
BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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VOLUME 4

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NUMBER 1

"AS GOD HATH APPOINTED THE ELECT UNTO GLORY, SO HATH HE, BY THE ETERNAL AND MOST FREE PURPOSE OF HIS WILL, FOREORDAINED ALL THE MEANS THEREUNTO. WHEREFORE THEY WHO ARE ELECTED, BEING FALLEN IN ADAM, ARE REDEEMED BY CHRIST, ARE EFFECTUALLY CALLED UNTO FAITH IN CHRIST BY HIS SPIRIT WORKING IN DUE SEASON, ARE JUSTIFIED, ADOPTED, SANCTIFIED, AND KEPT BY HIS POWER THROUGH FAITH UNTO SALVATION. NEITHER ARE ANY OTHER REDEEMED BY CHRIST, EFFECTUALLY CALLED, JUSTIFIED, ADOPTED, SANCTIFIED, AND SAVED, BUT THE ELECT ONLY."

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J. G. VOS, Editor and Publisher

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

TILL THE PERFECT DAY

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

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

(Author unknown)

Can peach renew lost bloom,
Or violet lost perfume,
Or sullied snow grow white
As overnight?
Man cannot compass it;
Yet never fear!
The leper Naaman
Shows what God will and can.
God who worked there is working here.
Wherefore let shame, not gloom
Betinge thy brow;
God who worked then is working now.

C. G. Rossetti

Safe where I cannot die yet,
Safe where I hope to lie too,
Safe from the fume and the fret;
You, and you,
Whom I never forget.

Safe from the frost and the snow,
Safe from the storm and the sun,
Safe where the seeds wait to grow
One by one,
And to come back in blow.*

*blow: bloom

C. G. Rossetti

I sing of a city whose greatness hath won me:
Where poverty, peril and pain are unknown:
The trance of its wonderful splendor is on me;
I dream of its King and the grace of His throne:
Slain Lamb and strong Lion who ransomed His own.

City eternal! How great is thy glory!
The wealth of the universe centers in thee:
The Lamb is thy light, and salvation thy story;
Thy river of life flows abundant and free,
Its banks all encompassed by life's healing tree.
(Author unknown. Adapted)

Though sun and moon and stars be not, the heavens a vanished scroll,
The pillars of the earth are His. Be fixed in God, my soul.
The waves may roar, the nations rage, and yet at His command
At the four corners of the earth the four great angels stand,
And swiftly hasteneth the day foretold in His sure Word,
The kingdom of the world shall be the kingdom of the Lord.

(Author unknown. Adapted)

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NUMBER 1

Sketches From Our History Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER IV

GLEAMS OF LIGHT IN MEDIEVAL DARKNESS

The decline and fall of the Roman Empire, which was brought about by internal weakness and decadence, on the one hand, and by repeated waves of invasion by the vigorous Germanic peoples of central and eastern Europe, on the other, occasioned a general eclipse of education and learning throughout most of Europe, which was followed by a general decline in knowledge of Christian truth on the part of the people. As the Church expanded to include practically the entire population of Europe, it slumped into a condition of ignorance and thus became a doctrinally corrupt Church. The Middle Ages were, in general, a period of doctrinal retrogression. With some exceptions, the Church during a period of a thousand years moved farther from the truth instead of closer to the truth. Between the death of Augustine (A.D. 430) and Martin Luther's posting of his 95 Theses on the church door of Wittenberg (A.D. 1517), there was very little progress on the highway of truth, but much movement in the direction of error. At the beginning of this period the Church possessed a rather high degree of doctrinal purity; at its close, it had lapsed to an abysmally low degree. The one really notable exception to this general decline is the doctrine of the atonement of Christ, in which real progress in the direction of an accurate statement of Scriptural truth was undoubtedly made by Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, at the close of the eleventh century. While there was little real progress in witnessing for the truth during the Middle Ages, there were some remarkable attempts to resist the general decline and to hold the line of truth against the increasing inroads of error. We shall consider some of these gleams of light in the medieval darkness in the present article.

Externally, the Church made great progress through the conversion of central, northern and eastern Europe, and the British Isles, to the Christian Faith. This territorial gain was, however, counterbalanced by the loss of North Africa and most of Spain to Mohammedanism. There was plenty of activity in the Church during the Middle

Ages, but much of it was not truly Christian in spirit because it did not proceed from a Biblical view of the way of salvation.

Missionary work was indeed carried on during the Middle Ages, and that on an extensive scale. The common Protestant notion that missionary work came to a dead stop and remained at a standstill for centuries is pure myth. Not only did devoted missionaries carry the Christian Faith to the regions of central, northern and eastern Europe, but missionaries penetrated as far across Asia as Karakorum, in Outer Mongolia, and Peking, 100 miles from the Pacific Ocean. By the year 1304 there were five thousand baptized Christians in Peking, with two organized churches. What hampered missionary work in the Middle Ages was not lack of zeal so much as lack of a pure Gospel to proclaim to the heathen world. The truth of God had become so corrupted with human errors that it was but a feebly flickering light of Christian truth that these earnest messengers of the cross carried to those in pagan darkness.

The Crusades have sometimes been called missionary movements, but this is a mistake. They were primarily military expeditions, though they had extensive social consequences. Waged by the nations of Europe for the primary purpose of regaining the "holy" places of Palestine from the Mohammedans, they met with temporary success but eventual total failure. Christianity cannot be propagated by force of arms, but only by the power of truth made effective by the Holy Spirit.

Within the Church a false ideal of powerful centralized government gained the ascendancy, and the Roman papacy became the virtual successor of the imperial throne in the power-politics of Europe. The simple form of church government set forth in the New Testament was forgotten as the bishops, archbishops and popes acquired more and more power. The Church became a monarchy in which the pope, as the re-

representative of Christ on earth, reigned as a crowned and enthroned ruler.

In the sphere of worship there was gross corruption. Mary the mother of Jesus came to be regarded as almost divine. The popular worship became largely invocation of Mary and the saints. As this idolatrous worship became prevalent, faith in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer became weaker and less clear. Superstition and a legalistic view of salvation (salvation by works) became almost universal. Large elements of European paganism found their way into the Church, disguised only by a thin veneer of Christian terminology. Belief in salvation by human merit all but supplanted the truth of salvation by divine grace alone. Prayers and masses for the dead became prevalent. The masses of the people were mostly in spiritual darkness and gross ignorance. Even the clergy, who should have instructed the people by precept and example, were often ignorant, slothful and immoral.

False teaching concerning the Christian's relation to "the world" became dominant, resulting in the false ideal called "asceticism" and the flight from human society known as "monasticism". Despairing of living a holy life in a wicked environment, the serious-minded too often took monastic vows and sought holiness in isolation from the world of human society. The false ideal of asceticism was almost universally regarded as the true measure of Christian piety. It was generally believed that celibacy or "virginity" was a holier estate than marriage, and that really to take Christianity in earnest required withdrawal

from family, friends and society into a monastery or convent. In the course of time celibacy was required of the priesthood as a matter of church law. While monasticism was not an unmixed evil, as some orders of monks achieved remarkable results in civilizing and Christianizing the regions of central and northern Europe, yet it was wrong in principle, and eventually it became a notorious evil. Many monasteries degenerated into dens of laziness, immorality and general corruption.

To summarize the period between Augustine and Luther, it may be said that it was, in general, (1) a period of religious ignorance; (2) a period of doctrinal decadence and lapse into error; (3) a period dominated by the false morality of asceticism; and (4) a period during which the Church's missionary efforts were largely nullified by the gross theological errors of the times. It was an era in which the Church usurped the place of the Gospel, the pope virtually supplanted Christ as Head of the Church, and the false holiness of asceticism almost excluded the true holiness of Christian sanctification. The Middle Ages were truly a time of darkness, religiously, morally and spiritually. Yet it was never total darkness. Always there was some testimony for the truth of God. And in this medieval darkness there were some burning and shining lights who witnessed, labored and suffered for the truth of God. We shall take up some of these faithful witnesses in the next installment of this chapter.

(To be continued)

THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS

THEIR ORIGINS, HISTORY AND DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES

(Selections from the book with the above title, by J. G. Vos, published by the author in 1940)

PART II

THE HISTORY OF THE COVENANTERS

CHAPTER I

THE PERIOD OF PERSECUTION, 1660-1688

(Continued from last issue)

6. Public Protests and Testimonies Issued by the Covenanters.

In May, 1679, the government had issued a proclamation calling the field conventicles "rendzvous of rebellion" and declaring that all who attended them were traitors. This act of the government was the occasion for the publication of the Rutherglen Testimony, on May 29th, 1679. The strict Covenanters decided it was time to publish their principles to the world, and selected Thomas Douglas, a minister, and Robert Hamilton, brother of the Laird of Preston, to go with eighty

armed men to the town of Rutherglen for this purpose. The little band assembled at the market cross of Rutherglen, where they burned certain acts and papers, and published a declaration, which they also affixed to the cross. The declaration was entitled "The Declaration and Testimony of Some of the True Presbyterian Party in Scotland." The Rutherglen Testimony was a condemnation of various laws enacted since the Restoration, including (1) The Act Rescissory; (2) The acts re-establishing Prelacy; (3) The requirement that persons holding public office renounce the Covenants; (4) The act which resulted in the ejection of ministers in 1662; (5) The act requiring the anniversary of the Restoration to be kept as a holiday; (6) The Asserty of 1669 which declared that the King is supreme in all causes ecclesiastical. In addition to these, the Testimony condemned all Acts of Council for enforcing the

King's supremacy over the Church. The document was unsigned.

During the interval between the publication of the Rutherglen Testimony and the battle of Bothwell Bridge, there was much controversy among the Covenanters as they endeavored to formulate a statement of their reasons for being in arms. Finally after much debate a statement was adopted by them, which was published at the cross of Glasgow, June 13th, 1679. It appears that this paper was not satisfactory to the strict Covenanters, who later became the Cameronians. Wodrow tells us that although none of these disowned the paper at the time, some "highly complained of" it. Some of them later claimed that John Welsh and David Hume had made the paper public at Glasgow "against faith and promise". Some of the martyrs in their final testimonies explicitly disowned the document and listed it as a defection. Robert Gray, who was executed in 1682, said of it in his dying testimony, "I also adhere to and heartily join with the Rutherglen Declaration; and I disown the Hamilton Declaration, because it took in the malignant interest". The paper, which was later printed and circulated by Welsh and Hume, was a reasoned defence of the conduct of the Covenanters in resorting to the use of arms in self-defence. It enumerated three causes for their action, as follows: "1st. The defending and securing of the true protestant religion, and presbyterian government founded on the word of God, and summarily comprehended in our confessions of faith and catechisms, and established by the laws of this land, to which king, nobles and people are solemnly sworn, and engaged in our national and solemn league and covenants, and more particularly the defending and maintaining of the kingly authority of our Lord Jesus Christ over his Church against all sinful supremacy, derogatory thereto, and encroaching thereupon. 2ndly. The preserving and defending the king's majesty's person and authority in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdom, that the world may bear witness, with our consciences, of our loyalty, and that we have no thoughts nor intentions to diminish his just power and greatness. 3rdly. The obtaining of a free and unlimited parliament, and of a free general assembly, in order to the redressing of our foresaid grievances, for preventing the danger of popery, and extirpation of prelacy". The paper concluded with a petition to the King for redress of grievances: "We humbly request the king's majesty would restore all things as he found them, when God brought him home to his crown and kingdoms; and if that cannot be obtained, then we heartily and humbly invite, intreat, beseech, and obtest, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, all who are under the same bonds with us, to concur in the defence of this common cause and interest, and that they would not stand still, and see, not only us oppressed, but this foresaid cause ruined, adversaries highly and proudly insult

against God and all good men, friends of the truth discouraged, yea, the protestant cause in Britain and Ireland, and even yourselves, within a little time, made a prey of, or else forced, when we are broken, (which the good Lord prevent) dreadfully to wrong your consciences. Finally. Because we desire no man's hurt nor blood, we request our countrymen, now the standing forces of this kingdom, some of them being our friends and kinsmen, not to fight against us, lest in so doing they be found fighting against the Lord, whose cause and quarrel we are sure he will own and signally countenance, seeing we fight under his banner who is the Lord of hosts".

It was the recognition of the authority of the King in this paper which caused the strict Covenanters to complain against it, and later repudiate it. Their contention was that Charles II had forfeited his right to the throne by his repudiation of the Covenants, which amounted to a repudiation of the coronation oath by which he had obtained the crown at Scone in 1651. The majority prevailed, however, and the "king's interest" was included in the paper, and no Covenanter publicly disowned it at the time. This paper, then, marks the time when the Covenanters, though still maintaining their unity, were on the point of dividing into two groups on the question of allegiance to Charles II. As the time went on, and as the suppression of conventicles proceeded with increasing rigor, those who favored the position taken in the Glasgow paper of June 13th, 1679, ceased to be vocal, and either took advantage of the Indulgences, or retired into isolated silence, neither complying with the defections of the times, nor identifying themselves with public protests against them. The other group, which in 1679 was too small a minority to prevent the adoption of the Glasgow paper, continued to hold field conventicles and to protest against the evils which they opposed, throughout the period of persecution and down to the Revolution of 1688.

On June 4th, 1680, a paper was found on the person of Henry Hall, a strict Covenanter who was apprehended at South Queensferry, from which fact the paper was afterwards known as the Queensferry Paper. It was an unsigned document, but is regarded as having been produced by the joint labors of Hall and Donald Cargill. The document was long, comprising about 6,000 words. As it was the first formal statement of the distinctive principles of the group which later became known as Cameronians, MacMillanites and Reformed Presbyterians, it may be worth while to give here a summary of its contents.

It begins with a statement of purpose. ". . . And as we resolve to covenant with and before God, so to declare before the world, what are the designs we propose to pursue, if God shall give us power and success, that men (knowing) if they will know, our inward thoughts and utmost end,

and our way from the one to the other, may not be at a trouble or uncertainty to find us out, and may have no occasion to misjudge, nor misrepute us that are friends, and those that have the glory of God before their eyes (as we may have no cause to be jealous of our intentions) and that our enemies with their associate backsliders (sometime professed friends) may not have ground to load us with foul and odious aspersions, but that all knowing the truth of things, those who oppose the kingdom of God with us may do it without excuse, and those who join with us may do it on solid grounds, and in hazarding their perishing lives, may know they do not die as fools". The paper then lists the principles for which the writers stand: (1) Acknowledgement of the Trinity; the way of redemption by Jesus Christ; His righteousness as that only whereby a man can be justified before God; the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures; the Scriptures the only rule of faith and life; self-dedication to God to live according to his word and by his Spirit. (2) Profession of intention to advance the kingdom of God by establishing the true Reformed religion, in the truth of its doctrine, purity and power of its worship and ordinances, its right government and discipline, and to free the Church of God from the tyranny and corruption of Prelacy on the one hand, and the thralldom and encroachments of Erastianism on the other hand; "and that we shall, to the utmost of our power, relieve the Church and our brethren, the subjects of this kingdom (God authorising and calling us to this by His raising us up, and giving us power and success in removing those who by their transgression have forfeited their authority) of that oppression that hath been exercised upon their consciences, civil rights and liberties, that men may serve God holily without fear, and possess their civil rights peaceably without disturbance". (3) Acknowledgement of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, especially that of Scotland, contained in the Scriptures, summed up in the Confessions of Faith and Covenants: of the pure worship required and prescribed in the Scriptures without the inventions, additions, adornings, or corruptions of man, as the only true worship of God; acknowledgement of the Presbyterian system of Church government as the only right government of the Church, distinct from the civil government, and to be distinctly exercised, "not after a carnal manner by the plurality of votes, or authority of a single person, but according to the Word of God; so that the Word makes and carries the sentence, and not plurality of votes". (4) Endeavor to overthrow the kingdom of darkness, especially idolatry, popery, superstition, will-worship and Prelacy with its hierarchy; "and that we shall with the same sincerity endeavor the overthrow of that power (it being no more authority) that hath established, and upholds that kingdom of darkness, that Prelacy, to wit, and Erastianism over the Church, and hath exercised such a lustful and arbitrary tyranny over the subjects, taken all

power in their hand, that they may at their pleasure introduce Popery in the Church, as they have done arbitrary government in the state. . . ". (5) Here follows a long list of the sins and crimes of the House of Stuart, and a declaration that they are no longer governors, but "a lustful rage", "which all ought to set themselves against, as they would do against pestilence, sword, and famine raging among them". In a sub-heading of point 5 three questions are raised and answered: first, "Whether the deed and obligation of our ancestors can bind us" (i.e., in allegiance to the Stuarts); this is answered in the negative: "Neither did they bind us to anything but to a government, which they then esteemed the best for the commonwealth and subjects; and when this ceaseth we are free to choose another, if we see it more conducive for that end, and more free of these inconveniences". Second, "Whether the Covenant doth bind us either to this man or to his posterity"; this is also answered in the negative: "The Covenant doth not, for it only binds us to maintain our king in the maintenance of the true established and covenanted religion; and this we have not: neither can they require homage upon the account of the Covenant, having renounced and disclaimed that Covenant: and we being no otherwise bound, the Covenant being the coronation compact, without the swearing and sealing of which our fathers, or rather we ourselves, refused to receive him for king, and them for rulers; and if they were free to refuse him for king upon the account of not subscribing of that Covenant, we are much more free to reject him upon his renouncing of it, this being the only way of receiving the crown of Scotland; and reigning also, not being an inheritance that passes from father to son without the consent of tenants, but an (and the more men plead for this, the more we are concerned to look to it) office, which, all say, is given *ad culpam, non ad vitam*." Third, "Whether there is yet any hope of them and their posterity". This also is answered in the negative, on the ground that the Stuarts had hypocritically repented many times already. Point 5 continues, ". . . we then upon these and the following grounds, do reject that king, and those associate with him in the government (stated and declared enemies to Jesus Christ) from being our king and rulers, because standing in the way of our right, free, and peaceable serving of God, propagating His kingdom and Reformation, and overthrowing Satan's kingdom, according to our Covenants, declare them to be henceforth no lawful rulers, as they have declared us to be no lawful subjects, upon a ground far less warrantable, as men unbiassed will see: and that after this, we neither own, nor shall yield any willing obedience to them, they having altered and destroyed the Lord's established religion, overturned the fundamental and established laws of the kingdom, taken away altogether Christ's Church-government, and changed the civil government of this land, which was by a king and free parliament, into tyranny, where none are as-

sociate to be partakers of the government, but only those who will be found by justice to be guilty of criminals (sic), and where all others are excluded, even those who by the laws of the land and by birth have a right to, and a share in that government, and that only because they are not of the same guiltiness and mischievous purposes with themselves, and where also all free elections of commissioners for parliaments, and officers for government, are made void, they making those the qualifications for admission to those places which by the Word of God and the laws of the land was the cause of their exclusion before. So that none can say that we are now bound in allegiance unto them, unless they will say, we are bound in allegiance to devils whose vicegerents they are, having neither authority from God (because it is by their sinfulness forfeited) nor yet judging nor ruling for God". . . . "We do declare, that we shall set up over ourselves, and over what God shall give us power of, government and governors according to the Word of God, and especially that word, Exodus xviii. 21: 'Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens'. That we shall no more commit the government of ourselves, and the making of laws for us, to any one single person, or lineal successor, we not being by God, as the Jews were, bound to one single family; and this kind of government by a single person being most liable to inconveniences, and aptest to degenerate into tyranny, as sad and long experience hath taught us". The paper continues under point 5 to state that the basis for the law to be set up shall be the civil and judicial, but not the ceremonial, laws of the Bible, with the exception of polygamy and divorce. This brings the paper to the end of point 5. (6) A testimony against the defections of the ministers of Scotland. ". . . The ministers of Christ are become the ministers of men, and bound to answer them as they will" . . . "If the rest had followed them, the ministry should have been extinct with themselves, and the whole work of reformation had been buried in oblivion, and not so much as the remembrance thereof kept up" . . . "Those ministers then not being followers of Christ, who, before Pontius Pilate gave a good confession, which was that He was a king (and no king if he had no power to order His house and subjects), and they not following Him nor his ministers, they not asserting and maintaining this His kingly power against all encroachments and usurpers of it; and besides, we being commanded if any brother walk disorderly, from such to withdraw . . . we declare (which is proper for us to do) that we neither can nor will hear preaching, nor receive sacraments from any of those ministers that have accepted and voted for that liberty, nor from any who have encouraged and strengthened their hands by hearing and pleading for them, all those who have

trafficked for an union with them, without their renouncing and repenting of those things, all that do not faithfully testify against them, and after do not deport themselves suitably to their testimonies, all who join not in public with their brethren who are testifying against them". (7) "Then, we do declare and acknowledge, that a Gospel ministry is a standing ordinance of God, appointed by Christ to continue in the Church until the end of the world; and that none of us shall take upon him the preaching of the Word, or administering of the sacraments, unless called and ordained thereto by the ministers of the Gospel". The 7th point goes on to say that in future the calling and ordination of the ministry shall be gone about with more prayer and fasting than formerly, and more careful examination of the candidates. The paper then repudiates the idea that it is schismatic or sectarian: ". . . for separation, as the Scriptures and divines take it in an evil sense, cannot be attributed to us; for if there be a separation it must be where the change is, and that is not in us; we are not separating from the communion of the Church, and setting up new ordinances, and a new ministry, but cleaving to the same ministers and following the same ordinances, when others have slidden back to new ways, and have a new authority super-added, which is like a new piece in the old garment". (8) "We bind and oblige ourselves to defend ourselves and one another in our worshipping of God, and in our natural, civil and Divine rights and liberties, till we shall overcome, or send them down under debate to the posterity that they may begin where we end; and if we shall be pursued or troubled any farther in our worshipping rights and liberties, that we shall look on it as a declaring war, and take all the advantages that one enemy doth of another, and seek to cause to perish all that shall, in an hostile manner, assault us, and to maintain, relieve, and right ourselves of those that have wronged us, but not to trouble or injure any, but those that have injured us, those being most lawful for us, being many that are wronged upon such an account, and by such persons who have nothing now over us, but power and usurped authority, which we shall neither answer nor acknowledge, if we can do otherwise, hoping that God shall break off that part of the yoke, and free us of that power and tyranny that we have cast off upon His account, and will give us judges as we had at the beginning, and councillors as we had at the first."

(To be continued)

"That there should be a Christ, and that I should be Christless; that there should be a cleansing, and that I should remain foul; that there should be a Father's love, and I an alien; that there should be a heaven, and I should be cast into hell, is grief embittered, sorrow aggravated."

Charles H. Spurgeon

Our Church Covenant and Modern Life

(Note: This is the sixth of a series of sermons on the obligations involved in the Church Covenant sworn and subscribed by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, May 21, 1871.—Ed.)

VI. WITNESSING FOR THE IDEAL OF A CHRISTIAN NATION

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:15-23; Phil. 2:1-11.

"Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."—Psalm 2:10-12.

The Covenant of 1871, besides a preliminary confession of sins, consists of an introductory paragraph and six sections. This Covenant was adopted in 1871 after long and earnest preparation, and it is recognized by the "Terms of Communion" as binding upon the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America today. In order that we may have a bird's-eye view of the Covenant as a whole, I shall present the subjects of the various sections as given in the Rev. Frank D. Frazer's "Outline Studies in the Covenant". These are as follows: (1) We hereby covenant to do our duty to God. (2) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the truth of God. (3) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the nation. (4) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the Church-at-large. (5) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the world. (6) We hereby covenant to perform these, our duties, faithfully.

Section 3 of our Church Covenant reads as follows:

"Persuaded that God is the source of all legitimate power; that he has instituted civil government for his own glory and the good of man; that he has appointed his Son, the Mediator, to headship over the nations; and that the Bible is the supreme law and rule in national as in all other things, we will maintain the responsibility of nations to God, the rightful dominion of Jesus Christ over the commonwealth, and the obligation of nations to legislate in conformity with the written Word. We take ourselves sacredly bound to regulate all our civil relations, attachments, professions and deportment, by our allegiance and loyalty to the Lord, our King, Lawgiver and Judge: and by this, our oath, we are pledged to promote the interests of public order and justice, to support cheerfully whatever is for the good of the commonwealth in which we dwell, and to pursue this object in all things not forbidden by

the law of God, or inconsistent with public dissent from an unscriptural and immoral civil power.

"We will pray and labor for the peace and welfare of our country, and for its reformation by a constitutional recognition of God as the source of all power, of Jesus Christ as the Ruler of Nations, of the Holy Scriptures as the supreme rule, and of the true Christian religion; and we will continue to refuse to incorporate, by any act, with the political body, until this blessed reformation has been secured."

"We hereby covenant to do our duty to the nation"; that is, in this section of our Church Covenant we pledge ourselves to do our duty to God in the matter of our relation to our country.

I. Why the Nation Should be a Christian Nation

That the nation as such should be specifically Christian is denied by some, who claim that "religion and politics will not mix". To this familiar assertion we reply that religion and politics **MUST** be mixed, and if religion and politics are not to be mixed, then the politics must be **GODLESS** politics. We believe there are a number of important reasons why the nation should be a Christian nation.

(1) God's sovereignty is universal, including the nation. God by His providence causes nations to come into existence and continue to exist. He determines their boundaries of time and place, and all their circumstances.

God by His moral government of the world deals with the nations as moral agents. By this we mean that God does not merely deal with the people that make up the nations, but that He also deals with the nations as such, in their national capacity, as moral agents. This is very clear from the Bible, a considerable part of which is addressed to nations as such. Some people today deny that the State is a collective person having corporate moral responsibility. There is not space to argue this point in detail here. Suffice it to say that we believe that the corporate moral responsibility of the State is established by correct

exegesis of the Scriptures, and that the contrary proposition (that the State does not possess corporate moral responsibility) is both unscriptural and destructive of justice.

We do not believe in the limited God of modern religion. Our God is not a God with a limited jurisdiction, not a God to be restricted to a certain sphere to be marked off and labelled "religious worship" while the rest of human life is placed under the autonomous control of man. Our God is the absolute Ruler of the universe. No person, and no nation, can ever be independent of Him. The destinies of the nations are decided by God. To God the nations are responsible for their character, their acts and their policies.

(2) Christ's Kingship is universal, including the nation. The Scripture reading of the morning shows this abundantly (Eph. 1:15-23; Phil. 2:1-11). Our Lord made the same claim Himself. "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). He is called "the prince (Greek, "ruler") of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5). In Psalm 2 the kings and judges (government officials) of the earth are commanded to "kiss the Son" (Jesus Christ), "lest he be angry" and they "perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little". Clearly God the Father has appointed His Son Jesus Christ, the divine-human Mediator, as King and Ruler not only over individual people, not only over the Church, but over the nations of the world.

(3) The authority of Scripture is universal, including the nation. Scripture is the revelation of the will of God for every sphere of human life. Its truths and principles are to be applied to every realm and element of life. There are no exceptions.

Many today would like a limited God, a limited Christ and a limited Bible. They would like to have God, Christ and the Bible confined to the limits of religious worship. They would like to shut God, Christ and the Bible off from life in general. Accordingly they would say that the Bible is important for the Church but not for the State.

But as a matter of fact the Bible is important for every sphere of life, including the nation. A great part of the Bible is addressed directly to nations; but even apart from that, the truths and principles of the Bible are to be applied to national life as they are to all of human society. This does not mean that the Bible will teach you how to organize a Parent-Teacher association, or how to repair your car, or how to take care of your farm. The Bible is not intended to be an encyclopedia of technical information on all subjects. But it is intended to provide truths and principles which are relevant, and are to be ap-

plied to, every sphere and relationship of human life.

(4) Christianity is universal in scope, including nations. Over against the idea of a religion that is limited in scope, we place the Bible idea of Christianity as a religion that is universal in scope. All things are to be placed under the feet of Christ. Even every thought is to be brought into captivity to Him.

Why is it that the Covenanter Church finds the going so difficult, so painfully slow, in witnessing for the Bible ideal of a Christian nation? It is because people have become accustomed to the false ideal of a limited religion—a religion that is to be restricted to the realms of worship and personal conduct, a religion that is thought of as separated from large areas of human life, as having nothing to do with politics, economics and other spheres of human society.

This notion of a limited scope of religion, we do not hesitate to assert, is a false one. God is not a limited God; Christ is not a limited Christ; the Bible is not a limited Bible; Christianity is not a limited religion.

The person who thinks that anything in his life is separate from his religion, is to that extent an irreligious person. If we think that we can live our life and make God and Christianity a minor side-issue of our life, then we have not even begun to understand the scope of Christianity as set forth in the Bible.

When we accept Christ we accept Him not only as our Saviour but also as our Lord, and that means Lord over all of our life, including our business life, our political life, our social life, our recreation, our thinking—everything. Christ claims everything. He is the true totalitarian Ruler. To offer Him a limited section of our life is to insult Him.

In the same way our national life must be brought under the Christian religion. Christianity is not a monopoly of the visible Church. God intends that there shall be Christian people, Christian families, Christian churches, and Christian nations.

Someone may ask, how can we have a Christian nation when less than half of the people of our country are professing Christians? The answer is, that of course we cannot really have a Christian nation until there are enough Christian people to make it a Christian nation by their political action. But we are not discussing existing conditions, but what the Word of God requires. ALL the people of America ought to be Christians, and the nation ought to be a Christian nation.

Anything else--anything less--is a deviation from the divine ideal set forth in the Bible.

Do you ask, are we Covenanters really holding out for a perfect state of human society? And if so, are we not seeking the impossible? The answer is, that we are always to witness for the divine ideal in human society, and that ideal is absolute perfection, even though we realize that total perfection can never be attained in this present world. Only in eternity--after the final destruction of evil--can absolute, total perfection be attained. But it is a moral obligation today, here and now. We are to witness for it and to strive toward it, even though we realize it is attainable on earth only in a relative and partial form.

None of us will be a perfect person this side of heaven. But it is our duty to strive toward perfection every day of our lives. We may never lower that ideal. To lower it is to sin against God. We must always hitch our wagon to the stars. We must always strive toward the impossible. We must always bear witness to the divine ideal, for the nation as well as for the individual.

As a matter of fact, the ideal of a Christian nation is not wholly impossible of attainment in this present life. While absolute perfection cannot come this side of eternity, a partial and relative attainment of the ideal of a Christian nation is possible.

Scotland was a truly Christian nation for a period of years. What Scotland was, the United States could become. I will not say how soon, or how probable it may be, for only God knows the answers to such questions. But I do say that it is a valid ideal and moral obligation, and that a relative attainment of it is not inherently impossible in this present world.

Do not be upset or embarrassed when people think you a little queer because you believe in the ideal of a Christian nation. If you are 100% for Christ people will think you queer anyway. Consistent Christians have always been considered queer by the world. But they are the ones God uses in accomplishing His purposes. So let us stand up for ideal of a Christian nation.

II. Our Life in a Non-Christian Nation

We hold the ideal of a Christian nation. But it is obvious that this ideal has not yet been realized in the United States of America. We are living, right now, in a non-Christian nation, a nation that has not recognized God, Christ and the Bible --a nation that, in its political life, carries on very much as if there were no God.

This raises the problem: How shall we, who believe in the ideal of a Christian nation, conduct

ourselves and live our lives in a non-Christian nation? In answer to this question, several things may be said.

(1) Our relation to God is determinative of all other relations. Holding the Bible ideal of a Christian nation, we may not live just as if we did not hold this ideal. We may not live just as if this ideal did not matter. We may not live just as if there were no difference between us and those who are not Christians. We may not live just as if there were no difference between us and those who believe in a limited kind of Christianity, who say "Religion and politics must not be mixed".

If we were to live just like other people, we would be untrue to God. We would be forgetting the ideal of the Christian nation. We would be living as if our special relation to God did not count.

So we affirm, first of all, that we must never forget or disregard the ideal of the Christian nation. Whatever we do, that ideal, and its denial by the present government of the United States, must always be kept in mind, must always be taken into account in our practical living.

(2) We will promote order and justice under the present non-Christian government. We fully recognize that even a non-Christian government, so long as it exists and serves the God-ordained purposes of civil government, is a divine institution and must be obeyed except when loyalty to God is involved. We are not anarchists. We believe in civil government. We are not like certain fanatical sects of misguided people who, apparently, are against the government in every possible way. We gladly and freely recognize that the existing U. S. government, even though it is a non-Christian government, still fulfils the general functions of civil government adequately. It maintains justice, provides for the public peace, defends the country against enemies foreign and domestic, takes necessary action in emergencies, and so forth.

We recognize, too, that in the providence of God we are CITIZENS of our nation, the United States of America. We are not ashamed of being American citizens, either. Our citizenship stands for something that we believe in, in this world of political confusion, communism, fascism, and other harmful tendencies. Accordingly, we are ready to fight in defence of our country. We are ready to pay our taxes, not just because we have to, but because we believe we ought to. We are prepared to obey the laws of our country, not just because we may be prosecuted if we violate them, but because we believe it is our Christian duty to obey the laws of our country. The only exception would be in the case of a law requiring something inconsistent with our duty to God.

(3) We will support whatever is good and useful to our country. Even apart from the ideal of a Christian nation, we will stand for and support those reforms and programs that we believe are good and useful to our country, that will make our country a better place to live in, will protect human life and provide for the safety and stability of human society. We will favor just laws and honest government. We will let our influence be exerted on the side of what we believe to be good and right.

(4) But we must maintain our position of dissent. "We will continue to refuse to incorporate, by any act, with the political body, until this blessed reformation has been secured." Much as we love our country, we recognize that the present non-Christian status of the government is an evil. Even though the existing secular or non-Christian government fulfils the general functions of civil government and accomplishes much good, it involves a practical denial of the ideal of the Christian nation. The greatest of the Church Fathers, Augustine, said that every lesser good contains an element of sin. Believing this to be true, we assert that the non-Christian or secular form of our government is not merely an evil, but a sin. And from that sin we, for our part, must maintain separation, lest we share in moral responsibility for it.

In our Covenant we say that we will continue to refuse to "incorporate" "with the political body". That means that we will refrain from POLITICAL acts. The two political acts that are involved are: (a) voting; and (b) holding office. To incorporate with the government by voting or holding office would neutralize our testimony to the ideal of a Christian nation. It would mean that we are willing to lower the ideal and participate in political life on the present secular or non-Christian basis.

We will gladly do all we can to help our country, short of giving up our position of dissent from its secular or non-Christian character. We will do all we can to help our country, short of becoming partakers in the sins of our country. We will do all we can to support our country, short of giving public approval to what is wrong in the life of our country.

To vote or hold office would mean to accept the Constitution in its existing Godless, Christless, Bible-less form. It would mean swearing to accept the Constitution on the present basis of "Religion and politics will not mix". This we cannot do, and be faithful to God.

The office-holder must take this oath to the Constitution. The voter incurs the same responsibility, by voting for someone to take the oath

as his representative. The one is responsible just as truly as the other.

Many churches will agree with a large part of our testimony for a Christian nation. It is this position of dissent that they cannot swallow. This is where the knife cuts. This is where the reproach of being a Covenanter comes in. This is why our Church remains small and despised. This is why some are ashamed to be Covenanters.

And just because this position of dissent—not voting and not holding office—is what hurts today, it is what we must hold on to at all costs. This is what cuts ice. This is what really gives the Covenanter Church some leverage in the life of America today. This must be retained, not primarily because it is useful, but because it is right.

III. We Will do what we Can to Make ours a Christian Nation

Our position is far from being one of mere passive dissent from a secular or non-Christian government. I have said that it is a sound principle that every lesser good contains an element of sin, and accordingly the non-Christian Constitution of the U. S. is a sin. Our first duty with reference to this sin is to separate, or dissent, from it. But that does not exhaust our duty concerning it. We have a higher view of moral responsibility than that. If a wrong has been done, we will not simply pass by on the other side and say "I am not guilty of it; I am not responsible for it". Rather, we will realize that it is our duty to do what may be in our power to set matters right. God's Word commands us: "Depart from evil, and do good" (Psalm 34:14). Departing from evil is not enough; we must also do good. Dissent from evil is not enough; we must also do something positive to try to correct the evil; we must make every effort to do what is right ourselves, and to have what is right done by others.

This does not mean that we are to do evil that good may come. We are not to try to set our country right by ourselves compromising with the very evils we seek to correct. We do not believe that the end justifies the means. We will not hold office or vote for others to do so on a secular, non-Christian basis in the hope that by so doing we could help our country to become a Christian nation. The person who himself becomes involved in an evil loses his real testimony against that evil. The person who has incorporated with the political body by voting or holding office cannot really protest against the secular character of the U. S. Constitution; he would be protesting against that which he has himself accepted. The person who accepts or approves something thereby cuts away his own standing ground for protesting against it.

But we are pledged to do what we can rightly do to make our country a Christian nation. We will set an example of good citizenship. We will pray and work for our country's peace and welfare. We will continuously seek an amendment to the Constitution which would recognize the sovereignty of God and the Kingly office of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will not only favor such a Christian Amendment to the Constitution ourselves, but will do our best to commend it to others privately and publicly.

But we cannot give up our position of dissent. Not only is dissent from the secular character of the U. S. Constitution our duty; it is also the position of power. While occupying the position of dissent we have a real standing ground for witnessing for the ideal of a Christian nation.

In Exodus 33:7 we read that "Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar-off from the camp. . . And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." Why was the tabernacle removed out of the camp? Because there was sin in the camp and the tabernacle could not be identified

with that sin. Though the situation of Israel was quite different from that of America today, the lesson of separation from evil is still relevant. The tabernacle was for the worship of the true God, Jehovah. The religion of the tabernacle involved the destruction of evil. Just because of this, it required first of all separation (dissent) from evil.

Let no one say that the omission of all acknowledgment of God and the Lord Jesus Christ from the Constitution of the United States is a little thing, a mere technicality or trifle that we ought to overlook in order to elect good men to office. We need good men in office in America, but what is needed most of all is for the rights of God to be taken seriously. To ignore the living God and His prerogatives is not a little thing.

Of course the position taken in our Church Covenant is not popular. It makes our Church very unpopular. Nor is this unpopularity always due to misunderstanding. Sometimes it is greatest when our position is most clearly understood. But we are not seeking popularity. We are seeking to be faithful and consistent in applying Christianity to all realms of life.

Jesus and the Critics

By the Rev. Leslie W. Sloat

Note: "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is indebted to "The Presbyterian Guardian" for kind permission to reprint the following article which appeared in the August, 1948, issue of that periodical. The article is of great value because it explains, accurately and yet in simple language, the attitude of the leading schools of "liberal" criticism toward the Person and work of Jesus as presented in the New Testament. A grasp of the matters set forth in this article is necessary for a real understanding of the type of religion which dominates many of the larger Protestant denominations of America today.—Ed.

The life of Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament, and as we have tried to set it forth in these lessons, is very different from His life as pictured by many modern students and writers. In particular, the Christ of the gospels is clearly a supernatural Person, who came to this world to perform a work of redemption for His people. But those who reject the God of the Bible, and with it the supernaturalism of the Bible, cannot believe that Jesus was historically such a person. They have therefore attempted to rewrite the life of Jesus from a naturalistic viewpoint. Some have been simply dogmatic in this procedure, while others have tried to find a basis

in history for their idea of what Jesus was. While Christian people do not need to know of these theories, in order to believe in Jesus and receive the benefits of His redeeming work, it is often interesting and profitable to see how unbelievers have dealt with their Christ, and it confirms our convictions when we see that no other explanation of Jesus is possible save that which holds the New Testament narrative to be true.

One of the earliest modern critics of the life of Jesus was H. E. G. Paulus (1761-1851). He tried to offer a "natural" explanation for everything supernatural in the life of our Lord. He held that Jesus merely urged upon His hearers repentance and moral betterment. As for the miracles, he thinks that in some cases the writers did not even intend to report an event as miraculous. Thus in the feeding of the five thousand, Paulus held that all the Gospels intend to suggest is that Jesus gave what He had to those near Him, and that the others also passed around food that they already had and so everyone was fed. Instead of walking on the water, Jesus supposedly just walked along the shore, or in very shallow water. In other cases the writers may actually have thought that something strange had happened, but, says Paulus, we know better. Eventually Jesus saw that His program could be accom-

plished only through His death, and so He submitted to it. Actually, however, He only fainted on the cross, and then revived in the tomb, escaped and returned to the disciples, and then went away somewhere.

Such a rationalizing method of dealing with the gospel narratives is an easy, but futile procedure, for those who reject the supernatural. For reliable historical criticism cannot deal thus carelessly with historical documents, which the gospels certainly are. If such an interpretation was to be maintained, a more solid ground was needed than Paulus provided.

The rationalizing method of Paulus was sharply opposed by D. F. Strauss (1808-1874). Strauss interpreted the miracles as "myths". A myth is the expression of a religious idea in narrative form. Starting with the idea of Jesus as Savior and Lord, men came to express that idea by telling wonderful stories about Him. This was not conscious deceit, but a sincere desire to describe the greatness of the man. As the purpose of these stories was to show the fulfillment of the Old Testament, Strauss tried to find analogies in the O.T. for many of the miracles.

Strauss is perhaps most famous for the "vision" hypothesis concerning the resurrection. The disciples loved and honored Jesus so much that they could not believe He was dead. So after a time they came to have hallucinations in which they thought they saw Him alive. Now, since it would take time for such a state of mind to arise in which such hallucinations were possible, Strauss held that the first appearances of Jesus were in Galilee, and quite a long time after the crucifixion, so long afterwards, in fact, that it was no longer possible to investigate the tomb. This is the famous Galilean hypothesis concerning the resurrection.

But again Strauss had paid little attention to historical questions concerning the authorship and genuineness of the gospels. His reconstruction was quite arbitrary. It was soon pointed out that one cannot get away from the fact that Luke, for example, was written very early, and that the portrait of Jesus contained in such a work as Luke cannot be ignored by a careful student of history. Later on Strauss wrote another book attempting to deal with the literary problems, but it made little general impression.

Strauss was in due course opposed by one A. Neander, among others. Neander believed in God and accepted the possibility and reality of the supernatural in the life of Jesus.

The next name of prominence in the field is that of C. H. Weisse (1801-1866) who really tried to deal with the literary problems Strauss has

passed over. Weisse held that there were two chief sources for the three synoptic gospels. One was the gospel of Mark based on eye-witness accounts. The other was a collection of the sayings of Jesus, called the "Logia", and written by Matthew. The writers of the first and third gospels (according to Weisse not Matthew and Luke), took these two sources and fitted the material together. This is the famous "two-document" theory which, with certain modifications, has been quite generally accepted until recently.

In his reconstruction of Jesus' life, Weisse denies the reality of the miracles, treats the Birth narratives as mythical, accepts the vision and Galilean hypothesis concerning the resurrection, and understands others of the miracles as the reflections of the writers on some sort of "Magnetic" power supposedly possessed by Jesus, a power, however, not supernatural.

Next to be mentioned is F. C. Baur and the "Tubingen School". Baur held that the explanation of the New Testament lies in the conflict in the early church between a Jewish and a Gentile Christianity. Gradually the conflict was settled in compromise. N. T. books which are strongly Jewish (e. g. Matthew) or strongly Gentile (e. g., Galatians) are to be dated early, while those which he thought had a "mediating" character are to be dated late. But even Matthew, for example, dated early by Baur, was thought to contain much unhistorical material. Luke was reworking of an early gospel, Mark was late and John was very late.

In 1863 Ernst Renan wrote a life of Jesus which, while it has little scientific value, has other interest. Renan held that Jesus started out with a pure, high-minded gospel which, however, "deteriorated" under Jewish influences. At times Jesus engaged in a little "innocent" deceit. In the raising of Lazarus, for example, Renan suggests that the sisters Mary and Martha, seeing that Jesus' popularity was temporarily waning, planned the supposed miracle to revive it, and Jesus fell in with their plan. As stated, this book has little of historical value, but is interesting from a literary viewpoint.

The same year H. J. Holtzmann in a book, "The Synoptic Gospels", gave the first real presentation of the "liberal" Jesus,—of what is left of Jesus after the supernatural has been removed from his life. As for the gospels, Holtzmann thought there was an earlier "Mark" from which our gospel of Mark had come. This earlier Mark and the "Logia" were the sources of the Synoptics. But Holtzmann discovered that even in these earliest originals as he reconstructed them, the supernatural was not absent. Even such a nature miracle as the feeding of the five thousand, in all of our present gospels, must have been in the

very earliest source. Holtzmann didn't know just what to do about this, but he still rejected miracles.

From his time to 1900 several somewhat more orthodox scholars appeared to refute the reconstructions of the modern critics. Such were B. Weiss, Theodor Zahn, J. B. Lightfoot and Ederheim. The latter's "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah" is a very worthy book.

In 1900 Adolf von Harnack published a series of lectures which appeared under the English title, "What is Christianity?". Here was pictured the "liberal" Jesus. The important thing was not the man, but his message. Jesus, according to Harnack, emphasized three great elements of that message: 1) the Kingdom of God and its coming, understood ethically; 2) The Fatherhood of God and the infinite value of the human soul; 3) The brotherhood of man and the command to love one another. Aside from teaching these things, Jesus was important as an example of that which he taught.

Here is Modernism in full flower. Christianity is interpreted as a non-doctrinal, non-personal religion centering in ethical conduct. Harnack felt that theology had tended to veil the person of our Lord in His true character as a teacher of righteousness. Jesus, said Harnack, did not teach about Himself. The apostles introduced the theology "about" Jesus, but we should be concerned rather with the teaching "of" Jesus.

There can be no disputing the fact that the religion Harnack presents is a religion of natural accomplishment and of self-salvation (if one may even speak of salvation in this connection). It is not a religion of redemption as set forth in the whole of Scripture.

Harnack's presentation was opposed and disputed by both orthodox and naturalistic scholars. Among the orthodox Denny (not always a clear thinker), Warfield and Machen showed that it is impossible to remove the supernatural from the gospels or their sources. Machen showed, for example, that the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke cannot be removed by being termed a later interpolation (as Harnack had suggested). The only explanation for the belief of the church from its earliest days, is that its belief is founded on historical facts reported in the gospel narratives.

Naturalistic critics of Harnack, on the other hand, claimed that he had proven too much. If Jesus was such an honest, morally high-minded man as Harnack claimed, then He could not have said concerning Himself the things which are included even by Harnack among His sayings. In

particular, Jesus clearly believed Himself to be the Messiah. That involved supernaturalism. But if Jesus knew He was not the Messiah or at least not divine, and yet said the things He said, He must either have been really a bad man, not telling the truth, or an insane man, deluded concerning Himself.

The impossibility of removing the Messianic elements from the life and teaching of Jesus led to the rise of a school which said that these elements were indeed dominant in Jesus' life, but were by Him thought of as future. This was the school of "consistent eschatology", with such a man as Albert Schweitzer. Of course, this school thought that Jesus was mistaken.

Still another development followed upon Harnack's reconstruction. A consistent carrying out of his principles simply means, this school said, that we cannot really tell what Jesus was like at all. More than this, it really doesn't make a great deal of difference. We have His teachings. They stand, whether we know anything about His life or not. Even if it should some time be proven that such a person as Jesus had never lived, that would not change the religion He founded, or is commonly thought to have founded. In other words, the adoption of the principles Harnack advocated led in the end to agnosticism and confusion in handling the life of Jesus.

There have been still other more recent developments, such as the popular "form-criticism", an attempt to get back of the gospel narratives to the alleged original "forms" of their stories and isolated sayings. But all of this simply has shown that when one rejects the gospel narratives with all their supernaturalism, he is left in utter confusion, and any explanation he attempts to make of the origin of Christianity simply results in confusion worse confounded. The whole history of naturalistic criticism of the life of Jesus has served only to confirm the conviction of believers, that the Jesus of the gospels was—and is—the Jesus of history, the supernatural Son of God, incarnate for the purpose of accomplishing the redemption of His people, which He did through His substitutionary sacrifice, and who is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Since He has performed the work of redemption, and since He even now lives, He can still be trusted. And they who believe in Him as their Saviour have everlasting life, and shall never perish, — not because they live like Jesus or follow His example, but because He by undergoing the penalty for their sins has forever delivered them from the eternal condemnation of the just God. Hence it is true today as always,— "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

The Fortieth Psalm

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

Verses 6, 7 and 8 of this Psalm are quoted, and their interpretation given, in the tenth chapter of Hebrews, with the unequivocal statement that they are words of Christ: "When he cometh into the world, he saith . . . See, I am come to do thy will, O God." The reason for His saying this is the fact stated in Heb. 10:4 that "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. WHEREFORE, when he cometh into the world, he saith, . . ." As the God-Man He understood the doings and thoughts of God with regard to men, that they are many and gracious.

"The wonderful works of God" are frequently spoken of in the Psalms, meaning extraordinary things, marvels, such as only God can do. "Jehovah God, the God of Israel who only doeth wondrous things" (Psalm 72:18). "To Him who alone doeth great wonders" (Psalm 136:4). They are the miracles of God in creation and providence but especially in redemption. "And thy thoughts toward us", thy purposes of grace, of mercy, of pardon. From the time of man's first sin God began to work His miracles of mercy and to proclaim the gospel of forgiveness. But, until the fulness of the time, His way of forgiveness was symbolized, for men, by the sacrifice of certain animals. Man needed an appropriate symbol as a help to faith and patience, for the time, humanly speaking, was long. But God has no pleasure in mere symbols. They are powerless to effect His purpose. He desires that men put their trust in Him, hear and obey His word.

Christ understood the will of God perfectly. "Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in; a pair of ears thou hast channeled out (excavated) for me." (The dual form of the Hebrew word for "ears" has usually been ignored). This was freely translated in the old Greek version from which the writer to the Hebrews quoted, "a body thou hast equipped for me"—equipped, that is, in particular, with the organ of hearing, set in an orifice on each side of the head of the body, for the entrance of the word of God into the inward parts, heart, mind, and will.

The prime importance of this is emphasized by the reply of Christ to the question, "What commandment is the first of all?" He answered, "The first of all commandments is, HEAR, O Israel; the Lord is our God; the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." (Mark 12:28-30). God reveals Himself and His will by His word. Accordingly, He equipped the human body with ears to hear, and so to understand, to love, and to obey. For,

"How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard?"

Christ came into the world equipped with a human body. "Burnt-offering and sin-offering thou hast not required. Thereupon, I said", said He, "See, I am come; in the roll of the book it is written concerning me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in my inward parts". Saying, "Thy law is in my inward parts", meant that He had heard, understood, believed, and was happy to obey.

The will of God here in view is, of course, that which was symbolized by the sacrifice, the will to forgive sinners. What Christ so willingly and gladly came to do was actually to perform the will of God which the sacrifices pictured but were utterly impotent to realize. No dumb, irrational beast could properly symbolize active, intelligent, loving obedience such as God requires at all times. The only obedience it was fitted to represent was submissive "obedience unto death". This was its part, but an imperative, indispensable, necessary part. For the law of God prescribes not only the commandment, but the penalty of death for disobedience. And, speaking of the sacrifice, God said, "it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). He refused the sacrifice as merely a gift to Himself (Psalm 50:7-15). The essential thing about the sacrifice was the shedding of its blood. "And without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Of course, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams", but to hearken and obey is not enough, indeed is impossible, for a man who has at any time disobeyed. The sentence of death stands against him. The law of God must be satisfied. The sacrifice represented the violent, substitutionary death of an innocent victim, in place of the sinner whose sins were symbolically laid upon it. But Christ came to do that will of God which none other could do. He was not only obedient, as proving His innocence; He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter." "He offered himself without blemish to God." "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice unto God." "Christ died for our sins."

"In the roll of the book it is written concerning me." The book here mentioned is no doubt "the book of the law", the Pentateuch; for, in the day of David it is not likely that anything more was yet recognized as Holy Scripture. But there is nothing in the Pentateuch about David; hence David, though the penman of these words, was not the speaker. He was a prophet speaking not of himself but of some other man. According to

the writer of Hebrews that other man was Christ. And this was confirmed when Christ said to His disciples, "All things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." But what is written in the law concerning Christ? Much—not only the covenant promises confirmed to Adam, to Abraham, and to Israel, but the whole law of the sacrifice in all its different forms, prefiguring the great atoning sacrifice of Christ.

Now if verses 6-8 are the words of Christ, then the whole Psalm is His, for there is but one speaker throughout. It is intensely personal. The first personal pronouns, "I", "me", "my", occur more than forty times, in every verse of the Psalm except verses 4 and 16, which unquestionably include Christ with "the man", that is, "every man" and "all those" who, like Himself, put their trust in Jehovah, and seek His salvation. He speaks not only of "my God" but of "our God". He says the goodness of God is "toward us", "for our advantage", united together as we are in the bonds of the everlasting covenant. Twice He speaks of "the great congregation", the word being rendered in the old Greek version, sometimes by "synagogue", sometimes by "church". Christ never, for a moment, lost sight of His covenant people. His mention of them here is another proof that the whole Psalm is His.

The first part, verses 1-5, is a thanksgiving to God, who "heard my cry, and brought me up out of a pit of turmoil, out of the filthy mire (of the streets). And he set my feet firmly on a rock; he directed my goings." The one great deliverance recorded of Christ is that in His resurrection and ascension. What else could this refer to? Coming from heaven into this world, as He did, walking in the filth of its streets, amid its darkness and death, its disorder, the constant clashes of selfishness, its limitations on every side, it must have seemed to Him to be a veritable "pit of turmoil".

The strange thing to us is that He gave thanks to God for hearing and delivering Him, before deliverance came! But we do not know the greatness of His faith. Once again He thanked God for having heard and granted the resurrection of Lazarus, a man whom He loved, from the dead, before Lazarus was raised! "I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me." And the record follows that "many believed". So here, of His joyous confession of faith in God's deliverance, a deliverance sure to come, He says, "Many shall see, and fear, and put their trust in Jehovah". And ever since God honored the faith and obedience, and certified His acceptance of the sacrifice, of Christ, many—a multitude that no man can number—have put their trust in Him.

Of verse 12, — "Innumerable evils have come upon me round about; mine iniquities have over-

taken me, and I am not able to see: they are more than the hairs of my head"—Perowne says, "It is quite impossible to refer such words as these to Christ." But let us consider a little. The word translated "evils" is of frequent occurrence in the Psalms and other Scripture. It usually means "wickedness" or "punishment for wickedness". That this is its meaning here, and not "wrongs" or "afflictions" suffered, is confirmed by the corresponding word in the parallel line, "iniquities". This word also is used both for iniquities themselves and for the "punishment of iniquities". "Immeasurable wickedness has overwhelmed me". It has come from without, as the waters of a flood. It came not from His heart, therefore cannot defile Him. "Mine iniquities have overtaken me", as a countless host of pursuing enemies, or, as an inescapable tide of judgment. Though He calls them "Mine iniquities", He does not acknowledge that He committed them. There is here no confession of personal guilt; no shame; no repentance; no consciousness of deserving God's wrath or punishment for anything He had done. He asks no pardon for Himself. Yet He continues His pleading cry for mercy and deliverance. Hence, we must understand that Christ says "Mine iniquities", not in the sense that He had committed them, but in the sense that the condemnation and punishment of them came upon Him from without. For, "Jehovah laid (caused to come) upon him the iniquity (or the punishment of the iniquity) of us all" (Isa. 53:6). In this sense "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us". (Gal. 3:13).

Between His prayer for deliverance for Himself and for the joy of all those who seek the salvation of God as He does, there lie verses 14 and 15. Many refuse to admit that they are the words of Christ. But Christ is not only man, He is God; not only Saviour, He is Judge. And these words are not only a prayer of the man Christ Jesus, they are a judicial sentence of the Supreme Judge of All, which occurs not only here but also, in substance, in other Psalms undeniably His. They are further proof that this Psalm is the word of Christ. We shall consider them more fully in connection with other Psalms.

If Christ be not the speaker here, this Psalm, by its own weight, breaks in pieces, pieces which puzzle the critics to explain how they ever got together in one composition. Its unity of thought can be found only in the mind of Christ as expressed when "his soul made an offering for sin". It can be understood only in the light of God's covenant promises and of Christ's fulfilment of them in the strength of His unshakable confidence, expressed again in the last verse, "My help and my Deliverer art THOU."

(Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued in future issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — Ed.)

Reviews of Religious Books

One or more current or recent religious books will be reviewed in this department in each issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". 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 through your local bookstore or direct from the publishers; do not send orders to the publisher of "Blue Banner Faith and Life."

HOW TO BE SAVED AND KNOW IT! by J. E. Conant, D. D. Fundamental Truth Publishers, Findlay, Ohio. Pp. 40. Paper cover.

This booklet is based on the incident of the Philippian jailor who asked, "What must I do to be saved?" The first half of the book disposes of answers to this problem considered wrong by the author, such as "Be baptized", "Begin a better life". These, of course, are unscriptural, but others actually true to the Scripture, ("Be converted", "Have a change of heart") are also ruled out, by arbitrarily limiting the meaning of those words.

Having thus cleared the way, the author then proposes what he considers to be the proper answer to this question, the one word, "Believe". (If one were inclined to argue the point, there is a kind of believing, too, which has nothing to do with salvation. "The devils also believe and tremble.")

The second half of this work, in developing the idea of "believing", is shot through with two errors which characterize much "fundamental" Christian literature. One is the idea that "God cannot save a person who doesn't believe", ignoring the fact that faith itself is the gift of God. (God can save anyone He chooses to save. No man, left to his own sinful will, would believe, unless God gave the will to believe.

The other error is that of confusing salvation with the assurance of salvation. Quoting "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life", the author of this booklet says that a person who doesn't KNOW he's saved, doesn't believe God. He says that "feeling" has nothing to do with this question. Now it is true that feeling has nothing to do with THE FACT OF SALVATION. The fact of a person's salvation is based on the finished work of Jesus Christ, received by faith. But it is not true that "feeling" has nothing to do with ASSURANCE OF SALVATION. Assurance of salvation IS feeling. It is not an inseparable accompaniment of believing and salvation.

Sin will rob the best Christian of assurance, for there is none so perfect on this earth that he does not commit sin. Then the devil may trouble

a Christian's mind about his salvation, even when he has no particular, unrepented sin. There are numerous examples in God's Word of such loss of assurance. To quote just one: "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" (Psalm 77:7-10).

Salvation comes through believing. Assurance of salvation may come much later. Having been attained, it may be lost for a time. But this in no wise alters the fact of salvation.

These errors appear to this reviewer to more than offset the truth set forth in this booklet.—Lester E. Kilpatrick

MESSAGES ON PHILIPPIANS, by Walter L. Wilson, M. D. Zondervan Publishing House, 847 Ottawa Ave., N. W. Grand Rapids, Mich. 1943, pp. 43, paper back, 35 cents.

The title of this booklet describes its contents. It is not intended to be a commentary on Philippians, but a practical study.

In the first chapter, the purpose of this prison epistle is considered. The remaining eight chapters do not take up the text of Philippians consecutively, but are concerned with some message which may be found extending throughout the epistle, such as "Unity in Christ", "Fellowship in Christ", "Christ Exalted", "Paul's Personal Testimony", and others.

It is not intended to be exhaustive, but is a practical application of a few of the teachings of the epistle. The difficulties of certain passages are passed over, while the evident teachings are pressed home. The book of Philippians should be read and re-read in connection with these "messages".—Lester E. Kilpatrick.

HIS IN JOYOUS EXPERIENCE, by Norman B. Harrison. Moody Press, 153 Institute Place, Chicago, Ill. 1928, pp. 96, paper back, 50 cents.

Also a study of the epistle to the Philippians this volume is for those wishing a more extended and systematic, yet popular, treatment. A brief

"practical, historical and analytical approach" to the epistle is first presented, after which the epistle is studied with the four chapters as units, Christ Within, Behind, Before and Above, or, the Inward, Backward, Forward and Upward Look. The author has worked out an ingenious chart which he fills in as the study progresses. The idea has value, whether or not you agree with his analysis, for you must think, to follow the growth of the chart.

The epistle to the Philippians yields many rich thoughts as this minister of the Word searches it out, illustrates and applies it. It will help the reader to find Philippians a more practical and cheering study.

The premillennial views of the author, while not prominent in the book, are found in his interpretation of 3:11, where he says that the resurrection "from among the dead", as he translates it, indicates two resurrections. It should be obvious that here Paul was not distinguishing the times of the resurrection of the just and the unjust, but the differing results. This verse gives no indication, one way or the other, as to the time. And other Scriptures are very plain as to one general resurrection of the just and the unjust at the same time, especially John 5:28,29. Mr. Harrison has here brought in his own view, of two resurrections separated by one thousand years, to the interpretation of a passage which is not concerned with the time at all.

In discussing a Christian's "citizenship in heaven" (3:20) this author fails to note the earthly privileges and responsibilities which accompany such citizenship. He suggests only the heavenly reward which awaits such a citizen. This also is a characteristic of the premillenarians—not of all but of most—who see no chance of bettering human society and institutions "until Christ comes to reign on earth." This passage (3:15-19) is specifically concerned with our walk and influence while here on earth.

However, this study is characterized by reverent faith in the Bible, as well as by deep spiritual insight and experience.—Lester E. Kilpatrick.

MY SERMON NOTES ON BIBLICAL CHARACTERS, by the Rev. W. P. Van Wyk. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S. E. Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1948, pp. 153, \$1.75.

This volume, with value out of proportion to its size, is packed with suggestions for the Bible student. Each paragraph is really a series of topic sentences. The author has been a successful minister for more than forty years in the Christian Reformed Church, and his stated purpose is to encourage "exegetical and expository preaching".

There are twenty-six chapters, each devoted to a character or group of characters, thirteen O. T. and thirteen N.T. Titles are descriptive, not novel. His outlines are regular, having three, four, or in a few cases five main divisions, with only two further steps of subdivision. However, homiletical nicety is never sought at the expense of adherence to the passage of Scripture under study. Simplicity of style, with always a ready application to the spiritual needs of his people, must have characterized the preaching of this minister.

This book should be of special interest to the busy pastor, though, of course, as the author himself warns, one should not attempt to find here ready-made sermons.—Lester E. Kilpatrick.

MESSAGES ON EPHESIANS, by Walter L. Wilson, M. D. Zondervan Publishing House, 847 Ottawa Ave., N.W., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1940, pp. 49. Paper cover, 35 cents.

In general, this book is an earnest plea for giving honor and glory to Jesus Christ and living a faithful, consistent Christian life. It draws many helpful practical lessons from Ephesians.

On page 22 the social ethical applications of Christianity are sweepingly denied: "Our Lord has never told us to clean up the pig pen. Our business is to change pigs into sheep" (see also p. 44). We believe, on the contrary, that the world is God's property and should be cleaned up as far as possible. This is not contrary to "changing pigs into sheep".

The chapter on "The World in Ephesians" fails to point out that there is a legitimate use of the world by the Christian (see 1 Cor. 3:22; 7:31). The teaching is over-simplified and the impression is given that the Christian's only proper relation to the world is one of renunciation and separation. This is characteristic of Fundamentalists who do not know the doctrine of Common Grace. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1).

The teaching concerning "the flesh" on pages 37, 38 fails to make it clear that "the flesh" in the Pauline sense does mean the human body but the whole sinful nature of man. Some of the statements made tend to convey the impression that "the flesh" is identical with the body. In Gal.5:19-21 Paul lists 17 "works of the flesh"; at least 10 of them are sins OF THE MIND ("hatred", "envyings", "heresies", etc.).

On page 35 it is stated that "World, flesh and devil are all five-letter words. Five is the number of human weakness." But in the Greek "world" has 6 letters, "flesh" 4 and "devil" 3. Even if it could be proved that five is "the num-

ber of human weakness", the number of letters in the English words would not have any significance.

On pages 7, 8, 34 there is an amazing teaching to the effect that "Heathen do not invent anything, except for destructive purposes. They have no electric lights", etc. This is not only contrary to actual facts in many non-Christian lands, but contrary to the Bible. It was the ungodly descendants of Cain, not the godly line of Seth, that invented the most; see Gen. 4:17-22. The Chinese invented printing and many practical devices. Who invented the wheel, lever, pulley, inclined plane? Geometry was worked out by the heathen Greeks; Algebra by the Mohammedan Arabs. These inventions and discoveries are not products of Christianity; they come from God's common grace, by which sin is restrained and civilization rendered possible, even apart from Christianity. It is one of the greatest weaknesses of American Fundamentalism that it knows nothing of the doctrine of Common Grace. The present volume should be read with discrimination, in view of its many misleading, unbalanced and over-simplified statements.—J. G. Vos.

