
BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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VOLUME 5

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NUMBER 1

"GOD THE GREAT CREATOR OF ALL THINGS DOTTH UPHOLD,
DIRECT. DISPOSE. AND GOVERN ALL CREATURES, ACTIONS,
AND THINGS, FROM THE GREATEST EVEN TO THE LEAST, BY
HIS MOST WISE AND HOLY PROVIDENCE, ACCORDING TO HIS
INFALLIBLE FOREKNOWLEDGE, AND THE FREE AND IMMUT-
ABLE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL, TO THE PRAISE OF THE
GLORY OF HIS WISDOM, POWER, JUSTICE, GOODNESS, AND
MERCY."

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, V.1

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System of Doctrine set forth in the Word of God and Summarized in the Standards
of the Covenanter (Reformed Presbyterian) Church.

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J. G. VOS, Editor and Publisher

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

THE DEATHBED OF RUTHERFORD

By Harriet Stuart Menteth

Tread lightly through the darkened room, for a sick man lieth there,
And, 'mid the dimness, only stirs the whispered breath of prayer;
As anxious hearts take watch by turns beside the lowly bed,
Where sleep the awful stillness wears—that soon must wrap the dead!

Hours hath he known of fevered pain — but now his rest is calm,
As though upon the spirit worn distilled some healing balm:
It may be that his dreaming ear wakes old accustomed words,
Or drinks once more the matin song of Anwoth's "blessed birds!"

Oh! green and fresh upon his soul those early haunts arise,
His kirk — his home — his wild wood walk — with all their memories —
The very rushing of the burn, by which so oft he trod,
The while on eagle wings of faith his spirit met its God!

A smile hath brightened on his lips — a light around his brow —
Oh! surely, "words unspeakable" that dreamer listeth now --
And glories of the upper sky, his raptured senses steep,
Blent with the whispers of His love — who gives His loved ones sleep!

But hark! — a sound! — a tramp of horse! — a loud, harsh, wrangling din!
Oh! rudely on that dream of heaven this world hath broken in —
In vain affection's earnest plea — the intruders forward press —
And with a struggling spasm of pain, he wakes to consciousness!

Strange lights are streaming through the room — strange forms are round his bed .
Slowly his dazzled sense takes in, each shape and sound of dread:
"False traitor to thy country's law — and to thy sovereign lord,
I summon thee to meet thy doom, thou felon Rutherford!"

Feebly the sick man raised his hand — his hand so thin and pale.
And something in the hollow eye made that rude speaker quail:-
"Man! thou hast sped thine errand well! — yet it is wasted breath,
Except the great ones of the earth can break my tryst with death!

"A few brief days — or briefer hours — and I am going home,
Unto mine own prepared place, where but few great ones come!
And to the judgment seat of Him, who sealed me with His seal —
'Gainst evil tongues, and evil men, I make my last appeal!

"A traitor was His name on earth! a felon's doom His fate!
Thrice welcome were my Master's cup — but it hath come too late!
The summons of that mightiest King, to whom all kings must bow,
Is on me for an earlier day — is on me even now!

"I hear — I hear the chariot wheels, that bring my Saviour nigh,
For me He bears a golden crown — a harp of melody —
For me He opens wide His arms — He shows His wounded side —
Lord! 'tis my passport into life! — I live — for Thou hast died!"

They give his writings to the flames — they brand his grave with shame —
A hissing in the mouth of fools becomes his honoured name;
And darkness wraps a while the land, for which he prayed and strove,
But blessed in the Lord his death — and blest his rest above!

(Note. See sketch of the life of Rutherford on back cover.)

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Sketches From Our History Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER IV

GLEAMS OF LIGHT IN MEDIEVAL DARKNESS

(Continued from last issue)

4. The Waldenses, Witnesses for the Authority of the Bible

We come now to the study of a body of Christian people who dared to challenge the claims of the medieval papal church and its hierarchy to supreme authority over faith and life, who suffered long and terrible persecution as a dissenting sect, and whose movement has been perpetuated to the present day as a living branch of the Visible Church.

There is some dispute about the origin of the name "Waldenses", but the common opinion is that it is derived from one Peter Waldo (sometimes written Valdez, Waldus, Valdesius and various other ways) who died sometime before 1218. The original location of the Waldenses was the city of Lyons in southern France, hence they were sometimes called "Poor Men of Lyons". From France the movement spread into Italy, Germany and Austria, though only in Italy have they continued their existence to the present day.

Some medieval and modern Waldensian writers claimed for the movement a continuous history from the days of the apostles, while others claimed that it originated as long ago as the seventh century. These claims of a very early origin of the Waldensian movement have been repeated by some Protestant writers in their zeal to refute the pretensions of the Church of Rome by showing that there was a dissenting evangelical or "Protestant" church in existence through the whole period of the middle ages. However, careful historical research has shown that these claims of a very early origin of the movement cannot be substantiated. There is no doubt that the medieval Waldenses had traditions of an early origin, but it cannot be proved that the movement existed before the twelfth century.

Comparatively little is known of the life of Peter Waldo. When he was a successful merchant in Lyons, he was suddenly awakened to

serious thoughts about religion by the tragic death of a fellow-citizen. On the advice of a Catholic priest, about 1170, Waldo resolved upon a life of poverty in the service of Christ. He settled part of his property on his wife, bestowed the rest of it on the poor, and committed his two daughters to a convent.

Thereupon Waldo began to wander about preaching to the people. Soon those who became his disciples also began to preach, going two by two from place to place. Waldo procured the services of two scholars to translate the Gospels and certain other portions of the Bible into the common language of the people. Soon the Roman Catholic hierarchy began to take notice of the activities of Waldo and his followers. But when the archbishop of Lyons ventured to interfere, the Waldenses stood their ground, saying that they must obey God rather than men.

At the Third Lateran Council of the Roman Catholic Church, held in 1179, representatives of the Waldenses appeared and petitioned the pope to approve of their movement and permit them to continue preaching. They also presented the pope with a copy of their translation of the Scriptures. This application to the pope for sanction of the movement would seem to indicate that the oft-repeated claims of a very early origin and continuous existence as a dissenting sect separate from the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church cannot be true, for their plea to the pope of course implied an acceptance (at that time) of his jurisdiction. If the movement had already existed for centuries denying the claims of the papacy, it seems highly improbable that the pope's approval would be sought as was actually done in 1179. But if it was a comparatively new movement in 1179, then it is easy to understand how there may have been at its origin no special antipathy to the papal claims, though such antipathy developed later with the course of events.

The pope appointed a commission to confer with the representatives of the Waldenses. An account of the proceedings of this commission has been preserved to the present day. The commission thought the Waldensian envoys simple people, and found them quite ignorant of the vocabulary and distinctions of medieval theology. The Roman Catholic council forbade the Waldenses to preach, though it did not mention the sect by name. A Synod held at Verona, Italy, in 1184, pronounced a ban upon them for preaching without permission from the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. The Waldenses, however, disregarded these decrees and continued to preach as before. For a time they were able to do this without serious interference on the part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Later serious persecution began. In 1310 two Waldensians were sentenced, one to life imprisonment and the other to burning at the stake. In 1319 three more were burned at the stake and 26 sentenced to life imprisonment. These persecutions were in southern France. In Italy, persecution unto death began with the burning of a Waldensian in 1312. At the close of the medieval period, in 1487, the pope, Innocent VIII, carried on a crusade against the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont in northern Italy. An army of 18,000 men was sent to afflict these simple Christians, with the result that they were compelled to retire to the most inaccessible mountain retreats, and suffered bitter hardships. Even more cruel and inhuman was the treatment meted out to the Italian Waldenses in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, after they had become identified with the Protestant Reformation.

It would take too much space to trace the history of the Waldenses in Germany and Austria. These differed in some respects from the French and Italian branches of the movement, as the latter indeed did from each other.

Only gradually did the Waldenses come to reject the jurisdiction, priesthood and sacramental system of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1179, as we have noted, they did not hesitate to petition the pope to sanction their movement and activities. Eventually, as the result of the attitude of the papal church, and the persecution which they suffered at the hands of the latter, separation became complete.

Some Protestant writers have made extravagant claims concerning the medieval Waldenses, asserting that they were Protestants before the Reformation, and in some cases even claiming that their system was strictly Presbyterian with respect to church organization, government, worship and discipline. Competent church historians hold, however, that such statements are decided exaggerations, and that the real facts were quite different from what has been alleged by some. The truth seems to be that the Waldenses, while

they were devoted to the Bible, yet were not evangelical in any profound sense. Schaff says: "They were . . . not Protestants, for we seek in vain among them for a statement of the doctrine of justification by faith. It is possible; they held to the universal priesthood of believers. . . They placed the stress upon following the practice of the Apostles and obeying the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, and they did not know the definition which Luther put upon the word 'justification'" (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, V, pp. 501-2). It was only after the Waldenses came into contact with the Lutheran Reformation that they became evangelical in the sense of holding the doctrine of justification by faith alone. There is no evidence that this was their faith during the middle ages.

David Schaff enumerates five chief principles of the Waldenses, which are as follows. (1) The duty of obeying God rather than men, which the Roman Catholic hierarchy understood as a refusal to obey the commands of the pope and the bishops. (2) The authority of the Bible, and its use by the people. (3) The importance of preaching, and the right of lay Christians to engage in preaching. (4) The right of women to preach as well as men. (5) "That it was spiritual endowment, or merit, and not the Church's ordination which gave the right to bind and loose, to consecrate and bless" (Schaff, V, pp. 502-4).

It should be observed that from the orthodox Protestant point of view these principles contain elements of error as well as elements of truth. The first two are certainly true and valid, the third is true with certain limitations, but the fourth and fifth are certainly erroneous. Preaching is certainly important, but a distinction must be made between voluntary evangelism addressed to the general public, on the one hand, and official preaching or expounding the Word in the congregation of believers, on the other hand; the latter, at any rate, is properly engaged in only by men who have been properly trained, and examined and commissioned by the courts of the Visible Church. (Cf. the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, which rejects as an error the proposition "That any unauthorized person may take upon him to preach the Gospel" — XXIV, Error 7). The alleged right of women to preach or teach publicly is certainly an error which is based on gross misinterpretation of the Biblical data on the subject (1 Cor. 14:33-36; 1 Tim. 2:12). The fifth Waldensian principle listed by Schaff is also definitely an error — indeed, it is essentially the old error of the Donatist sect of the fourth century after Christ, which the Church had long rejected as a heresy, the error, namely, that the validity of a minister's official acts (such as administration of the sacraments) depends on the personal piety and character of the minister himself, not on his ordination and official position in the Church. (Cf. the Westminster Con-

fession of Faith, XXVII.3; Larger Catechism, 161, "The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered. . ."). The Waldenses were accused of holding that any pious lay Christian, either male or female, could rightly administer baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is possible that this unscriptural sectarian tenet was unjustly charged against them by the ecclesiastical authorities, and that they did not actually hold this "principle" — a "principle" which is rejected by the great majority of orthodox Protestants.

The five chief Waldensian principles enumerated by Schaff are remarkable for what they omit as well as for what they contain. It should be noted that these five principles do not touch the heart of medieval Roman Catholic error — the legalistic belief in salvation by human merit or "good works" instead of by the free grace of God through Christ's work of redemption. The theology of salvation by free, unmerited grace had been the accepted and honored official faith of the Church in the days of Augustine, almost a thousand years before the rise of the Waldensian movement. During the middle ages this heart of the Gospel lay buried under a mass of traditional error, while belief in salvation by good works or human merit was prevalent. The theology of salvation by free grace alone was not revived and proclaimed to the world by the Waldenses (at least, not in any consistent form over against the legalism of the Roman Catholic system), but by Martin Luther and the other Reformers of the sixteenth century. We should honor the medieval Waldenses for the witness which they bore to truth, and especially for championing the authority and popular use of the Bible. But it is a distortion of history to claim that they were virtually evangelical Protestants before the Reformation.

With respect to baptism, there were some differences within the Waldensian movement. It seems that some of the Waldenses rejected in-

fant baptism, though apparently it was accepted by the majority. Schaff states that some of the Waldenses rejected purgatory and prayers for the dead, while the movement as a whole rejected the use of oaths and opposed capital punishment. Their rejection of oaths and of the death penalty for murder must be regarded as proceeding from misunderstanding of the teaching of the Bible on these subjects.

The rise of such a popular Bible-reading and Bible-preaching movement amid the spiritual darkness and ignorance of the middle ages, and its continuance in spite of cruel and bitter persecution, century after century to the present day, is certainly a remarkable witness to the power and faithfulness of God. In a different way from Gottschalk, Berengar and Anselm, and yet truly, the Waldensian movement was a gleam of light in the midst of medieval darkness.

After their identification with the Protestant Reformation, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Waldenses of Italy suffered their most cruel and bitter persecution, concerning which the poet John Milton in 1673 wrote his sonnet "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont":

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,

Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans

The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

(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 II

THE REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT. 1688-1690

1. The Revolution of 1688.

In June, 1688, a son was born to King James VII, which caused alarm throughout Britain at

the possibility of a line of Roman Catholic rulers. About this time seven English bishops who had been imprisoned by the King for petitioning against his arbitrary actions, were tried by a court and acquitted. William of Orange saw his opportunity and sailed for England, landing on November 5th, 1688. Late in December the Scottish Privy Council by its own act dissolved; this

marked the end of twenty-eight years of tyranny and persecution in Scotland. Early in 1689 a convention was held in Scotland, elected by the Protestant elements in the country, which proclaimed William and Mary King and Queen of Scotland on April 11th, 1689. The document adopted by the convention began thus: "Whereas King James VII. being a professed Papist, did assume the regal power, and acted as King, without ever taking the oath required by law, whereby the King, at his accession to the government, is obliged to swear to maintain the Protestant religion, and to rule the people according to the laudable laws, and did, by the advice of wicked and evil counsellors, invade the fundamental constitution of this kingdom, and alter it from a legal limited monarchy to an arbitrary despotic power; and, in a public proclamation, asserted an absolute power to cass, annul, and disable all the laws, particularly the laws establishing the Protestant religion, and did exercise that power to the subversion of the Protestant religion, and to the violation of the laws and liberties of the kingdom. . .". This is followed by a list of the actions complained of, and the statement, "Therefore, the estates of the kingdom of Scotland find and declare that King James VII. being a professed Papist . . . hath forfeited the right to the crown, and the throne is become vacant". The right of revolution, the right of a nation to decide when its rulers had forfeited the right to rule, on which the Covenanters had repeatedly insisted, was now claimed and exercised, not merely by a few thousand persecuted persons, but by the Estates of Scotland, representing the whole nation, in convention assembled. Scotland was declared to be a "legal limited monarchy" and not an "arbitrary despotic power". The cause of freedom had been notably vindicated after being trampled in the dust for twenty-eight years.

In the Claim of Right prepared by the Estates, which accompanied their offer of the throne to William of Orange, Episcopacy was expressly stated to be one of the burdens under which Scotland had suffered: "Prelacy and the superiority of any officer in the Church above presbyters is, and hath been, a great and unsupportable grievance and trouble to this nation, and contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people ever since the Reformation".

2. The Legal Settlement of the Church of Scotland.

The first step in the settlement of the Church of Scotland after the Revolution was the passing by Parliament on an "Act Rescinding the First Act of the Second Parliament of 1669". The act which was rescinded was the notorious "Act Asserting His Majesties Supremacy over all Persons and in all Causes Ecclesiastical", which was now declared to be "inconsistent with the Establishment of the Church now desired, and ought to be abrogat".

On June 7th, 1690, the Parliament passed an "Act Ratifying the Confession of Faith and Settling Presbyterian Church Government". Like the Claim of Right, this act called Prelacy a "great and insupportable grievance, and contrary to the inclination of the generality of the people, ever since the Reformation, they having been reformed from Popery by Presbyters". Presbyterianism was stated to be "the government of Christ's Church within this nation, agreeable to the Word of God, and most conducive to the advancement of true piety and godliness, and the establishing of peace and tranquillity within this realm". The act ratified the Westminster Confession of Faith, which had been ratified by Parliament in 1649. Presbyterian government was established according to the act of 1592 (The Great Charter of Presbytery), which was revived, except the part relating to patronage, which was later considered by Parliament. The act declared that "the sole power and jurisdiction within the Church" inhered in the ecclesiastical judicatories and not in the civil magistrate. Presbytery was to be "the only government of Christ's Church within this Kingdom. . .". By the terms of the act, the government of the Church of Scotland was placed in the hands of the Presbyterian ministers who had been ejected since 1661, and such ministers and elders as they should receive.

It will be noted that this act of Parliament restored Presbyterian Church government as "agreeable to the Word of God" but did not affirm that Presbytery is the only Scriptural form of Church government. It is one thing to say that Presbytery is A form of Church government that is agreeable to the Word of God, and quite another to say that it is THE form of Church government that is agreeable to the Word of God. King William did not believe in the divine right of any particular system of Church polity, and the Parliament in settling the government of the Church took the low ground that Church government is a matter of expediency, or a matter to be decided on the basis of the tradition and preference of the nation since the Reformation. Prelacy was rejected, but not declared to be contrary to Scripture; it was merely affirmed to have been "a great and insupportable grievance, and contrary to the inclination of the generality of the people", etc. It is plain that the character of the law was determined by policy rather than by principle. The legislation of the Revolution Settlement breathed a different spirit from that of the Second Reformation.

The Parliament of 1690, while it rescinded the act which had declared the King supreme in causes ecclesiastical, left a mass of other pernicious legislation untouched on the statute books of the nation. The Act Rescissory, which had rescinded the reforming legislation of the Second Reformation, was left untouched. The acts which condemned the National Covenant and the

Solemn League and Covenant as unlawful oaths, and the act which called the General Assembly of 1638 an unlawful and seditious Assembly, as well as other similar laws, were left untouched. Patronage was indeed abolished, but in its place a system was instituted by which the heritors and elders of a parish were given the right to nominate a minister when the parish was vacant, and the people themselves were to be permitted to accept or reject the candidate.

Of the ministers who had been ejected since 1661, only sixty were still living in 1690, and by these the General Assembly was constituted after an interval of thirty-seven years since the last Assembly had been dispersed by Cromwell's soldiers. The ministers who had been entrusted by Parliament with the government of the Church held a preliminary meeting to make arrangements for the General Assembly, which set up presbyteries and instructed these concerning the election of commissioners to the General Assembly. When the Assembly met on October 16th, 1690, one hundred and sixteen ministers and forty-seven ruling elders were present as commissioners from the presbyteries.

At this period there were some nine hundred parishes in Scotland, all of which had been occupied by men who had conformed to Episcopacy. Large numbers of these were soon received into the Revolution Church without any real evidence of a hearty acceptance of the Presbyterian polity. In 1693 the Parliament passed an act which required all ministers of the Church of Scotland to subscribe the Confession of Faith, and to approve of Presbyterian government, not as the only Scriptural polity, but as the only government of the Church of Scotland. This permitted large numbers of the former "curates", men who had supported a government which had persecuted the Church and slaughtered the saints of God, to be received into the ministry of the Revolution Church while still believing that Prelacy is a Scriptural form of Church government. These former Episcopalians formed what later became known as the "Moderate" party in the Church of Scotland, that party which nearly extinguished evangelical religion and orthodoxy in the Church in later years.

Presbyterianism had indeed been restored, but the wrongs of the persecuting period had by no means all been undone. The Covenants were still trampled in the dust. The divine right of Presbytery was not asserted. Prelacy was not condemned as unscriptural. The whole fabric of the Revolution Settlement was too much the work of the civil magistrate. Large numbers of the "curates" were admitted without adequate examination and safeguards. The Church of the Revolution Settlement had a pliable, tolerant spirit very different from the strict adherence to principle which characterized the Church of the

Second Reformation. The nation as a whole was weary of strife and difficulties, and human nature being what it is, it is not surprising that the Parliament and General Assembly followed a broad via media between opposite views in reconstructing the Church of Scotland.

3. Attitude of the Covenanters to the Revolution Settlement.

Between the Revolution and the first meeting of the General Assembly, the Cameronian Covenanters solemnly renewed the Covenants at a place called Borland Hill, near Lesmahagow, on March 3rd, 1689. The service was attended by a large number of members of the United Societies, and was conducted by the three Cameronian ministers, Shields, Linning and Boyd. Shields publicly confessed his sin in having formerly complied with various evils, to the satisfaction of those present. Thus at this critical juncture in the history of the Scottish Church and nation did those who still adhered to the Covenants proclaim their faith and purpose to the world.

After the Revolution Settlement, the United Societies petitioned the General Assembly to redress their grievances. Partrick Walker was one of the brethren appointed to present the matter to the Assembly. He writes "We were long put off, and with great difficulty got them laid before them, many of them about the helm looking upon us with a frowning countenance; and when we saw many of our bitter tongued persecutors sitting there as elders, and had so little regard to our grievances, and esteem of us, that they thought it not worth their while to give us any answer; these and other things made us come out with our hearts filled with sorrow". It is clear from this that the General Assembly was not minded to look carefully into the matters urged by the Covenanters.

The Cameronian ministers, Shields, Boyd and Linning presented two papers to the General Assembly, a longer and a shorter one, in which they urged the consideration of the points for which Covenanters had contended. At the same time they applied for admission to the ministry of the Revolution Church, and promised to be subject to the judicatories of the Church and to oppose schism and defection. Their application came before the Assembly on October 25th, 1690, by a report from the Committee on Overtures. The Committee recommended that the shorter of the two papers be read to the Assembly, but stated that the reading of the longer one would be "inconvenient, in regard that though there be several good things in it, yet the same doth also contain several peremptory and gross mistakes, unseasonable and impracticable proposals, and uncharitable and injurious reflections, tending rather to kindle contentions than to compose divi-

sions". Shields, Boyd and Linning then appeared before the Assembly and acknowledged their shorter paper, after which the Assembly, without a dissenting vote, adopted the report of the Committee.

Alexander Shields also presented a petition to the Parliament, in the name of "the persecuted people of the west and southern shires," setting forth the claims, and requests of the Covenanters. This paper was rejected by a committee of Parliament and never reached the floor of Parliament itself.

In spite of the unsatisfactory way in which the General Assembly had dealt with their papers, the three Covenanter ministers, Shields, Linning and Boyd, entered the Revolution Church. Patrick Walker says that in later years Shields regretted that he had not taken a more positive attitude when the matters were before the General Assembly: "Mr. Shields much lamented his silence before the Assembly, and coming so far short of his former resolutions, 'that if he ever saw such an occasion, he should not be tonguetacked': Masters Linnen and Boyd had too much influence upon him, being in haste for kirks, stipends and wives". Walker reports a conversation with Shields, in which the latter defended his entrance into the Revolution Church on the ground that there were many good men in it: "And Mr. Shields said to me, in our last parting at Edinburgh before he went abroad, 'Altho' ye have many naughty ministers in this Church, yet ye have some worthy men; cleave to the best, for it is not only dreadfully dangerous to separate from all, but utterly unwarrantable and cannot be defended; wait on, for I am perswaded there is somewhat coming upon this Church that will pull you out of doubts of withdrawing from the most part'. This amounted to deciding the question of union or separation on the basis of the character of the ministers in the Church, rather than

on the basis of the official creedal and legal position of the Church.

Alexander Smellie writes in "Men of the Covenant" that three of the Cameronian ministers, "but only three", united with the Established Church after the Revolution, while "the inflexible majority, true to themselves and hating all paltering and accommodation, refused to countenance arrangements which were not the highest but merely the next to the highest. Thankful as their inexorable souls were when 'the new sun rose bringing the new year', they recognized with sadness that even this nobler and joyfuller epoch was not that acceptable year of the Lord for which they had prayed and bled". This statement seems to imply that at the time of the Revolution Settlement, the Cameronians had a large number of ministers, of whom only three entered the Revolution Church, while the majority remained separate. The fact is that at the time of the Revolution Settlement the Cameronians had only three official preachers, namely Shields, Linning and Boyd, and that all of these entered the Established Church, which left the Covenanters without a minister until the accession of John Macmillan sixteen years later. Apart from this, Smellie's statement of the matter is very weak. The Covenanters regarded the Revolution Settlement, not merely as something "next to the highest", but as something positively sinful, as will be shown below. Their three ministers forsook them and entered the Established Church, and part of the lay membership, of whom Patrick Walker was one, did the same, but the United Societies as such remained aloof and continued their non-ecclesiastical form of organization until 1743 when the Reformed Presbytery was organized as the spiritual continuation of the General Assembly dispersed by Cromwell's soldiers in 1653.

(To be continued)

The Tabernacle of David Ruined by Man and Reared Up by the Mighty God

By the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine

(Abridged)

Note: Ebenezer Erskine, the author of the following sermon, was born in 1680 and died in 1754. He was very unjustly suspended from the ministry by the Church of Scotland in 1733, following which in the same year he took the lead in constituting the Associate Presbytery (Secession Church) in Scotland. In 1740 the Church of Scotland heaped further injustice upon him by deposing him from the office of the ministry, although he had renounced the jurisdiction of its

courts seven years before. Erskine was strongly evangelical in his preaching, and there is a Biblical solidity and a ring of conviction in his sermons which makes them spiritually edifying even after two hundred years. At the present day when the Visible Church in one half of the world is faced with persecution behind the "iron curtain", while in the other half of the world it is corrupted and distressed by modernism, false doctrine, worldliness, lukewarmness and divi-

sions, Ebenezer Erskine's sermon on "The Tabernacle of David Ruined by Man and Reared Up by the Mighty God" presents a timely message. In particular the message of this sermon should be pondered in relation to the current upheaval in China and the question that arises as to the future of the Church in that country. In order to bring this sermon within the limits of space available in "Blue Banner Faith and Life" it has been considerably condensed, but nothing has been otherwise changed except that some Scripture quotations have been corrected to bring them into harmony with the Authorized Version.—Ed.

Amos 9:11 "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old."

A scene of mercy is opened up in this verse, where briefly we may notice.

1. The designation that God gives unto his church, particularly the New Testament church; it is called the tabernacle of David. I think it is so called, with an allusion to the tabernacle that was made by Moses in the wilderness, which was a badge of God's particular presence among that people: it was a kind of portable thing that they carried about with them from one place to another, till they came to Canaan; and then it was set in the place which God had appointed for it in the temple at Jerusalem. God's militant church in the world is a kind of movable thing: "The tabernacle of God is with men," but it is not always fixed in one particular place; sometimes he sees meet to remove his tabernacle, as the tabernacle was removed of old from one place to another; sometimes he removes it from one nation to another; hence Christ tells the Jews, that "the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and given to a nation that would make a better use of it." Sirs, God's tabernacle has been pitched among us for a long time; but it has met with coarse handling, many hands have been admitted to approach it.

Little of God, little of his glory, is to be seen, as in former times: the cloud of his presence is departed.

But then, the tabernacle is here called the tabernacle of David. Sirs, David had great pleasure in God's tabernacle: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts? One day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Alas! this is not the spirit of the generality now-a-days; many love rather to be in a tavern than in the tabernacle. But by David here, we are not to understand David personally, but David typically, the son of David, he in whom David's family, David's throne, and David's power were perpetuated. And then it is called the tabernacle of David, be-

cause it is his property. The Church is Christ's property, he bought her at a dear rate, even with the price of his precious blood; she is his dwelling-place, and he has no other dwelling upon earth but his church: he says of Zion, where the tabernacle was placed, "This is my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I do like it well," Psa. 132:14.

2. We may notice the present case of the tabernacle of David; it is fallen, there are breaches made upon it, and it is in a ruinous condition. "The boar of the wood had wasted it, the wild beasts of the forest had devoured it:" the laws of the temple had been violated and profaned, as they are in our day: God in his righteous judgment had let robbers into it, that had spoiled it: "Who gave Jacob to the spoil and Israel to the robbers? He against whom they had sinned." Civil robbers, ecclesiastical robbers, break in upon his vineyard, and "spoil the tender grapes and vines," instead of preserving them; they carry away the rights of the people of God, instead of patronizing and defending them.

3. We have the promise here of rebuilding David's tabernacle: "I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old." We read of great furniture laid into the hands of Christ, of great gifts bestowed upon our Immanuel. But for what end? It was for building a house for God to dwell in among the sons of men: "When he ascended upon high, he led captivity captive, he received gifts for men, yea even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Christ laid the foundation of a new tabernacle in his blood, and he ascended up to heaven, and sat down upon the throne, in order to pursue that great end, to raise up a spiritual temple for himself and his Father to dwell in.

Now, the tabernacle of David has fallen, but "the man whose name is the BRANCH, he comes out of his place, he builds the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory thereof." But then.

4. That which I would have you particularly to notice is, the time or season when this is to be done; it is in that day when the Lord destroys the sinful kingdom from off the face of the earth;—that day when he sifts the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve;—that day when the sinners of his people shall die by the sword. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David.

From this connection I only take notice of this

Observation: That God many times ushers in a glorious work of reformation, by very cloudy, dark, and dismal dispensations of providence.

What a dismal aspect had God's procedure in the preceding verses! and yet grace and mercy breaks out of that dark cloud. Here was a very dark day, a day of destruction from the presence of the Lord, a day of hewing down by the sword,

a day of unhinging nations and churches; and yet you see what it all terminates and resolves in. "In that day will I build up the tabernacle of David, I will restore the breaches, and repair the ruins thereof, as in the days of old."

I remember, when the prophet Elijah came unto mount Horeb, the Lord passed by and he knew it not. There is a very strange appearance made unto the prophet: first, there was a great and stormy wind raised, which breaks the rocks and shakes the mountains, but God was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake; but God was not there. After the earthquake came a fire, but God was not in the fire. Well, what does all this resolve in? This was just a preparation towards God's manifesting of himself unto the prophet in the still and small voice. This is God's ordinary way of working, both towards particular persons, and particular churches; clouds and darkness are round about him in his way, before mercy and truth are seen going before his face.

I read you two texts from Scripture to confirm it. The one you have in the prophet Malachi, the last chapter of the Old Testament, verses 1 and 2, "Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Well, but the cloud turns about, and the bright side of it appears in verse 2, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall." Ver. 3, "And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Zech. 13:8,9, "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off, and die, but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried." Well, what follows upon that? "They shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

For the further confirmation of this truth, I shall produce instances, from which it will appear, that God's ordinary way is to usher in the enlarging and upbuilding of his church by such awful and terrible dispensations.

And the first is, God's planting a church for himself in the land of Canaan. When God has a mind to pitch his tabernacle there, according to the promise to Abraham, by which he made a grant of it to him and to his seed; what way does he go to work? First, Israel is brought into Egypt, and are made to groan there for four hundred years. When the time of their deliverance comes, Egypt is plucked, Pharaoh and his host is

turned into the Red Sea, there they are executed as on a high gibbet; after that, twenty or thirty kingdoms are overthrown, and the old inhabitants are pulled up by the roots. And then the Lord sets up his tabernacle, and puts Israel in possession of the land, according to his promise.

Another instance to the same purpose is in the return of the children of Israel from the Babylonish captivity. Before the captivity, they were so degenerate, so sunk in sin, that it was impossible to mend them: They were, like an old house, too crazy and ruinous to be patched up. Therefore what does the Lord? He takes them quite down, he unhinges their civil and ecclesiastic constitution, he as it were pulls them up from the very ground, he makes the land spue out its inhabitants, he sells Israel into the hands of the Babylonians, and lets them lie there seventy years, till the land enjoyed her Sabbaths. Well, what does he after the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths? What a strange revolution is made to bring Israel out of captivity! The great Babylonish empire must be turned over to the hands of the Medes and Persians, and this makes way for Israel to return; and he "makes them to take root downward, and bring forth fruit upward."

From all these things the truth of the doctrine is abundantly evident that God commonly ushers in his remarkable appearances for his church, with very awful and cloudy dispensations of providence.

Readily you may ask me the reason of this, why is it God goes this way to work? I answer,

1. One reason of it is, that he may be avenged on the persecutors and enemies of his church and people. God will take his own time to resent his people's quarrel; he lets them lie for a while under the feet of their enemies, but, the rod of the wicked shall not always rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints; and he will make inquisition for the blood of his saints that has been shed like water in our streets.

2. But then a second reason why God goes this way to work is, that he may remove the abounding offenses in the visible church, and roll away the impediments that hinder her reformation. The visible church is just a draw-net, that takes in both good and bad fishes; and sometimes the net is so full of bad fishes, bad ministers, bad magistrates, and bad professors, that error, iniquity, profanity, and scandalous offenses, instead of being suppressed, are encouraged and patronized by those whose high office obliges them to stand up for the great God according to their commission. Well, when these things are neglected by men of power and authority, or by judicatories civil and ecclesiastic; when scandalous errors, wickednesses, and abominations are

not purged by those whose province it is to do it; God takes the work in his own hand; his turn shall not lie behind; he will put to his hand, and do it himself, rather than let it lie undone.

I shall give you an instance in the case of Eli's two sons; they abandoned themselves unto such scandalous carriage about the tabernacle of God, that they gave offense unto all that feared God in Israel; yea, they made the sacrifices of the Lord to be abhorred by their scandalous way of acting. Well, Eli, who was both their father and their judge, he neglected to take them to task as he ought to have done; he censured them, but it was very superficially; just like some sentences passed in the judicatories of this church, when the honor of Christ required much more to be done. Well, what does the Lord when offenses abound, and Eli neglected to pass due censure upon his sons? He does a thing that makes the ears of every one that hears tell of it to tingle. Hophni and Phinehas, his two sons, are slain in battle, Eli's neck is broken, and the armies of Israel fall before the Philistines; the ark of God is carried away into the hands of the Philistines. So you see, God goes this way to work, that he may purge his house of corruptions and offenses, especially when this is neglected by those clothed with authority secular or spiritual for that end. But then again,

3. Another reason why God goes this way to work in building up his own tabernacle, is because there is something God-like, great-like, and majestic in this manner of procedure. There is an awful and terrible majesty in God's way of working, particularly in his way of repairing and building up his house: "Clouds and darkness are round about him, and yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne; the heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory."

I shall next go on to the

Application

I see your time has much prevented me; therefore I shall conclude all at present with two inferences.

In the first place, then, if it be so, as you have been hearing, that this is God's way of setting up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and closing up the breaches thereof, by such awful dark, and cloudy dispensations; hence I infer, that, unless God has a mind to take his kingdom away from us, unless he has a mind to lift his candlestick, and bid farewell to us forever, we have reason to look for very awful and dismal dispensations of Divine Providence in this land. Many black signs of God's anger are already gone forth: God has in a great measure departed from high and low, rich and poor, departed from magistrates, ministers, and people: little of God to be seen in ordinances, or the judica-

tories of his church; we have forsaken the fountain of living waters. O what barrenness under a dispensed gospel! O what abounding profanity! What cursing and swearing! What tyranny and oppression, particularly in ecclesiastic liberties and privileges! How are intruders enrolled among the number of the ambassadors of Christ! How are the privileges of the Lord's people sacrificed, in order to compliment the "man with the gold ring and the gay clothing!" How little difference is there put betwixt the precious and the vile! The land is groaning under a weight of sin, and the sin of the land is crying for vengeance at the hand of God. I doubt if these, and many other offenses, and the occasions of them, be removed, till God put to his hand, as in a manner you were hearing in the doctrine; therefore we had need to prepare for the storms: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

A second inference I make is, if it be so, that God ushers in the restoration and upbuilding of David's tabernacle in such a way, here is ground for encouragement to the Lord's people. Whatever dismal days may cast up, all shall issue in advancement of the interest of Christ, and the good of them that love him.

There are only these grounds and topics of consolation I would mention to you:

a. Here is comfort and encouragement, that Zion's King liveth, and he will outlive all his enemies: "The Lord liveth, blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted."

b. He not only lives, but reigns; and this is ground of comfort: "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful of their King." Why? "The Lord reigneth, even thy God, O Zion, to all generations. The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof."

c. He is adjusting all his providential dispensations for the good and advantage of his own people: "He rides in the very heavens for their help." God's way many times "is in the sea, and his paths in great waters, and his footsteps are not known." But though we cannot trace his steps, yet well does he know the way he is taking with his people, when he is plunging them as it were over head and ears in the deep waters of Marah. "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching out of his understanding." Therefore "thy way cannot be hid from the Lord, nor thy judgment passed over from thy God," Isa. 40.

d. Know, for thy encouragement, believer, that whatever he do with you, though he should

send a scattering wind, and sift you among the nations, yet not one grain shall be lost; his eye follows his remnant, wherever they go; "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

And then know, for thy encouragement, believer, that, go where thou wilt, thy God will go with thee, a God in Christ will bear thee company: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the floods, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Fear not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." And is not this glorious encouragement? He has his people set at all times as a seal upon his heart and arm, whatever be his dispensations towards them.

Then know, believer, whatever be thy situation in the world, or whatever be thy apprehensions of thyself, thou art standing in heaven in the person of thy High Priest, thy Head, and thy elder Brother. As the high priest, when he stood within the veil, represented all the people of Israel; so all the true Israel of God are standing within the veil of these visible heavens, in their great representative; "He has made us accepted in the Beloved." And is not this glorious encouragement?

I conclude with two or three words of advice in this cloudy day, or in case a darker day cast up.

My advice to every one that has any regard to their eternal well-being is, to see that their standing be right, for if you be not standing upon the rock, upon the foundation God has laid in Zion, you will never stand in the day of trial; when the floods of trouble and persecution come, you will give away, and be carried down before the flood. Therefore take care that you be settled upon the rock Christ, "not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Another advice I give you is, beware of an evil heart of unbelief; for the root of all apostasy and defection lies here: Heb. 3:12, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Let your life in the world be a life of faith on the Son of God; for there is no standing, no warring, but by faith: "This is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith."

Another advice I give to the Lord's remnant is, that they would beware of the prevailing defections in the day and generation wherein they live. Keep your garments clean; for they

that keep the Lord's way, and his testimony, he will take care of them, and keep them: Rev. 3:10, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

See that you be among the mourners in Zion, that sigh and cry for all the dishonors done to God in the day wherein you live. God takes care of such in an evil day: he puts a mark upon them, and gives charge to the man with the slaughter-weapon, not to touch any of them upon whom his mark is set.

Another advice I give is, Beware of every thing that may mislead you; beware of every person that may mislead you: "Evil communication corrupts good manners." Christ in a special manner bids us "beware of false prophets, that come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." We are advised in scripture to beware of several kinds of guides that we may not commit our souls unto their keeping or direction in their eternal concerns. As,

We are to beware of **BLIND** guides, men that are ignorant of the work of God upon their own hearts, that are ignorant of the narrow way that leadeth unto life. How shall they lead others to heaven, who are not traveling the road to it themselves? When "the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch."

Then we are advised likewise to beware of **BARKING** guides: "Beware of dogs," that is to say, men that bark at the truth, and that bark at honest ministers and Christians that desire to adhere to the truth in a day of defection. "Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the concision."

We are likewise warned against **DUMB** guides, who have not a mouth to open for Christ or his cause. The watchman is to give the cry when the city is in danger of being given up into the hands of the enemy. The Lord commands his ministers to "cry aloud, and not to spare, to lift up their voice like a trumpet, and shew his people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." It is a sign that the watchman is in a confederacy with the enemy, who is silent when the enemy is breaking down the carved work of God's temple. Can that man be counted faithful to his trust?

Then we are likewise to beware of **ERRONEOUS** guides, men that are tinctured and leavened with error. Beware of such erroneous men, who will "give a stone for bread, and a scorpion instead of a fish;" and those also who industriously screen and cover erroneous men from due censure. No man that has a regard to his natural life, but will take care to have a steward that will provide him with wholesome food; and much greater reason have persons to beware of er-

roneous teachers, that poison souls with erroneous doctrine.

Hold hand to all ministers and Christians who are endeavoring honestly in their sphere to build up the tabernacle of David. It is a sore matter, and looks ominous, when the real friends of the tabernacle come to be divided among themselves. Although we be commanded to separate from tabernacle-destroyers, yet we are not any where commanded to separate from tabernacle builders, who "keep the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," and are, according to their sphere and situation, endeavoring to promote the public cause of David our King, and opposing his enemies. "He that is not against us is with us." Let us study to be with all those that are with Christ, or upon his side, and his covenanted cause in the land; but especially with those that stand as it were in the front of the battle, and against whom the strength of the enemy is leveled.

Pray and wrestle much at the throne of grace, that God may come and work the work himself; for "except the Lord build the house, the builders build in vain."

Let it encourage every friend of Zion to lend their helping hand, that it is God that builds the tabernacle of David, and his faithfulness is engaged in the text to do it.

So let it encourage us to put hand to the work of the Lord's tabernacle, that it is God that builds the tabernacle of David: "God doth build up Jerusalem, and gather together the dispersed of Israel." If he smile upon our impotent attempts at the work, he will make the work to go on and prosper. It is no matter how insignificant, how few or small the instruments be if he work with them or by them; for he can make one to chase a thousand, an hundred to put ten thousand to flight.

Let every one attempt, through grace, the reformation of his own heart and life, and to have a walk like those who believe that the God of the tabernacle is in the midst of us. Israel were obliged to guard against all moral and ceremonial uncleannesses, became "the Holy One of Israel was in the midst of them;" so let us study to act and walk as in the sight of that God who searches Jerusalem as with lighted candles. Be ye holy, as he that hath called you is holy. The untender walk of professors is a reproach to the God of the tabernacle, and causes the enemy to blaspheme. Let the laws of the tabernacle, particularly those of the moral law as a rule of obedience, be "a light unto your feet, and a lamp unto your paths. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be on them, and mercy, and upon all the Israel of God."

