discipline is exercised, namely, Admonition, Rebuke, Suspension, Deposition, and Excommunication.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE. The exercise of the authority which Christ has committed to His Church for reclaiming members who fall into scandalous sin, and for guarding the purity of the Church by excluding those who cannot be brought to repentance.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT. The system of organization which Christ has appointed in the Scripture for the Visible Church.

CHURCH JUDICATORIES. The series of graded courts composed of ministers and ruling elders by which the government of the Church is carried on, namely Session (Consistory), Presbytery (Classis), Synod, General Assembly.

CHURCH MILITANT, THE. That portion of the Invisible Church which at a given time is present on earth, and consequently engaged in conflict with evil.

CHURCH TRIUMPHANT, THE. That portion of the Invisible Church which has already entered the state of glory, and consequently is enjoying victory over evil with Christ.

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here is not to be understood as necessarily implying an endorsement of everything contained in it. Please purchase books from your local bookstore or direct from the publishers; do not send orders to the publisher of "Blue Banner Faith and Life."

HOW TO THINK ABOUT EVOLUTION, by L. Duane Thurman. Inter-Varsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1978, pp. 144, paperback. $3.50.

The picture on the cover is weird. Perhaps it is intended just as an attention-getter. For this is a very good and much needed book, aimed at high school and college students who are being told in their science courses that Evolution is "not a theory, but proved fact." The remedy for limited and defective knowledge is more and better knowledge, and this book provides it in usable form in a definite area.

The author outlines the new controversy about evolution, arising from a California law requiring an equal presentation of Creation if Evolution is presented to students. He outlines the structure of

scientific thought and methods, and with numerous very apt quotations from evolutionary scientists blasts away the ridiculous but common claim that science deals with faithless fact while religion deals with factless faith. The reviewer was pleased to note that G. A. Kerkut's book, **Implications of Evolution,** is repeatedly referred to and quoted at some length. Kerkut is an evolutionist but unlike many of them he frankly admits and even insists that the general theory of evolution ("macro-evolution," the "monkey-to-man" kind) is based on seven assumptions which have not been proved and in the nature of the case never can be proved. Evolution in the common meaning is therefore not "fact" but **a faith.** The reviewer used this book of G. A. Kerkut with excellent results in a team-taught "theories of evolution" course at Geneva College.

The author shows that "micro-evolution" (the development of new varieties of a species, like red or blue African violets) is not false or contrary to Christianity. But the tendency is to assume that because this type of change is true, macro-evolution must also be true.

—J. G. Vos

JESUS: GOD, GHOST OR GURU? by Jon A. Buell, O. Quentin Hyder and F. F. Bruce. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49508. 1978, pp. 135, paperback, $3.95.

In spite of its somewhat shocking title, this is a very good book. Aimed at college and university students and other persons with academic education, it is a closely reasoned defense of the orthodox doctrine of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, against the easy-going glib superficiality which writes Jesus off by saying "He was a great moral teacher, but I could never believe that he was the Son of God."

One of the authors (Hyder) is a professional Christian psychiatrist, and he brings modern psychiatric learning and expertise to the defense of our Lord's Deity. He outlines the characteristics of the various types of mental illness (paranoia, schizophrenia, etc.) and shows in amazing fulness of detail that the known facts about Jesus, and His recorded sayings, do not fit any form of mental illness. On the contrary, Jesus stands forth as a striking example of perfect mental health and well-being.

The authors are at pains to show that the easy denials of a generation or two ago are no longer tenable. The papyri and manuscript discoveries have made it impossible to say that only in later centuries did the Church "deify" Jesus. The testimony is abundant and goes back to the actual time of Jesus and the apostles. The evidence is so full that if anyone other than Jesus were involved, it would be accepted without question. It is a pleasure to recommend this book. It is a book for people who think and do not simply repeat the slogans and cliches of former times.

—J. G. Vos

STORY BIBLE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN, by Anne DeVries. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. 1978, pp. 255. $9.95.

Translated from the Dutch language, this Bible story book is intended for young children aged 4 to 8 years. Believe it or not, the author, Anne DeVries, is a man, not a woman; at any rate the dust jacket calls him Mr. DeVries. Profusely illustrated, it is calculated to appeal to children of the intended age group. It is true to the Bible—for example, the story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden is treated as historical fact, not myth or "teaching model" as some Dutch authors are saying today. In my opinion the **Child's Story Bible** by Catherine Vos (reviewer's mother) is not only a larger book than this one, but calculated to reach a somewhat older age group (published by Eerdmans, Grand Rapids).

—J. G. Vos

ACTS: AN EXPOSITION. Vol. I, Chapters 1-8. By W. A. Criswell. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49508. 1978, pp. 285. $9.95.

This is not a verse by verse commentary, but an exposition of the main features of the first eight chapters of the Book of Acts. The author is a Southern Baptist minister located in Dallas, Texas. While there is considerable emphasis on the Baptist denomination and its distinctive tenets (as would properly be expected), still the main emphasis is conservatively evangelical, stressing what is common to all faithful evangelical churches. The author is rightly critical of all forms of communism, and all forms of "dead orthodoxy" in the church. He is critical of the tongues-speaking of the modern charismatic movement (p. 79).

The statement that "The church became a part of the state at the time of Constantine's conversion" (p. 271) is somewhat simplistic.

This book has a strong emphasis on Christian stewardship, tithing, evangelism, foreign missions, conversion, repentance and straightforward Christian living. Recommended.

—J. G. Vos

THE ROOTS OF EVIL, by Norman L. Geisler.

Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49508. 1978, pp. 96, paperback, $2.95.

This book is a reasoned defense of the Christian-Theistic view of the problem of evil over aginst the various philosophic and humanistic alternatives that have been held and advocated. It will be of value to people who are already Christians, as it points out quite cogently the flaws and weaknesses of the non-theistic positions. On the other hand, reasoned argument of this type will not of itself convert unbelievers to the Christian position, because the real trouble with the unbeliever is that his basic assumption of the autonomy of the human mind rules out the reality of the God of the Bible. This does not mean, of course, that God may not use this type of rational argument to bring about the conversion of unbelievers. But to the natural man the things of God are bound to be foolishness. He needs to be born again and renewed in his mind.

The reviewer noted some errors. Page 20, "lack or imperfection" is printed as "lack of imperfection," with total destruction of the meaning. Page 38, "impune" should be "impugn." Page 69, line 1, "evil know to man" should be "evil known to man."

—J. G. Vos

THE BIBLE TELLS US SO, by R. B. Kuiper. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. 1978, reprint of 1969. Paperback, pp. 132. $1.95.

This little book, with Foreword by the late Professor John Murray, is a gem. We are happy to recommend it highly and without any reservations. The author's simplicity, clarity and downright faithfulness to Scripture shine out on every page. Some of the chapter headings: The Bible is God's Word; God Is; God is Sovereign; Man is a Responsible Being; God is Almighty; The Love of God is Infinite; Salvation Belongs to the Triune God; Salvation is by Grace Alone; Christianity is the One True Religion; the Antithesis of the Regenerate and the Unregenerate is Radical; Christianity is History, Doctrine, Conduct.

The author was called home by God about ten years ago. In this book, "he, being dead, yet speaketh." Thoroughly aware of the errors and deviations of "modern" theology, the author unashamedly and without apology sets forth, in utter clearness, the Biblical and Christian view. Give this book to any Christian friend who is confused by modern preaching and modern religion. It is calculated to help such to know the truth that makes men free.

—J. G. Vos

THE TRUE BOUNDS OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM, by Samuel Bolton. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. 1978, reprint of 1645, paperback, pp. 223, $2.50.

This is a reprint of a Puritan work of three centuries ago, actually published about the time of the famous Westminster Assembly. In the main it is a polemic against antinomianism, or the doctrine that the Christian is not under law in any sense. The author carefully distinguishes the senses in which the Christian is and is not under law. He also deals with the question of Christian freedom from obedience to men. While of course rising from a situation somewhat different from what which we face today, the author everywhere rings true to the truth of the Bible. Recommended.

—J. G. Vos

THE DEEPER FAITH: AN EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS OF DORT, by Gordon Girod. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. 1978, paperback, pp. 135, pocket size. $1.95.

The historic Synod of Dort met in 1618-1619 to face and answer the attack of the Remonstrants or Arminians on the Reformed Faith in Holland and elsewhere in Europe. The product of this historic synod was the five "canons," which affirmed the truth and Scriptural character of (1) Unconditional Election; (2) Limited Atonement; (3) Total Depravity; (4) Irresistible Grace; and (5) The Perseverance of the Saints. It should be clearly understood that these famous "five points" are **NOT** a condensed summary of Calvinism or the Reformed Faith, but only the response of Calvinism to the five articles of the Remonstrants.

Often maligned and objected to today, especially by people who have only a vague and sketchy understanding of what they really mean, the famous "five points" have stood the test of time. This little book by Gordon Girod gives a clear exposition and defense of these "Five Points" in terms of present day theological climate and religious conditions. Everywhere true to the Bible and the historic faith of the Reformed churches, it should accomplish much good and help clear the air of some prejudices and misunderstandings. Heartily recommended.

—J. G. Vos

CHRISTIAN LEADERS OF THE 18th CENTURY, by J. C. Ryle. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, PA 17013. 1978, reprint of 1885. Pp. 432, paperback, $3.95.

J. C. Ryle was an evangelical bishop of the Church

of England who lived about a century ago. This book of sketches of Christian leaders of the 1700's has been reprinted by photographic reproduction from the original which appeared in 1885. Some of the characters portrayed are George Whitefield, John Wesley, Augustus Toplady, Henry Venn and James Hervey. As a source book of information on these and other Christian leaders of 18th century England, this book is excellent. We are happy to recommend it heartily. We object to a statement quoted from John Wesley (page 101): "You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work." This was part of Wesley's instructions to his helpers. While we can appreciate the relevance of it in Wesley's lifetime, still it would seem to point up what was a serious weakness in historic Methodism. In addition to "saving souls" the Christian worker is to witness to the whole counsel of God and to insist on the application of Christianity to all of life. We believe that Calvinism has been more truly effective in insisting on the application of Christianity to life than those who would limit the outreach of Christianity to evangelism in the narrow individual sense. Indeed we may believe that Wesley himself was truer to the Biblical scope of Christianity than the above quotation would seem to imply. This book is recommended to our readers.

—J. G. Vos

Contributions Received

The following contributions have been received since our last issue went to press:

December 1978. No. 5017, $7.50. No. 5018, $200.00. No. 5019, $2.50. No. 5020, $5.00. No. 5021, $52.30. No. 5022, .50. No. 5023, $9.50. No. 5024, $97.50. No. 5025, $50.00. No. 5026, $7.00.

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February 1979. No. 5043, $8.00. No. 5044, $4.00.

Later contributions will be acknowledged 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 less than half of the amount needed. Many thanks to all who have helped. Your contributions are deductible from your Federal taxable income if you live in the United States. Documentary proof of this is available if needed by any contributor.

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A Christian Introduction to Religions of the World, by J. G. Vos. $1.95.

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IMPORTANT NOTE

The January-March issue was erroneously published with a 1978 date instead of a 1979 date. Readers are encouraged to correct their copies for future reference.

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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 Coultron
The Provost of the town.

And cruel Grierson of Lagg
The persecutor came,
To do that day by 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,
As there that young defenceless girl
Was tempted by her foes
To buy her life by breach of faith
To Him who was her Lord;
Ah, she was young, and life is sweet,
And it was but a word.

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

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

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

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

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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VOLUME 34 JULY-SEPTEMBER 1979 NUMBER 3

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

The "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" was produced at a three-day summit conference held in Chicago, October 26-28, 1978. The conference was called by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, founded in 1977, and chaired by Dr. James M. Boice.

Preface

The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God's written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.

The following Statement affirms this inerrancy of Scripture afresh, making clear our understanding of it and warning against its denial. We are persuaded that to deny it is to set aside the witness of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit and to refuse that submission to the claims of God's Word which marks true Christian faith. We see it as our timely duty to make this affirmation in the face of current lapses from the truth of inerrancy among our fellow Christians and misunderstanding of this doctrine in the world at large.

This Statement consists of three parts: a Summary Statement, Articles of Affirmation and Denial, and an accompanying Exposition. It has been prepared in the course of a three-day consultation in Chicago. Those who have signed the Summary Statement and the Articles wish to affirm their own conviction as to the inerrancy of Scripture and to encourage and challenge one another and all Christians to growing appreciation and understanding of this doctrine. We acknowledge the limitations of a document prepared in a brief, intensive conference and do not propose that this Statement be given creedal weight. Yet we rejoice in the deepening of our own convictions through our discussions together, and we pray that the Statement we have signed may be used to the glory of our God toward a new reformation of the Church in its faith, life, and mission.

We offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we purpose by God's grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word.

We invite response to this Statement from any who see reason to amend its affirmation about Scripture by the light of Scripture itself, under whose infallible authority we stand as we speak. We claim no personal infallibility for the witness we bear, and for any help which enables us to strengthen this testimony to God's Word we shall be grateful.

A Short Statement

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.

3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.

4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation and the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

Articles of Affirmation and Denial

Article I

We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.

We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

Article II

We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.

We deny that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article III

We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.

We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

Article IV

We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.

We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration.

Article V

We affirm that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive.

We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

Article VI

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.

We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII

We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.

We deny that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

Article VIII

We affirm that God in His work of inspiration utlized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX

We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.

We deny that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

Article X

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.

We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

Article XI

We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

Article XII

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII

We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to

its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

Article XIV

We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.

We deny that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

Article XV

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.

We deny that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accomodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

Article XVI

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history.

We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by Scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

Article XVII

We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word.

We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

Article XVIII

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

Article XIX

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.

Exposition

Our understanding of the doctrine of inerrancy must be set in the context of the broader teachings of the Scripture concerning itself. This Exposition gives an account of the outline of doctrine from which our summary statement and articles are drawn.

Creation, Revelation and Inspiration

The Triune God, who formed all things by His creative utterances, and governs all things by His Word of decree, made mankind in His own image for a life of communion with Himself, on the model of the eternal fellowship of loving communication within the Godhead. As God's image bearer, man was to hear God's Word addressed to him and to respond in the joy of adoring obedience. Over and above God's self-disclosure in the created order and the sequence of events within it, human beings from Adam on have received verbal messages from Him, either directly, as stated in Scripture, or indirectly in the form of part or all of Scripture itself.

When Adam fell, the Creator did not abandon mankind to final judgment but promised salvation and began to reveal Himself as Redeemer in a sequence of historical events centering on Abraham's family and culminating in the life, death, resurrection, present heavenly ministry, and promised return of Jesus Christ. Within this frame God has from time to time spoken specific words of judgment and mercy, promise and command, to sinful human beings so drawing them into a covenant relation of mutual commitment between Him and them in which He blesses them with gifts of grace and they bless Him in responsive adoration. Moses, whom God used as mediator to carry His words to His people at the time of the Exodus, stands at the head of a long line of prophets in whose mouths and writings God put His words for delivery to Israel. God's purpose in this succession of messages was to maintain His covenant by causing His people to know His Name–that is, His nature–and His will both of precept and purpose in the present and for the future. This line of prophetic spokesmen from God came to completion in Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Word, who was Himself a prophet–more than a prophet, but not less–and in the apostles and prophets of the first Christian generation. When God's final and climactic message, His word to the world concerning Jesus Christ, had been spoken and elucidated by those in the apostolic circle, the sequence of revealed messages ceased. Henceforth the Church was to live and know God by what He had already said, and said for all time.

At Sinai God wrote the terms of His covenant on tablets of stone, as His enduring witness and for lasting accessibility, and throughout the period of prophetic and apostolic revelation He prompted men to write the messages given to and through them, along with celebratory records of His dealings with His people, plus moral reflections on covenant life and forms of praise and

prayer for covenant mercy. The theological reality of inspiration in the producing of Biblical documents corresponds to that of spoken prophecies: although the human writers' personalities were expressed in what they wrote, the words were divinely constituted. Thus, what Scripture says, God says; its authority is His authority, for He is its ultimate Author, having given it through the minds and words of chosen and prepared men who in freedom and faithfulness "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (I Pet. 1:21). Holy Scripture must be acknowledged as the Word of God by virtue of its divine origin.

Authority: Christ and the Bible

Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is the Word made flesh, our Prophet, Priest, and King, is the ultimate Mediator of God's communication to man, as He is of all God's gifts of grace. The revelation He gave was more than verbal; He revealed the Father by His presence and His deeds as well. Yet His words were crucially important; for He was God, He spoke from the Father, and His words will judge all men at the last day.

As the prophesied Messiah, Jesus Christ is the central theme of Scripture. The Old Testament looked ahead to Him; the New Testament looks back to His first coming and on to His second. Canonical Scripture is the divinely inspired and therefore normative witness to Christ. No hermeneutic, therefore, of which the historical Christ is not the focal point is acceptable. Holy Scripture must be treated as what it essentially is–the witness of the Father to the incarnate Son.