HIS VERY OWN: PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS, by Norman B. Harrison. Moody Press, 153 Institute Place, Chicago, Ill. 1930, pp. 176. Paper, 75 cents.

A very helpful, readable treatment of Ephesians, not a detailed commentary but an expository study. A number of charts are provided to help the reader. While the book is for the most part quite free of erroneous teachings, the following should be noted. On p. 31 an explanation of election is given which is misleading: "Men are not elected to a state of reprobation or separation from God. The word is incapable of such a use." This gives the impression that God's eternal decree has nothing to do with the reprobation of the non-elect. Scriptures definitely teaches the contrary: Rom. 9:17-22; 2 Pet. 2:12. On p. 32 it is stated that "Foreordination concerns only God's people"; the Bible teaches that it includes all that ever comes to pass, even "chance" events (Prov. 16:33) and the sinful acts of wicked men (Acts 2:23).

Unlike Dr. W. Wilson, the author believes in a social application of Christian principles; on p. 145, commenting on Eph. 6:5-9, he says, "The solution of industrial problems is enshrined in these few verses." On p. 170,171 in a right emphasis on the importance of the invisible Church, the impression seems to be given that the visible Church and its organization is not necessary nor a part of the plan of God. Perhaps the author did not intend to give this impression, but it is unfortunate that he did not clearly state that the visible, organized Church is a divine institution.—J. G. Vos

REVISION OR NEW TRANSLATION? by Oswald T. Allis, Ph.D. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1948, pp. 164, \$2.00.

This volume is a critique of the new "Revised Standard Version" of the New Testament, by a man who is a thoroughly competent Biblical scholar and also a humble believer in the Word of God. Dr. Allis examines the new version especially in the light of its claim to be a revision of the Authorized or King James and American Revised versions. He has done an amazingly thorough piece of work, and has carefully compared the new version not only with the King James and American Revised but with a number of other versions. His main conclusion is that the "Revised Standard Version" is really a new translation rather than a revision of the previous versions, and that in spite of some good qualities it has very great weaknesses and faults.—J. G. Vos

MATTHEW HENRY: MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES, by Roy A. Beltz. Boone Publishing Co., Box 200, Des Moines, Iowa. 1947, pp. 79. Paper 60 cents.

A very interesting, readable and informative account of the life and work of the famous Bible commentator Matthew Henry, who lived 1662-1714. The author brings out the religious earnestness and the truly Christian holiness of Matthew Henry. On pp. 54, 55 it is stated that Matthew Henry "has sometimes been claimed by the Calvinists and sometimes by the Armenians (sic); and often rejected by both". This is a misleading statement for it gives the impression that Matthew Henry was either neutral or inconsistent in his position with reference to the controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism. During almost his entire ministry Matthew Henry was pastor of a Presbyterian congregation at Chester, England, and there is no ground for doubting that he was a Calvinist. After more than two centuries his commentary on the Bible is still proving its usefulness at the present day. J. G. Vos

"A Christian is not to be valued by his enjoyments, but by his hopes. He hath meat and drink which the world knows not of. To appearance his life is worse than other men; aye, but his better life is hidden with God, he hath invisible things to live upon, his main portion lieth in things not seen. The whole Christian life is nothing else but a spiritual riddle full of mysteries and wonders; he can see things not seen, fulness in want, special love in common mercies, grace in a piece of bread."

Thomas Manton

SOME NOTEWORTHY QUOTATIONS

"Christianity is famous for pure precepts and excellent rewards. God's services will not be uncomfortable; for all his institutions are made up of a word of command and a word of promise."

Thomas Manton

"There is an impassable gulf fixed between those who hang the efficacy of Christ's work upon the 'free' action of man's will, and those who ascribe it all to God's free grace. They are of different religions."

B. B. Warfield

"It is the great fault of some that when they begin to be religious, they leave off to be human, as if there were no tree that grew in Christ's garden but crabs."

Thomas Manton

"He that is out of the Church is without the teaching, the holy worship, the prayers and the discipline of the Church, and is out of the way where the Spirit doth come, and out of the society which Christ is specially related to, for He is the Saviour of the body; and if we leave His hospital we cannot expect the presence and help of the physician. Nor will He be a pilot to them who

forsake His ship, nor a captain to them who separate from His army. Out of this ark there is nothing but a deluge, and no place of rest or safety for the soul."

Richard Baxter

"The Gospel is and must ever be a law; but it proceeds from free grace, and unto free obedience; without any constraint or fear, which never wrought a true and heartfelt fulfilment of any law."

Rudolph Stier

"The way to preserve the peace of the Church is to preserve its purity."

Matthew Henry

"A child of God should be a visible beatitude for joy and happiness, and a living doxology for gratitude and adoration."

Charles H. Spurgeon

"As the print of the seal on the wax is the express image of the seal itself, so Christ is the express image—the perfect representation of God."

Ambrose of Milan

Religious Terms Defined

A few definitions of important religious terms will be given in this department in each issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". The aim will be conciseness without the sacrifice of accuracy. Where possible the Westminster Shorter Catechism will be quoted. "L.C." means "Larger Catechism"; "S.C." means "Shorter Catechism".

KINGDOM OF GOD. The supremacy of God exercised for His own glory in the redemption of His people, especially in the spheres of power, righteousness and blessedness.

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Same as Kingdom of God, as shown by usage in the Gospels, as Luke 18:16 compared with Matt. 19:14, etc.

KINGSHIP OF CHRIST. "Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies." (S. C. 26)

KINGDOM OF GRACE. The present reign of Christ over His redeemed people, the spiritual Israel. (L. C. 191; S.C. 102)

KINGDOM OF POWER. The present reign

of Christ as Mediator over the entire universe for the benefit of His Church (Eph. 1:20-23), exercised through the divine providence which controls all that comes to pass, and involving the duty of submission on the part of all moral agents. (L.C. 191)

KINGDOM OF GLORY. The future Kingdom of God which will be absolutely perfect and free from evil, to be established at Christ's second coming, in which the saints shall reign with Christ for ever. (L. C. 191; S. C. 102)

INTERMEDIATE STATE. The state of souls separated from their bodies, between death and the resurrection; in the case of the redeemed, a state of happiness, peace, rest, being present with the Lord, and awaiting the still higher blessedness of the resurrection of the body. (L. C. 86)

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. The person-

al, visible, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth, in like manner as He ascended, which will take place at the Last Day, and will put a sudden stop to the age-long process of human history. (L. C. 56)

RESURRECTION. The supernatural event which will immediately follow the second coming of Christ, in which the bodies of all the dead shall be raised to life and re-united with their souls for ever. (L. C. 87)

RESURRECTION BODY. The body as raised from the dead at the Last Day, in some way identical with the body that died and was buried, yet different in its properties; in the case of the redeemed, a body spiritual, incorruptible, like Christ's glorious body. (L. C. 87)

TRANSFORMATION OF LIVING SAINTS. The instantaneous, supernatural change which shall take place in believers still living at the moment of Christ's second coming, by which, without passing through the experience of death, their bodies shall be changed from mortal to immortal bodies suited to the state of glory. (L. C. 87)

RAPTURE. The supernatural event which will immediately follow the resurrection and the transformation of living saints, in which the redeemed shall be caught up to Christ in the clouds, and set on His right hand. (L. C. 90)

JUDGMENT. The final judicial determination of the eternal destinies of angels and human beings, which shall immediately follow the resurrection, transformation of living saints and rapture to Christ in the clouds, in which Jesus Christ the Mediator shall pronounce judgment according to absolute righteousness. (L. C. 89-90)

HEAVEN. That place in the created universe where the presence and glory of God are especially manifested, and where the Lord Jesus Christ is now engaged in preparing eternal habitations for His people. (L. C. 90)

HELL. That place in the created universe originally prepared for the devil and his angels, where the wicked shall be totally deprived of the favorable presence of God and shall "be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul . . . for ever." (L. C. 89)

ETERNITY. The final fulfilment of human history, in which all that is now partial and incomplete shall have reached its full development, whether of righteousness and blessedness or of sin and woe, when the elect and the reprobate shall have been permanently separated, and the redeemed shall enjoy that endless Sabbath rest for which the entire sweep of world history was a brief moment of preparation (Rom. 8:19-25; Heb. 4:9,10).

Studies in the Larger Catechism of The Westminster Assembly

LESSON 157--FOR WEEK BEGINNING JANUARY 2, 1949

Q. 167. How is our baptism to be improved by us?

A. The needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others; by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vows made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism, and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavoring to live

by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body.

Scripture References:

Col. 2:11,12. Rom. 6:4,6,11. We are to improve our baptism throughout life, and especially in time of temptation to sin.

Rom. 6:3-5. We are to think seriously of the meaning of our baptism, and its implications for our lives.

1 Cor. 1:11-13. Rom. 6:2,3. We are to be humbled for our failure to live according to the implications of our baptism, and our own vows.

Rom. 4:11,12. 1 Pet. 3:21. It is our duty to attain in actual experience the blessings sealed to us in our baptism.

Rom. 6:3-5. Gal. 3:26,27. Rom. 6:22. Acts 2:38. Rightly to improve our baptism involves a serious effort to trust Christ fully and lead a genuinely righteous and holy life.

1 Cor. 12:13, 25-27. Improving our baptism involves a realization of our unity with our fellow-Christians, and an effort to walk in brotherly love with them, since all have been baptized by the same Spirit into one body.

Questions:

1. What does the Catechism mean by "improving" our baptism?

By "improving" our baptism, the Catechism means using it to good purpose in our daily life; thus it means experiencing its meaning, and working out its implications, in actual life. Baptism is (a) a sacrament; (b) a doctrine; (c) an obligation to progressive Christian experience and service. We are to receive the sacrament, by being baptized; to believe and understand the doctrine, that is, the nature and meaning of baptism; and to live out the implications as growing Christians. This question of the Catechism is intended to guard against the all-too-prevalent tendency to regard baptism as a mere rite or ceremony, something to be attended to and then forgotten. That this tendency was common 300 years ago when the Catechism was written, is shown by the reference to improving our baptism as a "much neglected duty". The situation is still the same today.

2. Is the efficacy of baptism limited to the time at which it is administered?

Certainly not. Baptism is a sign and seal of salvation from sin, and its efficacy continues as long as there remains any sin, or effects of sin, to be saved from. A mistaken notion that the efficacy of baptism is tied to the time of administration of it is the reason for some people's opposition to the baptism of the infants of believers. Since many of the things that baptism stands for or implies cannot be experienced by infants (such as repentance, faith, conscious assurance of salvation, etc.), some people hold that there is no use or meaning in the baptism of infants. But they are greatly mistaken. The efficacy of baptism covers the person's whole life subsequent to his baptism; those baptized as infants are to repent, believe, attain assurance, seek sanctification, etc., when they reach an age at which these experiences are psychologically possible for them. We are born into this world only once, but we celebrate our birthday year after year through-

out life; we are baptized only once, but are to remember our baptism and experience its meaning, and work out its implications, year after year throughout life.

3. At what times ought we especially to improve our baptism?

In times when we are confronted with temptation, when the recollection of our baptism should serve as a reminder that we are of the covenant people of God and must live accordingly and not compromise with sin as ungodly and worldly people do; and when we are present at the administration of baptism to others, when the meaning of baptism, and the vows connected with it, should become especially real and vivid to our minds and hearts. On such occasions we should remember that we, too, have received this same sacrament, with the same meaning, and that we, too, are bound by the same solemn covenant vows.

4. Do we ever really fulfil our duty in improving our baptism?

No, for even the most faithful Christians break the law of God daily in thought, word and deed. Therefore in thinking of our baptism and what it should mean in our life, we are always to be humbled because of our past unfaithfulness and failures in living up to our solemn vows. Some people who are not very earnest about seeking holiness, yet have a very complacent feeling about their own baptism, sometimes even counting on baptism to get them into heaven when they die. Such is a wrong attitude. The more fully we appreciate the real meaning of our baptism, the farther will spiritual complacency be from our hearts; instead, we will have a real humility because of our personal failure to attain what was our duty to attain.

5. What ways of improving our baptism does the Catechism specify?

The Catechism specifies a number of Christian experiences and duties, such as being humbled for our sins, growing up to assurance of salvation, drawing strength from Christ for mortifying sin and quickening of grace, etc. These various experiences and duties, taken together, mean a continuous, serious undertaking to live a faithful, consistent Christian life, according to the teachings of the Word of God, all along the line. As baptism stands for salvation from sin, improving our baptism involves taking salvation from sin seriously, in actual living experience. This in turn involves experiencing the reality of, and living out the implications of, effectual calling, justification, adoption, sanctification and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them. That is, improving our baptism means walking steadily forwards in the

highway of God's salvation, according to God's Word.

6. What does improving our baptism imply concerning Christian unity?

By the baptism of the Holy Spirit all Christians are baptized into the invisible Church; by the sacrament of baptism, all Christians are pub-

licly recognized as members of the visible Church of Christ. This implies the duty of cultivating unity and brotherly love with those who participate in the same baptism and are members of the same body. We should cultivate unity and love with all faithful Christians, and especially with those who are fellow-members with us of the same branch of the visible Church.

LESSON 158—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JANUARY 9, 1949

Q. 168. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the new Testament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, his death is showed forth; and they that worthily communicate feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with him confirmed; testify and renew their thankfulness, and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.

Scripture References:

Luke 22:20. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament.

Matt. 26:26-28. 1 Cor. 11:23-26. The Lord's supper is constituted by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Christ.

1 Cor. 10:16. The right use of the Lord's supper confirms the believer's union and communion with Christ.

1 Cor. 11:24. Partaking of the Lord's supper involves thankfulness to God for His grace.

1 Cor. 10:14-16, 21. The Lord's supper involves a renewal of our covenant vows of love and obedience to God.

1 Cor. 10:17. By partaking of the Lord's supper, believers show and renew their mutual love and fellowship as members of Christ's spiritual body, the Church.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that "The Lord's supper is a sacrament of the New Testament"?

In this statement, the phrase "The New Testament" does not refer to the New Testament as a book, or portion of the Bible, but to the New Testament (or New Covenant) as a dispensation of the Covenant of Grace. The Greek word trans-

lated "Testament" in Luke 22:20 usually means "covenant" in its N.T. usage, and it is so translated in this verse in the American Revised Version. The Covenant of Grace comprises God's plan and arrangements for the salvation of His people. The Old Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace was from Moses to Christ, and is called "The Old Testament" or "The Old Covenant". The New Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace is from the crucifixion of Christ to the end of the world, and is called "The New Testament" or "The New Covenant". Circumcision and the Passover were sacraments of "The Old Covenant" or "The Old Testament"; Baptism and the Lord's supper are the sacraments of "The New Covenant" or "The New Testament".

2. What constitutes the Lord's supper?

The Lord's supper is constituted by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ. What is meant by "the appointment of Jesus Christ" is explained in the next question of the Catechism (Q. 169). There may be many circumstances (such as time, place, frequency, and the like) which may vary greatly without interfering with the essential character of the Lord's supper. On the other hand, those matters which are included in Christ's appointment are essential elements of the Lord's supper, which may not be changed or omitted. Any substantial deviation from Christ's appointment would involve the danger of destroying the essential character of the ordinance as the Lord's supper. Thus the Roman Catholic Mass is not really the Lord's supper because the communicants receive only the bread or wafer and not the wine, which is reserved for the priest alone. This is a substantial deviation from Christ's appointment. Similarly, to omit any of the sacramental actions, such as the breaking of the bread, is a deviation from Christ's appointment, though less serious than the Roman Catholic practice referred to above.

3. What is the essential meaning of the Lord's supper?

By the Lord's supper, the death of Jesus Christ is showed forth. This means, of course, that the Lord's supper portrays the doctrine of

the substitutionary atonement, by which Christ died for the sins of His people. We might say that in the Lord's supper the atonement of Christ is acted out in a pageant. There is a possible reference to this in Gal. 3:1, where Paul tells the Galatian Christians that Jesus Christ had been "evidently set forth" (that is, VISIBLY set forth) before their eyes, and even crucified among them. Our Lord's own words ("This is my body, which is given for you"; "This is my blood . . . which is shed for many, for the remission of sins") make it unmistakably clear that the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement is the basic meaning of the Lord's supper. This is not all that the Lord's supper means, but it is the basic meaning of the sacrament, and without this basic truth, the other things which it represents are meaningless. Therefore persons who have no knowledge of the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement cannot rightly partake of the Lord's supper. Similarly, those who, under the influence of modern theology, have denied or explained away the substitutionary atonement of Christ, cannot rightly partake of the Lord's supper, and for them to go through the motions of it is both blasphemy and a meaningless mockery. Those who do not believe that Christ died for our sins, in the honest, historic meaning of the words, are not Christians and have no right to the Lord's supper, since they reject its central truth.

4. What is the purpose of the Lord's supper?

In brief, the purpose of the Lord's supper is the spiritual edification of the Lord's people. This means that rightly partaking of the Lord's supper will strengthen, encourage and spiritually build up Christians along the whole line of their Christian faith, life and work. The Catechism elaborates this by stating that those who rightly partake of the Lord's supper (a) are confirmed in their spiritual relation to Christ their Saviour; (b) are renewed and strengthened in their resolve

to live a life of thankfulness and obedience to God; and (c) testify and renew their love and fellowship for their fellow-believers. Thus the right use of the Lord's supper encourages and builds up the Christian in relation to his Saviour, in relation to his God, and in relation to his brethren.

5. What is the relation of the Lord's supper to the second coming of Christ?

"For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death TILL HE COME" (1 Cor. 11:26). The Lord's supper points forward to the second coming of Christ. The Christian's partaking of the Lord's supper thus involves a profession of faith in the second coming of Christ. The Lord's supper shows that human history will not go on and on forever; it will come to a sudden termination at the second coming of Christ. The Lord's supper is full of meaning with respect to the Christian philosophy of history. In this it parallels the Sabbath, which originated at the creation, and shall be consummated in eternity (Gen. 2:2,3; Heb. 4:1-10). The Lord's supper bridges the gap from the first coming of Christ to His second coming, from the crucifixion to the Judgment Day. By portraying the Lord's death, it points us backward to Calvary; by the command to observe it "till he come", it points us forward to the Last Day. The three great focal points of history, according to the Bible, are (a) the creation of the universe; (b) the crucifixion of Christ; (c) the "Day of the Lord", that is, the Last Day, or the day of Christ's second coming. The Sabbath, which originated prior to sin and apart from redemption, links the first and last of these points together; it spans the course of history from the original creation to the eternal consummation. The Lord's supper, which was instituted after man sinned, and as a part of the scheme of redemption, spans the course of CHRISTIAN history from the cross to the "great white throne".

LESSON 159—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JANUARY 16, 1949

Q. 169. How hath Christ appointed bread and wine to be given and received in the sacrament of the Lord's supper?

A. Christ hath appointed the ministers of his word, in the administration of this sacrament of the Lord's supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use, by the word of institution, thanksgiving and prayer; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants: who are, by the same appointment, to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed, for them.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 11:23,24. Matt. 26:26-28. Mark 14:22-25. Luke 22:17-20. The institution of the sacrament of the Lord's supper by Jesus Christ.

Questions:

1. Where in the New Testament is the record of Christ's institution of the Lord's supper found?

In the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), and in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 11. The latter is the fullest account of the institution of the Lord's supper.

2. Why is it important that Christ's appointment be exactly followed in the administration of the Lord's supper?

The Headship of Christ over the Church requires this. The Church is subject to Christ, and must obey His instructions and conform to His will in all things (Eph. 5:23,24). The Lord's supper is THE LORD'S supper; therefore the Church has no right to change or modify it. It did not originate in custom or tradition, but from a specific command of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church has no right to alter it, to add to it or to subtract from it.

3. Whom has Christ appointed to administer the Lord's supper?

Christ has appointed "the ministers of his word" to administer the Lord's supper. While this truth is not stated in the Biblical accounts of the institution of the Lord's supper, it follows from other portions of the Scripture which speak of officers being ordained to have charge of the work and worship of the visible Church. Ministers of Christ are called "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1,2; Titus 1:7). The word "steward" means a person officially entrusted with the oversight, care or administration of something. As the sacraments are certainly part of "the mysteries of God", it follows that they have been committed to the stewardship of the ministers of Christ. The same truth follows by analogy from the Old Testament, in which the sacrifices, ritual, tabernacle and its contents and worship were entrusted to the priests and Levites. While there is of course a true sense in which every Christian is a priest of God, yet so far as official responsibility for the preaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments is concerned, the ministers of Christ are the New Testament counterpart of the priests and Levites of the Old Testament.

Some people believe that any Christian may administer baptism and the Lord's supper. This however is contrary to good order in the Church. The Church is a visible body and as such must necessarily have leadership in its official functions. Good order requires that such authority be in the hands of those who have been duly chosen, examined and set apart for the exercise of it, and who accordingly can be held responsible for the rightful use of it. That such is indeed the will of Christ is shown by the considerations adduced in the preceding paragraph. The admonition of Paul, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40) applies to the administration of the sacraments as well as to the matters with which the apostle was immediately concerned in that context.

4. What are the elements used in the Lord's supper?

The sacramental elements used in the Lord's supper are two in number, namely, bread and wine. These elements serve a symbolical purpose. The bread represents Christ's body; the wine represents His blood. Taken together, the bread and wine represent His human nature, which He took to Himself when he "was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) by being born as a human child in Bethlehem.

5. What sacramental actions are involved in the Lord's supper?

There are six sacramental actions involved in the Lord's supper. Four of them were performed by Jesus (taking the bread and the cup; giving thanks, breaking the bread, giving the bread and the cup to the disciples). Two sacramental actions were performed by the disciples (taking the bread and the cup; eating the bread and drinking the wine). These six sacramental actions, taken together in their true meaning, portray or act out the atonement of Christ and a sinner's receiving Him by faith.

6. What is the meaning of the four sacramental actions performed by Jesus?

The meaning of the four sacramental actions performed by Jesus, and by His ministers in His name, is as follows:

(a) He **TOOK** the bread and the cup from the table where the Passover meal had been partaken of, signifying His taking a human nature (body and soul) when He was born into this world in Bethlehem.

(b) He **BLESSED**, or gave thanks for, the bread and the wine, setting them apart from ordinary uses for a special religious purpose. This action signifies our Saviour being set apart for His special work as the Redeemer of men, when He was baptized by John at the Jordan River at the age of 30 years. Jesus had previously been known as a carpenter, but now He was solemnly set apart for His special work, which He followed exclusively from that day until His crucifixion.

(c) He **BROKE** the bread, an action which signifies the breaking of His own body by being nailed to the cross, and by the spear of the Roman soldier which was thrust into His side after His death. This sacramental action reminds us that we are not saved by Jesus' teachings, nor by His life alone, but pre-eminently by His death on the cross.

(d) He **GAVE** the bread and wine to the disciples, signifying the gift of Christ to sinful men by the infinite grace of God (John 3:16) and the preaching of the Gospel in which this divine gift of the Saviour is offered to sinners.

7. What is the meaning of the two sacramental actions performed by the disciples?

The meaning of the two sacramental actions performed by the disciples, and by communicants today, is as follows:

(a) They **TOOK** the bread and the cup, signifying taking Jesus as Saviour by believing on Him. Christ's incarnation, baptism and atonement, and the preaching of the Gospel, must be followed by personal faith in Jesus Christ on the part of sinners. This personal faith in Christ for salvation is signified by taking the bread and the cup.

(b) They **ATE** the bread and **DRANK** the wine, signifying dependence on Christ for spiritual life and growth. As our bodily life is dependent on daily food and drink, without which we could not have bodily life and health, so our spiritual life is dependent on Christ, and apart from Him we cannot have spiritual life and health. Partaking of the elements of bread and wine signifies our continued dependence on Christ, by our spiritual union with Him, for our growth in grace unto the perfection which shall be ours in the state of glory (Eph. 4:13).

LESSON 160—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JANUARY 23, 1949

Q. 170. How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ therein?

A. As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses; so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death.

Scripture References:

Acts 3:21. Christ's human nature is now in heaven, and must remain there until the end of the world; therefore His body and blood "are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's supper."

Matt. 26:26,28. Christ's body and blood are spiritually present to the faith of the person who receives the Lord's supper, just as the bread and wine are present to their outward senses.

1 Cor. 11:24-29. Those who rightly partake of the Lord's supper feed upon Christ's body and blood, not in a physical sense, but spiritually, and yet truly and really.

1 Cor. 10:16. Those who rightly partake of the Lord's supper, by faith receive and apply to themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of His atonement.

Questions:

1. What are the principal views concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's supper?

There are three principal views concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's supper, namely (a) the Roman Catholic doctrine; (b) the Lutheran doctrine; and (c)

the Reformed doctrine. These three are united in affirming that in the Lord's supper believers receive and feed upon the body and blood of Christ. They differ as to the mode of Christ's presence in the sacrament and the mode of the believer's feeding upon His body and blood.

2. What is the Roman Catholic doctrine concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's supper?

The Roman Catholic doctrine, called "Transubstantiation", was officially adopted as a doctrine by the Fourth Lateran Council, A.D. 1215, and authoritatively defined by the Council of Trent, A.D. 1545-1563, as follows: "If any one shall say that, in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, there remains, together with the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the substance of the Bread and Wine, and shall deny that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the Bread into (His) Body and of the Wine into (His) Blood, the species only of the Bread and Wine remaining—which conversion the Catholic Church most fittingly calls Transubstantiation—let him be anathema." (The word "species" is here used to mean "outward appearance", while "substance" is used to mean "reality"). Thus the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the bread and wine are miraculously changed into the literal body and blood of Christ, only the outward appearance of bread and wine remaining. This doctrine has the corollary of the idea of the Mass as a SACRIFICE in which Christ is offered up anew for the sins of men. A common Roman Catholic catechism speaks of the Mass as the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, and adds that the Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the cross, though without real shedding of blood or real death, since of course Christ can die no more.

3. How can the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation be shown to be false?

A. A. Hodge ("Outlines of Theology") presents the following points as an argument against the Romish doctrine: (a) By analogy of the Scripture use of language, the word "is" in the statement "This is my body" must be understood to mean "represents"; see Gen. 41:26,27; Ex. 12:11;

Dan. 7:24; Rev. 1:20. (b) Paul refers to one of the elements as "bread", even after it has been consecrated in the Lord's supper: 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:26-28. (c) Even Roman Catholics hold that in every sacrament there is A SIGN and A THING SIGNIFIED. The doctrine of Transubstantiation confuses, and indeed identifies, the sign with the thing signified, by holding that the Bread and wine become the literal body and blood of Christ; thus the doctrine is contrary to the proper definition of a sacrament, held even by the Church of Rome itself. (d) If Transubstantiation were true, it would mean that we could no longer believe the testimony of our senses, which tell us that bread is bread and not flesh, and that wine is wine and not blood. No miracle recorded in the Bible ever involved such a contradiction of the senses, which are God-given and reliable within their proper sphere. (e) Transubstantiation is also contrary to reason, because it teaches that Christ's human body, while wholly present in heaven, may yet be present at many different places on earth at the same time. Also it is contrary to reason in maintaining that the body and blood of Christ are present without their sensible qualities, while the sensible qualities of bread and wine are present without the substance of bread and wine, since qualities can have no existence apart from the substance of which they are qualities. (f) The doctrine of Transubstantiation is part and parcel of an antichristian system of priestcraft, which regards the Mass as a sacrifice, and virtually puts the priest and his work in the place of Christ and His work as the object of people's faith. For all the above reasons, we may rightly conclude that the doctrine of Transubstantiation is false, unscriptural and religiously harmful.

4. What is the historic Lutheran doctrine concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's supper?

Following the teaching of the Reformer Martin Luther, orthodox Lutheranism teaches that "the Sacrament of the Altar" is "the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself" (Luther's Small Catechism). This is quite different from the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, for the Lutheran doctrine denies that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. Orthodox Lutheranism does, however, hold to a real bodily and local presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament. This is coupled with a doctrine of the ubiquity of the glorified body of Christ. While we believe that these elements of the historic Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's supper are erroneous, we should realize that it is both ignorant and unfair to say, as some do, that the Lutheran doctrine is almost the same as that of the Church of Rome.

5. What is the historic Reformed doctrine

concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's supper?

The orthodox Reformed doctrine is set forth in Q. 170 of the Catechism. This doctrine affirms that in the Lord's supper true believers "truly and really" feed upon the body and blood of Christ, "not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner". The Reformed doctrine expressly denies that the body and blood of Christ are "corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's supper", thus rejecting both the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran doctrines. Yet the body and blood of Christ are held to be "spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses."

A. A. Hodge ("Outline of Theology") summarizes the doctrine of the historic Reformed creeds as follows: "All the Reformed agree as to the following particulars: 1st. This eating was not with the mouth in any manner. 2d. It was only by the soul that they were received. 3d. It was by faith, which is declared to be the hand and mouth of the soul. 4th. It was by or through the power of the Holy Ghost. But this receiving Christ's body is not confined to the Lord's supper; it takes place whenever faith in him is exercised."

6. If a person who is not a true believer partakes of the sacramental elements, does he receive and feed upon the body and blood of Christ?

No, for such a person lacks the faith by which alone Christ and His benefits can be received by any human being. Such a partaker would receive only bread and wine, and his partaking of the elements would be presumptuous and sinful.

7. What is meant by "worthily communicating in the sacrament of the Lord's supper"?

We should note carefully that "worthily" is an adverb, not an adjective. This adverb, which is taken from Paul's words in 1 Cor. 11:27, describes the manner of partaking of the sacrament, not the character of the person who partakes. It does not mean that a person must be WORTHY of partaking of the Lord's supper. Since all human beings are sinners, and can only be saved by the free mercy of God, of course none can ever be worthy of partaking of the Lord's supper; to speak of being worthy is the same as to speak of DESERVING GRACE, a contradiction in terms: if we deserve it, then it is not grace; if it is grace, then it is something we do not deserve. The adverb "unworthily" is translated in the American Revised Version as "in an unworthy manner", which brings out the meaning clearly. To partake in an unworthy manner would be to partake without true faith in Christ, or while cherishing unrepented sin in our hearts, or without a proper

understanding of the meaning of the Lord's supper.

We should realize, too, that the word translated "damnation" in 1 Cor. 11:29, does not necessarily mean eternal damnation. The Greek word is KRIMA, which means "judgment". This word is translated "judgment" 13 times in the King

James Version of the New Testament. The American Revision translates it by "judgment" in 1 Cor. 11:29. The nature of the divine judgment in question is indicated by the next verse (30): "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep". (See "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 3, pp. 92,93, April-June 1948).

LESSON 161—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JANUARY 30, 1949

Q. 171. How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?

A. They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 11:28. Self-examination is required before partaking of the Lord's supper.

2 Cor. 13:5. A Christian should examine himself as to the reality of his faith and experience.

1 Cor. 5:7. Ex. 12:15. Separation from sin is required as a preparation for receiving the Lord's supper.

1 Cor. 11:29. 2 Cor. 13:5. Matt. 26:28. Zech. 12:10. 1 Cor. 11:31. 1 Cor. 10:16, 17. Acts 2:46,47. 1 Cor. 5:8; 11:18,20. Matt. 5:23,24. In preparing to partake of the Lord's supper, it is our duty to examine ourselves concerning the "truth and measure" of our knowledge, faith, repentance and consistency of Christian living.

Isa. 55:1. John 7:37. 1 Cor. 5:7,8; 11:24-28. Heb. 10:21,22,24. Psalm 26:6. 2 Chron. 30:18,19. Matt. 26:26. We are to examine ourselves as to our desires after Christ, and our new obedience to Him; we are to seek the renewal of all Christian graces, and to engage in serious meditation, and prayer for divine grace.

Questions:

1. Why is special preparation necessary before partaking of the Lord's supper?

Because of the importance of the Lord's supper, the solemn nature of the sacrament, and the danger of incurring divine judgments if we partake in an unworthy manner. Proper preparation is required, not only by these considerations, but by the specific command of the Word of God (1 Cor. 11:28). In the face of this express command, it is definitely wrong and sinful to partake of the Lord's supper without proper preparation.

2. What is the purpose of such special preparation for the Lord's supper?

The purpose of such special preparation is that we may partake of the sacrament aright, to our strengthening, encouragement and growth in grace, not to judgement or being chastened of the Lord. The purpose of self-examination is not to discourage us and frighten us away from the Lord's table, but that we may approach the Lord's table aright and receive a blessing. Note 1 Cor. 11:28, "But let a man examine himself, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD, AND DRINK OF THAT CUP." The apostle does not say, "Let a man examine himself, and refrain from eating of that bread . . .". The outcome of self-examination ought to be repentance and confession of sin, renewed faith and love toward our Saviour, and then receiving His blessing at the communion table. The "communion season" is the divinely-appointed time for taking an inventory of our spiritual state, measuring ourselves by the divine standard, repenting of and forsaking what is contrary to God's will, and resolving by God's grace to live a life that will be pleasing to Him.

3. Why does the Church have special services in preparation for the Lord's supper? What is their purpose, and do they fulfil that purpose?

The purpose of special preparatory services before the Lord's supper is obedience to the command of 1 Cor. 11:28, 31. Every individual Christian should examine himself and make his own preparation individually, but for our greater encouragement and assistance it is eminently proper to have special services of the Church before the Lord's supper is administered. Such services are to impress upon us the wickedness of our sins, our great need of God's grace, and the urgent duty of hearty repentance, so that we may not add sin to sin by partaking in an unworthy manner. While of course there is always room for improvement, and a danger of formalism, yet many can testify that such preparatory services have been a blessing to them and have been used by the Holy Spirit to bring them closer to the Lord. The general abandonment of such preparatory services in many denominations that formerly maintained them is one of the signs of the spiritual decadence of modern Protestantism.

4. What should we say to a Church member who is unwilling to partake of the Lord's supper because he "feels he is not good enough"?

Such a state of mind reveals a pitiable condition of spiritual bondage. It is the outcome of a legalistic view of salvation (salvation by works or character) plus a fear of incurring the divine judgment mentioned in 1 Cor. 11:29-32. Such a Church member should be kindly and patiently instructed so that he may come to understand that no person in the world is "good enough" to deserve any of God's blessings, and that salvation and everything the Lord's supper stands for is the free gift of God's unmerited grace to sinners. Such a person should be encouraged to cast himself on the free mercy of God in Christ, and then to partake of the Lord's supper after the proper preparation. See also the discussion of the next question of the Catechism (Q. 172).

Sometimes the statement that a person does not feel himself "good enough" to partake of the Lord's supper may be a mere excuse offered by nominal Church members who are living in sin and have no intention or desire of taking Jesus Christ and the Lord's supper seriously. We should be very careful never to encourage such to partake of the sacrament while in their carnal condition, for they will be in peril of incurring divine judgments if they partake. What such people need is to be born again of the Holy Spirit, honestly to repent of their sins, sincerely to believe in Christ as their Saviour, and only then—after due preparation—to partake of the Lord's supper.

Besides the legalists and the nominal Church

LESSON 162—FOR WEEK BEGINNING FEBRUARY 6, 1949

Q. 172. May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's supper?

A. One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, that he may be farther strengthened.

Scripture References:

Isa. 50:10. 1 John 5:13. Psalm 88:1-18. Psalm 77:1-12. Jonah 2:4,7. Assurance not being of the essence of salvation, a person may possess the fact of salvation without having attained the consciousness of salvation.

Isa. 54:7-10. Matt. 5:3,4. Psalm 31:22; 73:13, 22, 23. Phil. 3:8,9. Psalm 10:17; 42:1,2,5,11. 2 Tim. 2:19. Isa. 50:10. Psalm 66:18-20. A deep concern about

members already discussed, there are some true Christians who may be described as victims of a morbidly active conscience. Such people fully realize that we are saved by grace, not by works, and they are far removed from the nominal Church members who carelessly continue in sin. Filled with doubts and scruples, they find the approach of the communion season an occasion of distress rather than of joy. We should endeavor to help such Christians by sympathy and encouragement rather than by reproaches or harsh criticism. Such morbidly introspective souls should be encouraged to look outward rather than inward—to Christ and His redemption rather than always to be thinking only about their own doubts and weaknesses. They are like the diffident Mr. Fearing, in the second part of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", of whom Greatheart said, "He had, I think, a Slough of Despond in his mind, a slough that he carried everywhere with him, or else he could never have been as he was." Mr. Fearing was always pessimistic about himself, yet "he was a man that had the root of the matter in him", and finally crossed the last river triumphantly, "not much above wetshod", saying, "I shall, I shall." (See also next lesson, on Q. 172 of the Catechism).

5. What is the most important element in preparation for the Lord's supper?

Personal faith in Christ and Him crucified as our only Saviour, accompanied by sincere repentance for sin.

one's personal salvation, coupled with an earnest desire to be found in Christ and to depart from iniquity, is an evidence of being in the state of grace, even though subjective assurance may be absent or defective.

Isa. 40:11,29,31. Matt. 11:28; 12:20; 26:28. Divine promises are made, and the Lord's supper provided, for the spiritual help even of weak and doubting Christians.

Mark 9:24. Acts 2:37; 16:30. Rom. 4:10. 1 Cor. 11:28. The person who is troubled with doubts about his own salvation, or proper preparation for the Lord's supper, after doing what he can to remove the difficulty, ought to come to the Lord's supper, for his spiritual benefit.

Questions:

1. With what class of persons is this question of the Catechism concerned?

With diffident Christians, that is, with Christians who hesitate to partake of the Lord's supper because of doubts in their mind, either concerning the fact of their salvation, or concerning their proper preparation for the sacrament. This question does not concern those who make no profession of faith in Christ, nor those who, while making a profession, live careless lives of easy compromise with sin. In this lesson we are concerned only with the spiritual problem of the

person who is in earnest about the salvation of his soul, who believes in Christ, but who has doubts about his own spiritual state.

2. What is the difference between salvation and assurance of salvation?

Salvation is a matter of a person's relation to God; assurance of salvation is a matter of a person's feeling sure, in his own mind, about his relation to God. Many popular Fundamentalist Bible teachers confuse these two things, saying that if a person is saved he will always know it, and that if a person has accepted Christ and yet lacks assurance of salvation he simply does not believe God's Word. This teaching is over-simplified and erroneous, and has caused an untold amount of mental and spiritual anguish. Following the definite teaching of the Bible, our Catechism and the rest of the Westminster Standards teach that there is a distinction between salvation itself, on the one hand, and mental assurance of salvation on the other. To deny or ignore that distinction is to open the door to serious theological errors.

For a fuller discussion of the distinction between salvation and assurance, the student is referred to Lessons 66 and 67 of this course, on Q. 80, 81 of the Larger Catechism ("Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 2, No. 2, April-June 1947, pp. 66-69). Briefly, possession of something is one thing, and knowledge or certainty in one's own mind of the possession is something else. A person might have a million dollars in the bank, and yet not know about it, or not feel certain that the money was really his. Similarly, a person may be really born again by the power of the Holy Spirit, and yet not enjoy certainty concerning this spiritual change. The Holy Spirit's work is much deeper than our consciousness. Salvation, once a person really has it, is permanent and cannot be lost, but a person's certainty of it in his own consciousness is often obscured and interfered with by temptations, lapses into sin, or lack or understanding of the truths that are involved.

To upbraid a person who is struggling with spiritual doubts by telling him that he "doesn't believe John 3:16", etc., is not only heartlessly unkind, but reveals ignorance of the nature of such a person's real problem. A statement made in Lesson 66 may well be repeated here: It is amazing how dogmatically and confidently people write and speak on this subject (of assurance), while they yet give no evidence of having studied its problems or being familiar with its history. Some of these Bible teachers who are so positive that salvation and assurance are inseparable should read up on the subject in a standard orthodox work on Systematic Theology such as that of Charles Hodge. This matter is not by any means "as simple as A. B. C."

3. Why should lack of assurance not keep a person from partaking of the Lord's supper?

We are not saved by assurance, but by faith in Christ as our Redeemer. That is to say, we are

saved by believing IN CHRIST, not by believing that we are saved. It is a fine and comforting thing to be able honestly to believe that we are saved, but the really important thing is to believe on Jesus Christ as our Saviour. The person who confesses himself a lost sinner, sincerely intends and wants to believe in Christ as his only Redeemer, and is really trying to depart from iniquity, is a Christian and ought to partake of the Lord's supper, even though he may have some doubts about his salvation, or about his proper preparation for the sacrament.

When the Passover was observed by the people of Israel in Egypt, every family that had killed the lamb and put the blood on the lintel and side posts of their house door was SAFE from the plague that destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians. Suppose two families lived side by side. Both have killed the lamb and put the blood on the door. One family is rejoicing in the conscious certainty of safety from the destroying plague; the other family is troubled by doubts and worries, questioning and worrying about whether they will really be spared or not. Which of these families is the safest? The answer is: BOTH ARE ALIKE SAFE, though one has assurance, the other has doubts. For God had not said, "When I see a house where the people have no doubts or worries, I will pass over you". What God had said was: "When I see THE BLOOD I will pass over you" (Ex. 12:13). The person who is putting his faith in THE BLOOD, whatever doubts about himself he may have, is saved in God's sight, belongs with the covenant people of God and ought to partake of the Lord's supper.

4. How should a diffident Christian prepare for the Lord's supper?

Besides the self-examination which every Christian should engage in before partaking of the Lord's supper, the diffident Christian should "bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved", and thereupon come to the Lord's table expecting a blessing. Lack of assurance is not to be complacently tolerated; we are always to strive to attain and retain the full conscious assurance of our personal salvation. Doubts may be unavoidable, for the time being, but we are never to regard them as legitimate tenants of our mind. Just as it is wrong to tell a diffident Christian "You don't believe John 3:16", so it is also very wrong to tell a person who is struggling with spiritual doubts: "Forget it; just ignore your doubts and problems; pay no attention to them and they will pass." Spiritual doubts are very real to the person who has them. They cannot be disposed of by a wave of the hand and a pat on the back. Such a person should face his own troubles frankly and seek relief. Study of God's Word, prayer, and conference with godly, experienced Christians will help. And as the Catechism rightly affirms, the Lord's supper itself is intended for the spiritual help of weak and doubting Christians.

LESSON 163—FOR WEEK BEGINNING FEBRUARY 13, 1949

Q. 173. May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's supper, be kept from it?

A. Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 11:27-34, compared with the following Scriptures: Matt. 7:8; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Jude 23; 1 Tim. 5:22. Christ has committed to His Church authority to exclude from its membership ignorant and scandalous persons, and this power must be understood to include the right and duty of keeping such persons from the Lord's supper.

2 Cor. 2:7. 2 Tim. 2:24-26. When his ignorance has been overcome, or scandalous living corrected, the person who had been excluded is to be admitted to the fellowship and privileges of the visible Church.

Questions:

1. Is the Lord's supper intended for the unconverted?

No, for such persons lack saving faith in Christ, without which the sacrament cannot benefit them. Weak and doubting Christians may and ought, after due preparation, to partake of the Lord's supper. But persons who are really not Christians at all, or who are only hypocrites, can receive no benefit from the Lord's supper and have no right to partake of it.

2. Is the Church to decide what persons are converted, and have saving faith in Christ?

Certainly not. Only God can see people's hearts, to be able to know with certainty what their spiritual condition is. Church officers and church courts cannot see people's hearts and they have no business to pronounce judgment on whether people are, or are not, truly saved Christians. At various times and in various sects and denominations the attempt has been made to have a perfectly pure church by excluding all persons adjudged to be unregenerate. This attempt has always failed in practice, and must always fail, for church officers cannot see the heart. All such attempts to pronounce on people's spiritual condition, or their relation to God, are bound to produce evils even greater than they are intended to remedy. There have always been some unregenerate people in the visible Church; ministers and elders are not to blame for this unless they have been negligent in their legitimate duties.

3. If the Church is not to decide what per-

sons are converted, how can there be any church discipline?

The true idea of church discipline is based on evaluation of people's PROFESSION and PRACTICE, not on an attempted decision as to whether they are converted or not. The Church has no business to try to examine people's hearts, and pronounce judgment on their relation to God; but the Church, through its proper officers, does have the function of evaluating people's profession of faith and their manner of life. If a person applies for membership in a congregation, the session is not to try to decide whether he is born again or not, nor to ask him to prove that he is converted, nor to ask him to narrate his religious experience so that the officers of the congregation can decide whether he is saved or not. To attempt to exercise such functions would be to invade the realm which belongs to God alone. The officers of the congregation are, on the other hand, to inquire as to the applicant's profession of faith and manner of life; and having done this, it is further their function to decide whether his profession of faith, and manner of life, are compatible with membership in the Church. The applicant does not have to prove that he is saved. His profession is to be taken at face value unless contradicted by his manner of life.

4. What classes of people are to be excluded from the Lord's supper?

"Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous". By "ignorant" the Catechism means persons who do not make a proper profession of faith. A profession of faith of an ignorant person is inadequate for admission to church membership or to the Lord's supper. This inadequacy may be the result of lack of information, or it may be the result of false doctrines held by the applicant. Thus an applicant who did not know that Christ died on the cross to save sinners, or who did not know that salvation is by free grace and not by works, would have an inadequate profession because of lack of information. On the other hand, an applicant who professed belief in the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, would have an inadequate profession because of false doctrine. Both kinds of ignorance—mere lack of knowledge, and actual profession of error—constitute a legitimate ground for exclusion from the Lord's supper, or from church membership. Titus 3:10.

By "scandalous" the Catechism means persons whose profession cannot be taken at face value because it is contradicted by their manner of life. "Scandal" does not mean any sin or fault whatever, but only such sinful conduct as would nullify the person's profession and render it improper to admit him to the Lord's supper, or to the membership of the church. Such scandal might take many different forms, and the cir-

cumstances would have to be taken into account to arrive at a just decision concerning it.

The Catechism wisely refrains from attempting to provide a ready-made definition of either ignorance or scandal. It lays down the principle—which is undoubtedly Scriptural and therefore valid—and wisely leaves the precise application of the principle to the church courts before which such matters properly come for decision. The decision as to whether a particular applicant is ignorant or scandalous (in a way which would exclude him from church membership or from the Lord's supper) must be made by the church officers whose duty it is to pass on his application. In the course of time every denomination acquires a body of precedents from decisions of such cases which have the effect of church law in deciding similar cases. Thus a denomination may have a settled church law or rule that professional gamblers cannot be admitted to church membership or to the Lord's supper. Or a denomination may have a church law that members of oath-bound secret societies must be excluded. In each case the denomination has applied the principle set forth in the Catechism, that the ignorant or scandalous are not to be admitted.

5. What is the position of the Catechism concerning the question of open, close or restricted communion?

This question, in the form in which it exists today, is not directly answered by the Catechism, or any of the Westminster Standards, because the problems created by denominationalism were not then in view. The purpose of the Westminster Assembly of Divines was to lay the foundation for a "covenanted uniformity in religion" in the Churches of Scotland, England and Ireland. It was contemplated that there would be but one national Church in each kingdom, of which all faithful Christians would be members. Therefore the Westminster Assembly, while stating that the ignorant or scandalous are not to be admitted to the Lord's supper, did not take up the question of whether members of one denomination should be admitted to the sacrament in congregations of another denomination. This is a question which has arisen, for the most part, since the time of the Westminster Assembly.

However, the statements of the Catechism do have some relation to the question of open, close or restricted communion. Open communion means that all persons who wish to come are admitted to the Lord's supper. (The invitation is usually to "all members of evangelical Churches" or "all who are the Lord's", etc., but all who wish to partake are admitted without any investigation of their faith or life). Restricted communion means that members of other denominations may be admitted to the Lord's supper after they have met with the officers of the congregation and have satisfied them concerning their faith and life. (There are various degrees of "restricted

communion", some broader, some more narrow, in various denominations). Close communion means that only members of the denomination that is administering the sacrament, or of closely allied denominations officially recognized as of virtually identical faith, are admitted to the Lord's supper. The question of who is to be admitted to the Lord's supper has been greatly confused by the assumption that the only alternatives are "open" or "close" communion. This is untrue. "Restricted" communion is also a possibility that must be considered.

It should be said at once that the Catechism is clearly opposed to open communion. Open communion leaves no opportunity for the exclusion of "such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous"; it takes the whole question of whether people are ignorant or scandalous out of the hands of the Church, and leaves everything up to the individual would-be communicant. This is contrary to the Biblical teaching that the Church may and should exclude the ignorant and scandalous, and in practice it involves the danger of a breakdown in church discipline and profanation of the sacrament.

As for restricted and close communion, the Catechism AT LEAST requires the practice of restricted communion, and there is nothing said which is contrary to the practice of close communion on a denominational basis.

6. Does the practice of close communion deprive Christian people of their right to partake of the Lord's supper?

There can be no real privilege or "right" without the existence of a corresponding obligation or responsibility. The "right" to participate in the sacraments in a particular denomination of the visible Church implies the corresponding obligation of submission to the spiritual oversight and church discipline of the courts of that denomination. Where a person is not subject to the jurisdiction of a denomination, he can not claim any "rights" in that denomination. It is no doubt true that every faithful Christian, by the grace of God, has a right to partake of the Lord's supper, but not in a Church whose doctrines he does not accept and to whose discipline he is unwilling to subject himself. Every faithful Christian, by God's grace, has a right to partake of the Lord's supper in the Church of which he is a member, whose doctrines he has professed to accept, and to whose discipline he is subject in the Lord. To claim such a "right" to partake of the sacrament in some other denomination amounts to asking that denomination to deal with non-members on a different basis from that on which it deals with its own membership. A denomination sets up certain standards of faith and life, which it believes to be Scriptural, and then states that those who fail to come up to those standards are either ignorant or scandalous. Those of its own members who fail to measure up to those standards

are excluded from the Lord's supper by church discipline. But no Church can exercise church discipline in the case of persons who are not subject to its jurisdiction. Therefore a denomination may officially decide that the only way it can make sure of excluding the ignorant and the scandalous from the Lord's supper is by limiting participation to persons subject to its own jurisdiction and members of closely allied denominations which maintain virtually identical standards of faith and life. Only by mutual agreement on what constitutes ignorance and scandal can church discipline be maintained and the purity of the Church be safeguarded.

7. How can we answer the argument for open communion that "it is the Lord's supper, and all who are the Lord's should be invited to it"?

This argument is based on an unconscious confusion of the visible with the invisible Church. According to the teaching of the Bible, it is not all members of the invisible Church (all who are born again), but all who are living orderly as members of the visible Church (with a proper

profession of faith and a corresponding life) that are entitled to the privileges of the visible Church, including the Lord's supper. The apostle Paul directed that a certain member of the Corinthian Church, who was guilty of scandal, be excluded from Church fellowship (1 Cor. 5:13). This was actually done. The excluded member, though guilty of scandal, was presumably a Christian, as indicated by the fact that Paul later directed that he be restored to Church privileges (2 Cor. 2:5-8). Because it is the Lord's supper, it must be administered in accordance with the rules of the Lord's house (the visible Church) as these are set forth in the Bible. Of course each denomination must search the Scriptures and decide for itself what the rules of the Lord's house are, and then administer the Lord's supper accordingly. It is altogether unreasonable to expect that the Lord's supper shall be administered in Denomination A according to the rules of the Lord's house as these are understood in Denomination B. Each denomination is responsible to the Lord for its own interpretation of the Bible and for carrying out that interpretation in actual practice, including the administration of the sacraments.

LESSON 164—FOR WEEK BEGINNING FEBRUARY 20, 1949

Q. 174. What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper in the time of the administration of it?

A. It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fulness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

Scripture References:

Lev. 10:3. Heb. 12:38. Psalm 5:7. 1 Cor. 11:17, 26,27. At the time of administration of the Lord's supper, communicants are to wait upon God in that ordinance with all holy reverence and attention.

Ex. 24:8 compared with Matt. 26:28. At the administration of the Lord's supper, the sacramental elements and actions are to be diligently observed.

1 Cor. 11:29. Communicants should "heedfully discern the Lord's body", that is, realize the relation of the sacrament to Christ's Person and work.

Luke 22:19. 1 Cor. 11:26; 10:3-5, 11, 14. Communicants are to meditate on Christ's sufferings and death, to stir themselves up to a vigorous exercise of their graces.

1 Cor. 11:31. Zech. 12:10. Communicants are to judge themselves for their own sins, and feel sorrow for the same.

Rev. 22:17. John 6:35; 1:16. Phil. 3:9. Psalm 63:4,5. 2 Chron. 30:21. Psalm 22:26. At the administration of the Lord's supper, communicants are to hunger and thirst after Christ, and feed on Him by faith.

Jer. 50:5. Psalm 50:5. Acts 2:42. The administration of the Lord's supper is to be pre-eminently a time of renewing our covenant with God, and love to His people.

Questions:

1. What is the most obvious duty of communicants at the time of the administration of the Lord's supper?

Their most obvious duty is "with all holy reverence and attention to wait upon God in that ordinance". Reverence and attention are duties in connection with every divine service, but especially in connection with the Lord's supper which is a very solemn and sacred service because it commemorates the sufferings and death of our Lord. All irreverent or inattentive conduct at such a time must be very displeasing to God. Unnecessary talking or whispering, reading books or papers not connected with the service, falling asleep, day-dreaming about our worldly affairs,

turning around to stare at people coming in late—all these and other forms of conduct that are contrary to reverent attention should be strictly avoided. We cannot expect a blessing from the sacrament unless we are willing to devote our undivided attention to it.

2. Why should communicants “diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions”?

Because these elements and actions are all essential to the meaning of the sacrament. The Lord's supper is a visible, tangible portrayal, by symbolic elements and actions, of Christ's redemption and the way of salvation. To receive the full impression that the sacrament is intended to produce upon our minds and hearts, we must attend carefully to every detail of the ordinance. The Lord's supper does not produce spiritual results automatically, as the Church of Rome wrongly teaches by its doctrine of an “opus operatum”, but by the truth which the sacrament presents, which the communicant grasps by faith, and which the Holy Spirit applies to his heart and life. Each of the sacramental elements and actions especially presents some phase of that truth.

3. What is meant by “discerning the Lord's body”?

The word “discerning” in the Greek text of 1 Cor. 11:29 means literally “distinguishing” or “discriminating”; “to distinguish or separate a person or thing from the rest” (Thayer's Lexicon). Thus “discerning” in this verse means REALIZING that the sacramental elements represent Christ's human nature, or APPRECIATING them as symbols of His body and blood. A person who saw in the sacrament only bread and wine, and who failed to see Christ and His redemption set forth in it, would fail to discern the Lord's body. In order truly to discern the Lord's body, there is required, first, a measure of doctrinal knowledge; and in the second place, personal trust in Christ as one's Saviour.

4. Why should communicants affectionately meditate on Christ's death and sufferings?

Christ's death and sufferings should be the principal object of our thoughts at the communion table, because His death and sufferings constitute

the meaning of the Lord's supper. We should AFFECTIONATELY meditate on them because the infinite love of our Lord calls for a cordial response of love or affection on our part. The more we realize what our redemption cost our Saviour in shame and suffering, the more we will feel moved to love Him in return. Our attitude toward Christ, His sufferings and death, is never to be a sentimental one. Many people who are not really Christians feel a kind of sentimental admiration for Jesus, while they do not regard Him as a living person today nor as the only Redeemer of men. Such a sentimental attachment to Jesus does not differ essentially from the attitude people may have toward Florence Nightingale or Abraham Lincoln. The Christian's devotion to Christ, on the other hand, is to be a devotion to Him CRUCIFIED AND RISEN FROM THE DEAD, THE LIVING LORD—a devotion which stirs them up to “a vigorous exercise of their graces” and thus affects the whole course of their lives.

5. Why should communicants judge themselves, and sorrow for their sins?

It was because of the sins of His people that Jesus suffered and died on the cross. There can be no adequate appreciation of Christ's sufferings and death unless a person judges himself and sorrows for his sins. While our thoughts at the communion table are to be mainly on Christ's sufferings and death, we are to realize at the same time that it was our sins that He suffered and died to atone for; therefore we should judge ourselves and feel deep sorrow for our sin.

6. What special spiritual attitudes should a Christian have at the communion table?

(a) An attitude of earnest desire for communion with Christ (“hungering and thirsting after Christ”); (b) An attitude of personal faith in Him as Redeemer (“feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fulness, trusting in his merits”); (c) An attitude of spiritual joy (“rejoicing in his love”); (d) An attitude of thankfulness for His grace (“giving thanks for his grace”); (e) An attitude of sincere purpose to live in covenant with God and in love to His people (“renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints”).

LESSON 165—FOR WEEK BEGINNING FEBRUARY 27, 1949

Q. 175. What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper?

A. The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved themselves therein, and with what success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapses, fulfil their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they

find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at the sacrament; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time; but, if they see that they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterward with more care and diligence.

Scripture References:

Psalm 28:7; 85:8. 1 Cor. 11:17, 30, 31. After receiving the Lord's supper, Christians are to con-

sider how they have acted, and what benefit they have received.

2 Chron. 30:21-26. Acts 2:42, 46, 47. Psalm 36:10. Song of Solomon 3:4. 1 Chron. 29:18. 1 Cor. 10:3-5, 12. Psalm 50:14. 1 Cor. 11:25, 26. Those who find that they have received benefit from the Lord's supper are to thank God for it, seek to conserve the benefit for the future, fulfil their vows, and look forward to partaking of the Lord's supper often.

Song of Solomon 5:1-6. Psalm 123:1, 2; 42:5, 8; 43:3-5. In case no immediate spiritual benefit is experienced after partaking of the Lord's supper, communicants are to consider whether this may be their own fault, and if they conscientiously decide that it is not, they are to expect the benefit in due time.

2 Chron. 30:18, 19. Isa. 1:16, 18. 2 Cor. 7:11. 1 Chron. 15:12-14. Communicants who find that failure to receive benefit from the Lord's supper is their own fault, are to be humbled in their hearts, and to exercise more care and diligence in the future.

Questions:

1. Does the Christian's duty in connection with the Lord's supper end when the administration of the sacrament is completed?

No. Since the Lord's supper is intended to bring real spiritual benefit to Christian people, it is their duty to consider seriously how they have conducted themselves prior to and at the sacrament, and what benefit they have received. To drop the matter from our thoughts as soon as the actual communion service is dismissed would be to lose a part of the spiritual profit that we should receive from the sacrament.

2. Is the spiritual benefit of the Lord's supper always experienced at the time when the sacrament is received or immediately afterwards?

No. While it is undoubtedly true that most serious Christians consciously experience benefit at the time and immediately afterwards, this is not always nor necessarily the case. Sometimes God in His wisdom withholds the blessing, or the consciousness of the blessing, for a time.

LESSON 166—FOR WEEK BEGINNING MARCH 6, 1949

Q. 176. Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper agree?

A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper agree, in that the author of both is God; the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits; both are seals of the same covenant, are to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and by none other; and to be continued in the church of Christ until his second coming.

Q. 177. Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper differ?

As in the case of baptism, the benefits of the Lord's supper are not tied or limited to the time of administration.

3. When benefit is experienced, what attitudes should this produce in the communicant?

(a) An attitude of thankfulness to God; (b) A prayerful desire that the blessing may be continued; (c) A careful avoidance of pride or over-confidence which would occasion a relapse into sin; (d) A sincere purpose of paying his vows to God; (e) A desire to partake of the Lord's supper often. The danger of spiritual pride or over-confidence is especially to be guarded against. The Christian who has experienced spiritual blessings and benefits is always in danger of becoming over-confident and starting to trust in himself instead of in Christ. This will lead to a humiliating fall into sin unless carefully guarded against.

4. When no immediate benefit is experienced from the Lord's supper, what should a Christian do about the matter?

He should realize that the failure to experience spiritual benefit may be his own fault, and therefore he should review his preparation for, and conduct at, the sacrament. If he finds himself to be at fault in either of these matters, he is "to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterward with more care and diligence." That is to say, lack of proper preparation for the Lord's supper, and improper partaking of the sacrament, are sins, and should be repented of the same as any other sins.

5. What should be the attitude of a Christian who is not conscious of benefit received from the Lord's supper, but does not find this to have been caused by his own faults?

Such a Christian should "wait for the fruit of it in due time"; that is, his attitude toward God in connection with this matter should be an attitude of faith, confidently expecting a blessing, and an attitude of patience, being willing for the blessing to be deferred if that is God's holy will. There are many examples in the Bible of saints whose blessings were deferred, either to develop their faith, or because of some secret purpose of God. Impatience is always contrary to faith.

A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper differ, in that baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.

Scripture References:

Matt. 28:19. 1 Cor. 11:23. God is the author of both baptism and the Lord's supper.

Rom. 6:3,4. 1 Cor. 10:16. The spiritual part of both sacraments is Christ and His benefits.

Rom. 4:11 compared with Col. 2:12. Matt. 26:27,28. Both sacraments are seals of the same covenant.

John 1:33. Matt. 28:19. 1 Cor. 11:23; 4:1. Heb. 5:4. Both sacraments are to be dispensed only by ministers of the Gospel.

Matt. 28:19,20. 1 Cor. 11:26. Both sacraments are to be continued in the Church until Christ's second coming.

Matt. 3:11. Tit. 3:5. Gal 3:27. Baptism is to be administered with water, as a sign and seal of the new birth and union with Christ; and since it represents the beginning of the Christian life, it is to be administered only once to any person.

Gen. 17:7,9. Acts 2:38, 39. 1 Cor. 7:14. Baptism is to be administered to the infants of believers.

1 Cor. 11:23-26. The Lord's supper is to be administered repeatedly, with bread and wine, to represent Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul.

1 Cor. 10:16. The Lord's supper is to confirm our continuance and growth in Christ.

1 Cor. 11:28,29. Unlike baptism, the Lord's supper is to be administered only to persons of years and ability to examine themselves.

Questions:

1. How many points of agreement are there between baptism and the Lord's supper?

The Catechism enumerates five points of agreement, as follows: (a) The author of both sacraments is God. The Catechism might have added that both were instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ during His life on earth. (b) The spiritual part of both sacraments is Christ and His benefits; that is, Christ and His redemption is what is represented, sealed and applied by both baptism and the Lord's supper. (c) Both sacraments are seals of the same divine covenant, the Covenant of Grace which provides for the eternal salvation of God's elect. (d) As ordinances of the visible Church, both sacraments are to be administered only by the ministers of the Gospel, to whom the mysteries of God have been entrusted. (e) Both sacraments are permanent in nature, to be continued in the Church until Christ's second coming at the Last Day. Thus it appears that in everything which constitutes them SACRAMENTS, baptism and the Lord's supper are in agreement. That which constitutes them sacraments, they have in common.

2. What difference exists in the outward or material part of the two sacraments?

The material element of baptism is water, whereas the material elements of the Lord's supper are bread and wine.

3. What difference exists between baptism and the Lord's supper as to the spiritual reality signified and sealed by the sacraments?

While the spiritual reality signified and sealed by the two sacraments is basically the same, namely, Christ and His redemption and benefits, there is a difference in that baptism is a sign and seal of the BEGINNING of the Christian life (the new birth by the Holy Spirit, remission of sins through Christ's blood, union with Christ), whereas the Lord's supper is a sign and seal of the CONTINUANCE of the Christian life (feeding upon Christ for spiritual nourishment and growth in grace). The one is a sign and seal of spiritual BIRTH, the other a sign and seal of spiritual GROWTH, both being based on Christ's redemption.

4. Why is baptism to be administered only once to any person, while every Christian is to partake of the Lord's supper repeatedly?