Then another advice I would give you is, "O keep your hearts in the love of God." Study to maintain the lively impression of the love of God in Christ; for that will kindle your zeal for God and his glory, in a day when "the love of many is waxed cold." And it will make you stand when the floods of trouble and persecution are running.

And then another advice I give you is, Study to maintain the fear of God upon your spirits, and beware of the fear of man. The fear of man has been a terrible snare in our day and generation; many have been carried off their feet by the fears or flatteries of men; but beware of this. "Who are thou that should be afraid of man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be as grass?"

And then, lastly, study meekness and quietness of spirit, in opposition unto a spirit of anger, wrath, malice, or of hatred; Zeph. 2:2, "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment, seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be, ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Our proud spirits are ready to take fire in defending the cause of Christ. Moses was the most zealous man upon earth, and yet he was the meekest man upon earth. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God:" and Christ's cause and interest were never advanced by a spirit of wrath.

And in order to meeken your spirits, consider these two things I shall name:

First, what a holy and righteous hand God has even in the most dark and cloudy dispensations that can befall his church in the world. Should we be angry at what God does? "Who gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned?"

Secondly, let us consider what we deserve at God's hand, what a sinful hand the best of us have in bringing these gloomy dispensations on the land and place wherein we live. It was the consideration of this, that made the church, in a very dark day, Mic. 7:9, to say, when she was sitting in darkness, when her enemies were insulting her, saying, "Where is thy God?" Says the church, in that case, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." Not only they, but I have sinned against him, therefore "I will bear the indignation of the Lord."

"If contentment were here, heaven were not heaven. Whoever seek the world to be their bed, shall at best find it short and ill-made, and a stone under their side to hold them waking, rather than a soft pillow to sleep upon."

Samuel Rutherford

The Psalm-Prayers for Deliverance from Enemies

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

Prayers for deliverance from enemies, and thanksgiving for deliverances granted, fill a remarkably large part of the Book of Psalms. There are relatively few Psalms without some prominent reference to the adversaries of God and man.

Who is the Speaker of These Prayers?

That the Second Psalm is a prophecy of THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, and still being fulfilled, in THE MAN Christ Jesus, we have a sevenfold testimony in the New Testament by exact quotation from this Psalm: (1) by assembled apostles and believers in Jerusalem (Acts 4: 23-28); (2) by Paul at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:32-37); (3,4) by the writer to the Hebrews (Heb. 1:5; 5:5); (5) by the exalted Christ Himself (Rev. 2:26,27); (6,7) by further revelation of Jesus Christ shown to John on Patmos (Rev. 12:5; 19:15).

This is confirmed by many other passages in the New Testament. For one particular, we note that, according to the Second Psalm, the position given the Christ is BETWEEN Jehovah and the peoples, with the right to intercede with Jehovah; with authority and power to rule, to judge, and to execute judgment upon all peoples; which, self-evidently, is to say that Christ is ordained to be the MEDIATOR between God and men. And, beside Him, there is no other mediator. This is confirmed by 1 Tim. 2:5, "For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and man, THE MAN Christ Jesus".

That the First Psalm is also part and parcel of the prophecy of this same Person needs no extraneous proof. For, the description therein given of "THE MAN" can be made to fit no other man who ever lived on earth. Jesus Christ alone is the man whose delight is constantly in the law of Jehovah; whose reference thereunto continues, uninterrupted, day and night; who never walked in the counsel of the wicked, never stood in the way of sinners, never sat in the seat of scoffers. "He was holy, guileless, undefiled, and separate from sinners". No other could claim the insignia of the evergreen tree, which grows on through the ages, with never fading leaf, yielding its fruit in its season. No other could say, without exception, as He said, "I do always the things that are pleasing to him that sent me" (John 8:29). Hence, it can be unqualifiedly true of Him alone that "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

In the words of Isa. 53:10, "The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand". He will see to it that the will of Jehovah is done. He will

take possession of His inheritance of the nations that rise against Him, in the way prescribed; that is, by asking of Jehovah, and by judgment, breaking them with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

That these two Psalms taken together introduce the principal speaker in the Psalms that follow, after the manner of a Prelude, becomes the natural and unavoidable conclusion from an attentive reading through the Book. Some of these Psalms are written in the first person plural, in which the speaker includes the people of God with Himself, for their enemies are His enemies, and also the enemies of God. But, for the most part, the Psalms concerned with enemies are written in the first person singular, indicating one individual speaker throughout. And, in the thoughts and desires expressed, we behold His glory, "glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth".

He is a man who knows and loves God, loves God's law, hates and abhors every contrary thing. He knows and loves men, and teaches them the way of salvation, not only in the great historical and didactic Psalms, but in those which reveal His personal life and attitude toward God, especially in his prayers. The word of Christ to men is given in all the Scriptures, but the word of Christ to God is given most fully in the Psalms. It is written there for our instruction and admonition, and furnishes the vehicle for what we, threatened by the same kind of enemies that vexed His soul, may acceptably plead with God. We remember He said, "No man cometh to the Father, but by me". So we are concerned here with what Jesus Christ had to say to His Father about His enemies in this world.

Who are the Enemies of Which He Speaks?

They are the people, with their rulers, who have set themselves against Him. They are many. "They be MANY that fight against me" (56:2). "MANY are my persecutors and mine enemies" (119:157). After the Prelude, the Psalms begin with the troubled cry of the Third Psalm, "O Jehovah, HOW MANY are mine adversaries! MANY are they that rise up against me! MANY are they that say to my soul, There is no help for him in God!" But Jehovah answers His cry; He is strengthened, and says, "I will not be afraid of GREAT MULTITUDES of people which have set themselves against me round about" (verse 6). But who are these "great multitudes"? The word here translated "people" indicates that they are of His own people, not merely barbarian and savage hordes.

The complete answer is given in the third chapter of Romans, where quotations from His description of His enemies (viz., from Psalms 14:1; 53:1; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; 36:1), are laid to the charge of ALL MEN, Jews and Gentiles. Yes, "WE were enemies" until "reconciled to God through the death of His Son".

His enemies are not only spiritual foes and evil principles, but MEN — individual men, associations of men, and nations, who have accepted evil principles, and are taken possession of by evil powers. Their common purpose is to get rid of God, to trample upon His law, and to destroy the righteous by deceiving, ensnaring, and putting to death in whatever way their brutal minds may devise. They are often described as beasts, as serpents, lions, wild dogs and bulls. For such is the natural, inevitable consequence of sin in the human heart, unless the heart be changed.

When He Speaks in Low Estate as a Man among Enemies,

He speaks as a man in extreme danger, for whom his enemies are too many and "too strong". He is a poor and needy man; sorely afflicted; alone; despised; "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief".

With the perfect standard of truth and righteousness always clear in His mind, every suggestion of departure to the right or left was painful to His whole nature. Every temptation, subtle or crass, caused Him suffering. "He suffered, being tempted". But, "wherein he hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). His purpose to save other men led Him to mingle with people of every description wherever He found them, and there He was exposed to the attraction or push of every influence working to turn men from the path of rectitude. He characterized the whole period of His public ministry as one of temptation (Luke 22:28).

Yet the people set themselves against Him. When He told them the truth, they became His enemies. When He performed good works for them, they took up stones to stone Him. When they found they could not deceive Him, they took counsel to put Him to death. They were His enemies "wrongfully". They hated Him "without a cause".

From whatever source the temptation came, there He recognized an adversary, an enemy, from which, as a man, realizing His danger, He prayed for deliverance; but which, as SON OF GOD, THE JUDGE, He condemned. When His disciple, Peter, sought to turn Him from the cross, He said, "Get thee behind me, Adversary, thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men". Whether He ate or drank, or whatever He did, He did all for the

glory of God. And when Mary, the mother of Jesus, suggested that He use His power to do a good turn for His host, without regard to the glory of God, He replied, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come". He waited until the hour arrived in which He could glorify God by His work. He had to make His way against constant interferences of ignorance, false teachings, deceit, selfishness, pride, and wickedness of every kind. When the conflict wore heavily on His human soul, He withdrew to a quiet place to pray. He prayed not only for Himself, not only for His friends, He prayed for His enemies. When they were afflicted, "I behaved myself as though it had been my friend, or brother: I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother" (Psalm 35:14). "Streams of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law" (119:136). When He beheld the city of Jerusalem, He wept over it. For the sentence of the Judge cannot be changed.

When He Speaks with Authority as the Judge of His Enemies

Complete deliverance for Himself, or any righteous man, is impossible unless wickedness be stopped. But wickedness cannot be stopped except by the destruction and removal of wicked men. They themselves have forced the issue. The SON OF GOD, who is also Son of Man, has been commissioned to deal with this issue. When He speaks as Judge of His enemies, He speaks as the Mediator. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son". "And he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is Son of man" (John 5:22,27). At the same time, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise". "I can of myself do nothing; as I hear I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent me" (John 5:19, 30).

Accordingly, His sentences of judgment, both of acquittal and of condemnation, are pronounced with finality in the light of God's revelation of His will — "When mine enemies turn back, They stumble and perish at thy presence . . . The wicked shall be turned back unto Sheol, Even all the nations that forget God" (9:3, 17). Or, they are submitted to the Father's will in the form of prayer. His sentences of condemnation in this latter form occur in many of the Psalms, which, on this account, are often, with undisguised contempt and repudiation, called "cursing" or "imprecatory" Psalms. But the words "cursing" and "imprecatory", in our usage, carry a suggestion of injustice and unrestrained malevolence. These Psalms, however, are most emphatically NOT imprecations in any such sense, although they are in the form of prayers. Difficult decisions have been made, heavily weighted,

not only with woe for wicked men, but with sorrows for the Judge Himself. He asks for the support that only further expression of the Father's will can give. His enemies cannot be appeased, nor permitted to remain without fatal consequences to the Kingdom of God; all righteousness, and peace, and joy would perish from the earth. Therefore, by the will of the Father, He "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (Psalm 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25).

All who live on the earth today are being compelled to face this crisis. There hangs over us, ominously, the gathering darkness of Humanism, which seeks to dethrone God and His Christ, makes light of sin, and turns men loose, with no fear of God, and no knowledge of His law, to behave as they please. Yet they may not do as they please. They must serve the tyrannical selfishness of a few usurpers, who deny the right of anyone to say they are doing wrong, or to complain of oppression. There is no salvation except in the mercy and power of the Judge over all.

Do We Realize that He Speaks for Us?

Hidden deception is man's greatest danger, unless he keep himself fully informed and alert, by day and by night, in all the teachings of the law of God. The Man who speaks in the Psalms

did just that, and He would teach us to do the same, that we may have keener sense to detect our enemy, SIN, wherever it lurks. He would teach us to love that law, and enjoy the blessedness of keeping it. But this involves abhorrence of every kind of evil. The mere suggestion of sin becomes painful, painful even in the glamor of wealth, luxury, and sensual pleasure, heard over the radio, seen in the "movie" theatre, read in the modern novel, and presented with all the tricks of anti-Christian psychology. But that law gives the knowledge of sin in its vast and malignant power, which we can resist only in the Spirit of Christ, and which can be put down only by His judgments.

This is the One who, by His unyielding resistance to sin while He suffered, and by His perfect obedience, even unto death, fulfilled the condition of God's Covenant of Grace, that, in being united with Him as our covenant Head, we are saved in Him from all our enemies. He would teach us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil", with new understanding and earnestness, by continual use of His prayers.

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

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.

ACCOMMODATION OF SCRIPTURE. The practice of taking a phrase or text of Scripture out of its context, and employing it otherwise than according to its proper meaning, to apply to some other matter which its words seem to fit; for example, when the words of 1 Samuel 9:13 are applied to the Christian's approach to the communion table in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

ADIAPHORA. Things inherently morally indifferent; that is, matters which in themselves are neither sinful nor righteous, but which may be either sinful or righteous according to circumstances. (Rom. 14:1-12).

ADORATION. The act of reverently contemplating the divine majesty and glory, and rendering loving worship to God for His own sake.

ALTAR. A table or raised structure upon which sacrifices were offered. Sacrifices having been fulfilled and abolished for ever by the true sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, there remains no need for altars, and the communion table in a

Christian congregation's place of worship should not be called an altar, for no sacrifice is offered upon it.

ANABAPTISTS. A sect which arose in Germany at the time of the Reformation, which practiced the re-baptism of persons who had been baptized as infants. The more extreme type claimed to have founded a new and perfect church, to have the power to work miracles, that human government and magistrates are unnecessary among Christians, and even that polygamy is legitimate.

ANNIHILATIONISM. The false doctrine that the wicked will not suffer eternal punishment in hell, but will finally cease to exist, as if they had never lived.

ANTEDILUVIANS. Those members of the human race that lived before the great flood of Genesis 6-8.

ANTICHRIST. One who is against Christ.

There are many antichrists (1 John 2:18), and also a spirit of antichrist in the world (1 John 4:3). Many orthodox Reformed theologians believe that 2 Thess. 2:3,4 and Rev. 13:1-10 predict the appearance of an individual, personal antichrist, who will be utterly against Christ, before the second coming of the Lord.

ANTITYPE. That which corresponds to a type, the fulfilment of a type. Thus Adam, Moses and David are types of Christ, or divinely planned

portrayals of certain truths about Christ; whereas Christ is the antitype of Adam, Moses and David.

APOCRYPHA. Those books excluded from the Bible because of lack of divine inspiration. "The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings" (Westminster Confession of Faith, I.3).

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"Better go swimming and wet through our waters than drown by the way; especially now when truth suffereth, and great men bid Christ sit lower and contract Himself in less bounds, as if He took too much room."

Samuel Rutherford

"The bush has been burning these five thousand years, and no man yet saw the ashes of that fire."

Samuel Rutherford

"There cannot be a more humble soul than a believer. It is no pride in a drowning man to catch hold of a rock."

Samuel Rutherford

"We cannot understand God's providence till He hath done His work; he is an impatient spectator that cannot tarry till the last act, wherein all errors are reconciled."

Thomas Manton

"Thou darest not pray, Lord, let me have my worldly comforts, though they damn me; let me not be afflicted, though it do me good; and if thou darest not pray so, wilt thou murmur when God ordereth it so?"

Thomas Manton

"Nothing can go amiss to him that is found in the way of duty."

Thomas Manton

"We cannot be saved by a dead Christ, who undertook but could not perform, and who still lies under the Syrian sky, another martyr of impotent love. To save, He must pass not merely to but through death. If the penalty was fully paid, it cannot have broken Him, it must needs have been broken upon Him. The resurrection of Christ is thus the indispensable evidence of His completed work, of His accomplished redemption."

B. B. Warfield

"Men no longer cast us to the lions when we proclaim Jesus the only Saviour the world can know; His name the only name under heaven given among men wherein they must be saved. But the world of today endures with no more real patience than that older world two thousand years ago the arrogance of such lofty claims. This is above all others that have preceded it the day of eager and appreciative study of other faiths; and equally with the others that have preceded it, the day of indifference, if not hostility, to the high claims of Jesus."

B. B. Warfield

"The whole earthly career of Christ, including his death, was obedience in one aspect and suffering in another. Inasmuch as it was suffering, it expiated the sins of his people; inasmuch as it was obedience, it merited for them the covenanted reward of eternal life."

A. A. Hodge

"It is certainly as impious, and perhaps more foolish, to refuse to see clearly what God has revealed clearly, as it is to attempt to understand in detail undefined facts which God has seen fit to leave upon the verge of our horizon."

A. A. Hodge

"A believer of the nineteenth century knows much more than a believer of the tenth or third century could know, but that additional knowledge is ever dug from the selfsame gold mine; and that former generations stood behind in wealth of knowledge, can only be explained by the fact, that in those times the working of the mine was not so far advanced."

Abraham Kuyper

"Many of our Calvinistic preachers do not feed God's people. They believe in election, but they do not preach it. They think particular redemption true, but they lock it up in the chest of their creed, and never bring it out in their ministry. They hold final perseverance, but they persevere in keeping quiet about it. They think there

is such a thing as effectual calling, but they do not think they are called effectually to preach it. The great fault we find with many is, that they do not speak right out what they do believe. You could not know if you heard them fifty times what were the doctrines of the gospel, or what was their system of salvation. And hence God's people get starved." C. H. Spurgeon

"The abandonment of the name 'Theology', and the substitution in its room of the name of 'Science of Religion', was nothing but the honest consequence of the fundamentally atheistic point of view which was held."

Abraham Kuyper

The Covenant of Grace: Its Meaning and Its Implications for the Church, the Family, and the Christian

Note: Lessons 1-13 of this series will be found on pages 152-180 of the October-December 1949 issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". I wish to record here an acknowledgment of my debt to Professor R. B. Kuiper of Westminster Theological Seminary, whose lectures on "Practical Implications of the Doctrine of the Covenant of Grace" were very helpful to me and suggested the method of treatment of some of the subjects included in the present course of lessons.—J. G. Vos

LESSON 14

The Covenant of Grace and the Permanence of the Church

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

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

Gen. 17:7; 22:17,18; 28:4. God's covenant established with Abraham and his seed forever.

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

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

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

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

Questions:

1. When and where did the visible Church originate?

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

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

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

3. How is this truth denied by modern dispensationalism?

As pointed out in the previous lesson, the system of Bible interpretation called "modern dispensationalism" draws a very sharp distinction between Israel and the Church, asserting that these two are distinct and cannot be identified. Dispensationalism teaches that God has TWO covenant peoples on earth today, an earthly people (Israel)

and a heavenly people (the Church). It denies the continuity and spiritual identity of the New Testament Church with the Old Testament Israel. We believe that this system is erroneous and that there are good reasons for holding the continuity and spiritual identity of the Christian Church with the Old Testament Israel.

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

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

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

If it is true that the Christian Church is spiritually identical and continuous with the Old Testament Israel, it would follow from this that promises made to Israel in the Old Testament belong with equal propriety, in their true meaning, to the Christian Church. Moreover the New Testament plainly teaches that the real descendants of Abraham, in God's reckoning, are not necessarily his natural posterity, but those who have the faith that he had (Rom. 9:7,8; Gal. 3:29). Since believers are the real seed of Abraham, the covenant promises are made to them, regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles by physical descent. On the other hand many a physical descendant of Abraham, because of unbelief, is an alien to the covenant promises (Rom. 11:20; Heb. 4:2). Think of Esau, Hophni, Phinehas, Saul, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Judas Iscariot—all of these were of the "seed of Abraham" in the sense of physical descent, but they were not of the true "seed of Abraham" in the spiritual sense, for they lacked the faith of Abraham, and were strangers to the promises of the Covenant of Grace. The Church is the true Israel of God today, and the promises to Israel belong to the Church. These guarantee the permanence of the Church on earth.

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

Yes. Note the statements of the Confession of Faith and R. P. Testimony cited at the beginning of this lesson. By becoming "apostate" is meant departing so seriously from the Christian faith "as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan", that is, false churches. A church may retain the name "Christian" and the outward

forms of Christian worship and yet substitute an essentially false message for the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:6,7). Churches become apostate when they tolerate denial of basic truths of Christianity on the part of their ministers and members, and when such heresy is officially shielded and protected by the government of the denomination, so that those who try to purify the church are censured, silenced or cast out of the denomination. The mere existence of some heresy or form of unbelief in a denomination does not render it apostate. It must be a heresy that is destructive of Christianity, and this heresy must be officially shielded and protected by the government of the Church. When that situation exists, reformation is no longer possible and the church has become apostate.

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

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

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

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

Nor is our optimism based on the present condition of the churches, for in general the picture is a very dismal one today. In most of the large denominations it is a picture of modernism, unbelief, formalism, ritualism, preaching of salvation by character, and of gross lukewarmness. Even the small denominations which are more pure and faithful are having a desperately hard struggle to hold their own, not to mention the difficulty of growth in membership.

Our optimism is rather based on the infallible covenant promises of God, by which we are enabled to take the long view and walk by faith in spite of present conditions. The future is as bright as the promises of God. Bible history and Church history help us to take the long view. The covenant people of God have been very low

many times before, but God kept His covenant promises and revived them in due time. The present is a time of the ebb tide in spiritual things, but the tide will turn. Even if it does not turn before Christ's Second Coming, it will turn then and the Church will shine and reign in glory to all eternity.

LESSON 15

The Covenant of Grace and the Church's Obligations to its Own Membership

"Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV. 3.

"The end of church fellowship is to exhibit a system of sound principles, to maintain the ordinances of Gospel worship in their purity, to promote holiness, and to prepare the saints for heaven." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXII.3.

Scripture References:

John 21:15-17. The duty of feeding Christ's sheep and lambs.

Acts 20:28. 1 Pet. 5:2. The duty to feed the Church.

Heb. 13:17. The Church's obligation to watch over the members' souls.

1 Tim. 3:5. The minister's duty to take care of the Church.

1 Tim. 5:20,21. The duty of impartial church discipline.

Questions:

1. In what two spheres does the Church have an obligation to serve?

(a) The sphere of its own membership. (b) The sphere of those outside of its own membership. It is not correct to say, as some people do, that the Church exists solely to carry on missionary work and evangelism. The Church has a responsibility for those who are already saints, as well as for reaching the unsaved people of the world.

2. Why is it important that these two functions be kept in balance?

Both the internal and the external function of the Church are God-given responsibilities, and both are extremely important. If either is slighted or neglected, the results will be serious. A church which pays no attention to the indoctrination and spiritual nurture of its members, and has no message other than an evangelistic message for

the unsaved, will cease to be a genuine church and will become merely a rescue mission or Gospel hall. On the other hand, a church that does not carry on or support missions and evangelism will soon stagnate and become self-centered and spiritually sleepy. The internal and external functions of the Church are both included in Christ's "Great Commission". The Church should pay due attention to both, and keep a proper balance between them.

3. Which is primary, the internal function of the Church or the external function?

Clearly the internal function of the Church is primary. A man's first duty is to provide for his own house; a church's first responsibility is to provide for the spiritual welfare of its own membership. Really the discharge of the external obligation of the Church depends wholly on the prior adequate discharge of the internal obligation. If the Church itself is not kept sound and strong, it will soon cease to be an effective missionary agency. On the other hand, the proper discharge of the missionary obligation helps to keep the Church itself spiritually alert. But the internal function is the primary one.

4. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace stress the obligation of the Church to its own membership?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace draws a sharp line of distinction between the Church (the covenant people of God) and the world (those outside the covenant). It emphasizes the primary obligation of the Church to minister to those within the covenant since they are in a special relationship to God. Those within the covenant are to be prepared for heaven, and this task has been committed by Christ to the visible Church.

5. What are the duties of the Church to its own membership?

The duties of the Church to its own membership are (a) preaching and teaching them the Word of God; (b) pastoral care; (c) administration of the sacraments; (d) Christian fellowship of the communion of saints; (e) the proper use of church discipline.

6. How should the Church discharge its responsibility to the children in its membership?

(See Lesson 10 of this series, in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", October-December 1949, pp. 171-173, especially Q. 8 on p. 173).

The Church's obligation to its children is the same as its obligation to communicant members, with the following exceptions: (a) the

children are not to be admitted to the Lord's Supper; (b) they are to be urged and commanded to make a public profession of faith.

Our standards expressly state that baptized children of the Church are subject to the admonition and judicial discipline of the Church.

LESSON 16

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 1. Choosing the Right Church

"It is the duty of a Christian to pray for the reformation of every part of Christ's Church, to inquire what part adheres most closely to the Scripture plan; and without prejudice join in that communion which is most pure, and in which he may prove most useful in the service of Christ."

"When any Church imposes sinful terms of communion — when the constitution is anti-scriptural — when the administration is corrupt, and attempts at its reformation have proved ineffectual, it is the duty of Christians to separate from it; and if the majority should violate the terms upon which the Church members were united, it is lawful for the minority to testify against the defection, and to walk by the rule of their former attainments." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXI.4,5.

Scripture References:

Jude 3. It is our duty earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

1 John 4:1-6. The Christian must discriminate between true and false doctrines and religious teachers.

2 John 10,11. It is sinful to maintain religious fellowship with those who depart from the truth.

2 Thess. 3:6. 1 Tim. 6:3-5. It is a Christian duty to withdraw from those who deviate from the truth.

Questions:

1. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace stress the importance of Church ordinances?

God has chosen the elect to eternal life and the means thereto. These means are chiefly the visible Church and its ordinances, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation (Confession of Faith, XXV.2). Therefore the Church and its ordinances have a most important function in the working out of the Covenant of Grace. The Reformed theology is opposed to every tendency that minimizes or belittles the importance of the visible Church.

2. Does it make any difference what denomination we are members of?

Indeed it does. In the church situation as it exists today the choice of a denomination may mean the choice between biblical Christianity and a counterfeit system of religion. Even where the difference is not so extreme, it is our duty to join the church that maintains the fullest testimony for the truth of God. In every case our church membership determines our real testimony for or against the truth of God.

3. What texts of Scripture deal with the question of a choice between various denominations?

No text of the Bible deals with this matter directly, for the question of denominationalism had not yet arisen when the Bible was written. We will not find a ready-made formula for choosing between different denominations. Yet there are texts of Scripture from which we can learn the PRINCIPLES that should determine our decision. All those passages of the Bible that speak of witnessing for the truth, and withdrawing from error, and avoiding teachers of false doctrines, have a bearing on the question of a choice between denominations.

4. How is the question of denomination often wrongly faced and decided?

It is often wrongly faced and decided on a basis of convenience, emotional preference, family relationship, etc. These are all to be kept strictly subordinate to the real question, the question of TRUTH versus ERROR. We are to choose the church whose creed we believe to be closest to the truth of the Bible, not the church whose minister has the most pleasing personality.

5. What is the denominational picture in America today?

Besides a multitude of independent congregations of varying character, there exist in America today four main types of denominations, namely: (a) Out-and-out modernist denominations, that are virtually Unitarian in their faith; (b) Sleeping denominations managed by an unchallenged modernist leadership in their key positions; (c) Evangelical denominations of varying degrees of purity and faithfulness; (d) Churches that witness consistently to the Reformed Faith, in its fulness and purity. Of this fourth category, there exist in the United States several denominations, most of which are quite

small. We believe that our Covenanter or Reformed Presbyterian Church, though certainly far from perfection, maintains the fullest and most consistent testimony to the truth.

6. Should Christian people separate from modernist-dominated denominations?

They certainly should. Failure to do so is one of the major sins of Christians today. Note the following statement of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony: "There may be associations of men called Churches, which are founded upon Antichristian principles, and some Churches have degenerated into synagogues of Satan. Such are not to be considered as branches of the true Christian Church" (XXI.6). Note also Section 5, as quoted at the beginning of this lesson.

7. If a denomination is not modernistic, is it all right for Christians to be members of it?

Not necessarily. Modernism is extreme unbelief, but there are many less serious errors which are still false and wrong. Many Christian people hold these errors as truth, but that does not make them true, nor make it right to join a church that maintains them. We are to witness, not only against modernism, but against all kinds of error. It is not enough to find a church that is against modernism. We are to decide which denomination "adheres most closely to the Scripture plan" and then become members of it. It is better, no doubt, to be a member of an evangelical Arminian church than to be a member of a modernistic or Unitarian church; but to support Arminian error is wrong, too. We should not support any form of error.

8. Must we look for a perfect church to join?

No, for such does not exist on earth, but only in heaven. It is our duty to seek the purest and most Scriptural church, and then join it. Perfect orthodoxy, like perfect holiness, is found only above. We are not to expect absolute perfection, but we are to seek, join and support the church that is nearest to the truth revealed in the Bible.

9. How can the present tendency of people to forsake a strict and faithful church and join a more popular one be overcome?

(a) Not by "letting down the bars" of the strict and faithful church. (b) Not by harsh criticism or stern denunciation of those who decide to forsake the strict church. (c) But certainly something can be done to check this deplorable tendency by a PERMANENT program of sound indoctrination in the Bible principles of truth. It cannot be done by "inspiration"; what is needed is more INFORMATION. It cannot be accomplished by vague preaching on "high ideals" or "the challenge of our time"; what is needed is SYSTEMATIC and CONTINUED preaching of the great truths of the Reformed Faith. (d) Much could also be accomplished, no doubt, by a return to the Scriptural exercise of church discipline so that membership in the church would mean something and it would be evident to all that there is a difference between faithful and unfaithful churches. This does not mean that the judicial discipline of the Church should be invoked for trifling matters, but it does mean that serious breaches of members' profession and vows should not be complacently winked at. We should be more concerned about TRUTH and RIGHT than about "how to win friends and influence people".

LESSON 17

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 2. Loyalty to the Church

"The Christian Church, as a society of rational beings, must have explicit terms of communion, to which every member gives his assent. It is not to be expected that all men shall think alike about every object of thought; but Christians cannot co-operate, unless they are of one mind about the general principles of Christianity. Terms of Christian communion should embrace nothing but what is Divine truth, and reject nothing for which the Church has faithfully contended." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXII.4.

Scripture References:

Amos 3:3. Phil. 1:27; 2:2; 3:16. The duty of unity in church fellowship and loyalty to the truth.

Matt. 15:9. Loyalty to the Church is a duty

only in so far as the Church itself is loyal to the truth of God.

Acts 2:42. The early Christians' example of loyalty to the Church.

Questions:

1. What two wrong tendencies exist today with respect to the question of loyalty to the Church?

(a) In some Fundamentalist circles, there exists a minimizing of the importance of the visible Church that almost amounts to a contempt for the Church and its ordinances. This tendency is abetted by modern dispensationalism which virtually limits the Church on earth to the period between Pentecost and Christ's Second Coming. The idea of many Christians seems to be that the Church is only a means to an end,

or a tool for the accomplishment of certain purposes; that it serves a useful purpose, but is not indispensable; and that almost all Christian fellowship and activity can exist equally well without the visible Church as such. This is all wrong. The visible Church is not only a means, but an end in itself.

(b) In Modernist circles, there is a demand for an absolute and excessive loyalty to the Church as an institution, to its human leaders and their man-made program. One large denomination has officially declared that to refuse to obey the mandate of its highest court is a sin of the same kind as a refusal to partake of the Lord's Supper. Thus the word of man is put on a par with the Word of God. The great evil in all this is, that the churches which demand this totalitarian loyalty of their members have themselves grievously departed from loyalty to the Word of God, so that it becomes a choice between loyalty to the Church and loyalty to God.

2. Is loyalty to the Church good or bad?

This depends wholly on the character and doctrines of the Church. To be loyal to a church which is untrue to the Bible is certainly bad. On the other hand, when a person has conscientiously joined a church which he believes to be true to the Bible, then loyalty to such a church is certainly a Christian duty. Someone once said, "My country, right or wrong!" There exists in some circles a similar attitude toward the Church: "My denomination, right or wrong!" — that is, "I will be loyal and obedient to my denomination no matter whither it leads me, regardless of any higher loyalty to the Word of God". Someone amended the slogan concerning "My country" by saying: "My country right or wrong. If right, to be kept right; if wrong, to be set right!" We should imitate this in our attitude to the Church. We should say: "My denomination, right or wrong! If right, to be kept right; if wrong, to be set right!"

3. What is a Christian's duty with respect to a church which is untrue to the Bible?

If he is not a member, it is his duty to remain separate from such a church. If he is already a member, it is his duty to make every possible effort to bring about such reform as will bring the church into harmony with the teachings of God's Word. This does not refer to every minor detail of faith and life, for complete mutual agreement on every point is not possible on earth; see R.P. Testimony XXII.4 as cited at the head of this lesson. It concerns radical departures from the teachings of the Bible. Duty requires, in such a case, that the matter be pressed to the final court of appeal (Synod or General Assembly, as the case may be). The Christian who is a member of a church which is untrue to the Bible may never rest complacently until his church is brought into harmony with the Word of God.

4. What is a Christian's duty with respect to a church which cannot be reformed so as to be true to the Bible?

When serious and persistent efforts at reformation have proved to be finally ineffectual, it is a Christian's duty to separate from such a church. See R.P. Testimony, XXI, Section 5 and also Error 4. No Christian has a right, before God, to remain complacently in the membership of a denomination that is "corrupt or declining". As the Testimony rightly affirms, separation from such a church is a Christian duty. The only condition that can justify continued membership is the continuance of an active, positive attempt at reformation. When it finally becomes clear that reformation cannot be effected, it is the Christian's duty to separate from the denomination.

5. What is the Christian's duty with respect to the further reformation of a church that is already essentially pure and Scriptural?

The "status quo" is never good enough; we may never rest satisfied with it. Reformation of the Church is not an act, but a continuous process. Our Covenanter forefathers in Scotland realized this when they called for a "Second Reformation" following the success of the "First Reformation". The church which rests on past attainments and seeks no progress for the future will become a stagnant church. The Christian must always seek the FURTHER and MORE COMPLETE reformation of his church along Scriptural lines. "It is the duty of a Christian to pray for the reformation of every part of Christ's Church" (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXI.4). If it is the duty of a Christian to pray for the reformation of EVERY part of Christ's Church, this must include HIS OWN denomination as well as others, and it certainly implies working for it as well as praying for it. There is no point on earth at which the progressive reformation of the Church can be halted with the decree "Thus far but no farther". Like the sanctification of the individual, the reformation of the Church is to be continued progressively until the end of its stay in this world.

6. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace tend to strengthen loyalty to the Church?

The Bible teaches that the visible Church is a divine institution which is the appointed sphere within which the benefits of the Covenant of Grace are bestowed on the elect of God. Because of its character as a divine institution and the God-ordained sphere of saving power in the Covenant of Grace, the visible Church is most important, and the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasizes its importance. It shows the great importance of holding membership in a pure and Scriptural church, and the importance of loyalty to the Church because it is a divine institution.

LESSON 18

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 3. The Preaching of the Word

"The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation." — *The Larger Catechism*, 155.

Scripture References:

Psalm 19:7; 119:50, 130. The Word a means of grace in the conversion of sinners.

2 Tim. 3:15-17. James 1:21. 1 Pet. 2:2. The Word used by God as a means to the salvation of sinners.

1 Tim. 5:17. 2 Tim. 4:2. Tit. 1:9. The importance of preaching the Word.

Questions:

1. What wrong attitudes toward the preaching of the Word should be avoided?

(a) We should avoid underrating it, as the mystics do, who belittle the importance of preaching and the Bible, and depend more on their so-called "inner light", their feelings, inner impulses, "hunches", "guidance", and so forth.

(b) We should avoid overrating it, as some do who assert that the Word possesses an inherent power, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

2. What is the true function of the preaching of the Word in the salvation of the elect?

The preaching of the Word is an appointed means, honored and used by the Holy Spirit to the salvation of the elect, and in all ordinary cases, it is the indispensable means. The exceptions are infants, the insane, and the mentally deficient. Of course some are brought to salvation by reading the Word in printed form, who have not heard the Word preached. But none are saved apart from THE WORD, with the exceptions noted above.

3. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasize the importance of the preaching of the Word?

It shows that the preaching of the Word is a covenant ordinance, for the accomplishment of the covenanted salvation of the elect. It is the God-ordained means by which the covenant institution, the Church, is built up, both in numbers and in character.

4. What does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace imply concerning our duty in connection with the preaching of the Word?

(a) Regular attendance upon preaching. (b) Bringing up our children in the habit of attendance upon preaching from their infancy. (c) Reverent attention during preaching. (d) Recognition of the official character of preaching by an ordained minister, in distinction from voluntary exhorting by an unordained person.

5. What wrong tendencies are noticeable at the present time with respect to the preaching of the Word?

(a) In some churches, the encroachments of ritual upon the time for the sermon; likewise, the frequent observance of special days (Mother's Day, Father's Day, Red Cross Day, etc.), which makes it impossible to do justice to the great truths of the Bible. (b) The tendency to supplant preaching by motion pictures, or other "entertaining" features, in some denominations. (c) The frequent turning over the time of the preaching service to young people's groups and representatives or promoters of various organizations and causes (often worthy enough in themselves, but not a proper substitute for the regular preaching of the Word of God).

6. What kind of preaching is most needed today?

Doctrinal preaching, because many church members, especially in the young people's and young adults' age groups, are grossly ignorant of the great truths of the Reformed Faith. Doctrinal preaching is needed, not for a few weeks or a year, but PERMANENTLY, year after year, until the end of the world. After all, Christianity is first of all a body of truth. Not all sermons need be formally doctrinal, of course. But the crying need of the hour is not for more "inspiration", but for more INFORMATION. People's capacity to receive doctrinal instruction has become so weakened that ministers must go back to the A.B.C.'s and lay "line upon line" and "precept upon precept" patiently, being careful not to dispense too heavy doses at one time.

LESSON 19

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 4. The Sacraments

"Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits; and to con-

firm our interest in Him; as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly

to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXVII.1.

Scripture References:

Rom. 4:11. Gen. 17:7,10. Matt. 28:19. 1 Cor. 11:23. The sacraments are signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace.

Ex. 12:48. Gen. 34:14. 1 Cor. 10:16,21. The sacraments are intended to put a visible difference between the covenant people of God and rest of the world.

Questions:

1. What is the relation of the sacraments to the Covenant of Grace?

They are signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace. Under the Old Testament circumcision and the passover were the sacraments that constituted special signs and seals of the covenant relationship to God. Under the New Testament Baptism and the Lord's Supper have taken the place of the Old Testament sacraments. The essential meaning is still the same as under the Old Testament. The covenant is one and the same; only the administration of it has changed to the New Testament form.

2. What is meant by saying that the sacraments are church ordinances?

Because they are signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace, the sacraments are church ordinances, committed for their administration to the visible Church, for the visible Church is the institution and sphere of the covenant. Therefore the sacraments are to be administered only by lawful ministers of the Church, who are the Church's organs and Christ's servants in this administration.

3. What should we think about private administration of the sacraments?

Private administration of the sacraments is NEVER proper. The sacraments are church ordinances, not a private privilege of individuals. They should NEVER be administered privately, nor otherwise than in the congregation of believers. Not only is private administration of the sacraments wrong — administration in any other assembly than the congregation of believers under lawful officers is improper. For example, it is improper to administer Baptism in a private home with only family and relatives present; even though they may all be believers, still it is not a church congregation. Similarly, it is improper to administer the Lord's Supper in a missionary convention, or in a gathering of the students and professors of a Christian college. The sacraments pertain to the Church itself, not to any and every gathering of Christian people. (In exceptional cases, such as illness, or the baptism of a person serving a prison sentence, a ser-

vice may properly be held, and the sacraments administered, with only the minister and elders and a few other members present, but it should never be done by a minister alone).

4. Is it proper to administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper apart from the preaching of the Word?

Certainly not. In the Roman Catholic system, sacraments have virtually usurped the place of preaching. The Reformed theology teaches, in harmony with the Bible, that preaching is central and more important than sacraments (1 Cor. 1:17,18). The divorcement between the Word and the sacraments, and the frequent administration of the sacraments apart from the preaching of the Word, became prevalent in the middle ages, and was one of the corruptions of the Church of Rome that called for reformation.

The Reformers of the Calvinistic Reformation rightly regarded the pulpit as more central in Christian worship than the communion table, and assigned it the place of prominence in church sanctuaries. But today in some Protestant denominations we see the tendency to administer the sacraments apart from the preaching of the Word reappearing and gaining ground. But the Reformers were right. We should follow in their train, and insist that the sacraments be never administered apart from the preaching of the Word. The sacraments do not work automatically, or "ex opere operato" as Rome wrongly teaches; their efficacy is dependent on FAITH, and faith is dependent on THE PREACHING OF THE WORD.

5. How do the sacraments mark the distinction between the covenant people of God and the world?

As administered in some churches, the sacraments cannot mark any such distinction, for children are baptized regardless of whether or not the parents are church members in good standing and all who wish to partake are admitted to the Lord's Supper with no questions asked. This breaks down the line of demarcation between the Church and the world.

But where the sacraments are properly limited to the covenant people, that is, to those in good standing as members of the visible Church and (in the case of Baptism) to their infant children, they serve as a badge or emblem of membership in the covenant society of the people of God. ONLY those who make a credible profession of faith in Christ and obedience to Him, and their infant children, are to be baptized, ONLY those who profess personal faith in Christ and obedience to Him, and who have been examined as to their knowledge and their purpose to live godly in Christ Jesus, are to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. (Concerning the question

of open, close and restricted communion, see "Blue Banner Faith and Life", 1949, pp. 31-33).

6. What form of covenant-breaking is common among Christian people today?

Neglect of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Under the Old Testament, neglect of the signs and seals of the covenant was pronounced covenant-breaking by God (Gen. 17:14; Num. 9:13). We may rightly infer that neglect of Baptism and the Lord's Supper is also

regarded by God as covenant-breaking, a very heinous sin. Those who believe that Infant Baptism is Scriptural, and yet carelessly neglect or long postpone the Baptism of their children, are guilty of this sin; and so are those who remain absent from the Lord's Supper without necessary reasons. But God is gracious and ready to forgive even such careless disregard of the signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace when the guilty person repents and confesses his sin.

LESSON 20

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 5. Church Discipline

"Church censures are necessary, for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from the like offences, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for vindicating the honour of Christ, and the holy profession of the Gospel, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer His covenant and the seals thereof to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders."