It appears that the Old Testament canon had been fixed by the time of Jesus. The New Testament canon is likewise now closed inasmuch as no new apostolic witness to the historical Christ can now be borne. No new revelation (as distinct from Spirit-given understanding of existing revelation) will be given until Christ comes again. The canon was created in principle by divine inspiration. The Church's part was to discern the canon which God had created, not to devise one of its own.

The word **canon**, signifying a rule or standard, is a pointer to authority, which means the right to rule and control. Authority in Christianity belongs to God in His revelation, which means, on the one hand, Jesus Christ, the living Word, and, on the other hand, Holy Scripture, the written Word. But the authority of Christ and that of Scripture are one. As our Prophet, Christ testifed that that Scripture cannot be broken. As our Priest and King, He devoted His earthly life to fulfilling the law and the prophets, even dying in obedience to the words of Messianic prophecy. Thus, as He saw Scripture attesting Him and His authority, so by His own submission to Scripture He attested its authority. As He bowed to His Father's instruction given in His Bible (our Old Testament), so He requires His disciples to do–not, however, in isolation but in conjunction with the apostolic witness to Himself which He undertook to inspire by His gift of the Holy Spirit. So Christians show themselves faithful servants of their Lord by bowing to the divine instruction given in the prophetic and apostolic writings which together make up our Bible.

By authenticating each other's authority, Christ and Scripture coalesce into a single fount of authority. The Biblically-interpreted Christ and the Christ-centered, Christ-proclaiming Bible are from this standpoint one. As from the fact of inspiration we infer that what Scripture says, God says, so from the revealed relation we may equally declare that what Scripture says, Christ says.

Infallibility, Inerrancy, Interpretation

Holy Scripture, as the inspired Word of God witnessing authoritatively to Jesus Christ, may properly be called **infallible** and **inerrant**. These negative terms have a special value, for they explicity safeguard crucial positive truths.

Infallible signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide in all matters.

Similarly, **inerrant** signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.

We affirm that canoncial Scripture should always be interpreted on the basis that it is infallible and inerrant. However, in determining what the God-taught writer is asserting in each passage, we must pay the most careful attention to its claims and character as a human production. In inspiration, God utilized the culture and conventions of His penman's milieu, a milieu that God controls in His sovereign providence; it is misinterpretation to imagine otherwise.

So history must be treated as history, poetry as poetry, hyperbole and metaphor as hyperbole and metaphor, generalization and approximation as what they are, and so forth. Differences between literary conventions in Bible times and in ours must also be observed: since, for instance, non-chronological narration and imprecise citation were conventional and acceptable and violated no expectations in those days, we must not regard these things as faults when we find them in Bible writers. When total precision of a particular kind was not expected nor aimed at, it is no error not to have achieved it. Scripture is inerrant, not in the sense of being absolutely precise by modern standards, but in the sense of making good its claims and achieving that measure of focused truth at which its authors aimed.

The truthfulness of Scripture is not negated by the appearance in its of irregularities of grammar or spelling, phenomenal descriptions of nature, reports of false state-

ments (e.g., the lies of Satan), or seeming discrepancies between one passage and another. It is not right to set the so-called "phenomena" of Scripture against the teaching of Scripture about itself. Apparent inconsistencies should not be ignored. Solution of them, where this can be convincingly achieved, will encourage our faith, and where for the present no convincing solution is at hand we shall significantly honor God by trusting His assurance that His Word is true, despite these appearances, and by maintaining our confidence that one day they will be seen to have been illusions.

Inasmuch as all Scripture is the product of a single divine mind, interpretation must stay within the bounds of the analogy of Scripture and eschew hypotheses that would correct one Biblical passage by another, whether in the name of progressive revelation or of the imperfect enlightenment of the inspired writer's mind.

Although Holy Scripture is nowhere culture-bound in the sense that its teachings lack universal validity, it is sometimes culturally conditioned by the customs and conventional views of a particular period, so that the application of its principles today calls for a different sort of action.

Skepticism and Criticism

Since the Renaissance, and more particularly since the Enlightenment, world-views have been developed which involve skepticism about basic Christian tenets. Such are the agnosticism which denies that God is knowable, the rationalism which denies that He is incomprehensible, the idealism which denies that He is transcendent, and the existentialism which denies rationality in His relationships with us. When these un- and anti-Biblical principles seep into men's theologies at presuppositional level, as today they frequently do, faithful interpretation of Holy Scripture becomes impossible.

Transmission and Translation

Since God has nowhere promised an inerrant transmission of Scripture, it is necessary to affirm that only the autographic text of the original documents was inspired and to maintain the need of textual criticism as a means of detecting any slips that may have crept into the text in the course of its transmission. The verdict of this science, however, is that the Hebrew and Greek text appear to be amazingly well preserved, so that we are amply justified in affirming, with the Westminster Confession, a singular providence of God in this matter and in declaring that the authority of Scripture is in no way jeopardized by the fact that the copies we possess are not entirely error-free.

Similarly, no translation is or can be perfect, and all translations are an additional step away from the **autographa**. Yet the verdict of linguistic science is that English-speaking Christians, at least, are exceedingly well served in these days with a host of excellent translations and have no cause for hesitating to conclude that the true Word of God is within their reach. Indeed, in view of the frequent repetition in Scripture of the main matters with which it deals and also of the Holy Spirit's constant witness to and through the Word, no serious translation of Holy Scirpture will so destroy its meaning as to render it unable to make its reader "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

Inerrancy and Authority

In our affirmation of the authority of Scripture as involving its total truth, we are consciously standing with Christ and His apostles, indeed with the whole Bible and with the main stream of Church history from the first days until very recently. We are concerned at the casual, inadvertent, and seemingly thoughtless way in which a belief of such far-reaching importance has been given up by so many in our day.

We are conscious too that great and grave confusion results from ceasing to maintain the total truth of the Bible whose authority one professes to acknowledge. The result of taking this step is that the Bible which God gave loses its authority, and what has authority instead is a Bible reduced in content according to the demands of one's critical reasonings and in principle reducible still further once one has started. This means that at bottom independent reason now has authority, as opposed to Scriptural teaching. If this is not seen and if for the time being basic evangelical doctrines are still held, persons denying the full truth of Scripture may claim an evangelical identity while methodologically they have moved away from the evangelical principle of knowledge to an unstable subjectivism, and will find it hard not to move further.

We affirm that what Scripture says, God says. May He be glorified. Amen and Amen.

Studies on Prayer

THE WESTMINSTER LARGER CATECHISM

LESSON 14

Prayer for the Coming of God's Kingdom

Q. 191. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, (which is, "Thy kingdom come"), acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; . . .

Scripture References:

Eph. 2:2,3. All mankind are by nature under Satan's dominion.

Psalm 68:1,18. Rev. 12:10,11. Deut. 33:27. 1 John 3:8. Satan's kingdom is to be destroyed, for which we should pray.

2 Thess. 3:1. We are to pray for the propagation of the Gospel.

Rom. 10:1. We are to pray for the salvation of the Jews.

John 17:9,20. Rom. 11:25, 26. Psalm 67:1-7. Matt. 28:18-20. We should pray for the salvation of God's elect among the Gentiles.

Questions:

1. What is the spiritual condition of the human race apart from Christ and His salvation?

The spiritual condition of the human race apart from Christ and His salvation is a condition not only of guilt but also of bondage or slavery to the power of sin. The human race and all members of it are not only guilty before God but also enslaved to the power of evil. Because people are slaves to sin, they are not free to do good. They must be set free by the redemption of Christ, the Son of God, before they can love and serve God.

2. Why does the Catechism say that "by nature" we are enslaved to sin?

The Catechism uses this expression, "by nature," to show that our sinfulness is not merely a matter of bad habits, or the result of our environment, but part of OUR NATURE. We are born with a sinful nature, and from the beginning of our life we are slaves to sin, until Christ sets us free from its power. The expression, "by nature," is taken from the exact words of the Bible (Eph. 2:3).

3. What is the kingdom of Satan?

The "kingdom of Satan" is the sum total of everything in the universe that is contrary to the will of God. Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, became king of the kingdom of evil when he fell from his original holiness. The Catechism rightly speaks not only of "the kingdom of sin" but of "the kingdom of Satan," because sin is not a natural force such as gravity or electricity; sin is committed by persons, and the kingdom of sin is a kingdom of sinful persons — evil spirits and human beings — under the control of the supremely evil person called Satan. The kingdom of sin is a real kingdom with a real king, Satan or the devil. Every attempt to tone down or explain away the objective reality and personality of the devil is contrary to the Bible.

4. How can Satan exercise power as a king?

Satan can exercise power as a king only by the permission of God. The Bible teaches that all Satan's activities are strictly controlled by God. This is shown very clearly by the first two chapters of the book of Job, as well as by other parts of the Bible. God in His wisdom has permitted Satan to have certain power and to do certain things, but Satan cannot go beyond what God has permitted. This is also clearly shown by the power of Christ to cast out devils, as recorded in the Gospels. Satan's kingdom is temporary only and is doomed to total destruction. Rev. 12:12.

5. How is Satan's kingdom destroyed?

Satan's kingdom is destroyed by the work of Christ, the Son of God, who came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). Worldly, mechanical or merely human methods cannot accomplish anything toward destroying Satan's kingdom. Satan's kingdom is partly destroyed by the work of God's Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, in the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of believers. It will be completely and forever destroyed at the second coming of Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:8). Many people are deceived into thinking that the general progress of human civilization, general education and culture, science and invention, economic and social progress and organization, can restrain or destroy Satan's kingdom. All these can fit in with Satan's kingdom as much as with God's kingdom. Only the Gospel of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, really destroys Satan's kingdom.

6. How should we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed?

We should pray this prayer sincerely, with true faith. This means that we will not be satisfied merely to pray. We will also do what we can to bring about the destruction of Satan's kingdom, whenever we have an opportunity. If our faith is real it will be accompanied by works.

7. Why must we pray for the Gospel to be propagated throughout the world?

It is through the preaching of the Gospel that God's elect are brought to salvation (Rom.

10:13-15). Since this is a matter of such great importance, with so many obstacles in the way, and involving such great difficulties, it calls for earnest prayer. It is God's will that the Gospel of Christ shall be preached to all nations. Some countries are shut against the Gospel today. We should pray that God would cause the doors that are shut to be opened, so that the Gospel of Christ can enter and salvation be offered to the people of those countries. Some countries, such as Turkey and Russia, are almost locked tight against the Gospel of Christ. In other countries, such as Spain and Mexico, there are various restrictions and hindrances to the preaching of the Gospel. Read Revelation 3:7, 8 and note that Christ has the power to open doors so that the Gospel can enter in and have a clear track to go ahead.

8. What does the Catechism mean by praying that the Jews may be called?

By the word "called" the Catechism here means effectually called, that is, converted to Christ. The Catechism cites Rom. 10:1, where Paul said that his prayer was for the salvation of Israel. The 11th chapter of Romans predicts that at some future time there will be a great movement of the Jews to believe on Christ (Rom. 11:13-27). This does not mean that every Jew in the world will be converted to Christ, but that there will be a great increase in the number of Jews that believe in Christ, at some time before the second coming of Christ. Paul tells us that the spiritual blindness of the Jews, which prevents them from seeing that Jesus is the Messiah, is only temporary, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom 11:25). This shows that after "the fulness of the Gentiles" has "come in," the blindness of the Jews will be taken away, and large numbers of them will be converted to Christ. There are some Jews being converted to Christ all the time; we should pray for the hastening of the time when many of them will turn to Jesus Christ.

9. Why should we pray that the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in?

The expression "the fulness of the Gentiles brought in" means the salvation of the great company of God's elect of all nations throughout the world, except the Jews. We should pray for the accomplishment of this work of God for three reasons: (a) God is glorified in the salvation of people of every race and nation. (b) The sooner "the fulness of the Gentiles" is brought in, the sooner the Jews will have their blindness removed and will turn to Christ. (c) The sooner all God's elect, both Jews and Gentiles, are saved, the sooner Christ will come to deliver His people from all sin and suffering, and give them eternal glory.

LESSON 15

Prayer for the Coming of God's Kingdom (Continued)

Q. 191 (Continued). What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, (which is, "Thy kingdom come"). . . . we pray, that. . . the church (may be) furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate: that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him for ever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.

Scripture References:

Matt. 9:38. 2 Thess. 3:1. We are to pray that the Church may be furnished with all Gospel officers and ordinances.

Mal. 1:11. Zeph. 3:9. We are to pray that the Church may be purified from corruption.

1 Tim. 2:1, 2. We are to pray that the Church may be countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate.

Acts 4:29, 30. Eph. 6:18, 19. Rom. 15:29, 30, 32. 2 Thess. 1:11; 2:16, 17. We are to pray that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual for their intended purposes.

Eph. 3:14-20. We are to pray that Christ would reign in our hearts while we are in this present world.

Rev. 22:20. We are to pray that Christ would hasten His second coming, and our reigning with Him for ever.

Isa. 64:1, 2. Rev. 4:8-11. We are to pray that Christ would so exercise His kingdom of power in the world, as may best further the kingdom of grace and hasten the kingdom of glory.

Questions:

1. Why should we pray that the Church may be furnished with all Gospel officers and ordinances?

(a) These Gospel officers and ordinances, so far as they are genuine and truly spiritual and beneficial, rather than merely mechanical and formal, are gifts of God and are dependent for their effectiveness on the special work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that calls men to be ministers of the Gospel; it is the Holy Spirit that provides and equips pastors, elders and deacons for the Church; it is the Holy Spirit that provides and makes effective such Church ordinances as

the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, the exercise of church discipline.

(b) If we are really sincere in praying that the Church may be furnished with all Gospel officers and ordinances, we will not be content to pray and do nothing more; we will be inclined to do what we can about it. For example, we will encourage young men to enter the Gospel ministry; we will contribute liberally to the support of Christian education and church ordinances; we will attend upon the ordinances of the Gospel, and will encourage and support those Church officers who are charged with the administration and work of the Church.

2. Why does the Church need to be purged from corruption?

Of course the Church OUGHT not to need to be purified from corruption. But the fact is that it always DOES need to be purified from corruption. This is not merely sometimes the case; it is always the case. There are always retrograde tendencies at work, which cause corruption in the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the Church. These retrograde tendencies never cease to operate, and must always be vigilantly guarded against and counteracted.

The reformation of the Church is not to be regarded as a once-for-all act; it must be a continuous process. We should both pray and work for it. In this connection the letters to the seven Churches, in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, are most instructive. Nothing is more dangerously insidious than the comfortable belief that our own branch of the Visible Church is safe and secure from all inroads of corruption. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12. Whole denominations have succumbed to the deadly virus of modern unbelief and have become apostate from the truth, so they have ceased to be witnesses for the Gospel of Christ, while their ministers and members reassured each other by saying "The Church is basically sound." See the Confession of Faith, XXV. 5; Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXI. 6. It is highly presumptuous to assert that a particular denomination is so sound that there not only is not, but never will be, any Modernism in it. Yet this statement has been heard in a church court. We should always be on our guard against the leaven of corruption; we should always pray that the Church may be kept from it, and purified of it.

3. How is the Church to be countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate?

(a) When the Catechism was written, 300 years ago, the prevailing idea on this question was that there was to be an official or established Church, which would not only be recognized by the civil government as the true Visible Church of Jesus Christ, but also supported financially from the national treasury. We no longer accept this view of the relation between Church and State today.

(b) Neither do we accept the extreme view sometimes called Voluntaryism, to the effect that the State has nothing to do with religion and need not recognize or countenance the Church in any way. "Church and State are two distinct and separate institutions. The Christian religion should be the religion of both. . . Each has its own sphere, and its own functions to perform. Neither should invade the territory of the other. Where their duties coincide, as for example in the suppression of profanity, they should co-operate; yet always in such a way as not to mar their integrity as separate institutions. . . " (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXIX. 7). Thus our standards teach an absolute separateness of JURISDICTION of Church and State, but the duty of friendly co-operation in matters in which their duties coincide.

(c) The Church should be countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate, by being protected in the security and enjoyment of its rights and freedom; also it is proper for the State to "countenance and maintain" the Church by remission of taxes on Church property, etc.

(d) Our Standards do NOT teach that both true and false churches are to be countenanced and maintained by the State. At this point the teaching of the Westminster Standards differs from the prevalent American view of the relation between the State and religious associations and institutions. Under the Constitution and laws of the United States a Buddhist temple, a Unitarian church, a Jewish synagogue and a Mohammedan mosque enjoy identical and equal rights and privileges with the most evangelical and orthodox Protestant Christian Churches. There is not only no discrimination between Christian denominations; there is not even any discrimination between Christianity and other religions, so far as the State is concerned. This state of affairs is obviously not what the Westminster divines had in mind in saying that the Church should be "countenanced and maintained" by the civil magistrate. It is obvious that they meant that the TRUE Church should be countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate. This of course raises difficult and serious problems, which we cannot discuss further in this lesson on the Lord's Prayer. We may accept as sound, however, the principle that a truly Christian nation would at least guarantee the freedom and security of the true Church of Jesus Christ in all its denominational branches.