This is because of the difference in the spiritual reality signified and sealed by the two sacraments. Baptism is a sign and seal of spiritual birth, and just as a person can have only one natural birth into this world, so he can be born again of the Holy Spirit only once. Since baptism is a sign and seal of this, a person is to be baptized only once. The Lord's supper, on the other hand, is a sign and seal of spiritual growth by faith in Christ. Birth is an event but growth is a process. A person can be born only once but he can continue to grow for years. Similarly in the Christian life, while a person can be born again only once, he must continue to grow in grace all his life long. Since the spiritual reality of which the Lord's supper is a sign and seal (feeding upon Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul) is a continuous process, the Christian is to partake of the Lord's supper repeatedly throughout his life until he departs to be with the Lord.

5. Why are infants to be baptized but not admitted to the Lord's supper until they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him?

For a discussion of the doctrine of infant baptism, see "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 3, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 1948, pp. 168-170 (Lesson 156 of this course). The reasons why the infant children of Christian believers are to be baptized are given there, and need not be repeated here. As for the difference in this respect between baptism and the Lord's supper, the following considerations are relevant. Infants are not to be admitted to the Lord's supper because self-examination is required for a person rightly to partake of the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:28), and infants are not capable of self-examination; also personal faith is required for a person rightly to partake of the Lord's supper, and infants are not

capable of exercising faith. It has been held by some that for these very reasons baptism also ought to be withheld from infants, namely, because they are not capable of faith nor of self-examination. In answer to this argument, it may be said that baptism is the New Testament counterpart of circumcision, and under the Old Testament infants were circumcised by God's command, even though they were incapable of exercising faith. Therefore if their incapacity to exercise faith did not prevent infants from being circumcised under the Old Testament, it should not prevent infants from being baptized under

the New Testament. It is eminently appropriate that infants should receive the sacrament which is a sign and seal of spiritual BIRTH (which occurs prior to and is the source of conscious faith and obedience), while it would be highly inappropriate for them to receive the sacrament which is a sign and seal of feeding on Christ for spiritual GROWTH (which occurs subsequent to and is dependent upon the conscious exercise of faith). The contention that those who practice infant baptism should also permit infant communion is entirely without weight, as it overlooks the distinction between the spiritual realities signified and sealed by the two sacraments.

LESSON 167—FOR WEEK BEGINNING MARCH 13, 1949

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 168—FOR WEEK BEGINNING MARCH 20, 1949

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 fulfil 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 fulfil 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 no one 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 prayers 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 the objects of religious faith, but only as objects 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. Dan. 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 169—FOR WEEK BEGINNING MARCH 27, 1949

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; 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 God directly, without a mediator, or attempts to approach 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 and 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 Christ's name, 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.

"When thick clouds obscure the heavens, and a violent tempest arises, because a gloomy mist is before our eyes, and thunder strikes our ears, and terror stupefies all our faculties, all things seem to us to be blended in confusion; yet during the whole time the heavens remain in the same quiet serenity. So it must be concluded, that while the turbulent state of the world deprives us of our judgment. God, by the pure light of His own righteousness and wisdom, regulates all these commotions in the most exact order, and directs them to their proper end."

John Calvin, "Institutes", Book I, Chap. 17.

BLUE BANNER QUESTION BOX

Readers are invited to submit doctrinal, Biblical and practical questions for answer in this department. Names will not be published with questions.

Question:

A Sabbath School quarterly stated that Gen. 1:2 should be translated, "And the earth became waste and void". The writer held that the earth was inhabited before the creation of Adam, and that "In a remote age the earth with its inhabitants suddenly became a lifeless ruin presumably because of the sin of its inhabitants." Is this interpretation correct?

Answer:

First, for additional light on this question, we add a further quotation from the same source: "There are other texts in the Bible which tell us that God did not create the earth originally waste and void (Is. 45:18). What we have in the first chapter of Genesis from verse 3 is re-creation. The order of this chapter is creation, degeneration, and re-creation."

From these and other statements in the article quoted, it is evident that the writer was following the teaching of the Scofield Reference Bible—so called. Unfortunately, this book is being used by many as if it were the Bible. It is not the Bible. It is an attempt to read into the Bible certain erroneous ideas of men; a system of Dispensationalism, in particular. It does this by inserting headings, notes, and comments between the verses of Scripture, and by footnotes on the pages. Before the first verse of Genesis; between verses 1 and 2; between verses 2 and 3; and with a footnote attached to verse 2, it injects the ideas expressed in other words by the above quotations.

Without any tampering, the Genesis account of creation is simple and straightforward; it is brief, but plainly presents the essentials for a correct understanding of what follows. The first verse appears to be neither a heading nor a paragraph by itself, but part of a continuous narrative, connected with the following, in the usual Hebrew manner, by the conjunctive "and". In the second verse we note that the "and" is attached to the nouns of its three clauses, not to the verbs. The second verse, therefore, does not describe a series of events, but states three conditions concerning the earth that obtained at the time God began His work of "finishing" it, of arranging, fashioning, and filling it with the forms of life as described in verses 3-31, and summarized in Gen. 2:1. The latter verses of chapter 1 do describe a series of events, the "and" being attached to the verbs.

In the first clause of the second verse, "And

the earth was without form and void", the verb is a Hebrew "perfect"; it denotes a definite, completed state, or condition up to the moment. No reason appears in the context why its simple, basic meaning, "was", should be changed in our version to "became".

The third condition mentioned is to the effect that GOD HAD NOT ABANDONED THE EARTH, OR WRECKED IT IN WRATH, for, "the Spirit of God was brooding over its waters" (as an eagle over its young). The Hebrew participle here used indicates continued activity.

In support of its theory, the Scofield "Bible" refers the reader to the following Scriptures, (which, presumably, are the best that could be found for the purpose): Jer. 4:23-26; Isa. 24:1 and 45:18; Ezek. 28:12-15; Isa. 14:9-14. When these prophecies are examined in the light of their respective contexts, without reading preconceived opinions into them, they are found to give no support whatsoever to the notion in question.

Jer. 4:23-26 contains the identical Hebrew word translated "without form and void", or "waste and empty". But Jehovah and His prophet are here looking, not at the earth as a whole, as we commonly use that word. They are looking at the land of Judea, and the words of the prophecy are directed to the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem, who called their little bit of land "the earth", for that was about the extent of their knowledge of the earth. Verse 27 reads, "For thus hath Jehovah said, The whole land shall be desolate", The same word before translated "earth" is here translated "land", as it should be. And the statement here is that "The whole land (not 'was', but) shall be desolate". It looks to the future, not the past. However, this passage is a safe guide for us to the real meaning of the expression, "without form and void". Read the whole prophecy and the meaning lies plain on the face of it, namely, such disorder as makes the land "unfit for the habitation of man, and uninhabited". This meaning is confirmed by other passages in which the same two words occur separately.

Isa. 45:18 declares God's far-reaching PURPOSE in creating the earth. "He created it not to be a waste; he formed it to be inhabited". The first two verses of Genesis, taken together, imply that there was a period during which the earth was not inhabited; was not yet prepared for the habitation of man. How long that period was the Bible does not tell. Gen. 1:3-31 informs us that God carried out His purpose of fitting

the earth for the habitation of men. Then He created man and gave him possession.

Again, there is nothing in Ezek. 28:12-15, or in any other Scripture, that affords any support whatever to this screwy idea that God originally created the earth for the devil and other "angels that kept not their first estate", and then, after they fell, destroyed the earth and re-fashioned it for men. The devil fell from heaven, not from earth.

Through a telescope that gives an image sharp enough to be highly magnified, any one can see the surface of the sun, that it is, even now, in great disorder. He can watch the progress there of terrific storms and cyclones of almost unbelievable extent, intensity and velocity. We know that the sun is composed of the same material elements as is the earth, yet, very evidently, it is not fit for habitation and is not inhabited by any form of life of which we have any conception. Again, with the same telescope, one may view the surface of the moon. His immediate impression is, No air, no water, no building or adorning of the wastes, no life. It is unfit for habitation, and uninhabited.

God created the sun and the moon a long time ago. In their present state they have been good and true witnesses to His glory for a long time. It is His right to leave them in their present condition as long as He pleases. So it was His right to do as He pleased with the earth.

On the special teachings and errors of the "Scofield Reference Bible", see "Blue Banner Faith and Life", vol. 1, pp. 92,93; vol. 2, pp. 45, 46; 54-57; vol. 3, pp. 179, 180. F. D. F.

Question:

In Matt. 10:28 (and Luke 12:5) we are commanded to fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Does this mean to fear God, or to fear Satan?

Answer:

Nearly all commentators on the New Testament understand this command as meaning that we are to fear God. Some, however, have held that the reference is to Satan, or that the words apply equally to both God and Satan. Alford's "Greek Testament" gives a long note on this question. He rejects the view that the reference is to Satan, and holds that God alone is meant by the words "him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell". In support of this conclusion he points out that neither in Matthew nor in Luke is there any mention of Satan in the context; in both passages the context deals with God. He cites the parallel verse James 4:12 ("There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who are thou that judgest another?") and points out that this verse, so similar to Matt. 10:28 and Luke 12:5, refers only to God. Alford also states that

throughout the Bible Satan is spoken of as condemned and limited by God, not as a proper object of godly people's fear. He points out that in Matt. 10:28 the contrast is between "them which kill the body" and "him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell". Those who "kill the body" of Christ's disciples are precisely Satan's agents and instruments; it is none other than Satan that stirs up persecution against Christians and causes them to be killed (Rev. 2:10, 13). But if the first part of the verse refers to what Satan does through his agents and instruments, and the second part of the verse is in contrast to the first part, then it is extremely improbable that the second part also refers to Satan. Alford's exegesis is undoubtedly sound and accurate. We may safely conclude that the one "who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" is God alone. J. G. V.

Question:

Should a Protestant address a Roman Catholic priest as "Father"?

Answer:

"Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. 23:9). This saying of our Lord was of course not intended to prohibit the use of the word "father" in addressing our natural earthly father; the meaning is that we are to call no human person our "father" in the religious sense. In accordance with this command of Christ, we should not address a Roman Catholic priest as "Father". The proper form of address for either a Catholic priest or a Protestant minister is simply "Mister" together with his name, as "Mr. Jones" or "Mr. Smith". If the priest or minister has a doctor's degree he may properly be addressed as "Dr. Jones" or "Dr. Smith". Such use of the title "Doctor" is merely a recognition of a man's scholarly attainments, and implies nothing concerning his religious beliefs or character. J. G. V.

Question:

Is it proper to use the expression "full-time Christian service" as it is commonly used to mean the ministry, missionary work and Christian educational work? Should not every Christian be a full-time servant of Christ?

Answer:

The phrase "full-time Christian service" is in common use today, with an intended meaning approximately as indicated in the above query, namely, religious work in the service of Christ as a person's sole occupation or vocation. While those who use this expression no doubt mean well and have no intention of casting any slur on any faithful Christian, nevertheless the phrase is misleading and open to serious objection. If "full-time Christian service" means religious work as an occupation, then it would seem to imply that

those who are NOT engaged in religious work as an occupation are NOT in full-time Christian service. From this it would necessarily follow that those not in religious work as an occupation are only in PART TIME Christian service, if indeed they are in Christian service at all. This in turn would imply that the daily life and ordinary occupations of the vast majority of Christian people—such as farming, teaching school, working in factories, selling merchandise—are NOT service to Christ. Thus the expression “full-time Christian service”, as it is commonly used, implies a separation of life into the “secular” and the “religious”, and a regarding of only the religious activities as service to Christ, which is unsound and contrary to the teaching of the Bible.

According to the Bible, ALL of a Christian's life is to be regarded as service to Christ. “Servants, be obedient unto them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, AS UNTO CHRIST; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; BUT AS THE SERVANTS OF CHRIST, DOING THE WILL OF GOD FROM THE HEART; WITH GOOD WILL DOING SERVICE, AS TO THE LORD, AND NOT TO MEN: KNOWING THAT WHATSOEVER GOOD THING ANY MAN DOETH, THE SAME SHALL HE RECEIVE OF THE LORD, whether he be bond or free” (Eph. 6:5-8). Here the labor of a slave done for his earthly master is stated to be a service to Christ, which will receive a reward

if it is faithfully and well done. Many other Scriptures which might be cited set forth the same teaching. Our ordinary life and occupations, and even our pleasures and recreations, are service to Christ, and should be so regarded and so carried on.

The notion that to become a minister or missionary means to serve Christ more truly or more fully than to be a Christian farmer or business man is false and also harmful. It arises from a false, unbiblical isolation of religion from “ordinary” life. God calls some to special tasks in His kingdom, such as the ministry, or other Church office, or to missionary work; others He wishes to have serve Him in all the lawful walks and occupations of life. The apostle Paul served Christ just as acceptably and truly when he labored at stitching tents as when he was addressing an audience with the Gospel message. The Christian has just one life to live here on earth, and one Lord to live it for, and all of that life should be lived as service to the Lord.

The phrase “full-time Christian service” is so misleading, and is doing so much harm in distorting the thinking of Christian young people, that it ought to be abolished immediately from the vocabulary of all who believe that Christ is the Lord of THE WHOLE of life. Especially this phrase should be abandoned by those who are leaders of youth. J. G. V.

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J. G. VOS, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

WHY BE A COVENANTER?

Why be a Covenanter? The Reformed Presbyterian Church is a small, unpopular denomination with "old-fashioned" beliefs and strict principles. Why should we continue as members of

this Church which differs from other denominations and is regarded as "queer" by so many people?

NOT BECAUSE OF CUSTOM

Some people have remained Covenanters just because of tradition. They attend services and follow the Covenanter manner of worship just because they are in the habit of doing so. They cannot give any real Bible reasons for their Covenanter faith and practice. Ask them why they do not vote in political elections, and they can only reply that it is against the principles of their Church. They are like the little girl who was

asked why we do not have organs in our churches, and replied solemnly: "We don't because we're Covenanters, and Covenanters don't!" The person who is a Covenanter merely because of custom or tradition is not really a Covenanter at heart. His is not a conscientious loyalty to God's truth, but merely a blind loyalty to church tradition. This is a very poor reason for being a Covenanter.

NOT BECAUSE OF COWARDICE

There is such a thing as being a Covenanter because of cowardice, remaining in the Covenanter Church just because we lack the moral courage to get out of it. Sometimes people remain in the denomination because they fear to offend relatives by leaving it and joining some other Church. Persons who disbelieve the principles of the Covenanter Church, and who do not hesi-

tate to violate some of those principles in practice on occasion, may remain nominal Covenanters for years, because they do not dare to make a change. For them, to be nominal Covenanters is the path of least resistance. But it really is dishonest to hold membership in a Church unless we accept its principles and intend to practice them in our life.

NOT BECAUSE OF CONVENIENCE

For some people, it may be more convenient to be a Covenanter than to join some other Church. A person may happen to live next door to a Covenanter Church building. For others, being a Covenanter may involve much inconvenience, and even real sacrifice. One may have to drive many miles to attend services in a Covenanter congregation; in some cases, it may be possible to attend services but seldom. But convenience or inconvenience should never be the basis of our decision concerning Church membership. We

should join and support the Church we believe to be most faithful in witnessing for the truth, regardless of personal convenience. Our forefathers in Scotland suffered imprisonment, torture and death in order to worship God as they believed right. At the risk of their lives they attended "conventicles" in the wilds of Scotland. Shall we, their descendants and spiritual heirs, decide the question of our Church membership according to our own convenience? God forbid!

BUT BECAUSE OF CONVICTION

The person who is really a Covenanter at heart is the person who is a member of the Covenanter Church because of conviction. This means not just human opinion or preference, but CONVICTION OF TRUTH. The person who is a Covenanter because of conviction accepts the doctrines and principles of the Church, not just because of the tradition or authority of the Church, not because he is convinced in his heart and mind that they are taught in the Word of God, the Holy Bible. His loyalty is a loyalty to the written Word of God. He realizes that being a member of a Church means giving his testimony and his support, moral and financial, to the doctrines and principles of that Church. Convinced in his heart and mind that the Covenanter Church maintains

a fuller and more faithful testimony to the truth of God than any other denomination, he is constrained by his conscience to be a member of the Covenanter Church. Such a Church member is not a reed shaken with the wind; he is established firmly in his heart. He knows what he believes, and why he believes it. He can give real Bible reasons for his belief. As a member of the Church he is convinced, honest, and faithful to his obligations, regardless of inconvenience, unpopularity or reproach. He will receive the reward of a conscientious and consistent Christian.—J. G. V.

(Reprinted, with slight changes, from the first issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life", January, 1946)



BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 4

APRIL - JUNE, 1949

NUMBER 2

"THE VISIBLE CHURCH, WHICH IS ALSO CATHOLIC OR UNIVERSAL UNDER THE GOSPEL (NOT CONFINED TO ONE NATION AS BEFORE UNDER THE LAW), CONSISTS OF ALL THOSE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD THAT PROFESS THE TRUE RELIGION; AND OF THEIR CHILDREN: AND IS THE KINGDOM OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE HOUSE AND FAMILY OF GOD, OUT OF WHICH THERE IS NO ORDINARY POSSIBILITY OF SALVATION."

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J. G. VOS, Editor and Publisher

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

Peden At The Grave of Cameron

By Harriet Stuart Menteth

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Continued on back cover)

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 4

APRIL-JUNE, 1949

NUMBER 2

Sketches From Our History Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER IV

GLEAMS OF LIGHT IN MEDIEVAL DARKNESS

(Continued from last issue)

1. Gottschalk, Witness for Free Grace

Augustine of Hippo, who died A. D. 430, had clearly taught and ably defended the theology of salvation by the free, unmerited grace of God. This theology of free grace was of course not invented by Augustine, for it is taught throughout the Bible, and is made especially clear in the Epistles of Paul. The theology of free grace is simply consistent Biblical Christianity. Although the Church had always possessed this truth in the Bible, it was not until the false system of Pelagianism arose and had to be refuted that the theology of grace came into sharp, clear focus in the Church's consciousness. It was the great work of Augustine to point out and defend this truth over against the errors of Pelagius and his disciples. In his witness for this truth Augustine had clearly taught that God has, from all eternity, elected some to salvation and everlasting glory, while He has also sovereignly passed by others, foreordaining them to suffer the just punishment for their sins. Salvation is wholly a matter of free grace, according to Augustine, because it depends upon the eternal decree and election of God, not upon human free will. Regeneration, repentance, the will to believe, faith—all these are really gifts of God; their bestowal is the working out of God's eternal decree. Hence all the credit for any person's salvation belongs only to God; "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16). Ultimately it is God, not man, that decides the eternal destinies of men; it is God, not man, that brings about the salvation of those who are saved.

This theology of free grace, which is so plainly taught in the Scriptures and had been so sharply contrasted with the contrary errors by Augustine, should have remained the professed and honored faith of the Church for all time to come. But even Christian men are prone to error, and there has always been opposition to

the truth of salvation by free grace, because that truth more than any other is humbling to human pride and vainglory. So in the course of time the theology of free grace was all but forgotten from the minds of men, and the monumental work of Augustine was all but buried in oblivion. Four centuries passed. The dark ages closed in on Europe; the Church lapsed into a condition of religious ignorance and doctrinal unsoundness. Finally the theology of free grace—consistent Biblical Christianity—which the Church had accepted and honored in Augustine's day, was so far forgotten that when at last a man stood up to preach and teach it, it was considered a strange, new doctrine, and the man who taught it was accused of heresy.

This man was Gottschalk, a German theologian who was born about A.D. 808 and died about 868. Gottschalk's father, a Saxon nobleman, dedicated his son from infancy to the life of a monk. As a boy Gottschalk was sent to the monastery of Fulda (Germany), of the Benedictine Order, which was at that time one of the chief centers of theological learning in all Europe. There Gottschalk received his general education and was introduced to the study of theology. The abbot of the monastery was the famous Hrabanus Maurus, who later became archbishop of Mainz and the implacable opponent of Gottschalk.

After several years at Fulda, Gottschalk in 829 petitioned the Synod of Mainz for release from the monastery, alleging that the abbot had mistreated him. The synod granted his plea, and Gottschalk went to France where he entered the monastery of Orbais near the city of Soissons. Here he came in contact with the writings of Augustine. These made a profound impression on him. As he pondered the writings of the great African bishop, he realized that this was indeed consistent Christianity, this was indeed the teaching of the Word of God, this was indeed the truth that the Church had once owned but

later forgotten. A deep conviction gripped his heart and mind: the doctrine of predestination was the truth, it must be preached, and he must undertake the task.

Sometime between 835 and 840 Gottschalk, who had been only a monk, was ordained as a priest of the Church. After this he left the monastery of Orbais and went to Italy where he had relations with Notting, bishop of Verona, and Eberhard, an Italian nobleman. Gottschalk now began to pay the price of standing up for the truth against opposition. Persecution set in, which followed him without respite to his dying day. Hrabanus Maurus, Gottschalk's former abbot, now the powerful archbishop of Mainz, wrote letters to Notting and Eberhard, violently accusing Gottschalk of heresy. The result of this was that Notting and Eberhard were alienated from Gottschalk, and he was driven from Italy.

This persecution however did not silence Gottschalk's testimony for the truth. He realized that while God's servants may be persecuted, the Word of God is not bound. Travelling through regions which today are parts of Yugoslavia, Hungary and Austria, he continued to bear witness to the truth both by preaching and by writing. So thoroughly convinced was Gottschalk that the doctrine of predestination is Scriptural that he dared to face the powerful archbishop Hrabanus Maurus, at a synod held at Mainz in 848, and defend his convictions against the contrary views which the archbishop had expressed in his letter to Notting. Gottschalk presented to the synod a profession of his own faith and also a refutation of the archbishop's views. The outcome of this courageous stand for the truth was a tragic one. Not only was the synod unwilling to yield assent to the doctrines which Gottschalk defended, but Gottschalk himself was declared to be a heretic, was cruelly scourged, compelled to swear an oath promising never again to enter the territory of the Holy Roman (i.e., German) Empire, and was turned over to the authority of Hincmar, archbishop of Reims in France. Hincmar was very strongly opposed to Gottschalk's views, and sent him back to his old monastery at Orbais near Soissons.

Still Gottschalk was unwilling to abandon his great effort to have the truth of God's free, sovereign, gracious election accepted and honored by the Church again. He knew he was right, for he had anchored his faith to the rock of Scripture, and moreover the greatest of all the Church Fathers, Augustine of Hippo, had taught and defended the same truth. These bishops and archbishops of Germany and Italy were blinded to the truth; these men understood neither the Scriptures nor the history of the Church; they were calling white black, and condemning the teachings of the apostle Paul and Augustine as

a heresy. Surely there must still be some hope; surely the Church had not forever closed its eyes and ears to the truth. Gottschalk resolved to try again, in France.

The year after he was sent back to the monastery of Orbais, a synod was held at Quierzy, in France, which was presided over by Charles the Bald, king of France. At this synod Gottschalk appeared and endeavored to present and defend the truth. But the Church in France proved to be as bitterly opposed to his convictions as in Germany. The result was that Gottschalk was not only convicted of heresy a second time, but also condemned as a disturber of the public peace, and so brutally scourged that he almost lost his life. Besides this penalty, he was deposed from the priesthood, compelled to commit his own written profession of faith to the flames, and imprisoned in a monastery at Hautvilliers (France). The arrogant archbishop Hincmar then tried again to persuade Gottschalk to retract his teachings, but in vain. Gottschalk was fully determined to hold fast his profession of faith until death.

Even though he was imprisoned, Gottschalk continued to proclaim and defend the truth by writing letters, not only to his personal friends, but to some of the most prominent theologians in Germany and France. Finally he was successful in stirring up some interest in the doctrine of God's free, gracious election, and some prominent men rallied to his support and wrote in favor of his convictions. Among these were Prudentius, bishop of Troyes (France), and Ratramnus, a French monk renowned as an opponent of the doctrine of transubstantiation. At the suggestion of Charles the Bald, Ratramnus wrote a treatise entitled "Concerning God's Predestination", in which he defended the doctrine that God has from all eternity determined the final destiny of all human beings, the reprobate as well as the elect. On the other side, Archbishop Hincmar wrote a treatise with the title "Concerning the Predestination of God and Free Will". Hincmar was supported by one of the most famous theologians of the time, John Scotus Erigena, who wrote a book entitled "Concerning the Divine Predestination". Erigena's book afforded scant help to Hincmar, for it argued the question not from Scripture but from philosophy, and its contents caused Erigena himself to be suspected of heresy. Erigena's later theological writings showed a pronounced tendency toward pantheism, and his orthodoxy was regarded as doubtful.

The controversy about predestination was dealt with at Church synods in 853, 855 and 859. But in spite of all this discussion, Gottschalk and his supporters were unable to bring about a return to the truth on the part of the Church. They were on the highway of truth, but the tide of the times was against them. Powerful churchmen such as Hrabanus Maurus and Hincmar were

determined that the Church should not yield assent to Gottschalk's arguments. The Church was drifting away from the truths of God's Word and was becoming more and more saturated with the ideas of salvation by human merit and free will. Gottschalk however remained absolutely stedfast in his faith and resisted all efforts to induce him to recant. He remained a prisoner for almost twenty years until he died about 868. When Hincmar heard that Gottschalk had become ill and was likely to die, the archbishop issued an order forbidding him the sacraments, and also forbidding burial in consecrated ground, unless he would retract his views. Gottschalk bravely refused to recant, and continued a faithful witness of Jesus Christ and His truth until he was called to be present with the Lord.

Gottschalk's life and sufferings were not in vain; no testimony for God's truth is ever in vain. He was indeed a gleam of light in the

darkness of the Middle Ages. A man of whom the world was not worthy, he did not shrink from undertaking an apparently hopeless task, he did not leave the unpleasant duty of defending the truth to others, and he never compromised. He stood up for the truth in spite of unpopularity, reproach and suffering. The truth he witnessed for was ruthlessly crushed to earth, but it would rise again. First seven hundred years must pass while the Church groaned under the burden of belief in salvation by human merit and free will. Then God would raise up another champion for the truth that the apostle Paul had taught, Augustine had defended and Gottschalk had struggled and suffered for. That champion would be the Reformer John Calvin, through whose life and work the truth of predestination and salvation by free grace would really come to its rights.

(To be continued)

THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS

THEIR ORIGINS, HISTORY AND DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES

(Selections from the book with the above title, by J. G. Vos, published by the author in 1940)

PART II THE HISTORY OF THE COVENANTERS

CHAPTER I THE PERIOD OF PERSECUTION, 1660-1688

6. Public Protests and Testimonies Issued by the Covenanters.

(Continued from last issue)

The Queensferry Paper was never published by the Covenanters, as it was prematurely discovered and taken by the authorities. Only a few days passed, however, before the strict Covenanters published an official declaration of their principles. On the 22nd of June, 1680, Richard Cameron, accompanied by nineteen horsemen, rode to the cross in the village of Sanquhar and there read a paper which they afterwards nailed to the cross. It has been known as the Sanquhar Declaration. Containing only about 850 words, it is much shorter than the Queensferry Paper. The Sanquhar Declaration lists three steps in the Reformation of the Church of Scotland: (1) From Popery. (2) From Prelacy. (3) From Erastianism. It speaks of Charles II as he "who (it is true so far as we know) is descended from the race of our kings, yet he hath so far deborded from what he ought to have been, by his perjury and usurpation in Church matters, and tyranny in matters civil, as is known by the whole land, that we have just reason to account it one of the Lord's great controversies against us, that we have not disowned him and the men of his

practices, (whether inferior magistrates or any other) as enemies to our Lord and His crown, and the true Protestant and Presbyterian interest in these lands, our Lord's espoused bride and Church. Therefore, although we be for government and governors such as the Word of God and our Covenant allows, yet we for ourselves and all that will adhere to us as the representatives of the true Presbyterian Kirk and Covenanted nation of Scotland, considering the great hazard of lying under such a sin any longer, do by these presents disown Charles Stuart, that has been reigning (or rather tyrannizing as we may say) on the throne of Britain these years bygone, as having any right, title to, or interest in the said crown of Scotland for government, as forfeited several years since, by his perjury and breach of covenant both to God and His Kirk, and usurpation of His crown and royal prerogatives therein, and many other breaches in matters ecclesiastic, and by his tyranny and breach of the very leges regnandi in matters civil. For which reason we declare, that several years since he should have been denuded of being king, ruler, or magistrate, or of having any power to act, or to be obeyed as such. As also, we being under the standard of our Lord Jesus Christ, Captain of Salvation, do declare a war with such a tyrant and usurper, and all the men of his practices, as enemies to our Lord Jesus Christ and His cause and covenants; and against all such as have strengthened him, sided with, or any wise acknowledged him in his tyranny, civil or ecclesiastic, yea, against all such as shall strengthen, side

with, or any wise acknowledge any other in the like usurpation and tyranny, far more against such as would betray or deliver up our free reformed mother-kirk unto the bondage of anti-christ the Pope of Rome". The Declaration then proceeds to approve of the Testimony of Rutherford (May 29th, 1679), and to disclaim the Glasgow declaration of June, 1679, because it takes in the King's interest, from which Scotland has been released several years. The Declaration then condemns the Duke of York, who afterwards became King James VII (II of England) as a professed Papist, and protests against his succeeding to the crown. The document closes by stating that the signers will reward those that oppose them as they have rewarded them, as the Lord gives opportunity.

The Sanquhar Declaration was unsigned, but was the act of the strict Covenanters who followed Cargill and Cameron. It was the first public renunciation of the authority of the House of Stuart in Scotland. Previous testimonies and sermons had set forth grievances, and condemned abuses; the Sanquhar Declaration cuts to the heart of the matter by boldly denying the right of Charles II to reign. Though the government regarded this as rebellion, still the position taken in the Declaration itself was not rebellion but revolution, not a lawless refusal to obey legitimate authority, but a formal appeal to the law of the land and to the nation as such, against tyrannical usurpation and a power which claimed to be above law.

The effect of the Queensferry Paper and the Sanquhar Declaration was to increase the troubles of the Covenanters. Cameron was killed at Ayrsmoss a few days after the publication of the Sanquhar Declaration; Cargill was captured July 11th, 1681, and soon executed. In 1681 the Parliament passed the Test Act. This was the occasion for another public protest on the part of the Cameronian Covenanters. A company of them appeared armed at the town of Lanark on January 12th, 1682, and published a declaration, which they fastened to the cross there. This document, entitled "The Act and Apologetic Declaration of the True Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland", contains 1,300 words and so is longer than the Sanquhar Declaration but much shorter than the Queensferry Paper. It declares that the Scottish Parliaments "are so prelimited by law, as that no true son of the State or Church hath liberty to sit and vote there", and asks the question, "What shall the people do in such an extremity? Should they give their reason as men, their consciences as Christians, and resign their liberties, fortunes, religion, and their all to the inexorable obstinacy, incurable wilfulness, and malice of these, who in spite of God and man (and notwithstanding of their many oaths and vows both to God and His people) are resolved to make their own will the absolute and sovereign rule of their actions, and their strained

indulgences, and the measure of the subjects' hope and happiness? Shall the end of government be lost, through weakness, wickedness, and tyranny of governors? Must the people by an implicit submission and deplorable stupidity, destroy themselves, and betray their posterity, and become objects of reproach to the present generation and pity and contempt to the future? Have they not in such an extremity good ground to make use of that natural radical power they have, to shake off that yoke, which neither we nor our forefathers were able to bear; which accordingly the Lord honoured us (in a general and unprelimed meeting of the estates and shires of Scotland) to do; a convention of unprelimed members, a convention of men who had only the glory of God and the good of the commonwealth before their eyes,—the like whereof the present reigning tyrant could never since his home coming pretend to? At which convention, he was most legally, and by general consent cast off, by the Declaration afterwards published at Sanquhar by especial warrant from the said convention". The document goes on to enumerate as grounds for the above action, "some of the many thousands of the misdemeanors of the now cast-off tyrant in his overturning of our Church and State". These included (1) The Act Rescissory, which changed the constitution of both Church and State in Scotland. (2) The King's exalting the royal prerogative above the law of the land, so as to make Scotland "a laughingstock to the neighboring nations . . . who say we have only the law of letters, instead of the letter of the law". (3) Arbitrary adjournment of parliaments. (4) Claim of supreme power over all persons and in all causes. (5) Oppressive taxation, "for keeping up a brothel, rather than a court". (6) The packed Parliament and the Test Act passed by it, "such as no Protestant (how corrupt soever) can take". The document continues, "We are only endeavoring to extricate ourselves from under a tyrannous yoke, and to reduce our Church and State to what they were in the years 1648 and 1649". It then approves the Rutherford and Sanquhar Declarations, and proceeds to "rescind, annul, and make void" all the acts of Charles II since 1660, and particularly the acts of the Parliament which met at Edinburgh, July 28th, 1681. The closing words of the document are: "Let King Jesus Reign, and all His enemies be scattered".

The government's answer soon came in the form of an act of the Privy Council which stated: "The Lords of His Majesty's Privy Council do hereby ordain any person who owns, or will not disown the late treasonable Declaration upon oath, whether they have arms or not, to be immediately put to death; this being always done in presence of two witnesses, and the person or persons having commission from the Council to that effect". This order provided for military execution without any form of trial. An alter-

nate form which provided for trial by a jury of fifteen men, to be followed by immediate execution, was used in some parts of Scotland.

In 1684 the Cameronian Covenanters published another protest, entitled "The Apologetical Declaration and Admonitory Vindication against Intelligencers and Informers". The document was composed by James Renwick, who was the pastor and leader of the strict Covenanters after the death of Cameron and Cargill. In it they speak of the hardships they had suffered, and of the principles which they held, and disclaimed the intention to kill all who differed from them, but asserted that they would regard those who persecuted them, including judges, soldiers, informants and false witnesses, as their own and God's

public enemies and would deal with them accordingly. The Privy Council replied to this Declaration by an ordinance issued November 22nd, 1684, by which any person who should refuse to disown the Declaration was to be instantly put to death in the presence of two witnesses.

The Covenanters had openly challenged the claim of King Charles II to the throne. They had, in effect, proclaimed a revolution. For the time being they were regarded as traitors and rebels. But in a few short years, the Covenanters' rejection of tyrannical rulers became the nation's rejection, and what had been called treason and rebellion, became the deliberate act of the nation, in the Revolution of 1688.

(To be continued)

Our Church Covenant and Modern Life

(Note: This is the seventh of a series of sermons on the obligations involved in the Church Covenant sworn and subscribed by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, May 21, 1871.—Ed.)

VII. WHERE WE STAND ON THE QUESTION OF CHURCH UNION

Scripture Reading: Psalm 133; John 17.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."—1 Cor. 1:10.

The Covenant of 1871, besides a preliminary confession of sins, consists of an introductory paragraph and six sections. This Covenant was adopted in 1871 after long and earnest preparation, and it is recognized by the "Terms of Communion" as binding upon the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America today. In order that we may have a bird's-eye view of the Covenant as a whole, I shall present the subjects of the various sections as given in the Rev. Frank D. Frazer's "Outline Studies in the Covenant". These are as follows: (1) We hereby covenant to do our duty to God. (2) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the truth of God. (3) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the nation. (4) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the Church-at-large. (5) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the world. (6) We hereby covenant to perform these, our duties, faithfully.

Section 4 of our Church Covenant reads as follows: (We do swear) "That, believing the Church to be ONE, and that all the saints have communion with God and with one another in the same Covenant; believing, moreover, that schism and sectarianism are sinful in themselves,

and inimical to true religion, and trusting that divisions shall cease, and the people of God become one Catholic Church over all the earth, we will pray and labor for the visible oneness of the Church of God in our own land and throughout the world, on the basis of truth and of Scriptural order. Considering it a principal duty of our profession to cultivate a holy brotherhood, we will strive to maintain Christian friendship with pious men of every name, and to feel and act as one with all in every land who pursue this grand end. And, as a means of securing this great result, we will by dissemination and application of the principles of truth herein professed, and by cultivating and exercising Christian charity, labor to remove stumbling-blocks, and to gather into one the scattered and divided friends of truth and righteousness."

I. Denominationalism is Sinful

Denominationalism is an obvious fact of the church picture of our day. This of course is nothing new. It has been so, more or less, since the Reformation. Denominationalism existed, indeed, even before the Reformation, for there were dissenting sects outside the Roman Catholic Church, not to mention the Greek Orthodox Church and the various separate "Catholic" Churches of the Near East. There were also divisions of various kinds within the external unity of the Church of Rome. The Reformation, how-

ever, occasioned a great increase in denominationalism.

The religious freedom guaranteed by the American Constitution has provided a favorable environment for the increase of denominations and sects, until today the United States has perhaps more religious denominations than any other country of the world. In America any group of people can start a new denomination or even a new religion at any time without asking anyone's permission, and many have taken advantage of this freedom for reasons which they considered proper.

Religious liberty is of course a good thing, but can we say the same of denominationalism? Is it a good thing that Christian people are divided into denominations which are not only distinct, but often actually opposed to and competing with one another? Many a small town in the United States has ten or a dozen church congregations, representing as many separate denominations. No right thinking person will claim that it is good that it should be so. It may be unavoidable, but it is not good. It is an evil.

Our Church Covenant affirms that denominationalism is sinful. We may well accept this as our starting point in discussing this subject. Real denominationalism results from error, from believing something that is false. Where the creeds of two denominations contradict each other, they cannot both be true; at least one of them must be in error. If one teaches that Christ died in order to save all men, and another teaches that Christ died in order to save some men but not all, they cannot both be teaching the truth on this question; one or the other must be in error. It is only because of error that real denominationalism exists, and it is only because of sin that error exists. Doctrinal error is not simply the result of our natural human limitations; it comes from our fallen, sinful nature. The Fall darkened the human heart and clouded the human mind so that men stray from the path of truth and believe error. This proneness to error is partly removed and held in check by the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and mind of the person who has been born again. But even in those who have been born again, the liability to error is never completely removed in this present life. Just as there is no such thing in this life as a completely sanctified Christian, who is absolutely free from sin, so there is no such thing in this life as a completely illuminated Christian, who is absolutely free from error. Even the most mature Christian is still a fallible human being. Even the most orthodox Church is composed of fallible human beings. There cannot be, in this world, such a thing as a totally orthodox Christian or a completely orthodox Church. Every Christian has the seeds of heresy within him; every Church has elements of error in its creed. Only the Word of God is infallible; Christian

people's understanding of the Word of God always contains an element of error. This residual element of error may be very slight, and it may concern comparatively unimportant matters, but it is always there, and it always proceeds from human sinfulness.

The cause of real denominationalism is lack of unity in the understanding of truth. Because even the most spiritual and mature Christians are fallible, they tend to differ in their interpretation of the Bible. There is lack of unity in their understanding of truth. Each of course believes himself to be right and others to be wrong. The result is denominational divisions. Because these divisions arise from our sinful proneness to error, they are themselves sinful.

Denominationalism is sinful, not only because it originates from sinful proneness to error, but because after it has arisen Christian people do not make a serious effort to eliminate it by seeking to arrive at unity in their understanding of truth. People either regard denominationalism as inevitable, and tolerate it as if nothing could be done about it, or they try to eliminate it by easy shortcuts which are actually more evil than denominationalism itself. That is to say, people either propose to let the disease continue unchecked, or they propose remedies which do not touch the real cause (sinful error) and which are themselves worse than the disease they are intended to cure. In the past there has been little attempt to deal with denominationalism by a frank facing of its cause (sinful error), and in our own day almost nothing of that sort is being done. Some are complacently willing to allow the status quo to continue indefinitely, and others propose un-Scriptural and harmful shortcuts which cannot really eliminate the evil. Many are concerned about the divisions of the Visible Church, but few indeed are concerned about the sinful error that gave rise to these divisions and that perpetuates them at the present day. Yet it is this sinful error that most needs to be faced and repented of.

II. Unity must come before Union

The emphasis in contemporary American Protestantism is on Church UNION rather than on Christian UNITY. In the Bible we read the rhetorical question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). This implies, of course, that they cannot walk together except they be agreed. In the Bible the emphasis is on agreement among the Lord's people, on Christian unity. But in present-day American Protestantism the emphasis is not on agreement, but on walking together. Whereas God's Word says that two cannot walk together except they be agreed, the modern church union movement says in effect: "They should walk together whether they are agreed or not".

Real Christian unity can exist without church union, and there can also be church union without real Christian unity. It is quite common in our large cities to find two churches of the same denomination, located within a few blocks of each other, with the preaching of their respective ministers contradictory on the most important points of doctrine. They have union without unity.

When our Saviour prayed that His people might all be one (John 17:21) we must believe that He had Christian unity rather than Church union chiefly in mind. For union without unity is mere hypocrisy, it is a mockery of Christ. Unity is vastly more important than union. Not church union, but Christian unity, is the great goal which we should seek to attain; not that all Christians should be in the same organization, but that they should come to agree on Christian truth. Indeed, we do not hesitate to affirm that when the problem of Christian unity is solved, the problem of church union will practically take care of itself. When real Christian unity is attained, it will be not only possible, but easy, to attain church union, for the obstacle in the way of it will have been removed.

I have endeavored to diagnose the disease. I have not hesitated to call denominationalism a disease, yes, even to call it sinful and wicked in itself. It is the result of sin and it is itself sinful. But what about the remedy? It is one thing to say that the patient is sick; it is quite another matter to prescribe an adequate remedy. I shall say something about two wrong and inadequate remedies that are being advocated today, both of which are attempted shortcuts to church union. Then I shall say something about the true remedy which our Church believes to be required by the Word of God.

III. Attempted Shortcuts to Church Union

Years ago Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield wrote: "Men bewail the divisions of the Church of Christ, and propose that we shall stop thinking, so that we may no longer think differently. This is the true account to give of many of the phases of the modern movement for 'church union'. Men are tired of thinking. They are tired of defending the truth. Let us all stop thinking, stop believing, they cry, and what a happy family we shall be!" These words of Dr. Warfield are a very fair criticism of one of the attempted shortcuts to church union, namely the effort to attain union by disregarding doctrinal differences. Several unions have been brought about in this way, and some are being negotiated at the present time. Noteworthy is the so-called United Church of Canada, made up of Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. The so-called Church of Christ in China is another example. This attempted method of achieving church union says in effect: "Our different beliefs do not matter.

We are not agreed. Never mind. Who cares? Let us unite and walk together anyway."

Such unions are brought about either on the basis of a COMPROMISE CREED, in which each party agrees to sacrifice something which it believes to be truth, or else on the basis of a MINIMAL CREED, a creed so brief and so vaguely worded that it does not commit the united Church to much of anything. Such a minimal creed is carefully written so as to evade the issues which might cause controversy and division. Whether the effort is made by a compromise creed or by a minimal creed, the attempt to attain church union by disregarding doctrinal differences is the result of the attitude of indifference to truth which is so common today.

A well educated professional man told me that he had been, at different times, a Presbyterian and a Methodist, each for a period of years. Yet he did not know the doctrinal difference between the two denominations. It is this kind of ignorance, and this indifferent state of mind, that paves the way for projects for union on the basis of disregard of doctrinal differences. The present tendency toward union on a compromise or minimal basis is really the product of SKEPTICISM. Its real, though hidden, keynote is Pilate's question "What is truth?" Back of this disregard of doctrinal differences is the modern denial that there is such a thing as absolute, permanent truth. Of course if there is no such thing as absolute truth, then doctrinal differences are not a real barrier to union. They can be compromised and adjusted to everyone's satisfaction. But if we have any real grasp of the system of doctrine which we have professed, and which we believe to be taught in the Scriptures, we will never agree to union on a compromise or minimal basis.

Another attempted shortcut to church union is by way of interdenominational organizations. It is said that denominations exist and must be allowed to continue to exist for the present, but they should co-operate in mammoth interdenominational organizations as if there were no really important differences between them. Such an organization is the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, which includes some 25 denominations, 142,354 congregations and 27,749,967 individuals, and is often called "The Voice of Protestantism" in America. The leadership and general character and activities of this mammoth organization are thoroughly saturated with destructive Modernism. (This statement is clearly substantiated by Ernest Gordon's able and well-documented discussion entitled "An Ecclesiastical Octopus: A History of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and Allied Organizations"; price \$1.25; published by The Fellowship Press, 9 Park St., Boston 8, Mass.) The Federal Council has done much to propagate Modernism by radio broadcasting and by its

"preaching missions" in various cities. It constitutes a menace to the Gospel of Christ in America today. Other influential interdenominational organizations are the International Council of Religious Education, the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, the Home Missions Conference of North America, and several more. It is now proposed that eight of these huge organizations be merged in one truly colossal organization to be called the National Council of Churches. Another phase of this same movement is the World Council of Churches with headquarters in Switzerland, which recently held a meeting in Amsterdam, Holland. It was proposed that even the Church of Rome be included in this, but the pope was not willing.

These interdenominational organizations of the Federal Council pattern are collectively being called "the ecumenical movement". While church union is not officially one of their avowed purposes at present, they are calculated to bring about church union in the end. Some of their advocates frankly admit that organic union of denominations is the real objective. They are looking forward to what they call "the ecumenical Church", and regard existing interdenominational organizations as steps in that direction. The tragedy is that these organizations are permeated by modern unbelief and are unfaithful to the Word of God. An "ecumenical Church" (that is, a world-wide Church) that is the product of such organizations as the Federal Council and the World Council of Churches, will not be a truly CHRISTIAN Church that accepts the Bible as the infallible Word of God, but an inclusive body of predominantly Modernist or "Liberal" character. If nation-wide or world-wide church union is accomplished on such a basis it will constitute a serious threat to the standing and religious freedom of Churches and Christians which believe in the Christianity of the Scriptures. Back of the present grandiose "ecumenical" movement lurks the crafty mind of Satan, the father of lies, the deceiver of the whole world, the prince of this world and the arch-enemy of Jesus Christ.

There are, of course, interdenominational organizations and councils of Churches, mission boards, etc., constituted on a truly Christian basis, which serve necessary and useful purposes and which are not calculated to bring about organic union of denominations. Such are quite distinct from the well-known organizations of the "ecumenical" type and tendency.

IV. The True Path Toward Church Union

Both of the shortcuts that I have discussed are worse than the disease of denominationalism. But there is a better remedy. It is much slower, to be sure, but it is not impossible. This better way consists in the pursuit of unity on the basis of truth as set forth in the Bible; in short,

church union on the basis of gradually attained mutual agreement concerning the truth of God.

Little is being done about this today. That is a pity. Men's eyes have been dazzled by the attempted shortcuts. But what is needed is to get down to rock bottom and discuss the Scriptural issues with prayer and patience until sound conclusions and mutual agreement are reached. This was the method pursued by the renowned Westminster Assembly of Divines some 300 years ago. This body consisted of about 150 ministers and theologians representing all parties of Protestantism in England except the high episcopalianism of Archbishop Laud. The Assembly sat for seven years and held 1163 sessions seeking mutual agreement concerning the teachings of the Scriptures. Those men were not seeking a shortcut. They were thorough in their work, they took their time, they never tried to evade or brush aside issues, they got beneath the surface of things and dealt with the real issues. Their devotion to the Word of God was outstanding, and they had an abundant measure of something that is often lacking in synods and assemblies of the present day, namely patience. The result of this patient, painstaking labor was that their work has stood the test of centuries. In those days the Christian people and their leaders were interested in TRUTH and they sought unity on the basis of truth, not by the sacrifice of truth. They found this costly, but they were sufficiently concerned about truth to pay the price.

There is need today for a body such as the Westminster Assembly of Divines, to meet on the frank, avowed basis of the Bible as the infallible Word of God, and patiently to discuss all points of difference and dispute. Such an assembly should take as much time as needed to get to the bottom of denominational differences and reach sound conclusions and mutual agreement. Let it meet for 25 years if necessary. If the Churches want mutual agreement on the truth revealed in the Bible they can have it, but they will have to pay the price — and it will be a high price — in money, in effort, in sacrifice, in patience, in humility. Real Christian unity cannot be reached quickly nor can it be purchased cheaply. It is not a manufactured product like an automobile, that can be put together speedily on an assembly line; it is an organic growth like a tree, and trees take time to grow. But it is not inherently impossible; it can be obtained, by the blessing of God, if the Churches are sufficiently in earnest about wanting it. The pity is that today there is comparatively little interest in questions of TRUTH, and most people — even Christian people — seem to be concerned chiefly about "practical" things. In the end it will be known that truth is really the most practical of all things.

Is this idea of Christian unity only a dream? Alas, most of the large denominations of today

would not even accept the starting-point, the basis of the Bible as the infallible Word of God. And real, lasting Christian unity can be obtained on no other basis. Whether it be a dream or not, it is our Covenanter ideal, and we believe that it is required by the Word of God. We are not indifferent to the problem of denominationalism. We have a high, Scriptural view of Christian unity. We cannot consent to any quick, easy union on a compromise basis, nor to any evasion of issues by a vague, minimal creed. We do not insist that Christian unity and Church union must

necessarily be on our own basis, but we want to be sure that it is on God's basis. Toward that end we are pledged by our Covenant to pray and work. "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23).

(Note: For a fuller and more technical discussion of the question of Church union on a Biblical basis, the reader is referred to an article entitled "The Visible Church: Its Nature, Unity and Witness", by J. G. Vos, in "The Westminster Theological Journal", May, 1947, pp. 147-180).

The Forty-first Psalm

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

"That, when it is come to pass, you may believe"

Psalm 40 closed with words of hope, "As for me, poor and needy though I am, the Lord taketh thought for me". In Psalm 41 the Psalmist, still "compassed about with innumerable evils", continues his prayer.

I. Recalling a Basic Principle of the Kingdom of God (vss. 1-3)

"BLESSED is he who, habitually, with understanding, considers the one in need: In the day of evil (i.e., when his trouble comes), Jehovah will deliver him. Jehovah will protect him and keep him alive; And Thou wilt not give him over to the desire of his enemies. Jehovah will strengthen him on his pallet of pain; All his bed Thou hast changed in his sickness." "Changed", i.e., not as a nurse for a moment's relief, but as only God can change it from a bed of suffering to one of feasting and joy in the banquet hall. "BLESSED are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Resting upon this law of God's providential rule, in the consciousness that it has been his practice to consider the poor, for "Surely he hath borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows",

II. The Merciful Man, Himself in Need, Claims the Mercy of God (vss. 4-9).

"As for myself, I said, O Jehovah, have mercy upon me; Heal my soul . . . Mine enemies speak evil against me (saying), When will he die and his name perish? And if one come to see me, he speaks deceit; His heart contrives for him a plot (i.e., to use against me); He goes forth abroad; he tells it to others. Together against me they whisper, all who hate me; Against me do they devise my hurt."

This is what they said: "What do we? If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him . . . so they took counsel to put him to death." And there came to him Pharisees, tempting him,"

"seeking to entangle him in his talk", "laying wait to catch something out of his mouth". "Chief priests and elders . . . took counsel together to take Jesus by subtilty and kill him."

Verse 8 reads, literally, "A word of Belial (i.e., Some expression of perversity) is always being poured forth by him; But now that he lies prostrate, he shall not rise again."

"He hath a devil, and is mad." "He hath spoken blasphemies." "We found him perverting our nation." They called Him an "evil-doer", and "accused him of many things." But when He was laid in the grave, they set a guard because "this deceiver said, I will rise again."

Verse 9 begins with a word that marks it as a climax to the wrongs just described: "Yea, all this and more, a man of my peace (i.e., of my covenant) whom I trusted, one who eateth my bread, Hath lifted up his heel against me."

"I know whom I have chosen: but, (I have chosen) to the end that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eateth my bread hath lifted up his heel against me.'". So said Jesus to the Twelve at the last supper, quoting the latter part of this 9th verse as His own words. See John 13:18 ff.

"That the Scripture may be fulfilled." By this Jesus plainly implied: (1) That the Scripture He quoted had not been "fulfilled" in the experience of David who wrote the Psalm. (2) That it was not "fulfilled", nor to be "fulfilled", in any more or less common experience of godly men suffering persecution at any time. (3) That it was now being "fulfilled" in His own experience. (4) That, therefore, neither David, nor any other mere man, is the speaker here, but Christ speaking of Himself.

David, no doubt, had sore experience with his enemies aided by the treachery of such false friends as Ahitophel. But the description here of malignant persecution, without cause, is no-

where matched but in the history of Jesus Christ. David knew whereof he wrote, but he wrote far more than he knew. He, "being a prophet", wrote the word of Christ for all who are in Christ; for them to whom Christ said, "If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you." This Psalm is to help us to "know the fellowship of his sufferings".

"Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me." To John's whispered question, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus replied, "He it is for whom I shall dip a piece of bread and give it to him. So when he had dipped a piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot", who, when he had "received the piece of bread, went immediately out." In the very act of eating the bread Jesus gave him, he went out to finish his unspeakable perfidy in the darkness.

"From now on I tell you"; — Beginning with this prophecy, written in the Psalms concerning me, for the fulfilment of which I have taken the necessary steps, ("For Jesus knew from the beginning who should betray him", John 6:64), — "I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, you may believe that I am —." That is, that I am He who knows the end from the beginning, with all the details between. When all is finished, you will understand that it is my word that is come to pass.

Yet many deny that this Psalm is all of Christ. They say, for example, that Christ, in taking His quotation from the middle of verse 9, implied that the former part, "Yea, a man of my peace whom I trusted", does not apply to Him, because He knew Judas too well to trust him. But, certainly, there was an agreement between Jesus and each of the Twelve, which formed a basis of mutual trust and co-operation. Jesus, knowing their hearts, knew exactly how far He could trust them. Judas would not properly be called "traitor" had he not betrayed the trust of his Lord. Along with the others, Judas was entrusted with much of the precious truth of the Kingdom. As treasurer of the company, he was trusted to carry the money-box for all. Because he was trusted, he "knew the place" where Jesus would be after supper.

But, if these are the words of Christ, why the plea for mercy in verses 4 and 10? The only possible answer is, as in Psalm 27, that He stood before God in the sinner's place, bearing our sins, already suffering the consequences of sin He describes, poverty, sorrows, infirmities, malicious foes on every side. In Psalm 27, however, there is no confession of sin; but here, what is this? "O Jehovah, have mercy upon me; restore my life; for I have sinned against Thee."

Augustine, in his Commentary, answers thus, "Let us hear from this Psalm concerning the passion of Christ. Oftentimes I commend unto you, nor grieve I to repeat what for you is useful to

retain, that our Lord Jesus Christ speaketh often of Himself, that is, in His own Person, who is our Head; often in the person of His body which are we and His church; but so that the words sound as from the mouth of one, that we may understand the Head and the body to consist together in the unity of the whole, and not be separated one from the other." And again, "He indeed without sin was made to suffer; but I say, and you also say, through Him, O Jehovah, I have sinned against Thee."

Furthermore the Hebrew verb here rendered "I have sinned", is used in two different senses. It may be a confession of personal sin, as in Psalm 51:4; or, it may be a declaration that "I bear the guilt (the punishment) of sin." The identical words here translated, "I have sinned against thee", are in Gen. 43:9, "I bear the blame before thee" (cf. Gen. 44:32). And the noun, formed from the same root, is the common word for "sin-offering" (i.e., "sin-bearer") as well as for "sin" itself. Thus the old Hebrew word embodies the central truth of the Gospel that "God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us." This meaning is required in verse 4, not only by the pure spirit of godliness pervading the whole Psalm, but, in particular, by the assertion of verse 12, "And, as for me, thou hast upheld me in mine integrity"; in my innocence, my unbroken fidelity to the truth, my unflinching devotion to the right. Integrity means sinlessness. Now this statement and that of verse 4 must harmonize, for no change of speaker is indicated. But there is no possibility of harmonizing them except in the mouth of that One whose perfections of moral glory consist together with His sufferings and death for sin, "having been made a curse for us."

III. Confident that God will Raise Him to the Heights of Power and Glory (Vss. 10-12)

"But THOU, O Jehovah, have mercy upon me, and raise me up. And I shall render recompense to them." He thus claims as His own the judicial prerogative of God.

These are not words of David. David, though he had the power, yet in his best moments restrained himself from taking vengeance on his personal enemies, for he well knew the constitutional law of his kingdom, "Thou shalt not take vengeance; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev.19:18). He knew Jehovah had said, "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense . . . I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and reward them that hate me" (Deut. 32:35-41).

But the words of Jesus are, "The Son of man must . . . be raised up the third day . . . and he shall come in the glory of his Father; and then shall he render to every man according to his deeds." Also He said that the execution of His judgment would begin shortly upon the Jewish

nation and city, within the time limits of that generation (Matt. 16:21-22; 24:34).

Verse 11. "By this I know that Thou art well pleased with me, For mine enemies do not shout in triumph over me." They never had a chance. He was never caught in their trap. They were never able to hurry Him, or to force Him to do anything against His will.

Verse 12. "And as for me, in mine integrity, Thou hast upheld me, And Thou wilt make me to stand in thy presence forever."

"Behold my servant whom I uphold; my chosen in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the nations." It was given to His faith-

ful martyr, Stephen, to see and to tell the world that he saw "Jesus standing at the right hand of God."

Now these things have come to pass to the end that we may believe that Jesus Christ is God. How can we better praise Him than by believing in Him, and testifying to others with His own words? And, "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him", having heard Him say from the throne of His glory. "Come, ye blessed of my Father . . . for I was ahungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt.25:34-36).

SOME NOTEWORTHY QUOTATIONS

"Whoever from indolence ventures to alter anything of the Scriptures, stands not in the path of truth."

Epiphanius (Bishop of Constantia, Cyprus, A.D. 367-402)

"Forced absence from God's ordinances and forced presence with wicked people are great afflictions; but when the force ceases, and such a situation is continued of choice, then it becomes a great sin."

Matthew Henry

"Some say fundamentals are few; believe them and live well, and then you shall be saved. This is as if a man in a building should be only careful to lay a good foundation, no matter for the roof, windows or walls. If a man should come and unroof your house, and tell you: 'Friend, I have left you the foundation, the main buttresses are safe', you would not take it well. Why should we be more careless in spiritual things?"

Thomas Manton

"Heaven is but a translation to a better place. When you die, you are but translated. Enoch walked with God here; but when he was translated, he lived with God in uninterrupted glory. Many times Christ comes into His garden to gather lilies; and they are cropped here, that they may be transplanted from the winter to the summer gardens, from the Church and lower dispensation of the ordinances of paradise, that we may read divinity in the face of the Lamb for evermore, as scholars that are sent from the grammar-school to the university."

Thomas Manton

"There are three things, which if Christians do, they will prove mistaken: if they look for

that in themselves which is to be had in another, namely, RIGHTEOUSNESS; if they look for that in the law which is to be had only in the gospel, namely MERCY; if they look for that on earth which is to be had only in heaven, namely PERFECTION."

Philip Henry

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

Anonymous

"God is the one circumstance of my life."

J. Hudson Taylor

"There are four things which I would not for all the world have against me, namely, the Word of God, my own conscience, the prayers of the poor, and the account of godly ministers."

Philip Henry

"Be on your guard against the tendency of this generation, to paste a bit of blank paper over all the threatenings of the Bible."

Alexander MacLaren

"You must not fancy, then, that God sits helplessly by while the world, which He has created for Himself, hurtles hopelessly to destruction, and He is able only to snatch with difficulty here and there a brand from the universal burning. The world does not govern Him in a single one of His acts: He governs it and leads it steadily onward to the end which, from the beginning, or even a beam of it had been laid, He had determined for it."

B. B. Warfield

"Where is the Church of God in Scotland at this day? It is not amongst the great clergy. I

will tell you where the Church of God is. It is wherever a praying young man or young woman is at a dyke-side in Scotland — there the Church is. A praying party will ruin them yet, Sirs. A praying party shall go through the storm. But many of you in this country-side know not these things. The weight of the broken Church of God in Scotland never troubles you. The loss of a cow, or two or three of your beasts, or an ill market day, goes nearer your hearts than all the troubles of the Church of God in Scotland. Well, then, thou poor creature that will resolve to follow Him, pray fast; for if there were but

one of you. He will be the second; if there were but two of you, He will be the third. Ye need not fear that ye shall want company — our Lord will be your company Himself. He will be as condescending to you as ye please, yea, He will be so to you that resolve to follow Him in this stormy blast that is blowing upon His poor Church in Scotland at this day."

Alexander Peden (Quoted from one of Peden's sermons preached at a conventicle during the great persecution of the Covenanters in Scotland, 1669-1688)

Religious Terms Defined

A few definitions of important religious terms will be given in this department in each issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". The aim will be conciseness without the sacrifice of accuracy. Where possible the Westminster Shorter Catechism will be quoted.

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.

FREE AGENCY. The human personality's freedom of choice and action, by reason of which a person's decisions and conduct proceed from his inner character, not from external constraint.

FREE WILL. A misleading and incorrect term for free agency. Man is a free agent, but his will is not free from the rest of his personality. The will is free in the sense that it is not determined by anything outside of the person; but it is not free in the sense that it can operate independently of motives and character.

CONSCIENCE. The power of the human personality to judge its own dispositions and conduct, which registers approval when these are in conformity with the moral standard which the person accepts as valid, and registers disapproval when they are contrary to the moral standard which the person accepts as valid.

DUTY. That which human beings ought to do, by reason of some relationship.

MORAL OBLIGATION. Man's duty to do the will of God, by reason of his relation as creature to his Creator.

ETHICS. The science which deals with the motive, standard and purpose of human action.

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

MOTIVE. The consideration or state of mind which determines the human will to some decision.

MOTIVE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS. The desire to do the will of God, which determines the Christian's will to decisions in conformity with the will of God.

STANDARD. The authority by which something is measured, regulated or directed.

STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS. The revealed will of God, in the Scriptures, by which right and wrong are to be distinguished and known.

GOAL. The end or purpose for which something exists, or toward which it should move.

GOAL OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS. The Kingdom of God, as man's highest good and purpose of life. "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever" (S.C. 1).

Corrections

Please note the following corrections of typographical errors in the January-March 1949 issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life":

On page 18, column 2, next to last paragraph, "not" should be inserted after "does", so as to read: "'the flesh' in the Pauline sense does NOT mean the human body but the whole sinful nature of man."

On page 44 (back cover), column 1, line 9 from bottom, "not" should be changed to "but", so as to read: "but because he is convinced. . ."

It is suggested that readers make these corrections in their copies of the last issue. Any reader who discovers, in this or any future issue, errors which affect the meaning, is urgently requested to inform the editor by letter, so that corrections of same can be published. — Ed.

Studies in the Larger Catechism of The Westminster Assembly

LESSON 170—FOR WEEK BEGINNING APRIL 3, 1949

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 God and man?

There are two reasons for the distance which separates God and man: (a) God is the infinite Creator, whereas man is a finite creature; (b) 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 God and man 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 Q. 38-40 of the Larger Catechism ("Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 1 No. 7, July-September 1946, pp. 125-127, Lessons 34 and 35 of this course). 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 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 Mod-

ernist, insofar as he believes in Jesus Christ at all, believes in Him only 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 in prayer 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 of 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 171—FOR WEEK BEGINNING APRIL 10, 1949

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.

Psalms 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; 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?

"Quickenings" 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 is 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 persons 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 upon 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 172—FOR WEEK BEGINNING APRIL 17, 1949

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.

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".

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 and ministers?

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 Christian 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. (a) 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. (b) 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.

7. 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 possibility of the lost ever being reconciled to God (Luke 16:24-26; Rev. 22:11).

8. 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 souls in purgatory are also excluded.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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 for God to save those who have died in sin.

However we should be extremely cautious about saying that any 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". This 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 His purpose God in His mercy will save him from sin and eternal death.

LESSON 173—FOR WEEK BEGINNING APRIL 24, 1949

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 68:18. 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 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 Christians, 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 said of Zion, or the Church, "Thou art my battle-ax and

weapons of war: for with thee will I 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, said 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 is 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 the 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.

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 in order to fur-

ther 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 sometimes been people who have conceived the idea that God's glory required 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 to God for His 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 66:18). God in His divine sovereignty can permit evil and 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 abstain strictly from it.

LESSON 174—FOR WEEK BEGINNING MAY 1, 1949

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 18:13,14. 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 separateness 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 es-

tablishing 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 "pal" or 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 useful to 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 true 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 purposes to keep on sinning — is to add presumption to all our other sins (Psalm 19:13; 66:18). 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 to 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, our own relation to Him, 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 pray-

er 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 wicked and stupid.