"For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition; suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season; and by excommunication from the Church; according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXX.3,4.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 5:1-13. The Church at Corinth directed to exclude an ungodly person from membership.

1 Tim. 5:20,21. Church discipline to be exercised according to righteousness and without partiality.

Matt. 18:17. A person who refuses to submit to the lawful discipline of the Church is to be regarded as a non-Christian.

1 Cor. 5:5. 1 Tim. 1:20. An excommunicated person is delivered unto Satan.

Tit. 3:10,11. A heretic (or factious person), after due admonition, is to be excluded from the Church.

Questions:

1. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to church discipline?

The Covenant of Grace requires that there be a clear distinction and separation between the covenant people of God and the general population of the world. It requires that the covenant institution, the church, be kept pure and holy, and not profaned by those who propagate false doc-

trines or live scandalous lives. This can be accomplished only by church discipline, that is, by the official, authoritative administration of church censures according to the appointment of Christ.

2. What are the ends of church discipline?

(a) Medicinal, to bring about, if possible, the reformation of the offending member. (b) Surgical. Where the reformation of the offending member proves finally to be impossible, he must be excluded from the membership of the Church, in order that the whole body may not be affected by his sin.

3. What is the present status of church discipline in most denominations of the Presbyterian and Reformed family?

In most Presbyterian and Reformed denominations church discipline has almost ceased to exist except in the most flagrant cases of gross immorality. Many church members today regard church discipline as merely a relic of the past, a peculiar, narrow-minded custom of a bigoted past when the churches were terribly strict. Many church members of today will not tolerate any suggestion of church discipline, but will ask for their certificates and leave their denomination if there is a likelihood of it.

4. Can there be a real spiritual revival without a return to Scriptural church discipline?

Certainly there cannot. Note the solemn assertion of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony (XXXI.3,4):

"The Lord Jesus Christ hath instituted Church DISCIPLINE, in order to remove scandals, and prevent their unhappy effects; and no Church can, without the faithful and spiritual application of it, hope for his countenance and blessing.

"The impartial and prudent exercise of Church discipline is useful for vindicating the honor of Jesus Christ, maintaining the dignity of his ordinances, preserving the purity of the Church, averting the judgments of God, and for the benefit of the offender himself, that by the

administration of this ordinance of Christ, through grace, he may be humbled and recovered."

5. Whose duty is it to safeguard the soundness and purity of the Church?

Too often the tendency is to leave all such matters to the Session, that is, the minister and elders. While the pastor and elders have a special official responsibility for guarding the soundness and purity of the Church, they are not solely responsible for it. Every member of the Church has a responsibility. Members should admonish one another as occasion may require (Col. 3:16; Rom. 15:14; 2 Thess. 3:6,14,15; Gal. 6:1; Matt. 18:15,16). The shirking of this responsibility, in the spirit of "Am I my brother's keeper?" is the cause of much corruption in the Church. It is made even worse when those who should admonish some wayward church member, not only fail to do so, but gossip about him to others instead.

6. Should church members report serious scandals to the Church Session?

Certainly they should. If it is the solemn

duty of the Session to adjudicate such matters, it is also the solemn duty of other members to bear witness as occasion may require. One reason for the almost complete breakdown of church discipline today is the extreme unwillingness of most church members to testify before the Session of their congregation. This is a great evil and is very unfair to the pastor and elders. The members have elected the pastor and elders and have promised to support them in the lawful discharge of their duties. The "know-nothing", "do-nothing", "don't-ask-me" attitude makes it difficult or impossible for a church Session to act according to righteousness.

7. Are the baptized children of the Church who have not yet made a public profession of faith, subject to the censures of church discipline?

Yes. The Book of Discipline of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, I.8, states: "The authority and discipline of the church extends to all members, irrespective of rank and station in life. Children who are baptized members, whether or not they have made their own profession of faith, are under the care of the church and subject to its discipline" (p. 281).

LESSON 21

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 6. Church Government

"The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXX.1.

"For the better government, and further edification of the Church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXXI.1.

"The government of the Church is Presbyterian: Ministers or teaching Elders are the highest officers, and among these there is a perfect parity of power: with teaching Elders are associated, in the exercise of ecclesiastical government, other Elders who only rule. These ministers and ruling Elders meet in courts, congregational sessions, presbyteries, and synods, in regular subordination, the one to the other: to these courts Christ has given the power of governing the Church and ordaining officers, and this power is entirely ministerial and subordinate to his law. The deacon has no power except about the temporalities of the Church." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXIII.3.

Scripture References:

Isa. 9:6,7. Luke 1:32,33. Christ is King forever over His covenant people, which implies a

government in the Church under Christ, distinct from the civil magistrate.

1 Tim. 5:17. 1 Thess. 5:12. Acts 20:17,28. Heb. 13:7,17,24. 1 Cor. 12:28. Christ has appointed a government of the Church by elders.

1 Tim. 4:14. The elders are to govern the Church jointly, as a court or "presbytery".

Acts 15:2,6,22,23. A court governing a particular part of the Church is subject to the jurisdiction of a court governing several such parts or governing the whole Church.

Questions:

1. What is the relation of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace to the subject of church government?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace requires that the visible Church maintain its own orthodoxy, integrity and holiness over against the world. As all the saints are included in one and the same Covenant of Grace, it implies a responsibility of each congregation for the purity of the other congregations and of the Church as a whole. Therefore no congregation can rightly stand aloof from other congregations and their concerns. For the proper discharge of the obligation to other congregations, there must be a

church government having jurisdiction over all the congregations.

Ideally, this would be a government having jurisdiction over all Christian congregations in a particular country, or all in the world. But the rise of denominationalism has prevented this, and the nearest approach that is possible at the present time is a government having jurisdiction over all the congregations of a particular denomination.

The Church is an organism, not merely a collection of individual congregations and members. It has a unified corporate life. This involves the necessity for a church government having jurisdiction over the whole body.

2. What is the prevalent attitude toward the question of church government today?

The prevalent attitude today in American Protestantism is that the Bible does not require any specific form of church government, that church government is a matter of expediency or human preference, and that any form is proper if the majority of the church favors it.

There is also observable today a tremendous swing toward independentism — the idea that there is to be no authoritative church government having jurisdiction over more than a single congregation. Where this conception prevails, all responsibility for the condition of other congregations and for the Church as a whole is renounced.

3. In contrast to these attitudes, what do we believe concerning church government?

(a) We believe that the Bible requires authoritative church government having jurisdiction over all the congregations of a denomination. (b) We believe that the FORM of church government is important, and that it has been appointed in the Bible and not left to human prudence to determine. (c) Of the various historical forms of church government, we believe that the PRESBYTERIAN form, or government by elders in a series of graded courts, has the sanction of the Scriptures.

4. What are the essential elements of the Presbyterian form of church government?

(a) The Church is to be governed by elders, of which there are two kinds: elders which only

rule (called "ruling elders"), and elders which both rule and preach (called "preaching elders", "pastors", or "ministers").

(b) The elders are to govern the Church in a series of graded courts, as follows: Session or Consistory, having jurisdiction over a single congregation; Presbytery or Classis, having jurisdiction over a number of congregations; Synod, having jurisdiction over a number of presbyteries or classes; General Synod or General Assembly, having jurisdiction over the entire denomination.

(c) All the officers of a particular congregation, including the pastor, are to be elected by the members of that congregation, but they receive their commission and authority from Christ, the Head of the Church.

(d) Ruling power in the Church is always to be exercised by a group of elders acting jointly, never by a single individual (minister or ruling elder) acting alone.

Of course we do not profess to find every detail of the Presbyterian system of church government in the Bible. But we believe that the framework or essential structure of the system, as outlined above, is set forth in the Bible, especially in the example of the apostolic Church and in the teaching of the New Testament Epistles.

5. What attitude should we, as members of the covenant society, have toward the government of the Church?

We should regard the government of the Church seriously, recognize its great importance, strive to keep it soundly Scriptural and to prevent all wrong tendencies, and support church officers in the lawful discharge of their duties. In addition, those who have been chosen to church office should regard their office as a sacred trust, for which they must give answer to God.

6. What is the nature of the office of deacon?

The deacon is not a ruling or governing officer, but an administrative one. His province is the temporal side of the Church's affairs, including the business administration of the Church, collection and handling of offerings, and, in cases of need, ministering in the name of the Church to the relief of members. The deacons, like the elders, are to act jointly in a board, and the board of deacons is responsible to the Session and congregation for its acts.

LESSON 22

The Covenant of Grace and the Church's Obligations of the World: I. Evangelism

"The Gospel is the Revelation, which God has given to man, of the plan of salvation by a Redeemer; this is glad tidings worthy of all acceptance by sinners.

"Preaching the Gospel consists in the offer

of salvation through Christ to sinners, accompanied with such an explanation of the various parts of God's word as may tend to persuade men to receive Christ as a Saviour, and to live and walk in him.

"The Gospel offer is not a declaration to any individual sinner, that his particular name is in the book of life; it is not immediately founded upon the decree of election, but upon the commandment of God, authorizing the minister of the Gospel to offer Christ and all his benefits to sinners, as such, however aggravated their crimes may have been, accompanied with information that every one who accepts the offer shall be saved.

"Preaching the Gospel does not consist in promising salvation to all who hear it, or in affirming that Christ has redeemed each of them; but in a free and full offer of a Saviour to every individual, declaring that he who believeth shall be saved, and he who believeth not shall be damned; there is no inconsistency between the doctrine of particular redemption and the unlimited Gospel offer." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XI.1,2,3,4.

Scripture References:

Rom. 1:15-17. The preaching of the Gospel is God's appointed way of saving the elect, both Jews and Gentiles.

2 Cor. 5:13-20. The Gospel message announces Christ's redemption, and urges sinners to be reconciled to God.

Isa. 55:3. Those who accept the Gospel are brought into a covenant relation to God.

Acts 2:38-40. The Gospel promises free salvation to all who repent and believe on Christ.

John 10:15, 26-28. Preaching the Gospel does not mean proclaiming that Christ has redeemed every individual human being. The Gospel is to be offered freely to all, but only the elect, for whom Christ, died, will accept the offer.

Questions:

1. What is the literal meaning of the word "evangelism"?

The Greek word "evangel" mean "good news" or "good message". Thus "evangelism" means literally "good message teaching". "Evangelization" means the carrying on of a program or work of evangelism. The words "evangelistic" and "evangelical" are sometimes confused. "Evangelistic" means "pertaining to evangelism, or preaching the Gospel to the unsaved"; in America, at least, the term "evangelical" is used to describe the character and content of a person's faith. A person is "evangelical" if he believes in salvation by free grace through the substitutionary atonement of Christ; a person is "evangelistic" if he is concerned about the proclamation of the Gospel to the unsaved.

2. How is the term "evangelism" sometimes misused?

In recent years, members of "liberal" churches have applied the term "evangelism" to various forms of activity which are quite foreign to the true meaning of the term. (a) It is applied to church membership campaigns in which almost the whole stress is laid on joining some church, while little or nothing is said about sin, repentance, and salvation by the blood of Christ. (b) By a strange abuse of words, "evangelism" is being applied to certain foreign missionary activities which certainly are not preaching of the Gospel, but at best only adjuncts or by-products of the Gospel. Thus we read of "agricultural evangelism", "industrial evangelism", and the like. The idea is, apparently, that these various lines of activity are intended to influence people for good. There may be such a thing as evangelism accompanied by agricultural or industrial training. But evangelism is evangelism; it is not a quality of human activities, but the proclamation of a definite message about God and the way of His salvation.

3. Is evangelism the sole purpose and task of the Church?

No. The Church has a double obligation in its service to God. It has an obligation to its own membership and it has an obligation to the world, or the general public. These two must be kept in balance. If either of them is disregarded or neglected, evil results will follow.

Some people think that evangelism and missions are the sole purpose and function of the Church. This is untrue. Note the sound statement of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXII.3: "The end of church fellowship is to exhibit a system of sound principles, to maintain the ordinances of Gospel worship in their purity, to promote holiness, and to prepare the saints for heaven." There are some who seem to think that more evangelism is the answer to all problems and the remedy for all the Church's ills. But this is an untrue and unbalanced view of the matter. Just as a man's first obligation is to provide for his own family, so the Church's first obligation is to maintain its own soundness and integrity. Really, the future of evangelism and missions depends on keeping the Church itself sound and pure. To branch out into wide fields of external activity while neglecting sound preaching, doctrinal instruction and Christian nurture of the Church's own covenant children and youth, and Biblical church discipline, is a great mistake and will prove disastrous in the end. First of all we must make sure that the root and trunk of the tree are sound and remain so.

4. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to evangelism?

Evangelism is God's way of bring about the salvation of the elect, which is guaranteed by the Covenant of Grace. This includes, of course,

all preaching of the Gospel of Christ, whether addressed to the Church or to those outside of the visible Church, whether at home or abroad. The Gospel is to be proclaimed to all human beings, and in God's appointed time the elect will obey the Gospel command and come to Christ and be saved. "Every one of God's elect is, in the time appointed in the council of peace, apprehended of Christ by his Spirit, as one of his redeemed children; is regenerated, and thereby enabled to embrace the Saviour; and thus through faith becomes one with Christ in the covenant of grace, and acknowledging Jesus as his head and representative, is justified from all his sins" (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XIV.2).

5. What is the best method of evangelism?

Simple methods are best, and sometimes methods need to be changed or improved, but the stress should never be on the method. The stress should be on the **CONTENT** of evangelism — on the medicine itself, not on the package it is put up in. We are to stress the **MESSAGE** rather than the method. Our American worship of "methods" amounts almost to a form of idolatry. The important thing is that the real, Biblical message be preached, not the particular method by which it is accomplished (Phil. 1:15-18). Of course some methods are definitely unscriptural and should be avoided.

6. What special emphasis should be included in the message of evangelism in a country which has long known the light of the Gospel, such as America?

Those who hear the Gospel must be told that they are covenant-breakers. Not only are all human beings guilty of Adam's breach of the Covenant of Works (for Adam acted as their representative), but in America the great majority of non-Christians are first, second or third genera-

tion breakers of the Covenant of Grace. That is, their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents were Christian believers. Such covenant-breakers are even more guilty before God than the heathen in the heart of Africa who have never seen a Bible nor heard the name of Jesus Christ. Covenant-breakers are under an added obligation to repent and return to the covenant God of their fathers, and if they do not do so, they will to all eternity suffer added ruin, remorse and loss in hell.

7. Is there a contradiction between Christ's redemption, which is limited to the elect, and the Gospel offer, which is addressed to all mankind?

No. There is involved in this a paradox, or apparent contradiction, but there is no real contradiction, even though human reason cannot solve the problem. It is the strength and glory of the Reformed theology that it does not attempt to cut the knot and solve such paradoxes by human reason. The Bible teaches that Christ died to redeem the elect, and the elect only; the Bible also teaches that the Gospel is to be proclaimed to all mankind. Our human minds cannot fully harmonize these two teachings, yet we know that they are both true, because both are taught in the Bible.

8. In evangelism, is it proper to tell unsaved sinners: "Christ died for you"?

No. Note the statement of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XI.4, quoted at the head of this lesson. Christ died for the elect, not for all men individually. We have no way of knowing whether Christ died for a particular individual until that person actually comes to Christ in repentance and faith. We should preach that Christ died to save sinners and that all men are commanded to repent and believe on Christ, and that those who do repent and believe will be saved.

LESSON 23

The Covenant of Grace and the Church's Obligation to the World: 2. Missions

"In the second petition, (which is, 'Thy kingdom come'), acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in. . . ." — The Larger Catechism, 191.

Scripture References:

Gen. 12:3, 18:18. The world-wide redemptive purpose of the Covenant of Grace as announced to Abraham.

Psalms 2:8; Isa. 11:10; 42:6; 60:3; 66:18-21. The Gentile nations to be Christ's inheritance and to receive salvation in Him.

Matt. 28:18-20. Christ's Great Commission to teach all nations.

Acts 9:15; 11:18; 13:46,47; 15:3,7,12-18; 22:21; 28:28. It is God's command that the covenant salvation be preached to all nations.

Rom. 11:25-27. All of God's elect of Israel and of the Gentiles shall be brought to salvation in Christ.

Questions:

1. How is the Covenant of Grace the basis of the Christian missionary enterprise?

When God established His covenant with Abraham, it was in order that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in Him. Thus the

covenant salvation was to be for all nations. During the period of preparation, from Abraham to Christ, the Covenant of Grace was limited to the people of Israel. This was not for the sole benefit of Israel, but for the ultimate benefit of the Gentiles. It was not intended to be a permanent limitation, but only a temporary restriction of the covenant to the narrow channel of Israel in order that in due time it might overflow to all the nations of the world.

The elect of God are from every nation and race on earth (Rev. 7:9). Because God has chosen His elect unto salvation from all nations, the Gospel of salvation must be preached to the people of all nations. Both the eternal decree of election, and the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, are included in the great plan of God. Rom. 10:13-15.

2. How is the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace a strong incentive to carry on missionary work?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace is a strong incentive to carry on missionary work, because the Covenant of Grace guarantees the salvation of the elect. God has His elect in every part of the world, and they will certainly be saved through the preaching of the Gospel. Thus true missionary work cannot fail of its God-intended purpose. The missionary is not engaged in a useless task, nor a task the success of which is doubtful or uncertain. His success is as sure as the promises of God. This does not mean that churches and missionaries do not sometimes fail to do their duty; it means that when they do their duty, their labor is never in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

3. Why should the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace be a comfort to the Church concerning the future of the fruits of missionary work?

The future of the fruits of missionary work is guaranteed by God's faithfulness in the Covenant of Grace. The permanent endurance of the Church established through the labors of missionaries does not depend upon the toleration extended by earthly kings and rulers, but upon the promises of God in the Covenant of Grace.

Persecution cannot really destroy the fruits of missionary work. The outward form of the Church may be affected for a time; the Church may even be driven "underground" and believers reduced to worshipping God "in deserts, and in

mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. 11:38), as happened, by the providence of God, to the faithful Covenanters in Scotland. But such things do not really liquidate the Church. It is the bush that ever burns, yet is not consumed, for God is in the bush.

At the present day when we see the lights going out almost all over Asia, especially in the great country of China where the people of God have invested so much "blood and sweat and tears", we should realize that God is still on the throne of the universe and His covenant cannot fail. God will keep His covenant with His Church. It will endure, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The truth of God, and the covenant salvation, will pass down from parents to children, generation to generation, in multitudes of instances, in spite of the devil and all his works.

4. Is the purpose of missions limited to the salvation of individuals?

No. The real purpose of the missionary enterprise, according to the Bible, is the salvation of the human race as a whole. This is shown by many texts of Scripture, such as Gen. 3:15; Psalm 65:2; 67:7; Isa. 60: 3-5; John 4:42; 12:32; 1 John 2:2. This of course does not imply that every individual is to be saved. It does not imply anything concerning the number of the saved in proportion to the number of the finally lost, although the Bible teaches that the elect from all nations constitute "a great multitude, which no man could number" (Rev. 7:9). When the Bible calls Christ "the Saviour of the world" and teaches us that the Covenant of Grace will bring about the salvation of the world, or of the human race as a whole, this means that the kingdom of God, to all eternity, will include THE HUMAN RACE AS AN ORGANISM UNDER CHRIST ITS HEAD. The redeemed will constitute the real, abiding humanity. The reprobate, who are eternally lost, are like branches pruned off a tree; the elect are like branches living and growing on the tree; the human race is the tree. God's great purpose, in the Covenant of Grace, is the salvation of humanity as an organic whole, a purpose which cannot fail. We should not think of humanity as a tree destined to be cut down and burned, while a few branches are taken away and saved. It is the other way around — part of the branches are cut off and burned, but the tree itself, as an organism, is to live on.

LESSON 24

The Covenant of Grace and the Church's Obligations to the World: 3. Social Applications of Christianity

"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever." — The Shorter Catechism, 1.

"The preface to the ten commandments is contained in these words, 'I am the Lord thy God,

which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage'. Wherein God manifesteth his sovereignty, as being Jehovah, the eternal, immutable, and almighty God;

having his being in and of himself, and giving being to all his words and works; and that he is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, so with all his people; who, as he brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so he delivereth us from our spiritual thralldom: and that therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his commandments." — The Larger Catechism, 101.

"The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves." The Shorter Catechism, 42.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 10:31. Rom. 11:36. It is our duty to glorify God in every part of our life.

Luke 1:69-75. Being delivered from the kingdom of evil by God's Covenant of Grace, we are bound to glorify Him in all our life.

1 Pet. 1:15-21. The recipients of redemption are bound to live a God-glorifying life.

Lev. 18:30; 19:37. The covenant relation to God implies an obligation to live unto the glory of God.

Questions:

1. Why are Christian people bound to glorify God by their life?

For two reasons: creation and redemption. They have a NATURAL obligation to God (by creation), and a COVENANT obligation to God (by redemption). Because God is our God and Redeemer, because He has brought us out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage — redeemed us from the kingdom of evil — therefore we are bound to keep all His commandments, and live a God-glorifying life.

2. What mistake do Christian people often make concerning their obligation to live a God-glorifying life?

Christian people often fail to realize that God must be honored and glorified in ALL parts and areas of their life. It is a common tendency, even among earnest Christian people, to think of their duty to glorify God too narrowly, limiting this obligation to certain special spheres of life and leaving others outside of it. Some tend to limit their service to God to the ordinances of religious worship, prayer, Bible reading, giving some money to home and foreign missions, and perhaps doing some personal or public evangelistic work from time to time, while they never think of their business, recreation, political life and social life in relation to God's Kingdom. Some indeed regard the whole realm of politics as separate from the duty to glorify God, saying that

"Religion and politics will not mix". Others can see no connection between their Christian faith and the kind of schools their children attend. Still others fail to see any bearing of Christianity on the arts and sciences. This too-narrow individualism is certainly wrong. We are to glorify God — and to AIM at glorifying God — all along the line, in every sphere of life.

3. What is the bearing of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace on the social problems of our time?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace implies that the Christian must glorify God in all departments of life. This includes all phases of the Christian's relation to human society. Therefore the Christian is under obligation to apply the teachings of the Bible to the social problems of the day. Especially the Church, through the preaching and teaching of its ministers and the acts of its assemblies, must endeavor to apply the Word of God to social problems.

4. Why is it very difficult to apply the Word of God to present-day social problems?

Because the social problems of the present day are mostly different from those of Bible times, and therefore we do not find ready-made solutions of these problems in the Bible. For instance, the problems of relations between capital and labor in this industrial age are quite different from, and much more complicated than, any problems of employer and employee in Bible times. We cannot solve today's social problems by merely quoting a text or two. We must search the Scriptures patiently for the PRINCIPLES that bear on social problems, and then apply these principles patiently and conscientiously to the social problems of our day.

5. What special danger is involved in attempting to apply the principles of the Bible to today's social problems?

The danger that we may read our own ideas or prejudices into the Bible, and then draw conclusions which are not really Scriptural but are merely our own notions. The contradictory conclusions which many Christians come to with respect to the teaching of the Bible on temperance, socialism, pacifism, the race problem, the amusement question, etc., show that not everything which is called Christian teaching is really such. Where two people reach contradictory conclusions, at least one of them must be mistaken. Some people are so sure that war is always wrong, for example, that they inevitably interpret the Bible in harmony with this idea, and discount or explain away all the Scripture passages that can be adduced on the other side of the question. Others take it for granted that some form of socialism must be the will of God, and read the Bible accordingly. Some even go so far as to claim that Christianity requires all national

sovereignties to be pooled in a single world government, and seem unable to comprehend the objections to such a scheme which their fellow-Christians point out.

6. Is not the application of Christian principles to society a hopeless task, in view of the prevailing wickedness of the human race?

Even if there were only one Christian in the whole world, and all the rest were wicked people, it would still be that one Christian's duty to try to apply Christianity to society. Noah and his family were the only godly people of their time, and surely Noah might have regarded the situa-

tion as hopeless. Yet Noah did not limit himself to building the ark by which his family survived the Flood. He also preached righteousness to his own generation (2 Pet. 2:5), and we may be sure that Noah did not preach righteousness merely in the abstract, but in application to the concrete situation of his own day and age—a situation which is very vividly described in Gen. 6:5, 11-13. Noah preached righteousness to his own generation, not because he considered it probable that his preaching would be successful and human society reformed, but because it was HIS DUTY BEFORE GOD to preach righteousness. We are to do our duty; the results are in God's hands.

LESSON 25

The Covenant of Grace and the Christian's Relation to the World: I. The Basic Antithesis

"Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.

"By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

"They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

"From this original corrupton, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VI.1,2,3,4.

"Mankind are all now, by nature, the children of wrath, conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity, sunk in total depravity, become mortal in their bodies, subject to disease and pain, incapable of doing anything spiritually good, in a state of enmity against God, and condemned to endless misery in the world to come." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, V.4.

"Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others: yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner according to the Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet, their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XVI.7.

Scripture References:

Gen. 3:15. The divinely-ordained enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

Gen. 12:1. God's command to Abraham to separate from country and kindred.

Lev. 20:22-26. 1 Kings 8:53. The divinely ordained separateness of the covenant people.

Psalm 1. The basic antithesis between the righteous and the ungodly.

Psalm 2. The conflict between the heathen (seed of the serpent) and the Son (seed of the woman).

Psalm 10. The bitter opposition of the world to the covenant people of God.

John 3:3-6. The new birth divides humanity into the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

John 8:44. Those who are not children of God, are children of the devil.

2 Cor. 5:17. The new birth gives everything in life a new meaning for the Christian, which the unsaved person cannot share.

Questions:

1. Is the human race a unity today?

The human race possesses unity today only in the biological sense that all human beings constitute a single natural species descended from Adam and Eve. The human race does not possess spiritual unity today. When God created mankind, the race possessed spiritual unity. But this unity was shattered by the fall into sin. The result was not merely a wall of division between man and God, but the introduction of many divisions into the human family. The true source of

solidarity — a right relation to God — having been lost, mankind inevitably fell a prey to divisive forces.

2. How was the human race divided during the period from Adam to Noah?

After man fell, the dire effects of sin multiplied and increased. Soon Cain killed his brother Abel. Following the birth of Seth the race was sharply, radically divided into two lines: (a) the godly descendants of Seth, and (b) the ungodly descendants of Cain. Among the latter, wickedness increased by leaps and bounds. By the time of Lamech, the seventh generation from Adam (Gen. 4:16-24) all consciousness of sin and all sense of dependence upon God seem to have been lost; Lamech lived an "uninhibited" life. Soon the earth was filled with the most terrible wickedness, crime and violence.

Meantime the godly descendants of Seth were quietly maintaining their faith and their principles (Gen. 4:26). It is clear that there was a definite, marked distinction between the two groups of human beings. It appears also that the breakdown of this separation by intermarriage between the godly and the ungodly (Gen. 6:1-8) brought on the extreme development of wickedness which called for the judgment of the Flood.

3. What wrong attempt was made soon after the Flood to restore the broken unity of the human race?

The construction of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). We read that the whole earth was still one in language at that time. The erection of the tower was an attempt to establish a center of unity on a humanistic basis, without recognizing God or giving glory to Him (verse 4). This proud attempt was frustrated by the intervention of God, who introduced a new division into the human race, the division of languages — a divisive force that has proved very powerful and very difficult to overcome through the history of the race.

Since then, numerous attempts have been made by ungodly men to restore the shattered unity of the race on a secular or merely human basis. Some of these have sought world unity by conquest, others by agreement, but all have ignored the living God. History is strewn with the wrecks of these vain attempts at a restoration of world unity on a human basis, without recognizing God or the fact of sin. Every such attempt is foredoomed to failure. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6).

4. How does regeneration, or the new birth, divide the human race into two radically different kinds of people?

Mankind by nature, apart from the saving grace of God, are totally depraved and corrupted in sin, unable to do anything spiritually good, filled with enmity against God, and under the wrath of God (Rom. 1:18). In carrying out the provisions of the Covenant of Grace, God has stepped into this situation and saved A PART of the human race by Christ's redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit bestows on the elect the new birth, by which their "heart" or inmost nature and personality is radically changed and inclined toward God and holiness.

The divinely-wrought change makes the person a new creature in Christ Jesus, and changes his entire life. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. The unsaved person, on the other hand, is a stranger to this experience of the new birth. His whole life is set against God and against holiness. He is deeply selfish, and his noblest devotion never rises higher than humanity. In the bottom of his heart, he hates God and the people of God.

There is no middle ground between the person who is born again and the person who is not born again. Every person is on one side or the other of this dividing line. Only the restraining hand of God prevents the ungodly from rising up and killing every Christian in the world. The enmity in their hearts would have this result, if not restrained by God. Every persecution of God's covenant people by the world arises from this deep-rooted enmity in the hearts of unsaved people — enmity which is stirred up by Satan from time to time, as God in His providence may permit.

5. What happens when Christian people forget the radical difference that exists between them and the children of the world?

When this basic antithesis is forgotten, several dire results soon follow. (a) Christian people begin to associate freely with ungodly people, even to the extent of intermarrying with them, so that the salt loses its savor and the Church becomes almost indistinguishable from the world. (b) Christian people begin to cherish a false optimism concerning the probable success of plans for world improvement on a merely human basis — schemes which disregard the sinfulness of the world and the need of the new birth, and which leave God out of account. Christian people begin to pin their faith to such human schemes as social service, political action on a merely human basis, etc. (c) Christian people begin to cultivate religious fellowship with the adherents of other religions; Jewish rabbis are invited to occupy Christian pulpits; religion, rather than Christianity, comes to be regarded as the important thing.

LESSON 26

The Covenant of Grace and the Christian's Relation to the World: 2. The Duty of Separation

"When we hear any mention of our union with God, we should remember that holiness must be the bond of it. . . because it is a peculiar property of his glory not to have any intercourse with iniquity and uncleanness. Wherefore also it teaches, that this is the end of our vocation, which it is requisite for us always to keep in view, if we desire to correspond to the design of God in calling us. For to what purpose was it that we were delivered from the iniquity and pollution of the world, in which we had been immersed, if we permit ourselves to wallow in them as long as we live? Besides, it also admonishes us that, to be numbered among the people of God, we must inhabit the holy city Jerusalem; which, he having consecrated it to himself, cannot without impiety be profaned by impure inhabitants. Whence these expressions: 'He shall abide in the tabernacle of the Lord, that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness', etc., because it is very unbecoming the sanctuary which he inhabits, to be rendered as filthy as a stable." — John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, Chap. VI, Sec. II.

Scripture References:

John 14:30. Eph. 2:2. 1 John 2:15. The world of sin is Satan's kingdom.

2 Cor. 6:17,18. 1 Tim. 5:22. James 1:27. Rev. 18:4. Separation from the world is a Christian duty.

1 John 2:15-17. God commands His children not to love the world.

John 7:7. The Christian should follow Christ's example and testify of the world, that its works are evil.

Questions:

1. In what two senses is the term "world" used in the Bible?

(a) In a good sense, to designate the world of human society regarded as God's creation and property; for example, Matt. 13:38. "the field is the world"; Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (b) In a bad sense, to designate that sinful world-system which, as Satan's kingdom, is against God; for example, 1 John 2:15, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"; Eph. 2:2, "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air."

2. Is the Christian required to separate from human society, or the world itself?

No. Medieval monasticism was an attempt

to separate from the world itself by withdrawing from human society to a monastery or convent, an attempt to escape from corruption by abstaining from all association with the corrupt, but it resulted in dismal failure. In 1 Cor. 5:9,10, the apostle Paul shows that God does not require His children to withdraw from human society; He does not require them to refrain from all civil or business dealings with sinful, unsaved people, though religious fellowship with such is forbidden.

3. What kind of separation from the world is required by the Covenant of Grace?

The Covenant of Grace requires an obedient life of godliness and holiness of the covenant people of God. This involves a clear line of distinction and separation between the covenant people and the world that is Satan's kingdom. As pointed out in the preceding question, the Christian is not required to separate from human society or the world itself; he is not required to separate from anything that is good or innocent, but only from that which is contrary to God and to holiness. The Covenant of Grace definitely involves the obligation to separate from all participation in the sins of the world. The covenant people of God are not to be identified in any way with Satan's kingdom. They must separate from all that marks the world as Satan's kingdom.

4. What is involved in a consistent separation from the sinful world?

Separation from the sinful world means little or nothing unless it is carried out consistently. A consistent separation from the world involves abstinence from all conduct that is characteristic of Satan's kingdom. Some practices are characteristically worldly; the Christian must avoid them. Some places have become identified with the sinful world-system; the Christian should avoid them. The warning to God's people to separate from Babylon (the anti-Christian world-system) is relevant here: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

5. In considering the subject of worldliness, what error must be avoided?

The error of externalizing worldliness, or regarding it as consisting essentially in external actions or things. Worldliness is first and foremost a sin of the heart; its essence consists in the lust of the heart for something that God forbids (1 Cor. 10:6). That worldliness is essentially a matter of the spiritual state of the heart is shown also by the words of our Saviour in Mark 7:21-23,

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

It is true that worldliness has external manifestations, and it is true that the Christian duty of separation from the world has implications concerning external conduct. But we should remember that the antithesis between the covenant people and the children of this world is not PRIMARILY an external matter; it is a spiritual antithesis. Any attempt to define worldliness and decide questions about practical matters of conduct should proceed from the realization that the antithesis is basically not external but spiritual. If this is forgotten, worldliness will be too narrowly defined in terms of particular patterns of external conduct, and the result will often be a Pharisaic spiritual pride on the part of people who abstain scrupulously from those particular patterns of conduct, but whose hearts are really worldly to the core.

6. Why should a Christian bear witness against the sins of the world?

Our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ testified of the world, that its works are evil (John 7:7). The Christian should follow Christ's example and bear witness against the sins of the world, as occasion may require. The fact that this testimony of the Christian may have no apparent result should not discourage him from discharging the duty. For Christian people to protest publicly against the Sabbath desecration involved in a state fair being open on the Lord's Day, with all kinds of amusements going on, may seem at first sight to be a useless gesture, in that it can hardly be expected to accomplish the closing of the fair. But it is not useless. It is the discharge of a Christian duty, and it will be for the honor and glory of God at the Judgment Day that a witness was borne against that sin at that time. Moreover it will leave the guilty persons even more without excuse than they would otherwise be.

Note: This series of lessons on the Covenant of Grace will be continued in the next issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — Ed.

The New Chain Reference Bible

(F. C. THOMPSON)

By the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick

Note: This is the fourth 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 distinctive feature of Thompson's "Chain Reference Bible" which gives it its name, is a chain reference system which ties a verse on a particular subject—stated in the margin—to another verse on the same subject in a preceding passage, or to a later one, or both. In the New Testament each topic found in the margin is identified by a number, so that one may turn to that subject immediately in the "helps", a section in the back of the Bible, of 295 pages, without turning first to the index to locate it. The index lists some 7,000 subjects which are identified in this analysis of the Scriptures.

The word "new" in the title apparently designates the present edition, the third, which has been in the market since 1934.

This Bible is published and sold direct to the user by the B. B. Kirkbride Bible Company of Indianapolis, Ind. Like the "Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible" and the "Scofield Reference Bible", it uses the Authorized Version of the Bible as its basic text. It is published in the

best materials and workmanship, and priced at \$8.65 to \$23.35, in conventional type of Bible composition and binding.

However, this Bible differs from both the aforementioned annotated editions of the Bible in that its "helps" are primarily of an analytical and classifying nature, rather than in the form of notes which are in addition to, and aside from, the text of the Scriptures, and in that the "helps" are in a separate section at the back of the book. For these reasons it is less open to the charge that it promotes particularly one or another school of interpretation, as dispensationalism or Arminianism or modernism.

The primary portion of the "helps" is a section of 178 pages which is strictly Scripture texts, references and readings, under various subject headings. Another 115 pages contain on outline study of each book of the Bible, studies of prominent Bible characters, Bible harmonies and illustrated studies of Jesus' ministry, Paul's missionary journeys and other subjects.

It is true that in these latter pages the point of view of the author is deliberately revealed. For instance, concerning the book of Isaiah we read, "Some modern scholars have studied this poetical prophecy as a botanist studies flowers,

dissecting and analyzing them. By the use of this scientific method the beauty and unity of the book, like that of the rose, is almost forgotten as the different parts are pulled to pieces for examination." This is apparently a reference to the modern theory that there were two or more "Isaiahs". This statement is decidedly weak, it must be admitted, as a refutation of the critical theory of the prophecy of Isaiah. The way is left open for anyone to assume that it has reference to the theories of someone else. Moreover, this reference to the method of such "modern scholars" as "scientific" is unfounded, not to say unwise.

Again, under "Principles of Bible Study" just preceding the "helps" the author says, "It is of the utmost importance that the reader, or student should approach the Bible in a reverent attitude of mind, regarding it as the inspired Word of God, and not as an ordinary literary production." Concerning the book of Esther, it is mentioned that its "right . . . to a place in the Scripture Canon has been greatly disputed." But we read further, "Without doubt it occupies its place in God's Word because of its hidden teaching of an overshadowing providence in connection with God's people and the certainty of retribution overtaking their enemies." Of Jonah the author says, "This narrative has been ridiculed as a myth by unbelievers, and is regarded by some scholars as a legend, or parable.

"The Jews accepted it as historical, see Antiq. IX.10.2.

"Jesus Christ vouched for its truth, Mt. 12:39-41; Lu. 11:29,30."

Apparently, for author Thompson, the matter is settled, and so there can be no doubt as to his personal attitude toward the higher critical studies and theories destructive of the doctrine of inspiration. While he does not take up a positive offensive against present-day unbelief, at least he does not leave the field in its control with implied endorsement.

In explanation of such an attitude, not necessarily in complete justification, it may be said that apparently author Thompson believes that a specific stand against modern unbelief is not in place in this Bible, but he intends to encourage an intelligent study of the Bible itself by its publication. While complaint may be made that this and other controversial questions have, for the most part, been deliberately avoided, still these Bible studies have been given from a believing point of view, no encouragement has been given to destructive theories, and the Word is commended to many for their study, that the Word may commend itself.

Certainly it should not be necessary for each group in Christendom to publish its own Bible. While the "Scofield Reference Bible" and the "Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible" have set a bad precedent in this matter, it is to be hoped that those holding to the Reformed Faith

will not find it necessary to retaliate with a Bible and system of notes peculiarly "Reformed".

While a Bible such as this may not appear to give as much immediate help to the Bible student as a Bible with extensive expository notes, it should be remembered that the "help" which some such notes give is not Scripture and often not to be depended on. And to place such notes on the same page with the Scriptures may be misleading, no matter how well intentioned.

Evidence that this Bible does not give a view of the Bible peculiar to one or another party, is the list of users whose testimonials are used in sales promotion. That list includes such opposites in theology as Ralph Sockman and Walter A. Maier, Harry Rimmer and Daniel Poling, Gypsy Smith and E. Stanley Jones, all of whom, according to quoted statements, find this Bible helpful.

Perhaps it is gratuitous to mention omissions in a work of such limitations. However, there are some rather obvious considerations neglected which appear basic for the student, such as the following: Statement that Psalm 14 is almost identical with Psalm 53; Usher's dates are given, with the explanation tucked away in the "helps" under "chronology" that "they are no longer accepted as accurate by most scholars", but little if any attempt is made at specific correction; in references on the subject of the "Fatherhood of God" omission of the classic passage in John 8, in which Jesus says that those who are not children of God by faith are children of the devil (it is to be hoped that this omission was not intentional, with the design of avoiding offense to the modernists); there is a certain lack of uniformity in the concordance, in that many words which have both noun and verb forms—help, pity, fashion, fall—are not discriminated, while others—love, honour, hope, etc.—are listed separately according to noun and verb use.

The "Chain Reference Bible", even for the Sabbath School teacher, is not an all-purpose Bible. While it gives the Revised Version readings in the margin "in cases of a striking difference" between the two, there are no such striking differences found by author Thompson on most pages of the Bible. Yet the American Revised Version, besides its more accurate rendering of many passages, gives, in many cases, more references. Then a dictionary-concordance, such as is found in the back of many Bibles, gives a wealth of information not to be found in the "Chain Reference Bible".

While the usefulness of the "New Chain Reference Bible" may easily be overestimated by reading the promotional literature, nevertheless, an analytical Bible is a real help in a home, whether for personal study, Sabbath School teaching, or for preparing a talk on a Christian subject. And certainly there is not a better one of this type on the market.

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."

PRESENT DAY METHODISM AND THE BIBLE, by Newton C. Conant. Bible Protestant Press, Inc., P. O. Box 910, Camden 5, N. J. 1949, pp. 107, \$1.00.

This book, by the pastor of one of the thirty-four Methodist Protestant churches which refused to go into the Methodist union of 1939, examines the writings of a number of Methodist leaders and finds confusion within the ranks of the once spiritually powerful followers of Wesley.

The chief sources quoted are a series of booklets entitled "Know Your Bible Series", published by Dr. Roy L. Smith, Editor of the "Christian Advocate", and the editorial board of the paper: a book, "Great Christian Teachings", by Dr. Edwin Lewis; and various articles appearing in "The Christian Advocate". In all some forty-five names of Methodist leaders appear in the index.

One would like to see a more exhaustive study of the teaching in Methodist colleges and seminaries, Sabbath School quarterlies and other religious education materials, pronouncements of the General Conference, and a survey of the belief of the ministers of the church as a whole. The limited number of Methodist leaders quoted seems to this reviewer to be the chief weakness of the book.