4. What is meant by saying that the ordinances of Christ should be purely dispensed, and why should we pray for this?

(a) The ordinances of Christ are chiefly the preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the sacraments, the government of the church and the exercise of church discipline.

(b) These ordinances are purely dispensed when they are dispensed according to Christ's ap-

pointment in His Word, the Holy Bible, without human corruptions, additions or subtractions.

(c) This pure dispensing of Christ's ordinances depends on the Church's membership really wanting it, which in turn depends on the special work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Therefore we should pray that the Holy Spirit will so work in people's hearts that they will love, adhere to, preserve and defend the pure dispensation of Christ's ordinances. When this special work of the Holy Spirit is partly or wholly withdrawn, the membership and leadership of the Churches will soon introduce changes in Christ's ordinances, not according to Scripture, but according to the whims and fancies of their own hearts and the changing demands of "popularity."

5. Why should we pray that Christ's ordinances may be made effective for their intended purposes?

Unless made effective by the special work of the Holy Spirit, these ordinances will be mere forms without spiritual fruitfulness. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but only God can give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). We are not to put our trust in ecclesiastical mechanics, but in the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit's work.

6. What three forms or phases of Christ's kingdom are dealt with in the last part of this answer of the Catechism?

(a) Christ's present spiritual kingdom in the hearts of His people, called "the kingdom of grace" in the Shorter Catechism (S. C. 102). (b) Christ's eternal reign in glory, which will begin at His second coming, called "the kingdom of glory" in the Shorter Catechism (S.C. 102). (c) Christ's kingdom of power in the world, by which at the present time He has all power in heaven and in earth, even over His enemies.

To disregard any of these forms or phases of Christ's kingdom is sure to result in an erroneous, unbalanced, one-sided view of Christ's kingly office. Such error is extremely common at the present day. One Christian will emphasize Christ's present spiritual kingdom, another His eternal kingdom of glory, and still another His present reign of power over the universe. Only by believing in and emphasizing all three together, in their mutual relations, can we really grasp the scope of Christ's kingship and hold a truly Scriptural view.

In the second petition of the Lord's Prayer we rightly pray for all three phases of His kingdom: the kingdom of grace, the kingdom of glory and the kingdom of power. We pray for the extension and continuance of the kingdom of grace, the hastening of the kingdom of glory, and the success of the kingdom of power for its appointed ends. Note that the kingdom of power is not an end in itself, but a means to the furtherance of the kingdom of grace and the hastening of the kingdom of glory. In this statement of the matter the Catechism is eminently Scriptural.

7. Is it proper to pray that Christ's second coming may be hastened?

Certainly, and we should be sure to do so. See Rev. 22:20; the Confession of Faith, XXXIII. 3. Of course we should not wish for Christ's second coming to take place before the appointed time, when all of God's elect will have been brought to the saving knowledge of Christ. But we should wish and pray that the appointed time may be hastened. The spirit that would prefer to postpone the kingdom of glory in order to afford greater scope for the plans, programs and activities of the Church during this present age is alien to the philosophy of history taught in the Scriptures. According to the Bible the present world is a preparation for the eternal kingdom of God; the eternal may not be subordinated to the temporal. We are not only to desire our Lord's second coming, but to pray that it may take place quickly.

LESSON 16

Prayer that God's Will may be Done

Q. 192. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition, (which is, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven"), acknowledging, that by nature we and all men are not only utterly unable and unwilling to know and do the will of God, but prone to rebel against his word, to repine and murmur against his providence, and wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil: we pray that God would by his Spirit take away from ourselves and others all blindness, weakness, indisposedness, and perverseness of heart; and by his grace make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to his will in all things, with the like humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and constancy as the angels do in heaven.

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:10. The third petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Rom. 7:18. Job 21:14. 1 Cor. 2:14 Man's natural inability and unwillingness to know and do the will of God.

Rom. 8:7. Ex. 17:7. Num. 14:2. Eph. 2:2. Man's natural tendency to rebel against God's Word and providence, and to serve self and Satan.

Eph. 1:17,18; 3:16. Matt. 26:20,41. Jer. 31:18,19.

We are to pray that God, by His Spirit, would take away from us and others whatever is contrary to knowing and doing His will.

Psalm 119:1,8,35,36. Acts 21:14. We are to pray that God, by His grace, would make us able and willing to know, do and submit to His will.

Mic. 6:8. Psalm 100:2. Job 1:21. 2 Sam. 15:25,26. Isa. 38:3. Psalm 119:4,5. Rom. 12:11. Psalm 119:80,112. Isa. 6:2,3. Psalm 103:20,21. Matt. 18:10. We are to pray that God would make us able and willing to know, do and submit to His will as truly and fully as the angels do in heaven.

Questions:

1. In what two senses does the Bible speak of the will of God?

(a) The Bible speaks of the revealed will of God, which is the rule of duty which He has given to the human race (e.g., John 7:17).

(b) The Bible also speaks of the secret will of God, that is, God's counsel or decrees, by which He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass (e.g., 1 Peter 4:19).

The revealed will of God is also called His preceptive will, and is the standard of man's moral obligation. The secret will of God is also called His decretive will; it is not a rule of human duty, and cannot be known by man except as it unfolds in the events of God's providence; however, some parts of the secret will of God have been revealed in the prophecies of the Bible.

2. In what sense does the Lord's Prayer speak of the will of God?

As interpreted by the Catechism, the third petition of the Lord's prayer refers both to the revealed will of God and to the secret will of God. We are to know and do the revealed will of God; we are to submit cheerfully to the secret will of God, that is, to the events of God's providence. Thus the revealed will of God requires us to obey the Ten Commandments, to love God and our neighbor, etc., while submission to the secret will of God means that we will endure suffering, disappointments, hardships, bereavements, etc., patiently and without murmuring or rebelling against God.

3. Why are men by nature unwilling and unable to know and do the will of God?

Because of the sinful state of the human mind and heart which is the result of the fall of the race into sin. The fall into sin has darkened the human mind, so that apart from the new birth it cannot see and know the truth (Rom. 1:18-22; 1 Cor. 2:14), and it has also corrupted the human heart, so that men are inclined toward wickedness and opposed to righteousness (Rom. 1:28-32; Eph. 2:2,3). The new birth by the power of the Holy Spirit is God's remedy for this natural darkness of the sinful human mind and depravity of the sinful human heart. Men can never really know the will of God by human reason, science or philosophy, nor can they ever really do the will of God until their hearts have been renewed by the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit. Thus when we pray "Thy will be done," this implies, first of all, a prayer for the special work of the Holy Spirit in human minds and hearts.

4. Why do people murmur and rebel against God's providence?

There can be no doubt that murmuring and rebelling against God's providence is a very common sin even among Christian people. A very common form is complaining about the weather. It is strange but true that most people will ascribe their successful and pleasant experiences to "chance", "luck," or their own prudence and industry, etc., but when things turn against them, they will blame the situation on God and murmur and rebel against God. Men who never think to thank God for seasons of good weather, will curse God if there is a storm or tornado that causes them suffering and loss.

This perverse murmuring and complaining against God's providence arises from the natural sinfulness of the human heart. People wrongly suppose that God OWES them happiness, prosperity, good health and other blessings, and that if any of these are taken away from them, God is cheating them of their just rights. While a Christian will of course realize that all such attitudes are wicked, he will also realize that such thoughts do arise in his own heart, and will be humbled because of them.

5. How is God's will done in heaven?

God's will is done in heaven by the holy angels and by the saints that have departed this life and been made perfect in holiness (Heb. 12:23). It is clear that in heaven God's will is done perfectly, as the Catechism explains. To do the will of God perfectly means not only to do exactly what God requires, but to do it with perfect attitudes and motives ("humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity and constancy"). In heaven God's will is done perfectly because in heaven there is no sin or temptation to interfere with the perfect doing of God's will. It is a wonderful thought for the Christian that such a heaven is his sure destiny. The Christian is destined to be perfect and to be presented faultless before God's throne (Jude 24). The thought of our destiny of physical, mental, moral and spiritual perfection should be a strong encouragement to us as Christians in our conflicts with evil here on earth.

6. Is it possible for us to do God's will on earth as perfectly as the angels do in heaven?

No. It is our duty to do God's will, here and now, as perfectly as the angels do it in heaven; that simply means that what God requires of us

is perfect conformity to His revealed will. This perfect conformity would have been possible for the human race in this present world — indeed, it would have been actually attained — if Adam had not disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit. Adam's act of disobedience plunged the human race into sin and misery, and made perfect conformity to God's will in this life impossible.

Even born again Christians, who are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, can conform to God's will in this life only in part. Yet perfect conformity to God's will is always the ideal toward which we are to strive. It is not only our destiny in the life to come; it is also our duty in the present life; therefore we must always press on and strive toward a greater and greater attainment of it. "Brethren, I count not myself to rave apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13,14).

LESSON 17

Prayer for our Daily Needs

Q. 193. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition, (which is, "Give us this day our daily bread"), acknowledging that in Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God, and to have them cursed to us in the use of them; and that neither they of themselves are able to sustain us, nor we to merit, or by our own industry to procure them; but prone to desire, get, and use them unlawfully: we pray for ourselves and others, that both they and we, waiting upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means, may, of his free gift, and as to his fatherly wisdom shall seem best, enjoy a competent portion of them; and have the same continued and blessed unto us in our holy and comfortable use of them; and to be kept from all things that are contrary to our temporal support and comfort.

Scripture References:

Gen. 2:17; 3:17. Rom. 8:20-22. Jer. 5:25. Deut. 28:15-17. In Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited the right to all blessings of this life

Deut. 8:3. Outward blessings of themselves cannot sustain our life.

Gen. 32:10. Deut. 8:17, 18. We can neither earn God's blessings, nor obtain them by our own efforts.

Jer. 6:13. Mark 7:21, 22. Hos. 12:7. James 4:3. Because of our sinful hearts, we tend to desire, get and use the outward blessings of life unlawfully.

Gen. 43:12-14; 28:29. Eph. 4:28. 2 Thess. 3:11, 12. Phil. 4:6. We are to pray that, in subordination to the law and will of God, we may enjoy a suitable portion of the outward blessings of this life.

1 Tim. 4:3-5; 6:6-8. We are to pray that God will blesss us in our legitimate use of earthly blessings.

Prov. 30:8, 9. We are to pray that we may be preserved from all that is contrary to our true welfare in this present life.

Questions:

1. Is it true that all men have an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

This is only true within the limited sphere of civil society. Human beings have a civil right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness without unjust interference on the part of their fellowmen. Even within the sphere of human society the right of life or liberty may be taken away as a judicial penalty for the commission of crime. A man who has committed murder no longer has a right to life and liberty.

When we speak of man's relation to God, it is definitely NOT true that all men have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Whatever rights human beings might have, have been forfeited by sin; first by Adam's sin, which is imputed to all mankind; and then by each person's own sin, so that no human being has any rights which he can claim over against God. Man has no rights which God is bound to respect.

2. If God were to treat the human race with strict justice, apart from any way of salvation, what would be the result?

Human life would immediately become impossible, for all the common blessings such as rain and sunshine, food and clothing, homes and comforts, would be taken away; health would turn to sickness, and life to death. The human race has forfeited its claim to all these blessings. Only the GRACE AND MERCY of God cause sinful human beings to continue to receive and enjoy earthly blessings.

3. Is it true that God owes every man a life of happiness and prosperity?

No. What God owes every man is simply justice. In the case of fallen, sinful humanity, justice would mean God's wrath, curse and condemnation. Those who think God owes them something better than this fail to realize the meaning of God's righteousness and their own sinfulness. We should be deeply thankful that God deals with us on the basis of grace as well as justice.

4. Why cannot earthly blessings of themselves sustain our life?

We are not independent of God; our life is in His hands moment by moment. The real usefulness of all earthly things depends upon the providence of God. Food cannot give life to the starving, nor medicine health to the sick, except by the working of God's providence. It is only because God's providence is at work, that bread is more nourishing than stones. We tend to forget that we are dependent on God's providence every moment of our lives; we tend to place our faith in things rather than in the God who gives us the things. This becomes a form of idolatry, and even Christian people are often guilty of it. We should use the earthly things, and place our faith in God who gave them and who alone can bless them to our use.

5. Why can we not procure what we need by our own efforts?

Human independence is a vain delusion that is flattering to our sinful hearts. We cannot procure what we need by our own efforts because, in the first place, our efforts are always dependent on the providence of God. Our breathing, the beating of our heart, the functioning of our nervous system and muscles, our power to think and make decisions — all these depend continuously on the providence of God. We cannot do anything independently of God; in Him we live, and move, and have our being.

In the second place, the whole world of nature is constantly dependent on the providence of God. A man may plant wheat, but if God does not provide rain and sunlight, there will be no harvest. Or if there is rain and sunlight, in the providence of God a hailstorm may ruin everything. Men may build ships, and storms which only God controls may wreck them on their first voyage. It is evident that we must recognize that in every detail of our lives we are completely dependent on God.

6. Why do we tend to desire, get and use earthly blessings unlawfully?

Because of our sinful hearts, which cause us to commit sin in thought, word and deed every day of our lives. Even born-again Christians are not perfectly sanctified in this life, and must always contend against the sinful lusts and temptations which lurk in their hearts and which if unchecked will lead them into gross sins.

7. What is meant by "waiting upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means"?

This expression of the Catechism is a beautiful gem of Scriptural teaching. It means, in the first place, that we are to put our trust, not in our own powers or actions, but in the providence of God, that is, in God, whose providence controls our lives. We are to wait upon the providence of God from day to day, realizing that God will give us blessings according to His holy will in His own appointed time; therefore we are to avoid both unbelief and impatience. We will not demand blessings immediately when God in His wisdom sees fit to postpone them.

In the second place, while placing our trust in God, we will not be lazy or inactive, but still will make use of means. If we are sick, we will trust in God to make us well if it is His will to do so, but we will also avail ourselves of the best possible medical treatment. If we are waiting on God for a harvest, we will also take pains to cultivate the soil and plant the seed. We will not expect God's providence to eliminate our own toil and efforts.

In the third place, we will take care to use only LAWFUL means. We will not take matters in our own hands by breaking the moral law of God. We will try to promote our business interests by intelligence and honest work, but not by use of dishonesty, untruth or theft, nor by injustice to anyone.

8. Why are earthly blessings a free gift to God's children?

They are a free gift because we can never earn or deserve them. Earthly blessings were purchased for God's children by the Lord Jesus Christ (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, X. 5 and Error 6). Christ earned them, so they could be given to us as a free gift.

9. Is it right to pray for earthly blessings such as financial prosperity for ourselves and others?

Certainly this is right, and we ought to do it, but always in subordination to the will of God, "as to his fatherly wisdom shall seem best." We may pray for financial prosperity and similar earthly blessings, provided we pray that IF it is God's will He will give them to us. We have no way of knowing in advance whether or not such will be His will.

10. What does the Catechism mean by "a competent portion" of earthly blessings?

By this expression the Catechism means such a supply of earthly blessings as shall be for our true temporal and spiritual welfare. If God were to make all His children millionaires, this probably would not be for the true welfare of most of them. On the other hand, in most cases dire poverty would not be for their true welfare, either. In most cases God provides His people with a moderate portion of this world's goods, from which we may conclude that He deems this to be best for them. We should not cherish an ambition to "get rich," far less to "get rich quickly." The Christian ideal is a moderate, suitable portion of earthly prosperity. God gives some people great wealth, but we should not seek it.

11. Why should we pray for contentment in the use of God's blessings?

If we do not have contentment, we cannot really enjoy and appreciate the blessings of God. The lack of a spirit of contentment will turn all blessings into temptations or curses. Contentment is an attitude of mind which God can work in us by His Holy Spirit. We should seek this blessing from Him. "Be content with such things as ye have" (Heb. 13:5); "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11); "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6).

LESSON 18

Prayer for Forgiveness

Q. 194. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, (which is, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"), acknowledging, that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt; . . .

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:12 Luke 11:4. The fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Rom. 3:9-22. Matt. 18:24,25. Psalm 130:3,4. Psalm 51:5. 1 John 1: 8,10. We and all mankind are guilty before God, and wholly unable to satisfy His justice.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "debts" in the Lord's Prayer?

The word "debts" in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:12) is used with the meaning of "sins," as shown by the parallel passage Luke 11:4. The meaning, therefore, is not commercial debts (which could be satisfied by a money payment) but penal debts — that is, obligation to suffer punishment according to the justice of God by reason of want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God. (The Greek word used in Matt. 6:12 is correctly translated "debts" in both the Authorized and Revised Versions, and therefore "debts" is preferable to "trespasses" which is used by some Churches. The word "debts" brings out more clearly the truth that we are debtors to the justice of God).