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 is of 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 legitimately 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 be merely 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 175—FOR WEEK BEGINNING MAY 8, 1949

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 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 prayers 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.

LESSON 176—FOR WEEK BEGINNING MAY 15, 1949

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 provision 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 great 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 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 is really 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 recognizes that there was grace and redemption in the period from Moses to Christ; for instance, he calls Exodus "the book of redemption", states that 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, Michigan.

LESSON 177—FOR WEEK BEGINNING MAY 22, 1949

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.

Psalms 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 a 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 they really 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 the children of God, or that God is the Father of all human beings. Jesus told some of the Jews that they were not the children of God but the 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. We are always to remember that God is God, and we are creatures of God. 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 majesty 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 and glory and 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 it 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.

LESSON 178—FOR WEEK BEGINNING MAY 29, 1949

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 provi-

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 also pray with and for others, as occasion may require and as opportunity may exist.

dence, 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 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 living in this world, those who have not been born again can-

not 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 rightly 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 really should be honored; and even the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart does not wholly remove this "inability and indisposition" in the present life, 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 honor and 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, 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, offices 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), 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 his-

tory 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 word, thought and deed. By all we do or leave undone, 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 pro-

vidence is all-inclusive; from the fall of a spar-row 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.

LESSON 179—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JUNE 5, 1949

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. This 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 the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, in the conversion of sinners and 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, 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 prayers. 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 there are various restrictions and hindrances to the preaching of the Gospel, as in Spain and Mexico. 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 180—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JUNE 12, 1949

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 all 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, so that 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. 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 purged 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 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 has a right to 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 and a Jewish synagogue enjoy identical and equal rights and privileges with the most evangelical and orthodox Protestant Christian Churches. There is not only no distinction 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. 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, and the exercise of Church discipline. (b) These ordinances are purely dispensed when they are dispensed according to Christ's appointment 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. Q.102). (b) Christ's eternal reign in glory, which will begin at His second coming, called "the kingdom of glory" in the Shorter Catechism (Q. 102).

LESSON 181—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JUNE 19, 1949

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 our-

(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 one 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 that 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 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.

selves 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 119:1,9,35,36. 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 both 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 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 are only perfect beings, and 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).

This 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 the born again Christian, who is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, can conform to God's will only in part in this life. 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 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 have 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 182—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JUNE 26, 1949

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 contentment in 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 bless 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 true only 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 fellow-men. Even within the sphere of human society the right to 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 of 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 own 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 own 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 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 honest work and intelligence, but not by the 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 that 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).

The King James and American Revised Versions of the Bible

By the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick

Note: This is the first of a series of articles by Mr. Kilpatrick on various versions and annotated editions of the Bible. The series will be continued for several issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — Ed.

The King James Version of the English Bible is now three hundred thirty-eight years old, and during that time no other version has even threatened to supplant its leadership. It is published every year in copies far exceeding in number any other. This being true, one can understand the feeling of the modestly educated old Christian lady who, when reference was made to another version, said, "Well, if the King James Version was good enough for St. Paul it's good enough for me."

Of course, there was no English language in the day of the Apostle Paul. He wrote in ancient Greek. But there are far too many Christians who, while realizing that our English Bible has been translated out of the Hebrew and Greek, feel that the King James Version is THE BIBLE. They have been taught that, since we believe in the infallibility of the Scriptures, it is heretical if we question anything in the King James Version. Doubtless this is one reason why some young people, brought up in Christian homes, when they go to college and learn through unbelieving instructors the facts about the way in which we got our Bible, lose their faith in the inspired Word.

Perhaps in teaching that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, infallible, completely dependable, we have neglected to point out that this doctrine does not refer at all to any particular version, nor even to the Greek text which we have today. Rather, the truth should always be kept alive in our thinking, that our versions are to be regarded as always subject to correction, whenever the evidence warrants. It should be kept in mind, however, that in all the changes

that have been made in our English Bibles, in no case has a foundation doctrine of the Christian Church been altered. God has overruled to provide a witness, adequate and trustworthy, in every generation.

Naturally the average person is not equipped with a knowledge of Greek by which he may judge a new version — or, indeed, an old one — as to accuracy of translation. For that judgment we must accept the word of men whose scholarship, honesty and faith we trust. Yet a knowledge of the way in which the Bible we use came to us, should be of great help in enabling us to make effective use of the help which may be gotten from new versions and editions of the sacred Word. This study will be a background for a consideration of some more modern versions and editions.

English Bibles Before 1611

Although there were portions of the Bible in English, or Anglo-Saxon as the language was called at that time, as early as the 8th century, the first complete Bible in English was that of Wycliffe, 1380. Since this was before the day of the printing press, it was copied by hand, and since there were practically no students of Greek and Hebrew at that time, it was merely a translation of the Latin Bible called the Vulgate. The Vulgate was translated from the Hebrew and Greek, the work of one of the early Church Fathers, St. Jerome. He undertook the work because the many Latin Bibles of his day were being marked up in the margins. Then the next copyist would often incorporate those marginal explanations into the text, and the clergy feared that the true text of the Scriptures would be lost and corrupted beyond recognition. But because the Vulgate — meaning "common" because it finally became the version in common use in the Roman Church — had differences from other Latin Bibles in use when it first appeared, it was criticized as being novel and dangerous. Its

merits finally established it, and it replaced all others in the Roman Church, but we can see that distrust of new versions is not peculiar to our generation.

It was natural that the first English Bible should be a translation of the Vulgate. A Bible in the English language was opposed by the clergy very bitterly, not because it differed in meaning from the Vulgate, but because the clergy did not want the common people to have the Bible in their hands at all. They thought it was dangerous, and that only the Church must interpret the Word. Wycliffe was brought to trial for his labors. He fully expected to pay with his life, but that did not deter him from seeking to put the Bible into a language which the common people could use. Twice his trial was strangely interrupted, and when he was brought before the Archbishop for the third time, the ground beneath the hall began to rumble and tremble under the shock of an earthquake. Many of the prelates and friars began to tremble also with superstitious fear. They suggested that perhaps this was a warning from heaven that the trial of this otherwise good man should cease. But the Archbishop rose and declared that the trial must go on, that the earthquake was but evidence that the earth must be cleared of such infamous creatures who would put the Bible in the hands of the common people. Wycliffe was tried, found guilty and excommunicated, but was permitted to retire to his home, where he continued to work on the Scriptures.

Wycliffe's Bible had a tremendous influence in England in spreading among the common people a knowledge of the truth of the Word, which brought that land to the fore among the most enlightened nations of Europe at the time of the Reformation.

The next man raised up in England to this task was William Tyndale, a Hebrew and Greek scholar of fine attainment. It was just at the time when he finished his university work that the Greek text of the New Testament became available for study. Many ancient manuscripts had been discovered, and the new knowledge made the Vulgate translations out-of-date. Furthermore, the printing press had just come into use, and the means for spreading the Scriptures far and wide were ready. The cost of preparing a copy of the Bible was only a fraction of that formerly required when it must be copied by hand. It was God's time.

Tyndale was one day discussing the need of the common people for the Bible, rather than depending on the decrees of the clergy by which to regulate their conduct. One of the company said, "We had better be without God's law than without the Pope's", to which Tyndale replied, "I defy the Pope and all his laws; and if God spare me I will one day make the boy that drives

the plough in England to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope does."

Being denied the privilege of working under the auspices of the Bishop of London, he worked privately, but found that he could not hope to have his work published in England, so he went to Germany, first to Hamburg, then to Cologne where he engaged a printer. But the local priest heard, through a chance remark of one of the printers, of the project, and demanded of the magistrates that the plates be seized. Tyndale learned of this in time, and hurried down to the shop, gathered up what manuscripts and plates he could carry, and fled to Worms, where he completed the work under the protection of Martin Luther.

His next task was to get the Bibles into England. They were hidden in bales of cloth and merchandise of every description. Many copies were found and confiscated, but many escaped detection and the people of England were eager to get them. Interestingly, the Bishop of London, doing his best to stamp out the Bible in the popular language, arranged to buy up all the remaining copies of the first edition, and burnt them. Tyndale used the money to bring out another edition.

Seeing that it was useless to try to burn up all the Bibles, the bishops next tried to discredit Tyndale's version. However, Tyndale was a careful scholar and errors were few. Then a bishop, specially selected for the task, tried to prove that the Bible would be dangerous in the hands of the common people. He said that the ploughman, reading "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God", would cease his work, and that there would be none to do the farm work. He said that the baker, reading, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump", would not put enough leaven in his bread, and so the health of the people would suffer, and the simple, on reading, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out", would pluck out his eye and the country would be full of one-eyed people. This method of opposition fared little better than that of burning Bibles. There was much persecution, but the "plague" spread.

Tyndale's Bible was the basis for all the Bibles published in England for the next hundred years. Among the better known Bibles during that time were Coverdale's, Matthew's, the Geneva Bible and the Bishops' Bible. These were generously supplied with marginal notes, especially the Geneva Bible, most popular with the people, and also the best version. James I disliked it especially because its marginal notes were in opposition to his pet doctrine, the divine right of kings.

The King James or Authorized Version, 1611

At a conference between High and Low Church parties, James, when the subject of a new

translation came up, himself sketched out a plan for its production, even though the bishops were not in favor of it. This meeting was in 1604. Fifty-four of the best scholars in England, regardless of party, were appointed as a committee for the task. Several rules were laid down to guide in the work, among them that the Bishops' Bible was to be followed, to be changed only when the sense could be best expressed by another rendering. Although the Bishops' Bible was one of the poorer versions, the rule gave leeway which permitted the use of the Geneva Bible whenever the committee thought best. There were several other rules, but perhaps the most important was that marginal notes were forbidden, except for the explanation of Greek or Hebrew words. This, more than any other one factor, made it the Bible of all the people, and not of one or another party.

Thus was brought forth in seven years the version of the Bible which has done more than any other work to shape the English language as we know it today. Those fifty-four men, divided into six companies, and after making their translations alone, came together to compare, discuss, change and vote on the final form. Enough has been said to show that their work could not be perfect. None are more aware of that fact than those engaged in this work themselves. William Tyndale said concerning his own translation, "that if they perceive in any place that the version has not attained unto the very sense of the tongue or the very meaning of Scripture, or has not given the right English word, that they should put to their hands and amend it, remembering that so is their duty to do."

The American Revised Version, 1901

Faults were soon found in the version of 1611, but there was not at hand sufficient knowledge to warrant making a new translation immediately. Hence, for two hundred years those passages which were not completely accurate were studied, the case was discussed in periodicals and in commentaries, and in time there came more and more demand for a new version. J. Patterson Smyth lists under four heads the considerations which called forth the new translation:

1. Many more and older manuscripts had been discovered, which were unknown when the King James Version was published.
2. The science of how to evaluate a manuscript and how to choose between variant readings was developed.
3. Scholars were more familiar with the common tongue of the people of the times when the Scriptures were written, so that new shades of meaning in many words were known.
4. Finally, there were many English words which had become obsolete or had changed in meaning. A few illustrations: carriage, 1 Sam. 17:22; conversation, Psalm 50:23, 1 Pet. 1:15; prevent, Psalm 119:147, 148; take no thought, Matt. 6:34; bowels, Gen. 43:12; wist, Mark 14:40; quick, Heb. 4:12;

reins, Psalm 16:7; leasing, Psalm 4:1; lucre, 1 Tim. 3:3; chapman, 2 Chron. 9:14; barbarian, Acts 28:4.

The work of a Revised Version was instigated by the Church of England in 1870, and a committee of American scholars was asked to work with them. This work was published in 1885, with American Committee preferences, where the two committees did not reach an agreement, printed in an appendix. The American Revised Version, published in 1901 (by agreement the American Committee was not to undertake a separate work for a period of fourteen years) is now acknowledged, on both sides of the water, to be superior.

The work of the revisers was well organized, and all parties in the Church were represented on the Committee, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational. Also there were scholars not associated with any denomination. They worked two years on the Old Testament and ten years on the New Testament when the English and American committees were working together. The Revised Version has not been such as to replace the King James Version, due, in some measure at least, to the fact that accuracy of expression was sought, even at the expense of smoothness of language.

It is the opinion of some that the influence of destructive higher criticism may be detected in rare cases, such as in 2 Tim. 3:16, where the "All scripture is given by inspiration of God", found in the A.V., is replaced by "Every scripture inspired of God is . . .", in the American Revised Version. Also two marginal readings, Heb. 1:8 and John 9:38, may be cited as toning down the testimony of these passages to the deity of Christ. However, the doctrines of the inspiration of the Scriptures and the deity of Christ rest on a multitude of passages, not on a turn of language in one or two verses.

One noticeable change is that "Jehovah" is used where the A. V. in the Old Testament, following the Jewish superstition that this name is too sacred to pronounce, used the word "Lord". The word "hell" in the A. V. is translated according to the original word, Sheol, Gehenna or Hades. The "Holy Ghost" is rendered "Holy Spirit". Another noticeable change is the paragraphs which form the divisions, instead of the verses, though verses are still numbered. Poetry is written as poetry. Several passages, found missing in the best manuscripts, are omitted in the American Revised, enclosed in brackets, or included as a marginal note.

Although apparently not destined to come into general use, replacing the King James or Authorized Version, the American Revised Version is indispensable to the Bible student because of its greater accuracy, its elimination of obsolete words and its use of manuscripts discovered since the time of the Authorized Version.

Reviews of Religious Books

One or more current or recent religious books will be reviewed in this department in each issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". 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 through your local bookstore or direct from the publishers; do not send orders to the publisher of "Blue Banner Faith and Life."

A LAWYER EXAMINES THE BIBLE by Irwin H. Linton W. A. Wilde Co. Boston, Mass. Pp. 300. \$2.00.

The dust jacket of this book says that the volume puts forth the arguments for Biblical infallibility with legal precision. The author is a member of the Bar of the District of Columbia and of the Supreme Court of the United States. The sub-title is "An Introduction to Christian Evidences". The book makes very interesting reading. As an introduction to the subject of Christian Evidences the book is quite unconventional in its plan and contents, as in addition to such chapter headings as "Facing the Evidence" and "Giving the Infidel a Hearing" there are others such as "On Getting Converted", "On Marrying a Mate", "The Business of Living" and "The Business of Dying".

Many things in this book will help to confirm the faith of Christian people in the truth and inerrancy of the Bible. Also God may use it to the conversion of unbelievers. As a treatment of Christian Evidences, however, its falls into the unfortunate mistake common to what may be called the "appeal to facts" type of apologetic literature, namely assuming that there are facts which Christian and unbeliever recognize in common, and that both Christian and unbeliever can face these "facts" as mere facts, without any assumptions. What writers of this type of book fail to realize is that there is no such thing as a mere or bare fact, and if there were, it would be meaningless; to mean anything a fact must be related to something, that is, it must be interpreted in some way. That is, before "facts" can mean anything, we must have a philosophy of fact. Everyone, consciously or unconsciously, has such a philosophy. The unbeliever always assumes that "facts" exist of themselves, and that the human mind is competent to be the ultimate interpreter of facts. The Christian, on the other hand, assumes that "facts" are created by God and that the human mind is incompetent to be the ultimate interpreter of facts; it is God who determines the meaning of "facts". There is absolutely no common ground of knowledge between Christian and unbeliever; even a grain of sand is not the same thing to a Christian as to an unbeliever. All arguments founded on the idea of a territory of knowledge and thinking which is neutral between Christianity and non-Christianity (that is, where the God of the Bible

is not assumed), a zone in which Christian and non-Christian can talk things over without any assumptions, are unsound and doomed to failure so far as demonstrating the truth of the Bible to the unbeliever is concerned. However it is also true that as an unbeliever reads such a book as this the Holy Spirit may open his spiritual eyes by the new birth, so that he will begin to look at the "facts" with Christian instead of with non-Christian assumptions. The volume contains a great deal of valuable and very interesting, informative material. It would be an excellent book for a young people's or young married people's group to study for a few weeks.

On p. 101 there is an excellent statement which deserves high commendation, to the effect "that nothing is right or wrong except as it is according to the will and Word of God. There is no higher law or standard. Without realizing it, sometimes God is considered as a sort of 'prosecuting attorney' to enforce compliance with certain standards by which He Himself is morally bound. Those who are at all familiar with Calvin's Institutes know the fallacy of this conception." This is very much to the point at the present day. Right and wrong are determined, not by "the nature of things", but by the nature and will OF GOD.

On p. 100 there is an "explanation" of predestination which quite explains it away, by regarding God's decrees as based on advance knowledge of man's decisions. This is simple Arminianism, and makes men's eternal destiny depend on their own decisions instead of on God's decrees. In a footnote on the same page the author again affirms his belief in an Arminian view of "free will", and refers to the contrary view as "hyper Calvinism". What he calls "hyper Calvinism" is not really such, but the common, accepted doctrine of predestination taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith and historically held by all Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. This reference to "hyper Calvinism" is unfortunate, for it gives the uninformed reader the impression the author's view of predestination (which is really Arminian) is orthodox Calvinism, and that he rejects only an extreme "hyper" variety.

In spite of the defects mentioned above, this is a good book and one that will serve a useful purpose. It will repay careful reading. — J. G. Vos

NOTES ON THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD, by Richard Chenevix Trench. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1948, pp. 211, \$2.50.

This book is a new popular edition of the well-known "Notes on the Parables" by the scholarly archbishop of Dublin, Ireland (1864-1884). The work was first published in 1841 and has appeared in various editions since then. The dust jacket says: "The publication of this Popular Edition unlocks a treasure store for the ready use of the average student of the Bible. The features, which made the rich fund of information embodied in the original work almost inaccessible to all but the highly educated, have been carefully eliminated. The notes in foreign languages, which constituted nearly one-third of the study as it first appeared, have been carefully translated and evaluated. Those judged valuable have been skilfully interwoven with the text or retained as notes in the English language. Detailed polemic accounts have been eliminated in the interest of a concise and lucid exposition. Great care has been exercised to retain all of the scholarliness of the larger work." Such thorough editing of Trench's book would call for a high degree of scholarship and sound judgment on the part of the editor or editors; it would be interesting to know by whom this work was done, but the book does not mention his or their identity.

There is probably no sounder or more useful expositor of the parables of our Lord in the English language than that of Trench. It is indeed a treasure of accurate interpretation, and of special value to the minister who would preach on the parables. Its fidelity to the inspiration and authority of the Bible is above reproach. It is to be regretted that the book manifests one tendency that must be guarded against — the tendency, here and there, to follow some of the early Church Fathers in unsound allegorical interpretations. For example, after giving a sound, exegetical exposition of the parable of the Good Samaritan, the author proceeds to supplement this by an allegorical interpretation, according to which the traveller from Jerusalem to Jericho "is personified human nature, or Adam as the representative of the race", Jerusalem is "the heavenly city", Jericho "the city under a curse", the robbers represent Satan, by whom Adam "is stripped of his original righteousness" and left, not dead in trespasses and sins, but HALF dead, inasmuch as "he has still a conscience"; the priest and the Levite represent "the law and the sacrifices"; the Good Samaritan represents Christ; the wine represents Christ's blood; the oil stands for "the anointing of the Holy Spirit" (pages 112-114). In a note on page 205 it is explained: "Of course, this deeper interpretation was not meant for the lawyer, but for the (then) future Church. It was held by most of the Fathers". On this the reviewer can only comment that if most of the Fathers interpreted the parable thus allegorically

they were mistaken. By such methods, the Bible can be made to prove almost anything. The Reformers were absolutely right in insisting that every Scripture has one meaning only, the meaning intended by the Holy Spirit. Such allegorizing divorces the parable from its context (the question "Who is my neighbor?") and reads a "deeper" meaning into it which is not really there at all. This allegorizing tendency, however, is only a minor feature in an otherwise extremely valuable book. — J. G. Vos

MILLENNIAL STUDIES, by George L. Murray. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1948, pp. 207, \$2.50.

This book by the pastor of the First U.P. Church of Boston, Mass., was awarded the honor of "Book of the Year" by the United Presbyterian Church. The book is a scholarly, Scriptural exposition and defence of the Amillennial view of the second coming of Christ, that is, the view that Christ will return at the end of this age and that His return will be neither preceded nor followed by an earthly millennium or thousand year Kingdom. Written principally to refute premillennial and dispensational views, the book is always lucid and easy to understand and always maintain a kindly, winning spirit.

The author's exegesis is not always wholly convincing, even to this reviewer who heartily concurs in his amillennial eschatology. For example, in dealing with "The Great Tribulation", in his exegesis of Matthew 24, he tries to solve the difficulty of verse 34 ("This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished") by an attempt to prove that all the events predicted in verses 3 to 44 took place either prior to, or in connection with, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. Even the 30th verse ("And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory") is said to have been fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem and to have no reference to the second coming of Christ at the Last Day. It is possible that the author may be correct, but he seems not to have faced the difficulties of his own position. By his attempt to eliminate the difficulty of verse 34 ("this generation") he has become involved in equal if not greater difficulty elsewhere. For the parallel account in Luke 21 definitely places the coming of the Son of man in a cloud with power and glory, not only after the fall of Jerusalem, but at the close of a period of time following the fall of Jerusalem: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. . . AND THEN shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (verses 24-27). The

author also states that none of the N.T. epistles refer to "the Great Tribulation" as a future period of suffering. He fails, however, to note that Rev. 7:14, written after the destruction of Jerusalem, speaks of "the great tribulation", and in the Greek it is with emphasis: "the tribulation, the great one".

The author holds that in Matt. 24:14 the statement "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all nations; and then shall the end come", means that the Gospel shall be preached in the whole ROMAN world, and then shall the end of THE JEWISH NATION come. Similarly, he holds that Matt. 24:30 ("then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn") means "then shall all the tribes of THE JEWS mourn". The author's exegesis of Matt. 24:14,30 is not convincing to the reviewer; these verses seem to pose difficulties for his view which should be frankly faced. No view of prophecy is free from difficulties; the amillennial view must face difficulties as well as the other views. (The author does concede, on page 130, that there may be "great tribulation toward the end of the gospel age").

Dr. Murray's criticism of Postmillennialism does not seem wholly relevant. He states: "The postmillennial doctrine of the Lord's return was the popular doctrine several decades ago, and at that time it provided an incentive to missionary zeal and evangelistic fervor. The spread of the Gospel was regarded as hastening the millennium and the second coming of Christ. There was some justification for this optimism during the nineteenth century when the larger denominations were conservative and evangelistic, with the result that individual conversions were frequent and large scale religious revivals not uncommon. These circumstances might well inspire the hope that the preaching of the Gospel should usher in a golden age. It is not uncharitable to say that postmillennialism has changed, and that instead of presenting Christ's evangel today as a means of salvation and reformation, it has resorted to a humanistic gospel, the futility of which world events prove most emphatically" (page 85). While there is much truth in this statement, it should be realized that ORTHODOX postmillennialism is not founded on a favorable trend of current events, nor is it rendered untenable by any unfavorable trend of "world events". There is such a thing as orthodox, Calvinistic postmillennialism, which is quite different from the "humanistic gospel" which Dr. Murray rightly deplores, and which purports to rest on an exegesis of the Scriptures. The present reviewer believes that exegesis to be a mistaken one; but in any event, postmillennialism, like premillennialism and amillennialism, stands or falls with the validity of the exegesis on which it is based — not with the favorable or unfavorable turn of world events.

In spite of the foregoing criticisms of details of Dr. Murray's work, the reviewer believes this book to be basically sound in its exposition and defence of the amillennial view of the Last Things. Let no one say that amillennialism disbelieves the Scriptures, nullifies Revelation 20, puts the theories of men in place of the Word of God, etc., until he has read and pondered this book. If there are still those who have never heard of the amillennial interpretation of prophecy, and who still say that the only alternative to premillennialism is postmillennialism, they should by all means read and study this volume, along with "More Than Conquerors" by Hendriksen. Dr. Murray has not solved all problems nor removed all difficulties — no writer on prophecy has, and probably none will prior to the actual unfolding of the fulfilment of the prophecies — but he has produced a most valuable and timely book, and one which, unlike some religious books, is really interesting reading. It will undoubtedly be influential. — J. G. Vos

BIBLE SURVEY: A TREASURY OF BIBLE INFORMATION, by William Hendriksen. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1947, pp. 485, \$4.50.

This book by the professor of New Testament literature in Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, is indeed "a treasury of Bible information". Strictly orthodox, written in clear and simple language, and full of interest and originality, it is a book that will help almost anyone to get a better grasp of the Bible. Part I deals with "Facts about the Bible"; "How the Bible should be studied"; "How the Bible should be interpreted (essential steps in exegesis)". Part II takes up a birds-eye view of "The Bible Story". The author's use of "streamlined dates" as an aid to memory is ingenious; for example, "From the Dawn of History to the Division of the Kingdom"; "From Intertribal Warfare to Immanuel's Birth"; "From the Manger to the Mount"; "From Pentecost to Patmos". Part III takes up the various books of the Old and New Testaments, with a study of each one. Part IV lists a large number of special Bible chapters and passages, with a brief theme or keynote given for each. There is a good index, and a number of useful charts and diagrams.

This book is a good antidote to the piecemeal, this and that, here and there, study of the Bible that seems to characterize the International Uniform S.S. lessons. It would be a good book for an adults' or young adults' class or group to study. — J. G. Vos

BEFORE ABRAHAM, by Byron C. Nelson. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis 15, Minn. 1948, pp. 123, \$1.50.

This is a fascinatingly interesting book on

archaeology, by the author of "After Its Kind" and "The Deluge Story in Stone". The sub-title is "Prehistoric Man in Biblical Light". It is not primarily a study of the Bible, but a study of a scientific subject written from a Biblical point of view. The Introduction states: "This book is directed against mistaken ideas in religion on the one hand and against false notions of science on the other. It is intended to show that the Bible, when properly interpreted, leaves men free to agree to any antiquity of the human race, however great that may be, which a genuine science makes it necessary to grant; and it is intended also to show from facts brought to light by science . . . that the human race has apparently been from the earliest times mentally and physically what it is today, and that man should be regarded, therefore, as created rather than evolved."

The fallacy in such schemes of Bible chronology as Usher's is ably demonstrated (Cf. "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 1 No. 4, April 1946, pp. 60,61). The book then gives an "Introduction to European Life before Abraham", followed by "Europeans of the Glacial Epoch", "The Antiquity of the Glacial Epoch", "Man Before Abraham and the Evolutionary Theory", "Cro-

Magnon and Neanderthal Fossils", "Much Publicized and Other Fossils". Of special interest is the description of the researches of the Swedish scientist Baron Gerhard De Geer with respect to the continental ice sheet or glacier in Europe. Also very interesting is the author's theoretical explanation of the present arid climate of northern Africa and southwestern Asia. (Unfortunately the word "southwestern" is printed as "southeastern" twice on p. 55 and twice again on p. 63). The book has many excellent illustrations.

The author holds that no human remain or human relic from the period before the Flood has been discovered anywhere. In this he disagrees with those who hold that Woolley found at Ur in Mesopotamia the layer of clay deposited by the Biblical Flood, with remains of pre-flood chariots, etc., underneath (pp. 3, 108; cf. Halley, Pocket Bible Handbook (1946), pp. 79-81). Nelson holds that the Biblical Flood was worldwide, but that which caused the deposit at Ur only local. While some matters discussed in this book are controversial, it is calculated to confirm faith and confidence in the truthfulness of the Bible. — J. G. Vos

BLUE BANNER QUESTION BOX

Readers are invited to submit doctrinal, Biblical and practical questions for answer in this department. Names will not be published with questions.

Question:

Do the saints in heaven see us here on earth? I was under the impression that they do, but recently read an article which held that they do not. Which is right?

Answer:

Heb. 12:1 is sometimes mistakenly cited as proving that they do ("Since we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses"). Mistakenly, for, while our English word "witnesses" is often used in the sense of "spectators", the original Greek word here used does not mean "spectators"; it means "those who give their testimony"; in this instance, those, including all listed in the preceding chapter, who 'being dead yet speak' to us by the completed work and triumph of their faith. This should be far more to our encouragement in running our race than a feeling that we were being watched by departed saints. "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith" is the only way we can get sufficient help to reach the goal.

What is told us in the Scriptures relative to this question is well summarized in the Larger

Catechism (answer to Q. 86): "The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, . . ." (See "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 2 (1947), p. 73f). We know and are sure that Christ's preparation for His people, His purpose in this (John 14: 2,3), and His intercession for them (John 17:24), shall be fulfilled. His people shall be "with Him"; they "shall see Him as He is"; "His servants shall serve Him".

In speaking of "those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world", Jesus said, "they all live unto Him" (Luke 20:34-38), that is, "live with reference to God", to know Him and do His will. Whether the service they are now able to render, without their bodies, ever involves a sight of anything on earth, we simply do not know. But we do know that their chief attention is focussed in another direction.

They now know far more of the love, wisdom and power of God than they knew here; more of the all-sufficiency of Christ. They are perfectly satisfied, therefore, to leave our case in His hands.

As for ourselves, the thing we should be concerned about is that GOD sees us, all that we do; hears all that we say; even knows all that we think. We should, accordingly, be striving, here and now, to order our lives "WITH REFERENCE TO GOD", as all the saints now in heaven began to do before they left the earth. — F.D.F.

Question:

What penalty was involved in the sentence: "That soul shall be cut off from his people"? Was he exiled, or forbidden certain privileges, church or civil? Or, was he denied all pardon?

Answer:

This sentence, or judgment, is written first in Gen. 17:14, with the reason for it, "HE HATH BROKEN MY COVENANT". This is the key to understanding it.

When God began to administer HIS Covenant (which we call the "Covenant of Grace") to a separated people, He gave them, along with the promise, the law with its necessary penalty for disobedience, to the end that they might learn their need of Christ (Gal. 3:24). The promise they were to believe; the law, including both its moral and ceremonial statutes, they were to obey. To this they agreed, and the covenant was confirmed to them by the sacrifice. See Ex. 24:3-8.

But, why the sacrifice? Because there is no possibility of agreement between God and a sinner unless the death penalty, already incurred by the sinner, be paid in full, and the sinner pardoned. The Covenant of Grace provided for this in the death of the Anointed Substitute. But, until He should come and die, this central promise was symbolized for believers by the shed blood of the sacrifice. It was given to Daniel to tell exactly the time of fulfilment when "MESSIAH (i.e., Christ) SHALL BE CUT OFF . . . shall confirm the covenant . . . and shall cause the sacrifice to cease" (Dan. 9:27).

The Hebrew word translated "be cut off" is a passive form of the verb used in Gen. 15:18, "Jehovah MADE a covenant with Abram". Literally, "Jehovah CUT a covenant", "CUT OFF" or "CUT IN TWO"; that is, in such a way as completely to separate the blood, or life, from the flesh of the substitute. This act was symbolized for Abram's understanding and faith when he took the animal substitutes God instructed him to take. "and divided them in the midst". The plain implication is that through the death of the Substitute the believing sinner lives. However, the Substitute is available to the sinner only within the bonds of the covenant. If then the sinner breaks the covenant, as offered to him, by unbelief and disobedience, which always go together, he has no substitute; he must himself

"be cut off" (Heb. 10:26,27). He is cut off from the promise with all its manifold blessings, rights and privileges, which, of course, are primarily spiritual and eternal. He is cut off from the covenant people who share in the promise, and who, in a natural sense, are "his people" because he was born of them after the flesh.

The penalty, therefore, involved in this sentence is DEATH. God Himself administers His Covenant and executes its penalty in His own time and way, with or without the agency of men. How often we read His warning, "I will cut him off". Yet, except in certain aggravated cases, or critical situations, this sentence "is not executed speedily". "In wrath He remembers mercy". He delays in order to give further opportunity for repentance.

His sentence is written, explicitly, for some violations of moral statutes, but, more frequently, for violation of ceremonial statutes, the reason for this evidently being that the ceremonial statutes, as well as the others, were unquestionable requirements of God's law, and a man's attitude to them revealed the attitude of his heart toward God even more accurately than his attitude to moral statutes, which he might, naturally, regard as more important.

Of the temporal and physical execution of the sentence we know only so much as is recorded in the history of Israel. In some cases, such as Sabbath desecration, Molech worship, Spiritism, presumptuous sins, murder, adultery, the civil penalty (capital punishment) was prescribed.

In many other cases capital punishment is not prescribed. In what way or to what extent the offender was denied civil and church privileges we are not told, but, as long as his life was spared, he had opportunity to repent and return to God by means of the sacrifice. No one was denied pardon unless he refused to accept it on God's terms. — F.D.F.

Question:

What is the meaning of "a personal relationship with God"?

Answer:

This expression is sometimes used quite indefinitely. It would be hard to tell what the meaning is. Sometimes it seems to mean a supposed attainment of a man's own piety, self-centered and exclusive, even dragging God down to man's level.

In so far as it may accord with the revealed truth of Scripture, we remember that God is a Being possessing intelligence and will, i.e., a Person; not a mere force, or name, or ideal. God is a Person having the attributes of holiness, jus-

tice, goodness, and truth. God created man in His own image, i.e., a person; a person having capabilities of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Hence, (1) God, by creation, determined man's entire relationship to Himself to be "personal". This however, is not a relationship of equals. God is independent; man is wholly dependent. God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable; man is finite and capable of change. God is a Trinity, Three Persons in One; man is a single person.

(2) God, by His providence, determined man's relationship with Him to be a covenant relationship. God gave His promise, which man was to believe and depend upon, and His command, which man was to obey. The command, of course, had to be enforced by an appropriate penalty, which, since the promise was life, would have to be death, i.e., being deprived of all the blessings, rights, and privileges of the promise. This being accepted, a holy and happy fellowship was established.

But man, being deceived, disobeyed, bringing upon Himself and all who should be begotten of him, the condemnation of death. His covenant relationship with God was broken. He was dead in sin. Fellowship with God was no longer possible. He had become an enemy in rebellion against God.

Then God, in His marvellous mercy, revealed another covenant, A COVENANT THAT COULD NOT BE BROKEN, made between the Persons of the Godhead. Their carrying out its terms, which was absolutely certain, provided for sinners nothing less than a resurrection from the dead to newness of life eternal. To this end, it provided, first, a Redeemer, who would in time pay the death penalty of the broken covenant for sinners. It provided, further, for a completely restored covenant relationship with God. The work of redemption was put into the hands of a Mediator, able to deal with man for God and with God for man. Hence,

(3) God, by redemption, determined man's relationship with Him to be a Mediatorial relationship. The Second Person of the Godhead, the Son of God, became the Mediator, taking human nature into union with His divine Person, becoming man, living among sinners a life of perfect obedience, and paying the death penalty for sin in man's place. Thus the way was opened for the work of the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, in re-creating and sanctifying; raising to life the dead with new heart and mind, with faith and the will to obey; and confirming them in holiness.

Accordingly, the believer will say, My personal relationship with God means that God is my Creator; I am His creature. God is my Sovereign; I His subject. He is my Master; I His ser-

vant. He is my Provider; I His pauper. He is my Judge; I His suppliant. He is my Redeemer; I am not my own, I am "bought with a price". He is my Re-creator and Sanctifier; I His new creature in Christ. He is my Intercessor; I wait for Him. He is my Teacher; I His disciple. He is my Father; I am His child. We can come to Him about anything that concerns us, knowing that He will do for us beyond what we ask or think. But our coming to God can be only in Christ. All our blessings come through Christ. — F.D.F.

Question:

What is your opinion of the new Sabbath School curriculum published by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. under the title "Christian Faith and Life — A Program for Church and Home"?

Answer:

To undertake an adequate analysis and evaluation of the new S.S. curriculum referred to in the above query would require far more space than is available in the "Blue Banner Question Box". The new curriculum has been publicly reviewed by two well known ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., namely the Rev. Donald Grey Barnhouse, D.D. and the Rev. Oswald T. Allis, Ph.D., DD. Dr. Barnhouse's review was published in the magazine "Revelation" for July, 1948, pages 302, 324-5. Dr. Allis' investigation was published in "The Sunday School Times" for June 26, July 3 and July 10, 1948, and afterward issued in the form of a 40 page booklet entitled "A Critique of the New Curriculum". Copies of this booklet can be obtained from the Sunday School Times Co., 325 N. 13th St., Philadelphia 5, Pa., at 15 cents each, \$1.25 per dozen, postpaid.

Dr. Barnhouse in his review related how he sat down with two other ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to examine the new materials, and how they came to the conclusion that the lesson books took unpardonable liberties with the Bible and "the theology is terrible". Dr. Allis' study of the new materials is much longer and more detailed. He gives the new lessons a very searching examination. Some of his section headings give an idea of his opinion of the materials: "Bible not Central but Secondary"; "Reading Books Conflict with Bible"; "Bible Loosely and Incorrectly Quoted"; "Unscriptural Simplifications"; "The New Curriculum Modernistic". Dr. Allis also points out that the new curriculum is very expensive: "The cost of one copy of each of these items at quantity rates — that is, of a complete set of these books and quarterlies — reaches a total of \$23.76 a year". He adds: "The whole setup is too elaborate and costly to be practical. Churches where there is now little interest in Bible study will probably find it hard to interest parents and teachers in a program

that is so complicated, raises so many problems and difficulties, and is so weighted with 'expert' advice. On the other hand, churches that now have really successful Bible schools and are deeply interested in them will certainly want a system of lesson study that is really Bible-centered and completely in accord with the Bible and the doctrinal standards of their church." Dr. Allis characterizes the new curriculum as "the device of teaching modern Liberalism by the story-book method", and holds that the new curriculum is definitely unfit for use in a Church that holds to the inspiration and authority of the Bible. — J. G. V.

Question:

How can a person overcome temptation in using television?

Answer:

Probably most readers of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" cannot afford a television set for their homes, so this will hardly be a practical problem for them. For those who do have access to a television receiver it may be said that like radio, newspapers and magazines, television is not necessarily evil; it all depends on the character of the material used. It has been remarked that television seems specially adapted to prizefights. A spiritual Christian will take no pleasure in prizefights, and can best overcome the temptation to that sort of thing by turning off the switch or leaving the room. On the other hand there is a legitimate use of television which is not sinful. — J. G. V.

Question:

How should we uphold infant baptism when friends remind us that our Saviour was baptized when an adult?

Answer:

Our Saviour Jesus Christ never received CHRISTIAN BAPTISM. He received the rite administered by John the Baptist. That John's baptism was not the same as Christian baptism is proved by Acts 19: 1-5, where it is recorded that those who had already received John's baptism at a later time received Christian baptism in addition. Since Jesus never received Christian baptism, it is clear that the fact that he was baptized when an adult has no bearing on the question of infant baptism. As a matter of fact the Old Testament counterpart of Christian baptism was the ordinance of circumcision. The essential meaning of baptism and circumcision is the same; both are signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace. Jesus, who was born under the Old Testament dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, was circumcised, not as an adult, but

when He was eight days old (Luke 2:21). Since under the New Testament dispensation baptism has taken the place of circumcision, it is eminently proper that infants be baptized. — J. G. V.

Question:

Should the word "christening" ever be used instead of "baptism"?

Answer:

The word "christen" literally means "TO MAKE CHRISTIAN", and is therefore associated with the doctrine known as "baptismal regeneration" which we reject as false. The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony declares the following proposition to be an error: "That infants are as heathens until they are baptized, and that baptism regenerates and christens them" (XXV, Error 6). Since the word "christen" is associated with this doctrinal error, we should avoid using it. Also all tendencies to regard the baptism of an infant as a social occasion for family, relatives and friends, should be avoided. The administration of baptism is a religious matter pure and simple and should not be associated with social festivities of any kind. On the question of private baptism, see "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 2 (1947), pp. 136-7. — J. G. V.

Question:

Is the practice of Close Communion Scriptural?

Answer:

See "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 4 No. 1, January-March 1949, pp. 31-33. This question is now under investigation by a committee of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (Minutes, 1948, pp. 103-4, 140). — J. G. V.

Question:

A friend said that the hymns of Fanny Crosby are surely inspired. Is this true?

Answer:

Such statements can result only from a very loose and inaccurate use of the term "inspired". What such people probably mean is "inspiring" or "inspirational". When we are speaking about the Bible, the word "inspired" has a technical meaning; it means "GOD-BREATHED"; the idea is not that God by His Spirit breathed something into certain persons, but that the words of Scripture are what God has BREATHED OUT, that is, they are truly the Word of God. Only the Bible is "inspired" in this technical sense; only the Bible, therefore, is the infallible Word of God. If Fanny Crosby's hymns were "inspired" in this technical sense, they would be part of the Word of God,

and they would have to be included in every copy of the Bible, along with the writings of Moses and the Apostle Paul. Perhaps the reason people can claim that Fanny Crosby's hymns are inspired is not that they have such a high idea of these hymns, but that they have such a low idea of the Bible. Many people today regard the Bible as just a collection of human writings. If the Bible is only a collection of what a number of good men have written about God and religion, then of course it is not really inspired. In that case there would be no real difference between the Bible and other religious books. — J. G. V.

Question:

Will a person who has never heard of Christ or His Gospel be saved?

Answer:

The Westminster Confession of Faith gives a clear answer to this question in its chapter on "Effectual Calling". After stating that persons who have only the common operations of the Holy Spirit, and never come to Christ, cannot be saved, the Confession adds: "much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested". (X.4). In support of this statement, the Confession cites the following Scriptures: Acts 4:12. John 14:6. Eph. 2:12. John 4:22; 17:3. 2 John 9-11. 1 Cor. 16:22. Gal. 1:6-8. The Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all nations is based on the truth that without knowledge of Christ and faith in Him people are LOST and WITHOUT HOPE IN THE WORLD (Eph. 2:12). When missionaries preach the Gospel of Christ to people who have never heard of Christ before, the great majority reject the message, and only relatively few accept it. Many millions have heard of Christ and His Gospel and have rejected the offer of salvation. People are lost because they are SINNERS, not merely because of the specific sin of rejecting the Gospel. It is a terrible thing to think of the millions of people in this world that are without Christ and His salvation. But this thought, rather than leading us to a vain speculation as to whether these people can receive eternal life without believing on Christ, should stir us up to send the Gospel "to the uttermost parts of the earth." — J. G. V.

Question:

Was Elijah fed by ravens or by robbers? I heard a lecturer who claimed that the word translated "ravens" in 1 Kings 17:4 really means "robbers".

Answer:

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, Commentary on the Whole Bible, says on 1 Kings 17:6, "The ravens brought him bread — the idea of such unclean and voracious birds being employed to feed the prophet has appeared to many so strange, that they have labored to make out of the 'Orebim', which in our version has been rendered ravens, to be, as the word is used (Ezek. 27:27), merchants or Arabians (2 Chron.21:16; Neh. 4:7), or the citizens of Arabah, near Bethshan (Josh. 15:6; 18:18). But the common rendering (ch.18:19) is, in our opinion, preferable to these conjectures; and, if Elijah was miraculously fed by ravens, it is idle to inquire where they found the bread and the flesh, for God would direct them." The above quotation seems to deal adequately with the question. If we believe in miracles and in God's particular providence, there is nothing incredible about Elijah being fed by ravens. — J. G. V.

Question:

When does Justification take place? Is it in this life, or is it after the earthly life ends?

Answer:

According to all orthodox Christian theology, Justification takes place in the present life, immediately upon a person believing on Christ with a true saving faith. See Confession of Faith, XI.4; Larger Catechism, Q. 69 (note the words "in this life"); Shorter Catechism, Q. 32 ("in this life"). The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony rejects as an error the proposition: "That justification is incomplete in the present life" (XIV, Error 6). That the doctrine set forth in these standards is Scriptural is evident from the usage of language in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where he speaks of Justification and its benefits in the present tense; for example, Rom. 5:1, "Therefore BEING JUSTIFIED by faith, we HAVE peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; similarly Rom. 3:34 ("BEING justified") 3:28 ("a man IS justified"), etc. — J. G. V.

Question:

Why does the Bible compare Israel to stars, to dust and to sand? In a religious periodical I read this statement: "Israel is compared to the stars with relation to her heavenly origin and her heavenly destination. She is compared to dust because she has been trodden under the feet of the Gentiles and scattered throughout the world. She is compared to sand because of the individual characteristics and because she is constantly overwhelmed and overcome by the enemies as the waves cover the sands of the sea." Is this correct?

Answer:

The writer of the foregoing statement has let his imagination run riot in thinking up allegorical interpretations that are without any foundation whatever in the Scriptures. The references involved are Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 28:14 and 32:12. In each case the sole point of the comparison is the INNUMERABLE character of Israel. Note the following: "so that if a man can NUMBER the dust of the earth" (13:16); "I will MULTIPLY thy seed as the stars . . . as the sand" (22:17); "I will . . . make thy seed as the sand of the sea, WHICH CANNOT BE NUMBERED FOR MULTITUDE" (32:12); ". . . tell the stars, if thou be able to NUMBER them . . . so shall thy seed be" (15:5); "I will make thy seed to MULTIPLY as the stars of heaven" (26:4).

By imaginative allegorical interpretations a person can make the Bible seem to teach almost

This issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is going to 121 readers in the following foreign countries: Canada, Northern Ireland, Eire, England, Scotland, Syria, Cyprus, China, Korea, Japan, Australia, India, The Netherlands. Many of these foreign readers live in countries where exchange restrictions make it difficult to remit money to the United States. A considerable number are missionaries or native Christian leaders

anything. A person might just as well say: (a) Israel is compared to the stars because every star radiates light; every member of Israel is to shed forth spiritual light. (b) Israel is compared to dust because dust, when water is added, makes fertile soil to produce fine crops; so Israel, being dust, requires only the spiritual rain of divine grace to become spiritually fruitful. (c) Israel is compared to sand because of the gritty, abrasive character of sand, which in the course of time can wear any surface away. So Israel wears the Gentiles out and gains the ascendancy over them in the end. When we start to interpret the Bible by this kind of guesswork, there is no limit to the fantastic results that may be attained. The only safe way is to adhere closely and strictly to the meaning given in the text and context itself. Obviously the one and only point of comparison to stars, dust, sand, is the VAST NUMBER of the children of Israel. — J. G. V.

in various fields. They receive the magazine free through the generosity of subscribers in America. Many letters that have been received indicate that "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is read and appreciated by these Christian brethren in foreign lands. You can help to sustain and increase this circulation by contributing occasionally to the expense of publishing "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — Ed.

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J. G. VOS, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

Peden At The Grave of Cameron

(Continued from inside front cover)

"O Jesus! blessed Jesus! I am poor, and frail, and weak;
Let me not utter of mine own, for idle words I speak;
But give me grace to wrestle now, and prompt my faltering tongue,
And breathe Thy name into my soul, and so I shall be strong!

"I bless Thee for the quiet rest thy servant taketh now;
I bless Thee for his blessedness, and for his crowned brow;
For every weary step he trod, in faithful following Thee,
And for the good fight foughten well, and closed right valiantly!

"I bless Thee for the hidden ones, who yet uphold Thy name,
Who yet for Zion's King and Crown shall dare the death of shame;
I bless Thee for the light that dawns even now upon my soul,
And brightens all the narrow way with glory from the goal!

"The hour and power of darkness — it is fleeing fast away.
Light shall arise on Scotland, a glorious gospel day.
Woe! woe! to the oppressors; they shall shrivel in His hand.
Thy King shall yet appear for thee, thou covenanted land!

"I see a time of respite, but the people will not bow;
I see a time of judgment, even a darker time than now.
Then, Lord, uphold Thy faithful ones, as now Thou dost uphold;
And feed them, as Thou still hast fed Thy chosen flock of old!

"The glory! oh, the glory! it is bursting on my sight;
Lord, Thy poor vessel is too frail for all this blinding light!
Now let Thy good word be fulfilled, and let Thy kingdom come;
And, Lord, even in Thine own best time, take Thy poor servant home!"

Upon the wild and lone Ayrsmoss, down sank the twilight gray;
In storm and cloud the evening closed upon that cheerless day;
But Peden went his way refreshed, for peace and joy were given,
And Cameron's grave had proved to him the very gate of heaven!

Note: Richard Cameron, pastor and leader of the persecuted Covenanters of Scotland, was killed by the king's troops in the battle of Ayrsmoss, July 22, 1680. (See "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 3, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 1948, pp. 134, 139 and back cover). Alexander Peden, a much older man than Cameron, had been forced out of his pastorate by the government in 1663. For some 23 years he lived the life of a wanderer and was an outcast, while doing what he could to minister to the spiritual needs of the scattered Covenanters. The government continually sought to arrest him, and he had many remarkable narrow escapes. In 1673 while attending a conventicle he was captured and sentenced to

imprisonment in the Bass Rock and afterwards at Edinburgh. In 1678 with many others Peden was condemned to banishment in America, but was liberated at London, after which he returned to Scotland. He spent the last years of his life partly in Scotland and partly in Ireland. Exhausted by his years of hardship and suffering, he died in a cave not far from his birthplace in Scotland. Even his death did not end the wrath of his enemies, for after his burial the king's soldiers dug up his body and treated it with outrageous indignities. The above poem by Harriet Stuart Menteth is an imaginative account of Peden's grief over the death of Richard Cameron.

To our Readers: Only about one-half of the cost of publishing "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is defrayed by subscriptions; the balance must come from voluntary contributions. The expenses consist almost exclusively of printing, envelopes and postage; the editor and contributors receive no financial compensation. If you believe that "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is serving a useful purpose, will you not contribute from time to time as the Lord enables you?—Ed.



BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 4

JULY - SEPTEMBER, 1949

NUMBER 3

"TO ALL THOSE FOR WHOM CHRIST HATH PURCHASED REDEMPTION, HE DOTHS CERTAINLY AND EFFECTUALLY APPLY AND COMMUNICATE THE SAME, MAKING INTERCESSION FOR THEM, AND REVEALING UNTO THEM, IN AND BY THE WORD, THE MYSTERIES OF SALVATION, EFFECTUALLY PERSUADING THEM BY HIS SPIRIT TO BELIEVE AND OBEY, AND GOVERNING THEIR HEARTS BY HIS WORD AND SPIRIT, OVERCOMING ALL THEIR ENEMIES BY HIS ALMIGHTY POWER AND WISDOM, IN SUCH MANNER, AND WAYS, AS ARE MOST CONSONANT TO HIS WONDERFUL AND UNSEARCHABLE DISPENSATION."

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, VIII.8

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J. G. VOS, Editor and Publisher

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

Exultation over the Fall of the King of Babylon

(Based on Isaiah 14:12-20)

By J. G. Vos

How art thou fallen far
From heaven like a star,
O Lucifer, son of the morning bright!
How art thou now brought low,
No glory more to know,
Who once destroyed the nations by thy might!

Who didst in heart devise:
"To heaven I'll arise,
Above the stars of God will lift my throne!
To sit upon the mount
My portion I account,
The mount that stands at north's remotest zone.

"Above the firmament
Shall be my high ascent,
Until my greatness rivals the Most High!"
Yet thou shalt be brought low
Unto the place of woe,
In utmost depth of the abyss shalt lie.

All that see thee shall gaze
On thee with great amaze,
Astonished at the greatness of thy fall:
"Is this the mighty one
Whose purpose once was done
To rock the earth and shake the kingdoms all?"

"That caused the world distress,
Made it a wilderness,
And overthrew its cities by his might?
Who never would release
His prisoners in peace,
To see their native country with delight?"

All kings of every land
According as they planned,
Do sleep in glory, each in his own place.
But thou art cast afar
From out thy sepulchrè,
A branch cast off, rejected for disgrace.

As raiment of the dead
On whom the sword has fed,
Who all descend into the stony pit;
Or as a corpse that's found
Unburied on the ground,
And those who pass, unheeding, tread on it.

No burial shall be
For honor unto thee,
Because thou wholly hast destroyed thy land:
Thy people thou hast slain:
Thy seed shall not remain;
Forgotten they shall be until the end.

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 4

JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1949

NUMBER 3

Sketches From Our History Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER IV

GLEAMS OF LIGHT IN MEDIEVAL DARKNESS

(Continued from last issue)

2. Berengar, Witness for the Truth about the Lord's Supper.

It was only after centuries of controversy that the doctrine of transubstantiation was officially adopted by the Roman Catholic Church. This false doctrine teaches that in the Lord's Supper the bread and wine are miraculously changed into the literal body and blood of Christ, so that the elements are no longer bread and wine. This perversion of the New Testament doctrine of the Lord's Supper gradually gained ground in the Church as a result of the sacrament being regarded as a sacrifice, the communion table as an altar, and the ministry as a priesthood. It was in spite of the testimony of earnest witnesses for the truth that the Church of Rome finally adopted the doctrine of transubstantiation as its official faith and decreed an anathema against all who should deny it.

The first serious controversy on this subject took place in the ninth century. A French monk named Radbert (the Latin form of his name was Paschasius Radbertus) in 831 published a book entitled "A Book Concerning the Body and Blood of the Lord". In 844 he produced a new edition, with a dedicatory epistle addressed to Charles the Bald, king of France. Radbert was a real genius and a very able theologian. His book did not use the word "transubstantiation", but it was the first clearly defined statement of the doctrine which later was known by that name. This book was very influential. It was the opening shot of a theological battle which has continued unsettled to the present time.

Though Radbert's book was able and influential, it did not fail to arouse earnest protest on the part of those who held the contrary doctrine. It was immediately attacked by Hrabanus Maurus, the powerful churchman who later opposed Gottschalk's witness for the doctrine of predestination. Radbert's book was also attacked by Ratramnus, the monk who rallied to Gottschalk's

defence in that controversy. Radbert died about 860. Although influential writers opposed his views of the Lord's Supper, his position was the one finally accepted as orthodox by the Church of Rome.

The next stage of the controversy took place two hundred years later, in the eleventh century. The central figure was Berengar, or Berengarius, a French theologian of great ability. The date of Berengar's birth is unknown; he died in 1088. After completing his education in the school of Fulbert of Chartres, he became head of the cathedral school of the city of Tours (France), his birthplace. So great was his genius that he soon attracted pupils from all parts of France.

Sometime before 1040 Berengar was appointed archdeacon of Angers, France. Rumors soon began to arise that he was unorthodox concerning the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Berengar had studied the matter thoroughly, and came to the conclusion that the doctrine of transubstantiation was without support in the Scriptures, contrary to reason, and incompatible with the writings of the great Church Fathers Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome. Berengar did not hesitate to discuss the matter with his friends and students. The result of this was that the rumors of his unorthodoxy increased. A number of prominent men pleaded with him, but Berengar stood his ground, as he was not convinced by their arguments.

The outstanding theologian of the period was Lanfranc, a schoolmaster at Bec, France, who later became archbishop of Canterbury, England (1070-1089). Berengar discovered that Lanfranc endorsed the views of Radbert against those of Ratramnus concerning the Lord's Supper. Accordingly, Berengar wrote Lanfranc a letter expressing surprise and urging him to study the question further.

As it happened, Lanfranc was not at Bec when the letter arrived, as he had gone on a journey

to Rome. Berengar's letter was forwarded to him at Rome, but before it reached him, someone opened it and read it. When Lanfranc received the letter, he realized that it had already been opened and read and that the contents might occasion embarrassing consequences. Accordingly, Lanfranc himself reported the letter to the pope (Leo IX). The result of this was that Berengar was condemned as a heretic without so much as a trial or even a hearing. This was in 1050.

When Berengar's opponents in France heard that he had been condemned as a heretic, they immediately cast him into prison. However the influential bishop of Angers and other friends were able to obtain his release. Berengar's case was taken up by a Church Council at Tours, France, in 1054. At this council Berengar was protected by Hildebrand, the pope's legate, who later became famous as pope Gregory VII. Hildebrand succeeded in persuading the council to be satisfied with a vague statement by Berengar that the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ, without any explanation of the sense in which this statement was to be understood.

Confident of Hildebrand's support, Berengar went to Rome (1059) to a synod, where he was at once attacked by fanatical adherents of transubstantiation. By fear of death he was induced to profess acceptance of the doctrine "that the bread and wine, after consecration, are not merely a sacrament, but the true body and the true blood of Christ, and that this body is touched and broken by the hands of the priests, and ground by the teeth of the faithful, not merely in a sacramental, but in a real manner."

Immediately afterwards Berengar repented of his compliance with error, and as soon as he was back in France he again publicly attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation, and more strongly than before. For sixteen years he propagated his views by writing and teaching without interference. This greatly angered and scandalized the fanatical believers in transubstantiation, who called Berengar "that apostle of Satan", and his school at Tours "the Babylon of our time".

A church council held at Poitiers in 1076 tried to settle the controversy, but without success, and Berengar was almost killed in a riot which followed. Hildebrand was now pope Gregory VII, and he summoned Berengar to Rome. At a synod held at Rome, 1078, Hildebrand tried to get Berengar declared orthodox on the basis of a general statement about the sacrament, but even this powerful pope was overruled by the majority of the synod. The next year (1079) Hildebrand turned against Berengar, because of the influence of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury. The pope now commanded Berengar to confess that he had erred by not teaching that the bread and wine are changed into the real substance of the body and blood of Christ. Overcome by sudden panic, Berengar yielded. Later he described the scene in the synod: "Then, confounded by the sudden

madness of the pope, and because God in punishment for my sins did not give me a steadfast heart, I threw myself on the ground, and confessed with impious voice that I had erred, fearing the pope would instantly pronounce against me the sentence of condemnation, and, as a necessary consequence, that the populace would hurry me to the worst of deaths."

Berengar was kindly dismissed by Hildebrand, with a letter commending him to the protection of the bishops of Tours and Angers, France, and another letter pronouncing anathema on all persons who should injure him or say that he was a heretic. He returned to France overwhelmed with sorrow and shame for having a second time yielded to fear and acted against his own conscience. To Berengar's credit, it is recorded that he immediately retracted his "confession", and asked all Christian people "to pray for him, so that his tears might secure the pity of the Almighty."

Realizing that the tide of the age was hopelessly against him, Berengar withdrew into solitude, and spent the remainder of his life in prayer and retirement on a small island near Tours. He died in 1088. But his witness had not been in vain. Berengar left behind him many who shared his faith. Through the subsequent period of the Middle Ages, those who denied the doctrine of transubstantiation were called "Berengarians".

Berengar's own doctrine of the Lord's Supper may be summarized as follows. It is contrary to reason, and therefore to the truthfulness of God, that bread and wine should be changed into flesh and blood while retaining the properties of bread and wine. Those who lack faith in Christ receive only bread and wine, but true believers receive in addition the spiritual grace signified by the sacrament, so that to them the bread and wine become spiritually the body and blood of Christ. The Lord's Supper is not to be regarded as a constantly repeated sacrifice, but rather as a commemoration of the one sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. Transubstantiation is not only doctrinally untrue, but also evil in its practical result of leading people to regard the external signs as more important than the spiritual grace signified by them. The medieval stories about miracles occurring in connection with the sacramental elements, Berengar indignantly rejected as mere superstition and without evidence. He held that doctrines are to be tested by Scripture and reason, and cannot be established as true by mere church tradition, majority votes of synods, nor even by the decrees of popes. Thus Berengar was a witness for the truth of the Scriptures concerning the Lord's Supper. This truth was crushed underfoot at the time and for more than four hundred years afterwards; it came to its rights at the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century.

(To be continued)

THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS

THEIR ORIGINS, HISTORY AND DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES

(Selections from the book with the above title, by J. G. Vos, published by the author in 1940)

PART II

THE HISTORY OF THE COVENANTERS

CHAPTER I

THE PERIOD OF PERSECUTION, 1660-1688

7. The Precise Nature of the Covenanters' Claims during the Period of Persecution.

During the twenty-eight years of persecution the Covenanters held, in brief, to the Presbyterianism of the Second Reformation, to the attainments of the Church of Scotland from 1638 to 1649. Doctrinally, they adhered to the Westminster Standards. Their special claims which resulted from the persecutions which they suffered, were set forth in the various public declarations which they issued, as well as in the sermons which were preached at the conventicles, and in the dying testimonies of the martyrs. The lengthy protests and declarations issued by the Covenanters are not nearly so complex as they appear. In general, their claims may be summarized under three heads. The special claims of the Cameronian Covenanters, in which they differed from the Prelatic Church of Scotland, from the indulged ministers, and from the Stuart monarchy, consisted in a practical, as distinguished from a merely theoretical, testimony for (1) The obligation upon the Church and nation of Scotland of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant; (2) The sole headship of Christ over the Church, in opposition to Erastian encroachments and tolerations; (3) Christian civil government, in opposition to absolutism.

The first claim of the Covenanters, then, was the claim that the Covenants were still binding upon the Church and nation of Scotland. To be sure, those Covenants had been repudiated by the King, and burned by the common hangman, and declared unlawful and treasonable oaths by the Parliament. But the Covenants were not common legislation that could be enacted or repealed at pleasure; they were Covenants with God, religious bonds, and the content of them being Scriptural and moral, they could not be broken or repealed without the sin of perjury. During the early years of the persecution William Guthrie, preaching on Isaiah 8:17-18, said, "These lands have sworn away themselves unto the Lord most solemnly, singularly, and frequently. Seven times hath Scotland been sworn away unto the Lord, in little more than the space of an hundred years. I grant, indeed, that these covenants have been broken, for which breach the Lord hath been plaguing these lands; and as there hath been no breach of covenant formerly like unto this, so I think there hath been

no plague come like that which we may now expect. And yet seeing there is still a party in the land who adhere to these covenants, and have given a testimony for them, and that party is and will be accounted to the Lord for a generation, or the holy seed and substance of the land; since this is the case, God and these witnesses will not part yet if they shall abide by and adhere to these covenants". Richard Cameron, years later, maintained exactly the same position. Preaching on John 5:40 he said, "They can never be satisfied. They take away your lands, but they can never take away the right of your lands. It is true, religion doth not take away the civil law; but ye know that the land was given away unto the Lord. This was included in the covenants, and they became the charters of all the lands in Scotland". Not only was Charles II guilty of perjury in repudiating the Covenants which he had accepted, but the nation itself was guilty of covenant breaking in receiving Charles II as king in 1660. Cameron preaching on Hosea 13:9-10 said, "So this land has broken the covenant, and cast off the thing that is good. What is the breach of this covenant? How is it evidenced? They have 'Set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not'. If this be not the case of Scotland at present I am mistaken". The claim that the Covenants were still binding on the Church and nation of Scotland could only be made by the Covenanters who maintained conventicles. Such doctrine could be preached in no parish Church in Scotland, nor by any indulged minister, for the Covenants had been declared unlawful oaths, and to adhere to them was treason. And this claim was made by the Covenanters throughout the period of persecution, at the Revolution, and, indeed, down to the present day.