However, enough material has been gathered together to show the seriousness of the case against "Present Day Methodism".

The author quotes from the "Articles of Religion" (1948) to show that the Methodist Church retains its historical doctrinal standards, and states that all candidates for the ministry are required to accept these doctrines. This refutes the claim that the Methodist Church is a "non-doctrinal" church, leaving all questions of doctrine to the individual judgment. Those who have sworn to these doctrines and then deny them are rightly declared to be "intellectually dishonest".

The first section of the book, pp. 13-44, gives the evidence of the denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures and acceptance of all the destructive critical views of Scripture by these Methodist leaders. The second section, pp. 45-71, deals with the denial of "practically every fundamental doctrine of the historic Christian faith." The third section, pp. 72-96, tells of the present-day emphasis on the Social Gospel, a trend to-

ward Roman Catholicism, and a close link with the Federal Council of Churches.

The chapter on the "Social Gospel" seems to this reviewer to be weak in its failure to recognize the proper place of Scriptural preaching on social issues. The author quotes sources revealing unscriptural and communistic teachings by the Methodist Federation for Social Action. He rightly condemns substitution of the "Social Gospel" for true evangelical preaching of the Gospel of salvation. But the author would give the impression of opposing Christian activity against social evils such as slavery, the liquor traffic, neglect of the poor, cut-throat competition, and other evils contrary to Scripture commandments. His case would be stronger if he had presented the truth that evangelical Christians have, by the Spirit of God, "wrought righteousness" in many fierce battles with social evils. This would in no way excuse the doctrinal unbelief or unscriptural social teachings.

The fourth section is the conclusion, in which the author urges Methodists to "come out and be separate" since "unbelief and apostasy are too strongly entrenched" to hope for the expulsion of "those who brazenly are preaching doctrines opposed to the Articles of Religion."

The statement that "each Methodist is a part of the whole system" and is therefore responsible for the unbelief within the church seems to be valid reasoning.

The book is of value to us in warning those who contemplate uniting with a church which tolerates unbelief within its ranks.—D. Ray Wilcox

THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION, by Edward Boehl, translated from the German by C. G. Riedesel. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1946, pp. 308, \$3.00.

This book is a very scholarly presentation of the doctrine of justification by faith. Dr. Boehl lays a much needed stress on the fact that our justification in the sight of God rests entirely on the gracious imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, as sinners. In order to emphasize this truth, he goes back to the early history of the Reformation, and deals at some length with the controversy which was waged between Osiander and Melancthon. In that controversy, Melancthon

thon ably defended the doctrine of justification against the arguments of Osiander, who insisted that Christ's righteousness is INFUSED into the believer, and that by this presence of Christ in the believer the latter becomes essentially righteous. The author shows how Osiander's position tended toward pantheism, and heartily concurs with Melancthon in saying that "it is not necessary that the righteousness of Christ be infused into us", but that "it is faith alone which distinguishes the present state (of the believer; from the former state of sin." After dealing with some of this historical background, Dr. Boehl turns to the Biblical foundation for the justification doctrine. To find his Scriptural proof, he goes back to the law, the historical books, and the prophecies of the Old Testament; then to the Gospels, and, of course, to Paul's great Epistle to the Romans. Then, finally, Dr. Boehl considers justification in its relation to other vital Christian doctrines—to original sin, to the incarnation, to regeneration, predestination, sanctification, etc.

Throughout this book, the author's great concern is that all works of man should be excluded, as having no place or merit whatsoever in the justifying of the sinner before God. He does not even like to speak of the good works of the regenerate, for fear that men may regard these as the ground of their salvation. This zeal to exclude justification by works, though much to be commended, seems to have led the author into certain errors, particularly with regard to regeneration and sanctification. He considers regeneration the same thing as justification, and merely another term for it, saying (p. 208) that "regeneration can only be named along with justification in so far as it may be another picture to portray that the one pronounced righteous is now a child of God." He rejects the belief (as it is stated in the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XII.3, that "regeneration is THE INFUSION OF A NEW PRINCIPLE OF LIFE, by the Holy Ghost, on account of Christ's atonement, into an elect soul. . .". It is a little uncertain in your reviewer's mind as to exactly what Dr. Boehl does believe with regard to sanctification. Dr. Louis Berkhof, in his preface to the book, says (in pointing out some of Dr. Boehl's errors) that "he even regards sanctification as something that is effected at once in the sinner by imputation, and does not believe that it consists in the gradual dying of the old man and the equally gradual quickening of the new man." In speaking of Abraham, Dr. Boehl says, "Scarcely has he been justified, scarcely has he himself been sanctified and redeemed, when he immediately becomes the predecessor of all, who follow in his footsteps in the faith. . . the utmost possible that can ever be predicated of a Christian and of 'what he has become' immediately follows imputation." These and some other statements seem to justify Dr. Berkhof's criticism. Yet on

the other hand, we find the author saying (p. 241): ". . . when we thus begin each day anew, yea, when we daily experience and celebrate the dying of the old man and the quickening of the new man—then the Holy Ghost gains ground and an entrance into our hearts, so that, notwithstanding all obstacles, He accomplishes perfect works." Perhaps it is sufficient to say that Dr. Boehl does not make himself clear enough with regard to the relation of justification to sanctification. He does not draw enough of a distinction between the "declaring" of a sinner righteous, in justification, as a legal act of God, on account of the imputed righteousness of Christ, and the "making" of a sinner righteous, as in sanctification. Indeed, on page 208 we find him saying, "This justification—declaring righteous—at the same time makes the subject righteous. . .".

Yet in spite of these errors, and a failure at times to make himself clear, Dr. Boehl has made a great contribution to the defense of the Reformed doctrine of Justification. The book is not written in a popular style. It is heavy reading for anyone who does not have a thorough background in the history of Christian doctrine. The large amount of untranslated Latin makes it difficult at times for one unfamiliar with that language to catch the full meaning. Yet many of the errors it refutes are gaining strength in the church today, and the great truth it proclaims needs to be emphasized. In the words of J. W. Wells, "A doctrine which affords us tranquillity for the past, present and future; which elevates us beyond all vicissitudes of life and permits us to enjoy even now a forgiveness of sins and a quiet conscience, deserves its right place."—J. M. McMillan

THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF ADOPTION, by Robert Alexander Webb. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1947, pp. 188, \$2.50.

Anything that can be written today to make plain the Scriptural teaching on the Fatherhood of God, is timely. This doctrine, sapped of its strength and robbed of its sinew, has been one of the chief talking points for the modernist's bill of goods. It has become a catch phrase for capturing the interest of Christian people in order to draw them away from the Gospel of salvation by grace, into a program of social service.

It is a tribute to the discernment and vision of Dr. Webb that he saw the destructive nature of the modernist's emasculated doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. Dr. Webb died in 1919, but he had prepared and used the material of this book in his teaching in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Louisville, Ky., before his death. Although prepared some twenty years ago, the book meets this issue squarely and fundamentally, as it must be faced today.

This reviewer was especially interested in this volume because, when giving a speaking assignment some years ago on "adoption", other subjects in the series being "justification" and "sanctification", he found that there are volumes written on those two subjects, but almost nothing on adoption. It was taken for granted. In the first sentence of this book, Dr. Webb complains that it "has received but slender treatment at the hands of theologians."

A leading thought, carried throughout the book, its application being noted again and again, is that God bears not only a paternal relationship to men, but a magisterial relationship as well. He is not only Father, but also Ruler. Man was not only son in a family, but also a citizen in a kingdom. Man's position changed at the fall of Adam. He became an outcast son, an outlawed citizen. A citizen might be his substitute in paying his debt to the kingdom, but it took a Son to restore him to his position as a son, hence the Saviour must be both Servant and Son.

Dr. Webb refutes, in four chapters, the idea that man is restored to favor as a son of God merely by Christ's incarnation, or by His love. It was by a substitutionary atonement.

The last chapter of the book is especially interesting, for it shows that the term "adoption" is more comprehensive and complete than the more popular term in Fundamentalist circles today, "the new birth". We are reminded that in a birth "the essence of the begetter is communicated to the begotten". We dare not say that believers, by the new birth, become God. Rather, they are still creatures. Therefore, Dr. Webb says, we become sons of God by adoption, a term which covers the whole process. The "new birth" is a figurative and accommodational statement to describe the fundamental change that takes place when an unbeliever becomes a believer. This change is also set forth "as a 'creative' act (Eph. 4:24); and as a 'resurrective' act (Rom. 6:13); and as a 'vocative' act (I Pet. 2:9.); and still other terms are used." Near the last words of the book: "We have seen that that which is communicated in this mystical and voluntary begetting, is not some new substance, but precisely and definitely a new and holy filial disposition or character."

There is rich and greatly needed material here for Christian people. Thought is challenged on every page.—Lester E. Kilpatrick

ST. PAUL THE TRAVELLER AND THE ROMAN CITIZEN, by William M. Ramsay. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1949, pp. 402, \$3.50.

This volume is a photographic reprint of Sir William Ramsay's noteworthy book on the apostle

Paul, which was first published in 1895. The printing is beautifully and clearly done on good quality paper, and the binding is dignified and substantial. The reviewer noted only one typographical error, on p. 309, where the "t" is missing from the word "at".

The publishers are to be commended for making this book, which had long been out of print, available again to the Christian public. Always scholarly and thorough, the book is at the same time not only fascinatingly interesting but truly illuminating. The author makes Paul, Luke and others with whom he deals live before the mind of the reader. The accounts of Paul's journeys reveal a copious first-hand knowledge of the routes travelled and places visited. Particularly interesting is the author's treatment of the voyage to Rome and the shipwreck at Malta. His discussion of the problem of Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (pp. 94 ff.) is unusual and thought-provoking. He rejects the common notion that the "thorn" consisted of some weakness or disease of the eyes, and considers it most probable that it was a very severe form of malaria, stating that "Such an attack is for the time absolutely incapacitating: the sufferer can only lie and feel himself a shaking and helpless weakling, when he ought to be at work. He feels a contempt and loathing for self, and believes that others feel equal contempt and loathing" (p. 96).

The author's position is conservative and favorable to the orthodox supernaturalistic interpretation of the conversion, life and work of the apostle Paul. It is greatly to be regretted, however, that the author is not consistently true to the infallibility and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. For example, on p. 368-9 in discussing the apparent discrepancy between Matt. 27:5-8 and Acts 1:18,19 with respect to how "the field of blood" got its name, he says: "There can be no hesitation in accepting the vivid and detailed description which Matthew gives of this incident. But, if so, the account given in Acts cannot be accepted as having any claim to trustworthiness in any point of discrepancy", adding that Luke's account in Acts has been distorted by oriental popular tradition, which "acts with great rapidity, transforming the memory of the past within the lapse of a few years; and probably those who know the East best will find least difficulty in believing that the story which Luke here gives might have been told him, when the Field of Blood was pointed out to him at Jerusalem in 57 A. D." Again, on page 370 the author says: "The episode of Ananias and Sapphira in V 1 f. excites reasonable suspicion. That Ananias should be carried forth and buried unknown to his family, unmourned by his kindred and friends, is not merely contrary to right conduct, but violates the deepest feelings of oriental life. That a man should be properly lamented and wept for by his

family is and has always been a sacred right, which even crime does not forfeit. But the desire to bring into strong relief the unselfishness of the primitive Church has worked itself out in a moral apologue, which has found here an entrance alongside of real history." Needless to say, such opinions cannot be reconciled with the orthodox doctrine of the infallibility and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.

This book would be a very worth-while acquisition for any Christian who wants something more satisfying than a mere running commentary on the surface of things in the Bible, and who can read with discrimination, weighing the author's statements in the balances of the full inspiration and authority of the sacred text of the Bible.—J. G. Vos

MIRACLES OF SCIENCE, by Arthur I Brown. Fundamental Truth Publishers, Findlay, Ohio. 1945, pp. 287, \$2.00.

This book is really misnamed. It does not deal with miracles, and it does not deal with science. It should have been called "Wonders of Nature". The dust jacket informs us that the contents of the book have been given in lecture form over various radio stations, including the Moody Bible Institute station WMBI at Chicago. The author takes up many interesting and remarkable facts concerning God's works in the realm of nature, from the honey bee to the hippopotamus, from "the most mysterious substance in the universe" (protoplasm) to "the strange job of laying eggs". These interesting studies are intended to show "the indisputable, scientific fact of a personal, omnipotent Creator-God." At every point the author rightly see a personal, almighty God back of the phenomena of nature. The folly of atheism is clearly pointed out. There is also an oft-repeated, earnest appeal to the reader to come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

The use of the word "miracles" in the title is unfortunate, especially in an age when many are saying that the miracles of the Bible were not supernatural but somehow products of the laws and forces of nature operating in the universe. The loose use of the term "miracle" to describe any wonderful fact or remarkable event or narrow escape from disaster, so common today, should be avoided, and the term should be limited to miracles in the strict and proper sense. The marvellous phenomena of nature which reveal God's wisdom and power are not miracles, and if they are called miracles, then how can we speak of the Biblical miracles as events distinguished from other events by their SUPERNATURAL character?

On page 4 the author says: "What method He used in Creation is not disclosed, but now, with the discovery of atomic energy and the way to

control it, it is easier to understand how God could, and probably did, make use of this tremendous power." The reviewer considers this a very unwise statement, for it seems to suggest that in creating the universe God used atomic energy as a "method", as if God in His work of creation availed Himself of previously existing forces. Of course God created the atomic energy which now exists IN the universe, and God ordained the laws of its operation, but it is misleading to say that God "probably did make use of this tremendous power." The Bible teaches that God created the universe OF NOTHING, BY HIS MERE WORD (Heb. 11:3).

A book of this type is of value to Christians, for giving them an insight into the great wisdom of their God disclosed in the realm of nature. It may also be used by the Holy Spirit to help remove some of the doubts and difficulties of non-Christians, and lead them to Christ. It is however too much to expect that a study of the wonders of nature alone can show "the indisputable, scientific fact of a personal, omnipotent Creator-God". Nature is finite, and inferences drawn entirely from what is finite cannot demonstrate the existence of One who is not finite, the Infinite God.

The author is thoroughly loyal to the full inspiration and authority of the Bible, and consistently rejects the theory of evolution as an explanation of the origin and diversity of living species.—J. G. Vos

THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL: A COMMENTARY, by Edward J. Young. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 225 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1949, pp. 330, \$4.50.

Anyone who has long wished in vain for an exposition of the book of Daniel that is orthodox, scholarly, not too technical, and free from all kinds of fanaticism and hobby-riding, will rejoice at the publication of this book as one that findeth great spoil. Here is a book by a thoroughly competent, soundly orthodox Bible-believing scholar that provides a sane, sensible, edifying exposition of Daniel's prophecy in a form that the ordinary Christian of average education can use with profit. Such a book has been a crying need for years. There have been plenty of studies of Daniel, to be sure, but they have not been calculated to meet the Bible-believing lay Christian's need. There have been three types: (a) those written from the "higher critica!" point of view, denying that Daniel wrote the prophecy and of course denying its divine inspiration and authority; (b) those written from the premillennial and dispensational viewpoint, usually containing many fantastic and even absurd interpretations; (c) soundly orthodox commentaries which were too technical and difficult for the ordinary Christian to use to advantage. Popular studies of Daniel have been almost en-

tirely limited to the dispensational type, with the result that Christians who reject the modern dispensational system have often been charged with inability to interpret the book of Daniel at all. This reproach need no longer exist, for Dr. Young's book, which has the great merit of being scholarly and yet clear and simple, has not only provided a very satisfactory and plausible non-dispensational exposition of the book, but has also pointed out the inconsequence and untenability of the principal dispensational interpretations.

In the preface, Dr. Young states: "The present work is designed to serve the needs not only of the minister and trained Bible student, but also of the average educated reader of Holy Scripture. It aims above all to present a clear and positive exposition of the prophecy. In order to accomplish such an end it has been necessary to refute two common interpretations." The first of these interpretations requiring refutation is the "higher critical" view alluded to above. Dr. Young states that "it is a position which is in basic error", even though it "does indeed seem to hold the field today". He points out that if the "critical" view is true, then the book of Daniel is simply a forgery, not a revelation from God. The other interpretation to be refuted is the dispensational one, which refers the fulfilment of many of the prophecies of the book to "an alleged period of seven years which is supposed to follow the second advent of the Lord." Dr. Young recognizes that those who hold this latter interpretation "are sincere and zealous Christians", and while very keenly criticizing their interpretations, he does so in a very kindly and winsome spirit, in the hope that they "will at least give serious consideration to the interpretation" advanced in his commentary.

The book consists of an Introduction, an Outline Analysis of the Book of Daniel, twelve chapters of exposition, eight appendices, a Bibliography, General Index, and Index of Scripture References. It is well printed and bound and presents an attractive appearance, and the price is moderate for a book of this type. On page 10 the heading "APPENDICES" should appear beneath instead of above the words "The conclusion of the Prophecy".

It is the reviewer's judgment that Dr. Young has answered both the higher critics and the dispensational interpreters soundly. The critics, of course, will not be convinced, because their negative attitude proceeds from their philosophy, according to which real divine revelation involving predictive prophecy is regarded as inherently impossible. Dispensational Christians who ponder this book may come to the conclusion that the dispensational scheme is untenable.

It would require too much space to take up Dr. Young's exposition in any detail. The review-

er would mention, however, his very able and satisfying treatment of the much-debated prophecy of the "seventy weeks" or "seventy sevens" (Dan. 9:24-27). This passage is regarded by many as one of the principal supports of the dispensational scheme. Dr. Young devotes no less than thirty pages to the study of these four verses. He first gives a survey of past interpretations of the passage. Following this he takes the verses up and studies them minutely, frankly facing every problem and difficulty. After thorough examination, he rejects the view that the seventieth "week" is still future, and the popular dispensational view that "the prince that shall come" mentioned in verse 26 means a prince "of a future, revived Roman empire". In place of these interpretations, Dr. Young advocates and ably defends the traditional Messianic interpretation of the verses, according to which the seventieth "week" follows without a break upon the sixty-ninth "week", the prophecy is fulfilled in the public ministry and vicarious death of Jesus Christ, and "the prince that shall come" is Titus who destroyed Jerusalem in A. D. 70. The author presents a very strong, convincing case for this interpretation, and it seems to this reviewer that the champions of the dispensational view will find it impossible to refute his arguments.

This exposition is not only intellectually satisfying; it is also (in the best sense) devotional and eminently practical. It is calculated to lead the careful student to a reverent gratitude to God for the wonders of His great plan as they are revealed in the book of Daniel. It is a pleasure to commend this volume without reservation to the readers of "Blue Banner Faith and Life".—J. G. Vos

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Union Co., Pa. 1949, pp. 275, \$2.75.

This is the fourth edition of a work first published in 1918. That such repeated publication has been called for itself shows that this is a book of exceptional value, especially since, as the publisher points out in a foreword, "its teaching runs directly counter to that which is being promulgated on every hand today".

This book presents Calvinism without apology, something which is very much needed at the present day. It deals with the real heart and constitutive principle of the Reformed theology, the sovereignty of God. We live in a day when the sovereignty of God is denied, expressly or by implication, almost on every hand. It is denied by modernism, which is preaching a finite God, a God who is not really GOD but only an aspect of a pantheistically-conceived universe. It is denied by the most common type of "Fundamentalism", namely the Arminian system which limits God's

sovereignty in the interest of the freedom and autonomy of man. But truth crushed to earth will rise again, and in spite of all present indications, Calvinism is destined to be "the wave of the future"—it will be vindicated by time and eternity.

Following an Introduction, the present volume presents twelve chapters on the sovereignty of God. Chapter 1 defines the subject. The following chapters deal with the sovereignty of God in creation, in administration, in salvation, in reprobation, in operation, in relation to the human will, in relation to human moral responsibility, in relation to prayer; our attitude toward God's sovereignty; difficulties and objections; the value of the doctrine. This is followed by appendices dealing with "The Will of God", "The Case of Adam", "The Meaning of 'Kosmos' in John 3:16", and the difficulty of 1 John 2:2. There is no general index, but the principal Scripture texts treated are listed in Biblical order at the back of the book, with references to page numbers in the volume.

The teaching of this book is orthodox, the style simple and pointed, not "dry as dust" (as some people seem to think all theology must be) but interesting and illuminated, with many apt helpful illustrations. The following may be cited as a sample:

"The superficial work of many of the professional evangelists of the last fifty years is largely responsible for the erroneous views now current upon the BONDAGE of the natural man, encouraged by the laziness of those in the pew in their failure to 'PROVE all things' (1 Thess. 5:21). The average evangelical pulpit conveys the impression that it lies wholly in the power of the sinner whether or not he shall be saved. It is said that 'God has done His part, now man must do his.' Alas, what CAN a lifeless man do, and man by nature is 'DEAD in trespasses and sins' (Eph. 2:1)! If this were really believed there would be more dependence upon the Holy Spirit to come in with His miracle-working power and less confidence in OUR attempts to 'win men for Christ'.

"When addressing the unsaved, preachers often draw an analogy between God's sending of the Gospel to the sinner, and a sick man in bed with some healing medicine on a table by his side: all he needs to do is to reach forth his hand and take it. But in order for this illustration to be in any wise true to the picture which Scripture gives us of the fallen and depraved sinner, the sick man in bed must be described as one who is blind (Eph. 4:18) so that he cannot see the medicine, his hand paralyzed (Rom. 5:6) so that he is unable to reach forth for it, and his heart not only devoid of all confidence in the medicine but filled with hatred against the physician himself (John 15:18). O what superficial views of man's desperate plight are now entertained! Christ

came not to help those who are willing to help themselves, but to do for His people what they were incapable of doing for themselves: 'To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house' (Isa. 42:7)" (p. 149, in the chapter on "God's Sovereignty and the Human Will").

The author is scrupulously careful to show that his teaching is Scriptural. Citations of Scripture are numerous, and at every point it is shown that the Reformed doctrine is based on human opinion but on the Word of God. Difficulties and objections are carefully considered and answered, not, of course, with the idea of proving the doctrine by human reason, but to show that it is the foundation of consistent Biblical Christianity. In chapter twelve the value and practical benefits of the doctrine are well set forth: 1. "It deepens our veneration of the divine character." 2. "It is the solid foundation of all true religion." 3. "It repudiates the heresy of salvation by works." 4. "It is deeply humbling to the creature." 5. "It affords a sense of absolute security." 6. "It supplies comfort in sorrow." 7. "It begets a spirit of sweet resignation." 8. "It evokes a song of praise." 9. "It guarantees the final triumph of good over evil." 10. "It provides a resting-place for the heart."

When the generality of Christians in our country again read books of this type, instead of the frothy and superficial "popular" type of religious and devotional literature which abounds on almost every hand today, the spiritual revival for which we long and pray will have arrived.—J. G. Vos

THE NEW SCHAFF-HERZOG ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE, Vol. I. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1949, pp. 500, \$4.50.

This is Vol. I of a 15 volume set. Vols. I-XIII are to be reprints of a work published in 1907, while XIV and XV will contain supplementary material edited by Dr. L. A. Loetscher. The appearance is handsome, and the printing and binding are excellent.

This work presents a wealth of information and discussion. Those qualified to use it will find it very helpful. It is, however, not wholly reliable, and does not present a consistently orthodox point of view. The work of over 600 scholars of widely varying views, including such orthodox scholars as B. B. Warfield and Theodor Zahn and such radical modernists as Adolf Harnack and Wilhelm Bousset, the work presents an assortment of incompatible viewpoints.

In examining Vol. I the reviewer repeatedly stumbled upon unsound statements. For example, in the article on "Adam", the "higher-critical" documentary theory of Genesis is assumed to be valid (p.35) and the evolutionary theory

of man's origin is spoken of quite favorably (p.34); in the article on "Anselm", the unique truth of the satisfaction doctrine of the atonement is toned down by a misleading statement that even "moral influence" views of the atonement regard it as a "satisfaction" (p.190), a statement incompatible with Dr. Warfield's excellent article on "Atonement" (pp.349-356); in the article on "Antinomianism" the term "supralapsarian" is repeatedly equated with "hyper-Calvinistic" (pp.197,198). and the term is stated to mean "a type of thought making God responsible for evil . . ." (p.198) — a blunder which betrays a complete misunderstanding of the meaning of the term "supralapsarian". All Calvinists, whether supralapsarian or infralapsarian, believe that God has foreordained all that comes to pass, including evil; no Calvinist, whether supralapsarian or infralapsarian, believes that God is responsible for evil. — J. G. Vos

Notes on Shorter Books and Tracts

The following short books, booklets and tracts are recommended to the readers of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" as sound and helpful publications. All are paper covered, and all except the last two are published by Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Union Co., Pa.

AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST ARMINIANISM, by Christopher Ness. 1946, pp. 110, 75 cents, 2 for \$1.25. This is a reprint of an old classic, first published in London, England in 1700. Clear and to the point.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH, by Arthur W. Pink, Pp. 40, 30 cents. Expounds and defends the orthodox Reformed view of the Christian Sabbath, showing the error of those who hold that the Sabbath has been abrogated.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD: A SOLEMN AND BLESSED CONTEMPLATION OF SOME OF THE WONDROUS AND LOVELY PERFECTIONS OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER, by Arthur W. Pink. 84 pages, 35 cents. Deals with God's solitariness, decrees, knowledge, foreknowledge, supremacy, sovereignty, immutability, holiness, power, faithfulness, goodness, patience, grace, mercy, love and wrath; and with the contemplation of God.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, by Arthur W. Pink. 51 pages, 30 cents. An exposition of the Scriptural teachings on the final destiny of the lost, and a refutation of the heresies of Annihilationism and Universalism.

THE LAW AND THE SAINT, by Arthur W. Pink. 48 pages, 30 cents. Sets forth the accepted Reformed doctrine of the relation of the Christian

to the law of God, and refutes the error of Antinomianism.

THE GODHOOD OF GOD, by Arthur W. Pink. 36 pages, 12 cents. A brief but excellent and pointed tract on the absolute self-existence and self-determination of the God of the Bible.

THE CHRISTIAN IN ROMANS 7, by Arthur W. Pink. Pocket size, 28 pages, 5 cents per copy, 50 cents per dozen. A good argument against perfectionist interpretations which hold that Paul in Romans 7 sets forth something other than the experience of a spiritual Christian. Shows the absurdity of speaking about "getting out of Romans 7 into Romans 8."

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, by Arthur W. Pink. 25 pages, 15 cents. What Christian liberty involves, from what the Christian has been set free, and the distinction between true and false freedom.

REGENERATION OR THE NEW BIRTH, by Arthur W. Pink. 36 pages, 30 cents. Discusses the necessity, nature and effects of the New Birth or Regeneration. It clearly points out that regeneration is the cause, not the effect, of a person's coming to Christ for salvation. The teaching of trichotomy, or the three-fold division of the human personality into body, soul and spirit, which appears on pages 16 and 17, is contrary to the doctrine of man found in the Westminster Standards and held by most orthodox Reformed theologians. However the general teaching of this little book is excellent.

THE NEW BIRTH, by Arthur W. Pink. Pocket size, 32 pages, 15 cents. A shorter tract on the same subject as the preceding, by the same author. Aply presents and defends the truth that the new birth is solely the work of God, not a work of man nor a work of God and man jointly.

THE REFORMED FAITH IN THE MODERN WORLD, by Floyd E. Hamilton. Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 728 Schaff Bldg., 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Pa. 30 pages, 5 cents. A brief, clear, pointed setting forth of the famous "Five Points" which distinguish Calvinism from Arminianism.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD: A MESSAGE TO THE WORLD TODAY, by John Murray. Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 728 Schaff Bldg., 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Pa. 32 pages, 10 cents. Deals with the presuppositions of God's sovereignty, the nature of God's sovereignty, God's sovereignty in the salvation of men, and God's sovereignty in human responsibility.

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.

THE SEVEN SAYINGS OF THE SAVIOUR ON THE CROSS, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Union Co., Pa. 1947, pp. 134, \$1.75.

EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Her-

endeen, Swengel, Union Co., Pa. 1945, 4 volumes, total pages 1221. \$2.75 per vol.; \$10.50 per set.

THE MILLENNIUM: WHAT IT IS NOT AND WHAT IT IS, by George B. Fletcher. Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Union Co., Pa. 1947, pp. 87, paper cover, 75 cents, 2 for \$1.25.

NOTES ON THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD, by R. C. Trench (Popular Edition). Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1949, pp. 298, \$2.50.

THE CHILD'S STORY BIBLE, by Catherine F. Vos (New restyled edition). Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1949, pp. 715, \$3.95.

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:

In "Blue Banner Faith and Life" for October-December 1949, page 165 (Lesson 7: "The Covenant of Grace and the Salvation of the Christian"), why are justification and adoption listed on the subjective side of salvation? Are we not to regard these as acts of God, external to ourselves, while being, at the same time, in a close relation to the subjective work of salvation?

Answer:

Our correspondent is undoubtedly correct; his point is well taken, and we wish to express thanks to him for calling attention to this theological error which was inadvertently permitted to appear in the lessons on "The Covenant of Grace".

In question 4 on page 165 of our last issue, the writer was trying to make clear the distinction between what God has done **FOR** the elect by the work of Christ "in the days of His flesh" — His life of perfect righteousness and His substitutionary death on the cross — and what God does **IN** the elect here and now, during their lifetime — such as convincing them of their sin, working in them repentance and faith, or what is spoken of as "effectual calling". It was pointed out that both what was done long ago **FOR** the elect and what is done now **IN** the elect are wrought by God, both were purchased by Christ for the elect and both are guaranteed to the elect in the Covenant of Grace. This was pointed out to warn against the common error that holds that while

the blood and righteousness of Christ were provided by God, repentance and faith are the work of man's free will apart from God.

The distinction between the **HISTORICAL** and **PRESENT** elements of salvation is a true and valid one, and so is the distinction between the **OBJECTIVE** and **SUBJECTIVE** elements of salvation. But obviously these two distinctions do not precisely coincide. The former is a distinction of time, the latter is a distinction between what is external to the elect and what is internal. Our correspondent is right in saying that justification and adoption are acts of God, external to ourselves, while being, at the same time, in a close relation to the subjective work of salvation (effectual calling). — J. G. V.

Question:

What should we think of the following argument which appeared recently in a religious periodical: "To use the argument that God has not commanded us to use them (musical instruments in worship) is beside the point. We use radios, refrigerators, electric lights, etc., and these are not mentioned in the Bible. If Christian instruments are dedicated to the Lord (as they would be in a church) and the musicians also dedicate their talents to Him, I see no reason why such things can't be used to His glory."

Answer:

The argument presented is a fallacy because it overlooks the distinction between life in general and religious worship. The Puritan principle of purity of worship maintains that **EVERY ELE-**

MENT OF DIVINE WORSHIP MUST BE APPOINTED BY GOD IN SCRIPTURE. It does not hold that every element of ordinary life must be appointed by God in Scripture. It is proper to use a refrigerator in our home, to keep our food fresh, but who ever heard of using a refrigerator in divine worship? As for radios and electric lights, radio equipment may be used to broadcast a church service, and electric lights to illuminate the building, but neither of these are ELEMENTS of worship; they are only circumstances, therefore no special divine appointment is needed, any more than we need a text of Scripture to determine the hour for a church service, or the length of time for the service to last.

The argument that musical instruments must be proper in divine worship if they are dedicated to the Lord is a dangerous one, for it proves too much. The holy water, incense and candles in a Roman Catholic Church are all dedicated to the Lord; does that make them proper to use? The real question is whether a thing is in accordance with God's will or not. And our knowledge of God's will cannot be spun out of our own brain; we must go to God's Word to discover what is God's will. We reject instrumental music in divine worship because God has not appointed it for New Testament worship. Under the Old Testament it was confined to the typical Temple service, and it passed away when the veil was rent in two at the time our Saviour was crucified — along with the animal sacrifices and other ceremonial ordinances of the Old Testament. —J.G.V.

Question:

Is it right for Christians to call the Lord's Day "Sabbath"? The Jewish implications connected with the term "Sabbath" have brought the name into disfavor with many Christians. Dr. John R. Rice writes: "Many preachers make a mistake by calling Sunday a sabbath and Sunday school a sabbath school. Sunday is not the sabbath. Sunday is the Lord's Day, an entirely different day, given for a different purpose and with a different meaning" ("Sword of the Lord", April 4, 1941).

Answer:

There need be no peculiarly "Jewish" associations attached to the term "Sabbath". According to the Bible, the Sabbath originated at the creation of the world (Gen. 2:1-3), ages before God called Abraham, ages before there existed any people called "Jews". In Exodus, we find the Children of Israel required to observe the Sabbath BEFORE the giving of the ceremonial law,

and even before the giving of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 16:23-29). When the Ten Commandments were given, the command was to REMEMBER the Sabbath Day to keep it holy — if they were to remember it, then it must have existed before that time.

Christ by His atonement fulfilled and abrogated the ceremonial law. The veil of the Temple was rent in twain signifying that the ceremonial law had served its purpose and was no longer in force. But this did not abolish the Sabbath as instituted at the Creation. Manifestly, what the ceremonial law did not originate, the abolition of the ceremonial law could not repeal. If the institution of the Sabbath existed before the giving of the law of Moses, it must also continue after the abrogation of that ceremonial system. The abrogation of the ceremonial law by Christ's atonement cannot abolish the creation ordinance of the Sabbath any more than it can abolish the creation ordinance of marriage.

There is a world of meaning and permanent value in the term "Sabbath", as shown by the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the meaning of the Sabbath is shown to be interwoven with the Biblical philosophy of history. Hebrews 4:4-10 explains the spiritual meaning of the Sabbath. First there was the Sabbath instituted by God at the Creation (verse 4). This was not merely for practical benefit, but also had a typical significance — it pointed forward to a spiritual rest for the people of God. Next, the writer shows that the "rest" which the people of Israel enjoyed after entering the land of Canaan cannot be the fulfilment of the typical meaning of the Creation Sabbath, because long after Joshua's time, God spoke through David of a STILL FUTURE day of rest (verses 5-8). Therefore, the writer argues, there remaineth a rest to the people of God (verse 9), which is the eternal rest of the people of God, which we must give diligence to enter upon (verses 10,11). Thus the Creation Sabbath is rich with eternal import. Just as God worked six days and rested one day, so the Christian's life is a period of work and struggle, followed by an eternity of rest; and so the history of the world is an age-long history of labor and strife, followed by an eternity of peace and rest.

Anything which is so rich in truly Christian and Biblical meaning should not be abandoned to the Jews and Seventh Day Adventists. We should not try to avoid the use of the term "Sabbath", lest we begin to lose the thing the term stands for. To make our meaning clear, it may be preferable sometimes to say "the Lord's Day"

or to add the word "Christian" to "Sabbath". Dr. John R. Rice's views on the Sabbath and the Lord's Day are very popular at the present time, but we believe they are NOT Biblical, and certainly they are not in accord with the historic creeds and confessions of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. — J.G.V.

Question:

Does the expression "sons of God" in Job 1:6 and 2:1 refer to angels or to men? In view of the fact that believers are frequently spoken of in other passages as "sons" or "children" of God, and are also referred to as "presenting themselves before God", or "coming before God" in worship, could not these passages refer to assemblies of men for worship rather than, as commonly believed, of celestial beings? Does not the expression, "the day when the sons of God came. . ." (A.R.V.) suggest a definite, regular day of worship, which would not seem likely in heaven?

Answer:

The interpretation suggested by our correspondent would perhaps be quite plausible, except for the difficulty created by the fact that in each of the verses cited (Job 1:6; 2:1) SATAN is stated to have presented himself before the Lord "among them". This would seem to imply that the scene is a celestial rather than a terrestrial one. The language used is, of course, rather mysterious. Our curiosity would like to know more about the place and circumstances of these meetings, how Satan could come among the sons of God, etc. But all this is left untold. We are told only what is strictly necessary for the purpose of the narrative of the book of Job. The book as a whole deals with the problem of human suffering, and Job is the sufferer. In 1:6-12 and 2:1-6 we are taken behind the scenes, as it were, and given an insight into the reason for Job's sufferings. We must remember that Job himself did not have this information during the time while his sufferings were going on. To him, the suffering was a mystery and therefore more difficult to bear. But to the reader of the book, who has been acquainted with the dialogues between Satan and God, it presents a different aspect. Since Job's sufferings obviously took place in the ordinary world of time and space, and the dialogues between God and Satan took place "behind the scenes", it would seem most probable that the latter took place in the spiritual

realm which is above the ordinary world of time and space. More than this we can hardly venture to say. Heaven, or the spiritual realm where God, the angels and the perfected saints dwell in glory, is on a different plane of reality from this world of time and space in which we are now living, therefore a question as to "where" heaven is, is really meaningless. The Bible certainly teaches that heaven is A PLACE (John 14:1-6), but that does not mean that it is a place in the universe of time, space and nature in which we are living; it is no doubt on a higher level of reality and cannot be located in terms of geography or astronomy. — J.G.V.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The agent for "Blue Banner Faith and Life" for Britain and Ireland is the Rev. Adam Loughridge, B.A., Londonderry Villa, 54 Bangor Road, Newtownards, Northern Ireland. The 1950 subscription rate for Britain and Ireland is 7 shillings and 6 pence. All subscriptions for Britain and Ireland should be sent to the Rev. Mr. Loughridge.

The 1946 issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" are no longer available. A number of requests have been received for copies of Lessons 1 to 52 of the series on the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly. These are the lessons that were published in the 1946 issues of the magazine. In response to the demand for these lessons, they have been issued in mimeographed form by Rev. and Mrs. Philip W. Martin, and are now available at \$1 per set, or 75 cents per set in lots of three or more sets to be mailed in one parcel. Those who wish these mimeographed lessons should send their orders to Rev. J. C. Vos, Route 1, Clay Center, Kansas. Hearty thanks are hereby expressed to Mr. and Mrs. Martin for the labor they have devoted to cutting the stencils and mimeographing the lessons. — Ed.

CORRECTION

Please note the following correction of a typographical error in the October-December 1949 issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life":

On page 156, column 1, in the first line of Question 5, the word "theory" should be changed to "story", so as to read "Is the story of the Garden of Eden", etc. It is suggested that readers make this correction 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.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

Samuel Rutherford was born about 1600 and died in 1661. After studying theology he was installed as pastor of the church of Anwoth in Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland, in 1627, and it soon became clear that Rutherford was destined to be a leader in the Church of Scotland. In 1636 he published, in Holland, a treatise against the errors of Arminianism. This championship of Calvinism soon got Rutherford in trouble with the bishop, Thomas Sydserf (for at that time the government of the Church of Scotland was partly episcopal). Charges were filed against Rutherford before the High Commission Court; he was deposed from his pastoral charge at Anwoth, and sentenced to banishment in the northern city of Aberdeen. This forced separation from his beloved congregation of Anwoth was a great affliction to Rutherford, but he bore it patiently. He was confined in Aberdeen for about a year and a half, until February 1638.

Rutherford was one of those present at the signing of the National Covenant of Scotland in Edinburgh in 1638. By the action of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which met the same year in Glasgow, he was restored to his pastoral office at Anwoth. Soon Rutherford's reputation as a scholar and theologian became more widely known. In 1639 he was made professor of divinity at St. Andrews. Later, in 1643, he was chosen as one of the eight commissioners from the Church of Scotland to the Westminster Assembly of Divines in England, where he attended the Assembly's sessions day after day for over three years. With the Scottish minister

George Gillespie, Rutherford was one of those who had great influence on the decisions and formulations of the Westminster Assembly.

Perhaps Rutherford's most famous book was "Lex Rex, a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People" (1644), a plea for constitutional government, against the idea that the king has arbitrary power above the law. Rutherford is best known today, however, by his "Letters", most of which were written during his banishment in Aberdeen, and which have become one of the devotional classics of Christendom. Their true spirituality, earnestness, and portrayal of the preciousness of Christ, our duty to forsake all for His sake, and the glorious future that awaits His people, make them one of the books that will never grow old.

After the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, his book "Lex Rex" was publicly burnt by order of the government. Following this Rutherford was deposed from all his offices, and summoned to appear before the parliament of Scotland to answer to a charge of treason. When this summons was issued he was, however, already a sick man, and before he could be tried for treason by earthly rulers he was summoned by the King of kings and left this earth for the realm of glory and endless light. His summons to appear on the charge of treason forms the theme of the poem "The Deathbed of Rutherford" which appears on the inside front cover of this issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — J.G.V.

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All prices postpaid. No extra charge for foreign postage. The supply of 1946 issues is exhausted, but the lessons on the Larger Catechism (1-52) originally published in 1946 are available in mimeographed form as listed above.

Contributions gratefully received. As funds are available, "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is being sent free of charge to missionaries, pastors, evangelists and other suitable persons on the foreign mission fields of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

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J. G. VOS, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Route 1

Clay Center, Kansas, U.S.A.



BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 5

APRIL-JUNE, 1950

NUMBER 2

“AS CHRIST WOULD HAVE US TO BE CERTAINLY PERSUADED THAT THERE SHALL BE A DAY OF JUDGMENT, BOTH TO DETER ALL MEN FROM SIN, AND FOR THE GREATER CONSOLATION OF THE GODLY IN THEIR ADVERSITY; SO WILL HE HAVE THAT DAY UNKNOWN TO MEN, THAT THEY MAY SHAKE OFF ALL CARNAL SECURITY, AND BE ALWAYS WATCHFUL, BECAUSE THEY KNOW NOT AT WHAT HOUR THE LORD WILL COME; AND MAY BE EVER PREPARED TO SAY, COME, LORD JESUS, COME QUICKLY, AMEN.”

THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH, XXXIII.3

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J. G. VOS, Editor and Publisher

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

PATRICK HAMILTON

By Harriet Stuart Menteth

The King is away to St. Dothess' shrine;
On a pilgrimage he's gone;
He hath left the Beatons place and power,
And they'll burn young Hamilton!

Oh! young Hamilton, from beyond the sea
He hath strange new doctrines brought;
And our Father the Pope says: Such heretics
Are easier burned than taught!

He hath preached once — he hath preached twice,
And the people were fain to hear;
For, as rain on the new-mown grass, his voice
Comes down on the charmed ear!

And he tells us not, as our begging friars,
Of indulgence the price of gold;
But he speaks of a pardon, as sunlight free,
That can neither be bought nor sold.

And he tells us not of our Lady's grace,
By aves and penance won;
But he points the way to the Father's heart
Through the shed blood of the Son.

No crucifix in his hand he waves;
Nor relic nor chaplet wears;
And he spends no worship on dead men's bones,
No faith upon dead men's prayers.

All intercessors 'twixt earth and heaven,
Save Jesus — God's only One —
He would scatter, as marsh-raised mists are driven
From the path of the glorious sun.

And ever he reads in the Book of God,
As his very breath it were;
And, oh! if his doctrine be heresy,
'Tis strange he would find it there!

And ever some burdened souls and poor,
Avouch that his words are sooth.
And, oh! if his doctrine be heresy,
Dear Lord! that it were but truth!

They have lured him on to St. Andrews' town,
With their cunning words and fair;
In the dead of night, when good men sleep,
They have seized and bound him there.

James Beaton he sits on his throne of state,
And David he sits beside:
Was never a bloodier Prelate yet
Trained on by a bloodier guide!

And knights, and nobles, are all around—
This world with its braverie;
It pranked not thus in the path of Him
Whose throne was the cursed tree.

And young Hamilton stands in his light of youth,
With his calm and holy brow;
And it seems as the Father's name of love
Were beaming from it now!

But once he spake, as his doom they signed,
When Cassilis' young Earl drew near:
"God charge not my blood on thy soul, poor child,
And forgive who brought thee here!"

They have hasted down by the College wall,
With fagots they pile the sod;
But there are sore hearts for the blood of kings,
Sore hearts for the truth of God.

And many are gazing in silent awe,
With thoughts that they may not speak;
As men who awaken to feel a chain,
Erewhile they must die or break!

The friars are mustered, white, grey, and brown,
A motley, exulting band;
But all eyes are turned on one Black Friar,
Who strides at the martyr's hand.

"Convert! Convert!" cried the Black Friar,
"And sue for our Lady's grace!"
But ever the light of that holy brow
Chased the life-blood from his face!

Yet he set as a stone his cold grey eye,
And he fixed his cold white face;
And louder he clamored, "Convert! Convert!
And sue for our Lady's grace!"

One moment that death procession paused,
For a cry rose hoarse and wild,
As an old man burst through the serried crowd,
And wept like an orphaned child!

Full gently his hand did the martyr lay
On that old man's hoary brow:
"Good friend, thou didst never forsake me yet,
And thou hast not failed me now!"

"These weeds in the fire will not profit me;
But thee they may profit still;
And weep not so sore for thy master's doom—
He but bears his Master's will!

(Continued on back cover)

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 5

APRIL-JUNE, 1950

NUMBER 2

Sketches From Our History Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER V

REFORMERS BEFORE THE REFORMATION

1. Wycliffe, the Morning Star of the Reformation

John Wycliffe, called "the Morning Star of the Reformation", was an Englishman who lived A.D. 1320-1384. His name is spelled in various ways; in this article we shall use the form "Wycliffe" which is adopted by the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Wycliffe first became prominent as a teacher in Oxford University, where his lectures drew large classes of appreciative students. Soon he came to be regarded as the leading theologian of the university. In 1372 he received the degree of Doctor in Divinity, which in those days was not a merely honorary title but a recognition of achievement in the field of theological scholarship. In 1374 Wycliffe was appointed by the king of England as one of the royal commissioners to negotiate the settlement of a dispute with the pope concerning the appointment of Church officers in England. In the same year he was appointed rector or pastor of the Church of Lutterworth, which office he held until his death in 1384.

For about seventy years the seat of the papacy had been, not in Rome, but at Avignon in southern France. The French popes, having lost much of the revenue which the papacy had enjoyed at Rome, were eager to collect money, in the form of various taxes, fees and levies of tribute, from the countries of Latin Christendom. There had often been dissatisfaction in England with the corruptions of the papacy and the popes' attempts to interfere in England's national affairs. The demand of pope Gregory XI on the English Crown for the payment of tribute of a thousand marks per year, including back payments for several years, aroused indignation in England. The king, nobles and people of England, as well as some English churchmen, resented the papal demand for money as a grasping and unjustified raid on the finances of the nation. It was felt that the French popes were playing into the hands of the kings of France, to the detriment of the interests of England.

Through the centuries people with pious intentions had been leaving real estate to the Church by bequest, the land so bequeathed becoming free of liability to render taxes and feudal dues to the nation. This practice came to be called "mortmain" ("the dead hand"), because the land was irrevocably deeded to the Church, and remained in the possession of the Church century after century, long after the people who bequeathed the land were dead. Since the Church itself never died, the result was that it came to hold more and more of the land of England. As each generation passed, more land came into the possession of the Church, and ceased to pay taxes to the government, but the Church was never willing to relinquish its title to any of this property. The situation finally became so desperate that the English Parliament, at various times, passed laws called "Statutes of Mortmain", making it unlawful to bequeath land to the Church without a special license granted by the king. These laws were never wholly effective, however, and in the time of Wycliffe it was felt by many that something radical would have to be done to bring relief.

The leader of the anti-papal party in England was John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. Desiring to confiscate the rich lands and endowments of the Church in England for the benefit of the English nobility and government, John of Gaunt felt that Wycliffe would be helpful to him in this cause. So there came about a strange alliance between two men who had little in common except that both wished to deprive the Church of most of its wealth for the benefit of the nation. John of Gaunt was able to protect Wycliffe from punishment as a heretic, and Wycliffe provided the ideological weapons which John of Gaunt's party needed for their struggle against the papal claims. Thus Wycliffe became the intellectual leader of the anti-papal party in England.

Wycliffe lectured to his students at Oxford, and also wrote, on the subject "Of Civil Lordship". He taught that all civil lordship or authority is a trust received from God, and that "domin-

ion is founded in grace", by which he meant that God, the great Sovereign of the universe, commits lordship or authority to men, not as an absolute grant, but as a trust conditioned upon obedient and faithful service. Wycliffe taught that if the person to whom authority is delegated by God proves unfaithful to his trust, he forfeits his right to it, and may be deprived of it by a competent authority. The application of this doctrine was, that if the clergy of England were found to be unfaithful to their trust, they could properly be deprived of their temporal possessions, such as the Church's vast lands and endowments, by a competent authority. The question then arose, of course, as to what authority would be competent to take such action. Wycliffe made it clear that he meant that the civil rulers of the nation were the competent authority, because to civil rulers God has committed jurisdiction in temporal matters, just as He has entrusted spiritual matters to the Church. This teaching of Wycliffe pleased John of Gaunt and the other nobles who were opposed to the demands of the papacy and to the vast political and economic power wielded by the Church in England. The religious orders which held extensive properties, however, were strongly opposed to Wycliffe's teachings, and so were the pope and the higher clergy (bishops and archbishops) of the English Church.

Wycliffe did not hesitate to attack the papacy in the most outspoken language. In one of his tracts he called the pope "the anti-Christ, the proud and wordly priest of Rome, most cursed of clippers and cut-purses". Wycliffe added that if the realm of England had a large hill of solid gold, it would soon all be spent "by this proud and worldly priest-collector", and that "The pope should leave his authority to worldly lords, and speedily advise his clergy to do the same. I take it, as a matter of faith, that no man should follow the pope, nor even any of the saints in heaven, except as they follow Christ." Wycliffe also wrote that the pope "has no more power of binding and loosing than any priest, and that the temporal lords may seize the possessions of the clergy if pressed by necessity." Thus Wycliffe aided the duke of Lancaster's movement to confiscate the Church's property.

The Roman Catholic hierarchy tried hard to silence and break Wycliffe. In 1377 he was summoned to appear before William Courtenay, the bishop of London, to answer for his published opinions concerning "civil lordship" and other matters. By the protection of John of Gaunt, who attended the hearing, Wycliffe escaped any penalty.

Next the pope, Gregory XI, entered the controversy by declaring 19 sentences in Wycliffe's writings erroneous and perilous to Church and State. The pope sent some five bulls (official

papal decrees) to England against Wycliffe, calling upon the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of London, King Edward III and Oxford University to take action against Wycliffe. Gregory demanded that Wycliffe be arrested and held in prison until his case should be finally adjudicated by the pope. Apparently, as a result of the pope's demands, Wycliffe was nominally confined to a building at Oxford for a time, but suffered no real harm nor even serious inconvenience.

Wycliffe at first opposed the papacy on political and economic grounds, rather than for doctrinal reasons. Later, however, he became a doctrinal reformer, opposing the papacy as a religious institution; and finally he came to call in question the whole sacerdotal (priestly) system of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1378 Wycliffe broadened his attack on the papal system to include doctrinal matters. In Latin and in English, sermons, books and tracts poured from his pen. He also sought to reach the masses of the common folk of England, who were mostly illiterate, by a body of travelling preachers called "the poor priests", which aroused the hierarchy to even greater wrath and opposition. By 1381 Wycliffe came to see that the "sacrament of the mass" was the keystone of the whole priestly system. He issued twelve propositions in which he pronounced the doctrine of transubstantiation false and contrary to the Scriptures. This doctrine, which had finally overcome strong opposition and had been made an official dogma of the Church at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, was now openly challenged and declared false by a theologian of high standing who was connected with one of the leading universities of Europe. A trial was held at Oxford and, though Wycliffe was not mentioned by name, the opinions he had advocated were pronounced false, and the doctrine of transubstantiation was affirmed to be true. In spite of this decision, Wycliffe continued to teach and preach at Oxford. When even John of Gaunt turned against him and told him to cease speaking about transubstantiation at Oxford, Wycliffe was unmoved, and reaffirmed his convictions, saying "I believe that in the end the truth will win."

The next year, 1382, Wycliffe's doctrines were again brought to trial before Courtenay, who was now archbishop of Canterbury, though the reformer himself was not cited to appear. Twenty-four propositions supposed to be characteristic of Wycliffe's teachings were condemned by the synod, without mentioning Wycliffe's name. Of these 24 propositions, 10 were declared to be heretical (contrary to official dogmas of the Church), while 14 were pronounced erroneous though not heretical. Some of the propositions condemned as heretical were the following:

(3) "That Christ is not in the sacrament of

the altar essentially, truly, and really, in His own corporal presence."

(5) "That, if a man be properly repentant all outward confession is superfluous and useless for him."

(6) "To affirm constantly that it was not set down in the Gospel that Christ ordained the Mass."

(8) "That, if the Pope be an abandoned or evil man, and so a member of the devil, he has not power over the faithful of Christ granted him by any, save perhaps by Caesar."

(9) "That after Urban VI no one is to be regarded as pope, but we must live like the Greeks under our own laws."

(10) "To assert that it is contrary to Holy Scripture that ecclesiastical men should have temporal possessions."

The following were among the propositions declared erroneous but not heretical:

(11) "That no prelate ought to excommunicate any unless he first knows that he is excommunicated by God."

(16) "To assert that no one is civil lord, bishop or prelate while he is in mortal sin."

(19) "That special prayers restricted to one person by prelates or religious do no more avail the same person, other things being equal, than general prayers."

(23) "That friars are bound to get their living by the labor of their hands and not by begging."

The consequence of this condemnation of his teachings was that Wycliffe was forbidden to preach. Some of his principal supporters forsook him and disavowed his teachings. It was no longer possible to teach Wycliffe's doctrines at Oxford University. The reformer retired to the privacy of his residence at Lutterworth, where he devoted himself to writing in defence of his views, and to the translation of the Bible into English.

Wycliffe did not know any Hebrew, and probably did not know Greek either. As a matter of fact, both of these original languages of the Bible were practically unknown in the England of his day. His Bible was the common Latin version of Jerome (the "Vulgate"). The English version called by Wycliffe's name is a translation of this Latin version. The translation was not wholly the work of Wycliffe himself, for the work of translating the Old Testament was apparently done by Wycliffe's friend Nicholas Hereford, and it is uncertain just what part of the New Testament was translated by the reformer personally. Soon after Wycliffe's death, the whole transla-

tion of the Bible was further edited and revised by one of his followers, John Purvey, and others, with the result of great improvement in the English style and readability. There remain to the present day some 170 manuscript copies of these two stages of the Wycliffe version of the Bible. Because of the opposition of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the version was not printed when it was needed, and when English Bibles came to be printed, the Wycliffe version had already been superseded by later and more satisfactory translations. It was not until 1850 that the Wycliffe version was finally printed, as a matter of historical interest.

The following is a specimen of the Wycliffe version of the Bible (John 14:1-6):

"Be not youre herte affraied, ne drede it. Ye bileuen in God, and bileue ye in me. In the hous of my fadir ben many dwellyngis: if ony thing lasse I hadde seid to you, for I go to make redi to you a place. And if I go and make redi to you a place, eftsonne I come and schal take you to my silf, that where I am, ye be. And whidir I go ye witen: and ye witen the wey. Thomas seith to him, Lord, we witen not whidir thou goist, and hou moun we wite the weie. Ihesus seith to him, I am weye truthe and liif. no man cometh to the fadir, but bi me."

While conducting divine service in his church at Lutterworth, Wycliffe suffered a paralytic stroke, and died peacefully in his bed a few days later, on December 29, 1384, "having lit a fire which shall never be put out."

The Roman Catholic hierarchy had not been able to have Wycliffe put to death as a heretic, but many years after the reformer's death, the Council of Constance (1414-1418) decreed that his body should be disinterred and his bones "cast at a distance from the sepulchre of the Church", since he had been "a notorious heretic". This decree was carried out by the Church authorities in England in 1429. Wycliffe's mortal remains were burnt to ashes, and the ashes cast into a stream, thus being dispersed, like his doctrines, to all parts of the world.

Wycliffe was a champion of the supreme authority of the Bible. He taught that the Bible is the infallible Word of God and takes precedence over the decrees of the Church and over all human authority whatsoever. In his insistence upon the supreme and decisive authority of the Scriptures, Wycliffe rose high above previous theologians of the Middle Ages, and really anticipated the position taken by Protestantism.

In another respect Wycliffe fell short of the faith of evangelical Protestantism, for he did not explicitly teach the doctrine of justification by faith alone. It is true that he approached this truth, and that justification by faith is implied

in his teachings, for he rejected the idea of human merit, and declared that Christ's work is sufficient for our redemption. Yet Wycliffe did not teach justification by faith alone explicitly and pointedly over against the faith-plus-works system of Rome, as was done by Luther, Calvin and the other great Protestant Reformers of the Sixteenth Century. Considering the age in which he lived, it is remarkable that Wycliffe's theology approached as close as it did to the full truth of evangelical Protestantism.

Wycliffe has rightly been called "a reformer

before the Reformation". Though no general reformation took place in England as a result of his life and work, his influence was very fruitful in the Hussite movement of Bohemia, which we shall discuss, D.V., in the next installment of this series. The "Morning Star of the Reformation" did not live and strive in vain. But in the providence of God 134 years must pass before Luther's 95 Theses would be nailed to the church door at Wittenberg, and the Reformation become an accomplished fact.

(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 II THE REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT, 1688-1690

4. The Covenanters' Grounds for Dissent from the Revolution Settlement.

The Testimony which the Reformed Presbytery adopted at Ploughlandhead in 1761 sets forth in considerable detail the grounds of the United Societies for dissent from the Revolution Settlement. This document gives not only the grounds for dissent from the Established Church of the Revolution Settlement, but also for dissent from the constitution of the State which resulted from the Revolution. It begins with reasons for dissent from the civil constitution, objecting first to King William and Queen Mary, because they were foreigners, and had been educated in an Erastian Church, which is stated to be contrary to Deuteronomy 17:15, "Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother". To this it is added that William and Mary lacked not only Scriptural, but also covenant qualifications, "namely, known integrity, approven fidelity, constant affection, and zeal to the cause and true church of GOD; and therefore could not in a consistency with the covenanted constitution, and fundamental laws of the crown, be set up as king and queen of these covenanted lands". The next objection is to the character of the membership of the Committee of Estates and first Parliament of the Revolution, namely that these were made up of persons who had persecuted the Church, and who had made no confession of having done wrong in this, and were therefore not qualified to represent the kingdom. After this, objection is

made to the character of the constitution itself: "Although the declaration of the meeting of estates in this kingdom, containing their claim of right, comprehended much more of their civil liberties, and formal rights of government, than was enjoyed under the former monstrous tyranny, yet by no means sufficiently provided for the legal establishment of our former happy reformed constitution, which necessarily obliged the civil rulers to employ their power to maintain and defend, not only the doctrine, but also the presbyterian worship, discipline and government, as the only and unalterable form instituted by Christ in his house". Prelacy was rejected, but not declared to be unscriptural; Presbytery was adopted, but not declared to be of divine right; the Confession of Faith was adopted by the Parliament, but not declared to be of Scriptural authority.

This is followed by objections to the ecclesiastical constitution, and first to the ministers who first composed it: "That the members composing the same were no less, if not much more exceptionable, than those of whom the state consisted; the whole of them one way or another being justly chargeable with unfaithfulness to CHRIST, and his covenanted cause, by sinful and scandalous compliance with the public defections of the former times, or actively countenancing the malignant apostasy of the lands, which will appear evident, by considering that the Revolution Church consisted of such office-bearers, as had, in contradiction to their most solemn covenant engagements, fallen in with, and approven of the public resolutions". The office-bearers of the Revolution Church are also objected to because they had all submitted to the Indulgences, at least to the last one of James VII which is called a "blasphemous unbounded toleration, which that popish tyrant, the duke of York . . . granted, with a special view to reintroduce abjured popery;

and therefore while it extended its protection to every heresy, did exclude the pure preaching of the gospel in the fields; which toleration . . . was joyfully embraced by all the presbyterian ministers in Scotland, the honored Mr. Renwick only excepted, who faithfully protested against the same". A further objection to the officers of the Revolution Church is that they were polluted by wicked oaths, or by "approving the warrantableness of giving security to the bloody council, not to exercise their ministry, but according to their pleasure".

Next come objections to the Revolution Church itself, because Erastian in character and therefore inconsistent with the constitution of the Church in 1648, as evidence of which the statute of 1592 is cited, which provided for the time and place of meetings of the General Assembly to be appointed by the King's commissioner; and this is stated by the Testimony to be "a manifest invasion and traitorous attack . . . upon the headship and supremacy of Christ, as a Son in, and over his own house. He who is God's anointed King in Zion and sits on the throne of his holiness, is hereby robbed of his crown rights; the intrinsic power, the spiritual liberty and freedom, granted by Christ to his church, is encroached upon. It is a received opinion among all true Presbyterians, that the church hath an intrinsic power to meet in the courts of Christ's house, from the lowest to the highest, by virtue of the power committed to her by the Lord Jesus Christ, without dependence on the civil power". It is stated that the Revolution Church is Erastian in the same sense that the Prelatic Church was before the Revolution: "As the Episcopalians owned the king, in the exercise of his Erastian supremacy over them, so the Revolution Church, instead of opposing, did take up her standing under the covert of that antichristian supremacy, and has never since declined the exercise thereof. And, as the civil power prescribed limits unto, and at pleasure altered, the prelatial church, so this church has accepted of a formula, prescribed by the civil power, requiring that all ordinances within the same be performed by the ministers thereof, as they were then allowed them, or should thereafter be declared by their authority, as act 23d, sess. 4th, parl. 1st, 1693, expressly bears".

The Testimony further objects to the Revolution Church because its constitution was modeled on the act of 1592 (Great Charter of Presbytery) and not on the constitution of the Church of the Second Reformation as it was in 1648, and states that "therefore this revolution constitution amounts to a shameful disregarding—vea, disclaiming and burying—much (if not all) of the reformation attained to in that memorable period, and is a virtual homologation and allowance of the iniquitous laws at the restoration, anno 1661,

condemning our glorious reformation and sacred covenant as rebellion; and is such an aggravated step of defection and apostasy, as too clearly discovers this church to be fixed upon a different footing, and to be called by another name, than the genuine offspring of the true covenanted church of Christ in Scotland".

Following the above come special items of objection to the settlement of religion in Scotland at the time of the Revolution. The first is that Prelacy was continued in England and Ireland, contrary to the Solemn League and Covenant. Second, the covenanted Reformation in Scotland, as it existed from 1638 to 1650, was not restored, but left "buried under the infamous act rescissory, which did, at one blow, rescind and annul the whole of the reformation, and authority establishing the same, by making a retrograde motion, as far back as 1592, without ever coming one step forward since that time, and herein acted most contrary to the practice of our honored reformers, who always used to begin where former reformations stopped, and after having removed what obstructed the work of reformation, went forward in building and beautifying the house of the Lord". Third, because the settlement was Erastian in method, in that the lead was taken by the State, not by the Church: "Instead of setting the church foremost in the work of the Lord, and the State coming after, and ratifying by their civil sanction what the church had done; the Revolution parliament inverted this beautiful order, both in abolishing prelacy, settling presbytery, and ratifying the Confession of Faith, as the standard of doctrine to this church". The Testimony affirms that the method used in the Revolution Settlement is condemned by the very language of the Confession of Faith itself, in chapter xxiii section 3, which says that "The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word or the keys"; and also that the method used is condemned "by the beautiful practice of our reformers, betwixt 1638 and 1649, who observed the scriptural order, the church always going foremost, in all the several pieces of reformation attained to, and then the state coming after, by exerting their authority, in ratification and defense of the church's acts and deeds, in behalf of reformation". At this point the objection of the Act of 1592 is repeated, and it is stated that as the Revolution Settlement was based on the Act of 1592, it cannot "be freed of the charge of Erastianism", because "that act 1592 contains an invasion upon the headship of Christ, and intrinsic power of the church, and ascribes an Erastian power to the civil magistrate over the church, making it unlawful for the church to convocate her superior judicatories, but in dependence upon the king for his license and authority". Finally, the Revolution Settlement is objected to, because founded on policy, not on principle; King

William instructed the Parliament in 1690, "You are to pass an act establishing that church government which is most agreeable to the inclinations of the people", and the Parliament passed an act, "settling Presbyterian church government in the same form, and on the same footing", i.e., without declaring it to be of divine right.

The Ploughlandhead Testimony sums up its reasons for dissent from the Revolution Settlement as follows: "Hence we have the idolatrous institutions of prelacy, established in the one nation, and Erastianism, under the specious pretext of presbytery, in the other; and both under an exotic head of ecclesiastical government". "From what is said above, respecting the Revolution constitution, and settlement of religion in the nations, it will appear, that the same are opposite to the word of God, and covenanted institutions of both church and state, and to the reforming laws, between 1638 and 1650, ratifying and securing the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church, and all divine ordinances, sacred and civil, according to scripture revelation; and therefore cannot be acknowledged as lawful, by any that make the law of God their rule, and desire to go out by the footsteps of the flock of Christ".

From the foregoing it will be seen (1) that the Covenanters objected not only to the Revolution Church but to the constitution of the Revolution State; (2) that they objected to the Settlement of religion as being retrogressive rather than progressive, since it stood upon the ground of 1592 not of 1648; (3) that they maintained the continuing validity, and binding obligation on the Church and nation, of the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant, and objected to the Revolution Settlement because these were ignored, or even violated; (4) that they objected to the Erastianism, in both method and character, of the Revolution Settlement, as contrary to Scripture and the past attainments of the Church of Scotland; (5) that they objected to the persons placed in authority in both Church and State, as having been implicated in the gross evils of the former reigns, and having done nothing to clear themselves or show themselves worthy of the confidence of the Church and nation; (6) that they objected to the persons of the King and Queen themselves, because they were foreigners, former members of an Erastian Church, and not bound by the Scottish Covenants.

(To be continued)

WHITHER AMERICA?

By the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick

Note: The following article is based on the Report of the Committee on the Signs of the Times which was adopted by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, Session CXX, June 2-8, 1949. The Report as adopted by the Synod will be found in the Minutes of Synod, 1949, pages 96-99. The Report was re-written and expanded for wider publication by the Chairman of the Committee, the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick. — Ed.

One of the outstanding trends of society in our time is the trend toward combination. In the past generation we have seen that particular phenomenon in the business life of our nation. But our law-makers saw a danger there, and imposed severe restraints on the development and activity of business combination. It is pretty generally conceded today that the danger has been effectively guarded against. Yet the trend continues in our society, now particularly on the political and ecclesiastical scenes. The philosophy which lies back of much of this trend may be characterized by the one word, COLLECTIVISM. And when this trend is hailed as of itself social progress, our glorious freedom is thereby despoiled.

There was a superior power which effective-

ly brought under control the trend toward monopolistic combination in our economic life. Now the trend is operating in those spheres which, humanly speaking, are supreme. The Church and the State, each in its own sphere, is under no restraint except its own limitations. If there was a danger to our well-being from business combination and monopoly, what of the danger that now threatens? America would do well to stop and consider what she does in consenting to, and hastening, such collectivization.

The Political Scene

It is not peculiar to our generation that there are "wars and commotions", "men's hearts failing them for fear". However, current book titles, such as "Civilization on Trial", "No Place to Hide", "Our Plundered Planet", seem to indicate that former concepts of apprehension are not now sufficiently intense, nor sufficiently global in reach.

There is no reason to believe that the conditions which brought on past world conflicts have been changed, or the forces which produced them overpowered. Rather, the nations appear to be more confirmed than ever in their determination to seek peace through human wisdom.

The axiom that "in union there is strength" has been exalted in our day to the status of the prime condition of survival. The book title of a few years ago, "One World", was later improved upon with "One World — or None". Cooperation instead of conflict is the world's prescription for its sickness, while it ignores that which, according to the Word of God, is the fundamental cause of mutual international distrust, namely, repudiation of the claims of the living God.

The United Nations is the current organ of some fifty odd nations in an effort to promote international law and order. It has shown itself repeatedly to be the enemy of God's righteousness, to be guided by expediency rather than by God's law, and to be determined to ignore the King of kings whom God has set up. This does not mean that it can never achieve a measure of outward success, nor that it is not the duty of our nation to submit to its just decisions. A Christian owes an allegiance to the civil ruler in things not sinful, even though the ruler may be personally wicked. It would seem that like submission is due to the just decrees of a council of nations.

Although the United Nations agreement was voluntarily entered, there are already signs that point toward the complete domination of the individual. In fact, this is certain to be the tendency while the authority and law of God are ignored. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The trend toward domination is in the opposite direction from freedom, simply because human wisdom, as opposed to the Word of God, can never be the standard of truth.

Then, even within the framework of the United Nations, as well as apart from it, there is in evidence a grouping for mutual support of smaller groups of nations. First, there are the so-called "Iron Curtain" countries. Then there is the Atlantic Pact which binds certain nations together. Asiatic leaders, notably in China and the Philippines, have shown interest in some kind of Pacific pact. These facts are evidence of the lack of real unity among the nations, but at the same time they show that each group — notably the Russian bloc — would like to have its policies and control extended to the whole world.

Within our own nation — and this is found in other countries also — there is a similar movement toward collective social action. The benefits of modern science and industry, if they are to be developed and enjoyed, demand that men cooperate on a vast scale. If they were Christian, they could be persuaded to cooperate willingly, or at least without invading the rights of the people to choose their occupation, and to invest and manage their talents and possessions as they choose. But to the extent that Christian faith does not prevail, to that extent the measure of

those basic rights which may safely be enjoyed is inevitably diminished. The pattern that is being followed is to extend the powers of the central government to enforce cooperation, and thus attempt an equitable distribution of the nation's production.

The reckless rate at which Americans are surrendering their liberties, in order that the government may force the needed cooperation, is an eloquent testimony to the moral deterioration of our nation. The desire for material provision is stronger than the desire for freedom. Certainly, this extension of the powers of the government is not in itself immoral. But for Christian people to hail this trend as Christian progress, shows that those who do so have lost the heart and life of the Gospel, and are occupied with the by-products.

The agitation for government provision in many fields by ever more people, in exchange for our freedom, doubtless reflects accurately the genius of our generation. Of course, Americans prize their liberties. All people want liberty, but it cannot be enjoyed where sin abounds. Israel could have the fleshpots of the Egyptian government, or they could have the freedom of obedience to God, but they could not have both.

And so the collectivization which has proceeded to such tyrannical proportions in Russia, appears to be generically related to trends to be found around the world and in America. A dominant sign of our time, politically, is a trend toward collectivization on a materialistic basis, internationally and within nations, which results in the greatest burdens being laid on the honest, the thrifty and the industrious. If such a single world authority, with power to enforce its decrees, were to be consummated, the prospect would not be pleasant.

Collective social action—combination for greater efficiency—is not evil in itself. But when it is achieved and maintained only by circumscribing the freedom of people to choose their place of living, and to invest and manage their own talents and possessions, it does not represent Christian progress. It does not represent progress at all. It is merely the inevitable regression which results from rebellion against the rule of God. For rebellion against the rule of God blinds men's eyes to the gains which accrue when justice prevails and cooperation is voluntary.

This situation ought to call forth a fresh study of the Scriptures to determine what is the legitimate function of the State. Such study should go far to confirm the idea that State and Church are distinctly separate, neither being subject to the other, but both directly responsible to Jesus Christ, the King of nations and the Head of the Church. Such an attitude ought to displace the indiscriminate endorsement currently bestowed

on socialistic trends and projects by many widely known Christian spokesmen.

The Ecclesiastical Scene

Trends toward collectivization similar to those which are so evident among the nations of the world, are evident among the Protestant denominations. Again, it should be said that these trends are not evil in themselves. So long as they are voluntary they may be claimed as evidence of Christian unity, but where coercion is employed they constitute a danger signal.

In the United States, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (FCC) operated for many years as the chief Protestant interdenominational organization of general character, without rival or organized protest. However, by 1940 many were convinced that its influence was almost invariably exerted to advance modernistic thought and power, and they began to plan for a united association of Bible-believing Christians and Churches. From this movement emerged the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC) and the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), both being committed, as a basis of membership, to the Word of God as the infallible standard of faith and practice. (The FCC basis of membership is summed up in the mere statement that "The Federal Council is a fellowship of Churches which confess Jesus Christ as Divine Lord and Saviour." The FCC has consistently refused to interpret this statement, leaving members to interpret it as they please, even to the point of utter denial of the deity of Christ.) There is no need to characterize these councils further. Suffice it to say that the current collectivist trend is operating among the Churches.

FCC leaders, for a period of ten years, consulted with Protestant, or rather non-Roman—for some Orthodox Catholic bodies are included—leaders abroad with regard to a World Council of Churches, on the pattern of the FCC, which was finally consummated in 1948 at Amsterdam. Representatives of Churches in the ACCC also, just a few days before, and in the same city, together with like-minded Christians as representatives of Churches from other countries, constituted the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), while leaders of the NAE, after a preliminary meeting with other Protestant leaders in 1948 in Clarens, Switzerland, and continued talks in 1949 with European Church leaders, plan on bringing forth a third council of world dimensions in 1950 or 1951.

Thus there is collectivization in the air on the ecclesiastical scene as well as on the political. And where the Word of God has been forsaken as a standard, the same weapon of compulsion threatens, a weapon, incidentally, which is entirely out of place in the Church of Jesus Christ. E.

Stanley Jones, stumping the country to popularize the idea of "federal union" of all Protestant denominations, admits that there would be planning for the local churches, and that some would doubtless be closed. He further advocates that administration of the planned Protestant union should be placed in the hands of the FCC. Can there be any doubt as to which of two churches would be closed, where there is one that is cooperative with the modernist leadership, and another where the whole counsel of God is proclaimed, including obedience to the injunction, "Beware of false teachers"?

The "federal union" scheme in America falls into a pattern which is gradually taking shape more and more openly, and which is apparently typical of FCC policy. (A preliminary and exploratory meeting has already been held by officially designated representatives of seven denominations representing a membership of some sixteen million. This meeting took place in Greenwich, Conn., as the new year, 1950, came in.)

There is an attempt to dominate the free time on the radio by modernistic preaching, and also to have paid religious broadcasting ruled off the air. There is an attempt to control what churches shall be built in new subdivisions of cities. In a word, there is an attempt to eliminate rivalry, competition, "overlapping", among churches. That can only mean compulsion, pressure applied, to force adherence to a "party line". This is nothing else than cooperation in ecclesiastical life, Russian style.

Dr. Herman F. Reissig, field secretary of the American Committee of the WCC, when facing criticism of WCC policies, said, "We must be ruthless with what is not relevant." Dr. Adolph Kellar, an apologist for the WCC, says, "How fortunate that we have a World Council of Churches which will certainly not approve religions of another continent or nation, and not tolerate spiritual enterprises which are not the common concern of the whole Christian community!" In other words, criticism of the WCC by minorities who may object for conscience' sake, and who may want to preach the Bible, is not to be tolerated. Preaching of the Word of God, if the line of interpretation followed does not agree with the idea of the majority—"the whole Christian community"—will not be tolerated. This is but the warning smoke of persecution fires which are beginning to smolder in so-called Protestantism, fires such as those by which the Roman Catholic Church sought to stamp out the Reformation.

Concerning a recent "National Protestant Survey", Dr. Paul Douglas says, "On the basis of the surveys I have conducted I am convinced that in many cases only cooperative action can remedy the shortcomings. I would urge replanning and readjustment of the Protestant forces to compel

weak churches to break away from hampering traditions, to follow new patterns, and, in general, resolutely to face forward rather than backward, as some of them are inclined to do."

If any such authority is to be assumed by an unbiblical, so-called Protestant body, it can have no spiritual power, and so must resort to physical force. With such a pattern taking shape—and the fact of a super Protestant Church almost certain to appear in the near future—one may reasonably ask, "What is to hinder such an organization from becoming a dictatorial and persecuting body, such as the 'one church' in the Middle Ages?" One straw in the wind is a remark of Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, a Lutheran theological professor, and a delegate to the WCC, who said, as he left for Amsterdam, "In a popular sense this first meeting of the World Council could be spoken of as the reversal of the trend which began with the Reformation."

More than a straw in the wind is a vote of the WCC assembly in Amsterdam in 1948. A motion that "ecclesiastical totalitarianism, as well as political forms, be included in the totalitarianism which it denounced", was decisively defeated by the assembly. In commenting on this vote, "The Christian Century" reported, "The assembly was extremely careful to do nothing to offend Roman Catholic susceptibilities." From the other side, it is reported that Pope Pius XII, in a letter to one of his archbishops, a letter deliberately given to the press, said that the "holy father" was following "with assiduous interest the providential movement for the return of dissidents to the unity of the Church", and expressed the hope that it would be "an auspicious, happy symptom."

The prospect for those who hold vigorously to those doctrines that were emphasized and clarified in the Reformation, is not pleasant when the size of the groups challenging FCC and WCC leadership in the Protestant Church is considered. The ACCC and the NAE combined cannot boast even a quarter of the membership encompassed by FCC denominations. Although it is a fact that the FCC leadership does not actually represent the membership of the constituent denominations, it remains also a fact that the leadership is not seriously challenged by that membership. Yet the faithful may take courage in that God's witnesses are usually opposed by greater numbers. The cause of truth will prevail. Our Captain "shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he hath set judgment in the earth" (Isa. 42:4).

Modernist "unity" is on the surface only. There is a constant and deliberate effort made to "manifest" that unity, and the methods usually involve some form of compulsion. And, according to the admission of WCC leaders themselves, they do not have the support of the "grass roots" membership of their churches. There is urgent

need that the Church, in any cooperative venture, seek "for the visible oneness of the Church of God . . . on the basis of truth and of Scriptural order."

The Christian's Duty

The duty of Christians and of the Christian Church is clear, as we live in the shadows of such mighty collectivist movements, which may eventually unite to thrust the faithful into the furnace of persecution. There must be repentance for past sins. This is far more than a willingness to change our course when we find that we have been wrong. "Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?" asks Jeremiah (2:36). The modernists are constantly doing that. A decade or more ago Harry Emerson Fosdick preached a sermon entitled "Beyond Modernism". An issue of "The Christian Century" the past year carried an article on "Beyond Neo-Orthodoxy". But there must be repentance before there can come any change for the better. And there must be repentance on the part of believers for a craven unwillingness to contend earnestly for the faith.

Yet there appears much for which to be thankful, and which may serve to guide our efforts. The protest of the ACCC, the ICCC and the NAE, though feeble, is being made. Furthermore, when Dr. Walter A. Maier, of "Lutheran Hour" fame, in a "Town Meeting of the Air", met Dr. E. Stanley Jones and Governor Youngdahl of Minnesota, both urging federal union for the Protestant Church, and Dr. Truman B. Douglass urging full union of the churches, Dr. Maier stood boldly for the idea that there must be doctrinal unity as a basis for any worthwhile Protestant Church union. The postal response to this particular "Town Meeting" was the greatest received with reference to any such program in all the years that the program has been produced, and of this great mail response, "Town Meeting" reports that, of those who expressed their choice, 83% favored the stand taken by Dr. Maier. There is the attitude of the "grass roots" regarding grandiose schemes for church union.

(Since the adoption of this report there is evidence that WCC leaders are seeking to consolidate their positions and to implement their numerical strength against all rivals. Leaders of the WCC and the International Missionary Council promoted an Inter-American Evangelical Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 13-18, 1949, and an East Asia Christian Conference in Bangkok, Siam, December 4-11, 1949. Apparently this was an effort to incorporate the South American and Asiatic Churches, products of Christian missionary effort, in the WCC orbit. When opponents of the WCC movement, and of its doctrines and policies, sought entrance to these conferences, they were excluded, and the assemblies were closed even to those press reporters who

were considered to be unfavorable to their cause. In each case a separate conference was organized, apparently with considerable success in interesting national churches in resistance against the WCC.)

We may well ask with the Psalmist, "What can the righteous do?" First, they can cease to give their influence to encourage the trend toward political and ecclesiastical collectivism as of itself Christian. Where there is no freedom not to cooperate, cooperation is not a Christian achievement. If your denomination is going along with the ecclesiastical union movement on the basis of unscriptural principles and goals, and giving its blessing to the surrender of political liberties, as being both steps in Christian progress, you must deliver your soul from such responsibility.

Secondly, the righteous can witness to the great supernatural truths of the Word of God. These truths are widely neglected or flatly denied by many within the Protestant Church today. The "united witness" of the Church, many say, must be found by conversation, by compromise, by give and take on the part of all concerned. Such a pro-

cess of discovering "truth" to which we are to witness, cannot but produce error. And its witness cannot be maintained but by coercion. Christians must be prepared to sacrifice in our day if they would be faithful to their trust.

America has been caught in the major social error of our generation, collectivism. Many of the Christian Church, having loosed their hold on, and testimony to, the supernatural truth of the Word of God, have been deceived into believing that this growing collectivist trend is progress. America must be led back to the Word of God. The Christian Church is God's agency for evangelizing the world. When it holds to the truth of the Word as its arsenal, it is "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners", but when it falls, as the Roman Catholic Church fell, to such spiritual poverty that it found its chief strength in political alliances and wordly affluence, and as the FCC would have the Protestant Church do today, its glory is departed. Then we must look for the true Church of God, not in mighty organizations, but in the remnant that remains a faithful witness to God's Word.

Why So Much About Enemies in the Psalms?

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

Because the Covenant God put Enmity between the Wicked and the Righteous

THE COVENANT OF GRACE was first revealed to men in God's sentence of judgment in the matter of Adam's first sin (Gen. 3:14-19). It is not to be overlooked that THE GREAT PROMISE OF MERCY, which constitutes the sinner's only hope of life, is bound up in God's judgment upon sinners. The formal verdict begins with a CURSE (verses 14, 15) upon that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, the adversary of God and man, who attempted to destroy the work of God.

This CURSE includes (1) **The utter debasement** of the serpent to grovel on the lowest levels of earth existence. "Cursed art thou beneath all cattle, and beneath every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." To "eat" or "bite the dust all the days of thy life", means ignominious, irrevocable defeat, repeated without respite. Whatever success he may seem to have only sinks him lower in perdition. (2) **The final destruction** of the power of the serpent and of the serpent's seed. This destruction shall be brought about in a state of ENMITY and CONFLICT rendered certain by God Himself. "And ENMITY WILL I PUT between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed."

Evidently God will make this enmity certain by His own RIGHTEOUSNESS, which is its target, and which shall never be compromised by any appeasement. "HE shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The word "bruise", to agree with the original word, must be understood in the sense of bruise in a mortar, i.e., "smash" or "crush in pieces"; not of a mere surface wound. (This meaning is confirmed by Rom. 16:20). Accordingly there is involved SUFFERING for the seed of the woman. However, by this unqualified promise, God makes certain the absolute control and complete destruction of sin at its source; and, at the same time, guarantees to the woman's seed final victory in the conflict, and salvation.