2. What aspect of sin does this petition of the Lord's Prayer concern?

It concerns the guilt of sin, which is the basic aspect of sin in the Bible. In addition to involving guilt, sin also involves pollution or uncleanness, bondage or helplessness, and misery or unhappiness. Sin condemns, defiles, enslaves, and renders miserable. But the basic, all-important truth about sin is that it condemns, it involves guilt, it brings a person under the judgment and punishment of God.

3. How is this emphasis on the guilt of sin neglected today?

At the present day it is popular to soft-pedal the guilt of sin and to place the main emphasis on the misery — personal and social — which sin produces. The guilt of sin is an unpopular idea today; the man-centered religion of the twentieth century tries to avoid this idea or explain it away. Sin is regarded as a misfortune or calamity, rather than as something deserving blame and punishment. Consequently, many modern people regard themselves as quite righteous; or if they think of themselves as sinners, they feel that they are to be pitied and consoled rather than judged and condemned.

4. What mistaken idea about guilt is common today?

Today it is very common to confuse THE FEELING OF GUILT with THE FACT OF GUILT. Popular notions of psychiatry have led many people to suppose that there is nothing to guilt beyond the feeling of guilt, and that if they can manage somehow to get rid of that troublesome feeling of guilt, they will have nothing to fear.

The legitimate practice of psychiatry deals with neurotic or mentally abnormal individuals only. Such persons may have an abnormal feeling or "complex" of guilt which destroys their happiness and usefulness, and which is entirely different from their real guilt before God. It may be possible to relieve such an abnormal feeling of guilt by psychiatric methods. But real guilt before God cannot be affected one whit by psychiatry. Guilt remains guilt, regardless of whether we are obsessed by it or unconscious of it.

Real guilt is not a mere subjective feeling, but an objective fact concerning a person's relation to God. A person may be so hardened in sin that he is entirely unconscious of his guilt, and vainly imagines himself to be a righteous person on the road to heaven. By the special work of the Holy Spirit a sinner is brought under conviction of sin, and then realizes himself to be guilty before God, and deserving of eternal punishment in hell. Imaginary guilt or the mere feeling of guilt may be removed by psychiatry, but real guilt can only be removed by the blood of Jesus Christ, the sinner's Substitute.

5. Of what forms of sin is every person guilty?

Every person is guilty of both original and actual sin. (The term "actual" as used in this connection does not mean "real," for original sin is

just as real as actual sin. Rather, the term "actual" means "pertaining to one's acts," in contrast to original sin which is the state in which we are born).

Infants, of course, are guilty only of original sin; all others are guilty of both original and actual sin. Original sin includes: (a) the guilt of Adam's first sin; (b) the lack of that original righteousness in which the human race was created; (c) the moral corruption of our whole nature. On these three counts every individual is guilty before God, quite apart from any personal actions of his own; every individual is born into this world with guilt charged against him on these three counts. Actual sin is the product, in a person's life and activity, of original sin; it includes all the sins of omission and commission which occur in the course of a person's life, as distinguished from the sin with which a person is born.

Many people today deny that original sin involves guilt. Some try to limit the scope of sin by defining it as "voluntary transgression of known law," etc. Such a definition is unbiblical because far too narrow. According to the Bible "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17) and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). David confessed that he was born in sin (Psalm 51:5); therefore according to Rom. 6:23, when he was born he deserved death.

Many people especially rebel against the doctrine that newborn infants are guilty before God by reason of original sin. Against the teaching of the Scriptures they place their unrealistic and sentimental ideas of the "innocence" and "purity" of infancy. The Bible, however, definitely teaches that infants are guilty before God (Rom. 5:14), as witnessed by the fact that they are subject to death, which is the wages of sin.

6. What can we do to take away our guilt before God?

Absolutely nothing; "neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt." Suppose that we could start tomorrow morning and live an absolutely perfect life all our days — that would be no more than our duty, and could not avail to cancel the guilt of any of our past sins. Of course, no one can start to live a perfect life anyway. We are morally bankrupt, totally debtors to the righteous judgment of God, and unable of ourselves to pay any part of the debt. Our guilt before God can be taken away only by the redemption of Jesus Christ.

LESSON 19

Prayer for Forgiveness (Continued)

Q. 194 (Continued). What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, (which is, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors") . . . we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his Beloved, continue his favor and grace to us, pardon our daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness; . . .

Scripture References:

Rom. 3:24-26. Heb. 9:22. We pray that God would, through Christ's redemption, acquit us from the guilt and penalty of sin.

Eph. 1:6,7. We pray that God would accept us is His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

2 Pet. 1:2. Hos. 14:2. Jer. 14:7. We pray that God would continue His grace toward us, and pardon our daily failings.

Rom. 15:13. Psalm 51:7-12. We pray that God would fill us with peace and joy, by a daily increasing assurance of His forgiveness.

Questions:

1. What is meant by God's free grace?

This means the undeserved love and favor of God given to sinners by God's own good pleasure. This free grace of God is the source of our salvation. It is the ultimate reason why some are saved from sin and inherit eternal life. Thus it is also the true basis of the forgiveness of our sins. We are to come to God praying for forgiveness, not on the basis of our own character, good works, good resolutions, nor even on the basis of our own faith, but only on the basis of God's own free grace.

2. How is God's free grace given to sinners?

"Through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ," that is, through the finished work of Christ in the plan of redemption. This finished work of Christ is "apprehended and applied by faith;" that is, the Holy Spirit works faith in a sinner's heart, enabling and disposing him to believe on Jesus Christ; thus Christ's finished work is apprehended by the sinner (grasped, taken hold of, appropriated), and applied to his guilty condition by the work of the Holy Spirit. The free grace of God is the SOURCE of forgiveness, the finished work of Christ is the GROUND of forgiveness, and faith is the MEANS by which forgiveness is obtained.

3. Why does the Catechism mention both the obedience and the satisfaction of Christ?

Because both are essential to His saving work for sinners. By the "obedience" of Christ is here

meant what is sometimes called His active obedience — His life-long perfect keeping of the law of God, by which He achieved a perfect righteousness which can be imputed or credited to sinners. By the "satisfaction" of Christ is meant what is sometimes called His passive obedience — His sufferings and death by which He offered a sacrifice to atone for the sins of His people so that they could be forgiven and their sins canceled. Christ both lived for His people (to give them righteousness) and died for them (to cancel their guilt).

Many present-day Christians fail to realize the importance of the active obedience of Christ. Christ had to live a perfect life under the law in order to save His people; not only must a perfect righteousness be imputed to them, but only a perfect life would meet the requirements for the sacrifice required to atone for sin. An imperfect life could not be offered to God in sacrifice for the sins of others.

4. Why does the Catechism speak of God acquitting us "both from the guilt and punishment of sin"?

It is very important that the distinction and relation between these two be grasped. Guilt means debt to God's justice, and involves obligation to suffer punishment. Christ's redemption saves us from both the guilt and the punishment. Our guilt was laid upon Him, and He suffered the punishment in our place on Calvary. Unregenerate people almost always think of salvation as deliverance from the punishment of sin; the true Christian realizes that it is first of all a matter of deliverance from the guilt of sin. Many people are afraid of going to hell, who are not at all concerned about the fact that they are guilty before God. Almost everybody wants to be saved from hell, but only the born-again Christian wants to be saved from his guilt. True Christian repentance is being sorry for the guilt of sin; false repentance is sorry only about the penalty of sin.

5. Why must we pray to God to pardon our daily failings?

When a person truly believes on Christ he is instantly justified for all eternity; the guilt of all his sins, past, present and future, is wholly canceled and he is declared to be a righteous person by reason of Christ's blood and righteousness. So far as the judicial punishment of sin is concerned, the believer is justified once and for all. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

Yet the justified person still can and daily does commit sin in thought, word and deed, by omission and by commission. These "daily failings" cannot cancel his standing as a justified person; they cannot bring him into condemnation. But they can offend his heavenly Father, and cause Him to withdraw the light of His countenance from the person's soul for a time. They cannot destroy the believer's union with God but they can interrupt and weaken his communion with God. Therefore the believer is daily to confess his sins and to pray for God's pardon for his daily failings.

6. What effect does the forgiveness of sin produce in a person's consciousness?

The forgiveness of sin results in an experience of peace and joy and an increased assurance of forgiveness and salvation. This peace, joy and assurance are wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Since they are not given to all persons in equal measure, nor to the same person at all times in the same degree, it is proper that we should pray for the bestowal and increase of these blessings in our hearts.

LESSON 20

Prayer for Forgiveness (Continued)

Q. 194 (Continued). What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, (which is, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"), . . . we pray . . . that God of his free grace would . . . acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, etc. . . . which we are the rather imboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offences.

Scripture References:

Luke 11:4. Matt. 6:14,15; 18:35. Our heavenly Father requires of His children a sincere readiness to forgive others their offences against them.

Questions:

1. Why is the phrase "as we forgive our debtors" of special importance at the present time?

This phrase is of special importance at the present time because a certain type of the teaching called Modern Dispensationalism uses this phrase as the basis of a claim that the Lord's Prayer is "on legal ground" and not suited to "the dispensation of grace" or "the age of the Church." This peculiar teaching is especially prominent in the notes of the popular Scofield Reference Bible, which states in a note on Matt. 6:12 ("as we forgive our debtors") that this is "legal ground" in contrast to Ephesians 4:32 "which is grace." The Scofield Bible adds (page 1002), "Under law forgiveness is continued upon a like spirit in us; under grace we are forgiven for Christ's sake, and exhorted to forgive because we have been forgiven." On pages 1089-1090 the Scofield Bible informs us that "Used as a form, the Lord's prayer is, dispensationally, upon legal, not church ground . . . . it makes human forgiveness, as under the

law it must, the condition of divine forgiveness; an order which grace exactly reverses (cf. Eph. 4:32)." Because of this Dispensationalist teaching about the Lord's Prayer, some ministers have become so convinced that it is not a suitable prayer for Christians to use, that they are unwilling to have it used in the public worship of the Church.

2. How can this Dispensationalist error concerning the Lord's Prayer be answered?

See Lesson 11 of this series, on Q. 187 of the Larger Catechism, in the previous issue of Blue Banner Faith and Life. The Dispensationalist error concerning the Lord's Prayer, as exemplified by the Scofield Reference Bible, is open to criticism on two counts. First, it is based on a mistaken notion of the character of the period from Moses to Christ, namely, that that period was an era of law in contrast to grace. Secondly, it is based on a misunderstanding of the meaning of the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer. We shall consider each of these matters in the following questions.

3. Was the period from Moses to Christ an era of law in contrast to grace?

Certainly not. This is one of the outstanding errors of Modern Dispensationalism. It was an era of law, certainly, but not of law in contrast to grace, nor law in place of grace. In the period from Moses to Christ, the law was subsidiary to the system of grace. "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19); ". . . by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20); ". . . the law entered, that the offence might abound" (Rom. 5:20); "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). All these and many other Scriptures that might be cited show that the function of the law, in the period from Moses to Christ, was not to serve as an alternative to the system of grace, but as a subsidiary to the system of grace, to convince people of their utter sinfulness and their need of divine redemption.

The period from Moses to Christ was not "legal ground" in the sense affirmed by the Scofield Reference Bible (which on page 20 actually affirms that at Sinai the people of Israel "rashly accepted the law" and "exchanged grace for law"). Since this Dispensationalist teaching is certainly erroneous, and greatly misunderstands the essential character of the period from Moses to Christ, it must also be erroneous to say that the Lord's Prayer is "on legal ground."

Modern Dispensationalism confuses the unscriptural, legalistic Judaism of the scribes and Pharisees with the pure, gracious, divinely-revealed religion of the Old Testament. Judaism and the real religion of the Old Testament cannot be equated in this way, for the former is a legalistic perversion of the latter. (See **Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments**, by Geerhardus Vos, pp. 141-145; published 1948 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan).

4. How does Dispensationalism misunderstand the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer?

Modern Dispensationalism, as exemplified by the Scofield Reference Bible, sees a conflict between Matt. 6:12 ("Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors") and Eph. 4:32 (Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"). The former of these texts is said to be forgiveness "under law" and the latter is said to be forgiveness "under grace." It is stated that "Under law forgiveness is conditioned upon a like spirit in us; under grace we are forgiven for Christ's sake, and exhorted to forgive because we have been forgiven" (Scofield Reference Bible, p. 1002).

We should realize that there is no real conflict between these two texts. They merely present different aspects or phases of the same matter. From Adam and Eve to the end of time, no human being ever was, ever will be or ever could be forgiven by God except FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, and on the basis of Christ's blood and righteousness. Forgiveness is the very essence of GRACE, and it is simply meaningless to talk about "forgiveness under law" and "forgiveness under grace." ALL forgiveness is under grace; otherwise it would not be forgiveness. If we earn it by obeying the law, then it is wages, not forgiveness. All the Old Testament saints were forgiven BY THE GRACE OF GOD, on the basis of the blood and righteousness of Christ, through faith in the promised Messiah, as evidenced by their obedient compliance with the ordinance of sacrifice. In their case, no less than in the case of Christians of the present day, willingness to forgive others was the fruit and product of God having first graciously forgiven them their sins.

Those who hold that God did not forgive the Old Testament saints until He saw in their hearts a spirit of forgiveness of others, not only grossly misread the Old Testament, but virtually deny the doctrine of the total depravity of fallen man. If man is wholly sinful, as the Bible certainly teaches, how can he do good until his heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit? How can he begin to love and forgive his fellow man UNTIL HE HAS BEEN RECONCILED TO GOD AND GIVEN A NEW HEART? And what does being reconciled to God mean, if not divine forgiveness of a person's sins? Nobody ever really loved or forgave his fellow man, in the Bible sense of the words, until he was first by grace reconciled to God, that is, forgiven by God. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7:16). Does a selfish, hateful, unregenerate heart that is at enmity with God, love and forgive others? Not until divine grace works a change and the person is renewed and forgiven.

On the other hand, it is as true today as it was in Old Testament times that God requires His people to have a loving and forgiving spirit toward others. We are not merely "exhorted" to forgive because we have been forgiven; we are COMMANDED to forgive, as a matter of duty. If we are not willing to forgive others, we should question the reality of our own Christian experience. If our life does not produce the FRUITS of salvation, what ground have we for assurance that we are saved? Genuine love of the brethren is an evidence that a person is truly saved: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3:14). The person who is unwilling to forgive his brother, abideth in death; that is, the person who does not love his brother is unsaved. Therefore the Bible teaches that the person who is unwilling to forgive his brother is himself unforgiven by God. Forgiving our brother is of course not the GROUND of God forgiving us; rather, it is the EVIDENCE that God HAS FORGIVEN US. Where there is the real root, there will also be the fruit; if there is no fruit, then the real root is absent.

Looked at from one point of view, our forgiving others is a moral duty which is enjoined upon us. Looked at from another point of view, our forgiving others is a fruit and evidence of the grace of God in our lives. There is no real conflict between the two. It is only by grace that any sinner is ever enabled to do his duty; the fact that we do our duty (forgive others) is an evidence of God's grace in us. Since forgiving others is the fruit of a person himself being forgiven by God, it could never have been the "condition" of being forgiven by God (as Dispensationalists hold that it was "under the law"). If we want to use the word "condition" at all in this connection, we should only say that our willingness to forgive others is the condition of our ASSURANCE that God has forgiven us; and this was as true in Old Testament times as today.

5. What is the true interpretation of the phrase "as we forgive our debtors"?

The true meaning of this expression is that given by the Catechism, namely, that we are "imboldened to ask" and "encouraged to expect" that God will forgive our sins, "when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offences."

Our readiness to forgive others is an evidence of the gracious working of God's Holy Spirit in our hearts; it is, therefore, an evidence that we have been reconciled to God and that we have a true, saving faith in Jesus Christ. When we are privileged to have this boldness and assurance, we can come to God as children to a Father, confessing our daily sins with full confidence that they will be forgiven — that He will treat us as His children and not as His enemies.

(To be continued)

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here is not to be understood as necessarily implying an endorsement of everything contained in it. Please purchase books from your local bookstore or direct from the publishers; do not send orders to the publisher of "Blue Banner Faith and Life."

SINGING WITH UNDERSTANDING, by Kenneth W. Osbeck. 1979, pp. 323, hardbound. $9.95. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

This book on hymnology is elaborately and attractively gotten up but it is a total loss from the standpoint of the Reformed Christian who holds the historic Reformed principle of worship, as set forth in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 51, "The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his Word" (A.D. 1643). This historical Reformed principle of worship has always been held by the more orthodox Presbyterian bodies of Scottish origin to forbid singing of hymns other than the Psalms, and to forbid instrumental music in worship. Apparently author Osbeck has never even heard of this principle. The book might well be sub-titled "will-worship incorporated"–(Col. 2:23).

There is no general index. The Scottish Covenanters are apparently not even mentioned. Everywhere it is simply assumed that human preference, taste and expediency are the determining factors. "The Book of Psalms with Music" (Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America) is not mentioned. Nor is Francis Rouse, whose metrical version of the Psalms was debated and then approved by the historic Westminster Assembly. Luther is mentioned; Calvin is not. Christina Rossetti is not mentioned. Calvin Coolidge, Thomas Carlyle and Napoleon Bonaparte are quoted.