In the second place, the Covenanters maintained the sole headship of Christ over the Church, in opposition to Erastian encroachments and tolerations. The claim of King Charles II to supremacy in causes ecclesiastical, the Covenanters regarded as positively blasphemous. The principle of the sole headship of Christ over the Church made the Indulgence unlawful, for it proceeded from the King's Erastian supremacy over the Church. Many have condemned the Covenanters for opposing the Indulgences, but it was no controversy over trifles, for the principle of Christ's headship was involved, and the Covenanters held the high Reformed ethical principle that it is never right to make a sacrifice of principle, however slight, for the sake of practical ends or benefits. Alexander Peden, who never identified himself with the Cameronians, and yet held ground similar to theirs, said in preaching

on Matthew 21:38, "And now, Sirs, I know it is neither right nor lawful for any minister or Christian in Scotland to join with others in taking houses to preach in, and to leave the fields. It were better for us all, Sirs, to go to the field in frost and snow to the knees, until we were wet to the skin, ere we bow to king, council, or one of them; for I know that the Lord will never bless the labours of one of them that have their liberty from them, whether minister or professor, but such ministers and professors shall be blasted and fruitless, and if their souls be not in hazard I am mistaken—this being the main point of our testimony, that Christ is Head of the Church and King in Zion, and this they deny on the matter. And if this be not sad and dangerous, judge ye, namely to consent to let Christ's crown go upon the head of any king in the world. And this is the sin that shall yet ruin these three lands". Alexander Shields, preaching at the close of the period of persecution, said, "Although the testimony of the Church of France, and in the valleys of Piedmont, and in Hungary, be great and weighty and well worth the contending and suffering for, yet our testimony for the kingly office of Christ is more noble, and He will give it a glorious vindication when He comes to visit His people with His salvation. It is true, though the testimony for the prophetic and priestly office of Christ be noble and well worth the contending and suffering for, yet, in some respects, the kingly testimony of his kingly office is more noble and glorious, and though our testimony be so noble, yet there is not one part of it but what is opposed and contradicted not only by our enemies, but also by the ministers and professors in general. But we dare confidently affirm, and take heaven and earth to witness that we hold and maintain nothing but what is consonant and agreeable unto the word of God and the Covenanted principles of the Church of Scotland". Jesus Christ is a King, and the only Head of his Church, and the liberties and powers of the Church are derived from Christ only, and not from the civil magistrate. It was because of the King's claim to supreme power in causes ecclesiastical, that so many Covenanters refused to pray for the King. Patrick Walker says that the Covenanters were willing to pray for the King in the sense of praying for the salvation of his soul, but that they would not pray for him as head of the Church of Scotland, nor would they pray for the preservation of his health and lengthening of his life as that would amount to praying that he be given increased opportunity for tyranny. Walker tells how some Covenanters were tempted to pray for the King with a mental reservation: "When some of our pawky-witted primitive trucklers in my hearing, said that they would pray for him so and so, and subscribe their allegiance to him in such and such senses; I have heard Sir George Mackenzie answer them, 'Do not cheat your own consciences, and deceive the world. Ye must pray for him, and swear allegiance to him, in the sense of

the imposers; for ye that are swearers and prayers, ye have no power to put your sense upon our words' ". Just because the authorities interpreted praying for the King to mean praying for him as head of the Church, the strict Covenanters refused to pray for the King, even when their lives hung in the balance of this test. The smallest yielding of ground on this point would be to compromise Christ's glorious headship over the Church of Scotland.

In the third place, the Covenanters maintained a practical testimony for Christian civil government, in opposition to absolutism. Scotland was by sacred Covenant bonds constituted a Christian and a Reformed nation. The nation deliberately, and by its own voluntary deed, in the Act of Classes, had excluded from public office men known to be opposed to the Reformation attainments of the nation. The coronation oath, sworn by Charles II at Scone in 1651, made him King upon condition of his accepting the Covenants. The Scriptures were to be the supreme standard in civil affairs as in all other affairs. Under the Scriptures, the supreme power was not the King but the nation as such, the will of the nation being expressed in free Parliaments representing the people. Over and over again the Covenanters stressed the fact that they stood for Parliamentary government as over against autocracy. They repudiated the Stuarts because Charles II had repudiated the Covenants, and because he claimed to have supreme power above the law of the land. Richard Cameron, in a sermon preached three days before his death, said that the Covenanters did not hold Chiliasitic ideas, but yet they did believe in Christian civil government on earth: "Let us not be judged to be of the opinion of some men in England called the Fifth-Monarchy men, who say that, before the great day, Christ shall come in person from heaven with all the saints and martyrs and reign a thousand years on earth. But we are of the opinion that the Church shall yet be more high and glorious, as appears from the book of Revelation, and the Church shall have more power than ever she had before; and therefore we declare avowedly in opposition to all tyrannical magistrates over Protestants, and over Presbyterians—magistrates that are open enemies to God—we declare we will have none such acknowledged as lawful magistrates over us. We will have none but such as are for the advancement of piety and the suppression of impiety and wickedness. Let all the world say as they will, we have the word of God for it". James Renwick said that there were three reasons for his own death: his disowning the Duke of York (James VII) to be the lawful king of Britain; his maintenance of the lawfulness and duty of defensive arms; and his testimony against the sin of paying the "Cess" (a special tax levied to support the persecution of the Covenanters); and he added that "such a testimony was worth many lives". It was particu-

larly because of testimony for Christian civil government that Renwick died.

These three were the particular principles maintained by the Covenanters in opposition to the Church and State of their time. And these three can be reduced to a single principle: IUS DIVINUM, divine right. The Covenanters lived and died as witnesses for THE RIGHTS OF GOD. Scotland was bound by sacred covenants to maintain the rights of God. The rights of God included Christ's kingly office over the Church, so the Covenanters opposed Erastianism. But the rights of God were not limited to the ecclesiastical sphere; they embraced every sphere and relationship of life, including civil government. And so the Covenanters were witnesses for the rights of God in the sphere of the civil magistracy. The State, as well as the Church, must be Christian, Scriptural and Reformed. It has often been stated that the Covenanters went through twenty-eight years of persecution in a struggle for civil and religious liberty. While there is a qualified sense in which this is true, it is a very misleading statement. The Covenanters were not primarily interested in civil and religious liberty considered as rights of man. They never contended for civil freedom on a purely political basis, nor for religious freedom as it is understood today in the sense of universal liberty for all creeds.

Their basic principle was not political, nor humanitarian, but theocratic. They found the rights of God revealed in Scripture, and they wished these to be practically recognized and respected in every sphere of life, including the State and the Church.

The Marquis of Argyle, when about to die on the scaffold in 1661, said, "I could die like a Roman, but choose rather to die as a Christian . . . God hath laid engagements upon Scotland; we are tied by Covenant to religion and reformation. It is the duty of every Christian to be loyal, yet I think the order of things is to be observed. Religion must not be the cock-boat but the ship; God must have what is His, as well as Caesar what is his". Argyle died at the very beginning of the persecution, long before anyone thought of disowning Charles II, yet he sounded the keynote of the whole Covenanter movement through those twenty-eight years. Cameron, Cargill and Renwick all admitted the duty of Christians to be loyal to lawfully constituted government; but they believed in the right of revolution, and they believed that a time came when Charles II could no longer be regarded as a lawfully constituted ruler in Scotland. Just because they feared God, and were earnest in His cause, they did not hesitate to break the commandments of men.

(To be continued)

Our Church Covenant and Modern Life

(Note: This is the eighth of a series of sermons on the obligations involved in the Church Covenant sworn and subscribed by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, May 21, 1871.—Ed.)

VIII. OUR DUTY TO PARTICIPATE IN WORLD EVANGELIZATION

Scripture Reading: Romans 10.

"How shall they preach, except they be sent?"
—Rom. 10:15a.

The Covenant of 1871, besides a preliminary confession of sins, consists of an introductory paragraph and six sections. This Covenant was adopted in 1871 after long and earnest preparation, and it is recognized by the "Terms of Communion" as binding upon the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America today. In order that we may have a bird's-eye view of the Covenant as a whole, I shall present the subjects of the various sections as given in the Rev. Frank D. Frazer's "Outline Studies in the Covenant". These are as follows: (1) We hereby covenant to do our duty to God. (2) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the truth of God. (3) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the nation.

(4) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the Church-at-large. (5) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the world. (6) We hereby covenant to perform these, our duties, faithfully.

Section 5 of our Church Covenant reads as follows: "Rejoicing that the enthroned Mediator is not only King in Zion, but King over all the earth, and recognizing the obligation of His command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and resting with faith in the promise of His perpetual presence as the pledge of success, we hereby dedicate ourselves to the great work of making known God's light and salvation among the nations, and to this end will labor that the Church may be provided with an earnest, self-denying and able

ministry. Profoundly conscious of past remissness and neglect, we will henceforth, by our prayers, pecuniary contributions and personal exertions, seek the revival of pure and undefiled religion, the conversion of Jews and Gentiles to Christ, that all men may be blessed in Him, and that all nations may call Him blessed."

I. We Recognize the Basis

The true basis of world evangelization is the command and promise of the Lord Jesus Christ, commonly called "the Great Commission". This command and promise proceed from Christ's kingly authority. The command of a king is to be obeyed; the promise of a king is to be trusted. Since Jesus Christ is "higher than the kings of the earth" (Psalm 89:27), His command is pre-eminently to be obeyed, and His promise is pre-eminently to be trusted. Because of faith in Jesus Christ as our Redeemer and a desire to obey Him as our Lord, we are committed to participation in the great task of world evangelization.

Where evangelical faith in Jesus Christ is lacking, there will either be a lack of concern about missionary work, or mistaken ideas about its basis and purpose. Such mistaken ideas take various forms. One form may be described as the romantic approach to missions: the fascination of travel to far-away lands and meeting strange peoples with their peculiar and interesting customs. This romantic attitude toward missionary work proves to be a very temporary nature; seasickness is likely to dampen it considerably, and the pangs of homesickness are found to take a good deal of the romantic fascination out of living in a foreign land.

Another mistaken idea about missionary work is the utilitarian approach. I once heard a minister say in a sermon that we should support foreign missions because the missionary enterprise furthers American foreign trade. Doubtless international commerce has been stimulated by the contacts made by missionaries, but that is entirely incidental and has nothing whatever to do with the legitimate basis and purpose of missionary work. Others say that foreign missions must be supported because of their presumed effect in unifying the nations of the world and so tending to avert world war. Here again a by-product, which may be real or imaginary, is regarded as the main thing.

Another mistaken idea about missions is the humanitarian approach. Those who have this idea do not think of missionary work as part of God's plan for the supernatural redemption of His elect, but as a human program of sharing the benefits of culture and civilization. A young woman of a Christian family surprised her friends by announcing that she had become engaged to a young man who was preparing to go to

India as a missionary. "Of course", she added, "I do not intend to talk to anyone about the salvation of his soul, or anything like that; my husband will teach psychology in a university". While it is possible, and also necessary, to teach psychology from a truly Christian point of view, psychology regarded as a respectable alternative to talking to people about the salvation of their souls betrays a very wrong idea of the basis and purpose of missions. Sometimes people are heard to say: "The only kind of foreign missions I believe in is medical missions; medical work really does something to help relieve people's distress". Such a statement indicates a merely humanitarian conception of missions. Much deeper than people's physical distress is their spiritual distress. It was not without reason that Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, "Thy sins are forgiven thee", and only afterwards added "Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house" (Luke 5:18-26). And more important even than affording a way of relief for people's spiritual distress is the necessity for honoring and glorifying God by obedience to His revealed will. Fundamentally, missionary work is for the sake of God, not for the sake of human beings. The benefits to human beings are incidental to the serving and glorifying of God. We are to carry on missionary work for God's sake, not for humanity's sake; we are to bring benefits to men for God's sake, not merely for man's sake.

The truth is that world evangelization is an integral part of God's great plan of redemption. The Old Testament period was a period of preparation for it. The redemptive work of Jesus Christ laid the foundation for it, by purchasing all the benefits which the Holy Spirit applies to men. The New Testament period (from Pentecost to the second coming of Christ) is the God-ordained period for the world-wide application of Christ's redemption. It is the period for the world-wide expansion of the Christian religion.

When we speak of the world-wide expansion of the Christian religion, we do not mean the conversion to Christ of every individual, but the personal salvation of God's elect throughout the world. Sometimes an objection is raised against foreign missions on the ground that our own country is not yet wholly won for Christ. Such an objection reveals a misconception of the nature of the missionary task. Christ commanded His disciples to go "into all the world" and preach the Gospel "to all nations". Clearly this commission does not mean to stay in any one place until the population of that place is 100 percent converted to Christ. If that were the intention, Christianity would still be confined to Jerusalem, and the rest of the world would be unreached. Nor did the apostles hold any such idea. They preached and travelled widely, gathered their converts into congregations which formed very small minorities of the cities and

countries where they were located, and then they moved on to other regions. It is quite wrong to suppose that the purpose of missionary work is to bring every individual of any locality to Christ. The purpose is to gather in the elect of God throughout the whole world (John 11:51, 52).

II. We Accept the Task

By this fifth section of our Church Covenant we accept the task of world evangelization as something that concerns our Church as a body and something that concerns us personally as individual Christians. We dedicate ourselves to the task.

Obviously not every Christian can serve as a home or foreign missionary, nor is it God's will that every one should so serve. Some lack the educational, physical and other qualifications necessary for personal participation in the enterprise. The lack of these qualifications indicates that God has not called them to that particular form of service. Moreover, if all Christians were to become missionaries, who would form the home base to support them? Who would earn the money to provide the salaries, travel expenses and so forth? Our text asks, "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" Clearly this implies that while some are to be sent as missionaries, others are to stay at home and undertake the sending. There must be senders as well as persons to be sent.

Yet every Christian and every Church must be concerned to have a part in the missionary task. Some are to serve in person, others by their support of the work. As he prepared to leave England for missionary work in India, William Carey said to his friends, "I will go down, but you must stay here and hold the ropes". Those of us who are not called to "go down" should make sure that we are doing our share of holding the ropes. Missionaries should be properly supported by those who have sent them to their fields. They should know that they can count on continuous and adequate support, so that they can devote their full time and attention to their commission.

Protestantism was slow to get started in the work of foreign missions. For a long time the Roman Catholic Church was much more active in propagating its faith in foreign lands. This tardiness on the part of the Protestant Churches was largely the result of the life-and-death struggle for existence which was taking place in Europe. When this conflict had been won, it still took a long time before Protestantism really awoke to its responsibility for the evangelization of the world. Yet Covenanters have long been a missionary-minded people. Walter Smith, a Covenanter minister who was executed for his faith in 1681, drew up a set of rules for the con-

duct of "society meetings" among Covenanters who were deprived of the services of ordained ministers. It is worthy of note that Smith's rules reveal a very high idea of responsibility for world evangelization. Under rule 23 the following are listed as matters for prayer: "(1) That the old off-caste Israel for unbelief would never be forgotten, especially in these meetings, that the promised day of their ingrafting again by faith may be hastened; and that dead weight of blood removed off them, that their fathers took upon them and upon their children, that have sunk them down to hell upwards of seventeen hundred years. (2) That the Lord's written and preached word (may be sent) with power, to enlighten the poor Pagan world, living in black perishing darkness without Christ and the knowledge of his name. (3) That the damnable delusions of Mahomet, and the errors of Antichrist, Arian, Arminian, Socinian and Quakers may be discovered; that the blind may no more lead the blind, and go to hell wholesale, living and dying so; and the many gross errors abounding among many other sectaries may come to light." Even while facing bitter persecution, the Covenanters of Scotland had a deep concern about the evangelization of the world.

"I am a debtor", wrote the apostle Paul to the Christians at Rome, "both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise" (Rom. 1:14). "I am a debtor": evangelization is not a matter of charity, but of debt. It is real moral obligation which God has placed upon His people. By our Church Covenant we pledge ourselves to accept that obligation, as a personal and Church matter, in dead earnest.

III. We Pledge Ourselves to Labor to Provide an Adequate Ministry

"To this end (we) will labor that the Church may be provided with an earnest, self-denying and able ministry." It is clear that the spiritual welfare, growth and progress of the Church is closely connected with the provision of an adequate ministry. The Gospel ministry is Christ's appointed ordinance both for the shepherding of the Church and for its extension at home and abroad. There is of course a legitimate place for unordained or "lay" workers, both at home and on the foreign field, but the ordained Gospel ministry is absolutely essential to the welfare and extension of the Church. Ministers are stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1). To them Christ has committed the task of the official, authoritative preaching of the Gospel.

According to the Bible, the ministry is a gift of Christ to the Church (Eph. 4:11). It is He who calls men to the office of the ministry (we should always remember that the ministry is not a profession but an office) and who bestows upon them

the proper qualifications for the office. This does not however imply that the Church itself has no responsibility in this matter. For it is partly through the Church that Christ provides ministers for the Church. A truly spiritual and faithful Church will not only look to Christ for the provision of qualified ministers, but will also see that its own responsibilities in this matter are discharged.

This means, among other things, that the Church must make adequate provision for the education and training of candidates for the ministerial office. Our Church has always insisted on a thoroughly educated ministry. This was true even during the days of bitterest persecution in Scotland. The Covenanters lost minister after minister, some by martyrdom, some by defection. Finally they were left almost without ministers. In the face of great difficulty and danger the persecuted Scottish Covenanters sent certain of their young men to Holland to study theology and seek ordination in that stronghold of religious liberty. There Richard Cameron was ordained at Rotterdam in 1679, and there James Renwick was ordained by the Classis of Groningen of the Reformed Church, May 10, 1683. William Boyd was licensed by the Classis of Groningen, 1687. Thomas Linning was ordained by the Classis of Emden (a city then under the protection of Holland) after an examination in theology lasting twenty-one days. Thus did the Covenanters of that day overcome difficulties in obtaining an educated and properly ordained ministry. In our own day, the Covenanter Church still requires thorough education for the ministry, and continues to resist the trend of the times by insisting that candidates be able to study the Scriptures in the original Hebrew and Greek.

The Church should also encourage qualified young men to study for the ministry, and should provide financial aid where needed for this purpose. Adequate support should be given to ministers of the Gospel, so that they can carry on their

work properly and support their families decently without having to turn aside from ministerial duties to secular employments. The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:14). It is the Church's responsibility to see that this is possible.

It is our duty to support our Church's Theological Seminary properly, to encourage and help candidates for the ministry, to support and encourage pastors and missionaries in the work to which the Lord has called them. All this we are pledged to do by our Church Covenant.

IV. We Promise a Triple Effort

"We will henceforth, by our prayers, pecuniary contributions and personal exertions, seek the revival of pure and undefiled religion, the conversion of Jews and Gentiles to Christ, that all men may be blessed in Him, and that all nations may call Him blessed." Thus by our Church Covenant we are pledged to a triple effort for the proclamation of the Gospel and the extension of the Church of Jesus Christ. Our prayers, our money and our "personal exertions" are pledged to this great cause. Needless to say, if we are really dead in earnest we will further the cause in all three of these ways. No one of these lines of effort can take the place of the others. Praying for ministers and missionaries will not excuse us from contributing a proportion of our income to their support. Nor will financial contributions excuse us from the duty of prayer. Nor will prayers and financial contributions excuse us from such "personal exertions" as occasion may call for and opportunity permit.

Thus we covenant to maintain and support real Gospel evangelism and Church ordinances at home and abroad. We are wholly committed to this cause. May God grant that this section of our Church Covenant shall not be a merely formal commitment, but a promise that we shall really keep.

SOME NOTEWORTHY QUOTATIONS

"O labor to be in Christ, for Him, like Him. Be much in reading of the Holy Scriptures, much in prayer and holy unity among yourselves. Be zealous and tender in keeping up your private fellowship for prayer and Christian conference, as also your public correspondence and general meetings. Go to them and come from them as those interested, really concerned and weighted with Christ's precious controverted truths in Scotland, and labor still to take Christ among you in all your meetings, and to behave yourselves as under His holy all-seeing eye when at them, that you may always return with a blessing from His rich hand. Now, farewell, my dear Christian friends; the Lord send us a joyful meet-

ing at His own right hand after time, which shall be the earnest desire in time of your dying friend."

Sir Robert Hamilton

" 'Christianity' is not a mere synonym of 'religion', but is a specific form of religion determined in its peculiarity by the great series of historical occurrences which constitute the redemptive work of God in this sinful world, among which occurrences the resurrection of Christ holds a substantial and in some respects the key position."

B. B. Warfield

"We can no longer speak of a bourne from which no traveller e'er returns. The resurrection of Christ has broken the middle wall of partition down and only a veil now separates earth from heaven. That He who has died has been raised again and ever lives in the completeness of His humanity is the fundamental fact in the revelation of the Christian doctrine of immortality."

B. B. Warfield

"The doctrine of the Trinity! that is the substance, that is the ground and fundamental of all, for by this doctrine and this only the man is made a Christian; and he that has not this doctrine, his profession is not worth a button."

John Bunyan

"Beloved, do not, I beseech you, ground your salvation even in your faith. Ground it only in Jesus Christ who alone is your Saviour. And remember this, — that it is not your faith that saves you but God, and God alone, by whom it is that faith is wrought in your soul, and by whose power it is that you are guarded through

your faith unto that salvation which is reserved for you in heaven, and which shall without fail be revealed at the last day. Can your faith fail? Nay, forget your faith. Certainly the power of God, your Almighty Saviour, through which alone you have faith and which is pledged to your guarding, cannot fail!"

B. B. Warfield

"God's Word has two edges; it can cut back-stroke and fore-stroke: if it do thee no good, it will do thee hurt; it is the savor of life unto life to those that receive it, but of death unto death to them that refuse it."

John Bunyan

"Christ must be helpful to thee every way, or He will be helpful to thee no way; thou must enter in by every whit of Christ, or thou shalt enter in by never a whit of Him. Wherefore look not to have Him thy Saviour, if thou take Him not for King and Prophet; nay, thou shalt not have Him in any one, if thou dost not take Him in every one of these."

John Bunyan

Religious Terms Defined

A few definitions of important religious terms will be given in this department in each issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". The aim will be conciseness without the sacrifice of accuracy. Where possible the Westminster Shorter Catechism will be quoted.

CALVINISM. That system of Christian doctrine which, holding to the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Holy Scripture as the rule of faith and life, recognizes God's absolute sovereignty and complete control over all things, and man's absolute dependence on God for every factor of his salvation, faith and life. Named after John Calvin, the author of the system's classic formulation, "The Institutes of the Christian Religion", A. D. 1536.

ARMINIANISM. That theological system which regards the sovereignty of God as limited by the free will of His creatures. Arminianism teaches that God's decree of election proceeded from God's advance knowledge of men's free decisions to repent and accept Christ, so that it is really man, not God, that determines who shall receive eternal life. Named after Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch theologian who lived 1560-1609.

PIETISM. Originally a religious awakening in the Lutheran Churches of Europe in the latter part of the 17th century. This movement tended to set up an antithesis between personal Christian experience, on the one hand, and

creeds, doctrinal orthodoxy and church organization, on the other hand. Today the term "Pietism" is used to describe a type of religion which strongly emphasizes the regeneration and sanctification of the individual Christian, while it regards "the world" not as something which the Christian should influence for righteousness, but as something from which the Christian should withdraw, lest his holiness be contaminated by contact with it.

BARTHIANISM (Also called "Theology of Crisis", "Dialectical Theology", "Neo-Orthodoxy" and "Neo-Supernaturalism", with approximately the same meaning). A new variety of theology developed by the Swiss theologians Karl Barth and Emil Brunner and their disciples. Barthianism is a reaction against Modernism, but it is based on modern philosophy rather than on the Bible as the infallible Word of God. It denies the possibility of a direct, real revelation of God in human history, accepts the conclusions of the "higher critics" concerning the Bible, rejects the true doctrine of the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, and teaches that the Bible provides no ethical principles of

universal applicability. According to Barthianism, Christianity is essentially a tension between the realm of being (or pure fact) and the realm of thought (or pure logic).

LIBERALISM. That type of religion which denies or minimizes the supernatural character of Christianity (denying the reality of supernatural miracles, supernatural redemption and supernatural Christian experience), and holds that salvation is essentially a matter of culture or "character building" rather than a matter of redemption, and that Christianity, as a product

of the evolutionary development of the human race, differs from other religions only in degree, not in essential nature.

NATURALISM. The theological basis of Liberalism. Naturalism denies the reality of the supernatural in the Bible and in Christian experience, and holds that all religion and religious experience is the product of the operation of universal impersonal natural laws. The "God" of naturalism is really only a part of nature, or an aspect of the universe.

Studies in the Larger Catechism of The Westminster Assembly

LESSON 183—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JULY 3, 1949

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 unpopular today: the man-centered religion of the twentieth century tries to avoid the 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 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 remedy 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 unconscious of it, or obsessed by 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. 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, which is imputed to every person; (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 the 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 a person is born with.

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 184—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JULY 10, 1949

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 in 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, or taken hold of), 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; that is, 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 to atone for sin.

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 really wants to be saved from his guilt. True Christian repentance is 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 increasing 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 185—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JULY 17, 1949

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 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 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." On pages 1089-90 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 176 of this course, in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 4 No. 2, April-June 1949, pp. 68,69. 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. Second, 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 of 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 hand 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 Dispensational 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, for the former is a legalistic perversion of the latter. (See "Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments". by Geerhardus Vos, pp. 141-145; pub. 1948 by Eerdmans, Grand Rapids).

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 or ever will 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. 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, does not love his brother. The person who does not love 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; 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 it is not the real root.

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.

LESSON 186—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JULY 24, 1949

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 and holy God permit evil to originate and exist in His creation? We can only accept what the Bible tells us concerning this subject with child-like 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 subsequent 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 (e. g., 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; 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 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 own 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 187—FOR WEEK BEGINNING JULY 31, 1949

Q. 195 (Continued). What do we pray 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 the human soul. Modern "Liberal" theology tends to deny the existence of an objective, personal devil. Satan is said to be just a name for the sinful tendencies and desires of our own 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 is at stake in this matter. It is clear that Jesus believed in Satan as a real, individual, personal spirit. If 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 whom he can work and act. 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 in 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 attached to them, and love them more than we love God. Then 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 an 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 the Christian. If it were not for our remaining sinful nature, 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. 8:7, 8) that Satanic temptations are so insidious and so often successful. The Christian cannot take any real comfort from his own strength of char-

acter 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 188—FOR WEEK BEGINNING AUGUST 7, 1949

Q. 195 (Continued). What do we pray 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 remaining corruption of nature, etc., even true Christians are not only subject to temptation but sometimes reckless in exposing themselves to it.

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.

Psalms 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 temptation and sin 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 fatigue of body 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 true 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 Bible data. Of course true 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 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, faith and 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, live a holy life and thus 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 sins. 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 189—FOR WEEK BEGINNING AUGUST 14, 1949

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 all 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
6. 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 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. If He does not control all that comes to pass, He cannot make all things work together for good for His people. Only a God who is absolutely in control of the entire created universe can make 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 of 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 snowflake to the growth of a civilization, from the growth of a 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 in 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 been put out, but is still burning, yet it is being prevented from spreading and destroying without limit. The remaining corruption in the Christian, call-

ed "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; 2:8). 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 this 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. This 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 190—FOR WEEK BEGINNING AUGUST 21, 1949

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 He purposed 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 rea-

son for this is easy to discern: that we should not become too proud and self-confident by constant freedom from conflict with sin, or 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 recovered out of it by the grace of God.

(a) David, 2 Sam. 12:13. (b) Jonah, Jon. 1:3; 2:1,2. (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 in 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 191—FOR WEEK BEGINNING AUGUST 28, 1949

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 Greek manuscripts. The King James Version includes the conclusion in Matt. 6:13, but the American Revised Version 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 expositors." Jamieson, Fausset & 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 part of the genuine 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 to our petitions?

We should join praises to our petitions, ascribing glory to God, because praise is an essential element of 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 repose 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 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.

An Announcement to our Readers

The end of Lesson 191, above, marks the completion of our course of lessons on the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly which was begun in the first issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" (January 1946). The place of the lessons on the Larger Catechism will now be taken by a new series of lessons on the subject: "The Covenant of Grace: Its Meaning and Implications for the Church and the Christian".

Rather than begin the new series of lessons during the summer season, it seemed wise to wait until autumn when many churches start new plans and activities. Accordingly, the series of lessons on the Covenant of Grace will commence in our October-December issue. For those who desire some material to study during the interval, there is provided below a series of four Bible History Quizzes for the four weeks of September. Editor.

Bible History Knowledge Tests

The following series of tests in knowledge of Bible History deals only with simple matters concerning the historical contents of the Bible. Questions involving doctrinal or exegetical problems have been avoided. Each test consists of 25 numbered statements, each of which counts 4 points. Under each numbered statement there are four alternatives, a, b, c and d, only one of which is true. Check the letter indicating

the true alternative in each case, without using a Bible or any other help. After completing the test, turn to the back cover and compare your answers with the list of correct answers given there. If you picked the correct alternative under each of the 25 numbered statements, your score will be 100. Deduct 4 points for each error.

SERIES 1—FOR WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 4, 1949

1. The Garden of Eden was located in (a) Africa (b) Europe (c) Asia (d) a mythical continent which no longer exists.
2. The people in the world today are descended from (a) Cain (b) Abel (c) Seth (d) a son of Adam whose name is unknown.
3. The first polygamist was (a) Cain (b) Jabal (c) Jubal (d) Lamech.
4. Methuselah lived to the age of (a) 696 years (b) 898 years (c) 969 years (d) 989 years.
5. The number of people saved in the ark was (a) two (b) five (c) eight (d) twelve.
6. After the Flood Noah lived (a) 50 years (b) 150 years (c) 250 years (d) 350 years.
7. The Tower of Babel was located in (a) Palestine (b) Syria (c) Babylonia (d) Arabia.
8. The original home of Abraham was (a) Jerusalem (b) Damascus (c) Ur (d) Nineveh.
9. The date of Abraham was approximately (a) 4000 B. C. (b) 3000 B. C. (c) 2000 B. C. (d) 1000 B. C.
10. Melchizedek was (a) a Jew (b) an Egyptian (c) an Armenian (d) a person of unknown ancestry.
11. Melchizedek was (a) a prophet, a priest and a king (b) a priest and a king (c) a prophet and a king (d) a priest and a prophet.
12. The number of Jacob's sons was (a) four (b) eight (c) twelve (d) fourteen.
13. Joseph was (a) a son of Abraham (b) a grandson of Abraham (c) a great-grandson of Abraham (d) a great-great-grandson of Abraham.
14. The date of Joseph was approximately (a) 2050 B. C. (b) 1550 B. C. (c) 1050 B. C. (d) 550 B. C.
15. Moses was a member of the tribe of (a) Levi (b) Judah (c) Simeon (d) Naphtali.
16. Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt approximately (a) 1820 B. C. (b) 1320 B. C. (c) 1020 B. C. (d) 720 B. C.
17. After leaving Egypt, the Israelites wandered 40 years (a) in the Lybian desert (b) in the Sinai peninsula (c) in Mesopotamia (d) in Syria.
18. The Ten Commandments were given by God (a) at Mount Hermon (b) at Mount Sinai (c) at Mount Zion (d) at Mount Gerizim.
19. The Tabernacle was made and set up (a) in the land of Egypt (b) in the land of Moab (c) in the land of Canaan (d) in the wilderness of Sinai.
20. Moses broke the stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written because (a) he dropped them by accident (b) he was angry at the children of Israel for worshiping an image (c) Aaron persuaded him to break them (d) his father-in-law wanted them broken.
21. Because Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, they were (a) killed by fire sent by God (b) put to death by order

- of Moses (c) forced to remain outside the camp for seven days (d) required to confess their sin and then pardoned.
22. The earth opened and swallowed up Korah, Dathan and Abiram because they had (a) spoken contemptuously of the authority of Moses (b) persuaded the people to worship a golden calf (c) murmured because of the lack of water to drink (d) refused to give an offering for the Tabernacle.
23. The first high priest of the children of Israel was (a) Moses (b) Jethro (c) Joshua (d) Aaron.
24. Moses lived to the age of (a) 80 years (b) 100 years (c) 120 years (d) 140 years.
25. Moses was buried (a) in the land of Moab (b) in the land of Canaan (c) in the wilderness of Sinai (d) in the country of Ammon.

SERIES 2—FOR WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 11, 1949

1. After the death of Moses, the children of Israel were led by (a) Aaron (b) Joshua (c) Hobab (d) Caleb.
2. The first city west of the Jordan captured by the Israelites was (a) Jerusalem (b) Hebron (c) Bethel (d) Jericho.
3. Achan was stoned to death because (a) he allowed one of the people of the enemy to escape alive (b) he had broken the Sabbath by gathering sticks for fuel (c) he had spoken blasphemous words against God (d) he had disobeyed a command of God by appropriating and hiding certain valuable objects in the earth under his tent.
4. The first defeat suffered by the Israelites west of the Jordan was at (a) Jericho (b) Ai (c) Gibeon (d) Gilgal.
5. The people of Israel were deceived into making a covenant with the (a) Jebusites (b) Midianites (c) Gibeonites (d) Amorites.
6. The tribe of Judah was assigned territory located (a) west of the Dead Sea (b) east of the Dead Sea (c) along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee (d) in the northwest corner of Palestine next to the Syrian border.
7. Sisera was the commander of the army of (a) Eglon, king of Moab (b) Jabin, king of Canaan (c) Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia (d) Sihon, king of Heshbon.
8. The Israelites were led to victory over Sisera by (a) Caleb and Joshua (b) Deborah and Barak (c) Othniel (d) Jephthah.
9. Gideon was commissioned by God to deliver the children of Israel from the (a) Midianites (b) Amorites (c) Hittites (d) Moabites.
10. Gideon's great victory was gained by an army numbering (a) 300,000 men (b) 30,000 men (c) 3,000 men (d) 300 men.
11. Zebah and Zalmunna were (a) two cities in the southern part of Palestine (b) two rivers flowing into the Jordan (c) two officers in Gideon's army (d) two enemy kings put to death by Gideon.
12. Jephthah led the Israelites to victory over the (a) Moabites (b) Ammonites (c) Philistines (d) Midianites.
13. Samson was the champion of the Israelites in their struggle against the (a) Perizzites (b) Hittites (c) Midianites (d) Philistines.
14. Elimelech and Naomi originally lived at (a) Bethel (b) Bethlehem (c) Beth-shemesh (d) Beth-horon.
15. Ruth was originally (a) a Moabitess (b) an Egyptian (c) a Midianitess (d) An Amoritess.
16. Ruth's relation to David was that of (a) mother (b) grandmother (c) great-grandmother (d) great-great-grandmother.
17. Hophni and Phinehas were (a) two chieftains of the Philistines (b) two prophets who warned the people of Israel to repent (c) the wicked sons of the godly priest Eli (d) two half-brothers of the prophet Samuel.
18. The Philistines returned the ark of the Lord to (a) Bethlehem (b) Beth-shemesh (c) Beth-horon (d) Bethel.
19. Saul, the first king of Israel, was a member of the tribe of (a) Judah (b) Manasseh (c) Benjamin (d) Reuben.
20. King Saul disobeyed God by sparing the life of (a) Nahash, king of the Ammonites (b) Agag, king of the Amalekites (c) Achish, king of Gath (d) Doeg the Edomite.
21. The death of king Saul was caused by (a) an incurable disease (b) his own servants conspiring against him and killing him (c) David thrusting him through with a sword (d) himself committing suicide after having been wounded by the Philistines.
22. After Saul's death, David became king over the tribe of Judah, and reigned in Hebron for (a) 4 months (b) 3½ years (c) 7½ years (d) 10½ years.
23. Ish-bosheth, son of Saul, reigned as king over Israel (except the tribe of Judah) for (a) 2 years (b) 10 years (c) 14 years (d) 40 years.
24. David reigned as king over the whole nation of Israel for (a) 12 years (b) 23 years (c) 29 years (d) 33 years.
25. Absalom ordered Joab's barley field set on fire because (a) he wanted revenge on Joab because of an old grievance (b) he wanted to keep the grain from falling into the hands of the Philistines (c) Joab had not paid for the seed with which the field was planted (d) he wanted to bring pressure on Joab to come and see him, so that he could ask Joab to use his influence with David to gain permission for Absalom to see his father David again.

SERIES 3—FOR WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 18, 1949

1. Solomon became king of Israel about (a) 1075 B. C. (b) 975 B. C. (c) 875 B. C. (d) 775 B. C.
2. Solomon's reign lasted (a) 20 years (b) 30 years (c) 40 years (d) 50 years.
3. Solomon's great sin was (a) numbering the people of Israel (b) neglecting the Feast of the Passover (c) oppressive taxation (d) marrying many foreign women, with resultant compromise with idolatry.
4. Rehoboam, son of Solomon, reigned over (a) the entire nation of Israel (b) the tribes of Judah and Benjamin only (c) all the tribes west of the Jordan river (d) the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh.
5. After the division of the kingdom, the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel was (a) Nadab (b) Baasha (c) Jeroboam (d) Omri.
6. The man commanded by God to destroy the entire family of Ahab was (a) Jehu (b) Elijah (c) Elisha (d) Jehoshaphat.
7. Naaman the Syrian was miraculously cured of his leprosy through obeying the command of (a) Elijah (b) Elisha (c) Amos (d) Hosea.
8. The ruler of the kingdom of Judah who tried to kill all members of the royal family of David was (a) Manasseh (b) Ahaz (c) Athaliah (d) Amon.
9. The one child of David's line that escaped destruction was (a) Josiah (b) Joash (c) Uzziah (d) Jotham.
10. Samaria, capital of the kingdom of Israel, was captured by the Assyrians about (a) 922 B. C. (b) 822 B. C. (c) 722 B. C. (d) 622 B. C.
11. The king of Judah whose life was lengthened 15 years in answer to prayer was (a) Uzziah (b) Hezekiah (c) Josiah (d) Joash.
12. The discovery of the Book of the Law, followed by a great revival, took place during the reign of (a) Jehoshaphat (b) Joash (c) Josiah (d) Hezekiah.
13. Jerusalem was captured and destroyed by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar in the year (a) 786 B. C. (b) 686 B. C. (c) 586 B. C. (d) 486 B. C.
14. The great prophet in Judah at the time Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians was (a) Isaiah (b) Jeremiah (c) Ezekiel (d) Daniel.
15. In fulfillment of prophecy, the Babylonian captivity lasted (a) 50 years (b) 70 years (c) 80 years (d) 100 years.
16. The prophet Ezekiel carried on his work (a) in Samaria (b) in Judah and Jerusalem (c) among the captives in Babylonia (d) in Persia.
17. Daniel was taken captive by the Babylonians (a) 20 years before Jerusalem was destroyed (b) 10 years before Jerusalem was destroyed (c) at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (d) after the destruction of Jerusalem.
18. The king who was punished by seven years of insanity was (a) Sennacherib (b) Nebuchadnezzar (c) Ahasuerus (d) Darius.
19. The king who was rebuked by miraculous handwriting on the wall was (a) Nebuchadnezzar (b) Belshazzar (c) Esarhaddon (d) Evil-merodach.
20. The king who had Daniel put in the lions' den was (a) Darius (b) Cyrus (c) Belshazzar (d) Nebuchadnezzar.
21. The Persian king who gave permission for the first return of the Jews from Babylonia was (a) Cyrus (b) Darius (c) Ahasuerus (d) Artaxerxes.
22. The rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem was completed about (a) 716 B. C. (b) 616 B. C. (c) 516 B. C. (d) 416 B. C.
23. Nehemiah was cupbearer to the Persian king (a) Cyrus (b) Darius (c) Ahasuerus (d) Artaxerxes.
24. Nehemiah rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem about (a) 644 B. C. (b) 544 B. C. (c) 444 B. C. (d) 344 B. C.
25. The interval between the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of the events recorded in the New Testament was about (a) 400 years (b) 300 years (c) 200 years (d) 100 years.

SERIES 4—FOR WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 25, 1949

1. John the Baptist was a member of the tribe of (a) Judah (b) Benjamin (c) Levi (d) Asher.
2. The mission of John the Baptist had been especially predicted by the prophet (a) Micah (b) Jeremiah (c) Ezekiel (d) Malachi.
3. John the Baptist spent most of his life (a) in Jerusalem (b) in Samaria (c) in Caesarea (d) in the wilderness.
4. At the time of the birth of Jesus, the Roman emperor on the throne was (a) Augustus (b) Tiberius (c) Claudius (d) Nero.
5. At the time of the birth of Jesus, the governor of Syria was (a) Herod (b) Pilate (c) Cyrenius (d) Agrippa.
6. Jesus' public ministry began when he reached the age of (a) 21 years (b) 25 years (c) 30 years (d) 31 years.
7. Jesus' public ministry covered about (a) one

- year (b) two years (c) three years (d) 3½ years.
8. Jesus' twelve disciples were (a) all Jews (b) all Gentiles (c) all Jews except one (d) all Jews except two.
 9. Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived at (a) Bethlehem (b) Bethany (c) Bethsaida (d) Bethabara.
 10. The miraculous feeding of the five thousand took place near Jerusalem (b) the Sea of Galilee (c) Jericho (d) Samaria.
 11. The number of instances of Jesus raising a dead person to life recorded in the Gospels is (a) one (b) two (c) three (d) four.
 12. The man compelled to bear the cross of Jesus was (a) Barabbas (b) Judas (c) Nicodemus (d) Simon of Cyrene.
 13. The body of Jesus was buried by (a) the twelve disciples (b) Mary and Martha (c) Joseph of Arimathea (d) the Roman soldiers.
 14. After His resurrection and before His ascension Jesus appeared to His disciples during a period of (a) 10 days (b) 20 days (c) 30 days (d) 40 days.
 15. The number of souls added to the Church on the day of Pentecost was about (a) 1000 (b) 2000 (c) 3000 (d) 4000.
 16. The miraculous healing of the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the Temple resulted in (a) the high priest and his associates becoming Christians (b) Peter and John being arrested, threatened and released (c) all Christians being driven from Jerusalem (d) the formerly lame man being arrested.
 17. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead by the power of God because (a) they were reluctant to sell their property (b) they tried to lie to the Holy Spirit (c) they were ashamed to be known as Christians (d) they were spies of the chief priests.
 18. The first Christian martyr was (a) James the brother of John (b) Paul (c) Barnabas (d) Stephen.
 19. Before he became a Christian, Saul of Tarsus was (a) a Pharisee (b) a Sadducee (c) a publican (d) a disciple of the Greek philosophers.
 20. Not counting Hebrews, the number of books in the New Testament written by Paul is (a) 5 (b) 10 (c) 13 (d) 15.
 21. The number of New Testament books written by the apostle John is (a) one (b) 4 (c) 5 (d) 6.
 22. The number of New Testament books written by Luke is (a) one (b) 2 (c) 3 (d) 4.
 23. The name "Christians" was first applied to believers in Jesus Christ in the city of (a) Jerusalem (b) Samaria (c) Antioch of Syria (d) Philippi.
 24. The book of the Acts of the Apostles ends with (a) Paul's shipwreck on the way to Rome (b) Paul living at Rome as a prisoner of the Roman government (c) Paul being released and returning to Palestine (d) Paul's death as a martyr under Nero.
 25. The visions recorded in the Book of Revelation were seen by the apostle John (a) at Jerusalem (b) at Ephesus (c) at Antioch (d) on the island of Patmos.

THE SCOFIELD REFERENCE BIBLE

By the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick

Note: This is the second of a series of articles by Mr. Kilpatrick on various versions and annotated editions of the Bible. The series will be continued for several issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life".—Ed.

The "Scofield Reference Bible" (hereinafter referred to as SRB) is an edition of the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible, with a system of footnotes, references and paragraph headings inserted in the text of the Bible. These are intended as a help to the student of the Bible, in explanation of the difficulties and apparent contradictions, and in giving the English equivalent of Hebrew and Greek coins, weights, etc. The notes do not bulk large, many pages having no footnotes at all, and the references are not nearly so plentiful as in the ordinary edition of the English Bible, with references in the center of the page. Yet the over all interpretation of the Bible given, differs, in some re-

spects radically, from the historic creeds of the Christian Church.

Listed on the title page with the editor, the Rev. C. I. Scofield, D. D., are eight consulting editors.

Probably no other single agency in our generation has done more to influence the doctrinal thinking of Christian people. Since its release in the British Isles in 1909 (slightly revised in 1917), more than two million copies have been sold in our country alone. And there are thousands of Christians who look on "Scofield's notes" as, while not inspired, yet holding the key to the understanding of the Scriptures. While finding practically no acceptance in the seminaries of our land, yet it has been promoted in numerous Bible conferences and Bible institutes.

In the Introduction there are some excellent statements of aim, such as the following: "Ex-

pository novelties, and merely personal views and interpretations, have been rejected." Unfortunately, there is much evidence that the editor has failed in this, as also in ruling out "fanciful and allegorical schemes of interpretation."

In view of the estimate of the SRB which follows it should be stated at the outset that the point of view underlying this system of notes is that of the full inspiration of the Scriptures, an infallible Bible, completely reliable for instruction in faith and life. There is an excellent note on 1 Cor. 2:13, discussing the manner in which the Word of God has been transmitted to men. Furthermore, there are many notes which provide helpful analysis and application of Scripture truth.

However, in spite of certain merits, and of the fact that there has been much thought, study and comparison of Scripture with Scripture expended on this study Bible, it must be said that the system of notes is not to be depended upon. The notes are well integrated, teaching the doctrine of dispensationalism, which is the major objection to the SRB from the point of view of Reformed theology. Evidence will be cited to show that the system of dispensationalism as a whole is unscriptural, but there are other characteristics which will be noted first, which show weaknesses apart from dispensationalism.

Arbitrary Interpretations

On the very first page of the Bible, which has but four verses, there are four notes. In the first, a derivation of the word for "God" is given which is not borne out by the most widely accepted Hebrew lexicons. This is a point on which believing scholars differ, and most of them only suggest WHAT MAY BE the derivation of the word, because no one can be certain. But SRB gives no hint that there is any uncertainty about it.

The third note on page one, along with the heading inserted between verses one and two of the first chapter of Genesis, asserts the cataclysmic theory of the earth's beginnings. This is, briefly, the idea that between verses one and two there is the lapse of a vast geologic age, presumably millions of years. The heading inserted here reads: "Earth made waste and empty by judgment (Jer. 4:23-26)." The reference from Jeremiah reads as follows: "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger."

Certainly Jeremiah is not talking here of

something in the deep, deep past, but of something then future, as the very next verse plainly shows: "For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." Two other references are given, Ezek. 28:12-15 and Isa. 14:9-14, neither of which has any clear reference to such a catastrophe. In both references the language is highly ironical and figurative. Moreover, we are specifically told, contrary to the theory given in this note as a fact, that the angels were not tested on earth, but that they were cast out of heaven.

On the next page, with regard to the creation of the "greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night," SRB says that while the sun is a type of Christ, the "Sun of righteousness", the moon is the Church. There is Scripture for the former, but not a single suggestion in the Scriptures of the latter. In fact, SRB finds Genesis full of figures of things to come. Chapter 24 is said to be "highly typical", yet not once is there any mention in the rest of the Bible of any typical meaning for any of the "types" named in this note.

SRB defines a Scripture type (p. 4) as "A DIVINELY PURPOSED illustration of some truth." Even with such a wise limitation, the study of types in the Bible is a difficult subject, and one on which the finest of scholars speak with great reserve. But when a "type" is found in literally dozens of incidents and objects, where no DIVINE PURPOSE is so much as hinted at in the Bible itself, the types become nothing more than private interpretations.

Illustrations of such arbitrary interpretations might be multiplied, as from the notes on the descendants of Japheth, and the meaning of the various parts of the tabernacle, where the Scriptures are silent as to the typical significance. It would appear that SRB has forfeited our confidence when it speaks on types in the Bible.

Unwarranted Claims

Utterly unwarranted claims are made for certain interpretations which are suggested. With regard to Hag. 2:9, SRB says that "IT IS CERTAIN that the restoration temple, and all subsequent structures, including Herod's, were far inferior in cost and splendour to Solomon's." This idea fits in, of course, with SRB's scheme that the physical temple is yet to be restored in the future, in fulfilment of prophecy. Yet the "Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia" says that Herod's temple "in many respects surpassed in the extent of its courts and the splendour of its decorations the ancient sanctuary of Solomon." Thus SRB's "It is certain" does not appear so certain. And there is a commonly accepted interpretation of Hag. 2:9 which would not require a future temple more glorious than

Solomon's, namely, that the presence of Jesus Christ in the temple which was built in Haggai's time, gave it a glory that exceeded the glory of Solomon's.

With regard to Zech. 4:1 we read, "The vision of the candlestick and olive trees is, AS WE KNOW, from Rev. 11:3-12, etc. . . . Joshua and Zerubbabel were DOUBTLESS the two olive trees. . . ". This happens to be a passage about which devout scholars are in wide disagreement, yet SRB speaks dogmatically. Concerning Hag. 2:9, in the note of Zech. 2:1, SRB says, "IN NO SENSE has this prophecy been fulfilled," yet for many Christians, at least in one very real sense, the presence of Jesus in the temple did fulfil it.

With regard to the interpretation of Ezek. 38, SRB says: "That the primary reference is to the northern (European) powers, headed up by Russia, ALL AGREE." Other commentators on this passage which were consulted fail to show any such complete agreement as is claimed. Some suggest substantially the same interpretation as SRB, but only the possibility, while E. J. Young says that he regards it as "extremely improbable"; and further, "It is our professed conviction that at this point Scripture does not permit us to speak with dogmatism."

There are numerous instances where SRB speaks with finality on a point where the best of scholars differ. It seems presumptuous, to say the least, if not actually misleading, to give certain interpretations as assured truths, and never suggest that some devout scholars disagree.

Literal Interpretation

The SRB insists constantly that the prophecies of the Bible must be literally fulfilled. Concerning Isa. 9:7, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, etc.", SRB says, "The 'throne of David' is a phrase as definite, historically, as 'throne of the Caesars', and as little admits of 'spiritualizing' ". It sounds pious and humble and reverent to insist on believing literally all that the Scriptures have to say. But parts of the Bible are plainly and literally written in figurative language, and it is plain that we were so intended to understand them. A study of prophecy, declared by the Scripture itself to have been fulfilled, shows that such insistence on literality is not valid.

Matthew's Gospel says (2:13-15) that Isaiah's prophecy, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isa. 9:2), was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus to the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. Again, Hosea's words (11:1), "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt", are said to have found fulfilment in the fact that Joseph and Mary fled with the babe Jesus to Egypt and then

returned. Just how "literally" are we to interpret prophecy?

Actually, SRB interprets a prophecy literally where it suits the dispensational system, and typically where it suits. On p. 725 we read, "That Babylon the city is not to be rebuilt is clear. . . ". The interpretation of this prophecy, then, is considered to be typical. But prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel to the land of Canaan, it is insisted, must be interpreted literally.

Again, illustrations might be multiplied, but one more only will be given. Gen. 13:15 says, "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." This is God's promise to Abraham, which SRB says must be fulfilled literally. And since, so says SRB, it has not yet been fulfilled, (though a good case can be made for the complete fulfilment in the days of Solomon), there is to come a time when the restored nation of Israel must inherit that land. Now to be fulfilled literally, Abraham himself, as well as the Jewish nation, must inherit that earthly country. SRB does not deal with this question, but it would seem that it is answered in Heb. 11:10,16. For Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And "they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly."

Dispensationalism

To come to the principal criticism of the SRB, we are told in the Introduction that one of the main contributions to be made in this Bible is "in recovering to the church" the treasures of the prophetic portion of the Bible, which portion, it says, "has been closed to the average reader by fanciful and allegorical schemes of interpretation." Now to the extent that it has been so closed, it ought to be recovered, but it would appear that in the dispensational scheme set forth so systematically and insistently in SRB, we have a human system superimposed on all Scripture.

First mention in the notes of the dispensations is found with respect to Gen. 1:28, where the word is defined: A dispensation is "a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture. " There seven are INNOCENCE, creation to the fall; CONSCIENCE, from the fall to Babel; HUMAN GOVERNMENT, Babel to the call of Abraham; PROMISE, call to the giving of the law at Sinai; LAW, Sinai to the coming of Christ; GRACE, first coming of Christ to second coming; KINGDOM, the millennial age.

Now the word "dispensation" is to be found in the Scriptures four times in the AV, 1 Cor.

9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2; and Col. 1:21, and the same Greek word, otherwise translated, is found five additional times, yet Scofield in his notes passes over all without comment, except one. Concerning Eph. 1:10, SRB says, "The dispensation of the Fulness of Times. This, the seventh and last of the ordered ages which condition human life on the earth, is identical with the kingdom covenanted to David. . . ." (This should suggest that the SRB idea of a dispensation is not very fully found in the Scriptures.)

SRB says that "Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture", but it would seem that the distinction is a man-made one. Such a division of the ages was absolutely unknown until the nineteenth century, so far as we can discover from the literature of the Christian Church. It is true that SRB, p. 111, quotes Augustine of the 5th century, saying "Distinguish the ages, and the Scriptures harmonize", as though Augustine supports the dispensational scheme. But Augustine apparently knew of only two ages or dispensations, that before the coming of Jesus Christ, and that after. This is the traditional idea of the Christian Church. The idea of seven dispensations is a relatively modern notion.

While the idea of seven distinct dispensations is presented as the sober teaching of the Scriptures, it is impossible to find any such distinctions in the Bible itself. For instance, SRB says (p. 20), "The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law (Ex. 19:8). Grace had prepared a deliverer (Moses), provided a sacrifice for the guilty, and by divine power brought them out of bondage (Ex. 19:4); but at Sinai they exchanged grace for law."

It is a preposterous idea that Israel acted rashly. Rather we read (Ex. 19:7,8), that "Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered and said, All that that the Lord hath spoken will we do." That is merely what God expects of men at all times. God said explicitly, when confirming the covenant to Isaac, that it was "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." This word for law is the same as that used of the ten commandments at

Sinai, the TORAH. It is found also, before the giving of the law at Sinai, in Ex. 12:49; 13:9; 16:4,28; 18:16,20. Again, Pharaoh is represented as being punished because of his disobedience to God.

Not only was obedience to God's law a condition of acceptance with God before the law was given on Sinai, but grace is evident during the "Dispensation of law", so-called. Jonah preached, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (4:3). There were no conditions presented by which the punishment might be avoided, so far as the record goes, yet when Nineveh repented the judgment was stayed. This was the grace of God. It was God's grace that stayed death when man first sinned. It was grace that gave the law as a written word, as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Law and grace are not mutually exclusive, but both are found throughout God's Word. All men who are saved, either before the giving of the law, or after, were saved by grace (Heb. 9:15). All men who are saved are expected to keep God's law, not as a means of salvation, for by the law shall no flesh be justified, but as a response to God's love.

The same covenant of grace, under which all men are saved that are saved, was differently administered before the coming of Christ—through outward ceremonies and sacrifices—from the spiritual manner of administration after the coming of Christ. But the arbitrary distinction of the seven dispensations is manifestly a man-made scheme, into the mould of which all Scripture has been forced, in the SRB notes.

(For a fuller discussion of dispensationalism, the reader is referred to "Prophecy and the Church", by Oswald T. Allis, published 1945 by The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa., and reviewed in 'Blue Banner Faith and Life', Vol. 2, p. 54 ff.)

(Note: In the foregoing article, certain words in quotations from the Scofield Reference Bible are printed in capitals for the sake of emphasis. This emphasis is that of the author of the article, not that of the SRB.—Ed.)

The Prelude to the Psalms

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

In some old manuscripts Psalms 1 and 2 were written as one. But, whether so written or not, they together form a fitting prelude to the Praises and Prayers that follow. Here, as it were, the curtain is raised; the stage is set. The

scene embraces the domain of the Kingdom of God, heaven, and all the earth centralized in Zion, the mountain of His holiness, the throne of His judgment, from which "goeth forth the Law of Jehovah". The time is "TODAY".

Dispersed round about are all the nations and peoples of the earth. The execution of judgment is in progress. Already men are marked "righteous", i.e., justified, or, "wicked", i. e. condemned. All are moving, moving in opposite directions; in the way of the righteous, the way of blessedness, from life unto life; in the way of the wicked from death unto death.

The dominant theme of the Psalms is JUDGMENT AND MERCY as united in God's administration of His Kingdom over all people.

"I mercy will and judgment sing:
"Praises, Lord, I'll sing to Thee."
(Psalm 101:1)

Accordingly, the Prelude is in two parts. Moreover, the Psalms are "the word of Christ", who while one Person forever, yet speaks in two distinct natures, as Man and as God; as "THE MAN", the Righteous Man, representative of all the righteous, and as SON OF GOD, the Judge of all. Also, the Psalms cover, prophetically, the life history of man, which now proceeds in two states, or conditions: (1) Under the Law, "the man that doeth these things shall live by them"; (2) Under the Gospel, "the just shall live by faith". And the happiness of a man, the real blessedness that overflows in praise, provided for from the beginning in perfect obedience to the Law of God, may now be found, even by sinners, through faith in the Promise of God.

Listen and you will hear the music,—
"BLESSED is the man Who hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked. Nor stood in the way of sinners, Nor sat in the seat of scoffers:" (The verbs here say that he has not at any time, on any occasion, done these things). He is "holy, guileless, undefiled, SEPARATE FROM SINNERS, and become higher than the heavens." He is the man who said, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." "For in the law of Jehovah is his delight; And on his law he meditates day and night."

"He is like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth his fruit in his season, And his leaf does not wither, And whatever he does he brings to a successful issue." The ever-green tree, the Tree of life, is the insignia of his presence, first in Eden. in the midst of the garden; and now, "on this side of the river and on that, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding his fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." He is like a tree "bearing fruit wherein is the seed thereof after its kind." "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hands". He hath life in himself", and, "He giveth life to whom he will", "that they may be called, Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord".

"Not so the wicked: They are like chaff which the wind driveth away. ("Chaff", i.e., of

no more use, broken and dead). Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment; Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; ("knoweth", because He prepared it for them and keeps leading them in it by His unchanging love and constant care); But the way of the wicked shall perish"—and with it, of course, all who are traveling thereon.

Since this is the situation by the determinate decree of the Most High; since these sentences of life and death are now in process of execution,

"WHY have the nations made insurrection? And WHY do the peoples meditate a vain thing?"—(a futile course of action? Why do they not meditate on the Law of Jehovah?) "The kings of the earth have set themselves, And the great men consult together against Jehovah and against his Christ, (saying), Let us break their fetters asunder, and throw off their cords from us".

The Law of Jehovah does indeed bind men, but only to their advantage, that they may walk at liberty within the whole vast Kingdom, from the River to the ends of the earth. It is not an arbitrary, uncertain law of a tyrant, but is made known to them beforehand with a sure promise of life in obedience, and a faithful warning of death in disobedience. It is Jehovah's "instruction" that they may not miss the way of life. When it is realized that these "fetters" are "the fetters of the covenant" of Jehovah's mercy (Ezek. 20:37), and that these "cords" are "the cords of his love" (Hos. 11:4), no reasonable answer can be given to this question, "WHY?". Yet deluded men, flaunting their folly and pride, rage on like the wind-driven sea that finds no rest.

"He who sitteth in the heavens laughs;"—"laughs" as the granite cliff laughs at the waves dashing out their impotence at its foot.

"Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further". "The Lord mocks them". He who is the same yesterday and today and forever mocks them with frustration and defeat from which there is no escape.

"Then he speaks to them in his anger, And in his burning wrath he terrifies them.—I, even I, have established my King on Zion, the mountain of my holiness." The thing is done. They are face to face with an inexorable fact. Now they will have to deal FIRST with One, having full and universal authority, set BETWEEN them and Jehovah. And they will have to do it "TODAY", for immediately, the Anointed and Appointed King speaks, confirming Jehovah's words,—
"I declare the decree: Jehovah said to me, MY SON art THOU; I MYSELF have TODAY begotten THEE."

The title "SON" is here to be understood in its primary Scriptural sense, not of origin, derivation, but, of equality, sameness of essential being. "I and my Father are one". As SON OF GOD, He possesses all the qualifications for limitless sovereignty. Now all power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth. "Thou mayest shatter them with a rod of iron; Thou mayest dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel."

Surely fear will make them listen. Rebellion will bring destruction. Why not listen to what Jehovah said? Why not consider what He has done? He has put BETWEEN Himself and men One who has the right to intercede, "Ask of me"; One to whom He has promised to give an inheritance and a possession of people for Himself. But, if He received people for His possession, it must be that they are saved from perishing, and shall share in the blessedness of life. Plainly there is mercy, very great mercy, in this arrangement.

And "TODAY" must mean not only the day of judgment, but, concurrently, the day of grace. "TODAY" means NOW. "NOW is the judgment of this world". "NOW is the day of salvation". "TODAY if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

Jehovah alone is Judge, yet He Himself "judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to his Son", who, being SON OF GOD, possesses all the qualifications for righteous judgment. And, "He gave him authority to execute judgment because he is Son of Man", really, truly man, One who having taken to Himself our flesh and blood, knows what is in man, and can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; One who "loved the church (the congregation of the righteous), and gave himself up for it";—who, though eternally "in the form of God", possessing all the attributes of God, yet "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death",—"death", the Law of Jehovah's penalty for sin. "Christ died for our sins"; "By the grace of God he tasted death for every man"; "on which account God highly exalted him".

The New Testament not only completes, overwhelmingly, the identification of THE MAN and SON OF GOD, but also reveals clearly the underlying purpose and motive of the divine procedure: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

By this establishment of His throne of Judgment, God "now commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the

world in righteousness by the MAN whom he ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men in that he raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30,31). "Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest. . . even to us . . . and commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that THIS MAN is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:40-43).

"Therefore, now be wise, ye kings: Be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, And rejoice with trembling." The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom. And, if Jehovah is to be feared, surely also is His Son, in whose hands the power of Jehovah lies. "He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father". Therefore, "Give homage to the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way (the way of the wicked), For his wrath may soon be kindled,—BLESSED are all they who put their trust in him."

Literally, "BLESSED are all they who take refuge in him." To take refuge in the Judge, is to leave one's case entirely in His hands, making no defense, but trusting only in His mercy. This disclosure of the possibility of taking refuge in Him and finding salvation is the very Gospel itself. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

The Psalms belong to the present time and the present world. They are adapted for those who have listened to the word of Jehovah and of His Christ, and found refuge IN HIM. Being IN HIM they rejoice with Him, and they suffer with Him. His enemies are their enemies. They endure the hatred, the opposition and persecution such as He endured in this world. But at the same time they share the eternal righteousness and peace, the happiness, the abounding blessedness that can be found in Him alone.

Let all the earth sing to the Lord,
And make a joyful sound;
Lift up your voice aloud to Him,
Let songs of praise resound;
Before the Lord, because He comes,
To judge the world comes He;
He'll judge the earth with righteousness,
All men with equity.

(Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued in future issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life".—Ed.)

BLUE BANNER QUESTION BOX

Readers are invited to submit doctrinal, Biblical and practical questions for answer in this department. Names will not be published with questions.

Question:

Is a lie ever justifiable? (With reference to the Hebrew midwives, Ex. 1:15-22; Rahab, Josh. 2:4-7; Samuel, 1 Sam. 16: 2; etc.).

Answer:

A lie is a sin against the God of infinite, eternal, and unchangeable truth and holiness. The distinction between truth and falsehood is absolute. It is not for a moment to be left open to question, "Yea, hath God said?" It is not to be minimized or obscured in the least. The devil is doing all he can to that end. So much the more should we seek to think clearly about so important a matter.

With reference to Ex. 1:15-22, there is every reason to believe that what the midwives said to the king (verse 19), was true. The Hebrew women were physically superior to the Egyptian, vigorous, uninjured by the indulgences and deforming dress of too great riches. Knowing of the king's decree, they would naturally delay sending for the midwives, and, the midwives, who "feared God", would not come to the delivery unless and until it became necessary.

The midwives did not tell the king everything they knew. They probably concealed a number of facts which they were under no moral obligation to reveal to the king. They recognized a higher obligation to God. They avoided committing murder. Their intention was not to deceive, but to attend to their business in the fear of God. God's general approval of their action is indicated in verses 20 and 21.

Similarly, with reference to 1 Sam. 16:2. Samuel told one of the reasons why he came to Bethlehem. He did not tell all the reasons. He was acting as God's agent, following God's instructions. God had chosen David to be king of Israel instead of Saul. The time had now come when Samuel, David himself, and, presumably, David's father, should be informed of this fact, and David actually set apart and anointed. Evidently, we are to suppose that Samuel informed David and Jesse, privately, as to the meaning of his action. But, suppose Samuel had given out this information publicly, and it had reached Saul. In all human probability both Samuel and David would quickly have been put to death, and God's plan disrupted, (which, of course, is an idle thing to say). But both David and Israel had to be prepared for the carrying out of God's plan. Time was necessary.

Samuel told the truth, but he did not tell all the truth at that time. He concealed what he was under no moral obligation to reveal; rather, he concealed what he was under the highest obligation to conceal. His intention was not to deceive, but to perform the duty assigned him, at the time and in the way God appointed. "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter". But, "God cannot lie".

There are, of course, circumstances in which one is under obligation to tell the whole truth, as he knows it, but there are other circumstances in which, too often, he tells more than he should.