Thus at the outset, a separation was determined: the devil and his seed on one hand, the woman and her seed on the other. While, of course, the devil being a spirit can have no "seed" in the literal sense, yet all those of the human race who do the works of the devil are, according to common Scriptural usage, called his "seed", "children of the devil". On the other hand are those who, by the grace of God already received, realize and acknowledge that they have sinned, having been deceived by a crafty, venomous, malignant foe. "The serpent beguiled me." Henceforth, in revulsion against the deceiver, they are enabled to turn from their rebellion

against God, their Friend, and to resist the devil, their enemy.

"HE shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The pronoun "HE" is emphatic. It individualizes "her seed", pointing to "one pre-eminent descendant of woman, who is, with the bruising of his lower nature in the encounter, to gain a signal and final victory over the adversary of man . . . this simple phrase . . . describes exactly and literally Him who was made of woman without the intervention of man, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (Murphy on Genesis, p. 124 f.)

To accomplish this, in accord with the will of God openly declared by His decree, it was necessary for the Pre-eminent One, as Representative of all the woman's seed, and Surety of the Covenant, to enter into the conflict and endure the enmity and suffering involved.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST did exactly that!

Because the Covenant Surety Suffered in Conflict with Enemies

"When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, BORN OF WOMAN". When Jesus was ready to enter the conflict, He took His stand publicly, in John's baptism, "TO FULFIL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS". Then the battle was on. "Immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan", who had come there with all the venom of hatred of God and righteousness that it was possible for him to secrete. There he suffered a thrice repeated defeat, and withdrew, but only "until an opportune time".

Jesus at different times explained to His disciples the purpose of His coming, but they did not then understand. He had come, not immediately to establish peace in the world, but the sword; fires of strife and persecution; division; dividing one against another. The two parties of this division He pictured in the parable of the Tares of the Field, which He explained in more than usual detail: "The field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom; the tares are the sons of the wicked one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil" (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43). As His enemies became more threatening, He unmasked their identity, saying, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do" (John 8:44); "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" (Matt. 23:33).

"He knew what was in man." He knew the thoughts and intents of all hearts. He faithfully told them the truth that was their only hope of salvation. "And being grieved for the hardness of their hearts", He did this with compassion and

sorrow. But they despised the righteousness of His conduct; they rejected the truth of His teaching; they mocked the sympathy and kindness of His acts. When He told His enemies who He was, they took up stones to stone Him; they hounded His steps wherever He went, seeking an excuse to kill Him. But He was never caught off guard. IT WAS JUST WHAT HE WAS EXPECTING! When He knew they were about to carry out their diabolical purpose and put Him to death, HE WEPT, not for Himself but for them, because the judgment of God declared from the beginning was certain to be executed upon them, their city, and their children (Matt. 23:37, 38; Luke 19:41-44). He said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour." "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (John 22:44).

Because the Covenant People Suffer in Conflict with the Same Enemies

Because the covenant people bear the name of their God and are His witnesses, they are beset on every side by the enemies of God, of God's righteousness and truth. For in proportion as they are faithful, they hold high their God-given standards of faith and conduct that draw the fire of the enemy. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).

God's division among men permits of no intermediate class between the righteous and the wicked; between the wheat and the tares. His placement of enmity permits none to live at peace with wickedness. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." And upon those who foolishly compromise with the wicked, for the sake of peace, God sooner or later sends His judgments, using the wicked themselves as His sword. To the city that proved unfaithful to Him, God said, "They (thine enemies) shall deal with thee hatefully, and shall take away all thy labor, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be uncovered" (Ezek. 23:29). "Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God (James 4:4).

To His disciples, Jesus said, "Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:20). "BLESSED are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. BLESSED are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in hea-

ven; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."

It is certain that all enemies shall be put under the feet of Christ, for even now He reigns, and His judgments are daily bringing nearer the undisputed sway of the Kingdom of Peace and Glory, though we may not be able to appraise accurately the significance of current events. Shall we reign with Him? Yes, "if so be that we suffer with him, to the end that we may be glorified with him" (Rom. 8:17).

Thus, one of the outstanding characteristics of the Book of Psalms is fully accounted for, namely, the frequent references to enemies and conflict and suffering, with unceasing prayer for deliverance. For the most part, the Psalms describe this conflict as between ONE INDIVIDUAL and a multitude of adversaries; but, not infrequently, others called "the righteous" or "the godly" are included with the ONE. The sufferings described are not physical sickness, poverty or ill-fortune, but spiritual ones made vivid by the symbols of a common earthly experience. The instigators of the strife, in every case, are the wicked in their insatiable hatred of God, particularly of His righteousness and truth as witnessed in the lives of His people.

If we inquire for some other cause of the enmity, the Psalms themselves give no hint. They regard the cause as obvious, requiring no explanation. It is certainly not a matter of personal or occasional quarrels; of national or racial antipathies; of primitive ignorance or pagan darkness; of legal shadows as over against the light of the Gospel. It is deep-seated, permanent, unavoidable, irreconcilable. No appeasement can have anything but a superficial and temporary effect. The enmity remains, for God "put" it there between the wicked and the righteous. He put it there by the erection of His impregnable standards of truth and righteousness. That righteousness which makes for peace, and that truth which provides for the settlement of every dispute, are the sole cause of the enmity. In other words, the enmity is "without cause". It was, in the case of Jesus Christ, as He explained to His disciples, "that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25 and Psalm 69:4). The enmity is "between" the wicked and the righteous,

"Now if the nature of things, not God, furnish the axioms of natural law, and if the nature of things, not God, furnish the elementary truths of morals, then, all that is admirable, as wise or beneficent, in the realms either of natural or of moral law, is due to the nature of things and not to God. Logically followed out, the modern doctrine regarding the nature of things, leaves no room, no necessity for a God at all . . . "The na-

ture of things', if it furnish all the axioms of the natural and of the moral world, is really the source of all law. No one can have a just conception of law, or of the Lawgiver, so long as this latest Idol is set in the highest place . . . An eternal self-existent nature of things determining alike for the Creator and for his creation, is vanity, 'is a thing of naught', a mere idol of the brain."

but it emanates only from the wicked, and spends its force against the Faithful and True Witness and the phalanx of those who stand with Him in the love of God.

The Psalms have a most important place in the unity of Scripture. Whatever symbolism they employ is correctly interpreted by the rest of Scripture. If we take them as they are, the "word of Christ" for today, they will help us to be realistic and practical in our religion. If we do not explain them away as mere history of a dead and buried past, they will make us aware of our enemies, and of the imminent peril to which our Christianity, our Church, and our own personal salvation are constantly exposed from foes that never sleep.

We need the Psalms in these days of false religions that refuse to be at enmity with the enemies of God. It is indeed ominous when compromise with sin is not only popular, but justified by quotation from the Sermon on the Mount, even glorified, blasphemously glorified, as of the Spirit of Christ.

The weak-kneed policy of appeasement of enemies by the state, with moral standards in the discard, is threatening the whole structure of civilization, and our own national existence. The state feels free to take this course because it knows there will be but feeble protest from the Church, or none at all. For the Church is engaged in its own compromises with evil, quieting the fears of enemies, and making light of sin.

One of the first steps in the church's decline was its failure to use the Psalms to their purpose of "teaching and admonishing" the people. The result, of course, was ignorance of the Psalms in their real meaning; then disparagement of them as unsuited to modern Christianity; then exclusion of the Psalms from the praise service; then from the worship entirely, thus contributing to the general disregard of the law of God.

"Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

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

ture of things', if it furnish all the axioms of the natural and of the moral world, is really the source of all law. No one can have a just conception of law, or of the Lawgiver, so long as this latest Idol is set in the highest place . . . An eternal self-existent nature of things determining alike for the Creator and for his creation, is vanity, 'is a thing of naught', a mere idol of the brain."

John M. Armour

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.

APOSTASY. Forsaking the truth of God, by word or by actions, on the part of an individual, a church or a nation; especially, falling away from those truths which are essential to the existence of Christianity, such as the Trinity, the Deity of Christ and the substitutionary atonement. The Bible predicts an apostasy before the second coming of Christ, 2 Thess. 2:3.

APOSTLE. A person sent upon a commission; especially, one of the group of men chosen by Jesus Christ as official witnesses of His resurrection and ordained as His official representatives for establishing the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the New Testament Church.

ARMINIANISM. The doctrinal system derived from the teachings of the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius, which regards the sovereignty of God as limited by the free will of man, and which conceives of the work of salvation as divided between God and man, with the decisive factor in the hands of man.

BISHOP. An overseer; one of the titles used in the New Testament for the pastor of a Christian congregation. In the history of the Church the title "bishop" came to be used for an officer higher than pastors and elders, having jurisdiction over many congregations — something unknown in the New Testament.

BLASPHEMY. The sin of speaking or writing reproachfully or slanderously against God or the things of God, such as the Bible, the sacraments, the Sabbath, divine worship, etc.

BUCHMANISM. A modern religious movement led by the Rev. Frank Buchman, called "A First Century Christian Fellowship", "The Oxford Group Movement", "Moral Rearmament", etc. The movement is characterized by a false type of mysticism, emphasis on personal confession of sins to other "Group" members, fellowship between Bible-believers and modernists, and lack of concern about sound doctrine.

CALVINISM. Consistent Biblical Christian-

ity, called "Calvinism" because it received its classic doctrinal formulation in the writings of the Reformer John Calvin. Calvinism is that system of Christian doctrine which recognizes the absolute, unlimited sovereignty of God, and man's complete dependence on God for every factor of his life, faith and salvation.

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

CELIBACY OF THE CLERGY. The sectarian requirement of the Roman Catholic Church that its ordained officers abstain from marriage. This requirement, which is without Scriptural warrant, was not generally enforced until more than 1,000 years after Christ.

CHANCE. An event which comes to pass by the divine foreordination and providence, which is of such a nature that the human mind cannot calculate or predict its occurrence, or assign a definite cause to it. Proverbs 16:33.

CHILIASM. The doctrine of a thousand year reign of Christ; commonly used as equivalent to Premillennialism, or the doctrine of a thousand year reign of Christ on earth after His second coming.

CHRISTMAS. The day commonly observed as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ. There is no historical evidence that our Saviour was born on the 25th of December, nor is there any trace in the New Testament of the observance of His birth as a holy day.

CONCEPTION, THE IMMACULATE. The false Roman Catholic doctrine, made a dogma in 1854, that the Virgin Mary was born without original sin. The term "Immaculate Conception" is often incorrectly used by Protestants when they mean the virgin birth of Christ.

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"God hath strewed all the way from the gate of hell where thou wast, coming sinner, to the gate of heaven whither thou art going, with flowers out of His own garden. Behold how the promises, invitations, calls, and encouragements,

like lilies, lie about thee. Take heed thou dost not tread them under foot."

John Bunyan

"Love makes a great change in the heart. While the heart is naturally corrupt, sin is a de-

light, and the commandment is a burden; but when the love of God is let into the heart, corruption is counted the yoke, and duty is counted the delight and pleasure of the soul. The children of God, we hear them complaining, not of the law but of their own corruption."

Thomas Manton

"No condition of life will of itself make a man content, without the grace of God; for we find Haman discontented in the court, Ahab discontented on the throne, Adam discontented in paradise; nay, and higher we cannot go, and angels that fell discontented in heaven itself."

Philip Henry

"I am too much a catholic, to be a Roman Catholic."

Philip Henry

"When we view providence by pieces, and see God rending and tearing all things in pieces, we are perplexed; therefore we must not judge of God's providence by the beginnings, till all work together. When we apprehend nothing but ruin, God may be designing to us the choicest mercies."

Thomas Manton

"There are those within the courts of the church who are adroit in steering the court away from any definite decision on controversial matters. They advise postponement and delay until the issue is dropped. The result is that many people have lost their respect for the church. They have a right to expect decisions on certain matters. And when these decisions are not given they lose their interest in the church. That is one of the reasons why many people are staying away from the church."

Bible Christianity (Canada)

"Nothing more astonishing can possibly be conceived, than that the PRINCE OF LIFE should

consent to die for sinners. Angels must have been astounded at the mysterious spectacle. The sun refused to look upon it, and withdrew his rays for several hours at mid-day. The earth trembled, and the rocks were rent, and the veil of the temple, which concealed the most holy place, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the place which for ages had been too sacred for the eyes of men, was now exposed to the gaze of all. What Christ endured in giving Himself for us, no tongue can tell, nor heart conceive."

Archibald Alexander

"On the peril of your souls, I charge you to remember that Jesus Christ is the only way, the only truth, the only life; that no man comes or can come to the Father except by Him, that all the life that is in the world is in Him, and he only that hath Him hath the life, while he that hath not Him hath not the life. Listen to the solemn words of the apostle of love: 'Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son,' he, and he only, 'hath the Father also.' Let us note it clearly and note it whole: there is no access to God for sinners save in the blood of Jesus Christ."

Benjamin B. Warfield

"Law not only proceeds from God as its source; it has no existence except as presently and directly proceeding from him. Law is not that which was once commanded, or was written on tables of stone; but that which the Ever-living, Ever-present Lawgiver now commands . . . Whosoever deals with law physical or moral, deals not with law merely, but with God, of whose presence and power law is the perpetual demonstration."

John M. Armour

The Covenant of Grace: Its Meaning and Its Implications for the Church, the Family, and the Christian

LESSON 27

The Covenant of Grace and the Christian's Relation to the World: 3. The Sphere of Cooperation

"It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrates' just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them. . . ." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXIII.4.

"It is the duty of Christians who reside within the bounds of such nations as do not make a

fitting acknowledgment of divine authority to live in submission to the existing government, provided that in doing so they are careful to regulate their conduct according to the Scriptures, and to preserve a conscience void of offence toward God and man. It is also the duty of Christians, for the sake of peace and order, to conform to the common regulations of society in things indifferent or morally commendable." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXIX.5.

"It is lawful for Christians residing in na-

tions in which the light of the gospel has not been generally diffused, to continue in submission to such authority as may exist over them, agreeably to the law of nature, which, where revelation does not exist, is the only standard of civil duty. In such cases the infidelity of the ruler cannot make void the just authority conferred on him by the constitution." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXIX.6.

Scripture References:

Matt. 22:17-21. It is a Christian duty to render the things of Caesar to Caesar.

Jer. 29:4-7. It is our duty to seek the peace and welfare of the nation in which God's providence has placed us.

1 Peter 2:13-17. Christians are to glorify God by conscientious conduct in the relationships of human society.

2 Cor. 6:14-18. Fellowship and cooperation between Christians and unbelievers, in religious matters, is forbidden by the Word of God.

Acts 27:30-32. An example of legitimate and commendable cooperation between a Christian and unbelievers.

Rev. 2:14, 20. Two examples of forbidden fellowship and cooperation between Christians and unbelievers.

1 Cor. 10:27. An example of legitimate social fellowship between a Christian and non-Christians.

Questions:

1. Does the Covenant of Grace require separation between Christians and non-Christians in every sphere of life?

No. There are certain areas of life in which separation between Christians and non-Christians is a duty, and there are other areas of life in which cooperation between Christians and non-Christians may be legitimate, and even commendable.

2. In what areas of life is separation between Christians and non-Christians required by the Word of God?

God's Word requires Christians (a) to refrain from marrying an unbeliever; (b) to refrain from choosing non-Christians as their close friends and intimate companions; (c) to abstain absolutely from any cooperation or fellowship with unbelievers in the spheres of religious activity and religious worship.

3. Is the expression "the world", in the bad sense, equivalent to "human society"?

No. Although the Bible requires Christian people to maintain separation from "the world"

in the bad sense, separation from human society as such is not required. Even though the Christian's citizenship is in heaven, he is still living here on earth and is a member of human society, which involves certain legitimate obligations and relationships. Our duty as Christians does not cancel the relationships and obligations of human society, except in certain cases where special sinful conditions are involved. In case of conflict between our duty to God and the requirements of human society, we must of course obey God rather than men. But there are many matters in which every Christian must discharge his duty to human society. Thus cooperation between Christians and unbelievers is inevitable. It is important for us as Christians to understand the nature of this cooperation, and its proper limits.

4. Is there any area of life in which the difference between Christians and non-Christians does not count?

No. There is always a deep, RADICAL DIFFERENCE between the Christian and the non-Christian. The Christian has been born again of the Holy Spirit; he knows and loves the true God; he is on the road to heaven. The non-Christian has not been born again of the Holy Spirit; he does not know nor love the true God; he is on the road to hell. Even though the external action of a Christian may be identical with that of a non-Christian, still the motive, meaning and consequences of the act always diverge widely. Suppose that a Christian and a non-Christian each pay taxes amounting to \$25.00. It might appear that in this matter there is no difference between the Christian and the non-Christian. But the Christian pays his taxes because he fears the living and true God, and regards civil government as God's ordinance. His payment of his taxes is an act of obedience to the true God. For that act of obedience, he will receive a reward in eternity. The non-Christian, on the other hand, pays his taxes either because he can't avoid it, or at best merely because of love of his country. He does not do it to please and honor God; therefore his paying his taxes, like everything that he does, is really a sin, which must come under the righteous judgment of God. (See the Confession of Faith, XVI.7). When we look beneath the surface of things, we see that the difference between the Christian and the non-Christian ALWAYS counts, in every area of life.

5. Is the Christian's cooperation with non-Christians in human society voluntary or compulsory?

It is compulsory in the matter of obedience to the laws of the State, and voluntary with respect to other matters. Thus a Christian cannot choose, for example, whether he will pay his lawful taxes or not, nor whether he will testify

as a witness if lawfully summoned to do so. God has authorized civil government, or the State, to use physical force, if necessary, to bring about obedience to its laws (Rom. 13:4). On the other hand, there are many matters outside the sphere of civil government, or the State, in which cooperation between Christians and non-Christians is voluntary. These include all "voluntary associations" which exist for either a good or a morally indifferent purpose, but are not limited to Christian people. Examples of such "voluntary associations" are the American Red Cross, Parent-Teacher Associations, stamp collectors' societies, poultry breeders' associations, literary, historical and scientific organizations, and business and professional organizations. No Christian is under any obligation, as a matter of Christian duty, to join or cooperate with any of these "voluntary associations"; he is free to act according to his own choice, so long as cooperation does not necessarily involve support or endorsement of something contrary to the law of God. (See "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 3, No. 4 October-December 1948, pages 176-178, for a full discussion of the problem of membership in "voluntary associations").

6. Must Christians always obey the laws of the State?

While the Bible repeatedly enjoins obedience to the laws of the State and the commands of magistrates and rulers, it also teaches that the Christian's first and highest allegiance is to God, and that in case of a conflict between the law of God and the commands of earthly rulers, it is the Christian's duty to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). Thus, for example, Christian people ought to disobey a law of the State requiring participation in the rites of a false religion, or

requiring that ministers and missionaries obtain a permit from the State before engaging in the work of preaching the Gospel and organizing churches. Such laws, though enacted by earthly legislatures, are null and void in the sight of God, and Christian people should resolutely refuse to obey them, even at the cost of persecution and suffering. On the other hand, where there is no clear-cut issue between the law of God and the commands of the State, Christian people should conscientiously obey the laws of the State, even though they may regard the laws as unwise, or may suffer some personal loss or injustice because of obedience. Mere belief that a law of the State is unwise or unjust does not warrant disobedience. Christians are justified in refusing to obey only when the law of the State requires them to do something that is definitely contrary to the law of God.

7. Is it proper for Christian people to hold office, or elect others to do so, under a constitution of civil government which does not recognize the true God and His Son Jesus Christ?

No. The duty of Christian people to obey the laws and cooperate in civil matters does not involve incorporation with a non-Christian government (by voting or holding office). Such political incorporation would make the Christian morally responsible for the government's secular character — its ignoring God and Christ. That is to say, it would involve the Christian in sin. It is a sin for a nation to make no acknowledgment of God and His Son in its constitution. The Christian who votes or holds office under such a constitution becomes a party to this sin of omission, and therefore a sharer in the guilt that is involved. (For a fuller discussion of this matter, see "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 4, No. 1, January-March 1949, pages 8-12.)

LESSON 28

The Covenant of Grace and Holiness

"The Holy Spirit, according to the promise of the Father, is commissioned by Jesus Christ, the administrator of the Covenant of Grace, to sanctify justified sinners, and to prepare them for heaven." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XVII.2.

"Sanctification is a work of God's grace, whereby they whom God hath before the foundation of the world chosen to be holy, are in time through the powerful operation of his Spirit, applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole man after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin and rise unto newness of life." — The Larger Catechism, 75.

"The souls of believers are, at their death, made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; . . ." — The Shorter Catechism, 37.

Scripture References:

Ezek. 36:25-28, 31. Sanctification by God's Spirit is promised to the covenant people of God.

1 Pet. 1:13-16. Heb. 12:14. The duty of those whom Christ has redeemed to cultivate holiness.

1 Thess. 5:23,24. Jude 24,25. Perfect holiness is the promised and assured destiny of every true member of the people of God.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the words "sanctify" and "sanctification"?

These words, which are derived from the Latin, concern the subject of holiness. "Sanctify" means "make holy"; "sanctification" means "making holy" or "being made holy". These terms designate that progressive change of character which is carried on by the work of the Holy Spirit in those who have been born again, throughout their life on earth, until they are made perfect in holiness on entering the state of glory at their death.

2. Is sanctification a work of God, or a work of man?

Sanctification is a work of God, wrought by the almighty operation of the Holy Spirit. It is, however, a work of God in which the Christian is called to cooperate. This does not mean that God and man are joint partners, on an equal basis, in the work of sanctification. It means, rather, that the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification is partly wrought through the instrumentality of the human personality, which involves the Christian's earnest cooperation with the Holy Spirit's work. Thus in the Bible we are commanded "Grieve not the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 4:30), "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19), and we are warned against the sin of resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). Again, we are commanded: "yield yourselves unto God" (Rom. 6:13), "present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1), etc.

3. What spiritual danger is involved in the fact that sanctification is a slow process?

The danger of discouragement, or becoming weary and faint in our minds (Heb. 12:3). The fact that sanctification is not only a life-long process, but also involves a bitter struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil, often tempts the Christian to discouragement and faint-heartedness. Because of the severity of the conflict with sin and temptation, his faith may falter and his enjoyment of the light of God's countenance may grow dim. To warn and guard against these spiritual perils, the Bible presents numerous ex-

hortations to earnestness, constancy and unwearied striving against sin.

4. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace help the Christian to throw off spiritual weariness and discouragement?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace teaches the Christian that the outcome of his conflict with sin is a certainty. His final salvation and his final attainment of absolute moral perfection are not in doubt — they are sure. They are as sure as the faithfulness of the eternal God, who cannot lie, by the terms of that "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure" which is all the Christian's salvation, and all his desire. To the Christian, the Covenant of Grace is an unconditional covenant of promise. The only real condition of this covenant has been fully met and provided by the Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ — even His own precious blood shed on Calvary, and His own perfect righteousness of His life under the law. Thus Christ by His blood and righteousness has PURCHASED AND PAID FOR the Christian's final attainment of absolute moral perfection. That which the Lord Jesus Christ has already purchased and paid for cannot fail to be accomplished. The knowledge, from the Word of God, of this absolute certainty, provides the Christian with a strong encouragement in his desperate battle with evil, especially the evil which he finds in his own nature.

5. Does the certainty of the Christian's attaining absolute holiness, which is promised in the Covenant of Grace, imply that the Christian need not exert himself against sin, but can "let go" and leave the work of sanctification to God?

Certainly not. No true Christian will ever take any promise of the Bible as an excuse for sluggishness or sins of neglect. If anyone urges God's promise of absolute holiness as a pretext for lack of effort, that only shows that that person does not really know God. To the born again Christian, the promise will lead to earnest effort in resisting sin.

LESSON 29

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 1. What is Christian Education?

"But, notwithstanding the clear representations given by God in the mirror of his works, both of himself and of his everlasting dominion, such is our stupidity, that, always inattentive to these obvious testimonies, we derive no advantage from them. For, with regard to the structure and very beautiful organization of the world, how few of us there are, who, when lifting up their eyes to heaven, or looking round on the various regions of the earth, direct their minds to the remembrance of the Creator, and do not rather content themselves with a view of his works, to the total neglect of their Author! And

with respect to those things that daily happen out of the ordinary course of nature, is it not the general opinion, that men are rolled and whirled about by the blind temerity of fortune, rather than governed by the providence of God?" — John Calvin, "Institutes of the Christian Religion", Book I, Chap. V, Section XI.

Scripture References:

Psalm 36:9. Gen. 1:1. Psalm 139:17,18. Heb. 11:3. Human beings can have no truly adequate knowledge of anything except in relation to God.

Gen. 18:19. Deut. 11:18-21. The Covenant of Grace requires that parents teach the truth of God to their children.

Psalm 94:10; 119:66. Prov. 1:7; 2:6. Knowledge, wisdom and understanding come from God.

Questions:

1. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to the subject of Christian education?

In the administration of the Covenant of Grace, God has constituted Christian parents the representatives of their children. On the parents rests the responsibility for carrying out the covenant obligations with regard to the children. Among these covenant obligations one of the most important is that of providing for the Christian education of the covenant children. This is implied in infant Baptism, and is specifically mentioned in the vows taken by parents when their children are baptized. It is the solemn covenant duty of the parents to see that their children receive an adequate Christian education.

2. What is Christian education?

Christian education is education of covenant children and youth by teachers who are Bible-believing Christians, which is God-centered in character and content, and God-glorifying in aim.

3. What is included in Christian education?

Rightly understood, Christian education includes both Christian religious education and Christian general education. That is to say, it includes the whole range and realm of truth and knowledge, both God's revelation in Scripture and His revelation in nature and history. Whether imparted by the home, the Church or the school, Christian education must lead covenant children and youth to view everything, without exception, in the light of the Triune God, and in relation to Him and His will.

4. How is Christian education often too narrowly thought of today?

In American Protestant circles it is very common to think of Christian education as limited to Christian religious education in the strict sense, that is, the study of the Bible and especially its message concerning the way of salvation. The common idea is that if our children have a good knowledge of the Bible, the way of salvation and Christian conduct, then their Christian education has been properly provided for, even though nine-tenths of their education (in the public schools) is carried on without so much as mentioning God. Even when covenant children are carefully taught the Bible and the way of salvation (in the home and the Church), in most cases they study history, science and other "ordinary" school subjects with no reference to God, just as if God did not count in the world of nature and the realm of human affairs.

5. What is wrong with this narrow idea of Christian education?

This too-narrow notion of Christian education is the product of a false separation of religion from life in general. Too easily we tend to think that God is important on the Sabbath but not on week-days; that God counts in Church but not in the laboratory; that we need God to understand religious truth, but not to understand scientific or historical truth. Too easily we omit God from large areas of human life. We must realize that at every point in our life we are concerned with God. The person who thinks that history or chemistry can be rightly understood without God is in danger of having a religion without God. God is God everywhere, all along the line, or He is not God at all.

6. What is the effect of this narrow idea of Christian education on our children and youth?

The inevitable effect is a deplorable division of their thinking into two separate compartments, religious and secular. The Christian education which they receive in the home and the Church teaches them to think of all of life in terms of God, His plans and purposes, His will, His kingdom. The secular education which they receive in the public schools teaches them to think of nearly all of life as having no connection with God. The realms of nature, history and human society are presented in the schools as if they were perfectly intelligible apart from God. God, creation and providence are regarded as irrelevant by the modern secular philosophy which dominates public education. Since the children and youth spend about 30 hours each week under the influence of this secular teaching which regards God as irrelevant, and only (at best) three or four hours weekly under the Christian teaching of the home and the Church, it is easy to see which type of teaching is likely to make the strongest impression on their minds. Since God is regarded as unnecessary by modern public school education, our children naturally tend to absorb the idea that for most of human life, God does not count, though there is a special, separate, isolated compartment of life called "religion", where belief in God has its place.

Modern secular education not only ignores God as irrelevant; it also propagates teachings which are directly contradictory to the truth revealed in the Bible. For example, the Bible teaches that mankind is a special creation of God; many schools and colleges today teach that mankind is a product of a gradual process of evolution, by inherent forces, from the brutes. The Bible teaches an absolute, unchangeable standard of right and wrong revealed by God; many schools and colleges today teach that moral standards are the product of experience and change with the times. What can be the result of exposing our covenant children and youth

to such contradictory teachings, except acute mental and spiritual indigestion? How can our children and youth gain a unified and consistent view of the universe and of human life, when their education is divided between two irreconcilable philosophies of life — Christian and secular? Is it any wonder that many, after passing through our secular schools and colleges, come to the conclusion that God is unnecessary for most of life, and Christianity concerns only mystical experience or “spiritual life”?

7. What is involved in truly Christian religious education?

Truly Christian religious education must be conducted by parents and teachers who are themselves Christian believers, having faith in God and His Word. Those whose standpoint is that of modern skepticism or unbelief cannot carry on truly Christian education, and will do more harm than good to those under their care. Nor can those who are only slightly interested, or not interested at all, in Christianity, carry on truly Christian religious education. If their heart is not in it, it cannot be a success. Truly Christian religious education must also be orthodox; that is, it must be true, in its character and content, to the historic Christian faith revealed in the Bible. Much that is called Christian religious education today is far from orthodox, being filled with modern heresies such as evolution, “modern” views which deny the real inspiration and authority of the Bible, etc. Such “modern” religious education is really worse than none at all. It is not an advantage but a menace.

8. What is involved in truly Christian general education?

Like Christian religious education, general education to be truly Christian must be conducted by teachers who are themselves Christian believers, and who can therefore approach the subject matter of education from the standpoint of faith

in the God of the Bible and faith in God's Word. The textbooks that are used should be written by believing Christians, from the standpoint of faith in the true God. The whole range and content of education must be God-centered; that is, God must be the unifying principle and the interpreting principle of the whole curriculum. It is not enough that direct contradictions of the Bible be excluded. To exclude advocacy of the theory of human evolution will accomplish little unless the truth of divine creation and providence be put in its place. We must avoid not merely crude and gross denials of Bible truth, but the far more prevalent and subtle notion that most school subjects can be taught from a “neutral” point of view — the notion that God has nothing important to do with most of life and knowledge. In truly Christian general education, everything must be God-centered and interpreted in the light of God.

9. Why is the problem of Christian education specially difficult?

Because it is a very complex problem, involving our whole philosophy of life, including our most basic beliefs. Multitudes of present-day Christians fail to realize the baffling complexity of this problem, and think that it can be easily solved by some particular concrete proposal, such as the reading of a chapter of the Bible daily in every public school classroom. It is not so simple as that. Adding some Bible reading or even some sound Bible teaching to a school curriculum which is based on the idea that God is irrelevant for science, history and society, will not solve the problem; it will only produce confusion the minds of the pupils. The Bible must be taught, certainly; but beyond that, **the whole curriculum must be integrated by the Christian view of God, man, knowledge and history.** Otherwise the pupils will tend to acquire a double-barrelled, unreconciled view of life — a hodge-podge of Christianity and secularism.

LESSON 30

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 2. Responsibility for Christian Education

“The duties of parents to children relate to their health, their maintenance, their education, and morals In respect to their education and morals, great care should be taken. As it relates to the present life, habits of courage, application, trade, prudence, labor, justice, contentment, truth, benevolence, &c. should be formed. Their capacities, age, temper, strength, inclination, should be consulted, and advice given suitable to these. As it relates to a future life, their minds should be informed as to the being of God, his perfections, glory, and the mode of salvation by Jesus Christ. They should be catechised; allured to a cheerful attendance on divine worship;

instructed in the Scriptures; kept from bad company; prayed with and for; and, above all, a good example set them, Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1,2.” -- Buck's Theological Dictionary, pp. 324-5.

“Do you promise to pray with and for your child in private and family worship; to provide for his temporal well-being, and for his education as God enables you; to acquaint him with his lost condition and need of a Saviour; and to instruct him in the plan of salvation and the principles of our covenanted profession?” — Vows of parents in infant Baptism, in “The Directory for the Worship of God” adopted by the Reformed

Presbyterian Church of N.A. in 1945 (emphasis supplied).

Scripture References:

Mark 5:22,23,36-43; 9:17-27. In the Covenant of Grace, God has constituted parents the representatives of their children.

1 Sam. 2:12, 22-24; 3:11-14. God holds parents responsible for the proper training and discipline of their children.

2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14,15. Where parents are faithful to their covenant obligations, their children will grow up to know, love and serve God.

Questions:

1. Where has God placed the primary responsibility for the Christian education of covenant children and youth?

Few evangelical Christians would question the importance of Christian education for covenant children and youth, though there is much difference of opinion as to just what Christian education properly includes. But when we come to discuss the question of where God has placed the primary responsibility for the Christian education of the children of Christian families, we find considerable diversity of belief. The three answers that are commonly given are (1) the home; (2) the Church; (3) the State. It should be noted that the question is not whether the home, the Church and the State may each have some connection with, or responsibility for, Christian education, but rather, Where has God placed the PRIMARY responsibility for the Christian education of covenant children and youth. It should also be noted that the question does not concern responsibility for the evangelization and Christian teaching of the millions of children whose parents are not Christian believers; that is indeed an important question, but it is distinct from the question of responsibility for the Christian education of COVENANT children and youth.

This question should be decided, not on the basis of custom or tradition, but on the basis of Biblical teachings and principles. It is clear in the Bible that God has constituted Christian parents the representatives of their children during the latter's minority. All parents have a NATURAL responsibility for the care and education of their children; besides this natural responsibility, Christian parents have an added COVENANT responsibility for the Christian education of their children.

Accordingly, it must be affirmed that the PRIMARY responsibility for the Christian education of covenant children and youth rests upon the parents. Whatever the Church and the State may do or not do, the responsibility for seeing to

it that covenant children receive truly Christian education rests ultimately upon the parents. God holds the parents responsible for their discharge of this responsibility. At the Judgment Day the parents must give answer for their action in this respect. The faults and failings of the Church and the State will not excuse Christian parents for having neglected to provide truly Christian education for their children.

2. What is meant by saying that the primary responsibility for the Christian education of covenant children rests upon the parents?

This does not mean that the parents must themselves personally conduct and carry out all parts and phases of the education of their children. Under modern conditions of life that would in most cases prove to be impossible, as well as unwise. It is not meant that the parents must undertake the whole task themselves, but that they are responsible for seeing that the task is adequately done. It is clear that in ordinary cases the only practical way for children and youth to be educated is in schools. There are various kinds of schools, such as public (operated by the State), parochial and denominational (operated by the Church), and private (operated by corporations or voluntary associations). It is the responsibility of the parents to see that their children, whatever school they attend, receive truly Christian education, not modern secular education.

3. In what sense is Christian education the responsibility of the Church?

Subordinately to the primary responsibility of the parents, the Church shares with the home the responsibility for the Christian RELIGIOUS education of the covenant children and youth. This is evident from two considerations: (1) the Church has a teaching function with respect to all its members, and since the children are members, the Church must teach them the truths of the Christian faith; (2) the covenant children are to be encouraged and commanded to make a public profession of personal faith in Christ as their Saviour, and come to the Lord's table; and in order that they may do this in a worthy manner, the Church must teach them in preparation for the privileges and duties of communicant church membership.

4. Is Christian general education properly the function of the Church?

No. While the Church clearly has a function to perform in the Christian religious education of covenant children, we do not believe that Christian general education is properly the function of the Church. Our children should be taught literature and history, science and "social studies", in a God-centered curriculum from a Christian point of view, but it can hardly be proved from the

Bible that it is the function of the Church as an institution to engage in general education—to teach ordinary school subjects. For this reason, we do not believe that parochial schools (schools owned and operated by a Church congregation) are the right answer to the problem of Christian general education. We should recognize, of course, the immense amount of good that has been done by Protestant parochial schools in resisting the trend toward secularism in our country. Still it has not been shown that the Bible warrants the Church as a body carrying on this type of activity.

5. Is general education primarily the function of the State?

Our American public school system has become so much a part of our life that we tend to take it for granted that it is the business of the State to educate our children, without seriously asking ourselves on what grounds this assumption rests. We should realize that almost universal education operated by the State is a comparatively new development in the history of the world, and the supposed priority of the State in the field of education is neither a teaching of the Bible, nor a self-evident truth of reason. Mere custom and

tradition, of course, do not prove anything concerning matters of basic principle.

Certainly the State has a legitimate, and even necessary, function in connection with general education. This may be summarized as follows: (1) the State must see to it that all children in the nation receive education; (2) the State must set proper minimum standards for education, both as to quantity and as to quality, to which all schools, under whatever auspices they may be conducted, are required to conform; (3) where education of children is not provided for by the parents, the Church or voluntary associations, it is the duty of the State to establish and operate schools for their education.

6. Does patriotism require that all children attend the public schools operated by the State?

Of course not. The attempt has been repeatedly made, in various states, to pass legislation outlawing all private and Church schools and requiring all children to attend the public schools. In every case such legislation has either failed of enactment, or has been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States. The United States is still a free country, and patriotism does not require absolute uniformity of education.

LESSON 31

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 3. Attempted Solutions of the Problem

“Let us remember, then, in every consideration of our own nature, that there is one God, who governs all natures, and who expects us to regard him, to direct our faith to him, to worship and invoke him. For nothing is more preposterous than to enjoy such splendid advantages, which proclaim within us their divine origin, and to neglect the Author who bountifully bestows them.” —John Calvin, “Institutes of the Christian Religion”, Book I, Chap. V, Sec. VI.

Scripture References:

Prov. 1: 7. Genuine education begins with the fear of the Lord.

Prov. 8:32-36. Benefits of the divine wisdom.

Psalms 119:97-104. True wisdom is attained from the study of the Scriptures.

Questions:

1. What confusion has affected many Protestant attempts to solve the problem of Christian education?

Many earnest people who have been seriously concerned about the problem of Christian education have over-simplified the problem by failing to discern that there are really two distinct pro-

blems involved, namely (1) the problem of how the millions of non-Christian children of our country are to be reached with Christian religious and moral teachings; and (2) the problem of how Christian parents are to discharge their obligations in the Covenant of Grace to provide truly Christian religious and general education for their children. Though these two problems are really distinct, they have often been confused. The first problem concerns the moral and religious instruction of children and youth who are outside the Covenant of Grace; the other concerns the educational obligations of Christian parents toward the covenant children and youth. All attempts to work out a single over-all solution that will solve BOTH of these problems have failed, and must fail. Each problem must be faced on its own merits and the proper solution sought.

2. What are the principal attempted solutions of the problem of Christian education in the United States?

Teaching in the home, Sabbath schools, Vacation Bible Schools, Week Day Church School classes, Bible reading in public schools, Bible teaching in public schools, “Released time” programs, Parochial schools, and Private Christian schools operated by associations of Christian parents.

3. Why are home teaching and Sabbath schools not satisfactory solutions of the problem of Christian education?

Home teaching and Sabbath schools, if truly Biblical in content, are of course commendable and should be encouraged, especially since in the case of many children they are the only sources of religious instruction. But they cannot be regarded as adequate, for they afford far too little time for teaching. The Sabbath school at best provides 30 to 45 minutes a week for actual teaching. Even if the teachers are competent and the pupils regular in attendance, punctual and attentive (which are far from always being the case!) only a very limited amount of teaching can be done. Sometimes Sabbath school lesson courses lack continuity, and the resulting knowledge of the Bible is vague and incoherent.

Nor can home teaching and Sabbath schools counteract the effect of 30 hours a week of secular education in the public school. If our children are taught about God 30 minutes a week and exposed to education without God 30 hours a week, we should not be surprised if they grow up to think that God is not very important for most of our life and activities.

4. What is the value of Vacation Bible Schools, Week Day Church School classes and "Released Time" programs?

These various activities, insofar as they are truly Biblical in what they teach, are a help toward reducing the religious ignorance of the children and youth of our land. They bring Christian teaching to many children who otherwise would not come in contact with it. Therefore they should be encouraged and supported by Christian people in the absence of an adequate solution of the problem of Christian education. But it is a great pity when such efforts as Vacation Bible Schools, etc., are regarded as a real solution of the problem. Efforts of this type have some value, but they do not solve the problem; they are only makeshifts or stopgaps devised to mitigate a desperate situation. As long as the curriculum of our public schools is secular and man-centered in character, any plan which merely supplements the public school by adding something to it externally, cannot solve the problem; it is only a makeshift.

5. What can be said in favor of reading and teaching the Bible in the public schools?

The public schools exist to educate children and youth, and since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7), there can be no genuine education that is not God-honoring and God-centered. Any education that leaves God out or regards God as irrelevant is not really education, though it may pass by that name. Since God must be the key and unifying principle of

all real education, we conclude that the Bible should be both read and taught in our public schools.

Moreover the Bible should be read and taught honestly, in its true meaning. It is possible to select verses from the Bible for reading in schools in such a way as to give a false impression as to the message of the Bible; for example, verses mentioning Jesus Christ may be omitted to avoid offending the Jews. In teaching the Bible, it is possible to present merely ethical lessons and largely leave God out. Such reading and teaching of the Bible is not only dishonest, but harmful.