That many oppose extra-Biblical hymns on principle and as a matter of conscience is nowhere even suggested.

It is a bad day when a book on worship quotes Napoleon Bonaparte and neither John Calvin nor the Westminster Assembly. There are several denominations,

world-wide, which as a matter of principle sing only the Biblical Psalms, without instrumental accompaniment. Author Osbeck seems unaware of their existence.
—J. G. Vos

LAYMAN'S GUIDE TO INTERPRETING THE BIBLE, A, by Walter A. Henrichsen. 1978, pp. 231, paperback. $4.95. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506.

This book is intended for the layman who lacks formal theological education but is a serious student of Scripture. It is not meant for the merely casual reader of the Bible nor for the opinionated person who thinks he knows it all already. The church officer who said "I will not believe in predestination even if the Bible teaches it" will not have the patience to use this book as it is meant to be used.

Starting with basic principles of Bible interpretation, this book advances step by step laying down tried and true methods of valid interpretation, and pointing out the common errors and pitfalls that await the over-confident and unwary.

The author is at pains to warn against the easy going skepticism that says "You can prove anything by the Bible" and the superficial subjectivism which says "I have a right to my own ideas about what the Bible means." Everywhere clear and definite, the author makes his points and makes them well. The Bible at every point means what it means, not what the reader would like to have it mean. Our task as serious, sincere and honest Bible students is to search out what it means, rather than accepting the superficial ideas which aboud today. Recommended to our readers. —J. G. Vos

DIVINE HEALING OF THE BODY, by J. Sidlow Baxter. 1979, Hardbound, pp. 293. $7.95. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

The author presents a survey of Christian thought on this subject from the earliest Christian times to the present. He presents a moderate view, neither claiming that all pain and sickness of Christians can be healed by divine power, nor ruling out divine healing altogether. In this respect he parallels Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones (The Supernatural in Medicine, in this reviewer's opinion the best thing available on this subject. C.M.F. Publications, 157 Waterloo Road, London, England SE1 8XN).

Chapter 6 deals with the question "Is Healing in the Atonement?" Here the author betrays a basic theological confusion. The term atonement refers to the judicial expiation of guilt. It operates in the legal or judicial sphere. Atonement concerns guilt and its forgiveness. Sickness and pain, on the other hand, are consequences of sin. Is yellow round or square? How many feelings are there in a square mile? One might as well speak of forgiving someone for having measles or leprosy as to speak of healing being in the atonement. This confusion of theological thought is unfortunate. It will lead to further confusion in people's thinking. Indeed, if healing is in the atonement, then every human for whom Christ suffered and died is certain to be healed in this present life, just as surely as he or she is certain to be forgiven and justified in relation to God's law. —J. G. Vos

UNHAPPY SECRETS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, by Philip Yancey and Tim Stafford. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. 1979, hardbound, pp. 157. $6.95.

Promoted by Youth for Christ International, this book deals with failures, tensions and disappointments in the Christian life. There are many pictures, some of which add to the effectiveness of the book. The doctrine is evangelical, the impact aimed at college and university students. The need for sincerity and commitment is emphasized. Should be helpful to young people with problems and "hang-ups". —J. G. Vos

HOW TO GIVE AWAY YOUR MONEY: What the Bible Says About Stewardship. By Simon Webley. Paperback, pp. 58, 1978. $1.75. InterVarsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, IL 60515.

A simple, ably presented tract on stewardship, by a Christian business man in Ireland. Much usable, practical Biblical counsel. —J. G. Vos

THE HOMOSEXUAL WAY—A CHRISTIAN OPTION?, David Field, ed., pp. 52, paperback. $1.95. InterVarsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, IL 60515. 1979.

Sub-title is "A Concise and Penetrating Analysis of What the Bible Says About Homosexuality." A series of diverse viewpoints are presented. The various authors, in general, lack conviction of the Bible's normative authority. Some hold a Reformed view of the normative character of Scripture, some don't. The result is confusion. One contributor is a Roman Catholic who of course regards the church rather than Scripture as the authority. The authors mentioned or cited, in general, lack conviction of the Bible's absolute normative authority. In a "Brief Annotated Bibliography" at the end of the book, a Roman Catholic author is cited, and two Protestant women who are known to hold a "liberal" view of Scripture. This book provokes discussion but will need to be carefully handled. —J. G. Vos

LETTERS FOR RELUCTANT LEADERS (AND EAGER ONES TOO). Eleven studies on 1 and 2 Timothy, by Ruth Lichtenberger. Inter-Varsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, IL 60515. 1978, pp. 71, paperback. $1.95.

Questions on these two Epistles of Paul, with blanks for writing in the answers. The most controversial text in 1 Timothy today, 1 Tim. 2:12 ("do not permit a woman to teach. . .") is by-passed with a series of generalites. The normative character is obscured. —J. G. Vos

THE GOLDEN COW: MATERIALISM IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHURCH, by John White. Paperback, 1979, pp. 175. $3.50. InterVarsity Press, Box F. Downers Grove, IL 60515.

An able and telling exposure of the mammon-worship that plagues much of the professing Church today. Recommended; –J. G. Vos

DANIEL: AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY, by Joyce Baldwin. Hardbound, $7.95, pp. 210. 1978. InterVarsity Press, Box F. Downers Grove, IL 60515.

This book is part of the InterVarsity's Tyndale Series of Old Testament Commentaries. Many scholarly footnotes, but no index or bibliography. Scholarly, precise, true to the Scriptures. Recommended.
–J. G. Vos

DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY ON PHILIPPIANS, by F. B. Meyer. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI, 49501. 1978, reprint of some date prior to 1929. Paperback, (Kivar), pp. 261. $3.50.

F. B. Meyer was an evangelical churchman of the Church of England, who lived 1847-1929. The reviewer was unable to ascertain the date of original publication of the present volume, and can only say that it must have been prior to 1929. Why publishers try to keep the original date of publication of books they are reprinting a deep, dark secret, the reviewer can only guess. Perhaps it is to lead the Christian reading public to think that a book is recent or contemporary. If so, such caution is needless. This book stands on its real merit regardless of date or original publication.

A major theological controversy of the 1800's hangs on the interpretation of Philippians 2:5-8, where we read that Christ, in His incarnation, "emptied himself." Liberals have tried to claim that He emptied Himself of **His Deity**, so that in earth He was a mere man, not the eternal Son of God. Orthodox theologians have held that He emptied Himself, not of His deity, but of **His glory** and of **the use of His divine attributes**. Meyer rings true on this question (pages 85,86). These pages alone are worth the price of the book. Heartily recommended.
–J. G. Vos

HUSBAND AND WIFE: The Sexes in Scripture and Society. By Peter DeJong and Donald R. Wilson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. Pp. 224, 1970, hardbound. $6.95.

This book by two authors is dedicated to "Char, my wife". Is she Mrs. DeJong or Mrs. Wilson?

The book contains a wealth of viewpoints and opinions, convictions and beliefs, on many mooted questions of the present day. The question of ordination of women to church office seems to be omitted. Throughout the book there is manifested a tendency to regard the Biblical date on the role of woman as "culturally conditioned." The reviewer makes bold to ask how is the following culturally conditioned: "Adam was first formed, then Eve. Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Timothy 2:13,14).

In the reviewer's opinion the most significant and Biblically grounded book on this subject is **The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Men and Women**, by George W. Knight III. Baker Book House, 1977. This book is not referred to or mentioned, nor listed in the Bibliography. –J. G. Vos

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES, by Cornelis Vanderwaal. Series of Bible study handbooks. Volume 1, Genesis-Exodus, pp. 148. Vol. 2, Leviticus-Ruth, pp. 121. Vol. 7. Matthew-Luke, pp. 99. Vol. 8. John-Romans, pp. 105. All paperbacks. Translated from Dutch. Original title **Sola Scriptura**. 1978, no price stated. Paideia Press, P.O. Box 1450, St. Catherine's, Ontario, Canada L2R 7J8.

Written from the standpoint of faith in the Bible as God's Word, this series of studies of Biblical books seeks to avoid mere moralism (too often found in Bible studies, especially of the Old Testament), and to center on the covenant-redemptive character of the Bible. Recommended. –J. G. Vos

THE GOSPEL IN AMERICA: THEMES IN THE STORY OF AMERICA'S EVANGELICALS, by John D. Woodbridge, Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch. 1979 hardbound, pp. 286. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. $9.95.

This book treats "Evangelical" as the highest category of Christian truth and orthodoxy. Many who would prefer to be called "Reformed" are here merely listed as "evangelicals". The Reformed Faith is listed or treated merely as a variety of evangelicalism. Arminianism, Dispensationalism, Pentecostalism and many other "isms" are included under the broad term "evangelical". While the book contains a wealth of information and much of value, it does not aim high enough. –J. G. Vos

BEAUTY CARE FOR THE FEET, by LeRoy Koopman. Paperback, pocket size, pp. 92. $1.50. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 49506.

The title is not to be taken literally, but metaphorically. The book deals with Christian conduct. The Table of Contents will give an idea of what the author has to say: Even feet can be beautiful. Beautiful feet walk by faith. Beautiful feet are guided by the Holy Spirit. Beautiful feet do not trample holy ground. Beautiful feet walk in harmony with others. Beautiful feet bring good news. Beautiful feet will walk the streets of heaven. The doctrine is sound, the counsel relevant, the price reasonable. Recommended. –J. G. Vos

LADY HUNTINGTON & HER FRIENDS, compiled by Helen C. Knight. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI. Paperback. pp. 292, pocket size. $3.45. 1979, reprint of 1853.

The sub-title reads: The Revival of the Work of God in the days of Wesley, Whitefield, Romaine, Venn, and Others. This little book is the story of the origins of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist denomination of Great Britain. This group arose out of the Wesley-Whitefield revival, and for a long time had a hard conflict with the Anglican (Episcopal) Establishment.

Selina Hastings Huntingdon, with the title Countess, was the central figure in this movement. Her picture on the cover of this little book seems to indicate that she was a pretty determined woman. Actually although she was not ordained and held no church office, she exercised many of the functions of a bishop and of a presbytery—providing for the formation of congregations, calling of pastors, etc. God blessed this revival movement, we may be sure, not because of this unscriptural female leadership, but in spite of it and because of the Gospel truth which the movement held and effectively promoted. —J. G. Vos

THE PROPHET JONAH: HIS CHARACTER AND MISSION TO NINEVEH, by Hugh Martin. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI. 1979, reprint of 1866. Paperback pp. 460. $6.95.

An exposition of the Book of Jonah, reprinted from more than 100 years ago. True to the Bible, and containing much of permanent value. However, 1866 was not 1979, and the problems and questions people face today are somewhat different from then. Today people are telling us that the Book of Jonah is a parable or teaching model and not really historical. Martin takes the historical character for granted. We agree that it is historical, but a student of the Book of Jonah needs to know what can be said in defense of this in the face of modern unbelief.

The Bible in one place says Jonah was swallowed by "a great fish" and in another place it was by "a whale". Which was it, and what is the exact meaning of the two Hebrew words used? Questions of this kind do not seem to have concerned author Martin.

The binding and print are very good. However the style is prolix, long-winded, very wordy indeed. Everything of real importance and value in this book could have been said in much less than 460 pages! Much of the contents consists of spiritual applications to the sanctification of believers, etc. —J. G. Vos

WE BELONG TOGETHER, by Bruce Milne. InterVarsity Press. Box F, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1978, pp. 128, paperback. $2.95.

This book is hard to hold open. Very narrow inner margin, next to binding. Requires constant muscular effort of both hands. The cover portrays what appears to be intended as a picture of Jesus between a man and woman on His two sides. We object on principle to so-called "pictures of Jesus". Jesus is not a human person. He is a divine person with two natures, divine and human. No art can portray His divine person and nature, only His human nature. This leads to an improper stress on the humanity of Jesus to the disparagement of His Deity.

Apart from the foregoing strictures, this book has a good Christian message and much sound and helpful counsel. The basic theme is "Fellowship: an idea whose hour has come". This is worked out along several lines.
—J. G. Vos

SOMEONE WHO BECKONS: READINGS & PRAYERS FOR 60 DAYS, compiled by Timothy Dudley Smith. InterVarsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1978, pp. 135, paperback $3.95.

The compiler of this devotional book is an Anglican of Great Britain. Some of the contributors are C. S. Lewis, Lewis' wife Joy Davidman, G. K. Chesterton, Dorothy Sayers, John Newton, William Temple, Paul Tournier, Helmut Thielicke, O. Hallesby, John Bunyan, J. B. Phillips and T. S. Eliot. Not all of these figures represent consistent Biblical Christianity, or what we call "the Reformed Faith."

While there is much good and much of value in this book, it should be used with discrimination. —J. G. Vos

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION, by Norman Anderson. InterVarsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1978. pp. 162, paperback. $3.95.

The cover asks the question, "After twenty centuries, why is this doctrine still a mystery?" If the word "mystery" is used in the sense of a truth that baffles human reason and understanding, we might reply that it always will be a mystery, even in heaven in eternity, for it concerns God and God is inherently incomprehensible to the human mind.

The author endeavors to set forth and defend the historic orthodox doctrine of Christ's incarnation. The present-day debate on this subject is outlined, and the historic orthodox view is defended. Too advanced for the ordinary church member and even for the ordinary college student. Of interest especially to theological students and ministers. For such it has a real value.

On the cover there appears what seems to this reviewer to be two angels holding between them a veiled human head. This we consider improper. All attempts to portray Jesus visually are wrong. They inevitably favor His humanity at the expense of His deity. —J. G. Vos

THE ANDROMEDANS AND OTHER PARABLES, by Denis Osborne. InterVarsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1978, pp. 95, paperback. $2.50.

A somewhat fanciful story of visitors from outer space and what they found here on earth. Of interest specially to students and scholars with inquiring minds. Deals chiefly with problems of science-faith relationships. The outer-space visitors rule out telepathy as an impossibility because it cannot be explained in terms of physics. Of course, John Warwick Montgomery **(Principalities and Powers)** and John Stafford Wright **(Man in the Process of Time)** are two earth-bound scholars who definitely hold the contrary.

This book is difficult to hold open. The reader has to fight it constantly. It requires constant muscular effort of both hands. —J. G. Vos

IF YOU HAVEN'T GOT A PRAYER. By Stephen N. Crotts. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill., 60515. 1979, pp. 57, paperback. $1.25.

The sub-title is "A Beginner's Guide to Walking with God." Four chapters discussing prayer from a generally evangelical perspective, oriented to practical concerns. The first chapter answers the common problems raised by those having difficulty with prayer, e.g., "my mind wanders". In the second chapter Crotts presents four basic elements of prayer, viz., praise, confession, thanksgiving and petition. Then he suggests various aspects of "advanced" prayer, e.g., public prayer and conversational prayer. Many will object to the recommendation that one listen quietly awaiting God's answer—that God will speak directly to the petitioner. The last chapter speaks to the need for and practice of daily prayer. The Bibliography at the end of the booklet omits such important works as John Bunyan's **Prayer.**

—L. Coppes

GUIDANCE: WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT KNOWING GOD'S WILL, by Oliver R. Barclay. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill., 60515. 1978, pp. 59, paperback. $1.75.

This is a booklet in twelve short chapters written from a generally evangelical perspective. Barclay argues that guidance is ordinarily through God's work of providence and through Biblical revelation. He discourages seeking God's will through one's feeling and through signs. He encourages the use of sanctified common sense. Unfortunately he allows for direct extra-biblical messages including the "laying of fleeces". The writer's style is clear and easily understood. Except for the reservations mentioned above this book is recommended.

—L. Coppes

REFORMED DOGMATICS, by Heinrich Heppe, translated by G. T. Thompson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. 1978, pp. 721, paperback. $9.95.

This reprint of the translation of Heppe's classic work will be welcomed by students of Systematic Theology. Heppe has done an amazing job of collecting and collating the views of fifty-seven Reformed theologians, from John Calvin to the middle of the 19th century. Under every point he sets forth the doctrine, and then the views supporting it, expanding it, or contradicting it. The translator has annotated every entry. Thus anyone wishing to pursue the discussion or check the quotations may do so readily. There is a minimal use of foreign language terms. One may be disappointed by the translator's comments (always bracketed), since they consistently reflect a Barthian or Neo-orthodox bias.

—L. Coppes

DAYLIGHT: DAILY READINGS WITH THE BIBLE, by Andrew Kuyvenhoven. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 49506. 1977, pp. 370, paperback. $4.95.