The above is not to say that either Samuel or the midwives were perfect in everything they said and did; it is to point out the fact that they did what is here recorded of them in the fear of God. The real fear of God includes an abhorrence of all falsehood and duplicity.

With reference to Josh. 2:4-7: "By faith Rahab, the harlot, perished not with them that believed not, having received the spies with peace" (Heb. 11:31). "Was not also Rahab, the harlot, justified by works, having received the messengers, and sent them out another way?" (James 2:25).

Rahab, the person, was justified on account of her faith in Jehovah, the only living and true God—a faith demonstrated by her taking care of the spies. But, her lie was never justified, even though she may have intended that good should come of it. Neither was she justified for being a harlot. No sin is ever justifiable. Its penalty must be paid in full. Rahab had the beginnings of genuine faith, though she was not yet a wholly sanctified Christian. She increased in knowledge and in faith; accepted the true substitutionary meaning of the sacrifice; became one of the people of God, partaking of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace; and wonderful to say! was given a place in the ancestral line of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5,) and, the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, atoned for her lie, cleansed her from all sin. "He is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God through him". Even those persons who have lied may be justified through faith in Christ, but only because Christ paid the death penalty for their lies. He did so because He loved them in full acceptance of the fact that NO LIE IS EVER JUSTIFIABLE. F. D. F.

Question:

Is James 5:14 applicable to the church today?

("Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord").

Answer:

Certainly this text is applicable to the church today. It is a part of Scripture, and "all Scripture is . . . profitable", helpful, useful, serviceable, to every one of the people of God. But, precisely for this reason, it is not to be taken out of its setting and context, or interpreted apart from the rest of Scripture, which is the Book of the Covenant of the Lord.

EVERY PROMISE OF GOD IS A COVENANT PROMISE. The Everlasting Covenant offers two things: The LAW and the PROMISE of God; it requires two things: FAITH in that promise and OBEDIENCE to that law. These two requirements are not, and need not be, attached expressly to every particular promise or command, for they are always and everywhere implied.

For example, that tremendous promise, "Ask and ye shall receive" does not mean that we shall receive whatever we ask, whether in accord with God's will, or not, or that we shall receive anything miraculously, without effort on our part, or use of means. Strength of mind and body, the means at our disposal, and the wisdom to use the appropriate means, are all of God's provision, and so far indicate God's will that we make use of them.

The promise of James 1:5. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. . . and it shall be given him", does not mean that we can get wisdom outside of God's appointed way of giving us wisdom, apart from our own effort and discipline, or apart from the accumulated wisdom of the past that is available to us. His provision is His command. And, "Let him ask in faith." "Faith" here means an unswerving covenant faith; faith in God, that His will shall be done. It does not mean faith in ourselves that our prayer will move God or the universe to give us what we want, whether or no.

So here, "If any of you lack strength,"—literally, "Is any among you without strength?" James is writing to church members about practical Christianity. "Let him call for the elders of the church, (i.e., for the representatives of the covenant body), and let them pray for him." He is a member of that body which is knit together with Christ in the love of God in such a way that "all the members should have the same care one for another", and, "when one member suffers all the members suffer with it," The weakness of one member is a weakness of the body, and is a matter of concern to the whole body, not only for the member but for itself.

Is the church today losing its covenant consciousness? The Covenant of Grace as administered for us is the ground for our help in every need.

"Having anointed him with oil", as a matter of course, for that was the accepted panacea for all weakness, a means of refreshment and a lift. Even the contestants in the games were anointed with oil for additional fitness. But here it was to be done "in the name of the Lord".

In his discussion of these words in "Counterfeit Miracles", Dr. B. B. Warfield says. "The meaning is in effect, 'giving him his medicine in the name of the Lord', and the whole becomes an exhortation to Christians, when they are sick, to seek unto the Lord."

There is nothing in the passage to indicate that a miracle was to be expected; that outward means were not to be used. The anointing with oil was an outward means. Why not then all appropriate means available?—means provided for us by the wisdom, goodness and power of God, indicating His will that we use them? But we are to use them "in the name of the Lord", leaving results to His good will.

The promise is (verse 15), "The prayer of faith shall save the patient, and the Lord will raise him up"—IF, AS, and WHEN it is His will. The "prayer of faith" is the prayer that takes the appointed way through the Mediator of the Covenant, saying, "Not my will, but thine be done".

There is nothing here of so-called "Prayer-healing" or "Faith-healing". It is not the prayer, nor the faith, nor the medicine, nor the physician's skill, that heals. "The Lord is he who health all thy diseases". "To Jehovah, the Lord, belong deliverances from death". Disease and death are consequences of sin. The Lord alone can take away sin. To Him be all the thanks and praise. F. D. F.

Question:

A minister said that the observance of Lent is a custom at the very heart of the Christian religion, and that those denominations which are opposed to observing Lent are wrong, and oppose it merely because of their conflicts with the Roman Catholic Church long ago at the time of the Reformation. How can such a statement be answered?

Answer:

In the first place, those denominations which are opposed to the observance of Lent do not "oppose it because of their conflicts with the Roman Catholic Church". They oppose it because Jesus Christ has not commanded it. They oppose it on the well established Scriptural

principle that, What God has not commanded in His worship is forbidden.

The custom of observing Easter and the forty-day fast in preparation for Easter did not exist in the apostolic church, but grew up slowly as the church became more corrupt, as the commandments of men crowded out the commandments of God, and formalism suppressed spirituality. The "forty-day" period was not introduced until the fourth century, and nothing like uniformity of practice was reached before the seventh century.

The "Lenten Fast", i.e., the "Spring Fast", developed not from the teaching of Christ or His apostles, but from the Asceticism that crept into the church from without. The New Testament has very little to say about fasting. No set time is appointed for it. Christ once, in circumstances of extraordinary trial, "fasted forty days and forty nights". He did this alone, in seclusion, before He had gathered His disciples about Him. There is no record that He ever repeated this discipline, or in any way indicated that it should be made a "custom" in His church. Instead, He warned against its abuse (Matt. 6:16-18). It has so often been perverted by hypocrisy, by formalism, and by that self-righteousness which expects extra credit for doing "more than is commanded", while it neglects what is commanded, and discounts the all-sufficient atonement and perfect righteousness which Christ provided for the believer. Thus the facts do not support the notion that "this is a custom at the very heart of the Christian religion".

Repentance and prayer, with whatever self-denial may be conducive thereto, according to the peculiar condition and circumstances of the individual, are necessary for all church members in summer, in autumn, and in winter, as well as in spring.

Read "The Observance of Days" in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 2, pp. 17-20; and "Formality Not Christianity", in Vol. 3, pp. 173-176. F. D. F.

Question:

Please give an interpretation of Matt. 10:34 ("Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword").

Answer:

It seems reasonable to suppose that this whole 10th chapter is included in Jesus' charge to the twelve, as He sent them out to preach the Gospel and to heal, for the next chapter begins: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed. . .". Thus the statement must refer primarily to the divinely-purposed result of the

preaching of the Gospel. It may be rendered, "Don't get the idea that I came to send peace on the earth. . .", with emphasis on their BE-GINNING to think this thing.

Doubtless Jesus here intended to call attention to the utterly malignant and absolutely irreconcilable nature of this sinful world, with respect to the Kingdom of God. Where the Gospel goes, it brings peace to the heart of the believer, but it brings division and strife between the believer and the unbeliever. It would seem that the words of the angels at the birth of Christ, "Peace on earth", etc., are habitually misapplied. That element of this world which holds to its sin will not be placated. In fact, its murderous antagonism toward the Gospel is such that it answers with physical violence. Since the Gospel witness may not use the sword to propagate the Gospel, the sword—same word—must be placed in the hand of the magistrate (Rom. 13:4) to protect the lives of the saints.

Peace and harmony and unity are great blessings, and are to be sought, but we are not to be discouraged when faithful witnessing of the truths of the Gospel brings opposition and bitterness. Of Melchizedek it is said (Heb. 7:2, "first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace." L. E. K.

Question:

How should we answer those who say they feel they ought not to abstain from singing and sit in silence when they attend churches where uninspired hymns are being sung instead of the Psalms of the Bible?

Answer:

I would appear that those who object to remaining silent when in an assembly where uninspired songs are being sung, are moved primarily out of regard to what others will think. Now it is true that Paul says, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22), but he did this as carrying out his purpose to make himself "servant to all" (verse 19). Concerning things not sinful in themselves, such as eating, or not eating, meats from the market place—where they had been offered to idols—Paul said, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8:13). Here Paul would eat or not eat, whichever would cause least offence to Christian brethren, because neither to eat nor to refrain from eating was sinful in itself.

However, it is utterly different, where something wrong in itself is concerned. To do something sinful in itself, in order that good might come, he condemned in most vigorous language (Rom. 3:8).

The question, then, must be answered: "In what class does the singing of uninspired hymns fall?" The standard by which to judge as to whether or not the singing of hymns is sinful in itself, is not what an earthly pope or minister may say, or what the majority of Christians practice, or even what some very religious and devout people do. The standard for judging our conduct must be our profession.

According to our profession we have declared that we believe that "PSALMS, TO THE EXCLUSION OF ALL IMITATIONS AND UNINSPIRED COMPOSITIONS, ARE TO BE USED IN SOCIAL WORSHIP" (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXIV.8) In other words, we have said that we believe it to be wrong in itself to use uninspired songs in worship. Therefore, it falls into the second class; and to do something wrong, that good may come, is absolutely contrary to the Scriptures.

It would appear, then, that elemental honesty requires that we refrain from singing hymns in social worship. It is true that some people even some Christians, may think us fanatical and blinded by traditions of the past, but there are others—and they the more thoughtful—who have more respect for one who is loyal to his profession, than for the one who is governed by what others do. However, whatever people think of us, our vows are primarily to God, and especially our worship is addressed to God. We ought to please Him, even if we have to stand alone.

The fact that people may not know our reason for not singing, does not alter our duty to do right. We cannot always explain to everyone our conduct, but of course we should make known our faith insofar as possible. To refrain from singing often gives an opportunity to witness concerning purity of worship. To sing along with others makes it impossible for us to give a strong witness.

To sing along with others when worshipping in another church, hides our light under a bushel, is a denial of our profession, and places a higher evaluation on the opinions of men, for accomplishing good, than on the truth of God. L. E. K.

Question:

Is it proper to say "God needs ministers", "God needs missionaries", etc.?

Answer:

Certainly not. Although such expressions as the above are quite common, they should always be avoided as they are incompatible with the Bible doctrine of God as sovereign, infinite and almighty. We should never, even by implication, ascribe need or deficiency of any kind to God. Perhaps those who thoughtlessly use such expressions really mean to say "God graciously

condescends to use missionaries, ministers, etc., to accomplish His purposes". According to the Bible, God needs absolutely nothing; and what God chooses to use to accomplish His purposes, He Himself perfectly and fully provides. God chose to use Paul as a missionary to the Gentiles; God also created Paul, bestowed the necessary qualifications on him, and called him to his appointed task.

The Scriptures teach that the Triune God is a self-contained Being, sufficient unto Himself and not standing in and need of created beings. The idea that God created the universe because of necessity—because without it He lacked something—is an old heresy. The notion that God "needs" anything to accomplish His purposes is akin to this heresy, and alien to the Scriptural conception of God. God and man are NOT correlative to each other.

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, AS THOUGH HE NEEDED ANY THING, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. . ." (Acts 17:24,25). "God. . . is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, NOT STANDING IN NEED OF ANY CREATURES WHICH HE HATH MADE, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory, in, by, unto, and upon them. . ." (Confession of Faith, II.2). "God is unto himself all-sufficient, deriving no help or glory from any of his creatures; but manifesting his own glory by them, unto them, and upon them. . ." (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, 1.3). "God is a Spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection: ALL-SUFFICIENT . . ." (Larger Catechism, 7). J. G. V.

Question:

Please give an explanation of 1 Cor. 15:29, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" Does the apostle sanction the practice of being baptized for the dead? If not, just what is the force of his argument in this verse?

Answer:

While this reference to being baptized for the dead is mysterious, the language used is simple enough and there can be no doubt as to its meaning. The Greek words used mean "baptized ON BEHALF OF the dead"; this rules out the interpretation that the reference is to a practice of postponement of baptism until the approach of death. Alford comments: "The ONLY LEGITIMATE REFERENCE is, to a practice, not otherwise known to us, not mentioned here with any approval by the apostle, not generally

prevalent . . . , but in use by some, of SURVIVORS ALLOWING THEMSELVES TO BE BAPTIZED ON BEHALF OF (believing?) FRIENDS WHO HAD DIED WITHOUT BAPTISM." The apostle, in mentioning this practice, does not sanction it; nor does he condemn it, as turning aside to prove the wrongness of the practice would constitute an interruption of his argument and a digression from the purpose of the chapter. We must remember that the subject of this chapter is not baptism, but the bodily resurrection. The apostle alludes to an existing practice without commenting on its rightness or wrongness, one way or the other, and then argues that if there is no resurrection, then this practice is meaningless. In other words, those Corinthians who (wrongly, as we know) practiced baptism for the dead, by that very practice implied belief in the resurrection; yet these same people, very inconsistently, raised questions, doubts and denials concerning the resurrection. In effect, Paul charges them with inconsistency because on the one hand they allowed baptism for the dead, while on the other hand they questioned the resurrection.

In logic this type of argument is called an "ad hominem" argument. It is a challenge of the other party's right to hold a certain position, or to make a certain statement, on the ground that something else which he has said or done is incompatible with the position or statement in question. Jesus in Matt. 12:27 used such an "ad hominem" argument: "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges." The Jews had their exorcists who professed to be able to cast out devils. Alluding to this fact, Jesus charges them with inconsistency in their assertion that Jesus Himself cast out devils by Beelzebub. This does not imply any admission, on Jesus' part, of the REALITY of the Jewish exorcists' work of casting out devils. He merely refers to the existence of the practice (without either commending or condemning it) as a basis for refuting their slander against Himself. An "ad hominem" argument, of course, does not itself alone prove the truth or falsehood of the question at issue, but it may be effective in silencing an opponent who really has no right to take the position he does. J. G. V.

Reviews of Religious Books

One or more current or recent religious books will be reviewed in this department in each issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". 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 through your local bookstore or direct from the publishers; do not send orders to the publisher of "Blue Banner Faith and Life."

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY: OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. by Geerhardus Vos. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1948, pp. 429, \$5.00.

The first notice this reviewer saw of the book by Dr. Vos was a brief review in a Toronto periodical, "The Gospel Witness", by Prof. A. C. Whitcombe of Toronto Baptist Seminary. He described it as "Clear, straightforward reading . . . combines scholarship with orthodoxy. He has escaped majoring in minors and succeeds in doing away with a little of that weariness of the flesh for which theological books are noted."

Mr. Whitcombe's remarks are justified. Yet I am sure the book is easier reading for a professor than for an ordinary pastor. That is no fault of the book, nor of the professor, but of the pastor. Biblical Theology as a distinct discipline is a rather new approach to Bible study for your reviewer, and may be so to many Covenantal pastors. Dr. Vos in his introductory chapter lists the four departments of Theology as Exegetical Theology, Historical Theology, Sys-

tematic Theology, and Practical Theology. He then explains that Biblical Theology is a branch of Exegetical Theology which deals with "the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible." But he recognizes objections to the name—it should not be unique in being based upon the Bible; it should not presume to be as wide in scope as the department of which it is a branch. So he prefers the name "History of Special Revelation", instead of "Biblical Theology." But names are hard to change in academic circles, and for forty years Dr. Vos taught Biblical Theology in Princeton Theological Seminary, of which he is now professor emeritus.

Whereas Systematic Theology presents the knowledge of God in a logical, systematic way, Biblical Theology presents it from an historical viewpoint. This is not to be confused with "man's" changing ideas about God", but tells rather what GOD did to reveal Himself to man during his history. The whole book is a refreshing study; and although it has elements of both Systematic Theology and exegesis, it has advantages not possessed by either. There is here

no dependence upon an isolated phrase or sentence to prove a point, though many phrases and sentences are explained. The author has a profound knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, and certainly an understanding of what man is to believe concerning God. The leaders of the Church should become familiar not only with the contents of such a book, but with the method employed to study the Bible—"A History of Special Revelation."

Some of the most valuable paragraphs deal with the need of a special revelation, and the method God used to reveal Himself and His will. Here are answers to such questions as may be asked by a small child and by an advanced scholar. Did the prophets hear God's voice with their ears, as we hear another person speaking? Is there special revelation today? Will there ever be again? Has all special revelation been written down?

There was special revelation before the fall of man, before the revelation of the way of redemption. Since the record of this preredemptive revelation is in the Pentateuch, it is included in Part I of the book, called "The Mosaic Epoch of Revelation". The second division of Old Testament Biblical Theology is entitled "The Prophetic Epoch of Revelation". The longest chapter in this part is "The Content of the Prophetic Revelation", but the part has six chapters, including the mode of reception of the prophetic revelation, and the mode of its communication.

There are five chapters on the Biblical Theology of the New Testament. The special events that are discussed here are the nativity, Jesus and John the Baptist, the probation (temptation) of Jesus, and Jesus' public ministry. Dr. Vos shows that Jesus' teachings about God were the same as the Old Testament teachings. Holiness, righteousness, retribution, love, atonement, are found through all the Bible. Jesus' criticisms of Judaism are not condemnations of Scripture. Jesus was the most orthodox of the orthodox, but with an understanding of Scripture, and a sense of personal fulfilment of it, that no other man can have.

"Biblical Theology" delightfully defends orthodox positions as to the person and work of Christ, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the plan of salvation. An uncommon explanation of Jesus' temptation, or probation, is given, with close examination of the Scripture Jesus used in His answers to Satan.

Readers will be helped by the pages on Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom of God. Dr. Vos presents what has appeared readily enough, but which few dare to assert: that Jesus speaks of a two-sided kingdom, a present, spiritual development, and a "catastrophic ending-up", The "kingdom", popular goal of modernistic preach-

ers, includes forgiveness of sin, eternal life, divine sonship, as well as "service to mankind". The Fatherhood of God taught by Jesus is nowhere a denial of the Fatherhood taught by the Old Testament. Jewish leaders had perverted Scripture, making service to the Law their aim rather than service to the Lawmaker.

"Biblical Theology" is to be recommended, not only for its defense of the faith, but for its dramatic presentation of that revelation, and for the appeal of approaching the Bible in a fresh way—the unifying, strengthening sweep of an historical whole.

Rev. J. G. Vos has edited the notes of his father's lectures at Princeton, and Bible students are indebted to him for making them available in a bound volume. The book is well printed, and the index lists, first, subjects and names, then Scripture references. This is not a book to be read and discarded, but one to be kept for frequent reference.—Richard Hutcheson.

BONE OF HIS BONE, by F. J. Huegel. Zondervan Publishing House, 847 Ottawa Ave., N. W., Grand Rapids, Mich. No date, pp. 118, \$1.50.

Although this book is not dated, the title-page informs us that it is the fifth American edition of a book previously published in England. The author is an evangelical missionary in Mexico, where he has labored for a quarter of a century and now teaches in the Union Seminary of Mexico City. During World War I he served as a chaplain.

The theme of this book may be stated as the believer's mystical union with Christ, its meaning, consequences and implications. The book is wholly loyal to supernatural, historic Christianity and in its main positions is quite orthodox. The intense spiritual earnestness of the author is evident on every page. It is a clarion call to professing Christians to awake to the truth that without vital union with Christ their profession has no spiritual reality. Some of the chapter headings are: "The Christian Life a Participation—Not an Imitation"; "Participants of the Cross—Christ's Death our Death"; "Paul—Chief Exponent of Co-Crucifixion"; "Participants of Christ's Resurrection"; "Christ's Ascension our Ascension"; "Christ's Victory our Victory"; "Christ's Sufferings our Sufferings"; "Christ's Appearing our Appearing"; "The Bearing of this Position Upon the Church, Missions and Prayer".

Among many other good things, the following seemed to the reviewer to be especially worthy of quotation: "(Satan's) chief strategy, at present, seems to be an adulterated Christianity. In a thousand and one ways he is draining out the essence—he is removing the savour from the salt—he is watering down the pure

wine of the true Christian life. As has been so often said: he will float any number of truths to get into circulation one lie. He causes all our divisions. He is the father of so many counterfeit 'isms'. He will even give you a revival if only you keep it all in the realm of the 'flesh-life'. A revival which does not exalt the Cross, which brings no soul to co-crucifixion, to a deep realization of an inner oneness with Christ in death and resurrection, simply fails to register in heaven" (pp.80,81). "We are not to let go of a single faculty and expect God to control us as if we were machines. Union with Christ does not signify any such things. After coming into deepest union with Christ . . . we do not become passive. We do not give up self-control. As never before we live. Personality is vastly enhanced. The will is greatly fortified. The mind is marvellously illumined. The memory is gloriously strengthened. We are free as never before to choose, to will, to reason, and to act" (pp. 84,85).

It would be a pleasure to give this book an unqualified recommendation, in view of its earnest spiritual pleading and the wealth of precious truth which it presents. Honesty, however, requires the reviewer to call attention to certain defects which should be guarded against. On page 98 the expression "incorporation in the Godhead" is used to describe the ultimate destiny of Christians. Presumably the author did not intend this in a pantheistic or unorthodox sense, but the expression is an unguarded one, extremely liable to interpretation in a pantheistic sense, and therefore it would better have been avoided. Even in the glory of heaven, the distinction between Creator and creature will to all eternity remain.

Another defect consists in the author's tendency, at certain points, to employ Arminianizing modes of expression, as for example, "Christ cannot possess us . . . unless we are willing to be dispossessed of our own life" (p. 117). It would be more accurate to say that when Christ does possess us, He makes us willing to be dispossessed of our own life. "Even Christ Himself could not set a soul free from Satan's power which failed to avail itself of the efficacy of His death . . ." (p. 75). Here the author seems to hold the Arminian notion that the first step in the salvation of a particular human being is taken by man rather than by God; if he believes in the divine initiative and prevenience of grace (not as a general offer merely but as an application of redemption to the soul), he does not show it, and has used language which is proper to the contrary (Arminian) view.

The author states confidently, "Not only the Bible, but science as well declares man to be a tripartite being. He is spirit, soul, and body" (p. 67). This is very dogmatic in view of the fact that the great majority of orthodox theo-

logians have always held that man is NOT a tripartite being, but is composed of two essential elements, soul and body, the "spirit" and "soul" not being distinct essences, but aspects of that part of man's being which is non-material. Trichotomy, while popular in American Fundamentalist circles, has always been a minority view in orthodox theology. As for science — really "science" is an abstraction; we have only the opinions of scientists, and it is very doubtful whether there is any real consensus among them as to man's alleged tripartite constitution.

On page 66, in a quotation, occur some alleged instances of typology which may be regarded as doubtful. Canaan is said to represent the highest union with Christ; Joshua to represent the Holy Spirit, etc. Another unguarded expression is "the rights of Satan" (p. 76), which the reviewer considers unscriptural. Satan is a rebel against God and therefore has no rights, although God may have allowed him certain limited concessions.

This book, as is proper in a book on this subject, emphasizes the Christian's mystical union with Christ. But in the judgment of the reviewer it would have been wise to relate the mystical union to other aspects of salvation to a greater extent than the author has done. Unless a reader is very well grounded in Christian doctrine, he might easily get an unbalanced idea of the Christian life from the book. It should be made clear that here is a "federal" or covenant relation between the Christian and Christ, as well as a mystical union. For example, on page 75 the truth of justification by faith might well have been mentioned and related to what is there given. — J. G. Vos.

FAIREST FLOWER, by F. J. Huegel. Zondervan Publishing House, 847 Ottawa Ave., N. W., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1945, pp. 85, \$1.00.

This little volume is a devotional book dealing with the Christian as "the saint" (in the Scriptural usage of the word "saint", a holy person). Some of the chapter headings are: "The Saint in Disrepute"; "The Saint Vindicated"; "The Saint Defined"; "The Saint — Pulsating with Life"; "The Saint's Goal"; "The Saint and Sin"; "The Saint as Viewed by the Missionary"; "The Saint and Heaven". In general, the message of this book is orthodox and helpful. It serves to emphasize the reality of the Christian's spiritual life, and the antithesis between the Christian and the unsaved person.

One of the good points of the book is its frank rejection of perfectionism (pp. 43,44). On p. 44, however, it is stated that "Moral perfection is found only in God". Probably the author intended this in an orthodox sense, but the statement is liable to misconstruction. Adam was morally perfect when created. His perfection

was not the same as God's perfection, for God is infinite, whereas Adam was created a finite being. Yet Adam possessed moral perfection such as is proper to a finite being, namely, freedom from all imperfection. The Scripture also speaks of "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23).

A defect of the book consists in references by the author to various historical characters in terms of undue commendation. He states that Francis of Assisi "preached the Gospel as it had not been preached since the days of the apostles" (pp.73,74). This seems to the reviewer a great exaggeration; think of Athanasius, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, all of whom probably preached the Gospel with zeal and fervor equal to that of Francis, and with comparative freedom from the trend toward legalism and asceticism which characterized the preaching of Francis and almost all other medieval preachers.

The work of the French Roman Catholic, Fenelon, is stated to be "absolutely biblical" (p. 79), and the author says that his work "has never been surpassed". Fenelon persecuted the Jansenists, who of all Roman Catholics most closely approached the evangelical position. Our author also praises Madame Guyon too highly, stating that she "spent four years in a dungeon of the Bastille because she promulgated doctrines found in the Holy Scriptures" (p. 79). Dr. B. B. Warfield ("Perfectionism", II, pp. 374 ff.) clearly points out that Madame Guyon and archbishop Fenelon were not essentially evangelicals but Quietists; their personal religion was not evangelical Christianity but a mysticism which grows on a different root, and which is not, indeed, even peculiar to Christian circles, but appears in widely variant religious climates.

One more defect of this book must be reluctantly pointed out. The author says: "If you removed saintliness from society, it would collapse like a punctured balloon" (p. 55). He cites a number of moral and civic virtues of Abraham Lincoln as evidence of Lincoln's "saintliness". The author is here on dangerous ground, for apart from the presence of the saints in the world, the common grace of God restrains sin, produces natural virtues and renders civilization possible. Egypt and China had highly developed social orders, which did not "collapse like a punctured balloon", for ages before Christianity came on the scene. Rome had a history of centuries of civilization, law and order, before ever there was a Christian in Rome. Lincoln had many noble qualities of character, but he never identified himself with the saints by becoming a member of Christ's Church. Lincoln MAY have been a believer, in his heart, but his virtues of character do not prove that he was. Many of Lincoln's virtues could be duplicated in such a man as Cicero, or Confucius. Christians are the

salt of the earth, it is true; but God's common grace is also at work restraining sin and producing decency in people who are not Christians, and even in places where there are no Christians at all. We should not attribute to "saintliness" or special grace what may be only the products of common grace. — J. G. Vos

NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT: MATTHEW AND MARK, by Albert Barnes. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids G, Mich. 1949, pp. 425, \$3.00.

This is the first volume of the eleven volume set in which Baker Book House is republishing the well-known Barnes Notes on the New Testament. The volume is beautifully reproduced from a previous issue by the photo-lithoprint process, and is handsomely bound.

The reviewer confesses frankly that he examined this volume with a question-mark in his mind, in view of the history of the author, Dr. Albert Barnes, who lived 1798-1870. Chiefly on account of certain views expressed in his "Notes" on Romans, Dr. Barnes was tried for heresy in 1836, but acquitted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. The charges against Barnes included unorthodoxy on the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, on original sin, and on the atonement of Christ. Although Barnes was acquitted, there is reason to believe that this was partly due to the prevalence among members of the Assembly of views similar to those of Barnes. The following year (1837) the Presbyterian Church split into the "Old School" and "New School" branches. The "Old School" adhered to the orthodox Calvinism of the Westminster Standards, while the "New School" was characterized by toleration of unsound doctrines (influenced by the "Hopkinsian" heresy of New England) on original sin, the atonement, election and regeneration. When the division took place Dr. Barnes adhered to the "New School" branch of the Church. This does not mean that he was what would today be called a "modernist", but it does indicate that he leaned toward a modification or toning-down of the theology of the Westminster Standards in the direction of the unorthodox theology which proceeded from New England.

The reviewer did not read the present volume in its entirety, but examined it quite closely at certain points. In spite of the history of the author, outlined above, the reviewer did not notice anything objectionable in these "Notes" on Matthew and Mark. On the other hand, he found much that is good and helpful. Everything is clearly expressed, easy to follow and grasp, and the comments are really illuminating. The view of the atonement expressed in the notes on Matt. 20:28, for example, sets forth the orthodox doctrine of the substitutionary atone-

ment clearly and accurately. Many notes provide helpful information about names, places, Greek words, historical circumstances, and the like, which aid the student in grasping the meaning of the Scripture text. A few verses of Scripture text are printed at the top of each page, with the explanatory notes underneath. The price is very reasonable for such a large and beautifully printed and bound book. — J. G. Vos

YOUTH SPEAKS ON CALVINISM: A CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH, by the Youth and Calvinism Group (Grand Rapids, Mich.). Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1948, pp. 75, paper cover, 40 cents.

This little book by a number of young members of the Christian Reformed Church deals with the theological, religious and educational condition of that denomination, for which reason it will naturally be of interest chiefly to those who are members of the same. However it involves matters of concern to all Calvinists.

The various writers of the eight chapters are very intelligently alert and also very seriously in earnest about their religion, its implications for all of life, and the need for applying it in all realms. They believe their beliefs, and call for aggressive action and leadership in the application of them. The book contains some very frank criticism of the denomination, its preaching, etc. Such criticism may be painful to those who are its objects, but on the whole it is to be regarded as a good sign rather than the contrary. Far better have Christian youth criticize some features of the status quo in their denomination, than that the youth should complacently accept the status quo in all points without being interested enough to inquire seriously concerning the condition and principles of their Church.

This is not to say that everything in this book is justified. The reviewer never having been a member of the Christian Reformed Church naturally hesitates to comment on its affairs. In the chapter on "The Living Word" it is charged that present-day preaching in the Christian Reformed Church is too abstract, does not come to grips with the concrete sins and temptations faced by Christian youth today, has too much "glib use of . . . doctrinal formulations", etc. Every minister, regardless of denomination, will readily admit that his preaching could be improved. But the reviewer wonders whether the criticisms of Christian Reformed preaching are not too drastic. Perhaps if the writer of the chapter were in his minister's place he would find that it is not easy to preach even one sermon that is just suited to the knowledge, capacities and spiritual condition of a whole congregation. Unlike a class in a college or university, a Church congregation

includes adults and children, aged persons, those with academic degrees and those with very little formal education, those who are true believers and those who have not yet come to real repentance and conscious personal faith in Christ as their Redeemer. The minister must preach the Word of God to all these people, in a manner suited to their condition and capacity to receive it. The inevitable result is that some will sometimes feel that his sermons are "too deep", while others will accuse him of repeating obvious and elementary truths which everybody knows. There are always some who have not yet really grasped the obvious and elementary truths, and the minister must, for their sake, spend a good deal of time on the A.B.C.'s of Christianity. It would naturally be more interesting and stimulating for the mature members if the minister would advance into matters less familiar to them; but that would leave part of the congregation far behind.

The chapter entitled "A Roadblock" (pp. 45-52) deals with the Christian Reformed Church's stand on amusements. The reviewer confesses personal agreement with the point of view advocated in the chapter. The amusement question is a serious problem in Christian Ethics, especially for young people, but in the judgment of the reviewer the solution does not lie in an ecclesiastical ban on certain particular amusements, but rather in a conscientious practice, on the part of the individual Christian, of the principles laid down in Scripture concerning the use of "adiaphora" (things which are not sinful in themselves, but may or may not be sinful according to circumstances), as in Romans chapter 14. An ecclesiastical ban on particular practices which are not sinful in themselves, is contrary to the historic Reformed doctrine of liberty of conscience. (Cf. The Westminster Confession of Faith, XX.2, "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to His Word; OR BESIDE IT, IF MATTERS OF FAITH OR WORSHIP. . .".) Moreover, to single out certain particular "adiaphora" for ecclesiastical prohibition is certain to result in formalism rather than a conscientious, spiritual discernment, on the part of some members of the Church. (Where an individual abuses his Christian liberty and it is clear that sin has been committed, Church discipline can of course properly be resorted to).

The Christian Reformed Church is undoubtedly the largest truly and consistently Calvinistic denomination in the Western Hemisphere. May it ever continue to be a bulwark of the Reformed Faith and an encouragement to other denominations to stand up for the truth. And may much good come from the discussion aroused by the publication of "Youth Speaks on Calvinism." — J. G. Vos

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BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 4

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NUMBER 4

"IN THE UNITY OF THE GODHEAD THERE BE THREE PERSONS,
OF ONE SUBSTANCE, POWER, AND ETERNITY; GOD THE FATHER,
GOD THE SON, AND GOD THE HOLY GHOST. THE FATHER IS OF
NONE, NEITHER BEGOTTEN, NOR PROCEEDING: THE SON IS
ETERNALLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER: THE HOLY GHOST
ETERNALLY PROCEEDING FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON."

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GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

God answers prayer; sometimes, when hearts are weak,
He gives the very gifts believers seek;
But often faith must learn a deeper rest,
And trust God's silence when He does not speak;
For He whose name is Love will send the best.
Stars may burn out, nor mountains will endure,
But God is true. His promises are sure
To those who seek.

(Missionary Monthly)

The thing surpasses all my thoughts,
But faithful is my Lord;
Through unbelief I stagger not,
For God hath spoke the word.
Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, "It shall be done!"

(Author unknown)

Be prayerful, and thou shalt have
Strength equal to thy day;
Prayer clasps the Hand that guides the world;
Oh, make it then thy stay!
Ask largely, and thy God shall be
A Kingly Giver unto thee.

(Prayer and Promises)

One billow past — another rolls to meet thee
Across thine onward track;
On every side new trials seem to greet thee,
As if to turn thee back.
Until thy soul, o'erwhelmed, in darkness sinking,
Can raise submissive eyes;
Yield to His will, and while the flesh is shrinking,
His purpose recognize.

(Author unknown)

Is this a time, O Church of Christ, to sound retreat?
To arm with weapons cheap and blunt
The men and women who have borne the brunt
Of truth's fierce strife, and nobly held their ground?
Is this the time to halt, when all around
Horizons lift, new destinies confront?

No, rather strengthen stakes and lengthen cords,
Enlarge thy plans and gifts, O thou elect;
And to thy Kingdom come for such a time.
The earth with all its fulness is the Lord's.
Great things attempt for Him, great things expect,
Whose love imperial is, whose power sublime.

(Author unknown)

So shall crown Thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown —
And Thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!
As Thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being beloved!

Robert Browning

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1949

NUMBER 4

Sketches From Our History Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER IV

GLEAMS OF LIGHT IN MEDIEVAL DARKNESS

(Continued from last issue)

3. Anselm, Witness for the Truth about the Atonement.

The substitutionary atonement of Christ is a doctrine taught clearly and consistently in the Scriptures, both in the Old Testament and in the New. But it was many centuries before the Church came to a clear understanding and grasp of this truth. Ever since the age of the apostles, there had been a general acceptance throughout the Church of the doctrine of the atonement, the truth that Christ died for our sins, but this truth was not fully analyzed nor properly defined. Alongside of this general belief in Christ's atonement, there were false, unscriptural ideas about the atonement which were believed and handed down from generation to generation almost unquestioned.

Throughout the Middle Ages it was very commonly held that the atonement consisted in a ransom paid by Christ to Satan, by which the human race was redeemed from Satan's power. This theory regarded Satan as having gained a certain right to control over the human race, by reason of man's fall into sin. It was held that Satan's rights could only be canceled by the sufferings and death of Christ, the Son of God. There was indeed an element of truth in this theory—the truth that the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), that Christ came to bind "the strong man" and spoil his house (Mark 3:27). But the notion that Satan possessed any lawful right to control over the human race, and the idea that the atonement consisted in the payment of a ransom-price to Satan, were definitely unbiblical. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, not to negotiate with the devil about his "rights"; He came to redeem His people by paying a ransom-price to God, not to Satan. Yet this peculiar theory of the atonement as a ransom paid to Satan was held by many eminent Church Fathers during the early centuries and continued to be held quite generally

through the Middle Ages. This false theory was held along with the general doctrine that Christ died for our sins, and the Church did not seem to realize that the popular notion of the atonement was a confused mixture of truth and error. Other doctrines were being studied and defined: the doctrine of the atonement had to wait until rather late in the Middle Ages before it was really clarified.

The first Christian scholar really to analyze and define in a logical and thorough manner the doctrine of the atonement of Christ was Anselm of Canterbury, who was born about A. D. 1033 and died in 1109. Anselm was a truly godly man, and is rightly regarded as one of the great scholars in the history of the Church. A spiritual and devout Christian, he had a profound insight into the truths of the Bible. For all time to come, every orthodox Christian and Church will be Anselm's debtor, for his great service in clarifying the Church's thinking about the atoning work of Christ.

By race Anselm was a Lombard; he was born in northern Italy. His father was a harsh and unreasonable man, but his mother, Ermenberga by name, was a fine Christian, and her careful Christian training, by the blessing of God, bore fruit in Anselm's humble faith in Christ and godly, upright character.

When he was fifteen years old, Anselm wished to enter a monastery, but his father refused permission for this. Later he fell ill, and after recovery abandoned his lessons and for a time followed a life of worldly pleasures. Soon his mother died, and the young Anselm being unable to endure his father's harsh treatment, forsook his home and went to France, where he finally entered the monastery of Bec, in Normandy. The prior of the monastery at this time was the famous Lanfranc, who like Anselm himself was a Lombard from northern Italy, and like Anselm was later to become archbishop of Canterbury.

At the age of 27 Anselm became a monk; at the age of 30 he was chosen prior of the monastery. In 1078 he was elected abbot, or chief officer of the monastery. Under Anselm's leadership the monastery of Bec became renowned as the chief center of learning in the whole of Europe. Scholars and students from near and far were attracted to Bec, not only by Anselm's great learning but also by the influence of his noble Christian character and earnest piety.

In 1093 Anselm became archbishop of Canterbury, the most important Church office in England. This high office was practically forced upon him against his will, for Anselm was extremely reluctant to assume such weighty responsibilities, and much preferred the peaceful life of a scholar at Bec. After struggling for some time to avoid accepting the proffered office, Anselm finally yielded to pressure and became archbishop of Canterbury. We cannot enter here into the long story of Anselm's conflict with William Rufus, king of England, and his successor king Henry I, concerning the autonomy and spiritual independence of the Church over against the civil government of the nation. Though a very meek and patient man, Anselm was absolutely unbending in his loyalty to his principles and conscientious convictions. After long and distinguished service rendered to Christ and the Church, Anselm was called to his eternal reward on April 21, 1109, at the age of 76 years.

Anselm was the author of a number of important theological writings, of which the most influential by far was his little book entitled "Cur Deus Homo" ("Why God Became Man"). This was easily the most noteworthy discussion of the atonement that had appeared since the days of the apostles.

As the title of his book indicates, Anselm's aim was to show the necessity for the Incarnation—"Why God became man". He reasoned that the Incarnation was necessary in order that there might be an atonement for human sin. It is man's duty to glorify God in every action of his life. Since man has fallen into sin by disobeying God, he has failed to glorify God, and has inflicted a grievous dishonor on his Creator. The justice of God requires satisfaction for the dishonor inflicted on God by man's sin. But the sinner cannot himself in any way satisfy the justice of God. Even if the sinner were to leave off sinning and start to live a perfect life (which of course he cannot do), still he could not render satisfaction to the justice of God for his past sins. The sinner, in other words, owes a debt to the justice of God which he cannot pay.

It is man that owes the debt to the justice of God, but this debt is of such a nature that sinful man himself cannot pay it. Anselm argues that even the whole world would not suffice as compensation for the guilt of a single transgression.

Thus God alone can provide the kind of satisfaction that is required; yet it is man that owes the debt. Therefore if satisfaction is to be rendered at all, there must be a being who is both God and man in one person—the God-man, Jesus Christ. Being man, He can represent the sinner in satisfying the justice of God; being God, He can render a satisfaction of infinite value to the divine justice.

Christ being Himself sinless did not Himself deserve to suffer death for sin. By His obedience unto death, He rendered to God more than was required of Him as a man. Thus Christ by His voluntary death on the cross rendered satisfaction to God's justice, the merit of which can be reckoned to sinners. The merit or value of Christ's death on the cross is infinite, because Christ is not a mere man but the God-man. His deity imparts an infinite value to His sufferings and death.

Because of the infinite value of Christ's sufferings and death, Anselm argues, God's justice is satisfied and sinful human beings can justly be forgiven and saved. Christ must be rewarded for His obedience to the Father unto death. But how can Christ be rewarded, since He is God and already possesses the whole universe? There is only one way by which Christ can be rewarded for His obedience, and that is by the blessings of salvation being bestowed on His brethren, the sinful human beings for whom He died.

Such, in bare outline, is the doctrine of the atonement as expounded by Anselm. It will be noted that the essential features of the orthodox doctrine of the atonement were clearly grasped and accurately stated by this Christian scholar who lived eight centuries ago. Manifestly Anselm was a profound student of the Word of God. His "Cur Deus Homo" not only avoided the old error of regarding atonement as a ransom paid to Satan, but provided a penetrating analysis of the problem of the forgiveness of sin, and furnished the Church with clearly defined ideas concerning the atonement. Here was a doctrine of the atonement in which Biblical concepts took the place of speculations, and clear, accurate thinking supplanted the vagueness of earlier writers on the subject.

Anselm did not say the last word on the doctrine of the atonement; he did not work the doctrine out as we have it today in the great creeds and confessions of the Protestant Reformation. In particular, he did not specially discuss the question of the extent of the atonement (that is, the question of whether Christ's atonement was intended for the salvation of all men, or only of the elect). Nor did he fully work out the idea of Christ as the sinner's substitute. But Anselm's work was sound as far as it went. He laid the groundwork, and other Christian scholars were in due time to work out the details along Scriptural lines. Thomas Aquinas, and later the Reformers,

especially John Calvin, built upon Anselm's solid foundation in formulating the orthodox doctrine of the atonement of Christ. We should realize that it is primarily to Anselm that we owe the doctrine of the atonement as we have it, for example, in the Westminster Standards (see the Larger Catechism, Q. 38-40, 44). It was through his studies that the Holy Spirit guided the Church into a clear grasp of this cardinal truth of the Christian faith.

Anselm lived in a day when much was dark in the life and thought of the Church. There was much false doctrine; superstition and corruption were prevalent. But Anselm of Canterbury is a man who shows the brighter side of the picture. He was truly a gleam of light in the midst of medieval darkness. His life and work show

that the Church of his day was not completely corrupt. Over against the legalism, superstition and error concerning salvation which abounded on every hand, there were those who knew and believed the truth of God's Word concerning human sin and divine grace—who knew that the sinner cannot save himself by good works, but must be saved, if at all, by the precious blood of Christ which was shed on Calvary. The fact that Anselm's work on the atonement was taken up by later scholars and used as a basis for further clarification of the doctrine, shows that the Holy Spirit was indeed, according to Christ's promise (John 16:13) guiding the Church into all truth. We should praise and thank God for having given such a man as Anselm to His Church.

(To be continued)

THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS

THEIR ORIGINS, HISTORY AND DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES

(Selections from the book with the above title, published by the author in 1940)

PART II

THE HISTORY OF THE COVENANTERS

CHAPTER I

THE PERIOD OF PERSECUTION, 1660-1688

8. Divisions among the Covenanters during the Period of Persecution.

Throughout the period of persecution the great division in Scottish Presbyterianism was naturally the division between the indulged ministers and their followers, who conformed, to a greater or less degree, to Prelacy, and the strict Covenanters who refused all compliance with Prelacy and maintained field conventicles to the bitter end. As those ministers who accepted the Indulgences were not permitted to teach the binding obligation of the Covenants, they practically forsook the ranks of the Covenanters by accepting the Indulgence; they might be Covenanters in private belief but could not be in public testimony. The very name Covenanter signifies acceptance of the Covenants as binding, and this was unlawful in the Prelatic Church in which the Indulged ministers were tolerated during their good behaviour. The division between the Indulged and the Non-indulged, therefore, was not properly a division between two classes of Covenanters, but a division between men who were silent about the binding obligation of the Covenants and men who maintained a public testimony for that obligation.

During the latter part of the persecuting period, a number of lesser divisions broke out among the Covenanters. In 1681 a Covenanter named John Gib developed fanatical tendencies and gathered about himself a little band of de-

luded people, four men and twenty-six women, who called themselves the Sweet Singers. Though originally Covenanters, the Gibbites repudiated not only the Covenants, but the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Acts of the General Assembly, public declarations of the Covenanters, the metrical version of the Psalter, the division of the Bible into chapters and verses, all payment of taxes, and every minister of the Gospel in Scotland. They left their houses and went to the hills where they spent their time in fasting and chanting the penitential Psalms, while waiting for the destruction of Edinburgh. Donald Cargill visited them in the wilds, and also wrote them a letter, to persuade them of their errors, but they would not heed his warnings. They were apprehended by the authorities, and in the end most of them repented of their errors and follies. The governments seems to have charged the fanatical excesses of the Gibbites on the Covenanters in general, and because of this many of the martyrs from 1681 to 1688, whose testimonies are recorded in the "Cloud of Witnesses", expressly repudiated the errors of Gib.

In 1682 the followers of James Russel withdrew from the fellowship of the Covenanters, not because the latter were too strict, but because they were not strict enough to suit Russel. Patrick Walker says the Russel had had a prominent part in the killing of Archbishop Sharp, and that he was a man of a hot and fiery spirit. His reason for separation from his brethren was that they could see nothing immoral in paying toll or custom at ports and bridges, while Russel wished to make the refusal to pay such dues a condition of fellowship. The Covenanters were all agreed that the Cess, a special tax levied to sup-

port the persecuting forces, was immoral and should be refused; but they were unwilling to refuse all payment of taxes or custom to the existing government, however bad it might be. The "Informatory Vindication" states that "James Russel discovered some unwarrantable excesses, pressing indifferent things as the most necessary duties, (as about naming the days of the week, and months of the year, &c.,) and otherwise imposing upon men's consciences; whereupon he and we parted; after which he branded and aspersed us with false charges, as if we had turned aside to gross defections, and palliated and plastered the corruptions of our time, consorting in this with some few, and even with some who had given little satisfying resentment of their former extravagancies with Gibb, being by them applauded and strengthened in his foresaid excesses".

In 1685 the Earl of Argyle invaded Scotland with an expedition from Holland in an attempt to redress the civil wrongs of the land. Argyle's object appears to have been civil and political rather than religious. The expedition was defeated and dispersed and so ended in total failure. An attempt had been made to enlist the cooperation of the Covenanters, which resulted in a division in the ranks of the Covenanters. Patrick Walker writes that in April, 1685, George Barclay and others came to the west of Scotland "in order to engage, preach up, and prepare a people to join Argyle, who came to Scotland about the Middle of May thereafter, with some men and many notable arms; which when Mr. Renwick, and the general correspondents of the United Societies saw, his manifesto made them to demur, and hesitate to concur in that expedition, upon these grounds and reasons, first, because it was not concerted according to the ancient plea of the Scottish Covenanters, in defence of our Reformation, expressly according to our Covenants, National and Solemn League. Secondly, because no mention was made of these Covenanters, nor of Presbyterian government, of purpose lest the sectarian party should be irritated. Thirdly, because it opened a door for confederacy with sectarians and malignants. Fourthly, because of promiscuous admission into trust (of) persons who were enemies to the cause and accession (i.e., accessories) to the persecution, to wit, Argyle's self, who, many times, if not always, was a member of the bloody council, from May 1663 until 1681, and whose vote took away the life of Mr. Donald Cargill; and next to him, Sir John Cochran of Ochiltree, who was so guilty of that great gush of the precious blood of Mr. Cameron, and these with him at Airmoss". Barclay's attempt to enlist the help of the Covenanters failed, writes Walker, but it "kindled a fire of division amongst that people, who had been unite for five years before". "Then the simple and misled of these societies saw themselves led and left upon the ice; many of them returned with blushing to Mr. Renwick and their former

societies; but never with that cordialness, love, light, life, nor zeal, as before". The breach between Peden and Renwick began in 1685, and Walker states that it was caused by the activities of Barclay and others, who so influenced Peden as "to make him express himself so bitterly against Mr. Renwick, that he would set himself in opposition to him, and make his name stink above the ground". It is pleasant to know that before Peden's death he was reconciled to Renwick, and asked Renwick to pray for him, after which Peden said, "Sir, I find you a faithful servant to your Master. Go on in a single dependence on the Lord, and ye shall win honestly through and cleanly off the stage".

During the years of the "Killing Time" (1685-1688) the Covenanters could ill afford to be troubled by dissension among themselves. But it is impossible but that offences will come. When a man like James Russel advocated his absurd and unjustifiable views, it was absolutely necessary, both for the sake of conscience before God and for the sake of a good name among men, that he and the Covenanters should part company. When Barclay and others attempted to involve the Covenanters in a purely political project, it was absolute necessary that they reject the temptation to join in the matter. It was to their credit that they saw the snares in their pathway and kept themselves clear of such entanglements.

9. The Extent of the Persecution Suffered by the Covenanters.

John Howie, in the conclusion to "The Scots Worthies" estimates that during the twenty-eight years of persecution in Scotland, "above 18,000 people, according to calculation, suffered death, or the utmost hardships and extremities". Of this number, he states, 1,700 were banished to America and 750 to the northern islands of Scotland. 3,600 were imprisoned, outlawed, or sentenced to be executed when apprehended. 680 were killed in skirmishes or died of their wounds. 7,000 voluntarily left Scotland for conscience' sake. 362 were executed after process of law, and 498 slaughtered without process of law. In addition to the above, "the number of those who perished through cold, hunger, and other distresses, contracted in their flight to the mountains, and who sometimes even when on the point of death were murdered by the bloody soldiers, cannot well be calculated, but will certainly make up the number above specified". Alexander Smellie says that while Howie's figures may be somewhat exaggerated, yet "when everything is remembered", his "figure of eighteen thousand cannot be much in excess of the grim reality".

Michael Shields, in a letter written during or just after the persecuting period, enumerates some of the sufferings of the Covenanters during the reign of Charles II, speaking of "His cruelty

over the bodies of Christians, in chasing and killing upon the fields, many without sentence, and bloody butchering, hanging, heading, mangling, dismembering alive, quartering upon scaffolds, imprisoning, laying in irons, torturing by boots, thumbkins, fire-matches, cutting pieces out of ears of others, banishing and selling as slaves old and young men and women in great numbers, oppressing many others in their estates, forfeiting, robbing, spoiling, pillaging their goods, casting them out of their habitations, interdicting any to reset them, under the pain of being treated after the same manner". Cruelty was less condemned then than now; yet even if the Covenanters had been entirely wrong and the government entirely right about all the matters at issue, it would be impossible to justify the cruelties perpetrated on the Covenanters, especially the use of torture and the practice of execution without process of law. The fact is that the persecutors of the Covenanters were bloody and godless men and though they acted in the name of religion and law, they had little real regard for either.

10. The Condition of the Covenanters on the Eve of the Revolution.

During the latter part of the persecuting period the strict Covenanters, who abhorred all compliance with Prelacy and Erastianism, organized what were known as "Praying Societies" or "Society Meetings". These were private religious meetings of small groups of Covenanters, held secretly, by which they maintained their identity and refreshed their souls when field conventicles could not be held. Walter Smith, a minister who was executed in 1681, drew up a set of rules for such meetings, entitled "Rules and Directions anent private Christian Meetings, for Prayer and conference to mutual edification, and to the right management of the same". It is interesting to note that under rule 23, the following are listed as matters for prayer: "(1) That the old off-casten Israel for unbelief would never be forgotten, especially in these meetings, that the promised day of their ingrafting again by faith may be hastened; and that dead weight of blood removed off them, that their fathers took upon them and upon their children, that have sunk them down to hell upwards of seventeen hundred years. (2) That the Lord's written and preached word (may be sent) with power, to enlighten the poor Pagan world, living in black perishing darkness without Christ and the knowledge of his name. (3) That the damnable delusions of Mahomet, and the errors of Antichrist, Arian, Arminian, Socinian and Quakers, may be discovered; that the blind may no more lead the blind, and go to hell wholesale, living and dying so; and the many gross errors abounding among

many other sectaries may come to light". This shows that the followers of Cameron and Cargill were not, as they have often been represented, people interested only in bearing testimony against Prelacy, Erastianism and tyranny, whose whole religious attitude was a negative one, composed of opposition to various evils, but a people with warm evangelical faith and a zeal for the salvation of the lost, even in the heathen world. The times and the circumstances forced them to stress their testimony against particular evils, but behind all this was true Christian faith and unfeigned Christian piety.

In 1681 the Covenanter Societies were united in a "general correspondence", with a delegated meeting to be held four times yearly. This form of organization was strictly non-ecclesiastical, but served as a substitute for Church organization for the Covenanters from 1681 to 1743 when the Reformed Presbytery was organized. The general correspondence was known as the United Societies.

As the years of persecution wore away, the Covenanters became more convinced that the days of the Stuarts were numbered. Cameron had confidently affirmed that the Lord would remove the Stuarts from the throne, because they had usurped the kingly office of Christ. A few days before his death Cameron said in a sermon, "As for that unhappy man, Charles the II, who is now upon the throne of Britain, after him there shall not be a crowned king in Scotland of the name of Stewart". This of course was not a prophecy but a shrewd guess; since James VII was never crowned in Scotland, Cameron was technically right, although he probably meant that Charles II would be the last of the Stuart kings. When nearly all the people of Scotland were tamely submitting to absolutist tyranny in both Church and State, Richard Cameron saw clearly that such a government could not last, that God would enable the nation to overthrow it, that the darkness would give way to the dawn, and peace and freedom be restored to the distracted land. Years before the nation as a whole, the Covenanters anticipated the inevitable revolution which came in 1688. They considered themselves the legitimate representatives and continuation of the Church and State of Scotland as these had existed before the Restoration of 1660. They had appealed to the nation; they had appealed to God himself; and they awaited the outcome with grim determination not to yield or compromise, come what might. They stood for the rights of God, and endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

(To be continued)

Our Church Covenant and Modern Life

(Note: This is the last of a series of sermons on the obligations involved in the Church Covenant sworn and subscribed by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, May 21, 1871.—Ed.)

IX. WE COVENANT TO PERFORM OUR DUTIES FAITHFULLY

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 12.

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. . . Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:1,2,28, 29).

The Covenant of 1871, besides a preliminary confession of sins, consists of an introductory paragraph and six sections. This Covenant was adopted in 1871 after long and earnest preparation, and it is recognized by the "Terms of Communion" as binding upon the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America today. In order that we may have a bird's-eye view of the Covenant as a whole, I shall present the subjects of the various sections as given in the Rev. Frank D. Frazer's "Outline Studies in the Covenant". These are as follows: (1) We hereby covenant to do our duty to God. (2) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the truth of God. (3) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the nation. (4) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the Church-at-large. (5) We hereby covenant to do our duty to the world. (6) We hereby covenant to perform these, our duties, faithfully.

Section 6 of our Church Covenant reads as follows: "Committing ourselves with all our interests to the keeping of Him in whom we have believed; in faithfulness to our own vows, and to the Covenants of our fathers, and to our children whom we desire to lead in the right ways of the Lord, in love to all mankind, especially the household of faith; in obedience to the commandment of the everlasting God to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, we will bear true testimony in word and in deed for every known part of divine truth, and for all the ordinances appointed by Christ in His kingdom; and we will tenderly and charitably, but plainly and decidedly, oppose and discountenance all and every known error, immorality, neglect or perversion of divine institutions. Taking as our example the faithful in all ages, and, most of all, the blessed Master Himself, and with our eye fixed upon the great cloud of witnesses who have sealed with

their blood the testimony which they held, we will strive to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, in hope of the crown of life which fadeth not away.

"Finally, we enter upon this solemn act of covenanting before the Omniscient God, with unfeigned purpose of paying our vow. All sinister and selfish ends and motives we solemnly disavow, and protest that we have no aim but the glory of God, and the present and everlasting welfare of immortal souls. And our prayer to God is and shall be to strengthen us by His Holy Spirit to keep this our promise, vow and oath, and to bless our humble attempt to glorify His name and honor His truth and cause with such success as will bring salvation to our own souls, the wider spread and triumph of truth and holiness, and the enlargement and establishment of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, one God, be glory in the Church throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

I. We Recognize our Covenant Obligations

In this final section of our Covenant we profess to be a covenant-conscious Church. We recognize that by reason of God's Covenant of Grace and our own vows and professions which are subordinate to it, there are solemn obligations resting upon us. We recognize these obligations, we realize that they are of the utmost importance, we declare that we will take them seriously. We will not be of those who expect the blessings of salvation from God without any recognition of obligations to God. We realize that while the Covenant of Grace involves great and precious promises on God's part, it also involves solemn responsibilities on our own part.

There exists today an easy-going type of evangelism which has little to say about duty to God, and which forgets that when a person says "I accept Christ as my Saviour" he must also count the cost of a radically changed and re-oriented life, a life lived no longer unto self, but unto God. This cheap type of evangelism sometimes goes so far as to assert that Christian people need not obey the commandments of God because they are not under law, but under grace. We should realize that this antinomian attitude

is a perversion of the Gospel of Christ. We are saved by grace alone, not by works, it is true; we are not saved by obeying the commandments of God, but if we are really saved we will desire to obey them; we are not saved by fulfilling our covenant obligations, but if really saved we will desire to fulfill them.

The Covenant speaks of our own vows, that is, those involved in baptism, in public profession of faith, in the Lord's Supper, in our Church Covenant; of our fathers' vows, that is, of the obligations of the covenants sworn by them which have descended to us in God's appointed covenant scheme; of our children, on whose behalf in baptism we make the same vows, and to whom those covenant obligations descend by God's appointed order of things; of love to mankind in general, and of love to the Church in particular; and of obedience to God's command to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. These are our covenant obligations. We recognize them as rightly and properly binding upon us by reason of our participation in the benefits of God's Covenant of Grace. We recognize that we are a covenant-bound people, and we promise to be a covenant-keeping people. Thus we claim to be a covenant-conscious Church.

II. We Will Make our Lives Count for God

"We will bear true testimony in word and in deed for every known part of divine truth, and for all the ordinances appointed by Christ in His kingdom; and we will tenderly and charitably, but plainly and decidedly, oppose and discountenance all and every known error, immorality, neglect, or perversion of divine institutions." In this sentence of our Covenant we propose that our lives shall count as witnesses for the truth of God. We pledge ourselves to witness for truth and right, and to oppose error and wrong. Thus we place ourselves squarely against the false notion of "tolerance" which is steadily becoming one of the major idols of America in our time. We do not believe that all religions are true and ways to God; we do not believe that any manner of worship is proper if only the worshipper be sincere; we do not believe that friendship and love require us to keep silence and refrain from exposing and rebuking error and wrong.

Note that we are pledged to witness for and defend, not part of the revealed truth of God, but the whole of it — "every known part of divine truth". By this commitment we avoid the error of "Fundamentalism", the error of picking out a few "fundamental" or "essential" truths of Christianity to be defended, while the rest of the body of God's revealed truth is regarded as "non-essential" and therefore not to be insisted upon. Who are we to take the revelation of the sovereign, infinite God in our hands and say that part of it is "essential" and part of it is "non-essen-

tial"? How could we dare to pronounce any part of God's revelation unimportant? We pledge ourselves to defend the whole body of revealed truth, the total teaching of the Scriptures, the whole counsel of God so far as we have been able to grasp it.

We should gladly and freely recognize that the movement known as "Fundamentalism" has accomplished much good in exposing the error and danger of Modernism and the need for faith in the integrity of the Scriptures and salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ. If we had to choose between Modernism and Fundamentalism, we should have no hesitation in choosing the latter, for it is unquestionably on the side of historic Christianity and the truth of God. Yet we cannot be satisfied with the method or content of Fundamentalism. It does not go nearly far enough. It is at best a partial, one-sided and incomplete movement. The attempt to defend Christianity against modern unbelief by singling out a few central doctrines and concentrating on maintaining them, is wrong in principle. Christianity is to be defended and upheld, not in part, but as a complete system. While concentrating on a few "fundamental" truths may stay the tide of unbelief for a time, it cannot be considered an adequate defence of the faith, and it cannot be permanently successful. It is wrong in principle to concentrate on defending the citadel of Christianity while letting the outposts go. We are to defend the whole structure; we may not let one post or board of the temple of divine truth go undefended. In the end, Christianity will have to be defended, not by stressing a few "fundamental" truths, but by Calvinism or the Reformed Faith which insists that every jot and tittle of God's revealed truth is relevant and must be insisted on.

Accordingly, we propose to witness to God's truth as a whole, all along the line. Moreover, our witness is to be not merely a matter of words, but of practice. We will bear testimony in deed, as well as in word. This involves consistency between our words and our deeds. We will not profess that God is to be worshipped strictly as appointed in His Word, and not otherwise, and then give the lie to our profession by going and worshipping God in some other manner different from what is appointed in his Word. We will not say that we believe that the Psalms of the Bible should be used exclusively in singing praises to God, and then go and make use of uninspired hymns in worship. We will not say that we accept the doctrine, government and worship of the Covenanter Church as Scriptural, and then become popularity-admiring church-trotters who Sabbath after Sabbath attend some other church than the one we profess to regard as Scriptural. We will not say that we accept the "Terms of Communion" and other standards of our own Church as in accordance with God's Word, and then turn around

and speak of the outstanding Modernists, inclusivists and church-unionists of our day as if they were the vanguard of real progress and great spiritual leaders of Christianity. We will not profess to accept the doctrinal system set forth in our official Church standards, and then turn around and tell people that we do not believe in predestination, infant baptism, total depravity, or some other doctrine of that system. In a word, we will be faithful and consistent in bearing witness to the whole body of God's revealed truth as we, as a Church, have been able to grasp it.

Our testimony to the truth of God will be not only positive, but also negative. We will not only witness for what is true and right, but we will also oppose what is false and wrong. Today there is a strong aversion to the negative side of witness-bearing. "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative" is one of the slogans that give the temper of our time. The radio networks are trying to insist that religious broadcasting be confined to what is "positive"; that is, that speakers refrain from pointing out the difference between their message and contrary views. A Protestant is not to point out the errors of Roman Catholicism, for example. Now this whole notion of a merely "positive" presentation of Christianity is not only a false ideal, but a delusion. It is inherently impossible, for the truth is not really set forth unless it is distinguished from error. We in our Covenant propose not merely to witness for the truth but also to witness against all that is contrary to the truth. And we propose to witness against what is contrary to the truth, not merely in matters of doctrine, but in matters of practice. We will oppose a wrong manner of worshipping God, just as we will oppose a false doctrine about the way of salvation. We will oppose an unscriptural form of church government just as we will oppose an error concerning the atonement of Christ.

This matter of bearing witness against error and wrong is not easy. It requires a clarity of thinking and a degree of conviction which are at a premium in our day. The whole popular trend of our time is against bearing a strong testimony against religious error and wrong. But why should people feel so? It is quite popular today to bear a strong testimony against communism; why should Christian people shrink from bearing a strong, clear testimony against religious errors and evils? We must free ourselves from the slavery of public opinion; we must seek and gain the freedom that comes from following our real convictions rather than the popular trend. We must be less concerned about what people will think of us, and much more concerned about what God will think of us and our conduct.