But even when the Bible is honestly read and adequately taught, this does not constitute a solution of the problem of Christian education. What about all the rest of the curriculum? Are the pupils to study the Bible with God, and science without God? Merely adding Bible study to a secular curriculum produces an artificial patchwork, not a unified body of knowledge. Carrying a pocket Testament does not make a man a Christian, and tacking on Bible lessons does not make an evolutionistic, man-centered, secular school system Christian. What is needed is to revolutionize the whole system of our public schools, so that God becomes the center and unifying principle of the whole curriculum. God should be the hub of the wheel, from which all the subjects and activities radiate like the spokes of a wheel.

We should favor the reading and teaching of the Bible in the public schools; we should guard zealously against modernistic teaching of the Bible in the schools; and we should realize that reading and teaching the Bible in the public schools is only a step in the right direction, not a solution of the problem of Christian education.

6. What can be said for parochial day schools, and private Christian day schools operated by associations of Christian parents?

Probably these two types of activity come the nearest to solving the problem of Christian education. In fact, Christian day schools operated, not by the Church, but by voluntary associations, would seem to constitute the logical solution of the problem of the Christian education of covenant children and youth. We have already registered an objection to parochial or church-operated day schools (see Question 4 in the preceding lesson). Christian day schools operated by associations of parents do not, of course, solve the problem of imparting Christian instruction to the millions of children of non-Christian homes; that is not their purpose. But for their intended purpose, namely truly Christian education of covenant children and youth, this type of schools would seem to be ideal. The difficulties do not concern matters of principle; they concern practical and financial questions.

LESSON 32

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 4. The Public School and Christian Education

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”
—Ex. 20:3.

“Nor will it be sufficient for you to refrain from worshipping any other god, unless you also refrain from imitating certain nefarious despisers, who take the compendious method of treating all religions with contempt. But the observance of this precept must be preceded by true religion, leading our minds to the living God; that being endued with the knowledge of him, they may aspire to admire, fear, and worship his majesty, to receive his communication of blessings, to request his aid upon all occasions, to acknowledge and celebrate the magnificence of his works, as the sole end in all the actions of our lives . . . For it is criminal to detract even the smallest portion from his glory; he must be left in possession of all that belongs to him.”—John Calvin, “Institutes of the Christian Religion”, Book II, Chap. VIII, Sec. XVI.

Scripture References:

Psalm 19:1-6. Rom. 1:19,20. The world of nature is a revelation of God, and cannot be rightly understood apart from Him.

Gen. 3:15. Human history is the age-long conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and cannot be rightly interpreted merely in terms of social development or natural processes.

Eccles. 1:2, 16-18; 12:1, 13. Without God, knowledge and education are vain and meaningless, without real satisfaction or enduring value.

Questions:

1. Should the public schools provide Christian education?

Yes. As we have already seen in the preceding lesson, only God-honoring and God-centered education is real education; therefore if the State is to engage in the task of education, it should provide Christian education. Much that is called education today is not really education, for it does not give the pupils any consistent, unified view of life and the world; it inculcates merely an assortment of incompatible viewpoints, fragmentary bits of knowledge and some practical skills or techniques. There is no over-all unifying principle discernible; or so far as there is one, it is a man-centered, evolutionary philosophy of human progress, not the God of the Bible. The pupils emerge from this process with a good deal of assorted information, and no idea whatever as to what it is really all about. Such is not really

education. The public schools, to provide real education, will have to present God as the unifying principle and explanation of it all.

2. What is involved in making the public schools truly Christian?

Making the public schools truly Christian is not a simple or superficial matter, as some suppose. We have already seen that it cannot be accomplished by simply adding Bible reading or Bible lessons to a man-centered, secular course of study. We should not harbor the delusion that slight or easily accomplished changes will turn the American public school system into an ideal instrument of Christian education. We are discussing, not what is practically attainable under present conditions, but what would be involved in a truly Christian public school system.

To be truly Christian, the public schools would have to have (1) daily reading and teaching of the Bible according to the faith of evangelical Christianity; (2) a curriculum in which all subjects are taught from a God-centered viewpoint; (3) textbooks and lesson materials prepared by believing Christians with a God-centered approach to their subjects; (4) teachers who are personally evangelical believers in Jesus Christ.

It may be objected, of course, that such a program is revolutionary and impossible in schools operated by a secular State which does not recognize God in its fundamental law. This is no doubt true. However Christianity is a revolutionary religion, which was long ago accused of turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6). We believe that God-ignoring secularism is wrong, both in the State itself and in the schools operated by the State.

3. If it is impossible to make the public schools thoroughly and truly Christian at the present time, should we aim at something more easily attainable, such as the introduction of non-sectarian religious and moral teaching into the schools?

If by “non-sectarian” teaching is meant simply **non-denominational** teaching—teaching which avoids doctrinal points peculiar to particular denominations, such as special views of Baptism or the form of church government—then it will be almost universally agreed that religious and moral teaching in the public schools should be “non-sectarian”. Certainly the Church, not the school, is the proper organ for teaching the distinctive principles of a particular denomination.

Unfortunately, however, the term “non-sectarian” is being commonly used in the sense of

DOCTRINALLY NON-COMMITTAL, that is, not taking sides between evangelical Christianity and contrary systems of religion. A widely publicized book on religion in the public schools, for example, speaks approvingly of a textbook for public school Bible teaching which was prepared jointly by a Quaker, a Roman Catholic and a Unitarian—representatives of mysticism, sacerdotalism and denial of the Trinity. Such “non-sectarian” teaching could not be loyal to genuine evangelical Christianity, and at best could rise no higher than a vague moralism or “quest for ethical values”.

It is always wrong to lower our ideal to something less than what the Word of God requires. The Christian Amendment Movement could immediately gain wide popular support if it would agree to abandon its effort to get the Lord Jesus Christ recognized in the United States Constitution, and compromise the issue by seeking for a recognition of “Almighty God”. Such a compromise would no doubt be “practical”, but it would not be right. With respect to Christian education

in our public school system, we should never give up the high ideal of full conformity to the whole will of God. We may not aim at anything less than the sum-total of what God requires.

In particular, we should beware of so-called “non-sectarian” religious teaching in our public schools. Some of the most poisonous modernism has been introduced into such materials in the past. While the well-known action of the U. S. Supreme Court may seem to have made religion in the public schools a closed issue for the time being, this may be changed in the future, and we should be alert to the principles that are involved. If at some future time religious teaching is introduced in to the public schools, it may be provided that the textbooks and materials shall be prepared by the state universities. If that is done, Christian people should be prepared to undertake a thorough investigation of the whole matter, for such textbooks may be expected to be filled with “higher criticism”, evolution, denial of the real inspiration and authority of the Bible, and other destructive “modern” religious teachings.

LESSON 33

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 5. Privately Sponsored Christian Day Schools

“Perhaps the underlying cause in our day of the breakdown of the social order is the false philosophy which is produced by a false explanation. Evolution as an explanation does not and cannot explain things in true perspective. Entrenched in the highest citadel of man’s thinking it is known as modernism. It is a hydra-headed monster insidiously wrecking the faith of youth and is undergirding the nonsensical superman or super race mania. It is a dangerous philosophy which insists on the centrality of man in the universe and human reason as the sole and all-sufficient source of knowledge. It denies the spiritual nature of man and makes Christianity homo-centric with evolution as the agency of human progress. In this vicious system God has been humanized, man has been deified and sin ethicized. This commonly accepted system has produced a demoralizing effect in many lands and man is inflated with his own importance.”—From the Report of the Committee on the Signs of the Times, Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of N. A., 1945 (Minutes, p. 92).

Scripture References:

Mal. 4:6. Eph. 6:4. God expects parents to be concerned about the spiritual welfare of their children.

Prov. 4:1,2; 13:1; 15:5. It is the duty of parents to instruct their children in knowledge.

Deut. 4:9,10; 11:18,19. Godly parents are to teach their children the revealed truth of God.

Questions:

1. How can Christian day schools be classified?

They can be classified in two groups, namely (1) Parochial schools, that is, schools owned and operated by a church congregation; and (2) Non-parochial schools, that is, schools not owned and operated by a church congregation.

2. What are the chief denominations maintaining parochial schools?

(a) Roman Catholics (10,188 schools with 2,607,879 pupils in 1947); (b) Lutherans (1,111 schools with 89,710 pupils in 1947); (c) Seventh Day Adventists (970 schools with 35,219 pupils in 1947).

3. What are the chief types of non-parochial Christian day schools?

(a) Those of Reformed or Calvinistic faith (120 schools with 21,175 pupils in 1947); (b) Those of Mennonite faith (35 schools with 2,106 pupils in 1947); (c) Other evangelical groups (86 schools with 10,214 pupils in 1947).

4. What has been the rate of increase of pupil enrollment in these schools during recent years?

In the decade from 1937 to 1947 the following increases in enrollment were registered: Roman Catholic parochial schools, 7%. Lutheran parochial schools, 20%. Seventh Day Adventist parochial schools, 55%. Reformed or Calvinistic

schools, 54%. Mennonite schools, 1580%. Other evangelical groups, no statistics for 1937. (The foregoing statistics, in the answers to questions 2, 3 and 4, include both elementary schools and high schools—grades one to twelve).

5. Where can information and practical advice be obtained by persons considering establishing a Christian day school in their community?

Write to the National Association of Christian Schools, 542 South Dearborn Street, Chicago 5, Illinois. This association, which is designed to serve all schools of evangelical faith, has excellent, up-to-date literature on the subject.

6. What are some of the more common objections to Christian day schools, and how can they be answered?

(a) It is objected that privately supported Christian day schools make no provision for the evangelization and Christian teaching of millions of children from non-Christian homes in our country. Answer: This is true, but it does not concern the intended purpose of Christian day schools, which is to provide Christian education for the children of CHRISTIAN parents. Do we hesitate to provide proper food and clothing for our children, because there are millions of children in the world that are underfed and ill-clad?

(b) It is objected that privately supported Christian day schools are expensive. Answer: This is true. The real question, however, is one of importance, not of expense. Perhaps most American Christian families would serve God better if they would spend less on luxuries and more on Christian education for their children. What are the souls of our children worth, in terms of dollars and cents? However, Christian day schools are not so expensive as is sometimes supposed. Representative figures can be obtained from the National Association of Christian Schools.

(c) It is objected that privately supported Christian day schools are contrary to democracy. Answer: Democracy, rightly understood, includes civil and religious liberty, involving the sacred right of parents to have their children educated according to their own faith and conscience. The U. S. Supreme Court has declared unconstitutional legislation which would require all children in a certain state to attend the public schools. This attitude of the Supreme Court shows that private schools are NOT contrary to democracy. Real democracy is not Statism or dictatorship, and does not require absolute uniformity of education.

(d) It is objected that privately supported Christian day schools give their pupils the idea that they are different from other children, resulting in a proud and Pharisaic attitude toward those who attend public schools. Answer: Certainly Christian people ARE different from those who

are not Christians, and believers ARE better than unbelievers or irreligious people. We should carefully inculcate into our children the truth that they, as children of the Covenant of Grace, they are different from the world, and to be separate from the world. The lack of this covenant-consciousness has been deplorable in American Protestantism. God's covenant people certainly are better than others. However, this is not due to nature, for by nature all are sinners and totally depraved. That God's children are better than others is due simply and solely to the sovereign grace of God. A truly Christian school will, of course, teach that all men are lost and wicked sinners by nature, and that Christians are saved only by divine grace, for which they themselves deserve no credit whatever. All glory belongs to God. Such teaching will hardly produce a proud or Pharisaic attitude.

(e) It is objected that privately supported Christian schools are small and that they do not impart education of high quality. Answer: Those who raise this objection have not taken the trouble to ascertain the real facts. There are some thirty thousand pupils attending non-parochial Christian day schools (elementary and high) in America today. Many of these schools have hundreds of pupils, fine modern buildings and the best of up-to-date equipment, as well as thoroughly trained, conscientious teachers. Their graduates compare very favorably with the graduates of the best public schools in educational attainments. It is notorious that many public schools of the present day, under the influence of what is called "progressive education", are turning out graduates who cannot spell correctly, do not speak grammatical English, and whose knowledge of history and geography is woefully deficient. The truth is that the education provided by private Christian schools is not only truly Christian in character, but is also often superior from the academic point of view to that offered by public schools in the same communities.

7. How can properly trained teachers be obtained for private Christian day schools?

Write to the National Association of Christian Schools, which maintains a teachers' agency.

8. What are the principal advantages of private Christian day schools, from the standpoint of Christian parents?

(a) Christian day schools provide daily teaching of the Bible according to the evangelical Christian Faith. (b) They are staffed with teachers who are believing Christians and are concerned about the religious and spiritual welfare of their pupils. (c) All subjects are taught from a God-centered, Christian point of view. (d) The entire course of study is unified in accordance with Biblical truth. (e) All anti-Christian teach-

ings such as evolution, modernism, etc., are excluded. (f) Christian day schools help their pupils to have a sense of belonging to the special, covenant people of God, and of being separated from the unbelieving world.

9. What are some of the cities where large Christian day schools are operated by associations of parents?

Chicago, Ill., Denver, Colo., Grand Rapids, Mich., Paterson, N. J., among others.

Note: For the statistics and much of the information in this lesson we are indebted to publications of the National Association of Christian Schools, 542 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill.

LESSON 34

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 6. Functions of Home, Church and School

"Under Christ's government . . . representative responsibility includes natural representation, the result of natural relation. Hence parents are responsible for the education and moral training of their children, and one generation covenants, contracts, and acts representatively for the generations following, whilst remote generations enjoy the fruits of their ancestors' obedience, are credited with their well-doing, or punished for their transgressions."—James Kennedy, in "Memorial Volume", 1872, p. 54.

Scripture References:

Psalms 22:25; 65:1. Eccles. 5:4,5. We are faithfully to pay our vows to God.

Josh. 24:15. Joshua and his family resolve to serve the Lord.

Isa. 30:20,21. Godly teachers are a gift of divine grace.

2 Tim. 2:2. The teaching function of the Church.

Questions:

1. What three institutions perform functions in the education of our children and youth?

The home, the Church and the school.

2. Can any one of these institutions carry out the whole task of Christian education?

No. The task is too great for any one of these institutions. The ideal situation would be harmonious cooperation between the home, the school and the Church in the great task of the Christian education of covenant children and youth. Unfortunately most of our children attend public schools which are practically devoid of Christian teaching, and which often inculcate anti-Christian teachings. So under present conditions, it often comes down to a case of the home and the Church having to carry the whole load of Christian teaching and at the same time to try to counteract the secular influence and wrong teachings of the public schools. This present condition is of course far from satisfactory, as more and more Christian people are coming to see. However, by the grace

of God, the Church and the home together can accomplish much, in spite of the non-Christian influence of the schools. This does not imply, of course, that Christian parents may regard our secular public schools with complacency.

3. Is the task of each of these institutions identical with that of the others?

No. While the home, the school and the Church should cooperate in the task of Christian education, each has its own function to perform, which it can undertake better than the others. To some extent, of course, these functions will overlap; yet each has a distinct character and emphasis.

4. What is the special task of the home, or the parents, in the Christian education of the children?

First of all, the parents are the sole teachers of the children in their earliest years, when they are very impressionable. The influence of godly parents and faithful teaching in pre-school years may be very great in after life. Secondly, the parents should set a godly example by Christian standards of conduct in the home, faithful observance of family worship, regular attendance at Church services and prayer meetings, etc. Thirdly, Christian parents should impress the stories of the Bible and the truths of the way of salvation upon the minds of their children from their early years, as soon as they are able to understand. Fourthly, parents should exercise firm but loving discipline over their children, not tolerating stubbornness or perverse conduct; when children are allowed by fond but misguided parents to behave just as they please in the home, they will prove a great problem to pastors and teachers in Church and school. Fifthly, parents should provide a supply of sound, interesting Christian literature for their children, and encourage them to read it, and should guard against promiscuous reading of worldly books and magazines.

5. What is the special task of the school in Christian education?

The school should teach the Bible and elementary Christian truth to the children, in addi-

tion to teaching "ordinary" school subjects from a Christian point of view. In Bible teaching, the effort should be made to enable the pupils to acquire a good, coherent knowledge of the historical contents of the Bible. It is a shame that children of Christian families should grow up not knowing that Abraham lived before Joshua, or David before Daniel. In addition to Bible history, there should be teaching of the way of salvation, as well as insistence, in precept and practice, on the Biblical standard of conduct.

The school is not the place for teaching the distinctive principles of a particular denomination (except, of course, in case of a school established and maintained wholly by that denomination), nor the more advanced aspects of doctrinal truth; these are the province of the Church.

6. What is the special task of the Church in Christian education?

While the province of the Church will inevitably overlap to some extent those of the home and the school, still the Church has special functions to perform. These include indoctrination, or instruction in the doctrines of the Christian faith,

teaching of the Church's catechisms, and special instruction by the pastor preparatory to making a public profession of faith and being admitted to the Lord's Supper.

7. What is the general importance of Christian education today?

It is of exceedingly great importance for the future of the Church and the Kingdom of God. It may be truly affirmed that the problem of Christian education is THE great unsolved problem of American Protestantism, and that the deplorable, ignorant, run-down, lukewarm condition of many churches is the result of the lack of a consistent and adequate program of Christian education. There is much recognition of the need for revival in America today. But if there is to be revival with permanent results, there will have to be a solution of the problem of Christian education. Without a substantial knowledge of divine truth, revivals and their results are bound to be transitory. American Protestantism needs to realize the desperate need for adequate Christian education; Christian parents need to re-think this whole question in the light of their obligations in the Covenant of Grace.

LESSON 35

The Covenant of Grace and the Completeness of Calvinism

"He has a great and high respect to the covenant. It is the covenant of the great God, with His great and eternal Son, for the honor and glory of His great name; and therefore He cannot but have a great and high respect unto it. His great name is manifested in it; and therefore, when we plead His respect to the covenant, we plead in effect, saying, 'What wilt thou do for thy great name?'"

"He has a dear and lovely respect to the covenant, for it is the covenant of His grace and love, wherein He shows His infinite love to Christ, and through Him to a company of wretched sinners. It is a covenant of kindness, Isa. 54:10, 'My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee'; intimating, His covenant of peace is a covenant of kindness, wherein He manifests His dearest love: therefore He has a dear respect to it."—Ralph Erskine (in sermon on Psalm 79:20, entitled "Faith's Plea Upon God's Covenant").

Scripture References:

Isa. 57:15. The majesty and the condescension of God.

James 2:23. Gen. 18:17. Psalm 25:14. Isa. 54:5. Jer. 31:32. The spiritual intimacy between God and His people established by the Covenant of Grace.

Gen. 17:1. Deut. 4:23; 29:9. Psalm 103:17, 18. Heb. 12:22-29. The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasizes man's responsibility to God.

Questions:

1. What objection is often urged against Calvinism, or the Reformed Faith?

It is often asserted by critics of Calvinism, that this system of theology is very one-sided and over-stresses God, God's glory, God's decrees, God's works, etc., while failing to do justice to other aspects of Biblical truth such as God's loving kindness, man's moral responsibility, man's free agency, etc. Some go so far as to say that Calvinism and Arminianism are simply two sides of the same picture; that both are equally true, each emphasizing a truth which the other neglects; that is, Calvinism stressing God's sovereignty while Arminianism stresses man's freedom and accountability. (Since Calvinism and Arminianism are mutually **contradictory** systems at the points in dispute between them, it is really absurd to speak of them as if they were mutually **complementary**.)

2. Is it true that Calvinism is a one-sided system?

Certainly not. Those who say it is, either do not grasp the system in its integrity, or else they fail to realize that for each of the doctrines which they say Calvinism over-stresses, there is in the

system a complementary truth which prevents one-sidedness. Especially the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace brings out the beautiful, rounded completeness of the system of Christian theology called Calvinism, or the Reformed Faith.

3. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace bring out the completeness of the Reformed Faith?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasizes certain Biblical truths which serve to complement other truths of Calvinism, thus making the system complete. Of course, the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace is itself a distinctly Calvinistic doctrine. When we think of Calvinism, we should not think only of the so-called "Five Points of Calvinism" (1. Total depravity of man. 2. Unlimited sovereignty of God. 3. Limited or particular atonement. 4. Irresistible or efficacious grace. 5. The perseverance of the saints)—for these "Five Points" are NOT a summary of Calvinism, but only a list of the five doctrines which distinguish Calvinism from Arminianism. Besides these five points, there are many other doctrines, including the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, which go to make up the complete system of Calvinism or the Reformed Faith.

4. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace serve as a complement to other truths in the system of the Reformed Faith?

(a) In harmony with the Bible, the Reformed Faith strongly stresses the majesty and sovereignty of God. It ascribes all glory to God. Along with this stress on the glory of God, the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace brings out the condescension of God; though He is the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, yet He is willing to stoop to the level of His creatures, to call Himself the "Friend" and "Husband" of His people—even to humble Himself by becoming man, dwelling among us, and laying down Himself as a sacrifice for our sins on the cross. All this divine condescension and self-humbling is included in the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace; it is one of the doctrines of Calvinism, side by side with the truth of the divine majesty and glory.

(b) In harmony with the Bible, the Reformed Faith emphasizes God's absolute predestination; it teaches double predestination, including the election of some to eternal life and the reprobation of others to eternal death. This truth is strongly stressed by Calvinism, but not any more strongly than by the Bible itself. But alongside of this strong emphasis on God's absolute predestination, Calvinism insists on the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace which equally emphasizes God's love and mercy. The loving kindness of God is brought out by the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace especially in two ways: first, this doctrine shows that God's decree of election, while

it is sovereign on God's part, still is not an arbitrary decree; in His eternal decree of election, He has mercifully taken account of family relationships; He has elected believers and their children after them (Gen. 17:7; Psalm 103:17). Secondly, the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasizes the truth that God sincerely offers salvation to all sinners who hear the Gospel (Ezek. 33:11; Matt. 23:37; 1 Tim. 2:4). (This of course involves a paradox or apparent contradiction which human reason cannot solve. It is strength, not the weakness, of Calvinism that it does not attempt to solve such paradoxes by human reason, but allows both truths to stand side by side just as the Bible itself does).

(c) Calvinism or the Reformed Faith strongly stresses man's absolute dependence upon God for every element of his life, faith and salvation. In this respect, Calvinism is eminently Biblical, for according to the Bible God is absolutely sovereign and independent, whereas man, as a creature and a sinner, is absolutely dependent on God and absolutely unable to do anything whatever toward saving himself. It has often been urged against Calvinism that this doctrine of God's sovereignty and man's dependence cuts the nerve of all human activity or response to the Gospel and leads to fatalism or despair. But this criticism is unjustified, for the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace strongly emphasizes man's moral accountability to God. It is a very distorted view of things to say that Calvinism teaches God's sovereignty while Arminianism teaches man's responsibility. The truth is that Calvinism teaches God's sovereignty AND man's responsibility (without attempting to harmonize the two by human logic), whereas Arminianism rejects God's sovereignty and teaches man's responsibility alone. No Arminian ever preached man's responsibility as strongly as Calvinism insists on it, for it is precisely because God is sovereign that man is responsible to God, and Arminians do not believe that God is sovereign.

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasizes man's accountability to God, not only by teaching that the sinner is guilty and under the wrath of God for his sin, but also by commanding the sinner to repent and believe on Christ as his Saviour. Yet this does not imply any denial of man's utter dependence on God. The sinner is commanded to repent and believe; he cannot do so of himself; but by the work of the Holy Spirit, God GIVES to the elect sinner the very repentance and faith which God REQUIRES of the sinner (2 Tim. 2:25, 26; Eph. 2:8); hence the sinner's repenting and believing is no contradiction of his utter helplessness and dependence on God.

There are several other ways in which the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace serves to bring out the beautiful, rounded completeness of the Reformed Faith, but those that have been men-

tioned are sufficient for our purpose in this course of lessons. May God grant unto us to see the beautiful, well-proportioned and truly Biblical character of the Reformed theology, and to realize the vital importance, for the Church and the

Kingdom, of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace.

Note: This concludes this series of studies on "The Covenant of Grace: Its Meaning and Its Implications for the Church, the Family and the Christian".—Ed.

How Should We Study The Bible?

By J. G. Vos

Note: Inasmuch as there are only nine lessons on "The Covenant of Grace" in this issue, instead of the usual 13 doctrinal lessons, the following outline on the subject of Bible study is published here in place of the other lessons. A new series of lessons will be begun, D.V., in the next issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — Ed.

Scripture References:

2 Pet. 1:19-21. Luke 24:36-45. Acts 18:24-28.
2 Tim. 3:14-17.

Every Christian should study the Bible. But how? The Bible is a spiritual gold-mine. But what are the tools and methods by which we can mine the gold?

PART I

Mistaken Ideas about Bible Study

1. Agnosticism: the Idea that We Cannot Really Know the Truth

Read John 8:32. Jesus taught that truth exists, and that it can be learned and known. The agnostic denies that truth can be certainly known. He says that all we can really know is our own opinion or interpretation of the truth.

The agnostic's real trouble is that he does not believe in God to start with. The Bible does not try to prove by reason that God exists; it starts out by **assuming** God's existence (Gen. 1:1). Only "the fool" will say "there is no God" (Psalm 53:1). If we believe in the living and true God, we will take our stand with Jesus against the agnostic.

2. Romanism: the Bible Subordinated to the Decrees of the Church

The Roman Catholic Church has the entire Bible (and the Apocrypha besides), and believes that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and therefore of divine authority. Yet the Roman Catholic Church imparts to its people a wrong attitude toward the Bible.

A Roman Catholic edition of the Bible contains notes giving the Roman Catholic Church's "infallible" interpretation of the Bible. Thus the Church, not the Bible, is the Romanist's real authority in religion. He accepts the Bible only as it is "infallibly" interpreted for him by his church.

Protestants have their creeds and confessions of faith, but they place these beneath, not above, the Bible. They believe that their creeds are imperfect and may contain errors, and may have to be amended from time to time. Protestants accept the Bible as their real authority in reli-

gion. They accept the decrees of the Church only so far as they find these to be in accordance with the Bible itself.

3. Mysticism: the Bible Subordinated to Personal Feelings and Opinions

Mystics imagine that they can know the truth and the will of God by dreams, visions, "feelings", "hunches", or "guidance" received by prayer apart from the Bible.

The mystic is unwilling to accept the Bible as his authority, and unwilling to use his brains in connection with religion. His standard is always something inside himself, and he always wants to follow his feelings or vague impulses, rather than his intellect. He makes prayer a substitute for Bible study, not an aid to Bible study.

4. Rationalism: the Bible Subordinated to Human Reason, Science and Philosophy

The rationalist is just the opposite of the mystic, but he treats the Bible just as badly. The mystic doesn't want to use his brains at all in connection with religion, whereas the rationalist doesn't want to do anything but use his brains. He approaches the Bible as if it were a problem in mathematics.

The rationalist refuses to believe what he cannot explain in accordance with natural laws. Therefore he is usually an evolutionist and refuses to believe in the miracles of the Bible.

Facing the Bible, the Rationalist does not ask "What does it say?" or "What does it mean?" but rather, "Is it reasonable?", "Is it scientific?", "Does present-day experience lead us to suppose that it could have happened?" He starts by rob-

bing us of our infallible Bible, and ends by stealing our divine Saviour from us.

Rationalism is the root of most of the unbelief that has influenced the Protestant Churches of

our day. We should beware lest it gain an entrance into our own Church. It has already ruined many churches, and no denomination can be considered permanently safe from its peril.

PART II

True Principles of Bible Study---A. What is the Bible?

1. The Bible is the Inspired Word of God

Because the Bible is the inspired Word of God, it is unique among books. Other books may be "inspiring", but only the Bible is **INSPIRED**. This term means "God-breathed" (Greek text of 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). Scripture is what God has breathed out of His mouth.

Because the Bible is God's Word, it must be carefully handled, in a reverent and intelligent manner. Careless, superficial, slipshod study of the Bible is contemptible. Handling the Bible in a joking, flippant manner is sinful.

2. We Need the Help of the Holy Spirit to Understand the Bible

The Holy Spirit is the **REAL AUTHOR** of the Bible, back of the various human writers. Therefore **only He** can enable us really to grasp the true meaning of the Bible. If we are seeking the Holy Spirit's help, we will approach the Bible with a receptive spirit and a humble mind. Instead of asking proudly: "What do I say about the Bible?", we will humble ourselves, and ask, "What does the Bible say about me?"

3. The Bible is for All Men

The Bible is not intended only for scholars and experts. It has a plain message for plain people. As Protestants we believe that the Bible, just as it stands in any really honest translation of the Hebrew and Greek, is suitable for everyone.

B. Some Rules for Understanding the Bible

Acts 18:24-28

1. We Should Make a Right Use of Helps Toward Understanding the Bible

"Helps" means books about the Bible, including Bible dictionaries, maps, commentaries, catechisms, confessions of faith, and the like.

During the past 1900 years a lot of labor of godly men has been put into careful study of the Bible. We can obtain helps which present the accumulated, tested product of this labor. It would be foolish to neglect all that has been done in the past, and start to build the structure of Christian knowledge all over again "from scratch". True progress means building on the foundations laid by others in the past.

Those who say "No book but the Bible" are misguided. The apostle Paul used books (2 Tim. 4:13), and if he needed books, so will we. Some people despise all human helps such as commentaries, and say that they need only the help of the Holy Spirit to understand the Bible. They forget that the Holy Spirit has been guiding Christian people — the Church — in the study of the Bible for nearly two thousand years before they were born. Such people's attitude is really a very proud and conceited one. They despise what has been accomplished by the Holy Spirit's help in the past.

In using helps, we should make sure of obtaining those that are sound and true to the Bible as the Word of God. Unsound helps are worse than none at all, for they will break down

our faith rather than build it up. Also we should use helps as **HELPS**, not as **AUTHORITIES**. Our authority is the Bible; the helps are only to aid us in grasping its true meaning.

A very helpful volume is Halley's "Pocket Bible Handbook" (764 pages), obtainable at \$2.00 through your bookstore or from H. H. Halley, Box 774, Chicago 90, Illinois. Readers of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" will take issue with an occasional statement of this book, but its viewpoint is evangelical and it is a mine of conveniently arranged information.

2. Every Text or Portion of Scripture Has Only One Meaning

Those who claim to find two or more diverse meanings in one statement of Scripture are mistaken. Every statement of Scripture has one meaning only, the meaning intended by the Holy Spirit in that particular statement.

A statement of Scripture may have a **COMPLEX** meaning, that is, a meaning made up of two or more parts which supplement each other. But no text of Scripture can have two or more meanings which are contrary to each other. Thus Matt. 1:21 has a complex meaning: "He shall save his people from their sins" involves truth about the work of Christ, about the sinfulness of His people and about the salvation of His people. But these truths all fit together; they complement each other. On the other hand, it has been claimed that the incident of the wild gourds (2

Kings 4:38-41) has seven distinct meanings each different from the others. This is just foolishness. The incident of the wild gourds has precisely ONE meaning, namely, the almighty power of the God of Israel to perform a miracle for the benefit of His true servants and as a testimony to one of His true prophets. All mystical, spiritual, allegorical, etc., meanings are only imaginary — they are not really in the text.

A text or portion of Scripture may have many APPLICATIONS, but it can have only one MEANING. For example, "Thou shalt not steal" means one thing only, namely, that God forbids stealing. But this truth can be applied to individual life, family life, national and international life, etc.

It is also wrong to allegorize the contents of the Bible, that is, to look for a mysterious hidden meaning unrelated to the obvious meaning of the text or portion of Scripture. The Parable of the Good Samaritan has been much abused in this way. Its obvious meaning and intention is to provide an answer to the question "Who is my neighbor" by showing that my neighbor is anyone in need whom I have the power to help. Marvellous allegorical meanings have been "found" in this parable — the two pence are said to represent the means of grace (Word and sacraments) or the two sacraments (Baptism and Lord's Supper); the inn is said to represent the Church. It is even claimed that the Samaritan's reference to "when I come again I will repay thee" predicts the second coming of Christ and the Judgment Day.

The statement of Jesus "I am the true vine" (John 15:1) has been held to contain a prediction of His death on the cross, because the vine, unlike ordinary trees, has to have a trellis or arbor for support; this support is made of wood; the cross on which Christ was crucified was made of wood; therefore the trellis stands for the cross. There is really no limit to what human ingenuity can find in the Bible by such methods of interpretation. Many soul-destroying heresies have been bolstered up and propagated by such unsound methods of handling the Bible.

There are portions of the Bible which are symbolic. In such cases the symbolic meaning is the true meaning. For example, in John 10:14 the word "shepherd" is a symbol of Christ as our Redeemer; the word "sheep" symbolizes Christian people. To interpret this verse literally would be very foolish. In some parts of the Bible, such as the Book of Revelation, there are very many symbolic statements and descriptions; for example, the heavenly city is stated to be cube-shaped (Rev. 21:16).

There are also portions of the Bible which are typical. A "type" is the acting out on a smaller scale or a lower plane of some truth which is

later to be acted out on a larger scale or a higher plane. During the last war when synthetic rubber was badly needed, the first step was to build a small "pilot plant" which embodied the principle, but produced only small quantities of rubber. Later tremendous commercial plants were built to produce rubber in vast quantities, yet each of these large plants was an enlargement of the little "pilot plant". The Bible system of "types" and "antitypes" is like that. (The fulfillment of a type is called the "antitype", that which corresponds to the type). Thus King David was a type of Christ, and Christ is the antitype of King David. In every case there is an organic connection between the type and the antitype. We should hesitate to say that a portion of Scripture is typical unless the Bible itself in some way indicates that it is so. When we start to deal with types and antitypes, we should heed the warnings: "Go slowly"; "Handle with Care"; "Proceed with Caution."

3. Scripture is its Own Interpreter

The Bible is a self-interpreting book. The key that unlocks the Bible is found in the Bible itself. Any "helps" that violate this principle are unsound and should be avoided — for example, books that "interpret" the Bible in terms of sociology, evolution, economics, etc. It is unsound to interpret the Bible in accordance with ANY system or principle derived from a source outside of the Bible itself.

We must interpret the Bible by comparing one part of the Bible with other parts of the Bible. In this process, the obscure or difficult portions must be explained in the light of those portions that are clearer and easier to understand. For instance, the Book of Revelation must be explained in the light of the Gospels and Epistles; the prophetic portions of the Bible in the light of the historical and doctrinal portions.

We must always take the context into account in interpreting the Bible. "A text without a context is merely a pretext". Yet this principle is constantly being violated at the present day. For example, Acts 20:8, "And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together", is used for the text of a sermon on "Lights", the divisions of which are (1) The Light of Nature; (2) The Light of Scripture; (3) Christ the Light of the World. Obviously the "lights" in Acts 20:8 were ordinary lamps for lighting the room, and they are not mentioned to serve as a peg for hanging a sermon on spiritual light on.

We must consider the occasion, historical circumstances, speaker, persons addressed, etc., if we are to grasp the meaning of a portion of Scripture. In Psalm 53:1 it says "There is no God". If these words are taken by themselves, without regard to their context, it would seem that the Bible

teaches atheism. But when we read the whole verse we see that "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God". Again, in Job 2:4 we read: "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life". What! Did no man ever willingly lay down his life for his country, his loved ones or his faith? But examine the context and it will be noted that the statement quoted was made by Satan, the father of lies. When this is understood, we can grasp the true import of the statement and the purpose for which it was included in the Bible.

4. Contradictions in Bible Interpretation Cannot be Accepted

Since the Bible is wholly the inspired Word of God, it cannot contradict itself. It must present a consistent message; it must form a consistent whole from beginning to end. Any admission of real contradictions destroys the authority and infallibility of the Bible.

In studying the Bible we will sometimes come upon apparent contradictions. Some of these apparent contradictions cannot be solved; these are called PARADOXES. We must just let them stand unsolved and charge them against the limitations of the human mind. For example, that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and yet man is a free agent and responsible for his acts, is an apparent contradiction or paradox. Human reason cannot solve this paradox. We must just accept BOTH of these truths (for both are taught in the Bible), without being able to harmonize them completely.

It is our duty, as a matter of reverence and faith in God, to let such paradoxes stand unsolved. If we could solve all the paradoxes and mysteries of the Bible, we would be as great and wise as God. Our mind cannot comprehend God and God's ways any more than a thimble could contain all the water of the Pacific Ocean. If we attempt to solve such a paradox as the one mentioned above, we only run into worse difficulties. If we deny God's foreordination, we come to believe in a limited God; if we deny man's freedom and responsibility, we come to believe in fatalism. It is the strength, not the weakness, of the Reformed Faith or Calvinism, that it looks such paradoxes squarely in the face, calls them by the right name, and lets them stand without attempting to cut them up by human reason.

Other apparent contradictions in the Bible can be solved by sound methods of Bible study. For example, in Gal. 2:16 Paul says that "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ . . . for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified". But James (2:24) says: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Sound methods of Bible study can solve this apparent contradiction. Galatians and James were not written at

the same time, and they do not discuss exactly the same question. Paul wrote that we are justified by faith without works, meaning that our human works form no part of the BASIS or GROUND of our salvation. James, on the other hand, speaks of good works, not as the ground, but as the FRUIT or EVIDENCE of our salvation. Paul is discussing the source of salvation; James is discussing the difference between true faith and false faith. We are not saved because we have good works; on the contrary, we have good works because we are saved. Because good works are the EVIDENCE of a true, saving faith, James could properly write of being "justified by works". The contradiction is only apparent, not real. When we once see that Paul was discussing the ground of salvation, while James was discussing the evidence of salvation, the difficulty disappears.

The real paradoxes of Scripture have been well searched out and recognized. It is not likely that any new ones will ever be discovered, just as it is not likely that a new continent or large island will ever be discovered.

We may never admit that there are any REAL contradictions in the Bible. There may be apparent contradictions, but not any real ones. When the bank sends us a monthly statement with canceled checks, we may find an apparent contradiction between the bank's statement and our check-book stub record. But we realize that either the bank's statement or our own record (probably the latter!) must have a mistake in it somewhere. We can detect it by checking our figures carefully. In Bible study, if our interpretation of text No. 1 contradicts our interpretation of text No. 2, then we must suspect that our interpretation of one (or both) texts is mistaken. If we cannot eliminate the apparent contradiction by re-checking our study of the texts, then we must either wait for further light, or else put it down as a paradox that cannot be solved by the human mind. During this present life "we know in part" (1 Cor. 13:12). We must not expect to know and understand everything.

ANNOUNCEMENT

"Blue Banner Faith and Life" is published as a service to God, a witness to His truth, and a help to His people. Financially it is a "non-profit" enterprise. Though the circulation has grown steadily since publication was started (1946), printing and mailing costs have also risen sharply. "Blue Banner Faith and Life" carries no advertising, and seeks to provide only substantial material for the serious Christian. Receipts from subscriptions are not sufficient to pay the cost of printing and postage. According to present indications, about \$400 additional will be needed to finish 1950 without debt. If God has enabled you, will you not help by making a contribution? — J. G. Vos

Moffatt's Translation of the New Testament

By the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick

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

A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, by James Moffatt, a former professor in Oxford University, is now nearly forty years old. It is widely known in the English speaking world as one of the leading modern English translations of the New Testament. (His translation of the Old Testament appeared in 1925, but has not attained the popularity of the aforementioned, possibly because those who have taken to his New Testament are those who in general do not hold that the Old Testament is on the same level of inspiration, that is, that it is not as truly the Word of God.)

The most widely accepted version of the Bible ever published in the English language, that of 1611, was the product of the labors of a large company of scholars. This fact had doubtless set a precedent, so that not again will the work of one man be a serious contender to be the most widely used version, as was the case with Wycliffe's and Tyndale's versions, which appeared before 1611. However, the New Testament of Moffatt has been widely distributed and has had great influence. It is still available in most religious bookstores.

In it the attempt has been made to render the Scriptures in language that is more nearly that of everyday usage than either the version of 1611 or the Revision. Certainly there can be no objection to such an attempt. Indeed, the liberty to do so is part and parcel of the Protestant movement. The early Reformers, from the days of Hus and Wycliffe, knew that if there was to be any adequate reformation, the people must be permitted to read the Bible in their own language. Furthermore, the Roman Catholic clergy early recognized in the translation of the Bible into English, the greatest threat to their power, and sought to stamp out and destroy such copies as were produced. They wished to keep the Bible available only in the Latin "Vulgate", as it was called, which could never be readily understood by the ordinary person.

Especially since the turn of the present century has it become evident that the Bible should be available in language readily accessible to the man in the street, the market place and the home. Up until the last decade of the nineteenth century it was thought by many scholars that the N.T., since the language was definitely not that

of classical Greek, was written in a vocabulary that was distinctly a variety spoken by the Jewish population. However, about that time, according to G. Abbott-Smith in his "Greek Lexicon of the N.T.", "the discovery of vast numbers of non-literary papyri (records of commercial transactions, contracts, every-day memoranda, letters), chiefly in Egypt, has removed all doubt as to the category to which the language of the N.T. belongs. It is now abundantly clear that the diction of the apostolic writers is not a peculiarly isolated idiom, characteristic of Jewish Hellenists, but simply the common speech of the Greek-speaking world at the time when the N.T. books were written."

Thus, if the language of the original writers was distinctly the language of everyday conversation and business, then certainly we should find it readily translatable into like language for others. There is nothing sacred about the particular form of the King James Version, yet the Word of God itself is sacred, and there must always be more than ordinary care to reproduce accurately the thought of the original. And so, in evaluating any translation, the first consideration must always be given to the accuracy with which the subject matter of the Bible is reproduced. In this article no attempt is made to judge the skill with which Dr. Moffatt has handled the Greek, except as such judgment may be involved in a comparison or contrast of his rendering with that of the King James Version (AV) or the American Revised Version (ARV).