This is a book of daily devotionals, one for each day of the year (including February 29). The author, a Christian Reformed minister, is known as a major contributor to **Today** (formerly **The Family Altar**). Each month's study focuses on a different theme or Biblical book. Each devotional is one page long, and simply and clearly written. The author writes from a Reformed or Calvinistic perspective. He evidences strong influence from Abraham Kuyper's views of the Kingdom of God and its task, viz., to clean up the slums and conquer disease. His pastoral experience is seen at every turn. Those who use this booklet will find their lives much enriched. Definitely recommended. —L. Coppes

PROMISE AND DELIVERANCE, I AND II, by S. G. De Graaf, translated by H. Evan Runner and Elizabeth W. Runner. Paideia Press, Box 1450, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canda, L2R 7J8. 1977, pp. 423 and 456. $10.95 each.

These volumes treat Old Testament history from the Creation to the ministry of Nehemiah. The author writes from the Kuyperian (pre-Dooyeweerdian) perspective. His purpose is to help the reader tell the Bible stories to children from a covenantal viewpoint. This reviewer has used these works in family devotions with his children (ages 6 and 10), and finds them excellent.

The English version reads simply. It forcibly and constantly summons the reader to covenantal responsibility. However, there are a few shortcomings. Most obvious is the almost total ignoring of extra-biblical history. This work is dated archaeologically, e.g., De Graaf intimates that there were several Baals (there was only one); he does not understand the ancient practice of dueling to settle a war, the importance of the "blind and lame" on the walls of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:6), etc. Those concerned about the problem of evolution and related matters will find no help here. De Graaf holds to presumptive regeneration. Also he speaks of God giving up on His elect (someone who belongs to Christ; I, p. 104).

The author's postmillennialism surfaces when he remarks that believers shall be glorified along with the earth (I, p. 144). Some would disagree when he concludes that Zipporah did not repent, and with his chronology of the Book of Judges.

For those who are concerned, it is worth noting that Abraham Kuyper did not share what have become identified as the alarming elements of the Dooyeweerdian-Toronto positions.

Definitely recommended. —J. Coppes

THE FINAL CURTAIN: STUDIES IN ESCHATOLOGY, by John H. Bratt. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1978, pp. 118, paperback. $1.95.

The author is a professor of Biblical studies in Calvin College, Grand Rapids. This little book is an excellent production. Clear, simple, interesting, it is a presentation of standard Reformed doctrines of eschatology or "the last things".

Christians of ordinary high school education should find no difficulty in understanding Bratt. "Eschatology" means the doctrine of "the last things" or the fulfillment of prophecy about the end of the world and related matters. This book takes up first, individual eschatology: death, immortality, the state of the soul after death. The views of Roman Catholics and Universalists are contrasted with orthodox Biblical teachings. Secondly, Cosmic eschatology: the signs of the times, the grand climax, and the eternal state. All this is briefly treated in harmony with sound Biblical teaching.

At the close of each chapter there is a page or so of provocative questions for further study and discussion. These cannot all be answered by studying the chapter—they may require additional Biblical study and/or reading of standard authors on their subjects.

Incidentally, the last words of the book are a quotation from this reviewer's father: "The central abode of the redeemed will be in heaven, although the renewed earth will be accessible to them and a part of their inheritance" (G. Vos).

Highly recommended to our readers. —J. G. Vos

CHRISTIANITY VS. DEMOCRACY, by Norman DeJong. The Craig Press, P.O. Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 1978, pp. 170. $4.95. Paperback.

The cover gives the title as "Christianity and Democracy", but the title page and the running heads throughout the book give it as "Christianity vs. Democracy." The author, Norman DeJong, is not identified in any way. (He was a professor at Dordt College, Iowa). There is an extensive bibliography but no index.

This book will be of interest chiefly to students of philosophy, educational theory and political science. It is a study of the life, thought and influence of Boyd H. Bode (1873-1953), a philosophical thinker of German-Dutch (East Frisian) background. The son of a Christian Reformed minister, Bode gradually reacted against his background and early faith and became, in plain language, an unbeliever so far as orthodox historic Christianity is concerned.

Bode became widely known and highly regarded in American educational and philosophic circles. He held professorships in various important institutions, and wrote numerous books and scholarly articles. He was at various times friendly to and critical of the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey and also William James. As time went on Bode became increasingly alienated from historic Christianity. He saw Christianity and Democracy as antithetical principles, and held that Democracy, not Christianity must prevail as the wave of the future.

"Judged from a Christian perspective, democracy is that ideal or urge of sinful man whereby he seeks to become a lawmaker rather than law-abider. It is the attempt to claim authority and power for oneself while rejecting the power and authority of others. It is the spirit or religious attitude which claims sovereignty for man while denying the sovereignty of God. Jefferson, Dewey, Bode, and Brameld all breathed that spirit. For them democracy was not compatible with orthodox Christianity, but the antithesis of it" (p. 163).—J. G. Vos

THE TIME IS FULFILLED, by F. F. Bruce, 1978, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. Paperback, pp. 128, $2.95.

As one of the early Church fathers stated it, "the New Testament lies concealed in the Old, and the Old is revealed in the New." Dr. Bruce shows this to be true, bringing forward evidence along five lines. He shows that the Old Testament as a book is incomplete, but anticipates the fulfillment which we find in the New Testament. Written from the standpoint of evangelical faith in the Scriptures, this book is perhaps too scholarly and technical for the ordinary Christian reader. It is more suited for theological students and minsiters of the Word. It abounds in footnotes with references to scholarly literature which will prove to be **terra incognita** to the ordinary though alert church member. On page 99 "early" should be "earthly." —J. G. Vos

AN INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL TRUTHS, by Alexander C. DeJong. 1978, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Paperback, pp. 96. $2.45.

An excellent introduction to Biblical doctrines, specially suited to individual use as a companion to study of the Bible itself. Clearly and simply written, well suited as a study guide for the ordinary Christian. At the end of each chapter or section there are sentences

with blanks to be filled in by the student. Even such difficult subjects as predestination and free will are handled with remarkable clarity and great faithfulness to the Word. At the end there is an eight-page glossary with definitions of relgious terms. An excellent production, heartily recommended to our readers. —J. G. Vos

THE EMOTIONS OF GOD'S PEOPLE. Sub-title, Helping Those who are Hurting. By Millard J. Sall. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1978, paperback, pp. 155. $3.95.

The author is a clinical psychologist of recognized standing. From the standpoint of evangelical Christian faith he deals with the emotional lives and problems of present-day Christians. Some of the matters treated are rebellion, impulsiveness, obsessive-compulsive personality, depression, and divine guidance. Biblical characters discussed are Esau, John the Baptist and Joseph. Many practical suggestions and counsels. —J. G. Vos

MY SON, MY BROTHER, MY FRIEND: A NOVEL IN LETTERS, by Dale C. Willard. InterVarsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1978, paperback, pp. 107. $3.95.

A short novel in the unusual form of a series of letters between four persons: Robert Cunningham, his son, his father and his friend. Written in colloquial, conversational style, it is easy reading. Conveys a definite Christian message. —J. G. Vos

THE BIBLE AS A BOOK, by Gerardus Van Der Leeuw. Paideia Press, P.O. Box 1450, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada L2R 7J8. 1978, paperback, pp. 89. Price not stated.

This little book was originally published in Dutch in (date not stated). The author says: "There are many people who read the Bible not as a book but only as an anthology. They limit themselves to the 'beautiful' parts —a number of Psalms, a few pieces of prophecy, some well-known stories, the gospels (rarely in their context), and the letters of Paul (seldom as letters but as collections of texts instead). They know that one should read Isaiah 53, 1 Corinthians 13. . . If we do not read the Bible as a book, we will never be able to read it as though we had never read it before, and then the admiration and astonishment that takes hold of someone who is actually reading the Bible for the first time will escape us. Worse yet, we will not get to know the Author of the Bible either." Much good counsel on how to read the Bible. —J. G. Vos

HOME BEFORE DARK, by Margaret Johnson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1978, pp. 158, hardbound. $6.95.

"What happens when a tragic accident claims the lives of an entire family—a true story told by the best-selling author of 'Eighteen—No Time to Waste.' " How Christians met tragedy in real life, and how they found God's grace sufficient for their every need. —J. G. Vos

BUT I DIDN'T WANT A DIVORCE: PUTTING YOUR LIFE BACK TOGETHER, by Andre Bustanoby. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. 1978, pp. 174, hardbound, $6.95.

A comprehensive treatment of divorce from the Christian point of view. Summary of divorce laws in the various states. Summary of Biblical teachings on divorce. The emotional pain of divorce. The effect of divorce on the family's children. Sex, love and the divorced person. Biblical teaching on the remarriage of divorced persons. John Murray's outstanding book on divorce is not mentioned. Perhaps the author did not know it existed. The author pleads that divorced persons be treated with compassion by the church and its members. —J. G. Vos

DISCIPLE IN BLUE SUEDE SHOES, by Carl Perkins. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1978, pp. 146, hardbound. $6.95.

The autobiography of a professional performer and musician. Specially of interest to those who love music. Illustrated. An earnest Christian testimony. —J. G. Vos

CHRISTIAN APPROACHES TO PHILOSOPHY, TO HISTORY, by C. Gregg Singer. Craig Press, Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 1978, pp. 38, paperback. $1.00.

This will be of interest mainly to students and educators. The author seeks to bring Christian truth to bear on philosophy and on the philsophy of history. Longer books have been written on this subject, but this one attempts much in little space. Unfortunately no index. The author warns against taking our basic presuppositions from secular scholars who are really unbelievers. —J. G. Vos

Religious Terms Defined

COMMUNION. Sharing or mutual participation. It is used in this sense in the phrase "the communion of saints". In 1 Cor. 10:16, the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are spoken of as the communion of the body and blood of Christ; that is, the Lord's Supper involves a sharing or mutual participation in the benefits of Christ's atonement. From this text the Lord's Supper has come to be called the Communion, or the Communion service.

CONCEPTION, THE IMMACULATE. The false Roman Catholic doctrine, made a dogma in 1854, that the Virgin Mary was born without original sin. The term "Immaculate Conception" is often incorrectly used by Protestants when they mean the Virgin Birth of Christ.

CONFESSION. That element of prayer which expresses our unworthiness and ill-desert because of our sins, and our sincere sorrow for them.

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

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

CONSCIENCE. That aspect of the human personality which registers disapproval when the person violates his moral code. Conscience itself is not the standard of right and wrong; it only registers the person's relation to whatever moral code he believes in. Conscience needs to be enlightened by the Word of God (Scripture) and by the Holy Spirit. It is wrong to speak of Christian people as living "according to the dictates of their own conscience." Conscience is not to be a dictator. Christians are to live according to the dictates of God revealed in Scripture.

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

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

CONVERSION. The sinner's turning from sin to God, which is the effect of the Holy Spirit's act of regeneration. (Note: the term **Conversion** always includes **Repentance**, and is also sometimes used in the broad sense to include both the Spirit's act of regeneration and the sinner's response to that act in turning to God.)

CONVICTION OF SIN. The troubled state of mind produced in a sinner by the Word and Spirit of God, wherein the sinner is profoundly conscious of being under the wrath of God, morally unclean, and unable to save himself.

CORRUPTION OF NATURE. The depraved, ungodly character or "heart" which became the natural condition of all descendants of Adam (except Jesus Christ) as the result of the guilt of Adam's first sin being imputed to them.

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

COVENANT OF GRACE. The covenant made in eternity between God the Father and God the Son as the representative of all the elect, by which the eternal salvation of the elect is fully provided for and infallibly guaranteed, and which was in time revealed to the people of God and put into execution according to the divine plan.

COVENANT OF WORKS. A covenant made by God, at the dawn of human history with Adam as the representative of the human race, according to which Adam's obedience to a specific revelation of God's will would bring unchangeable righteousness and eternal life to the entire human race, whereas his disobedience would result in the fall of mankind into a state of sin, misery, and subjection to the wrath and curse of God, both here and hereafter.

COVETOUSNESS. Violation of the Tenth Commandment; a sinful, inordinate desire for something which is our neighbor's, not our own.

CREATION. The origination, by the direct, almighty power of God, of that which is truly new as to form, as to matter, or as to both form and matter. "The Work of Creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good" (**Shorter Catechism**, 9). Creation is sharply distinguished from **Providence**, in which God works without originating anything truly new. The common view known as Theistic Evolution stands condemned because it confuses Creation and Providence, as well as on other grounds.

CREED. A formal statement of religious belief. Creeds may be long or short; they may be orthodox or erroneous. The word "Creed" is used today chiefly in a contemptuous and disparaging sense, as if creeds are necessarily bad and to be shunned. But there can be no real Christianity without creed, either written or unwritten. There are great advantages, such as clarity and definiteness or precision, in having a written creed. When we hear people speak contemptuosly of creeds, we should realize that they are treating precise statement of truth as something contemptible.

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

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Later contributions will be acknowledged 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 less than half of the amount needed. Many thanks to all who have helped. Your contributions are deductible from your Federal taxable income if you live in the United States. Documentary proof of this is available if needed by any contributor.

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Recessional

June 22, 1897

God of our fathers, known of old–
  Lord of our far-flung battle-line–
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
  Dominion over palm and pine–
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies–
  The captains and the kings depart–
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
  An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

Far-call'd our navies melt away–
  On dune and headland sinks the fire–
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
  Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!

Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
  Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe–
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
  Or lesser breeds without the Law–
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard–
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding calls not Thee to guard!
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

–RUDYARD KIPLING

Editorial Comment: June 1897 marked the Diamond Jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria over the British Empire. At age seventy-eight she reigned over the greatest empire the world had ever known–far greater than the Roman Empire. It included dominions, colonies and dependencies on all five continents and the islands of all the oceans of the world. The Diamond Jubilee was marked by a most impressive celebration, with notables from all over the world in attendance. The pretentious procession required over four hours to pass Queen Victoria's carriage. Bonfires burned on all mountains and high hills from the north of Scotland to the south coast of England. The next day Rudyard Kipling published the **Recessional** on the front page of the **London Times.**

It seems to your editor that this poem is singularly suitable to the present situation of the United States. We, too, are dust that builds on dust, and guarding calls not God to guard.

The reference to "reeking tube and iron shard" is to the artillery of Queen Victoria's day. Today its counterpart is nuclear missles.

"Judge of the Nations, spare us yet, lest we forget, lest we forget." –J. G. Vos

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE
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VOLUME 34 OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1979 NUMBER 4

Studies on Prayer

LARGER CATECHISM. LESSON 21, Prayer for Deliverance from Evil

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

(b) The theory of a limited God, who would like to prevent and restrain evil in the universe, but finds that he lacks the power to do so. According to this theory God is doing the best He can, but His power is limited in various ways (such as by the laws of nature, or by the free will of His creatures) and therefore it is not possible for Him to cope adequately with the forces of evil. This theory cannot be accepted because it is contrary to the clear teaching of the Bible that God is Almighty; He is infinite in His being and all His attributes, and nothing that He chooses to do is too hard for Him to accomplish. Moreover, this theory of a limited God fails to explain how evil originated.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Certainly not (James 1:13, 14). God does not Himself tempt any person. To blame our temptations on God is wicked and irreverent. Yet it is also wrong to suppose that God has nothing whatever to do with the temptations that we experience. While God does not Himself tempt us, it is true all the same that God, for His own purposes, "may so order things" that we are tempted. We should never fall into the atheistic notion that "things" exist or occur apart from the foreordination and providential control of God. When we meet with temptation, we should realize two things: (a) It is not God that is tempting me, but Satan or my sinful heart or both. (b) Yet this temptation has been foreordained by God as part of His plan, and it is God that has permitted this temptation to come to me, for His own wise purposes.

LESSON 22

Prayer for Deliverance from Evil, Continued

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

Questions:

1. Who is Satan?

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

2. What false belief concerning Satan is common today?

The notion that Satan has no real, personal existence, but is merely a personification of the forces of evil in the universe and in the human soul. Modern "liberal" theology tends to deny the existence af an objective, personal devil. Satan is said to be just a name for the sinful tendencies and desires of our hearts. The people described in the New Testament as possessed by demons, are said to have been simply mentally ill. Such an attitude toward Satan must be highly satisfactory to Satan himself, as he can do his work all the better when his objective existence is denied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LESSON 23

Prayer for Deliverance from Evil (Continued)

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

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

Scripture References:

Gal. 5:17. Matt. 26:41, 69-72. Gal 2:11-14. 2 Chron. 18:3 compared with 2 Chron. 19:2. Because of their remaining corruption of nature, etc., even true Christians are not only subject to temptation, but sometimes actually reckless in exposing themselves to temptation.

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. What is meant by improving our temptations?

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

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

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

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

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

LESSON 24

Prayer for Deliverance from Evil (Continued)

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

No. Sometimes we can see remarkable instances of such overruling, which we call "special providences." The famous Spanish Armada which was sent to attack and destroy the Protestant nation of England was destroyed by an unexpected storm. There have been many instances, great and small, of such remarkable overruling of the world by God. But often we cannot see how the world is overruled for good. We must believe, on the authority of God's Word, that He will overrule all things for His glory and our good, even when we cannot see how things will work out to make this come true.