"We will tenderly and charitably, but plainly and decidedly, oppose and discountenance all and every known error. . .". Our testimony will be borne lovingly, but also pointedly. The man-

ner of our witnessing will be loving, but the content will be pointed. There is no real conflict between Christian love and a pointed testimony against error and evil. Some people think that Christian love requires that witness-bearing be vague and ambiguous, and refrain from pointing out the error in plain language, lest people's feelings be hurt. Of course, we should never hurt anyone's feelings needlessly; but if the truth is what hurts, we cannot tell them the truth without hurting them. The notion that we can bear a real testimony to the truth and still avoid offending anyone is simply a mirage. You cannot drive a nail into a board by hitting it with a feather. You cannot warn a man against poisoned food by telling him that perhaps the flavor could be improved a bit. You cannot bear witness against oath-bound secret societies without saying that it is wrong to be a member of such; and you cannot say it is wrong without offending people who are members of them. With all care to speak "tenderly and charitably", if we speak the whole truth it will hurt and offend some people. In our Covenant we face this fact, and declare that we will be more concerned about the rights of God than about the feelings of men. Our testimony will be tender and charitable in manner, but also pointed: we will "plainly and decidedly" oppose what is false and wrong.

III. We Will Keep Faith with the Past

"Taking as our example the faithful in all ages, and, most of all, the blessed Master Himself, and with our eye fixed upon the great cloud of witnesses who have sealed with their blood the testimony which they held, we will strive to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, in hope of the crown of life which fadeth not away". Thus we recognize that we are part of a great historical organism, the body of Christ, which includes the faithful in all ages, the Church of the Old Testament and of the New Testament. We are not the first people who ever witnessed for the truth of God; we received it from the Church of the previous generation. It has come down to us through the ages, from the hands of prophets and apostles, of confessors and martyrs. It has come to us from Jesus Christ Himself, the great Head of the Church, who spoke through the prophets and the apostles and who by His Holy Spirit has guided His Church into all truth through the centuries.

Christianity is a faith which makes martyrs, and through its history it has had a great body of martyrs, who sealed their testimony with their blood. We think of the faithful martyrs of the Old Testament period, of the period between the Testaments, of the early Christian Church as it was attacked first by Judaism and later by paganism, of the middle ages and Reformation period when testimony was borne against the errors and evils of Romanism, of our own Covenant-

er forefathers who suffered and died because of their testimony against prelacy and Erastianism and related evils, and of that great but still largely unknown body of martyrs who have suffered under the various forms of modern totalitarianism. Real Christianity is still a religion of martyrdom. The day may come when this will be literally true in America; we should not say that it cannot happen here. Even today there are powerful tendencies at work which if unchecked will ultimately destroy our religious freedom and even bring faithful Christians face to face with the choice between denying Christ and suffering martyrdom.

We honor the martyrs of Jesus Christ. But our attachment to them is not to be a sentimental, but a practical one. We take them not merely as the subjects of beautiful and moving poetry, but as our example and pattern in our attitude toward life. They died for the truth of God; we are called upon to live for it, and if need be also to die for it. It is very easy to have a sentimental or romantic attachment to the martyrs. It is very difficult to follow in their train, to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Christ as they did. But this practical imitation of the martyrs is our duty, and it is what we pledge ourselves to in our Church Covenant. Our aim is to hold fast, to do our part aright; our hope is the crown of life that fadeth not away.

This is a beautiful and noble ideal. It will never become a reality in our life until we know what it is to be crucified with Christ — to give up our own selfish desires and ambitions, and yield ourselves up to Christ as the Lord of our lives. We cannot serve God and mammon. We cannot worship the idol of self and serve the living God at the same time. We cannot say "Thy will be done" and still have our own way. We cannot obey God's commandments and still do as we please. We cannot have the honor that comes from God alone if we still have our hearts set on receiving the praise and approval of men.

IV. We Will Live as in God's Sight

"We enter upon this solemn act of covenanting before the Omniscient God, with unfeigned

purpose of paying our vow." We realize that God is omniscient, that is, that God knows everything and cannot be mocked or deceived. We are not recognizing these covenant obligations in order to please men, or win the favor of human beings. Our vows are made to God and in making them we profess utter sincerity — an unfeigned purpose of paying our vows.

We also profess a God-centered aim, for we solemnly disavow "all sinister and selfish ends and motives" and "protest that we have no aim but the glory of God and the present and everlasting welfare of immortal souls". Our aim is God-centered, not man-centered. Thus our Church Covenant ends as it began, with a recognition of the sovereignty of the living God, and our absolute allegiance to Him.

We realize, too, that what we have vowed is beyond human power to perform; we realize that we cannot keep our covenant vows of ourselves. Therefore we add that "our prayer to God is and shall be to strengthen us by His Holy Spirit to keep this our promise, vow and oath, and to bless our humble attempt to glorify His name and honor His truth and cause with such success as will bring salvation to our own souls, the wider spread and triumph of truth and holiness, and the enlargement and establishment of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Thus we profess that we will depend, not on ourselves or our human power, but on the power of the Holy Spirit, in answer to prayer, to enable us really to glorify God on earth.

This completes our series of sermons on the obligations involved in our Church Covenant, which began in the October-December 1947 issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". The editor hopes that these studies have proved helpful in enabling readers to grasp more clearly the true faith and principles of the Covenanter Church and to see the Scriptural character of our Church Covenant. May God grant that our Church shall always remain faithful to the system of faith and life to which we are pledged by our Covenant.

THE BEATITUDES OF THE PSALMS

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

The "beatitude" is a form of declaration characteristic of the teaching and preaching of Jesus Christ. It occurs among His words in the Gospels and in the Revelation. Since the Psalms are also "the word of Christ" we are not surprised to find the same feature in them.

Two different words are translated "blessed" in our version of the Psalms. God is "blessed" when He is worshipped, praised, adored. "Bless-

ed be Jehovah forevermore. Amen and Amen". (89:52). Man is "blessed" when God prospers him; bestows upon him the good things of life. "The generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house". (112:2,3). This is the word used in benedictions. "Blessed be ye of Jehovah". (115:15).

The second word is used to tell of God's graciously enabling a man to walk uprightly and go

straight. This God does in accord with man's dual nature, body and soul, providing the help of things spiritual and material, temporal and eternal. Then the man is truly "BLESSED"; he is really and overwhelmingly "HAPPY". This is the word used in the beatitudes.

We recognize the beatitudes by their form, beginning with the word, "BLESSEDNESSES-OF", a plural noun, apparently used as an interjection, giving expression to the happiness, the manifold joy that fills the believer's life by the manifold grace of God. This word occurs 26 times in 19 Psalms. It is used to declare the unspeakable benefits of redeeming grace.

Jehovah is the source and the dispenser of all blessing according to His covenant promises. To have Him for our God — in other words, to be in covenant with Him — is for us the sum of all blessedness. It is to have place and part in His Kingdom of Blessedness, which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."

I. The Blessedness of Receiving God's Covenant Promises

1. Of Being Chosen.

BLESSED is the nation whose God is Jehovah, The people he hath chosen for his own possession. (33:12).

BLESSED is he whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, That he may dwell in thy courts; We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, Thy holy temple. (65:4).

BLESSED are they that dwell in thy house: They will be always praising thee. (84:4).

God's choice is revealed in His administration of the Everlasting Covenant, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people". "I will be his Father; and he shall be my son". They are, as our catechism says, "received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God".

In the 144th Psalm are pictured the prosperity, peace and security which God provides for the help of His own children:

When our sons shall be as plants grown up in their youth, And our daughters as cornerstones hewn after the fashion of a palace; Our garners full, affording all manner of store; Our sheep bringing forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields; Our oxen well laden: No breaking in, and no sallying forth (to fight), And no outcry in our streets: BLESSED is the people that is in such a case! BLESSED is the people whose God is Jehovah! (144:12-15).

2. Of Being Justified.

BLESSED is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

BLESSED is the man to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no guile. (32:1,2).

3. Of Being Sanctified.

Chastened. BLESSED is the man whom thou chastenest. O Jehovah, And teachest out of thy law, That thou mayest give him rest from the days of evil. (94:12,13).

Strengthened. BLESSED is the man whose strength is in thee; In whose heart are the highways (to Zion). . . . They go from strength to strength: Every one of them appeareth before God in Zion. (84:5,7).

4. Of Being Protected from Enemies.

The enemies, that is, of God and man, whose aim is to corrupt the righteousness, destroy the peace, and stop the joy of the Kingdom of God.

That security as well as prosperity comes only from Jehovah is told in Psalm 127. He takes care of the house, the city, and all the work of the Kingdom, using, as He will, the instrumentality of His own children:

Lo, children are a heritage of Jehovah (his own possession); The fruit of the womb is a reward (of his work). As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, So are the children of youth. BLESSED is the man who hath his quiver full of them: They shall not be put to shame When they speak with their enemies in the gate. (127:3-5).

Remember, O Jehovah, against the children of Edom The day of Jerusalem; Who said, Rase it, Rase it, Even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed, BLESSED shall he be that rewardeth thee As thou hast served us. BLESSED shall he be that taketh and dasheth in pieces thy brood against the rock. (137:7-9).

The word here translated "dash in pieces" is a word used to describe the judgments of God. (Cf. Jer. 13:14; 51:20-23). It is a word used in the decree of Jehovah putting judgment of the nations into the hand of Christ, His Son, "Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel". (2:9).

When the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us in thy name", Jesus said to them, "I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority. . . over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall in any wise hurt you. . . In that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Luke 10:17-21).

The miracles of Jesus demonstrated, chiefly, His power to save, but at least two of them witnessed His power to destroy. He foretold His

judgment of destruction upon Jerusalem, which came to pass after forty years of preaching the Gospel and gathering the Church. It proved a very great blessing to the Church, for there was destroyed an active source of persecution against the people of God, and of lies and heresies against the essential truths of Christianity. God protects His Kingdom, and guarantees its righteousness and peace and joy by the execution of His judgments — never by appeasement. There is a great "blessedness" for His people in deliverance from their enemies. And the beatitudes would not be complete without telling of their security by the judgments of God. "Zion heard and was glad; And the daughters of Judah rejoiced, Because of thy judgments, O Jehovah." (97:8).

II. The Blessedness of Performing our Covenant Duties

1. Of Knowing.

Blessed is the man who (having refused the counsel and way of wicked men) finds his delight in the instruction of Jehovah; And on his law meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted beside streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (1:1-3).

BLESSED is thy people who know the joyful sound; They walk, O Jehovah, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name they do rejoice all the day; And in thy righteousness are they exalted. (89:15,16).

2. Of Believing.

BLESSED are all they who take refuge in him. (2:12).

O taste and see that Jehovah is good! BLESSED is the man who taketh refuge in him. (34:8).

BLESSED is the man that putteth his trust in Jehovah, And respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. (40:4).

O Jehovah of Hosts, BLESSED is the man that trusteth in thee. (84:12).

BLESSED is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help, Whose confidence is in Jehovah his God. (146:5).

3. Of Fearing.

BLESSED is the man that feareth Jehovah, That delighteth greatly in his commandments: His seed shall be mighty upon the earth. (112:1,2).

BLESSED is every one that feareth Jehovah, That walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thy hands: Thou shalt be BLESSED, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be a fruitful vine, In the innermost parts of thy house; Thy children like olive plants, Round about thy table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed That feareth Jehovah. Jehovah bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children. Peace be upon Israel! (128:1-6).

4. Of Obeying.

BLESSED are they that keep justice, Even he that doeth righteousness at all times. (106:3).

BLESSED are they that are perfect in the way, Who walk in the law of Jehovah. BLESSED are they that keep his testimonies, That seek him with the whole heart. Yes, they do no unrighteousness; They walk in his ways. (119:1-3).

BLESSED is he who taketh thought for the poor: Jehovah will deliver him in the day of evil. Jehovah will protect him and keep him alive, And he shall be blessed upon the earth; And thou wilt not give him over to the desire of his enemies. Jehovah will strengthen him on his pallet of pain: All his bed thou hast changed in his sickness. (41:1-3).

Thus the Beatitudes of the Psalms sketch, in broad outlines, the Grace of God, and the Duty of Man. They testify that true happiness is to be found in receiving the salvation God bestows, and in rendering the obedience God requires, by the regenerating and enabling power of the Holy Spirit within the covenant people of God.

(Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued in future issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — Ed.)

SOME NOTEWORTHY QUOTATIONS

"We hear of some dapper preachers who claim that the age has outgrown doctrine. They have advanced around the circle to the place from which they started, and hope they are ready again to enter the kingdom of heaven like little children, as far as ignorance is concerned. Let it be remembered that systematic theology has its essence simply in clear thinking and clear speaking on the subject of that religion which is revealed in the Scriptures. A man can outgrow

systematic theology, therefore, either by ceasing to be clear-headed, or by ceasing to be religious, and in no other way. I suppose some escape in their haste by both ways at once."

A. A. Hodge

"A natural man can never do or perform an act of pure obedience. It is true, his works are materially good: but it is not the matter which makes a work good. Velvet is good matter to

make a garment of, yet it may be marred in the cutting; pieces of timber are good matter for a house, but it must be judiciously framed; so these actions are for the matter good in themselves, yet they are not pleasing to God, because they are faulty in the most necessary circumstances. Whatsoever is well done must come from a principle of faith and love; and it must be done to God's glory, otherwise it is not reckoned among duties, but sins."

Thomas Manton

"Nothing is more senseless than the attempt to modify the results of the inspiration of Jehovah in conformity with human reason."

A. A. Hodge

"It was the saying of a heathen, Those that made images and pictures of God, took away fear and established error. Pictures to represent God do debase the nature of God, and make him contemptible; and images of God are so natural to us, that we can hardly dispossess our minds of them. Imaginations are as bad as images; he that forbiddeth images in the church, doth also forbid them in our mind. A picture or corporeal resemblance of the divine essence is worse in the mind than in the glass windows. By pictures and resemblances of the divine essence, heathen idolatry began."

Thomas Manton

"If we should speak to you of England being unchurched, a man would think this were an idle dream that ever Christianity should be banished

from this island, that we should lose our church and our glory; and yet if we should look to the spiritual cause of such a judgment, there is nothing so probable as this. God may in justice remove the old light, because we have set up so many new ones; and take away the candlestick from us, because we are despisers of the gospel."

Thomas Manton

"There are four things we must not make a mock of: sin, people's natural infirmities, the Word of God, and good people."

Philip Henry

"There are three difficult things: to believe things impossible to reason, to hope against hope when the thing hoped for is deferred, and to cleave to God as a friend when He appears against us as an enemy."

Philip Henry

"There are two things we should greatly beware of: that we may never be ashamed of the gospel, and that we may never be a shame to it."

Philip Henry

"He that hath a blind conscience which sees nothing, a dead conscience which feels nothing, and a dumb conscience which saith nothing, is in as miserable condition as a man can be on this side hell."

Philip Henry

"Sins go not alone, but follow one another as do the links of a chain."

John Bunyan

Religious Terms Defined

A few definitions of important religious terms will be given in this department in each issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". The aim will be conciseness without the sacrifice of accuracy. Where possible the Westminster Shorter Catechism will be quoted.

ANTINOMIANISM. The false teaching that the Christian, by reason of Christ's atonement and obedience to God's law, is freed from the obligation of personal obedience to the moral law of God.

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 spiritual identity of Israel and the Church, and tends to set "grace" and "law" against each other as mutually exclusive principles).

POSTMILLENNIALISM. That view of the

Last Things which holds that the second coming of Christ will take place at the close of a long period of world-wide peace and righteousness called "the Millennium" or "the Kingdom of God". (Orthodox Postmillennialism accepts the supernatural Christianity of the Scriptures, and holds that the Millennium will be brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of men, especially through evangelism, missionary work and the application of Christian principles to society).

PSEUDO-POSTMILLENNIALISM. An optimistic belief in human betterment and progress which serves Modernists and Liberals as a substitute for belief in the Bible prophecies concerning the Last Things. Pseudo-Postmillennialism believes that the Kingdom of God will be achieved gradually through a NATURAL process by

which social institutions will be reformed and "Christianized". This differs from orthodox Post-millennialism in that it regards the coming of the Kingdom of God as the product of the operation of natural laws in an evolutionary process, whereas orthodox Postmillennialism regards the coming of the Kingdom of God as the product of the SUPERNATURAL working of the Holy Spirit in connection with the preaching of the Gospel.

PREMILLENNIALISM. That view of the Last Things which holds that the second coming of Christ will be followed by a period of world-wide peace and righteousness, before the end of the world, called "the Millennium" or "the Kingdom of God", during which Christ will reign as King in person on this earth. (Premillennialists are divided into various groups by their different views of the order of events associated with the second coming of Christ, but they all agree in holding that there will be a Millennium on earth AFTER the second coming of Christ but BEFORE the end of the world).

AMILLENNIALISM. That view of the Last Things which holds that the Bible does not predict a "Millennium" or period of world-wide peace and righteousness on this earth before the end of the world. (Amillennialism teaches that there will be a parallel and contemporaneous development of good and evil — God's Kingdom and Satan's kingdom — in the world, which will continue until the second coming of Christ. At the second coming of Christ the resurrection and judgment will take place, followed by the eternal order of things — the absolute, perfect Kingdom of God, in which there will be no sin, suffering nor death).

ESCHATOLOGY. The doctrine of the Last Things. (From the Greek word "eschatos", meaning "last". Eschatology includes the state of man after death, the second coming of Christ and related matters, the resurrection, the judgment, heaven, hell and eternity).

The Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible

By the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick

Note: This is the third of a series of articles by Mr. Kilpatrick on various versions and annotated edition of the Bible. The series will be continued for several issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life".—Ed.

By far the most ambitious and farreaching project in the way of an annotated Bible to appear in our century — possibly in any century — is the Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible, published in 1948 by the Westminster Press, publishers of materials primarily for the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Work has been carried forward on it for the past several years by the Board of Christian Education of that church, with a company of editors drawn from the top level of professors in the Presbyterian seminaries of the land — three from Princeton, three from McCormick, one each from two other Presbyterian seminaries, an Episcopal seminary and a Lutheran seminary, with one editor from the Board of Christian Education itself. Other scholars are named as contributors, three of whom are from the British Isles. A prospectus beautifully printed in color is used to promote its sale. These editors' names and such sponsorship and promotion will be sufficient to commend the volume to many and thus insure an initial outlet. Its influence is bound to be great. The price, \$10, while high as Bibles go, is not at all out of line with book prices, considering the more than 2,000 pages, and the excellent materials and workmanship — printing, composition and binding — employed.

The plan of the volume is similar to that of the Scofield Reference Bible, in its use of the King James version, introductory articles to each book of the Bible, paragraph headings and sub-headings, footnotes and a concordance with definitions. However, these helps are much more extensive than in the Scofield Bible. Furthermore, its appearance is much more modern and attractive. There are no center-of-the-page references, prose portions of the Bible are set in paragraphs rather than in verses, while poetical portions are printed in the form of poetry. It should be noted that its point of view is far removed from that of the Scofield Bible.

From the statements of purpose in the preface, and from the language employed, one might be encouraged to have high hopes that here is a real contribution to the ordinary person's understanding of the Bible. Our attention is called (p.vii) to the "inrush of new knowledge and the introduction of new methods", which, we are told, "have brought widespread confusion in the field of Biblical studies." We are told that the purpose of this volume is to give the ordinary man a share in the benefits of "archaeological research" and in the results of the patient study of the "newly discovered papyri and manuscripts of the New Testament", until now available only to the "limited circles of the scholar and the specialist."

As for the question as to just what the Bible is, this answer is given (p.xv): The Bible "is the record of God's revelation to mankind, the abiding

witness to the fact that he has spoken." While this statement fails suspiciously to measure up to the clearcut language of the Larger Catechism, "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience", a little farther (p.xv) appears the statement that the Bible "is thereby, in a wholly unique sense, the Word of God." We shall need to know a little more about the "unique sense" in which the Bible is the Word of God.

And so, in spite of such encouraging statements as "The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the proof that he was truly the Word of God incarnate" (p.xvii), it should be obvious that this "Bible" must be examined in some detail before we accept its proffered help in "our understanding of the Bible" (p.xvi). Possibly the most basic question we can ask is whether the editors of this "Bible" believe that the whole Bible is the very Word of God. The answer that must be given is that

This Bible Definitely Teaches that not all the Bible is God's Word

It teaches that the Word of God must be sifted from the maze of tradition, myth, folklore, paganism and human error.

a. Tradition

Concerning the first book of the Bible we are told (p.19) that "it is questionable whether the story of Adam and Eve was ever intended to be simply a literal and factual account of what two people said and did at a particular time in history", and that "the expulsion from the Garden is the dramatic representation of how sin has separated man from God." We are told (p.20) that "the contents of Genesis" — totally ignoring the definite statements of the rest of the Scriptures — "preserve no hint as to its authors and editors", but that "After the Exile (586-538 B.C.) tradition ascribed the authorship to Moses, a belief that was taken over by the Christian Church." We are further told (p.14) that "about 400 B.C. there emerged the Torah, or Pentateuch, comprising the five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy." Now the Bible, from the book of Joshua on, speaks of the "law (Torah) of Moses", and Jesus Himself speaks of the "law of Moses." But this "Bible" tells us that this is mere tradition, and a sadly mistaken tradition at that.

b. Mythology

As for the "sons of God" referred to in Gen. 6:2, it is declared (p. 30) that "Apparently, they go back to an old fragment of mythology which has been used in Jewish tradition."

c. Folklore

Other stories, so it is claimed, are hero stories, apparently in the nature of folklore. "The Samson stories are not to be understood as exact

history or biography, but as popular hero tales" (p.351). The notes on Gen. 5 tell us that the "Babylonians also had a list of ten pre-Flood heroes, but that tradition claimed much greater longevities for their heroes" (p. 29). The ages of the patriarchs listed in Gen. 5, we are told, "are also to be considered as traditional rather than as historical." The story of the flood, we are told, came from Mesopotamia, and the Babylonians had their version, but the Hebrews "purified and elevated it, teaching that God is righteous."

d. Paganism

We are told that the shewbread in the tabernacle was "a vestige of an ancient pagan notion that a deity needs food" (p.127). And concerning the Levitical laws we read, "Many of them are now known to have been borrowed from the Canaanites. . ." (p. 150).

e. Human Error

It has always been readily admitted by Bible students that there are apparent contradictions in the Bible, especially where two or more accounts of the same incident are given. And in some cases our information may not be sufficient for us to reconcile fully the various elements of the record. However, the editors have found an easy way to dispose of such difficulties. They conclude that the writer has had two or more sources of information which he combined, and that one of them was in error.

However, it appears that the editors have taken pains to find difficulties where they would not appear to the ordinary reader. Because Noah was first told to take animals into the ark by twos, but later "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens", the notes tell us that "The numbers here given do not agree. . . This is one of several evidences that two documents were put together. . ." (p.30). And again, where God said to Moses, "Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the Lord", it is plain that the whole company was not to ascend the whole way to the top of the mount. Yet when, a few verses later in this same chapter (Ex.24:12) God said to Moses, "Come up to me into the mount, and be there;" the editors undertake to explain this "difficulty" for us: "Since in vv.9-11 Moses is described as being already on the mount, it is probable that we have here a fragment of another narrative. . ." (p. 125).

Although numerous Bible commentators have harmonized satisfactorily practically all the statements in the four Gospels, such statements as these are common: "Only in Matthew had the daughter died" (N.T.p. 38); "In Matthew this occurs as soon as Jesus enters the city" (N.T.p.57); "Matthew has the cursing a day later than Mark"

(N.T.p.58). There is seldom any attempt to show how the differing statements could be in full agreement. Rather, the impression is left that one account must be in error. But, if one account is in error, one may reasonably raise the question, "May they not both be in error?" Still, we are told, "God has spoken". It now begins to appear why there was such studied reluctance to say plainly in the Introduction, without any qualification, "The Bible is the Word of God." Apparently we are to believe that the Word of God is there, but it is up to us to sift it from the groundless tradition, mythology, folklore, remnants of paganism and from human error.

This "Bible" Attempts to Make Critics of all Students of the Bible

This teaching already noted departs radically from that which the historic Christian Church for nineteen centuries has professed in its creeds. Still, it may be noted that bold, plain denial of the cardinal doctrines of God's Word is very scarce. That was the method of the modernist preachers of the past generation, but the attack apparently is now to be more subtle. The virgin birth of Christ, His atonement, His deity and miraculous ministry, are not denied. Rather, questions are raised, and either answered in such a way as to undermine the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures, or left unanswered. The conclusion would appear to be, in the latter case, that every student of the Bible is competent, without being tied at all to what the Scriptures say, to solve the difficulties of the Bible in whatever way appears most satisfactory to him.

The critical theories accepted by Modernism have been adopted without any adverse discussion whatsoever, as though they represent the unchallenged conclusions of modern Bible scholars — which, incidentally, is far from the case. Among these are: Isaiah was written by two "Isaiahs" and at least one editor (p.11). Deuteronomy was compiled about 621 B.C. (some 600 years after Moses' death) "in a desperate attempt to save their people from a similar disaster" (to that which befel the Northern Kingdom) (p.14), and that Joshua, Judges, and other books were "re-worked under the inspiration of Deuteronomy" (p.299), which, of course, according to these editors, was not written until the days of Josiah. Esther is not history but a "historical romance" with "the plot of the story . . . most skilfully worked out" (p. 626). It was written, so these notes conclude, two centuries later than the times which it describes. Jonah was written by "an unknown author living about three centuries later (who) gave his name to the main character of a most remarkable book" (p. 1311), while "the simplest explanation (of Daniel) seems to be that the author is making use of a common practice of apocalyptic writers: a revelation is attributed to an ancient notable in order that it may carry more weight with the readers for whom it is in-

tended" (p.1236). Similar theories are suggested concerning the authorship of some of the N.T. books, even though the book itself declares it to be the work of Peter or Paul.

However, these statements, serious and far-reaching as they are, do not tell the whole story. For these statements are presented as though this is all the legitimate result of scholarly Biblical criticism, in a sincere effort to arrive at the authentic text of God's Word. But there are other critical theories which are not presented quite so dogmatically. They are presented as questions, then a body of argument to substantiate the theory is presented, with none of the difficulties which the theory poses being mentioned, and the Bible student is left to come to "his own" conclusion on the basis of what he has read.

By way of illustration, we are told that the numbers given in Exodus and Numbers, of the children of Israel who came out of Egypt, "furnish a major historical problem." The reason given for doubting their accuracy are that the number would be "as large, if not larger, than the probable population of Egypt at that time", and that "Even when we take into account the divine provision of food and water, we note that the Wilderness of Sinai is very inhospitable and barren, the population never having been more than three to six thousand." Then the theory is advanced that the figures from David's census, several centuries later, may have been misplaced and copied into this part of the record. No evidence is presented that this took place, and none of the difficulties involved are even suggested. Neither is any attempt made to explain how the figures could be correct as they stand.

Again and again, the Bible student is encouraged to become a critic of the Bible, rather than a student. Thus, the Sabbath School teacher, supposedly on the basis of modern research and learning, is encouraged to come to the conclusion that parts of the Bible are not true, entirely apart from the more widely accepted critical theories. This, of course, is what might reasonably be expected to follow the teaching of unbelief in our seminaries — that this unbelief should not only be passed on to the "grass roots", but that the "grass roots" folk should conclude that, if some parts of the Bible are open to question, then no part can be claimed to have supernatural authority.

In carrying out this office, the notes suggest that certain statements, given in the Bible as fact, be "explained" by attributing the record to mere human agency. We are told that the story of Noah's drunkenness and consequent curse on Ham "SEEKS TO EXPLAIN the fact that the Canaanites. . . were defeated by the Israelites" (p.34). Abraham's "migration to Canaan WAS VIEWED BY HIS DESCENDANTS there as an act of faith in the true God" (p. 37). "Many ancient peoples

practiced this rite (circumcision), but the **HEBREWS VIEWED IT** as the outward symbol of their adherence to God's covenant" (p.42). "This story (destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah) **MAY HAVE ARISEN** as an explanation of the formations on the salt mountain still existing at the southwestern end of the Dead sea" (p.45). Reference is made "to the laws **SAID TO HAVE BEEN HANDED DOWN** by God to Moses" (p.90).

When every man is a critic of the Bible, it will soon cease to be a book of worth or authority. If this Study Edition becomes widely used it will speed the deterioration of the faith of the users. In conclusion it may be said that

This Bible Presents Another Gospel

This is a serious charge. But it is a serious thing to tamper with the Word of God. And the tampering with the Word of God to be found in this "Bible" results in the substitution of another gospel. Modernism, and its present-day successor, Neo-orthodoxy, are little more than the intellectual flight of Man from the justice of God. This "Bible" seeks to get rid of the justice of God, not by the only way possible, through its full satisfaction in the sacrifice of the Son of God on Calvary, but by denying it.

Abraham, we are told, "did not revolt. . . (at the suggestion that he sacrifice his son) because child sacrifice was a common religious custom in ancient times" (p.48). Hebrews 11:19 gives the reason in these words: "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Concerning God's command to Saul to destroy the Amalekites, we are told that this is "a primitive custom of gross barbarity" (p. 368), and that Samuel's execution of Agag before the Lord can "be understood only against the background of a cruel and barbarous age". Concerning Psalm 54 and those immediately following we are told that "In one way these psalms mar the psalter" (p. 747).

Men are saved, the Bible teaches, only by the supernatural intervention of God into the affairs of this universe, but this "Bible" reduces this

miraculous working — which it continually admits took place — to mere extraordinary providence, by defining a miracle as "A marvelous event, exceeding the known course of nature and therefore **REGARDED AS** due to the special intervention of God or of some supernatural power" (Concordance, p.72). In line with this definition we read that "On any view of the birth of Jesus, this conviction of God's purposeful working is basic" (N.T. p. 25), as though the virgin birth is not essential to the Gospel. The stilling of the storm is referred to as "a providential calm" (N. T.p.84). Concerning the feeding of the five thousand: "All four Gospels agree that Jesus did a mighty work in the desert" (N.T.p.48).

Then this "Bible" appears to consider prophecy to be an impossibility. Of Jacob's blessing, found in Gen. 49, we read that "The allusions in the poem are to conditions in the period of the Judges, Samuel and David. The date of the composition, therefore, is probably in the 10th century B.C." (p.85), a thousand years, it may be observed, after the time of Jacob. The song of Moses after Israel had passed through the Red Sea, since there is a "reference to the settlement in Canaan, and the sanctuary there", must have been "composed after Israel was in Palestine" (p. 113).

A "Bible" that rejects the explicit statements of God's Word as to His justice, which tones down the idea of a miracle by which alone men can be saved from the penalty of that justice, and which rejects the idea of prophecy as per se inadmissible, certainly can have but superficial resemblance to the Gospel which alone is able to save. Surely this publication will contribute to the progress of unbelief, but it is to be hoped that it will bring many to reject the leadership that would place such a false view of the Scriptures in the hands of the Bible student.

(Note: Certain words in quotations from the Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible are printed in capitals for the sake of emphasis. The emphasis is that of the author or this article, not that of this "Bible".)

The Covenant of Grace: Its Meaning and Its Implications for the Church, the Family and the Christian

Introductory Note: How to Use this Material

The following series of Bible lessons is intended to take the place of the "Studies in the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly" which were completed in the last issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". The lessons have been prepared for class or discussion group use, but they are also suitable for individual study or for reference.

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

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

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

Contrary to our previous practice, these lessons will be undated, as many groups may wish to use them on other dates than those for which they were originally prepared.

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

Besides the Bible itself and the lessons in "Blue Banner Faith and Life" the following are recommended as helps toward an understanding of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace:

"The Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America", obtainable from Mr. James S. Tibby, 209 Ninth St., Pittsburgh, Pa., at \$1.50 per copy. This newly-published volume contains the Westminster Standards complete, together with the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony and other standards of our Faith.

"Bible Truths for Young Christians: A Series of Lessons in Preparation for Communicant Church Membership", by J. G. Vos. This contains concise definitions of many terms. Price 15 cents per copy, \$1.50 per dozen, from the Service Print Shop, 1121 Buchanan Street, Topeka, Kansas.

"The Eternal Covenant", by J. G. Vos. (Sermon published in "The Covenanter Witness", July 20 and 27 and August 10, 1949). This gives a survey in a single sermon of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace.

"The Covenant Idea in Scripture", by F. D. Frazer. (Mimeographed, 55 pages, 1937). This contains penetrating exegetical studies of the subject.

LESSON I

The Idea of a Covenant Between God and Man

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

Scripture References:

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

Job. 9:32,33. 1 Sam. 2:25. The distance between God and man is so great that man could never fully glorify and enjoy God unless God takes the initiative and bridges the chasm between Himself and man.

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

Questions:

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

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

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

It is very commonly, but wrongly, stated that God's covenants with man are of the nature of compacts, agreements or bargains mutually entered into by God and man. There is indeed an element of truth in this idea, for man (through his representatives, Adam and Christ) is a party to the covenants, and must agree to the terms laid down by God. But the idea of a covenant as a compact or agreement tends to lead people to think of God and man as more or less equal parties who mutually NEGOTIATED AND ESTABLISHED the covenant relationship. Such is a serious error. In every covenant of God with man, the initiative is always taken by God; it is God who lays down all the requirements; man's part is simply to accept what God provides and

obey what God requires. Note, for example, God's words to Noah: "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you. . . ." (Gen. 9:9), and to Abraham: "And I will make my covenant between me and thee. . . ." (Gen. 17:2); again, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7). God constituted the covenant relationship; Abraham's part was to believe and obey. The covenant was not negotiated between God and man, it was made by God and sovereignly imposed on man.

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

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

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

As created, mankind existed in a NATURAL relationship to God, that is, the relationship of creature to Creator. Being a rational creature, man owed obedience to God as his Creator. On the basis of that Creator-creature relationship, mankind might have had some experience of rendering service to God and receiving blessing from God. But it would have been far short of the destiny God intended for man in creating him. Man was created in the image of God, for the purpose of glorifying and enjoying God in a RELIGIOUS relationship. Therefore, as the Confession of Faith rightly states, mankind "could never have any FRUITION of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant" (VII.1). "Fruition" means bearing fruit. It is the purpose of a fruit tree to bear fruit. Mankind was created to bear the fruit of glorifying and enjoying God.

God proposed to make Himself man's blessedness and reward. Therefore the distance between Creator and creature must be bridged in some way, so that a truly religious relationship and communion could exist between God and man. Only God could bridge the gap between Himself and man. God did it in order that man could really bear the fruit God had created him to bear—so that man could really possess God as his blessedness and reward. "From me is thy fruit found" (Hos.14:8).

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

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

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

The very idea of a covenant of God with man requires that the covenant be made by God, not by man. The covenant must originate with God; all its terms and conditions must be laid down by God; none of them can be made or decided by man. Such a covenant is not proposed by man to God, but imposed by God on man. God does not consult man as to the terms and conditions. Some people today call this "undemocratic", but by doing so they betray the fact that they think of God and man as virtually on a plane of equality. We should always remember that the Kingdom of God is not a democracy but a monarchy, and an absolute monarchy at that; God's rule over His creatures does not depend on "the consent of the governed". When people object to this idea, it is because they have failed to grasp the Bible view of God as sovereign. Such people cannot enjoy the benefits of a covenant relation with God, for they exclude themselves from this by their irreligious attitude toward God—an attitude of unbelief, disobedience and rebellion against God's sovereignty. The first requirement for a covenant relationship with God is an unquestioning faith in God and everything God has said, with a willing obedience to all of God's requirements, and acceptance of whatever terms and conditions God in His divine wisdom sees fit to lay down.

Any notion of "democracy" between God and man is essentially impious and irreligious. It was Satan's suggestion that man could become "as gods" (Gen. 3:5; ARV, "as God") that led Eve to her first act of rebellion against the divine au-

thority. Ever since that early day, man has rebelled against submitting to the sovereignty of God, and has cherished the ambition of being "as God". This was never more obvious than in the humanism of our own day.

LESSON 2

The Covenant of Works: I. In Eden

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

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

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

"the Covenant of Life", as in the Shorter Catechism, Q. 12.

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

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

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

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

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

The condition of the Covenant of Works was perfect obedience to the will of God. The test provided to prove man's perfect obedience to God's will was God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was a sheer, arbitrary test of obedience to the will of God — the only reason for abstaining from the fruit of that particular tree was that God had said "Thou shalt not eat of it". The penalty provided for breaking the Covenant of Works was death, and this means not merely the

death of the body, but death in the widest sense, including eternal death or "the second death". There was also a reward provided for obedience to God in the Covenant of Works, the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life, symbolizing eternal life (Gen. 3:22; Rev. 22:2).

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

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

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

Although both Modernism and "Neo-orthodoxy" consider the story of man's probation in the Garden of Eden as an early myth invented by someone to explain the existence of evil in the world, there can be no doubt that the Bible treats this account as sober, actual history. Jesus Christ regarded Adam and Eve as historical persons (Matt.19:8), and the apostle Paul in Romans 5:12.

20 makes his whole argument contingent upon the historical character of Adam. If the account in Genesis 2 and 3 is mythological rather than historical, then we can no longer believe in the infallibility of the Bible, nor in the authority of Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

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

LESSON 3

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

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

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

"The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corrup-

tion of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it." — The Shorter Catechism, 18.

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

"The covenant of grace was made with Christ

as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed." — The Larger Catechism, 31.

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rom. 5:14. Adam prefigured Christ.

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

Questions:

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

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

2. What is the natural state of fallen man?

The natural state of fallen man, that is, the state people are born in today, is a state of sin and misery. "Mankind are all now, by nature, the children of wrath, conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity, sunk in total depravity, become

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

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

When Adam broke the Covenant of Works by disobeying God, that was the end of all prospect of earning eternal life by obedience to God. Those who attain eternal life today do so by another covenant, the Covenant of Grace, which was made with Christ, the Second Adam. But the Covenant of Works is still in effect for all people who are not under the Covenant of Grace. All who are out of Christ are still under the curse and penalty of the broken Covenant of Works. All those who are not in Christ are still "in Adam". The penalty of eternal death hangs over every human being who has not received life in Christ. If we have not been saved from the curse by the work of Christ as our Redeemer, then we are still under the curse of the broken Covenant of Works. Dare we try to face it standing on our own feet, on the basis of our own life and works? Rather, let us place our faith in Christ, the Second Adam.

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

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

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

God requires perfect, absolute obedience to His will. Adam, as the representative of the human race, failed to render perfect obedience to the will of God. But God's requirements could not be changed. God still required perfect obedience to His will as the condition of human beings enjoying His favor. So God provided Christ, the Second Adam, as the representative of all the elect of God. Christ succeeded where the first Adam had failed. He lived a life of absolute, flawless obedience to the will of God.

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

fulfilled the condition of the Covenant of Works on behalf of His people.

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

LESSON 4

The Eternal Basis of the Covenant of Grace

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

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

"The Covenant of Grace is an agreement between God, in the person of the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the public head of elect sinners, in which God engages to bestow eternal life and glory upon all the elect, on condition that Christ shall fulfil all righteousness as their representative." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, IX.1.

Scripture References:

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

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

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

Questions:

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

It means God's special kindness and love — eternal life and the Kingdom of God — given as a free gift to sinful people who deserve to be punished for their sins to all eternity in hell.

2. When was the Covenant of Grace made?

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

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

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

Note: Our Standards teach that there are not, "besides the Covenant of works, two distinct Covenants — one, a Covenant of Redemption made with Christ; and the other, a Covenant of Grace made with us, DISTINCT from the Covenant of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"that he should GIVE ETERNAL LIFE to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2).

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

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

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

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

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

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

10. Is the Covenant of Grace conditional or unconditional?

Viewed as a covenant made between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, it is condition-

al, the stipulated condition being Christ fulfilling all righteousness as the representative of the elect. Thus the righteousness of Christ is the condition of the Covenant of Grace, a condition that has been fully met by our Saviour.

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

Note: The Larger Catechism, Q. 32, says: "The grace of God is manifested in the second 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; . . . ". Though the word "condition" is used here, still the Catechism does not represent faith as a condition in the strict and proper sense of the term, for it immediately proceeds to state that the very faith which God requires is wrought in the elect by the Holy Spirit, promised and given to all the elect. Thus it is clear that the Catechism uses the word "condition" in the old-time sense of "means" or "instrument". Faith is the God-

appointed means by which sinners are to receive Christ; but since that very faith is itself a BENEFIT of the Covenant of Grace, purchased by Christ for the elect and bestowed on them by Christ's Holy Spirit, it cannot be a CONDITION of that covenant in the strict sense. See Eph. 2:8, which proves that saving faith is itself a gift of God.

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

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

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

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

LESSON 5

The Implementation of the Covenant of Grace

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

"This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that He might discharge, He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it, endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body; was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death; yet saw no corruption. On the third day He arose from the dead, with the same body in which He suffered, with which also He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father, making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VIII.4.

"The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath

fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VIII.5.

Scripture References:

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

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

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

Questions:

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

It was implemented, or put into effect, by a series of acts of God in human history, culminating in the death, resurrection and ascension of

the Mediator, Jesus Christ. Thus, unlike other religious systems, Christianity is a religion of HISTORICAL FACTS, not a mere system of ideals or abstract truths. Christianity is dependent on events that happened — it is anchored to historical facts from beginning to end.

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

At the present day, many people who suppose that "science" has disproved the historical facts of Christianity (especially the miracles, including the resurrection of Christ), vainly imagine that they can let the facts go and still retain the spiritual "essence" of Christianity in the form of "eternal truths" or "timeless verities" such as goodness, beauty, unselfishness, reverence, etc. A renowned novelist is reported to have said that she could still be a Christian even if it could be proved that Jesus Christ never lived. That is just another way of saying that historical facts do not matter, that Christianity is not a matter of redemption but of ideals. If we get our ideas of Christianity from the Bible instead of from modern novels, we will realize that Christianity is absolutely dependent on historical facts which happened at particular times and places. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17).

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

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

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

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

5. What preparations did God make, in the

period from Adam to Christ, for the coming of the Mediator?

For a complete view of the preparations, it would be necessary to consider the entire body of history recorded in the Old Testament, and at the same time to realize that by His providence God also carried out preparations among the Gentile nations of ancient times (for example in the rise and expansion of the power of Rome, the Roman network of highways, the wide diffusion of the Greek language, etc.). More narrowly, we may say that the preparations took the form of preserving the knowledge and worship of the true God in a separated people, to whom God specially revealed Himself and His will, whom He delivered from their enemies, with whom He entered into a covenant relationship, and specially prepared them for the coming of the Mediator. It was necessary, according to God's plan, that there be such a separated, covenant people, in order that from them the Mediator (as to His human nature) could be born, and that among them He could live and carry out His redemptive acts. From the time of Adam and Eve, there always existed in the world a body of people who knew and worshipped the true God. At the time of Noah this body of people—the Church of that day—was reduced to an extremely small fraction of the human race, eight individuals, but still it existed. With God's call of Abraham the preparations took a big step forward toward a separated, covenant nation. With the redemption of the children of Israel from Egypt under Moses, the covenant nation became an actuality. The rest of the Old Testament records God's dealings with the covenant nation of Israel, in preparation for the coming of Christ, the Mediator. The final stage of preparation is recorded in the New Testament: the ministry of John the Baptist, God's final messenger to Israel, commanding the people to prepare for the coming of God's Son.

6. What was accomplished during the Period of Realization?

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

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

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

The Period of Application is the period from

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

LESSON 6

The Revelation and Administration of the Covenant of Grace

"This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come: which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called, the Old Testament."—The Westminster Confession of Faith, VII.5.

"Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory; yet, in them, it is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations."—The Westminster Confession of Faith, VII.6.

Scripture References:

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

Rom. 4:11. 1 Cor. 5-7. Hebrews chapters 8-10. Under the Old Testament, the Covenant of Grace

was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

By the institution of sacrifice, which pointed forward to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. We do not know when God first commanded sinful men to approach Him by means of a sacrifice which involved the shedding of blood, but presumably it was soon after the fall, for we find Abel offering "of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (Gen. 4:4), and it is recorded that "the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering", and also that Abel's sacrifice was offered to God "by faith" (Heb. 11:4)—therefore it was done with the approval of God, and presumably in obedience to a revelation of God's will.

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

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

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

signs and seals of the covenant they had the ordinances of circumcision and sacrifice.

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

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

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

(a) The administration of the Covenant of Grace was shifted from a national basis (Israel) to a universal basis (world-wide, Jews and Gentiles); the covenant nation of Israel gave way to the New Testament form of the Church. (b) The ordinances by which the Covenant of Grace is administered under the New Testament (the preaching of the Gospel, the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper) are much simpler and fewer in number than the many and complicated ritual ordinances of the Old Testament. (c) The New Testament ordinances have less external display, and are more spiritual in their character, and more effective in giving believers an assured consciousness of their salvation, than the ordinances of the Old Testament. (d) Yet the essential meaning of the two dispensations of the Covenant of Grace is exactly the same. The one pointed forward, the other points backward, to the same Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace. The essential meaning of baptism is identical with that of circumcision; the essential meaning of the Lord's Supper is identical with that of the Passover. The difference between the two dispensations is partly a matter of degree, partly a matter of external form; it is in no sense a matter of essential meaning.

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

Certainly they were saved by grace alone, not by works. It is an old but persistent error that the Jews were saved by works, or by obedience to the law of God. If the Bible teaches anything clearly, it teaches that no one was ever saved by the works of the law (Rom. 3:20). The error mentioned above teaches that the Covenant of Works was from Moses to Christ, and the Covenant of Grace from Christ's crucifixion to His second coming. This is entirely wrong and

contrary to the Bible. The Covenant of Works was from the creation of Adam and Eve until they fell into sin. Then the Covenant of Grace was revealed, and it has been the only way of salvation and eternal life since Adam's fall. Believers under the Old Testament were saved by grace, through faith, just as Christians are today. They participated in the same Covenant of Grace that Christian believers share in today.

LESSON 7

The Covenant of Grace and the Salvation of the Christian

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

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

"The goodness of the elect is not the cause of their being taken into this Covenant, neither is faith, repentance, sincere obedience, or any other thing, except the righteousness of the surety, the condition of it; but God has promised, in this Covenant, to bestow on all the elect, faith, repentance, and holiness, as well as happiness; and Christ, their glorious head, enables them to believe, repent, and live a life of sincere godliness."—The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, IX.9.

Scripture References

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

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

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

Joel 2:28,29. Ezek. 37:14. Isa. 44:3; 59:21.

God has promised to give the Holy Spirit to all His elect.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

The objective side of salvation consists of what Christ has done FOR the elect, in the great historical facts of His redemptive work. This includes Christ's being born and His entire earthly life and work, but especially it includes (a) His

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

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

The subjective side of salvation consists of what Christ does IN the elect, by His Holy Spirit, who takes the purchased salvation and applies it to the elect, working faith in them, persuading and enabling them to come to Christ, etc. The subjective side of salvation includes all that the Holy Spirit does IN the elect, just as the objective side includes all that Christ has done FOR the elect. The elements of the subjective side of salvation may be summarized as: the new birth, faith, repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end (See The Shorter Catechism, Q. 30-36).

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

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

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

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

strength if we can; He has provided the life-preserver and He also, by the Holy Spirit, works in His elect the desire and the ability and the decision to grasp and cling to it.

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

5. What is the function of faith in receiving salvation?

Faith is the God-appointed means or channel by which sinners receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Faith is a "condition" of salvation only in the sense that it is the appointed means by which sinners embrace Christ. "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel" (The Shorter Catechism, Q. 86).

Faith is not the condition of the Covenant of Grace in the proper and strict sense of the term "condition", for in the strict legal sense the only condition of the Covenant of Grace is that Christ fulfil all righteousness as Representative of the elect. Strictly speaking, the Covenant of Grace is to the elect an UNCONDITIONAL covenant of promise. But faith is required as the channel or means of receiving the benefits.

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

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

Salvation ultimately depends not upon anything human but upon the finished work of Christ and the covenanted promises of God. Since the redemptive work of Christ is absolutely complete and perfect, and the promises of God are absolutely true and reliable, it follows that the Christian's perseverance in grace and his eternal security are guaranteed by the Covenant of Grace. If the Christian's perseverance and his eternal security depended on his own will power, there would be no real guarantee of his final salvation. He might be saved today and lost again tomorrow. He could never be sure he would be able to hold out to the end. But since the Christian's continuance in grace and his eternal security depend upon the unbreakable covenant of the God who from all eternity elected him

to everlasting life, his final salvation is guaranteed.

Since the final salvation of the elect is guaranteed by the Covenant of Grace, personal ASSURANCE of salvation is possible. If the final issue were still uncertain, personal assurance would always be impossible; a person could never be sure of his salvation until his actual entrance upon the life of glory in heaven. A person cannot be sure about something which is itself uncertain. But since the final salvation of the elect

is an absolute certainty, being purchased by Christ and guaranteed by the Covenant of Grace, it is possible for a Christian to attain full assurance of his salvation in his own mind. The true believer can reach the place where he can say: "God hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure" (2 Sam. 23:5).

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

LESSON 8

The Covenant of Grace and the Christian Family

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

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

"Children of professing parents are born in the Church and are entitled to the initiatory rite of baptism. To speak of persons already baptized in our Church as 'joining the Church' when they are received into full communion, is not strictly correct and is productive of error, because it leads such persons to regard themselves as free from all covenant obligations until they make a public profession. The truth is, that they are children of the covenant, and, if they refuse or neglect to make a public profession, they despise their birthright and become covenant-breakers. N. B.—The record as to their reception should differ from that taken in from the world. It should state distinctly that they were baptized members of the Church, and were admitted to full communion on examination and profession of their faith."—R. J. George, "Lectures in Pastoral Theology: Series II. Pastor and People", p. 166.

"Family worship is the daily gathering of the household for the purpose of praise, Scripture reading and prayer. . . This service, conducted morning and evening, is a distinguishing mark of a Christian home, and is essential to the development of family religion. The head of the

family is responsible for this important service and all available members of the household should be present and may be invited to take some part."—The Directory for the Worship of God (adopted 1945 by the R. P. Church), V. 2.

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

2. Is the family a covenant institution?

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

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

3. What is a Christian family?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When Sabbath Schools were first introduced, some godly people objected to them on the ground that parents would thereafter neglect the instruction of their own children and shift the burden to an (often incompetent) teacher. While we are not opposed to Sabbath Schools, we should realize that time has proved that there was some basis for the objection. God has entrusted the religious nurture and instruction of covenant children to their parents. It is the parents that will be held responsible for this task. It cannot rightly be shifted to anyone else. The Sabbath School can be a supplementary help, but it cannot be an adequate substitute for parental instruction.

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

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

titled to Baptism, which is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace.

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

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

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

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

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

LESSON 9

The Covenant of Grace and Infant Baptism

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

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

"One of the chief sources of the church's membership is her own children. In presenting them for baptism, parents not only claim for their children the privileges of the church, but dedicate them to God and the service of Christ. They obligate themselves to teach them to fear God and keep his commandments; to respect and honor the church and her worship; and in due time to profess their faith in Christ, and to seek full membership in the church. . . . In administering baptism to her children the church recognizes their rightful place within the Covenant, and her obligation to give them pastoral care and oversight, and to assist the parents in carry-

ing out their vows. . . " — The Form of Church Government (adopted 1945 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church), I.8.9.

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

See the note appended to Question 6 of the previous lesson (Lesson 8). Infant Baptism is a Scriptural practice which does not depend upon isolated "proof-texts". It follows logically from other truths of the Scriptures; the proof may be stated, essentially, in the following form: (a) Baptism is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace. (b) The children of believers are included in the Covenant of Grace. (c) Therefore the children of believers are entitled to Baptism, which is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace.

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

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

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

Baptism is a sign and seal of partaking of the

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

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

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

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

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

One of the factors that God has taken into account in His eternal decree of election, is the factor of family relationship or descent from believing parents. This is reflected in the inclusion of the children of believers in the Covenant of Grace, which the Bible so clearly proclaims. This inclusion of the children of believers in the cove-

nant is not a "legal fiction" — it is a reality, and it is based on the eternal reality of God's decree of election unto eternal life.

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

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

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

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

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

6. What is meant by "Baptismal Regeneration" ?

This is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and of some Protestants, to the effect that regeneration or the new birth is effected by the instrumentality of Baptism. The Church of Rome teaches that the sacraments work automatically (as an "opus operatum", or "a work performed") unless there is a deliberate intention to hinder the effect. Thus Rome teaches that Baptism effects regeneration, and the baptized person is born again. This teaching is rejected by our Church,

which condemns as an error the proposition "That infants are as heathens until they are baptized, and that baptism regenerates and christens them" (The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXV, Error 6).

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

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

(b) Formalism and neglect of baptismal vows, on the part of both parents and children. If Infant Baptism is to be a mere formality, or a mere ceremony for attaching a name to a baby, it cannot be justified. Rightly considered, it involves the most solemn obligations on the part of the parents — obligations which descend to the children when they reach years of discretion. Gross formalism and gross neglect of baptismal vows, especially on the part of parents, has become a terrible scandal in American Protestantism, and like the practice of promiscuous Infant Baptism, this formalism and neglect threatens to bring the whole practice of Infant Baptism into general contempt.

For a statement of the vows taken by parents when their children are baptized, see "The Directory for Worship", III.3, in "The Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America", p. 313-315.

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

Opponents of Infant Baptism often argue that it does, but really their argument is without weight. The chief captain told Paul that he had become a Roman citizen by the payment of a great sum of money, but Paul immediately replied that he was a Roman citizen by birth (Acts 22:28). To be a Roman citizen was a coveted privilege in those days; it conferred special rights and benefits. Paul was a Roman citizen by birth. Did Paul's birth as a Roman citizen deprive him of the valuable privilege of being naturalized as a Roman in adult life? Obviously Paul did not think so. Most of us are American citizens by birth; perhaps a few of us were born in foreign countries and have become American citizens by naturalization. Do we who are Americans by birth deplore our birthright, and say that being born as Americans has deprived us of the privilege of being naturalized in adult life?

Infant Baptism deprives the child of no real right or privilege. The parent takes the vows on the child's behalf, as the child's representative.

Later the child is to ratify that profession of faith, and take those vows on himself by personal faith, in order to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. Those who oppose parents taking vows for their

children, are dominated by an individualism which is unrealistic, contrary to the nature of the family, and utterly alien to the spirit and teachings of the Bible.

LESSON 10

The Covenant of Grace and Church Membership of Children

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

"The visible Church is a society made up of all such as in all ages and places of the world do profess the true religion, and of their children." — The Larger Catechism, 82.

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

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

"The Church Visible consists of all those throughout the world who publicly profess their faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, promise obedience to Him, and unite with an organized congregation. The children of members are also included in this number." — The Form of Church Government (adopted 1945 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church), I.1.

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

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 7:14. Acts 2:39. Ezek. 16:20,21. Rom.

11:16. Gen. 17:7. The children of true believers are members of the visible Church from birth.

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

Questions:

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

The idea that the membership of the visible Church consists solely of COMMUNICANTS, that is, of those who have made a personal profession of faith in Christ and have been admitted to the Lord's Supper. This is a wrong and unscriptural view of the membership of the visible Church, for it excludes the children of believers from Church membership.

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

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

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

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

The children of believers are members of the visible Church because they are included with their parents in the Covenant of Grace, as has been shown in Lesson 8 of this course. According to the Bible, the family, not the individual, is the real unit of church membership; and therefore children are included with their parents and counted as Church members. Many people who profess to adhere to the Westminster Standards are surprised at this doctrine of the Church membership of children, and seem to consider it some strange or peculiar teaching. This doctrine, however, is nothing new. It is not only clearly taught by all the standards of our Church, but it has always been a recognized doctrine of the Reformed Faith. However this doctrine of the Church membership of believers' children has been neglected and almost lost sight of for a generation or more, while individualistic and Baptist ideas of Church membership have become quite general. Though some may regard this change as a sign of religious progress, in reality it is an evidence of doctrinal decadence and retrogression, of a trend which needs to be checked and reversed.

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

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

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

Apparently there is some confusion on this point at the present day. Because we speak of "communicant members" and "baptized members", the idea has apparently arisen that children are members because they have been baptized, that is, that Baptism confers Church membership on them. However this is not correct, and the true doctrine is that infants are baptized because they already are Church members (from birth). Dr. R. J. George made this point very

clear when he wrote: "The children born in a Christian home are born church members, and entitled to the sacramental seal of baptism." ("The Covenanter Pastor", p. 163). They are entitled to Baptism because they are born Church members; therefore Church membership is prior to Baptism. This is the accepted view of orthodox Reformed theologians on this matter. Baptism is a badge or recognition of Church membership, but it does not make a person a Church member. A birth certificate or passport is a badge or evidence of American citizenship, but it does not make a person a citizen. He is a citizen first, and gets the passport later as evidence of his citizenship.

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

The analogy of citizenship may help us here again. There exists in the United States only one kind of citizenship. A person is an American citizen, or he is not. An infant one day old, if born in the United States, is an American citizen. It is not a second rate citizen; even though only one day old, it is entitled to the full protection of the government and laws of the United States. But it does not have all the privileges of citizenship; for example, it cannot vote nor hold public office until it reaches the legal age for exercising these privileges.

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

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

speaking of "full membership", because the word "communion" involves the idea of the enjoyment of the privileges of membership.

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

Certainly this phrase should be abolished, except when it is used in its proper meaning, namely, of those received from the world. When used of covenant children and youth, the phrase "joining the Church" betrays an ideology which cannot be reconciled with the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace and the standards of our Church. This is not a mere matter of words and names; it involves the conflict of two irreconcilable ideas of the visible Church and of the Covenant of Grace. We should say that our covenant children "make a public profession of their faith", which exactly describes the step taken, and cannot foster any false notions of Church membership. (We should avoid the use of the word "confirmation", which is almost as bad as the phrase "joining the Church", in that it seems to imply that those "confirmed" were not previously real members of the Church).

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

Adequately to answer this question would require far more space than is available here. The most important matters may be briefly mentioned: (a) The Church should administer the sacrament of Baptism to them. (b) The Church should teach

them that they are Church members, and that this is a high privilege and honor. (c) The Church should teach its children the Word of God and the way of salvation, and, in the name of Christ, should urge and command them to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. They should be made conscious of their covenant obligations as well as of God's covenant promises. (d) The Church should impress upon its children the duty, when they reach the proper age, of making a personal, public profession of faith and partaking of the Lord's Supper. (e) The children of the Church are subject to the discipline of the Church, regardless of whether or not they have made a public profession of faith and been admitted to the Lord's Supper.

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

No definite answer can be given to this question. The customary practice varies somewhat in different denominations, and also to some extent in different congregations of the same denomination. Under the Old Testament Jewish boys were expected to begin to participate in the Passover at the age of 12 years (Luke 2:41-43). From this we may perhaps infer that 12 years is a proper age, in ordinary cases, for covenant children to make a public profession of faith and be admitted to the Lord's Table. However, age is only one of the factors that must be taken into account. Much more important are the degree of knowledge and the seriousness of purpose of the applicants.

LESSON 11

The Covenant of Grace and Infant Salvation

"Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth: so also, are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, X.3.

"Since we are to judge of the will of God from His Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace in which they together with their parents are comprehended, godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children whom it pleaseth God to call out of this life in their infancy." — The Canons of the Synod of Dort, XVII.

"Infants, as well as adults, are rational and moral agents, and by nature totally depraved. The difference is, that the faculties of infants are in the germ, while those of adults are developed. As regeneration is a change wrought by creative power in the inherent moral condition of the soul,

infants may plainly be the subjects of it in precisely the same sense as adults, in both cases the operation is miraculous, and therefore inscrutable." — A. A. Hodge, "Outlines of Theology", XXVI.20.

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

Scripture References:

Luke 18:15,16 and Acts 2:38,39 and John 3:3,5 and 1 John 5:12 and Romans 8:9 compared together. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerat-

ed and saved by Christ through the sovereign action of the Holy Spirit.

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

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

Questions:

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

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

2. How can it be shown that this popular idea of the "innocency" of infants is contrary to the Bible?

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

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

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

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

We should not entertain the slightest doubt that all covenant children which die before reaching years of discretion are of the elect and are saved by the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit. This conviction is not based on the notion of "innocency", but on the Bible doctrine of the Covenant of Grace. David was comforted by the knowledge that his child that had died was not lost forever; he said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam.12:23). The infants of Bethlehem that were murdered by orders of king Herod (Matt. 2:16-18) were not forever lost; Jeremiah's prophecy (31:15-17) proves that they were saved: "There is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border". ("The words, 'There is hope in thine end', are to be fulfilled ultimately, when Rachel shall meet her murdered children at the resurrection. . .", J. F. & B., "Commentary on the Whole Bible").

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

God's covenant established with Abraham (Gen. 17:1-14) proves that every child of believing parents is born within the Covenant of Grace. It is true that some of the children of believing parents are not of the elect, and turn out to be covenant-breakers. But an infant that dies before reaching years of discretion cannot be a covenant-breaker; it cannot despise and violate the obligations of the Covenant of Grace. Therefore we have the best of reasons for believing that all children of believing parents dying in infancy are not only within the Covenant of Grace, but also of the number of the elect and shall certainly be saved. Just as they were made guilty and sinful by Adam's fall, apart from any act of their

own, so they are made righteous and holy by Christ's redemption, apart from any act of their own. If anyone should say that regeneration cannot take place in infancy, it is sufficient to cite Luke 1:15, which proves that this miraculous act of the Holy Spirit can take place even before birth.

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

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

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

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

It is also generally admitted that the Bible warrants us in saying that the salvation of covenant infants is a certainty, whereas in the case

of non-covenant infants we are not warranted in speaking of the certainty of their salvation, but may at most entertain a probable hope of it based on such general considerations as are mentioned above.

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

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

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

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

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

non-elect, but how elect infants are regenerated (in view of the fact that they cannot attend upon the ministry of the Word).

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

Yet it has been repeatedly claimed that the Westminster Confession teaches the doctrine of "infant damnation". For example, A. H. Strong says: "The Westminster Confession, in declaring that 'elect infants dying in infancy' are saved, implies that non-elect infants dying in infancy are

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

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

LESSON 12

The Covenant of Grace and the Unity of Scripture

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

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

"God hath, from time to time, made known to men his will respecting the salvation of sinners, and hath authorized certain persons qualified for the work, to communicate a Divine Revelation to mankind, specifying the only method of escaping eternal punishment on account of sin, and accompanied with sufficient evidence of its authenticity." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, III.2.

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

Scripture References:

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

Heb. 1:1. Eph. 3:9. 2 Tim. 3:16,17. God has not only revealed His will to mankind, but has com-

mitted the revelation to written form for the permanent instruction of His Church.

Questions:

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

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

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

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

If the Bible is not really a unity, then the Bible is not really the Word of God. If the Bible presents fragments of irreconcilable viewpoints, contains mutually contradictory statements, etc.,

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

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

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

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

This is the error of those who fail to realize that the Bible is an organism. They take each verse or portion of Scripture more or less by itself, without realizing that it has an organic connection with all other parts of the Bible. This may be called the "Sears, Roebuck catalogue view of the Bible". In a mail-order catalogue there is no organic relation between a suit of clothes on one page and a washing machine on another page; the only relation is a mechanical one; they just happen to be listed in the same book. But in the Bible everything is organically related to everything else. For example, the fall of Jericho in Joshua chapter 6 is organically related to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem in Matthew chapter 2, and this again is organically related to the Christian being justified by faith and having peace with God in Romans chapter 5. It all fits together and one part depends on another part. The Bible is not a miscellaneous collection of moral and religious truths as a mail-order catalogue is a miscellaneous collection of merchandise; the Bible is an organism like a tree; every part is organically related to every other part. Multitudes of people fail to realize this, and the result is that they approach and use the Bible in a very mechanical manner, to their own great error and loss.

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

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

But the "higher criticism" has become so

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

The higher criticism holds that the Bible is a human product, filled with errors and contradictions. Its divine inspiration and authority are denied or explained away. The Pentateuch is split up into fragments assigned to various hypothetical documents, alleged to have been written at various times, for diverse purposes, by different authors, and later combined in a patchwork or crazy-quilt pattern by an editor or "redactor", or by a number of such "redactors", the whole being finally (falsely) attributed to Moses. The book of Deuteronomy is said to have been written at the time of Josiah; Daniel is said to have been written subsequently to the events prophesied in the book; Isaiah is said to have been written by two or even by three different "Isaiahs", and later welded into a single book by some unknown "redactor". The four Gospels are said to be largely unreliable, and probably not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; in particular, the Gospel of John is said to be not historical, but a piece of philosophic interpretation of the life of Jesus, written long after the events it purports to record.

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

The answer to the previous question quoted from a book written by Dr. W. H. Green in 1895. It may safely be said that the situation is even worse at the present day. What was being valiantly resisted in Dr. Green's day has been accepted as truth, in general, by the theological world of 1949. Just as evolution is taken for granted by the scientific world today, so the higher critical view of the Bible is taken for granted, by and large, by the theological world of our day. There are exceptions to this statement, of course; there remain a few fairly large and many small denominations that have not surrendered to the higher critical view of the Bible. The same is true of the theological seminaries of the world; but most of the large and influential ones are dominated by the higher criticism. Their scholars are so sure that the higher criticism is valid, that they do not even take the trouble to read and answer the books written in defense of the Bible by orthodox scholars. The sentiment among Modernists is that their battle has been won; they feel that the idea of an infallible Bible is dead, and the few who

still try to believe in it are not important. We should realize that this higher critical view of the Bible is not only tolerated, but actually dominates, most of the large Protestant denominations in America today. The seriousness of the situation cannot easily be exaggerated.

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

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

8. Over against the atomistic and higher critical views of the Bible, how does the doctrine of

the Covenant of Grace safeguard the unity of the Bible?

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

LESSON 13

The Covenant of Grace and the Unity of Scripture, Continued

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

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

Scripture References:

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

Gal. 3:14,16. Acts 15:11. Rom. 3:21-23, 39. Psalm 32:1 compared with Rom. 4:3,6,16,17,23,24. Heb. 13:8. Though the administration differed under the two Testaments, there were not two covenants, but only one throughout.

Questions:

1. What is modern dispensationalism?

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

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

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

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

The harm in the modern dispensational view of the Bible consists in the fact that this popular system virtually nullifies the unity of the Bible by so sharply setting off one part of the Bible against another part of the Bible. For example, the dispensation of Law against the dispensation of Grace, and vice versa. Scofield actually asserts that at Mount Sinai the people of Israel "rashly"

accepted the law (p. 20), and even that at Mount Sinai the Israelites "exchanged grace for law" (p. 20). The result of this is the notion that the approach of sinful men to God was on a radically different basis in different dispensations. Even the Lord's Prayer is declared to be "on legal ground" (p.1002), and, as a form of prayer, to be unfit for Christian use (p. 1089-1090).

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

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

According to the orthodox Reformed theology, there was first the Covenant of Works (from the creation of man until Adam's fall), and then the Covenant of Grace (from Adam's fall to the end of the world). According to the Reformed theology, the entire span of world history between Adam's fall and the end of the world comes under the one Covenant of Grace, and throughout this entire period God's dealings with mankind are based on ONE SINGLE PRINCIPLE, NAMELY, THE REDEMPTION PURCHASED ON CALVARY BY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. There are differences of external administration in the different periods, but the underlying principle, the essential meaning of God's relations with men, is identical from Adam's fall to the end of the world.

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

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

Scofield states (p. 1343) that FOUR forms of the Gospel are to be distinguished, namely, (1) the Gospel of the Kingdom, or "the good news that God purposes to set up on the earth. . . a kingdom,

political, spiritual, Israelitish, universal, over which God's Son, David's heir, shall be King. . . for one thousand years." (2) The Gospel of the Grace of God, or "the good news that Jesus Christ . . . has died on the cross for the sins of the world." (3) The everlasting Gospel (Rev. 14:6), which is "neither the Gospel of the kingdom, nor of grace". (4) What Paul calls "my Gospel" (Rom. 2:16), which is "the Gospel of the grace of God in its fullest development."

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

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

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

Over against this idea, the Reformed theology teaches the CONTINUITY and SPIRITUAL IDENTITY of Israel with the Church. It teaches that from Adam and Eve to the end of the world, God has only ONE body of people on earth in covenant with Himself, namely, the Church. The form of the Church has changed, but the life and essence has remained identical. Israel was merely the form of the Church in the period from Moses to Christ. After the Day of Pentecost, the true spiritual life of Israel was continued in the New Testament form of the Church. Today the Church is the true Israel, just as in David's day every true Israelite was a member of the Church.

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

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace guards against these errors of modern dispensationalism (a) by making it clear that the Bible has one single consistent theme from beginning to end, to which all parts of the Bible are subsidiary and to

which all contribute. That one theme, of course, is the accomplishment in history of God's eternal Covenant of Redemption; the Bible is the record of the preparations for, realization of, and application of, Christ's redemption. (b) By making it clear that from the creation of mankind to the end of the world there is one single body of peo-

ple on earth in covenant with God, namely, the Church, of which the Old Testament Israel was a temporary form or phase.

Note: This series of lessons on the Covenant of Grace will be continued in the next issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — Ed.

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."

GOD TRANSCENDENT, by J. Gresham Machen. Edited by Ned B. Stonehouse. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1949, pp. 189, \$2.50.

"Some men would be horrified by the use of a theological term; they seem to have a notion that modern Christians must be addressed always in words of one syllable, and that in religion the scientific precision of language which is found so useful in other spheres must be abandoned. I am by no means ready to agree. . . I am by no means ready to relinquish the advantages of a precise terminology in summarizing Bible truth" (p. 83). These words of Dr. Machen underlie the power of his preaching. It was his popular and clear presentation of the basic doctrines of the Bible that led friends and foes to acknowledge him as a leading spokesman for evangelical Christianity. Now, almost twelve years following his death, Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse, his successor to the chair of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, has edited "God Transcendent", a volume of twenty sermons representative of the pulpit power of Dr. Machen.

These sermons are prepared in the expository tradition; there is constant appeal to the authority of the Word of God. In the main, they are a defence of evangelical Calvinistic theology, and a refutation of false teaching in the church today.

Dr. Machen demands a fair hearing for our evangelical position: "It was once remarked about a great encyclopedia how strange it was that the principle of that work, in accordance with which various types of religious belief were to be presented by their own adherents, was not applied to evangelical Christianity. Other beliefs are presented in the great encyclopedia by their friends; evangelical Christianity alone (at least in the form of the Reformed theology) is presented by its opponents. The same unfairness prevails in many circles today. Various religious beliefs are given a hearing, but this tolerance is not allowed

to extend to the gospel of the cross of Christ" (p. 41).

He asks for "just plain old fashioned honesty of speech". He shows that "traditional terminology is constantly being used in a double sense" (p. 43). Opponents of the cross of Jesus Christ no longer deny; they merely "interpret". They use such terms as the "Deity of Christ", the "Atonement", and "the Brotherhood" with the regularity and saintliness of a John Knox, but they are merely using these terms to camouflage a philosophical belief that even Voltaire would have endorsed. Because of this modern art of "interpretation", there is a crying need for distinct cleavage between redemptive Christianity and "humanistic Christianity".

In a sermon on "The Creeds and Doctrinal Advance", Dr. Machen points out that progress needs a foundation. "There can be no real progress unless there is something that is fixed. Archimedes said, 'Give me a place to stand, and I will move the world.' Well, Christian doctrine provides that place to stand. Unless there be such a place to stand, all progress is an illusion" (p. 152).

Taking a frequently misused statement in the Bible (2 Cor. 3:6), he gives a very convincing exegesis of "The Letter and the Spirit". He says that Paul is not contrasting the letter of the law and the spirit of the law; he is not here undermining the pedantic details of the Pharisaical observing of the law; but rather he is contrasting the law which brings death because of sin, and the Spirit of God which brings life. "The thing that is written killeth, but the Holy Spirit in the heart gives life" (p. 55).

In "The Active Obedience of Christ", a sermon preached only twelve days before his death, Dr. Machen rejoices that "those who have been saved by the Lord Jesus are in a far more blessed condition than was Adam before he fell. . . Those who have been saved by the Lord Jesus Christ are not only righteous in the sight of God, but they

are beyond the possibility of becoming unrighteous" (p. 173).

Here are but a few of the highlights of this volume. It is a book that will enlighten and stimulate both pastor and people. It bears rereading and should prove invaluable as a reference book on theology. I heartily concur in the editor's wish that "this volume not only may serve to enlarge the understanding and appreciation of the heroic witness of J. Gresham Machen, but also may contribute positively to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to which he gave his life."
— Bruce C. Stewart

THE HIGH POINTS OF CALVINISM, by Bastian Kruithof. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1949, pp. 92, \$1.50.

This little volume presents eight sermons on important truths of the Reformed Faith. The sermons are quite brief; the reviewer read through the one on "The Perseverance of the Saints" in ten minutes. This brevity makes the book easy to read quickly, but it also means that the author's presentation of truth and refutation of error is extremely condensed, and many matters that might profitably have been enlarged upon have been given only a sentence or a paragraph.

Following a Foreword and an Introduction, Chapter I deals with "The Burning Heart". This is an allusion to the crest or coat of arms of the Reformer John Calvin, which portrays a burning heart held in an extended hand, around which appears a Latin motto which may be translated: "My heart I give Thee, Lord, without delay and with sincerity". The author brings out that the popular notion of Calvin as a dealer in cold logic, devoid of sympathy or human interest, is only an absurdly unhistorical caricature. Calvin was the great thinker of the Protestant Reformation, but he was also a deeply spiritual Christian, as well as warmly and sympathetically human. The author makes it clear that genuine Calvinism is above all else a matter of personal devotion to God. He says: "We are a Reformed people in the glorious tradition of . . . the flaming heart. The personal question can be very properly put today: Is this crest yours? Is your heart burning with God and for Him?" (p. 19).

The next six chapters deal with "The Sovereignty of God"; "Is Man Totally Depraved?"; "Predestination and Election"; "Is Salvation Limited?"; "Irresistible Grace"; "Perseverance of the Saints". In these chapters the author aims at presenting "the main facts, ideas, and ideals of Calvinism" (p. 83). He shows clearly and convincingly that the sovereignty of God is basic to all the other "high points" of Calvinism; predestination, for example, must be considered in relation to the sovereignty of God if we are to do it justice. The author takes up the so-called "five

points of Calvinism", states each one positively, and answers the principal objections that are raised against it. He is careful to show that these truths are based on the Word of God, not on human reasoning.

The final chapter, entitled "The Christian World and Life View", deals with Calvinism as a philosophy of life. This chapter shows that Calvinism is consistent Biblical Christianity related to, and to be applied to, the whole range and realm of human life. "The spirit of Calvinism, which surrenders all of life to God and recognizes Him as the beginning, the center and end of all history, is the very antithesis of the modern, humanistic spirit" (Introduction, p.x).

On p. 78 "temporal faith" should be "temporary faith"; all faith that exists in time is temporal. On p. 29 there is a peculiar statement about "Whatever of Calvinism remained in" "the Pilgrims and the Puritans who settled New England". The author adds: "They deviated somewhat, so that the concept 'Puritanic' is not synonymous with 'Calvinistic'. But the leaven was in them, and it has been a blessing in the history of our country." The reviewer would venture to submit that at the time they settled New England — 1620 and following years — the Pilgrims and the Puritans were strictly orthodox Calvinists, and if they "deviated somewhat", it was not from Calvinism as such, but from the common Presbyterian and Reformed doctrine of the visible Church (in the direction of Independency or Congregationalism). At any rate, Arminians were not welcomed among them.

On p. 52 there is an unfortunate allusion to the Westminster Confession of Faith, in which the author implies that the Westminster Confession has "misinterpreted Calvinism" by "getting one of its great teachings out of place" — i.e., by putting predestination and election at the head of the system of doctrine. The fact is that the Westminster Confession first deals with Holy Scripture, then with "God, and the Holy Trinity", then with "God's Eternal Decree", then with "Creation". Thus predestination and election are precisely in their correct logical place in the system. The Confession rightly treats the decrees of God AFTER it discusses God Himself, but BEFORE it discusses the execution of God's decrees. To place the chapter on predestination and election at a later point in the Confession would involve the great risk of giving people the idea that God's decrees are subsequent to events taking place in time. As a matter of fact no small amount of misunderstanding of Calvinism arises from this very notion — from people thinking of God's decrees as if they were formed in time, and therefore in a temporal relation to decisions and actions of God's creatures. Of course no decree of God was ever made subsequently to any event in time; all His decrees were made from all eternity.

In spite of the above criticisms, the reviewer considers this an excellent book, one that is well worth purchasing and reading and one that will have a very good effect. Its clearness and simplicity of style make it quite suitable for the average adult church member. The book is beautifully printed; the reviewer did not note a single misprint in it. — J. G. Vos

A SUMMARY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, by Herman Kuiper. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1949, pp. 32, paper cover, 30 cents (\$3.00 per dozen).

This is a brief lesson book for children's catechism classes, containing 28 one-page lessons which consist of brief questions and answers intended to be memorized. In order to get the complete thought, the questions must be memorized along with the answers, for many of the answers are not complete in themselves. All New Testament Scripture quotations are given from the Revised Standard Version. The doctrine is the accepted, orthodox doctrine of Calvinism or the Reformed Faith. The style is simple and clear. This book, with its concise, straightforward answers to important questions, would be a good manual to place in the hands of inquirers who are ignorant of the doctrinal system of Christianity. It presents in brief, concise form a good view of the whole range of Christian truth. — J. G. Vos

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO REVELATION, by Delber H. Elliott. Service Print Shop, 1121 Buchanan St., Topeka, Kans. 1948, pp. 132, \$1.00.

Of the making of expositions of the Book of Revelation there is no end, and many of those made in the past are without value because of their fantastic ideas and their unsound methods of exegesis. The present volume is an exception, for it is sound, sane and helpful. Moreover it is clear and simply written, so that the ordinary reader can benefit by perusing its pages.

The author begins his work with a fitting word of caution: "He who presumes to interpret the Book of Revelation treads on dangerous ground. It is the most obscure and mystifying book of the Bible. The wide divergence of views held by sincere Bible expositors warns us against opinionated assertions that we only can be right." He then adds: "But this baffling book of the Holy Scriptures is certainly meant to be understood. There must be somewhere a key that will unlock its treasures to searchers after truth. An effort is made here to follow a method of interpretation that is sane and scriptural and that can be consistently carried through to the end" (Preface). The author also says that he has not aimed at writing an extended commentary, but only a "Reader's Digest edition for busy people", and he warns the reader that he "must not expect every diffi-

culty and obscure expression to be so easily cleared away. Many mysteries will remain unsolved. . . The author aims merely to carry out a method of interpretation which gives to each chapter what seems to him a Scriptural and plausible explanation" (Preface).

In the judgment of the reviewer, the author has been quite successful in reaching the goal which he has aimed at. Those who want all problems solved, all mysteries explained, and all curious questions answered, will be disappointed, not only with this book, but with all sober books on this subject. But those who thirst after truth will find that this book appeals to them, and that they have received a blessing from studying it.

On the much-debated question of the Millennium, the author states briefly the meaning of the three contending views: Premillennial, Postmillennial and Amillennial. He then indicates his own inclination to accept the Amillennial view, in the following words: "The view which seems to us nearest Scripture is that Christ is now a king and will reign eternally on His throne on heaven; that He will come again at the end of this dispensation to raise the dead and conduct the judgment; that the millennium began with the binding of Satan which took place when Christ triumphed over him at the cross; this scene in Revelation actually centers in heaven rather than upon earth. This view we believe has fewer difficulties and is consistent with the interpretation we have been following throughout the book" (p. 120).

This book is well worth purchasing and reading. If you have friends who confidently assert that the Premillennial interpretation is the only one that "believes God's Word" and "takes the Bible at face value", give them a copy of this book and get their promise to read it. They may find in it some things they had not thought of before. — J. G. Vos

MATTHEW TWENTY-FOUR: AN EXPOSITION, by J. Marcellus Kik. Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Union County, Pa. 1949, pp. 97, \$1.50.

This book presents a careful exegetical study of Matthew chapter 24, our Lord's great discourse concerning the Last Things. The thesis of the author is that verse 34 is the key verse for the understanding of the chapter ("Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled"). He says: "If the literal and well-defined meaning of this verse is accepted, it will be seen that this verse divides the chapter into two sections. Section One speaks of events which were to occur to the generation living at the time that Christ spoke these words. Section Two speaks of events to occur at the Second Coming of the Lord. Verse 34 is the division point of the two Sections" (p. 9).

In accordance with this scheme, the author understands the events predicted in verses 3 to 33 to have been fulfilled by events preceding and connected with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. He holds that the portion of the chapter following verse 34 deals with the Second Coming of Christ and the character of the time preceding it. He holds that while in the first section there were various specific signs given as warnings of the approaching calamity, in the second section no preliminary signs are given. "The First Section deals with the destruction of Jerusalem; the Second with the Second Coming of the Lord and Final Judgment. Warnings in the First; no warnings in the Second. In the First, the saints had to flee; in the Second, the saints are taken up. The First speaks of judgments upon earth; the Second speaks of judgment in heaven. In all this there is a vivid contrast between Matthew 24:4-35 and Matthew 24:36 - 25:46." (p. 91).

While the author has presented an impressive case for his position that Matt. 24:1-35 predicts exclusively the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70, the reviewer is still not convinced that that portion of the chapter does not ALSO predict events associated with the Second Coming of Christ. There is such a thing as a MULTIPLE fulfilment of prophecy, first on a lower plane or smaller scale, and later in final fulfilment on the grand scale. As the Flood in the time of Noah was a type or sample of the Last Judgment, so the destruction of Jerusalem and related events may have been a type or sample of the events which, on a much broader and more dreadful scale, will take place preceding and at the Second Coming of Christ. To hold such a view of prophecy is not to attribute to Scripture a multiple meaning, for in each case there would be an organic connection between the preliminary and the final fulfilment; and two fulfilments would be in their source and essential meaning the same, but differing in degree and in finality. We do not err when we take a reference to David in the Psalms (e.g., Psalm 89:3,4) and explain that the ultimate reference is to Jesus Christ, the representative of God's elect in the Covenant of Grace. This is a legitimate interpretation precisely because David was a type of Christ; that is, there exists an organic relation of meaning between David and Christ. Similarly, the reviewer would submit that it may be legitimate to interpret Matt. 24:1-35 as dealing preliminarily with the destruction of Jerusalem, but ultimately with the Second Coming of Christ.

Mr. Kik has performed a real service by making it very clear that Matt. 24:1-35 most certainly does refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and related events. That is something that has been overlooked by many students of prophecy. But in the judgment of the present reviewer we are not compelled to adopt an "either. . . or" interpretation — to hold that verses 1-35 predict

EITHER the destruction of Jerusalem OR the Second Coming of Christ. A good case can be made out for the "both. . . and" interpretation, as suggested above. — J. G. Vos

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA, BEING ITS STANDARDS SUBORDINATE TO THE WORD OF GOD, published by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. For sale by James S. Tibby, 209 Ninth St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 1949, pp. 350, \$1.50.

For the first time all the doctrinal and administrative standards of the Reformed Presbyterian Church have been published in a single volume. The present volume is well printed and bound and of a handy size (4¾ by 7 inches). It contains the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, the Covenant of 1871, the Form of Church Government, the Book of Discipline, the Directory for the Worship of God, and a manual of official formularies and forms. A preface presents an informative "History of the Standards".

The most noteworthy feature of this volume is the fact that it gives the Westminster Confession of Faith in its original, unrevised form, in the critically corrected text of Carruthers. Thus the numerous errors of common editions of the Confession of Faith have been eliminated. Unfortunately one of Carruthers' corrections was missed — and that probably the most important of them all — for the present volume in Chapter XX Section 2 of the Confession of Faith (p.36) reads "in matters of faith or worship", thus repeating the common error, instead of reading "if matters of faith or worship", which Carruthers has proved to be the correct reading.

If the reviewer is not mistaken, this is the first time in many years that the Confession of Faith in its original, unrevised form has been published and offered for sale on this side of the Atlantic. For years those Churches that did not believe in the changes and additions made by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. have had to purchase their copies of the Confession of Faith from Ireland or Scotland. This publication of the original Confession in a handy, inexpensive volume will prove a help not only to the Reformed Presbyterian Church but to others in the United States and Canada who want copies of the Confession of Faith in the authentic form in which it came from the Westminster Assembly.

The proof-texts are merely cited, not printed out in full. The Form of Church Government, Book of Discipline and Directory for the Worship of God are the new standards adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1945.

Every Covenanter home should have this book, and it should be read and studied. If we are to have real revival, we will have to have a fuller and truer knowledge of the doctrines and principles of the Christian Faith than exists at the present time. This book should be a big help toward that end. — J. G. Vos

HERESIES EXPOSED, by Wm. C. Irvine. Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., Bible Truth Depot, 19 West 21st St., New York 10, N.Y. No date, pp. 225, paper cover, 75 cents.

The sub-title of this volume states that it is "A brief critical examination in the light of the Holy Scriptures of some of the prevailing heresies and false teachings of today." The book discusses and exposes some 26 heresies or false religions, namely Agnosticism, Annihilation and Conditional Immortality, Atheism, Baptismal Regeneration, British Israelism, Buchmanism, Christadelphianism, Christian Science, Cooneyites, Evolution, Freemasonry, Humanism, Kenosis Theory, Modernism, Mormonism, Pseudo-Christianity ("Religious Education"), Roman Catholicism, Russellism (Jehovah's Witnesses), Seventh-Day Adventism, Soul-Sleep, Spiritism, Swedenborgianism, Theosophy, Tongues Movement, Unitarianism and Unity School of Christianity.

This is a very useful compendium of information about the above-listed heresies and false systems. The unscriptural character of the various systems is ably exposed, and their danger pointed out. Some statements of the book cannot be endorsed, especially in the chapter of Seventh-Day Adventism, where the book tries to refute the Adventists by the familiar argument that the believer is not under the law but under grace, therefore he need not keep the Sabbath. If the Sabbath has been abolished by Christ's atonement, then of course those who insist that Saturday is the Christian Sabbath must be wrong! The reviewer believes that it is possible to refute the claims of Seventh-Day Adventists without rejecting the Sabbath itself. Christian people are free from the penalty and curse of the law, but surely not from the precept of the law as a rule of godly living. If the fourth commandment has

been abolished by Christ's atonement, and the believer need no longer obey it, then how about the sixth, seventh and eighth commandments? Are these no longer binding on the Christian as a rule of life? May he kill, commit adultery and steal, because he is not under the law, but under grace? We realize, of course, that the authors of this chapter in "Heresies Exposed" would answer "No" to the question. But we must point out the dangerous, antinomian tendency of their method of dealing with the Seventh-Day Adventist view of the Sabbath.

In spite of the above and some other statements of the book that are open to serious objection, it is a good and useful volume and should be kept on hand against the day when it may be needed. — J. G. Vos

BOOKS RECEIVED

The announcement of the books listed below should not be construed as a recommendation. A review of those found in this list which we regard as having value for our readers will be given in a later issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" — Ed.

LET YOUTH PRAISE HIM! A Hymnal for Christian Primary Schools, Sunday Schools and Christian Homes. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1949, pp. 149, \$1.50.

THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL, by Edward J. Young. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1949, pp. 330, \$4.50.

ST. PAUL THE TRAVELLER AND THE ROMAN CITIZEN, by William M. Ramsay. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1949, pp. 402, \$3.50.

THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION, by Edward Boehl. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1946, pp. 308, \$3.00

THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF ADOPTION, by Robert Alexander Webb. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1947, pp. 188, \$2.50.

BLUE BANNER QUESTION BOX

Readers are invited to submit doctrinal, Biblical and practical questions for answer in this department. Names will not be published with questions.

Question:

What type of literature can be most wisely used in seeking to bring Christian influence to bear on a family which claims to have neither time nor money for church publications, yet reads

"Sunday" newspapers, the "Reader's Digest" and the "National Geographic Magazine"?

Answer:

First, I do not believe that any type of literature is the answer to this problem. It is evident

the family has a taste for worldly literature and no taste for Christian literature. That taste must be changed. It is not simple nor easy. It has been done in many cases, however, and can be done again.

It is evident this family loves the world and the things of the world more than Christ. Until the love for Christ transcends love of the world they will not trade reading matter easily. But once love for Christ triumphs there will be no such reading problem. People do what they most love to do. It is purely a question of what is supreme.

How can this problem be solved? (1) Prayer. The pastor and friends can take the matter daily secretly to God in prayer — prayer that emanates from love for the best interests of this family and the glory of God. If it does not come from a consuming love, from the heart and lips of a Christian who is qualified to "ask and receive", as well not pray. If the intercessors are qualified as pray-ers, a change will come over the family. Their desires will change; they will be hungry for the Word of God.

It may be that while this family are church members they are not saved. In this case one must pray and labor for their salvation. But often it is coldness which has gradually crept on them, even though they are children of God. They need to be warmed. Prayer will quicken the circulation.

(2) Faithful, wise suggestion, after the warmth from intercession has begun. A sick person will not react well to a big plate of food to which he is not accustomed. But a tempting morsel of something may be tasted and then it may be eaten. If so, the start on a new line of diet is begun. Other bits may be given which will find their place in the digestive tract with the old, unwholesome food. This makes the prayer work easier, and by and by the taste for the old is gone and the new diet is established.

But it must be remembered that this change is a work of grace in the heart and desire, and the glory belongs to God alone.

So far as the type of literature is concerned, what will taste good to one may not be the antidote for another. Prayer will help select. I have never seen this combination of prayer and wise suggestion fail, if, or the pray-er is qualified to be an intercessor, and in prayer he finds the bits to slip the sick family. I sometimes catch such an one by a challenge from the pulpit in the morning service, asking for the reading of a certain book with the reminder that I will ask for a show of hands in the evening service.

Often the fault lies in the laziness of the pastor and interested friends. Prayer is hard work. Often, it may lie in their impatience and tactlessness.

I fear this is not what you want, but I doubt if any suggested reading is the answer. I have people reading a whole book of the Bible on a Sabbath afternoon now, who two years ago wanted only secular reading. And they have an appetite for God's Word during the week as well. — J. D. E.

Question:

Can a person adhere to the teachings of the Bible and be a member of a labor union? Is there an inconsistency or conflict involved?

Answer:

No unqualified answer can be given this question to cover all cases. In some cases there is very serious conflict. In some cases concessions have been made by union executives to Christians who testified their loyalty to Christ. Many Christians affirm that, in their cases, no conflict has yet risen. The declared objectives of the labor unions are fundamentally right. That much has been accomplished by them for the benefit of the working man is unquestioned. The evil is not in the union of labor for legitimate ends.

The evil stems from the anti-Christian, atheistic, communistic leadership which so largely controls many labor unions. It is grasping for arbitrary, dictatorial power, not only over the workman, but over all society and constituted authority. It is using the working man as its tool to destroy just government and set up its own tyranny. It cares nothing for the rights and liberties of the working man except to use them for itself. It would compel its members to work only where, when, and how it pleases, and would deny the independent worker the right to work and support his family. It is ready, on slight pretext, to block employers in the exercise of their rights, to destroy their property, and stop the wheels of industry to the detriment of all the people. It denounces the Bible, Christianity, and the Church, and violates the Sabbath.

The Christian workman is not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. One is his Master, even Christ. Knowing the teachings of the Bible it should not be difficult for him to judge, in his own case, whether obedience to the union would interfere with his higher obligations to Christ. Maintaining his first loyalty, and trusting in Christ, not in man, he may find it necessary to separate from union affiliation. This may involve hardship, even persecution, but he knows that the Lord over all will provide for him and his family, as shall be best for every one concerned. — F.D.F.

Question:

How can a Christian observe Christmas without having religious ideas associated with it? Is

not the "non-religious" observance of Christmas in the home actually a form of false worship?

Answer:

"He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it" (Rom.14:6). That is to say, he regulates his use of the day by regard for the will of God. Since no observance of "Christmas" is prescribed by the Word of God, the Christian is at liberty to use it as he thinks best. And this his liberty is not to be judged by another man's conscience (1 Cor. 10:29). If he regulates his conduct on Christmas day by an enlightened conscientious regard to the will of God, he will not be open to the charge of holding the ideas or keeping the observances of a false religion. Neither will he be chargeable with the wasteful expenditures demanded by the world's commercialization of the day. But, by modern arrangements of the world's work, most people have vacation on Christmas day. There is then a special opportunity for relatives and friends to gather in the home and enjoy the festivities of good will. These may certainly be enjoyed without any mixture of false religion.

Yet, "none of us liveth to himself". We are to take care that our liberty become not a stumbling block to others. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Rom. 14:21). We should be ready at all times to give a true account of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made His people free. — F.D.F.

Question:

When the head of a family is unable to provide for the family, should the wife or daughters engage in work outside the home, or should the need be met by (a) relatives; (b) public relief; or (c) the local congregation through its deacon board?

Answer:

This question presents an individual, family, and local problem, which, probably, no outsider could answer helpfully without rather intimate knowledge of the whole situation. But the situation is perfectly known to our God. It is of His wise providence and lies under His complete control. He has His own purposes in sending afflictions upon His people. His purposes are always gracious, and with them are His promises. He has promised His people wisdom and strength, guidance and help when they ask Him in willingness to do His will. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee" (Psalm 55:22).

Yet, all the while, we are to remember that "Every one shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:5). Every soldier has to carry his own pack. — F.D.F.

Question:

Since the Bible teaches that in heaven the saints will neither marry nor be given in marriage, should we not guard against the idea presented by many love songs that marriage is an eternal union ("forever" and "eternal" being often used in pledges of faithfulness)?

Answer:

Certainly we should guard against undue extravagance and deceptive exaggeration in our language, especially in our promises. Yet human language is an elastic thing, and carries what people put into it. For example, the words "eternal" and "forever" are frequently used in a relative, not the absolute sense; and as expressing quality rather than duration. Compare Eccles. 1:4, "the earth abideth forever", with Matt. 24:35, "the earth shall pass away". Both statements are true according to the common usage of the words. To deny love all its extravagances of expression would be not only futile, but ungracious. — F.D.F.

Question:

Why are the children of this world wiser than the children of light (Luke 16:8)?

Answer:

This question refers to the parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-12. Verse 8 reads: "And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." This might be paraphrased as follows: "And the employer praised the unjust steward, because he had acted shrewdly (for his own self interest); for ordinary worldly people in carrying on their worldly business are more shrewd (for their own selfish purposes) than Christian people are (in their service to God)" (See comments in Alford's "Greek Testament" on this parable).

So much for the meaning of the verse. The query asks WHY the children of this world are wiser than the children of light. The only reason which can be assigned is the sluggishness and spiritual stupidity of Christian people — that is, their spiritual immaturity and the sinful corruption of nature which remains even in those that have been born again. The worldly person, in the pursuit of his own worldly and selfish ends, is really following the line of least resistance; he does not have to struggle against his own heart and nature as he pursues wealth, security or power.

But the Christian, as he seeks the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt.6:33) is engaged in a constant conflict against his own heart, against his own remaining sinful corruption. He has a battle, not only with his environment, but even more he has a battle with himself. The result of this is often a kind of spiritual weariness, faint-heartedness and lack of progress. True spiritual wisdom comes from above, and for it to control our life involves a bitter struggle against "the flesh".

This parable itself was provided by our Lord, no doubt, as part of the remedy for such lack of spiritual wisdom on the part of the "children of light". It puts the Christian to shame by a comparison with the eagerness and intelligence of worldly people in pursuing worldly aims. For the Christian who knows his need of wisdom there is a sure source of supply: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). — J. G. Vos

Question:

If I pray for the salvation of a person, does God make him repent and believe? If so, where does his free will come in?

Answer:

The question rises out of a misunderstanding of the nature of the work of the Holy Spirit, and also a misunderstanding of the nature of human freedom. What the Holy Spirit does is not to "make" people repent, but to make them WILLING to repent. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). God so changes the nature of a person that that person freely and willingly does that which originally he could not do and hated to do, namely, repent and believe on Christ. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, but God can change them — that is, God can change man's sinful nature by the work of the Holy Spirit, the new birth — and is doing so all the time.

The term "free will" is ambiguous and should not be used without careful definition of its meaning. It is more correct to use the expression "free agency", which means that man is free as a person to make decisions without constraint from an outside source; it means that man is free to act

ACCORDING TO HIS OWN NATURE. The term "free will" gives rise to the mistaken notion that the will is free from other elements of the personality, and can act by itself regardless of the moral state of the person's heart.

In Eden, before man sinned, man's nature was good, and he was free to do good, that is, to act in accordance with his nature. When man sinned, his nature, including all his mental and spiritual powers, became enslaved to evil, and therefore his will came under bondage to evil too. Since the sinner's will is in bondage to evil, it is not free to choose God and holiness. It acts according to the person's nature, and chooses self and sin. Thus in man's present fallen condition, he is free to do evil only. He can neither will nor do anything which is truly (spiritually) good in God's sight. He can no more will to act contrary to his (sinful) nature than a fish could make up its mind to leave the river and walk on land.

When a person is regenerated, or born again of the Holy Spirit, a miracle is performed in the depths of that person's soul by the almighty power of God. The governing disposition of that person's soul is instantaneously re-created holy and good. That is to say, that person's inmost nature or character is miraculously changed from evil to good. This divinely-wrought change of nature expresses itself in repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, love for God, seeking after holiness, etc. Regeneration does not do any violence to man's "free will" (more correctly, free agency), for when he repents, believes on Christ, etc., he still acts according to his own nature. His nature having been changed, he freely acts according to his NEW nature by believing on Christ. The Holy Spirit deals with human beings as persons, not as if they were sticks or stones. He does not force or compel any person to act against his will or against his nature. Instead, He miraculously changes the person's nature, and then that person willingly becomes a Christian.

Throughout this life the corruption of the old nature continues in the Christian, and must be struggled against. So there is an internal conflict in the Christian's personality. He is not perfectly and completely free to choose God and holiness, for the remaining inward corruption interferes with this. But the regenerate part gains the victory more and more. Finally, on entering the state of glory, the Christian is made perfect in holiness, and therefore in heaven he is perfectly free to do good only, and cannot possibly do evil. In all this, no violence is done to the human will. It is the nature that is changed, and that determines the will. — J. G. Vos

Index of Blue Banner Faith and Life for 1949--Volume 4

Note: Where a subject begins on one page and is continued on the following page or pages, only the number of the first page is listed in this index.

- ADAM, historical character of, 156; and Christ, parallel between, 157
- AFFECTIONS, HEAVENLY, 70
- ALFORD, 42
- ALLEGORIZING OF SCRIPTURE, error of, 91
- ALLIS, O. T., 88, 122
- AMBROSE OF MILAN, quoted, 20
- AMEN, meaning of, 115
- AMILLENNIALISM, definition of, 149
- ANONING WITH OIL, 126
- ANSELM OF CANTERBURY, 137
- ANTINOMIANISM, definition of, 148; superficial evangelism and, 142
- AQUINAS, THOMAS, 138
- ARMINIANISM, definition of, 103
- ASCETICISM, 4
- ASSURANCE and salvation, 30; and Lord's Supper, 30; and Covenant of Grace, 165
- ATONEMENT, 137
- AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, on Psalm 41, 56; conversion of, 61; and free grace, 47
- AYRSMOSS, BATTLE OF, 50
- BAPTISM, for the dead, 128; and Covenant of Grace, 169; and Lord's Supper, 35; time of efficacy of, 22; covenant children entitled to, 170; why administered only once to any person, 36
- BAPTISM, INFANT, abuses of, 170; answer to objections, 89, 170; and Covenant of Grace, 168
- BAPTISMAL REGENERATION, 170
- BARNHOUSE, D. G., 88
- BARTH, KARL, 103
- BARTHIANISM, definition of, 103
- BAUR, F. C., 13
- BAXTER, RICHARD, quoted, 20
- BEATITUDES OF THE PSALMS, article by F. D. Frazer, 145
- BERENGAR, 95
- BIBLE, American Revised Version of, 82; destructive criticism of, 150; error of atomistic view of, 177; false categories imposed on by dispensationalism, 178; importance of unity of, 176; infallibility of regarded by modernists as dead issue, 177; King James or Authorized Version of, 81, 82; liberals' method of insinuating doubts concerning, 151, 152; organic character of, 177; unity of how denied today, 177; unity of how maintained by doctrine of Covenant of Grace, 178
- BIBLE HISTORY KNOWLEDGE TESTS, 116, 134
- BLESSEDNESS, meaning of in Psalter, 145, 146; of performing covenant duties, 147; of receiving covenant promises, 146
- BOOKS RECEIVED, list of, 184
- BOOKS REVIEWED
- A Lawyer Examines the Bible, Linton, 83
- Before Abraham, Nelson, 85
- Bible Survey, Hendriksen, 85
- Biblical Theology, Vos, 129
- Bone of His Bone, Huegel, 130
- Constitution of R. P. Church of N. A., 183
- Fairest Flower, Huegel, 131
- God Transcendent, Machen, 180
- Gospel According to Revelation, Elliott, 182
- Heresies Exposed, Irvine, 184
- High Points of Calvinism, Kruithof, 181
- His in Joyous Experience, Harrison, 17
- His Very Own, Harrison, 19
- How to be Saved and Know It, Conant, 17
- Matthew Henry, Mighty in the Scriptures, Beltz, 19
- Matthew Twenty-four: An Exposition, Kik, 182
- Messages on Ephesians, Wilson, 18
- Messages on Philippians, Wilson, 17
- Millennial Studies, Murray, 84
- My Sermon Notes on Biblical Characters, Van Wyk, 18
- Notes on the N. T.: Matt. and Mark, Barnes, 132
- Notes on the Parables of our Lord, Trench, 84
- Revision or New Translation? Allis, 19
- Summary of the Christian Religion, Kuiper, 182
- Youth Speaks on Calvinism, 133
- BRUNNER, EMIL, 103
- BUNYAN, JOHN, quoted, 103, 148
- CALVIN, JOHN, 49, 139; quoted, 40
- CALVINISM, definition of, 103; defends Christianity as complete system, 143
- CAMERON, RICHARD, 102; posts Sanquhar Declaration, 49; quoted, 97, 98, 141
- CARGILL, DONALD, 5; and Gibbites, 139; execution of, 50
- CARNAL CHURCH MEMBERS and Lord's Supper, 29
- CESS, the, 130
- CHARACTER, definition of, 58
- CHARLES THE BALD, 48, 95
- CHARLES II, 5, 49
- CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS, in Covenant of Grace, 167; meaning of their covenant status, 169; why some grow up ungodly, 167
- CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD, why wiser than children of light, 186
- CHRIST, liberal view of, 60; obedience of, 106; satisfaction of, 106; why called Second Adam, 157
- CHRISTENING, term to be avoided, 89
- CHRISTIAN ETHICS, definition of, 58
- CHRISTIANITY, historical nature of, 161
- CHRISTIAN LITERATURE, how foster taste for, 184
- CHRISTMAS, non-religious observance of, 185
- CHURCH, VISIBLE, civil magistrate and, 75; duties to its children, 173; believers' children included in, 171, 172; why it must be purged from corruption, 75
- CHURCH OF CHRIST IN CHINA, 53

- CHURCH DISCIPLINE**, 31
- CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**, based on profession not on proof, 170; of infants, 172
- CHURCH UNION**, attempted shortcuts to, 53; must be preceded by doctrinal unity, 52; often exists without real unity, 53; true path toward, 54
- CLOSE COMMUNION**, 32, 89
- CLOUD OF WITNESSES**, 139
- CONFIRMATION**, objection to term, 173
- CONFLICT WITH SIN**, 111
- CONSCIENCE**, definition of, 58
- CONSISTENCY**, 143, 144
- CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH THROUGH THE AGES**
 Gleams of Light in Medieval Darkness, 3
 Gottschalk, Witness for Free Grace, 47
 Berengar, Witness for the Truth about the Lord's Supper, 95
 Anselm, Witness for the Truth about the Atonement, 137
- CONTENTMENT**, 80
- CORRECTIONS** of typographical errors, 58
- COVENANT-BREAKING** by believers' children, 167; penalty of in O. T., 87
- COVENANT CHILDREN** dying in infancy, 174; church membership of, 168; religious nurture of, 168
- COVENANT-CONSCIOUS CHURCH**, 142, 143
- COVENANTERS** and world evangelization, 101
- COVENANT OF GOD WITH MAN**, terms laid down by God, 153; an act of voluntary condescension on God's part, 154; initiative taken by God, 153; not an agreement negotiated by God and man, 153
- COVENANT OF GRACE, THE: Its Meaning and Its Implications (Series of Bible Lessons), 152-180**
1. The Idea of a Covenant Between God and Man, 153
 2. The Covenant of Works: I. In Eden, 155
 3. The Covenant of Works: II. In Relation to Mankind Today, 156
 4. The Eternal Basis of the Covenant of Grace, 158
 5. The Implementation of the Covenant of Grace, 160
 6. The Revelation and Administration of the Covenant of Grace, 162
 7. The Covenant of Grace and the Salvation of the Christian, 164
 8. The Covenant of Grace and the Christian Family, 166
 9. The Covenant of Grace and Infant Baptism, 168
 10. The Covenant of Grace and Church Membership of Children, 171
 11. The Covenant of Grace and Infant Salvation, 173
 - 12, 13. The Covenant of Grace and the Unity of Scripture, 176, 178
- COVENANT OF GRACE**, administration of how affected by coming of Christ, 163; change in administration in time of Moses, 163; erroneous views concerning parties to, 159; eternal phase of (Covenant of Redemption), 158; formal establishment of with Abraham, 163; how baptism is sign and seal of, 169; how errors of dispensationalism are guarded against by, 179; informal establishment of with Adam and Eve, 163; in what sense conditional or unconditional, 159, 160; legal or external phase of, 167; made between God and elect sinners through Christ, 159; meaning of inclusion of believers' children in, 169; not provision of eternal life on lower terms than Covenant of Works, 158; objective of, 159; parties to, 159; periods in implementation of, 161; proof that believers' children are included in, 167; provides for objective and subjective sides of salvation, 164; relation of to assurance, 165; relation of to church membership of children, 168, 171; relation of to infant baptism, 168; relation of to perseverance, 165; relation of to question of infant salvation, 168, 173; relation of to Trinity, 160; revealed by institution of sacrifice, 163; supplementary helps for study of, 153; terms or content of, 159; vital or spiritual phase of, 167; when first revealed, 162; when made, 158
- COVENANT OF LIFE**, 155
- COVENANT OF REDEMPTION**, 158, 159
- COVENANT OF WORKS**, content of, 155; how fulfilled by Christ as Second Adam, 157; in what sense still in effect, 157; objective of, 155; outcome of, 156; parties to, 155; penalties of, 156; subjective consequences of breach of, 156; terms of not lowered by Covenant of Grace, 158
- COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**, rebellion against God's sovereignty excludes from, 154; why constituted by God not by man, 154; why needed for attainment of man's true destiny, 154
- CREATOR-CREATURE RELATIONSHIP**, 154
- CROSBY, FANNY**, hymns of not inspired, 89
- CRUSADES**, 2
- CUR DEUS HOMO**, 138
- DENNY, JAMES**, 14
- DENOMINATIONALISM**, 51, 52
- DIFFIDENT CHRISTIANS** and Lord's Supper, 29, 30
- DISPENSATIONALISM, MODERN**, and Lord's Prayer, 69; and unity of Scripture, 179; definition of, 148; harm of its view of Bible, 178; meaning of, 178; on fifth petition of Lord's Prayer, 107; view of on Israel and the church, 179
- DISSENT, POLITICAL**, 11, 12
- DUALISM**, 109
- DUTY**, definition of, 58
- EARTH**, not abandoned by God prior to man's creation, 41
- EBERHARD**, 48
- ECCLESIASTICAL OCTOPUS** (book by E. Gordon), 53

- ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT**, 54
EDEN, GARDEN OF, 156
EDERSHEIM, 14
ELECTION, 169
ELLJAH, fed by ravens, 90
EPIPHANIUS, quoted, 57
ERASTIANISM, 97, 99, 145
ERIGENA, JOHN SCOTUS, 48
ERMENBERGA, 137
ESCHATOLOGY, definition of, 149
ETERNITY, definition of, 21
ETHICS, definition of, 58
ETHICS, CHRISTIAN, definition of, 58
EVANGELISM, superficial type of, 142
EVANGELIZATION in God's plan, 100
EVIL, PROBLEM OF, 108, 109
FAITH, gift of God, 165; function of in salvation, 165; not condition of Covenant of Grace, 165
FALL OF MAN, not myth but history, 156
FAMILY, definition of Christian, 167; relation of Christian to Covenant of Grace, 167; not product of evolution, 166; not as such a covenant institution, 167; origin of, 166; provision for sustenance of in cases of need, 166; religious instruction, 168; family ties taken account of by God in eternal decree of election, 169; family worship, 168
FATHERHOOD OF GOD, proper response to, 70; universal religious not taught in Bible, 70
FEDERAL COUNCIL, 53
FOREIGN MISSIONS CONFERENCE OF N. A., 54
FORTIETH PSALM, THE, by F. D. Frazer, 15, 16
FORTY-FIRST PSALM, THE, by F. D. Frazer, 55
FREE AGENCY, definition of, 58; and regeneration and conversion, 187; and repentance and faith, 187
FREE GRACE, meaning of God's, 105
FREE WILL, ambiguity of term, 187; definition of, 58
FRUITION OF GOD as man's blessedness and reward, 154
FULL-TIME CHRISTIAN SERVICE, 42
FUNDAMENTALISM, weakness and incompleteness of, 143; worthy achievements of, 143
GENESIS 1:1-3, meaning of, 41
GEORGE, R. J., quoted, 166, 171, 172
GIB, JOHN, 139
GOAL OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS, 58
GOD, a limited, wrong explanation of origin of evil, 109; has no need of created beings, 128
GORDON, ERNEST, 53
GOTTSCHALK, 47
GRACE, God's free how given to sinners, 106; meaning of, 105; meaning of in Covenant of Grace, 158
GUILT, cannot be removed by man, 105; how distinguished from penalty, 106; lack of emphasis on today, 104; mistaken modern notions of, 104; universality of, 105
GUTHRIE, WILLIAM, quoted, 97
HAMILTON, ROBERT, 4; quoted, 102
HARNACK, ADOLF VON, 14
HEALING in answer to prayer, 126
HEATHEN, spiritual condition of, 90
HEAVEN, definition of, 21
HELL, definition of, 21
HENRY I, king of England, 138
HENRY, MATTHEW, quoted, 20, 57
HENRY, PHILIP, quoted, 57, 148
HIGHER CRITICISM, 177
HILDEBRAND (pope Gregory VII), 96
HINCMAR, 48
HODGE, A. A., quoted, 147, 148, 173
HOLLAND, Covenanter ministers ordained in, 102
HOLTZMANN, H. J., 13
HOWIE, JOHN, quoted, 140
HRABANUS MAURUS, 47, 95
HUMANISM, 155
HUMAN RIGHTS, 78
HYMN SINGING, 127
INDULGENCE, THE, 139
INFANTS, Bible silent as to whether there are any non-elect dying in infancy, 176; Adam's first sin imputed to, 174; born guilty before God, 174; born with corrupt nature, 174; church membership of not dependent on baptism, 172; innocency of not taught in Bible, 174; sentimental notion of innocency of, 174
INFANT DAMNATION, not taught by Westminster Confession of Faith, 175
INFANT SALVATION, basis of that of covenant children dying in infancy, 174; Bible silent as to whether all dying in infancy are saved, 175; only Calvinism affords grounds for hope that all dying in infancy are saved, 175; question of complicated by error of baptismal regeneration in early centuries, 175
INFORMATORY VINDICATION, quoted, 140
INTERMEDIATE STATE, definition of, 20
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, 54
ISRAEL, and the church, 179; why compared to stars, dust, sand, 90
ISRAELITES of O. T., not saved by works, 163
JAMES II (VII of Scotland), 50, 141
JEROME, 80
JESUS AND THE CRITICS, L. W. Sloat, 12
"JOINING THE CHURCH", 173
JUDGMENT, definition of, 21
JUSTIFICATION, takes place in present life, 90
KILLING TIME, THE, 140
KINGDOM of Christ, phases of, 76; of glory, 76; of glory, definition of, 20; of God, definition of, 20; of God, not a democracy, 154; of grace, 76; of grace, definition of, 20; of heaven, definition of, 20; of power, 76; of power, definition of, 20
KING JAMES AND AMERICAN REVISED VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE, L. E. Kilpatrick, 80
LABOR UNIONS, membership in, 185
LANFRANC, 95, 137
LATERAN, FOURTH COUNCIL OF, 26
LAUD, ARCHBISHOP, 54
LENT, origin of, 127; reasons for not observing, 126
LEO IX (pope), 96

- LIBERALISM**, definition of, 104; view of about Christ, 60
- LIE**, immorality of every, 125
- LIFE, COVENANT OF**, 155
- LIGHTFOOT, J. B.**, 14
- LORD'S SUPPER**, argument for open communion in answered, 33; assurance not necessary for partaking of, 30; Christ's institution of, 24; church not to decide whether prospective communicants are converted or not, 31; diffidence concerning partaking of, 28; duty of communicants after the sacrament, 34; duty of communicants at time of administration of, 33; duty of communicants to judge themselves, 34; elements used in, meaning of, 25; essential meaning of, 23; excuses of carnal church members for not partaking of, 29; excuses of legalists for not partaking of, 29; excuses of nominal church members for not partaking of, 29; ignorant persons to be excluded from, 31; in what sense a feeding upon Christ's body and blood, 26; Lutheran doctrine of body and blood of Christ in, 27; meaning of discerning the Lord's body, 34; meaning of worthily partaking of, 27; not intended for the unconverted, 31; objections to close communion answered, 32; points of agreement and difference between it and baptism, 35; proper age for admission to, 173; proper preparation for, 28; purpose of, 24; question of close communion in connection with, 32; question of open communion in connection with, 32; question of restricted communion in connection with, 32; reason for preparatory services before, 28; Reformed doctrine of body and blood of Christ in, 27; relation of to second coming of Christ, 24; reluctance of morbidly introspective Christians to partake of, 29; Roman Catholic doctrine of, 26; sacramental actions involved in, 25; scandalous persons to be excluded from, 31; self-examination required for proper partaking of, 28; time of efficacy of, 35; to be administered by whom, 25; transubstantiation of elements in, an error, 26; what classes to be excluded from, 31; what constitutes, 23; what forms of ignorance or scandal properly exclude from, 32; why infants are excluded from, 36; why to be observed repeatedly, 36
- LOVE OF GOD**, unbalanced emphasis of, 66
- LOVE SONGS**, exaggerations in, 186
- LUTHER, MARTIN**, 3, 81
- MACHEN, J. G.**, 14, 180
- MACLAREN, ALEXANDER**, quoted, 57
- MANTON, THOMAS**, quoted, 19, 20, 57, 148
- MARY**, worship of, 4
- MASS**, Roman Catholic doctrine of the, 26
- MCCORMICK SEMINARY**, 149
- MIRACLE**, compromising liberal definition of, 152
- MISSIONS**, 100
- MODERNISM**, an intellectual flight from God's justice, 152; attitude of toward infallibility of Bible, 177; fostered by activities of Federal Council, 53; view of concerning Christ, 60
- MOHAMMEDANISM**, 3
- MONASTICISM**, 4
- MORAL OBLIGATION**, definition of, 58
- MOTIVE**, definition of, 58
- MOTIVE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS**, definition of, 58
- NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**, 54
- NATURALISM**, definition of, 104
- NEANDER, A.**, 13
- NEO-ORTHOXY**, 152; definition of, 103
- NEO-SUPERNATURALISM**, definition of, 103
- NOTTING**, 48
- OPEN COMMUNION**, 32, 33
- OUR CHURCH COVENANT AND MODERN LIFE (Series of Sermons)**
- VI. Witnessing for the Ideal of a Christian Nation, 8
- VII. Where we Stand on the Question of Church Union, 51
- VIII. Our Duty to Participate in World Evangelization, 99
- IX. We Covenant to Perform our Duties Faithfully, 142
- OWEN, JOHN**, quoted, 173
- PAULUS, H. E. G.**, 12
- PEDEN, ALEXANDER**, quoted, 57, 58, 97, 98; relations with James Renwick, 140; summary of life of, 92
- PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**, 87
- PIETISM**, definition of, 103
- POEMS AND POETICAL QUOTATIONS**
- Be prayerful, and thou shalt have, 136
- Can peach renew lost bloom (C. G. Rossetti), 2
- Exultation over the Fall of the King of Babylon (Vos), 94
- God Answers Prayer, 136
- I sing of a city whose greatness hath won me, 2
- Is this a time, O Church of Christ, to sound retreat, 136
- One billow past — another rolls to meet thee, 136
- Peden at the Grave of Cameron (Menteath), 46
- Safe where I cannot die yet (C. G. Rossetti), 2
- So shall crown Thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown (R. Browning), 136
- The thing surpasses all my thoughts, 136
- Though sun and moon and stars be not, 2
- Till the Perfect Day, 2
- POLITICAL DISSENT**, 11, 12
- POLITICS AND RELIGION**, 8, 9
- POSTMILLENNIALISM**, definition of, 148
- PRAYER**, acceptable requires sense of need, 66; acceptable requires sense of sin and unworthiness, 66; acceptable requires sincerity, fervency, love to God, 67; acceptable requires penitent, thankful, enlarged hearts, 66; definition of, 37; difference between Christian and non-Christian, 39; divinely-given rule for direction in, 67; does not involve revelation of truth outside of Scripture, 60; error of Rome in addressing it to creatures, 38; for bodily healing, how answered by God, 126; for contentment in use of blessings, 80; for enemies,

does not imply pacifism or non-resistance of violence, 62; for others' welfare, 65; for the dead, erroneously sanctioned by some Protestants, 63; for the dead, not found in Bible, 63; for the dead, Roman Catholic teaching on, 63; for the dead, why wrong, 63; for temporal and spiritual blessings for ourselves, 62; for unpromised blessings, must be submissive to God's secret will, 64; for whom to be offered, 61; God's glory the prime consideration in, 64; help of Holy Spirit in, 60; Holy Spirit's help in not uniform but variable, 61; how Bible serves as rule for direction in, 67; how to be offered, 65; how to be offered for destruction of Satan's kingdom, 73; importance of for propagation of Gospel throughout world, 74; importance of for salvation of fullness of the Gentiles, 74; in relation to the sin unto death, 63; may not ask for blessings on violations of God's law, 65; may not presume to dictate to God, 60; meaning of for calling of the Jews, 74; meaning of in name of Christ, 39; meaning of praying with understanding, 66; meaning of that asking mercy for Christ's sake, 40; must be in subordination to God's secret will, 60; must be instructed by Scripture to seek what is for God's glory, 64; need for encouragement in, 40; need for reverence in, 70; non-Christian types of, 37; not to be read from written forms or books, 61; present-day often lacks reverence, 66; relation of Christ's mediation to, 40; reason for engaging in, 37; right attitude concerning God's time and way of answering, 67; self-righteous, an abomination to God, 40; sinful if offered without a Mediator, 60; source of boldness, strength and hope of acceptance in, 40; source of knowledge for right, 67; spiritual affections required for acceptable, 61; spiritual apprehensions required for acceptable, 61; spiritual graces required for acceptable, 61; that of Old Testament saints was offered in name of Christ, 40; to be offered for hastening of Christ's second coming, 76; what kinds of desires to be offered to God in, 37; what things to be requested in, 63; why a duty of all men, 39; why faith required for acceptable, 67; why for church to be furnished with officers and ordinances, 75; why in name of Christ, 59; why is God alone able to answer that for forgiveness of sins, 39; why is God alone able to fulfil the desires expressed in, 39; why is God the only one able to hear, 38; why Mediator required for, 59; why must thanksgiving be included in, 38; why must we confess our sins in, 38; why not in name of Mary or saints, 59; why only by help of Holy Spirit, 37; why only in name of Christ, 37; why addressed to God alone, 38; why to be offered for all sorts of men, 62; why to be offered for effectiveness of Christ's ordinances, 76; why to be offered for magistrates and ministers, 62; why to be offered for our enemies, 62; why to be offer-

ed for pardon of daily failings, 106; why to be offered for pure dispensing of Christ's ordinances, 76; why to be offered for welfare of church, 64; why to be offered for whole church on earth, 62; why we need a rule for direction in, 67; why we need help of Holy Spirit for, 60; why wrong to pray for anything unlawful, 65; wrong attitude which prevents prayer in name of Christ, 40

PRAYER, THE LORD'S, dispensationalism and, 69; how misused, 68; how to be used, 68; meaning of first petition of, 71; second petition, 73; third petition, 76; fourth petition, 78; fifth petition, 104; sixth petition, 108; meaning of hallowing God's name, 72; meaning of will of God in, 77; not prayed by Christ Himself, 68; objections raised by some to use of as a prayer, 68, 69; parts of, 69, 70; question of genuineness of text of conclusion of, 115; refutation of dispensational view of, 69, 107; teaching of conclusion of, 114; teaching of dispensationalism on fifth petition of, 107; teaching of preface of, 69, 70; teaching of Scofield Reference Bible on, 69, 107; use of as a model, 68; use of as a prayer, 68; who can rightly use it, 70; why it uses plural pronoun in addressing God as Father, 71

PRAYER BOOKS, not to be used in worship, 61

PREACHING MISSIONS, modernistic sponsored by Federal Council, 54

PRELUDE TO THE PSALMS, THE, F. D. Frazer, 122

PREMILLENNIALISM, definition of, 149

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A., 149

PRINCETON SEMINARY, 149

PRUDENTIUS, 48

PSEUDO-POSTMILLENNIALISM, definition of, 148

PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH, proper age for, 173

QUEENSFERRY PAPER, 5, 49

RADBERT (Paschasius Radbertus), 95

RADIO BROADCASTING, modernistic fostered by Federal Council, 53

RAPTURE, definition of, 21

RATRAMPNUS, 48, 95

REDEMPTION, COVENANT OF, 158

REFORMED PRESBYTERY (Scotland), 141

RELIGION AND POLITICS, 8

RENAN, ERNST, 13

RENWICK, JAMES, 98, 102, 140

RESTITUTION THEORY of Gen. 1:1-3, 41

RESTRICTED COMMUNION, 32

RESURRECTION, definition of, 21

RESURRECTION BODY, definition of, 21

RIGHTS OF MAN, 76

RUSSEL, JAMES, 139

RUTHERGLEN TESTIMONY, 4, 50

SABBATH SCHOOLS, and parental instruction of children, 168; heretical character of some newly published materials for, 88

SAINTS IN HEAVEN, do they see us on earth? 36

SANCTIFICATION, when to be perfected, 114

- SANQUHAR DECLARATION**, 49
- SATAN**, allies of in tempting people, 110; how he can exercise power as king, 73; how restrained by God, 113; how trodden under saints' feet, 114; identity and names of, 110; kingdom of how destroyed, 73; meaning of "the flesh" as ally of, 110; meaning of the world as ally of, 110; modern denial of objective existence of, 110; reality of kingdom of, 73
- SCHWEITZER, ALBERT**, 14
- SCOFIELD, C. I.**, 119
- SHARP, ARCHBISHOP**, 139
- SCOFIELD REFERENCE BIBLE**, arbitrary interpretations in, 120; dispensationalism of, 121; error of on Gen. 1:1-3, 41; four forms of Gospel distinguished in, 179; insistence of on literal interpretation, 121; refutation of dispensational teachings of, 122; seven dispensations of, 178; teaching of on law and grace, 69; teaching of on Lord's Prayer, 69, 107; unwarranted claims of, 120
- SCOFIELD REFERENCE BIBLE**, article by L. E. Kilpatrick, 119
- SCOTTISH COVENANTERS, THE** (Selections from book by Vos)
6. Public Protests and Testimonies Issued by the Covenanters, 4, 49
 7. The Precise Nature of the Covenanters' Claims during the Period of Persecution, 97
 8. Divisions among the Covenanters during the Period of Persecution, 139
 9. The Extent of the Persecution Suffered by the Covenanters, 140
 10. The Condition of the Covenanters on the Eve of the Revolution, 141
- SCRIPTURE**, see Bible
- SECOND COMING OF CHRIST**, definition of, 20; prayer for hastening of, 76
- SECRET SOCIETIES**, 144
- SEMINARIES**, evil effects of teaching unbelief in, 151
- SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE**, 75
- SHIELDS, ALEXANDER**, quoted, 98
- SHIELDS, MICHAEL**, quoted, 140
- SIN UNTO DEATH**, 63
- SMELLIE, ALEXANDER**, quoted, 140
- SMITH, WALTER**, quoted, 101, 141
- SPURGEON, CHARLES H.**, quoted, 7, 20
- STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS**, 58
- STIER, RUDOLPH**, quoted, 20
- STRAUSS, D. F.**, 13
- STRONG, A. H.**, 176
- "SWEET SINGERS", THE**, 139
- TAYLOR, J. HUDSON**, quoted, 57
- TELEVISION** and temptation, 89
- TEMPTATIONS**, forwardness of Christians to expose themselves to, 111; not to be blamed on God, 109; state of mind produced by yielding to, 114; what is meant by improving, 112; why Christians are subject to, 111; why God permits Christians to suffer, 113; why we deserve to be left under the power of them, 112; why we need divine help to resist and improve them, 112; wisely permitted in God's providence, 109
- TERMS OF COMMUNION OF R. P. CHURCH**, Scriptural character of, 143
- TEST ACT OF 1681**, 50
- THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**, duty of supporting, 102
- THEOLOGY OF CRISIS**, definition of, 103
- TOLERANCE**, false notion of, 143
- TRANSFORMATION OF LIVING SAINTS**, definition of, 21
- TRANSUBSTANTIATION**, error of, 26, 96
- TRENT, COUNCIL OF**, 26
- TUEBINGEN SCHOOL OF CRITICS**, 13
- TYNDALE, WILLIAM**, 81, 82
- UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**, 53
- UNITED SOCIETIES**, 141
- UNITY, CHRISTIAN**, not merely a dream, 55; real meaning of, 53; required by Word of God, 55; must precede church union, 52
- UNPARDONABLE SIN**, 63
- UNTRUTHFULNESS**, 125
- VISIBLE CHURCH**, definition of, 45
- VOLUNTARYISM**, 75
- VOWS** of parents descend to children, 143; of parents for children, unrealistic individualism of objections to, 171
- WALKER, PATRICK**, quoted, 98, 139, 140
- WARFIELD, B. B.**, 14; quoted, 20, 53, 57, 102, 103; treatise of on infant salvation, 175
- WEISS, B.**, 14
- WEISSE, C. H.**, 13
- WELSH, JOHN**, 5
- WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES**, 54
- WESTMINSTER PRESS**, 149
- WESTMINSTER STUDY EDITION OF THE HOLY BIBLE**, article by L. E. Kilpatrick, 149
- WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL**, 55
- WHY BE A COVENANTER?** 44
- WILL OF GOD**, how done in heaven, 77; man's natural ignorance of and resistance to, 77; meaning of in Lord's Prayer, 77; two senses of term in Bible, 77; why done imperfectly on earth, 78
- WILLIAM RUFUS**, king of England, 138
- WORKS, COVENANT OF**, 155
- WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**, 54
- WORLD**, enmity of against God, 127; God's overruling of not always obvious, 112; how overruled by God for benefit of His people, 112
- WORLD-WIDE EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY**, 100
- WYCLIFFE, JOHN**, 80, 81
- ZAHN, THEODOR**, 14

An Announcement to our Readers

The present issue completes four years of publication of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". The publisher desires to record his deep gratitude to God, whose kind providence has made it possible to overcome apparently insurmountable obstacles and to continue publication through four years without missing an issue. The publisher also wishes to express his sincere appreciation and hearty thanks to all who by their interest, prayers, gifts and personal exertions have helped to render publication possible.

In particular, the publisher wishes to express his heartfelt gratitude to the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America for the generous financial assistance for the current year made available by its 1949 session, without which the publication of this final 1949 issue would have been, humanly speaking, impossible.

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In looking forward to 1950 the publisher would bespeak the continued prayers and assistance of all who believe that "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is serving a useful purpose in expounding, defending and applying the truths of our holy faith.

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