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

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

4. How does God restrain Satan?

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

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

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

LESSON 25

Prayer for Deliverance from Evil, Continued

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

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. When will our sanctification and salvation be perfected?

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

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

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

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

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

LESSON 26

The Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. Why should we join praises with our petitions?

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

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

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

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

As the word "Amen" means "truly," we close our prayers with this word to show our sincere, real desire and confidence that God will hear and answer our prayers. As the Catechism points out, God is the one who is able to help us, because He possesses eternal sovereignty ("the kingdom"), omnipotency ("the power"), and glorious excellency ("the glory"), and therefore, when we have pleaded with Him to help us according to our need, we are "quietly to rely upon him, that he will fulfil our requests."

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

The End

Studies on the Plan of Salvation

LESSON 1

God's Provision of Salvation for His People

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

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

Question:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Covenant of Grace.

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

He represented "all the elect".

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

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

5. When was the Covenant of Grace made?

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

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

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

LESSON 2

How the Covenant of Grace Manifests God's Grace

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

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

Scripture References:

Genesis 3:15. A Redeemer from sin promised.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. What does Christ, our Mediator, provide?

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

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

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

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

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

8. How do we get faith in Jesus Christ?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LESSON 3

The Dispensations of the Covenant of Grace

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

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

Scripture References:

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

Questions:

1. When did the Covenant of Works come to

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. What error concerning this question is common today?

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

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

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

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

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

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

A. The Covenant of Grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the passover, and other types and ordinances, which did all fore-signify Christ then to come, and were for that time sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation.

Scriptural References:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A symbol is an arbitrary sign used to denote

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LESSON 4

The New Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

The "New Testament" or "New Covenant" is

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. How many dispensations are there in the Bible?

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

Covenant of Works and two of the Covenant of Grace. Thus the first dispensation (the Covenant of Works) was from the creation of man until Adam fell into sin; the second dispensation (the Old Testament) was from the fall of man until the crucifixion of Christ; the third dispensation (the New Testament) is from the crucifixion of Christ until the end of the world.

LESSON 5

The Mediator of the Covenant of Grace

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

There is one only.

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

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

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

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

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

By affirming that Christ is **of one substance with the Father,** we mean that there is only one God, and Jesus Christ is this one God just as truly as the Father is this one God. As Christians we do not believe in **three** Gods, but in **one** God who exists in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is therefore not **like** God; he **is** God, the only God that there is. In him dwells, not a part of the fulness of the Godhead bodily, but **all** the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The word "distinct" teaches the truth that Christ's two natures, divine and human, while they were and are mysteriously united in one divine person, still are not in any way mixed, blended or confused. Each remains distinct and retains its separate identity. Christ's divine nature always remains his divine nature; his human nature always remains his human nature; these two cannot be mixed in any way. Christ is not a being halfway between God and man; he is a person who is both God and man at the same time; he is as truly God as if he were not man at all; and he is as truly man as if he were not God at all. In the record of our Lord's life on earth, at one point his deity shines forth, as when he said "Before Abraham was, I am"; at another point his humanity is disclosed, as when he said "I thirst." But the two are never mixed or confused in any way.

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

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

LESSON 6

How the Son of God Became Man

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. What should we think of such a belief?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LESSON 7

Why the Mediator Must be God

Q. 38. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God?

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

Even a sinless human being, if merely human, would not have been able to endure the wrath and curse of God as Christ did. It was necessary that the Mediator be God in order to sustain and support his human nature in its temptations and sufferings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

Adam and all his posterity had broken the law of God and lived in violation of that law. It was necessary that the Second Adam keep the law of God perfectly. God himself is not under the law; he is the **Lawgiver.** Jesus Christ had to be truly human so that he could be truly under the law of God, and thus succeed where Adam failed, in meeting the condition of the Covenant of Works, namely a perfect obedience to the law of God.

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

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

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

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

(To be continued)

The Use and Abuse of Church History

By J. G. Vos

The history of the Christian Church, including the Reformed Presbyterian or Covenanter Church, if rightly regarded and used can be a great source of strength, wisdom and stability to the serious Christian. On the other hand, Church history wrongly regarded and misused can be a stumbling block, an occasion of weakness and stagnation. There are three attitudes toward the past history of the Church which are wrong and which can only hinder true strength and progress in bearing witness to the Truth. These three attitudes are: (1) Romanticizing the past; (2) Absolutizing the past; and (3) Disdaining the past. We may consider each of these.

I. Romanticizing the Past

Romanticizing the past means giving it, in our thinking, an ideal or perfect quality which in fact it did not have. Often it may involve the anachronism of reading the present back into the past instead of seeing the past and interpreting it for what it really was.

Two examples of this tendency come to mind. The first consists in romanticizing the ancient British or Celtic Church — the first centuries of Christianity in Britain and Ireland, before the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain and before the dominance of Romanism. That the Old British or Celtic Church was in those times as pure as any part of Christendom, or even the purest of all, we do not question. But the attempt of some authors to portray the Old British Church as essentially Calvinistic in doctrine and Presbyterian in form of government, and on top of this to hold that it preserved in some places an unbroken continuity of corporate life until the Protestant Reformation, through a thousand years of the Middle Ages, can only be regarded as an unwarranted romanticizing of history.

Similarly the Waldensian movement of northern Italy has been romanticized, not so much by the Waldensians themselves as by writers in English-speaking countries. The allegation that the Waldenses had a distinct corporate life going back almost, if not actually, to the apostolic period, and continuing clear through the Middle Ages to the time of Martin Luther and the Reformation, and that through this long period of nearly a millennium and a half they were always distinct from Roman Catholicism, is impossible to substantiate by valid historical evidence. The real evidence indicates, rather, that the Waldensian movement originated in the twelfth century, about 400 years before Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. Moreover, the Waldenses were not evangelicals or Protestants in the proper sense of these terms. It is possible — or perhaps even probable — that they held the universal priesthood of believers. It is true that they opposed some of the most serious abuses and pretensions of the Church of Rome. But they did not hold the real heart and core of Protestantism — the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone — in any consistent or pointed manner until they learned it from the Lutheran Reformation in the sixteenth century. It is even more unhistorical to try to maintain that the mediaeval Waldenses were Calvinists and Presbyterians before the Reformation. That they were noble and faithful witnesses for the truth of God cannot be denied, and we should honor their memory for it. But it is an improper romanticizing of history to regard these saints as virtually Calvinistic and Presbyterians in mediaeval Italy and France.

II. Absolutizing the Past

By absolutizing the past is meant regarding some one epoch or period in the past as ideal and normative for all time to come. The time just after the passing of the apostles, or the time of the great early Church Councils, or the time of Luther, Knox and Calvin, or the time of the Second Reformation and the Westminster Assembly, is nostalgically regarded as "the good old days" and the idea is held that what the Church of our own day really needs is to get back in spirit to those times and there take its stand. This tendency arises from a lack of historical perspective, often combined with a considerable degree of historical ignorance, and a failure to recognize the imperfection and relativism of all human attainments — even the best and highest human attainments under God.

One example of this tendency is the not uncommon notion that the official creeds or standards of a church are sacrosanct and that it is wrong and impious to seek to amend them in any detail, or even to bring them to re-examination in the light of Scripture. This absolutizing of the past inevitably disparages the authority of Scripture as the absolute standard of faith and life. If there are some elements or phases of the past history of the Church which must be regarded as exempt from the judgment of Scripture, then the Bible is no longer our **only** infallible rule of faith and life. If Scripture is really the **only** infallible rule of faith and life, then everything in the history of the Church since the New Testament was completed, is subject to the judgment of God speaking in the Scripture. We do scant honor to the Westminster Confession, for example, if we attribute to it an authority which inheres in the Bible alone, and thus regard and treat it as if it were infallible. But the person who considers it impious or profane to say that such a creed can be amended on the basis of further study of the Bible, is treating it as infallible and giving it a rating which of right belongs only to the Word of God. The present writer considers the Westminster Confession the best creedal statement of Christian truth that has ever been formulated. But after all it is not the Word of God and it is not infallible. It was composed by men who were indeed learned and godly, but still fallible and in themselves capable of error.

Again, when people regard the Reformation as a fixed quantity and a once-for-all attainment, they are absolutizing history. The Protestant Reformation was part of a historical process. **Ecclesia reformata reformanda est** — "The Church having been reformed is to be further reformed." Like sanctification, reformation of the Church is a process without any terminal point in history.

III. Disdaining the Past

Disdaining or despising the past is a reaction against the romanticizing and absolutizing tendencies. The person who disdains the past fails to appreciate its real attainments and values. He fails, that is, to realize what God has really done in the past history of His Church.

Someone has said that "Nobody ever learns anything from history except that nobody ever learns anything from history." By and large, we live in an age which overrates the present and

scorns the past. Some can hardly mention the Scottish Covenanters of the 17th century and their struggles without a sneer. The witnesses and martyrs are brushed off with faint praise by an attitude which says, in effect, "The Covenanters were important of course, but. . . ".

All true progress is building on foundations laid in the past. Only by a grasp and appreciation of the past can we have a truly valid attitude toward the present, and only so can we build soundly for the future. The person who says "History is the bunk" is dishonoring God who by His work of creation and providence made history what it was.

In our own day that great historic monument of the Reformed Faith — the Westminster Confession — has been laid aside as a museum piece by the largest Presbyterian body in America, and a "new confession" substituted for it as the denomination's real working standard. And this "new confession" is really a rejection of much of the truth attained and witnessed to in the historic Westminster Confession. This is truly a disdaining of history.

It is not uncommon to find people with an attitude of disdain for the historic Scottish Covenanters and the old Scottish covenants. We are not saved by Covenanter history, we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. But we do the Lord scant honor if we despise what He has done in and through His people in past times.

The disdainful attitude has its roots in **pride** — the pride of ignorance. Someone has said that there are three kinds of pride: pride of race, pride of face and pride of grace, and that pride of grace is the worst of the three. But surely we may rank with it pride of ignorance as one of the worst forms of pride. There are people who actually glory in their shame, who actually **boast** that they are ignorant of theology and church history.

We of the nineteen sixties are not the first intelligent or faithful Christians that ever lived. Christ through His Spirit has always been at work throughout the past history of His Church. Let us heed the Biblical injunction to "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Let us not romanticize the past, let us not absolutize the past and let us not despise the past. Rather may we appraise it justly and value it wisely, to the honor and glory of God.

Religious Terms Defined

DEISM. The false system which holds that God created the universe and then left it to function automatically without providential control.

DEITY OF CHRIST. The truth that the historical person Jesus Christ, by reason of His divine nature, was and is the only true God, Creator of the universe, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (I John 5:20. John 1:1-3. Col. 2:9).

DEMONISM, DEMON POSSESSION. An activity of demons or evil spirits described in the New Testament, by which one or more of them gained control of a human personality and dominated it for Satanic purposes. In the New Testament this is distinguished (a) from ordinary insanity or mental disease, and (b) from bodily disease. The common notion that those described in Scripture as demon-possessed were in reality only mentally ill is therefore wrong. The symptoms may have been similar, but the cause was different.

DEPRAVITY, TOTAL. The truth that the unsaved sinner is corrupted by sin in every part of his personality, including both body and soul, so that apart from the special work of the Holy Spirit he cannot choose to love God, nor do anything spiritually good in God's sight. Total depravity does not mean absolute depravity, nor does it imply that anyone in this life is so bad that he could not become worse. The depravity spoken of is total in its extent, not in its degree.

DEVIL, THE. The chief of the fallen angels, who, by the providential permission of God, heads the kingdom of evil in opposition to the kingdom of God until the time appointed by God for him to be cast into hell (Rev. 20:10).

DISPENSATION. A particular manner of God's dealing with His creatures, or the period of time that coincides with the same. In the Bible, three dispensations are distinguished: (1) The Covenant of Works, from the creation of mankind to Adam's fall. (2) The Old Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, from Adam's fall to the crucifixion of Christ. (3) The New Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, from the crucifixion of Christ to His second coming. These three are dispensations within history. Beyond them is "the age to come" or the eternal order of things.

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

DIVINE NATURE OF CHRIST. Christ's deity, by which He existed from all eternity as the living and true God, of the same substance with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

DOCTRINE. A truth of the Bible set forth in logical form in its relation to other truths of the Bible. True doctrines consist of (1) facts, plus (2) the divinely revealed meaning of the facts.

DONATISTS. A separatist sect of North African Christians in the fourth and fifth centuries after Christ, which held that the validity of a minister's official acts depends upon his personal piety, and that those who had denied Christ under persecution could never be restored to good standing in the Church. These errors were strongly opposed by the North African bishop Augustine of Hippo.

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here is not to be understood as necessarily implying an endorsement of everything contained in it. Please purchase books from your local bookstore or direct from the publishers; do not send orders to the publisher of "Blue Banner Faith and Life."

James Ferguson. **The Epistles of Paul to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians** and David Dickson, **The Epistle to the Hebrews.** Banner of Truth Trust, Box 621, Carlisle, PA 17013. 1978. $17.95.

These various words first printed in 1656-1674 are now offered in one volume by Banner of Truth Trust as another of their reprints of great Puritan classics. The material is closely arranged both in type-setting and general format. The small print makes the reading rather difficult. The format offers the scripture verse followed by a brief exposition and concluded by a discussion of the doctrines prominently set forth in the verse(s). The work reads smoothly. It is an exegetical feast for everyone who pours over its pages. The whole demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the original languages (albeit somewhat dated). Modern exegetes may fight different attacks on the Scripture but these authors present the Bible as the eternal Word of God. Consequently their work exceeds the limitations of time. Even a highly trained believer will learn much from the pens of our authors. Those unskilled in Greek need not avoid these commentaries but will find them extremely helpful and warmly pastoral.

Both authors are reformed or calvinistic in doctrine and disposition.

Such works should be much used by every sincere Christian. —Leonard J. Coppes

Be Still and Know by Millie Stamm. Zondervan Pub. House, 1415 Lake Dr., S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506. 1978. Paperback. 582 pp. $17.95.

This is a book with short devotional readings for every day of the year. The style is easy to read, pleasant. The author offers many practical suggestions for enhancing one's relationship with God including much repeated admonitions to relate to God on a personal level. These admonitions are also service oriented seeking to lead one into greater service for God.

The reformed reader will be disappointed if he is unable to appreciate and enjoy an Arminian mystical view of salvation and sanctification. There is little focus on doctrine as a means of praising God. There is little said of divine law as a schoolmaster for everyday Christian living. Christian service is much promoted but with no mention of the role of the organized church. Not recommended. —Leonard J. Coppes

The Piety of John Calvin: an anthology illustrative of the spirituality of the reformer. Transl. and ed. by Ford Lewis Battles. Music edited by Stanley Tagg. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1978. pp. 175. $9.95.

Six Psalms of John Calvin. Transl. by Ford Lewis Battles. Harmonizations by Stanley Tagg. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1978. pp. 24. $1.95.

Several recent publications emphasize the warmth and personal piety of John Calvin, but this anthology demonstrates those qualities more effectively than any mere encomium. Its selections, taken from a wide range of Calvin's writings, are cast in poetic form, with a sensitivity to Calvin's graceful Latin and French which could come only from one who has devoted many years of loving labor to them. Why put in poetic form what Calvin wrote in prose? Because they are "found poetry" —passages of hymnic or poetic quality imbedded in prose writing. Although Calvin was not consciously writing "poems," placing such passages in lines and strophes helps the reader to enter more completely into the thought-patterns of a great and godly mind. The passages chosen present Calvin's spiritual autobiography, his comments on the Christian faith, on prayer, on Christ and the church, and a number of prayers.

Chapter 6 contains six psalms which Calvin translated into French for his 1539 Psalter but withdrew from later

editions. Battles has translated them into unrhymed English meter, to fit their 1539 tunes, harmonized and arranged for choirs by a Pittsburgh organist. The set is also issued separately for use in performance with the title **Six Psalms of John Calvin.** The settings are quite well done, modal (which is most appropriate but will sound slightly strange to many ears), usable for school choirs, and require organ or piano accompaniment.

We must reject, however, the editors' suggestions that performance with instruments in the church service would have met with approval in the Reformed church of the 16th century (p. 141). Early Calvinists often sang Psalms with instruments **at home**, but never in public worship. The recurring efforts to provide a "Calvinist approach" to organ playing and choir music are simply perverse.

Throughout the book, Dr. Battles has drawn on most of the best current scholarship for his very helpful comments and notes. One minor flaw: he often fails to cite reprint editions, which would help the interested reader significantly.

This is an appealing book, pleasing the eye and stirring the heart. Both Calvin's enemies and friends have much to learn from it—much of Calvin, and much of genuine piety. —Robert M. Copeland

SIGN OF A PROMISE, James C. Schapp, paperback, 254 pages, Dordt College Press, Sioux Center, Iowa 51250.

In this era when many are searching for their "roots" James C. Schapp brings together 15 short stories under the title Sign of a Promise. Each story is based on a true incident in the life of some Dutch immigrant. These are stories of pioneer hardships; stories of right and wrong, death and birth, success and failure.

Older generations living today will remember some of these struggles—the younger generations will be enriched by this heritage.

The author writes with a sense of urgency lest this Dutch legacy be lost in the melting pot that is America and with the Christian commitment to the sovereignty of God and his dealings in the lives of his children.

—Marian M. Vos

THREE TO GET READY, by Howard A. Eyrich. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, New Jersey 08865. Paperback. pp. 147. $3.95.

There are many books written for couples about to be married, but few written for the pastors who will counsel them. The purpose of this book is to provide a practical manual for the pastor in the area of pre-marital counseling from a biblical perspective.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part provides a basic theology of pre-marital counseling. The second part outlines a program of pre-marital counseling, and discusses various pertinent issues related to it. The third part provides detailed information concerning each counseling session in the program.

This book provides a well thought out, Biblical program of pre-marital counseling. It should be very helpful to the pastor who is trying to set up a program of pre-marital counseling; the pastor who has been involved in counseling, but seeks new ideas to improve his counseling program; and seminary students who will soon be involved in pre-marital counseling as pastors.

It is of vital importance that Christian couples contemplating marriage receive proper, Biblical counseling. The use of the ideas in this volume should help to insure that couples understand the bibilical basis for marriage, and are properly prepared for married lives that are pleasing in the sight of God. —William H. Pihl

GEORGE WHITEFIELD'S LETTERS. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pa., 17013. $10.95, 1977, 570 pp., hardback.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD'S JOURNALS. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. $11.95, 1979, 595 pp., hardback.

These two reprints by Banner of Truth are a welcomed re-publication for those scholars who are interested in George Whitefield and the Great Awakening. His journals have been reprinted twice before by the Banner of Truth Trust. The JOURNALS are a spiritual classic. The letters are reissued for the first time in a facsimile edition of the 1771 edition of WHITEFIELD'S WORKS. Both of these volumes cover about the same time span—1734-1742. These two volumes are an excellent addition to the life of Whitefield by Arnold Dallimore (so far only volume 1 is available, maybe volume 2 will be ready for the press in the not too distant future). —Samuel Sterrett

THIS MORNING WITH GOD, general editor Carol Adeney. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. $6.95, 1978, 510 pp., paperback.

THIS MORNING WITH GOD is a daily devotional guide. If it is used faithfully the entire Bible will be covered in four years. It uses a method of asking questions to help direct a person in understanding the passage and its practicality in your life. This book is a good aid to help someone in their daily walk with the Lord. —Samuel Sterrett

TWO SPIES ON A ROOFTOP, by Marianne Radius. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. $4.95, 1978 reprint of 1968, 368 pp., paperback.

NINETY STORY SERMONS FOR CHILDREN'S CHURCH, by Marianne Radius. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. $4.95, 1978 reprint of 1966, 286 pp., paperback.

Mrs. Radius is the daughter of Geerhardus and Catherine Vos. Thus as she writes she has the background of having a father who is known for his work in the area of Biblical Theology and a mother who is known for her children's Bible story book. This background is combined in these two works. They are handbooks of Biblical Theology for children. It is a shame that both of these books were reissued in paperback. Books of this nature have a hard enough time enduring the treatment they receive when in hardback. Secondly, the names given these reprinted volumes are not the original names. The name for the work on the Old Testament was THE TENT OF GOD. The name for the work on the New Testament was GOD WITH US. The original names reflected the theme Mrs. Radius saw in the Bible. Yet if this is the only form in which they are available–buy them. –Samuel Sterrett

PROMISE AND DELIVERANCE, VOLUME 2: THE FAILURE OF ISRAEL'S THEOCRACY, by S. G. De Graaf. Paideia Press, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. $10.95, 1978, 456 pp., hardback.

This is a translation from the Dutch of a work by the late Rev. De Graaf, a minister in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. When Dr. De Graaf wrote this work, he had in mind Sabbath school teachers. It is not an outline for lessons, but it seeks to be a traveler's guide. Dr. De Graaf brings out three points as he tells the story of the Bible: 1.) The Bible is God's revelation of Himself; 2.) The Bible is God's revelation of Himself in His Mediator; 3.) The Bible is God's revelation of Himself in His covenant people. It is because of these three elements that this work stands out. This series should be placed in the libraries of all branches of Christ's Church.
–Samuel Sterrett

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, by William Hendriksen. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. $19.95, 1978, 1122 pp., hardback.

With the publication of this commentary, Dr. Hendriksen has completed the commentaries on the Gospels in the New Testament Commentary. This commentary is by far the largest commentary that Dr. Hendriksen has yet written. It, like those before it, is a verse by verse commentary on the Scriptural text. Dr. Hendriksen provides his own translation of the text. He provides us with an introduction to the Gospel of Luke that treats such questions as authorship and date of authorship, characteristics and theme of Luke. It also has two special studies on the location of the parables and methods of interpretation of the parables. This is a work that the layman can read and understand, but it is also scholarly and exegetical and has meat for the scholar.
–Samuel Sterrett

REFORMED DOGMATICS, edited and translated by John W. Beardslee III. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. $6.95, 1977 reprint of 1965, 471 pp., paperback.

This volume is a source-book for the English speaking student who does not read Latin. It was first printed by the Oxford University Press as a part of the Library of Protestant Thought. It contains portions of three seventeenth century theologians–Wollebius of Basel, Voetius of the Netherlands, and Turretin of Geneva. The editor selected Wollebius' COMPENDIUM OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY as an adequate summary of seventeenth century Reformed theology, an essay from Voetius' SELECTAE DISPUTATIONES THEOLOGICAE has been chosen to present the "relevance" of Reformed theology and the section on the decrees of God and predestination has been selected from Turretin's INSTITUTES OF THEOLOGY. This is an important work for all who love the Reformed faith. –Samuel Sterrett

ANGLICAN AND PURITAN THINKING, by Hywel R. Jones, Paul E. G. Cook, et. al. The Westminster Conference, Secretary: Rev. David Bugden, 75 High Street, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE17 2TA, England. No price given, 1977, 102 pp., paperback.

The content of this book comprises the papers read at the 1977 meeting of the Westminster Conference. The theme of the conference was the difference between Puritan and Anglican theology. The first paper read by Hywel R. Jones is the most important paper to see the fundamental difference out of which all other differences arise. Dr. Jones deals with the question of "Authority". The Anglicans accept Scripture and human reason, but the Puritans said that the Scriptures alone were to be the authority in the Church. The paper by Dr. D. M. Lloyd-Jones on "Preaching" should be read by all those men who feel that they are called to preach the Gospel. This reviewer recommends this work to the readers of this journal. –Samuel Sterrett

THE ORIGINS OF NEW TESTAMENT CHIRSTOLOGY, by I. Howard Marshall. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. $2.95, 1978, 132 pp., paperback.

This work is the first book to be published in a series on Issues in Contemporary Theology. In its pages Dr. Marshall surveys the teaching of the New Testament about Jesus Christ, His person and His work. In the course of this survey Dr. Marshall demonstrates his understanding of work by other biblical scholars. This work is a good guide to the debate over Christology. The only point that this reviewer could not accept was Dr. Marshall's reason for rejecting H. P. Liddon's orthodox work THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. Dr. Marshall says that Liddon was "no mean scholar" and that his work should not be despised, but his method was not acceptable. Liddon was content to rest his case upon the infallibility of the Scriptures. –Samuel Sterrett

THE PUPPFT MASTER, by J. Isamu Yamamoto. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. $3.95, 1977, 136 pp., paperback.

J. Isamu Yamamoto is a research worker for the Spiritual Counterfeits Project of the Berkeley Christian Coalition. In this volume he continues his study of the Unification Church, headed by Sun Myung Moon (see his booklet THE MOON DOCTRINE, also published by I.V.P.). This book is an example of Dr. Yamamoto's thorough research of the teaching of the Unification Church. The Christian community needs to heed the advice of Dr. Yamamoto to test the spirits, and put all of our trust on Jesus Christ. —Samuel Sterrett

MAN OF GENEVA: THE STORY OF JOHN CALVIN, by E. M. Johnson. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. $2.50, 1978, 129 pp., paperback.

Dr. Johnson has written a book with the young mind as its intended audience. Within the pages of this book the life of John Calvin is presented in a captivating manner. The author starts with Calvin as a teenager on his way to Paris to be a student. He continues through Calvin's conversion and life in Geneva. It is a good introduction to the life of Calvin. As such, it can be read by all age groups (especially those who are coming to Calvin for the first time). —Samuel Sterrett

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD, by Herman Bavinck, translated by William Hendriksen. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. $5.95, 1977 reprint of 1951 translation, 407 pp., paperback.

Herman Bavinck was an outstanding theologian of the last century from The Netherlands. His magnum opus was REFORMED DOGMATICS. This work is a translation of the second volume of that work. It is very good and readable translation of the Dutch. Not only was the Dutch translated, but also the Hebrew, Greek, Latin and German sentences and paragraphs. Dr. Hendriksen provided a schematic form of outlines and summarizing captions that aid the reader of this work. In the translator's preface Dr. Hendriksen expressed the hope that this translation of the second volume of Bavinck's REFORMED DOGMATICS would create a desire for the translation of the whole work. It is almost thirty years since the first publication of this work and still the English world misses the translation of that outstanding work. Perhaps the reprinting of this translation will create the desire for the whole work's translation.
—Samuel Sterrett

JAMES, by Robert Johnstone. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. $8.95, 1977, 444 pp., hardback.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER, by Robert Johnstone. The James Family Christian Publishers, 2500 James Ave., N., Minneapolis, Minn. 55411. $11.95, 1978, 417 pp., hardback.

Robert Johnstone was a minister in the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland in the nineteenth century. He had a well-deserved reputation at that time for his biblical expositions. This is illustrated in these two works. The commentary on James is a volume of sermons that Dr. Johnstone first preached in his first charge, Princes Street, Arbroath. They exhibit both scholarship and devotion to the Scriptures. The commentary on First Peter is more of a critical and exegetical commentary then the one on James, but it still has that devotion to Scripture that is necessary in any commentary. Anyone who consults either of these commentaries will be richly rewarded. —Samuel Sterrett

COLLECTED WRITINGS OF JOHN MURRAY, VOLUME 2: SELECT LECTURES IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. $12.95, 1977, 417 pp., hardback.

John Murray never intended to write a Systematic Theology, but in a limited sense this volume follows the form of a Systematic Theology. The topics covered include The Doctrine of Man, Common Grace, Christ and Redemption, Sanctification, Church and Sacraments, and the Last Things. Some of this material was first prepared as class lectures, others were addresses given at public meetings, and one or two were articles for publication. This reviewer hopes that more of Dr. Murray's lectures will be published, in order that those of us who did not have Dr. Murray as a teacher can still learn from him. This is a work that should be found in the library of all those who love the Reformed faith.
—Samuel Sterrett

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF J. GRESHAM MACHEN TODAY, by Paul Woolley. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. Box 817, Phillipsburg, New Jersey 08865. 1977, $2.75, 84 pp., paperback.

This little volume is not a biography of Machen, the founder of Westminster Seminary, though it does contain many interesting views of the private life of Machen. Dr. Woolley, a colleague of Dr. Machen, seeks to present Machen's defense of the system of doctrine of the Scriptures in the light of some problems that the church needs to face today. Among these problems are Labor Unions, Modern Science, Language and Preaching and Sexual Education and Marriage. This work is recommended to the readers of this journal.
—Samuel Sterrett

THE BOOK OF BOOKS: ESSAYS ON THE SCRIPTURES IN HONOR OF JOHANNES G. VOS, editor John H. White. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 817, Phillipsburg, New Jersey 08865. $7.50, 1978, pp. 178, hardback.

The readers of this journal need no introduction to the man who is being honored by the publication of this volume. He is the editor of this journal, a work begun in 1946 in Clay Center, Kansas. All of the contributors reflect the respect of Dr. Vos for the authority of Scripture. The contributors include J. G. Vos, John H. White,

Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., E. Clarke Copeland, Paul Woolley, Wayne R. Spear, James T. Dennison, Jr., Joseph Hill, Duncan Lowe, Cornelius Van Til, Bruce C. Stewart, and Willard G. McMillan. This is a volume that is recommended to the readers of this journal.

–Samuel Sterrett

JOHN CHARLES RYLE, EVANGELICAL BISHOP, by Peter Toon and Michael Smout. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880. $4.95, 1976, pp. 123, hardback.

John Charles Ryle was one of the leading evangelicals in the Church of England in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century. There has been a renewed interest in both the man and his works in recent years. This volume is one indication of that interest. Another sign is the fact that more of Ryle's works are now in print then at any other time since the turn of the century. This brief volume is a good introduction to the life and work of J. C. Ryle. This reviewer did find the following errors: 1) On page 9, 773 instead of 1773; 2) On page 115, firend instead of friend. –Samuel Sterrett

HOLINESS: ITS NATURE, HINDRANCES, DIFFICULTIES AND ROOTS, by J. C. Ryle. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. $8.95, 1979, pp. 471, paperback.

This work is a reprint of the work on sanctification by John Charles Ryle, first bishop of Liverpool. This is a work which this reviewer read while he was still in college and found it as challenging at that time as when it was first written. In this reviewer's opinion this is the best volume available on the subject of sanctification.

–Samuel Sterrett

CHARGES AND ADDRESSES, by John Charles Ryle. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. $11.95, 1978, 384 pp., hardback.

This volume of Bishop Ryle has been among the rarest of his works. It was first issued in 1903 three years after Ryle's death. The publisher gathered up the Bishop's Charges and Addresses that he had given while he was Bishop of Liverpool and which had been published as pamphlets. These Charges and Addresses reflect spiritual and physical conditions of Liverpool and England as seen through the eyes of an evangelical Bishop. –Samuel Sterrett

THE BIBLE IN ITS WORLD: THE BIBLE AND ARCHAEOLOGY TODAY, by K. A. Kitchen. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. $3.95, 1978, 168 pp., paperback.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE: AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY, by Donald J. Wiseman and Edwin Yamauchi. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. $3.95, 1979, 122 pp., paperback.

These two books are both good introductory studies in Biblical archaeology. Each man is a noted scholar. Dr. K. A. Kitchen is Lecturer in Egyptian and Coptic in the School of Archaeology and Oriental Studies at the University of Liverpool. He has written one other work of note, ANCIENT ORIENT AND OLD TESTAMENT. Dr. Donald J. Wiseman is Professor of Assyriology at the University of London, and Chairman of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq. He is editor of PEOPLES OF OLD TESTAMENT TIMES. Edwin Yamauchi is Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, History Department, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. He has written an archaeological handbook, THE STONES AND THE SCRIPTURES.

THE BIBLE IN ITS WORLD is a work that presents the historical world of the Bible as seen through the studies of various archaeological finds and evidence. It is one of the first works to make use of the discovery of Elba in modern Syria. It is a good introductory, but it has one weakness. It does not give much space to the archaeology of the New Testament.

The one weakness of Kitchen's work is offset by ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE. Dr. Yamauchi's portion on the New Testament gives us an even fuller treatment of the archaeological evidence. The two studies printed in the later work are taken out of the first volume of THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE COMMENTARY.

Both of these studies are commended to the readers of this journal. –Samuel Sterrett

DICTIONARY OF OLD TESTAMENT WORDS FOR ENGLISH READERS, by Aaron Pick. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501. $12.95, 1977, 589 pp., hardback.

This is a reprinting of the 1845 publication of THE BIBLE STUDENT'S CONCORDANCE. It is an Old Testament study aid. It lists every English word in the Authorized Version in alphabetical order. Under the English word the Hebrew word, or words, is given along with its literal meaning, plus a listing of every Bible reference where that English word is used. This work is of some value to the Bible student who does not have a knowledge of the Hebrew language. –Samuel Sterrett

BEGINNER'S BOOK OF DOCTRINE, by William Hendriksen. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. $.95, 1978, 32 pp., paperback.

Dr. Hendriksen has provided the modern Christian world with a helpful summary of the key teachings of the Bible. It is a catechism for young people. It uses the question and answer format and has review sections every so often. The topics covered include The Bible, God, Creation, Good Angels, God's Loving Care, Sin, Salvation, The Trinity, The Holy Spirit, The Evil Angels, Prayer, Death, Heaven and Hell, and The Second Coming of Christ. This work is commended to all.

–Samuel Sterrett

CALVIN ON SCRIPTURE AND DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY, by John Murray. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. $2.95, 1978 reprint of 1960, 71 pp., paperback.

John Murray, late Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, gave a series of lectures on Calvin in Grand Rapids on the 450th anniversary of Calvin's birth and the 400th anniversary of the final edition of the INSTITUTES. Three of the four lectures are published in this volume. This is a timely reprint in the light of the recent debate among evangelicals over the doctrine of Scripture. Dr. Murray demonstrates through quotes from Calvin's Commentaries and INSTITUTES that Calvin held to the verbal inspiration and infallible authority of the Bible. This reviewer recommends this work to one and all. —Samuel Sterrett

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