However, even one not skilled in the use of N.T. Greek finds other questions which may and must be considered in estimating the usefulness of a particular translation. Significant questions are such as the following: What was the translator's own faith with respect to the Scriptures? How does he treat the text of the Scriptures? How does he treat the doctrines of the Scriptures? These considerations ought always to take precedence over the question of personal like or dislike of the language employed and thought brought out, in any particular passage. That Dr. Moffatt was a Greek scholar of considerable repute should be admitted at the outset.

1. What of Dr. Moffatt's Professed Faith?

With regard to Dr. Moffatt's faith in the inerrancy of God's Word we have his own statement. In speaking of some of the difficulties of translation, he says in his Preface, "Once the translation of the N.T. is freed from the influence of the theory of verbal inspiration these difficulties cease to be formidable." This freedom,

which he takes for granted, he regards as a great blessing. However, for those who accept the doctrine of the plenary (full) inspiration of the Scriptures, Dr. Moffatt has granted himself a dangerous liberty. He says that he has "tried not to sacrifice the spirit to the letter." But the Holy Spirit never contradicts Himself as to what He has already expressed through the written Word. Jesus says, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle (Moffatt's translation reads, "not an iota, not a comma") shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." If we get ideas contrary to that which is written in God's Word, we may be very sure that we have neither the "letter", nor the "spirit".

In speaking of Moffatt's book, "The Historical New Testament", which he wrote before publishing his translation, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, editor of "The Expositor's Bible", a commentary series on the Bible by some 25 scholars, and widely known as a liberal, said, "He (Moffatt) first among the Presbyterians of our Church calmly yields the crucial points on the N.T., and makes the admissions as if they were of no consequence." (Quoted from "Question Box" of "Evangelical Action" (Australia), W. R. McEwen, editor, Jan. 1, 1947).

Now a translator's personal attitude toward the Bible is bound to have some effect on his work. No one can be completely free from such bias. This knowledge of Dr. Moffatt's personal faith is sufficient to suggest the need for careful study of other sources before accepting his suggestions.

2. How does Dr. Moffatt treat the Text of the Scriptures?

In answer to this question, one may leaf through this volume and gather from the footnotes — which appear on perhaps half of the pages — a fair idea.

Some Bible students may not be aware of the fact that there is no "master copy" of the original Greek New Testament in existence. Rather, there are many hundreds of manuscripts (the abbreviation for the word "manuscript" is "MS" for the singular, and "MSS" for the plural), some quite ancient, but of course none dating back to the time of the original writers, and also ancient versions such as the Syriac, the Ethiopic, the Latin, and others. It is from these that Bible scholars have determined just what the original reading of the N.T. was, where they find differences among the MSS. While there is not full agreement on the part of scholars, it is significant that there is no controversy in any reading which would jeopardize any of the great doctrines of the Church. In other words, through comparison of manuscripts, study of the early versions and of quotations made from the New Testament in the

early days of the Christian Church as found in other writings, scholars have come to substantial agreement as to what the original text of the New Testament was.

Dr. Moffatt frequently disagrees with the AV and the ARV committees as to which of several readings was the correct one, and in a footnote frequently cites the evidence for the reading which he adopts. For instance, in John 8:34, where the ARV reads, "Every one that commiteth sin is the bondservant of sin", Dr. Moffatt omits the words "of sin", and reads merely "Everyone who commits sin is a slave", and gives as evidence Manuscript "D", together with the Latin and Syriac versions. Certainly, the average person is not competent to judge whether he has done wisely, but at least we are assured that there is some evidence in the MSS and versions for what has been done.

However, there are at least forty other cases where Dr. Moffatt states in a footnote the fact that he has altered the text of the original Greek passage, **without any manuscript authority**. These changes which he make are of four kinds. He sometimes omits a passage; he sometimes inserts a passage — usually only a word or phrase; he sometimes changes the order, shifting a phrase or a verse or even several verses, or in one case two chapters; and in some cases he substitutes a different word for one found in the MSS. In most cases he gives his reasons for altering the text, which may be one of the following: he is making the change to the "original", the "right", or to the "true" reading. In some cases he is not so sure of himself. He says that he is altering the text to what "seems original", or to what "appears" to be original, or to what was "likely" original. He sometimes rules out a passage as a "gloss", that is, something which has been written in by a copyist or editor. Again, he sometimes merely states that he is altering the text according to a "conjecture", or a "plausible" or an "ingenious" conjecture. He cites Wellhausen, one of the most influential or liberal higher critics of the last century, as his authority for an alteration of the text in three instances, and in at least three more he merely notes the fact that he has made a change in the text, without giving any reason.

It should be said that the changes made in the text are not of major importance, so far as questions of doctrine or fact are concerned. However, it is only reasonable to suppose that, where there was a choice between a reading more favorable to the liberal point of view, and one more favorable to the conservative point of view, other things being equal, Dr. Moffatt would choose the former. Thus, this liberty of changing the text of the Scriptures without external evidence is seen to give an opening for ideas both untrue and misleading.

3. How does Dr. Moffatt Treat the Doctrines of the Word?

It is difficult to discover any consistent presentation of false doctrine running through this New Testament. For instance, Dr. Moffatt, in his rendering of 2 Tim. 3:16, says, "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for amendment. . .", which is certainly an improvement, doctrinally, over the ARV which reads: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable. . .". On the other hand, his free treatment of the text sometimes extends beyond even a conjecture as to what was original. He adopts Wellhausen's suggestion as to Luke 11:41, that Luke confused two Aramaic verbs which are similar in spelling and pronunciation, and so has said something which he did not intend to say. Here is a criticism, even of the original writer of one of the Gospels, which cuts dangerously close to being a criticism of the Holy Spirit Himself.

On the basis of a single MS — though this is one of the places where Dr. Moffatt does not even call attention to his divergence from the almost universal judgment of other scholars — Dr. Moffatt gives a translation in Matt. 1:16 which removes the testimony of this verse to the Virgin Birth of our Lord: "Joseph (to whom the virgin Mary was betrothed) the father of Jesus." Both the AV and the ARV read, "Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus. . .". However, really to remove the testimony of the Scriptures to the Virgin Birth of Jesus would require the alteration of more than a single passage. The same is true of all the great doctrines of the Word. They are woven into its warp and woof.

In conclusion, it may be said that the reading of Moffatt's translation will doubtless give the person little acquainted with the language of Scripture, thoughts that would be missed by reading one of the older versions. Also the person well acquainted with the AV will doubtless be challenged by some thought not brought out at all in the familiar version to which he has been accustomed. However, in the light of what we have found as to Dr. Moffatt's own faith and his treatment of the text and doctrines of the Scriptures, some of the ideas thus suggested may not be well founded. Especially where one is studying a passage carefully and in detail, it would always be well to check Moffatt against the more widely accepted versions.

Even if one were to get no false teaching from this volume, the lack of regard for that which is written as coming originally from God and therefore without error, is not a good influence. And if one is to depend on such a translation as this to give him an interest in the Bible which he does not have in reading the King James Version, he is apt to be disappointed. The aversion to Bible reading in our generation is not nearly so much on account of the archaic language, on the basis of which plea some excuse themselves for the neglect of this duty. The real reason for the aversion we have to Bible reading is simply the rebellion of the flesh against the Bible doctrine of holiness.

Use Moffatt critically (in the good, scientific sense of the word). Use this translation sparingly, and in subordination to one of the older, well-established versions.

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".

THE SEVEN SAYINGS OF THE SAVIOUR ON THE CROSS, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Union Co., Pa. 4th edition, 1947, pp. 134, \$1.75.

As the title of the book would indicate, a chapter is given to each of the seven Cross-sayings: The Word of Forgiveness, The Word of Salvation, The Word of Affection, The Word of Anguish, The Word of Suffering, The Word of Victory, The Word of Contentment. It is little wonder that a fourth edition of this book has been called for. Would to God that many more editions were required by the demand for this book in the homes of the English-speaking world. Here we have none of the superficiality which marks so

much of fundamental Christian literature today. The author has sat long at the foot of the Cross and has drunk deeply of the wonders there displayed. The scholarly beauty of the book appeals to the learned and the untutored alike. It combines in a marked way doctrine, devotion and evangelism. Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ will be stirred in their innermost being as they partake of this fruit of the author's labor.

Mr. Pink has truly caught the meaning of Luke 24:44-46, for throughout he shows that the events which transpired in connection with the crucifixion are all clearly foretold in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. Those who think that Christ is not sung of in the Psalms will be

greatly enlightened as they peruse these pages. "How marvellously complete was the prophetic foreview! No essential item was missing from it. Every important detail of the great Tragedy had been written down beforehand. The betrayal by a familiar friend (Psa. 41:9), the forsaking of the disciples through being offended at Him (Psa. 31:11), the false accusation (Psa. 35:11), the silence before His judges (Isa. 53:7), the being proven guiltless (Isa. 53:9), the numbering of Him with transgressors (Isa. 53:12), the being crucified (Psa. 22:16), the mockery of the spectators (Psa. 109:25), the taunt of non-deliverance (Psa. 22:7,8), the gambling for His garments (Psa. 22:18), the prayer for His enemies (Isa. 53:12), the being forsaken of God (Psa. 22:1), the thirsting (Psa. 69:21), the yielding of His spirit into the hands of the Father (Psa. 31:5), the bones not broken (Psa. 34:20), the burial in a rich man's tomb (Isa. 53:9) — all plainly foretold centuries before they came to pass. What a convincing evidence of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures!" (p. 86).

There is one place where the author has used faulty exegesis. He applies the words "Woman, behold thy son" as "Woman, behold thy Son", thus making the word 'son' apply to Jesus rather than to John the beloved disciple. It is clear from the context that Jesus, in love for His mother, is directing her to John that she might receive from him the care that a son should give to his mother. Mr. Pink teaches this truth in this chapter in a way that is greatly needed today. "In the course of time the children grow to manhood and womanhood, which is the age of full personal responsibility, the age when they are no longer beneath the control of their parents, yet have not their obligations to them ceased. They owe their parents a debt which they can never fully discharge. The very least they can do is to hold their parents in high esteem, to put them in the place of superiority, to reverence them. In the perfect Exemplar we find both obedience and esteem manifested" (p. 52). The author uses his faulty exegesis to teach a truth that is set forth in Scripture, namely, that we are saved by grace and grace alone, and that Mary was no exception to that need. He has quoted the words "Woman, behold thy son" a number of times, and always spells "son" with a capital "S", showing that that is the way he has meant it to be interpreted.

It is heart-warming to read a book like this where the author has kept the sovereignty of God, and the Divinity and humanity of our Lord ever before him. "Because He is the Most High, God's secret will **cannot** be thwarted. Because He is supreme, God's counsel **must** stand. Because He is Almighty, God's purpose **cannot** be overthrown" (p. 111). The author's aim to glorify and enjoy his Saviour has been manifested throughout the book. It is too bad that such a fine volume is marred with numerous typographical errors.

We hope that these will be eliminated in the next edition.

Many appeals are given through the book. The following is found at the end of the chapter entitled "The Word of Anguish" (p. 84):

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Here was a Cry of Desolation —
Reader, may you never echo it.
Here was a cry of Separation —
Reader, may you never experience it.
Here was a cry of Expiation —
Reader, may you appropriate its saving virtues."

— Philip W. Martin

THE CHILD'S STORY BIBLE, by Catherine F. Vos. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1949, pp. 732, \$3.95.

This new edition of "The Child's Story Bible" is a beautiful book. It is well bound in fine cloth, and has a heavy, colorful dust jacket. The numerous full-page, full-color reproductions of virile new paintings by Dirk Gringhuis add much to the attractiveness of the book. The large, well-spaced type makes reading a pleasure.

"The Child's Story Bible" is a well written story from beginning to end. It is dramatic, yet extremely reverent in style. It is true to the Biblical records. It presents the way of salvation in clear and unmistakable language.

The deep things of the Word are explained in simple, colorful language that little children can grasp. For example, in the first chapter:

"When did God begin? And who made God?"

"No one made God. And God did not begin. God has always been. Forever and ever and ever, God has lived. God never had a beginning, and His life will never end.

"If you were to take a cup and dip water out of the big wide and deep ocean, you could dip and dip and dip but you could never dip the ocean dry. Your mind is like a little cup, and God's life is like the big deep ocean. You cannot dip the ocean dry with a cup. And we cannot understand God's life, that never began, and will never, never end.

"Some day the sun and moon and stars, and the earth on which we live, will all grow old, just as your clothes grow old and worn out. But God will be the same as He was, today and yesterday and long, long ago. His life will go on and on, forever.

"God is eternal."

Again, here is an illustration of the unique

manner in which children are drawn into the experience of the story:

"It is springtime. There are flowers on every side. The brook which flows through the meadows murmurs softly over the stones.

"Oh, see those little snow-white lambs! How many there are! The sheep are nibbling the soft grass. Let us sit awhile on this green hillside and watch them.

"Listen! Did you hear that sweet sound? There it comes again. What is it? It must be a shepherd boy singing.

"There he is, sitting down under that oak tree. He cannot see us, because we are behind some bushes. Listen!

"'Jehovah is my Shepherd;

I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

He leadeth me beside still waters.'

"How sweet that song sounds! The boy has a little harp in his hands. Perhaps he is going to play it. Be sure to keep behind the bushes. Do not let him see you!"

Reading this book, or hearing it read, day by day to our children, with longer periods of reading on Sabbath afternoons, this reviewer has come to a high appreciation of "The Child's Story Bible". Upon finishing a chapter the cry of the children is invariably, "Read more, read more."

We recommend this book as the best story of the Bible for children that we know of. It is well adapted to use in the home, in schools, and in church group meetings. It is a splendid gift! — D. Ray Wilcox

THE MILLENNIUM: WHAT IT IS NOT AND WHAT IT IS, by George B. Fletcher. Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Union Co., Pa. 1947, pp. 87, paper cover, \$.75; 2 for \$1.25.

This book is small in size and moderate in price, but of real interest and value to those who want to know the truth about what the Bible teaches on the subject of a Millennium. The author begins by lamenting the trend in some circles to identify Fundamentalism with Premillennialism and "to make the Premillennial interpretation of Bible prophecy the criterion of orthodoxy" and "the sine qua non of Christian and Church fellowship" (p. 7). The author states that for many years he "was a militant and ardent premillennialist, the possessor of large charts", etc. (p.8). But further study of the Bible led him to give up the "postponement" and "pre-tribulation rapture" theories, and eventually to abandon modern dispensationalism and the premillennial view of the second coming of Christ.

The author first takes up "What the Millennium is Not", showing by careful searching of the Scriptures that neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament teaches the doctrine of a thousand year earthly or political reign of Christ. This is no superficial glancing over Bible passages, but deals with the crucial questions in such discussions as: "The Silence of Christ"; "Christ not a Political Messiah"; "No Days after the Last Days"; "The Argument from Galatians and Hebrews"; "The Absurdities of Literalism"; "Reading into the Text a Theory"; "The Origin of Premillennialism"; "The Testimony of the Creeds"; "The Importance of the Captivity"; "The Conditional Element of Prophecy"; "The Gap Theory"; "The New Testament Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecies"; "The Spiritual Israel of God"; "The National Restoration of the Jews".

Next the author takes up "What the Millennium Is", giving a positive interpretation of Rev. 20 and 21, including "The Binding of Satan"; "The Reign of the Saints"; "The Loosing of Satan"; "General Judgment and Second Advent"; "The Eternal State". He explains the binding of Satan as not absolute but relative to his deceiving the nations (i.e., the Gentiles) into pagan idolatry. The thousand years are taken symbolically as meaning a period of great length. The reign of the saints is located with Christ in heaven during the present age, not on earth during a future age. The loosing of Satan is explained as a divinely-permitted revival of world-wide pagan power shortly before the second coming of Christ. The author holds that the loosing of Satan is taking place in our day as shown by the increasing power of totalitarianisms such as Fascism, Communism and Romanism.

At the end of the book there is a five page discussion of "Prophecy and the Jew" by Dr. Albertus Pieters, who argues convincingly that the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament were not given to Israel in a racial capacity, but to Israel as the true people of God, and that therefore these promises have been inherited by the Christian Church, "to the exclusion of those of Jewish descent who are now cut off from the Olive Tree" by their unbelief (p. 83).

While the reviewer might be inclined to take issue with the author's interpretation on a minor point here and there, it is a pleasure to commend this little book as sound, helpful and very much needed at the present time. — J. G. Vos

NOTES ON THE MIRACLES OF OUR LORD, by Richard Chenevix Trench (Popular edition). Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1949, pp. 298, \$2.50.

This volume is a condensed, popular type edition of Trench's well-known work on the miracles of Christ. The printing, paper, binding and appearance are excellent, and the price moderate.

The extent of condensation can be judged from the fact that the 512 pages of the original work have been reduced to 298 pages of about the same size in the present edition. This reduction has been largely, though not entirely, achieved through the elimination of many footnotes of the original, and the shortening of others. Often the text of the book, too, has been condensed, yet the work has been skilfully done and the main values of the original conserved.

Trench, of course, was a believer in Biblical, supernatural Christianity, and in our own day it is refreshing to read a study of the miracles of Christ which does not try to "appease" non-Christian thought by all sorts of concessions to modern science and philosophy, seeking to reduce the supernatural in the miracles to the bare minimum compatible with Christian faith. Trench takes the miracles as they stand; he does not feel embarrassed about them, nor called upon to apologize for them, as some modern writers do. To him they are not obstacles in the way of believing the Bible, but essential parts of God's special revelation.

The book contains a preliminary section on miracles in general, discussing "the Names of the Miracles", "Miracles and Nature", "The Authority of Miracles", "The Evangelical, Compared with Other Cycles of Miracles", and "The Assaults on the Miracles", as well as "The Apologetic Worth of the Miracles". In arguing against Schleiermacher's view of the miracles (i.e., that they were not really supernatural, but wrought through the laws and forces of nature, but appeared as wonders to those before whom they were wrought, since the latter did not understand the causes which operated to produce the miracles), Trench cites the saying of Augustine of Hippo that has often been quoted in favor of such a notion. Augustine wrote that miracles are "not contrary to nature, but contrary to that which is known as nature". Trench clearly shows that it is only in the outward sound of the words that Augustine seems to say what Schleiermacher and his followers have said about the miracles; for Augustine did not mean the same thing by "nature" that Schleiermacher did. By "nature", Augustine meant the will of God for all created being; he had no idea of limiting it, as modern thought does, to the everyday operation of causality in the physical world. By saying that miracles are "not contrary to nature", Augustine merely meant to say "that God never can be contrary to God: that there can be no conflict and collision of his wills; that whatever comes in is as true an order, the result of as real a law, as that which gives place to it; which must needs be, since it has come in according to the will of God, which will is itself the highest order, and law, and harmony" (pp. 45,46).

Pages 75 to 298 of the book present exegetical

studies of the several miracles of our Lord, in 33 chapters. Trench was an acute and penetrating, as well as reverent and spiritual, student of the Scriptures, and these studies, like those in the companion volume do on the Parables, present many insights into the miracles, their meaning and message. Ministers intending to preach a series of sermons on the New Testament miracles will find this book very helpful indeed. The ordinary Christian who is a serious student of the Bible will find here a wealth of interesting and valuable material.—J. G. Vos

EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Union Co., Pa. 1945, 4 volumes, total pages 1221. \$2.75 per vol.; \$10.50 per set.

This four volume exposition of the Fourth Gospel is clearly the product of many years of painstaking, prayerful study of the Word of God. The present edition is a slightly abridged and edited form of the author's book which appeared in 1923. The author's viewpoint is that of a loyal and convinced believer of the Reformed Faith. His treatment of the sacred text is always careful, reverent and humbly devout. Realizing that Holy Scripture is a deep gold-mine, he digs deeply for the hidden treasure, and finds much.

This is not the type of book that will captivate the superficial Christian or church member of the present day. Those who are looking for something of a "popular" type, that will be very easy to read, filled with little stories and anecdotes on every page, requiring no mental concentration or serious effort, will not find what they seek here. This book is a serious study of the Gospel of John. This does not mean that it is filled with technical theological terms — it is not — nor that it is "as dry as dust" as commentaries are popularly supposed to be. The serious Christian who loves God and loves the Word of God will not find this book dry. The author did not write it to catch the fancy of the unconverted. It is for the Lord's children, and those who hunger and thirst will find here the bread and water of life.

It would take more than the space available for this review, to give many details of Mr. Pink's work. His orthodoxy has already been mentioned. Another characteristic is his clearness and simplicity of style, even in the presentation of profound truths. In addition to this, his writing is at every point eminently practical; he seeks not merely to inform the mind, but to stir the conscience and to feed the soul. Many practical lessons are drawn from the truth which the author expounds.

That our readers may have a sample of the good things in this work, we may quote here a paragraph or two from the author's treatment of our Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria (John 4:20-30):

"What is worship? We answer: First, it is the **action of the new nature** seeking, as the sparks fly upward, to return to the Divine and heavenly source from which it came. Worship is one of the three great marks which evidence the presence of the new nature — 'We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh' (Phil. 3:3) — in the Greek there is no article before 'spirit' or 'flesh'; the spirit refers to the new nature, which is born of the Spirit.

"In the second place, Worship is the **activity of a redeemed people**. Israel did not worship Jehovah in Egypt; there they could only 'sigh', and 'cry', and 'groan' (see Ex. 2:23,24). It is not until Israel had passed through the Red Sea that we are told 'Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, **I will sing unto the Lord**' (Ex. 15:1); and note, this was the Song of Redemption — the words 'redeemed' and 'redemption' are not found in Scripture until this chapter is reached: see v. 13.

"In the third place, Worship **proceeds from the heart**. 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their HEART is far from me. But in vain do they worship me' (Matt. 15:8,9). Worship is a redeemed heart **occupied with God**, expressing itself in adoration and thanksgiving. Read through the Redemption Song, expression of Israel's worship, in Ex. 15, and notice the frequent repetition of 'Thou', 'Thee', and 'He'. Worship, then, is the occupation of the heart with a **known God**; and everything which **attracts** the flesh and its senses, **detracts** from real worship.

"'God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth' (v. 24). There is no choice in the matter. This emphatic 'must' bars out everything which is of the flesh. Worship is not by the eyes or the ears, but 'in spirit', that is, from the **new nature**. The more spiritual is our worship the less formal and the less attractive to the flesh will it be. O how far astray we have gone! Modern 'worship' (?) is chiefly designed to render it pleasing to the flesh: a 'bright and attractive service', with beautiful surroundings, sensuous music, and entertaining talks. What a mockery and a blasphemy! O that we would all heed that pointed word in Psalms 89:7; 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him' — how different things would then be." (Vol. 1, pp. 209,210).

Here and there the reviewer found that he must take issue with allegorical or mystical interpretations; for example the author suggests that the wine of the miracle at Cana symbolizes and points to the blood of the Saviour shed on the cross (Vol. 1, p. 87); in expounding the passage on "The True Vine" (John 15:1-6), he says: "The

word 'fruit' occurs **eight** times in the chapter, and in Scripture eight is the **resurrection-number**. It is associated with a **new beginning**. It is the number of **the new creation**" (Vol. 3, p. 251). The reviewer considers this type of interpretation unwarranted, especially the instance last cited. Bear in mind that the Bible was not divided into chapters until long after it was first written, and the significance of a certain word occurring a certain number of times in a particular chapter vanishes. Moreover that the number eight stands for the resurrection idea is open to question.

At one point the reviewer must dissent wholly from the author's statements — namely with respect to his method of answering the question as to whether the disputed passage, John 7:53 to 8:11, is to be regarded as an authentic portion of the original text of the Gospel of John. The American Revised Version prints this section in brackets, with a marginal note stating: "Most of the ancient authorities omit John 7:53-8:11. Those which contain it vary much from each other." This is a question to be faced (and if possible, decided) by careful consideration of all the available evidence, in accordance with sound principles of textual criticism. Mr. Pink, however, decides the question (in favor of the genuineness of the disputed passage), entirely on the basis of INTERNAL evidence, listing several considerations which purport to show that the disputed passage fits in perfectly with its context and with "the evident design of this section of the Gospel", adding that "it will be evident, we trust, to every spiritual intelligence, that no uninspired pen drew the picture therein described. The internal evidence, then, and the spiritual indications (apprehended and appreciated only by those who enter into God's thoughts) are far more weighty than external considerations. The one who is led and taught by the Spirit of God need not waste valuable time examining ancient manuscripts for the purpose of discovering whether or not this portion of the Bible is really a part of God's own Word" (Vol. 2, pp. 130-132). To these statements the reviewer feels constrained to demur, for he certainly does not believe that examining ancient manuscripts with a view to deciding a question of this kind is a waste of time, nor that all external evidence should be thus summarily ruled out of court as irrelevant to the question at issue. Without pronouncing either for or against the genuineness of John 7:53-8:11, the reviewer would emphasize the importance of weighing ALL the evidence, external and internal, in a case of this kind. Internal evidence is of great value when the external evidence is equivocal or doubtful, but can hardly be used to set the external evidence aside when the latter is decisive. Not all spiritual students of John's Gospel are as sure as Mr. Pink that the disputed section fits in perfectly with its context, and with the evident design of this part of the Gospel.

In spite of the criticisms registered above, which concern particular points or matters of detail, the reviewer considers this an excellent book, well worth purchasing and carefully reading and

re-reading. It is truly edifying. Would to God that more Christians of the present day had an appetite for such substantial studies in the Scriptures. — 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.

MODERN TOWER OF BABEL, by Carl McIntyre. Christian Beacon Press, Collingswood, N.J. 1949, pp. xiii, 304. Cloth \$1.50; paper \$1.00.

OUTLINES OF THEOLOGY (Complete unabridged text of the enlarged and revised edi-

tion), by Archibald Alexander Hodge. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1949, pp. 678, \$5.00.

OF ANOTHER WORLD: THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S CHURCH, by Harold Petroelje. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy Street, S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1949, pp. 172, \$2.50.

THE CITIES OF ST. PAUL: THEIR INFLUENCE ON HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT, by William M. Ramsay. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy Street, S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. (Originally published 1908). 1949, pp. xvi, 452, \$4.00.

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:

Was the ban placed on the ground after Adam sinned lifted after the Flood? God said, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake" (Gen. 8:21).

Answer:

The curse put upon the ground after Adam sinned has never been lifted. Its burdens of "toil" and "sweat", "briers and thorns" still remain to hamper man's gathering of his food, as any farmer will testify.

Gen. 8:21 gives what "Jehovah said in his heart" after Noah's acceptable sacrifice of thanksgiving. Afterwards, He explained His decision to Noah in the words of chapter 9:8-11. Verse 11 reads, "And I will confirm my covenant with you;" — that is, the covenant of Gen. 3:14-19. Hence, the curse of 3:17, which is a part of that covenant, is confirmed, not lifted.

"Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth". Here "any more" clearly means "again", as does the original word. If however "again" be put for "any more" in 8:21, we have "I will not again curse the ground again". To avoid such tautology the reader is likely to give "any more" some other meaning, such as might involve the idea of

"no more any curse on the ground". This may account for the above question. But the Hebrew reads, literally, "I will not add to curse again the ground for man's sake". The agreement of this with 9:11 is evident.

Furthermore, the word translated "curse" in 8:21 is a different word from that used in 3:17 (and 5:29), — from a different root, and hence describes a curse of a somewhat different kind.

We conclude, therefore, that Gen. 8:21 refers only to the judgment of the Flood. — Frank D. Frazer.

Question:

What is the meaning and usage of the word "antilegomena"?

Answer:

"Antilegomena" is a Greek word meaning "disputed matters". It is used to designate certain books of the New Testament whose right to a place in the "canon", or list of books recognized as divinely inspired and authoritative, was questioned in some parts of the Church for a time. The four Gospels, the book of Acts, the 13 epistles which bear the name of the apostle Paul, 1 Peter and 1 John, were recognized as apostolic, and therefore entitled to a place in the canon, by the year 200 A.D. at the latest. "The remaining books of the New Testament were called 'Antilegomena', or, from their forming a part of the Canon only after a second revision, the Deuterocanonical. That position in the Canon they gained gradually; at the beginning of the fourth

century they were received by MOST of the churches, and at the end of that century they were received by ALL In the end there was universal conviction; and the very doubts which deferred the reception of a small portion of Scripture in certain parts of the early Church now serve to confirm our faith in the rest" ("The Bible Hand-Book", by Angus and Green, pp. 39, 40).

There is a very good explanation of this matter in Halley, "Pocket Bible Handbook" (17th edition, 1946), pp. 655,656. See also "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1946), pp. 31,32 (Question Box): "Who decided what books should be included in the New Testament, and on what basis was the decision made." — J. G. Vos

Question:

Could Christ, being man as well as God, have sinned when tempted of the devil, if He had had any desire to do so? If not, where were the virtue in refraining if He couldn't have helped it?

Answer:

"Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of any law of God given as a rule to the reasonable creature" (Larger Catechism, Q. 24). In other words, sin is not only in the outward act, but in the heart desiring the act. Sin is any disagreement, in thought, or word, or act, with the revealed will of God.

Christ Jesus, as man, was born of the virgin Mary, yet without sin. That is, He was born holy, as Gabriel, God's messenger, informed Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the One born holy (or, begotten holy) shall be called Son of God" (Luke 1:35). He came into the world in perfect agreement with the will of the Father (Psalm 40:8; John 4:34; 8:29). He was and continued to be "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). "God sent his Son" (not in sinful flesh, but) "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). "He was made sin on our behalf", but in such a sense that "He knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

Hence, the supposition upon which the above question is based is an impossibility. Christ could have had no desire to sin. If He had desired to sin, He would have already been a sinner, actually sinning, whether He committed the overt act or not. Then we would have had no Saviour.

When the Son of God undertook the redemption of His people from their sins it was impossible for Him to fail. And, "all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen"; they never for one moment depended on an "if".

The virtue in His refraining from sin was in His holiness, which is the acme of all virtue. The virtue of holiness is being holy, that is, of a character to which sin is abhorrent, repulsive, revolting; to which no sin has any attraction; of a character that cannot desire to sin; that cannot help refraining from sin. As Jesus Christ said, "The prince of the world cometh; and he hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

We understand but little of the nature of man; far less of the nature of God, or of the God-man, Christ Jesus. Yet this much we do know by what is written in the Word of God: God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in holiness. "God cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1:13). Man is a finite creature; and though made in the image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, he was tempted and sinned. God united with man (man born holy, not by ordinary generation) in One Person, Jesus, the Son of God, "was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

This God-man, of two distinct natures, but one Person, could not have sinned because God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in holiness. He could not have been deceived or overcome because God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in knowledge, wisdom, and power.

This great fact that Christ could not have sinned is the hope and joy of the Christian who by faith is in Christ and Christ in him. He knows that in Christ he shall be made perfect in holiness, for Christ has made all necessary provision to this end, that he may attain unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. See Eph. 4:7-16. Is sin becoming for us more and more abhorrent and impossible?

"We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is. And every one that hath this hope on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure (1 John 3:2,3). — Frank D. Frazer.

Question:

Why does the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America not join in with the American Council of Christian Churches and the International Council of Christian Churches?

Answer:

No individual can give an answer to this question that would be more than a mere expression of personal opinion. The question as stated does not concern personal opinions or convictions, but the position of the denomination as such. Therefore this question can be adequately answered only by the Synod, which is the highest court of the denomination. Any communicant member in good standing, or group of such, can submit a question to the Synod for decision. The

question should be submitted, first of all, to the Session of the local congregation, with the request that it be transferred to the Synod (through the Presbytery if there is a meeting of Presbytery before the meeting of Synod). Such transfer of a paper or question does not imply any endorsement or approval of the contents of the paper on the part of the Session or Presbytery, but only a certification of the fact that the paper is signed by a member or members in good standing in the Church, and that it is not abusive or libellous in its language. If the paper is proper in these respects, the Session and Presbytery have no option; the law of the Church requires them to transfer it to Synod. See "Constitution of the R. P. Church of N. A." (1949), p. 300. — J. G. Vos

Question:

Please explain John 20:23, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained".

Answer:

The Roman Catholic Church, of course, claims that this text speaks of a judicial power to grant or refuse the forgiveness of sins, delegated by Jesus Christ to the priesthood of that church, so that the priest is empowered to decide whether the person's sins shall be forgiven or not. This interpretation is part and parcel of the sacerdotal (priestly and sacramentarian) system which the Church of Rome has substituted for the evangelical system of the Bible. According to the evangelical (and Biblical) faith, the individual deals directly with God, there being no Mediator but the God-man Christ Jesus; according to Rome's sacerdotal system, the individual deals with God and Christ, not directly, but through the intermediation of the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church; Rome teaches salvation by sacraments in the hands of an official priesthood.

It is the consistent teaching of the whole Bible that the forgiveness of sins is the prerogative of God alone. Accordingly, orthodox Protestant Bible scholars have always held that John 20:23 refers, not to a judicial power of forgiving and retaining sins, but to a MINISTERIAL and DECLARATIVE function. According to the Protestant view, the apostles of old, and ministers and Church courts today, are not empowered judicially to forgive sins, but only to declare that those who comply with God's terms (hearty repentance and true faith) are forgiven by God. Ministers and Church courts are not like judges of the supreme court sitting on the bench to decide the verdict in a particular case; they are like ambassadors representing their king in dealing with a foreign country; as ambassadors, they state what their orders are; they announce the

king's terms and conditions in accordance with their commission. Ministers and Church courts are ambassadors of Christ, the King of kings. They announce His terms to men. But they cannot decide, in a particular case, whether the person's sins shall be forgiven or not; that is a matter for God alone to decide.

For a further discussion of this matter, see "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 1, No. 7 (July-Sept. 1946), pp. 137,138. — J. G. Vos

Question:

In 2 Tim. 3:16 we read that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable, etc. Having just read Ezekiel chaps. 40-48, I can find verses here and there that are profitable, but can find little in the section as a whole. What is the purpose of that section? In what way is it profitable to the student of the Scriptures?

Answer:

The statement of 2 Tim. 3:16,17 does not imply, of course, that all Scripture is **equally profitable for every purpose**. We believe that every sentence and word of Scripture is equally inspired; we believe that every sentence and word is important for some purpose; but we do not believe that every sentence and word is equally important for every purpose. The statement of Paul in 2 Tim. 4:13, to the effect that he left his cloak at Troas with Carpus, is fully inspired and completely true, and moreover it has its proper importance; but certainly it is not equally important, for the purpose of establishing the system of Christian doctrine, with Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 15:3 that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures".

It is possible that our correspondent has understood the word "profitable" in too narrow and individualistic a sense, as meaning profitable toward the conversion and sanctification of the individual sinner. In 2 Tim. 3:16 the apostle says, among other things, "profitable for DOCTRINE", that is, for teaching the truth. The revealed truth of God is of course much broader and more inclusive than the salvation of the individual; it includes truths of social, ecclesiastical, national, international and cosmic importance.

The closing chapters of the book of Ezekiel (40-48) contain the prophet's visions of the renewed land of Israel, the renewed city of God, the renewed temple or sanctuary of God. Some Premillennarian expositors hold that these visions will be fulfilled literally during the millennium which they believe will follow the second coming of Christ. Some go so far as to assert that such verses as 44:11 and 46:24 will be fulfilled literally in the restoration of animal sacrifices upon a material altar in the earthly city of Jerusalem

during the millennium. Since this interpretation encounters obstacles in the Epistle to the Hebrews which we believe to be insuperable (Heb. 9:8-14, 26), we are convinced that it is unsound.

Apart from Premillennarian circles, the common interpretation of Ezek. 40-48 among orthodox Protestants is that these chapters are SYMBOLICAL in character and refer, not to the literal land of Israel, the literal altar, temple, city, etc., but to the spiritual counterparts of these, namely **the Christian Church with its doctrine, worship, government and discipline**. That the visions are not to be literally fulfilled is indicated by various features of the visions themselves; for instance, the division of the land of Palestine in chap. 48 follows geometrical rather than geographical and topographic lines. In 40:2 the site of the temple is spoken of as "a very high mountain", whereas in literal reality it is only a moderate-sized hill. For these and other reasons, it is best to adopt the symbolical interpretation referred to above.

What, then, is the real message of these chapters? Wherein are they "profitable"? A detailed exposition, or even an inclusive summary, would of course be beyond the limits of space available here. In the judgment of the undersigned, these chapters set forth, in symbolical form, the glories of the Christian Church and the New Testament dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, as well as what the Westminster divines spoke of as God's "fervent zeal for his own worship, and his revengeful indignation against all false worship" (Larger Catechism, Q. 110). The seemingly repetitious and lengthy descriptions of the city, the sanctuary and the divisions of the land of Israel among the tribes, with their detailed measurements and specifications, all serve to teach a lesson. The lesson, we believe, is this: the Church and all that pertains to it belongs, not to men, but to God, and must be constituted and controlled, not according to the preference or opinion of men, **but in exact conformity with the requirements of the revealed will of God**. Not a post or board of the Temple is left for men to determine according to their stiff-necked inclination toward "will-worship"; every essential element of the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the Church must conform precisely to what God requires in His Word, the Holy Bible, on the principle that "what is not commanded is automatically forbidden".

Included in these closing chapters of Ezekiel is that marvellous vision of the healing waters, so full of meaning which is sorely needed today. For a practical exposition of this vision of Ezek. 47, see "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol 1, No. 8 (Oct.-Dec. 1946), pp. 147-150, "The River of Salvation". — J. G. Vos

Question:

(1) How does God guide us in praying? How

do we know that we are not mistaking impressions of our own mind for divine guidance? Why do some people who claim special divine guidance do peculiar things which appear to others to be the result of very bad judgment?

(2) What is your opinion of the position taken by many pious (or pietistic) Fundamentalists who assert that they can ascertain the will of God as to some action which they propose to take through prayer without recourse to the Scripture?

Answer:

These two queries were submitted at different times, by two different readers, but because of the similarity of the questions raised, they may well be answered together.

The letter accompanying the second query enlarged somewhat upon what the writer had in mind, as follows:

"For example, a prominent Fundamentalist of this city tells me that in deciding whether he should go to another city to carry on certain Christian work he would ascertain the will of God by praying about it. He specifically denies that he would consult Scripture on the point, and in fact states that the Bible would cast no light on such a question. He tells me that this is also the practice of a certain missionary whom he very much admires.

"I have taken the position that this is nothing but mysticism, since his action either must conform to the principles revealed in Scripture or must violate those principles of conduct, in which case he should ascertain the will of God in the particular case of applying those principles to the known facts involved in his action. It seems to me that since the completion of the canon of Scripture and the withdrawal of special gifts and manifestations of God, Christians do not under ordinary circumstances receive visions or other forms of communication from God such as the apostles or Old Testament saints received, but that they receive guidance from the Scriptures by the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit in removing the veil of sin from their minds. However, I should like to see your comments."

We have quoted this correspondent's letter at some length, because of the conviction that his statements are fundamentally sound and really constitute a good answer to his own question. Some further observations on the problem may be in order, however.

It is an accepted principle of our faith that special, direct revelations from God are "now ceased" (Westminster Confession of Faith, I.1). Accordingly, we are to depend for our knowledge of God's will upon God's Word, the Scripture. Of course, the Bible does not give a ready-made, categorical answer to every conceivable question

of faith or conduct; some questions the Bible answers directly, by its express statements; other questions can be answered by valid logical inference from express statements of the Bible; still others, especially in the realm of ethics or conduct, by the application of a relevant principle which is set forth in the Bible. Accordingly, the Shorter Catechism rightly affirms that "The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him" (Q. 2).

Every question that can be answered from the Bible should be dealt with in that way. In general, this means questions of faith, and questions of conduct. Historically, only three authorities have seriously contended for recognition as the rule of faith and life. These are (1) The infallible Bible (orthodox Protestantism); (2) The allegedly infallible church (Romanism); (3) The individual human being — his thoughts, feelings, impulses, experience, etc. (Rationalism and Mysticism). Of these three rival authorities, we believe that the first is the true one, and the other two are both false and dangerous. "What saith the Scripture?" and "To the law and to the testimony" must be our watchwords.

There are, however, certain classes of questions which the Bible does not answer; that is, questions for which a clear "Yes" or "No" answer cannot be obtained either from direct statements of the Bible, or from logical inference drawn from statements of the Bible, or by applying a relevant principle of the Bible to the situation. These classes of questions concern matters which are known as "adiaphora" or things which in themselves are neither commanded nor forbidden by the Bible, but morally indifferent. For instance, a minister of the Gospel can learn from the Bible what are the duties of his office, such as to preach, visit the church members, administer the sacraments, rebuke those who commit sin, etc. But suppose a minister receives, at the same time, calls from two different congregations in two different cities, to be their pastor. Shall he accept the call to San Francisco and decline the one to Baltimore, or vice versa? Clearly the Bible does not provide the answer to this question. How, then, shall it be decided? Some might be inclined to decide such a question by casting lots, which we believe would be unwarranted. Others, in praying for divine guidance, would be inclined to expect some mystical impulse from the Holy Spirit, and would decide in accordance with that. This, too, we believe to be unwarranted.

Prayer for divine guidance is always in order. The Christian should daily pray that God by the Holy Spirit will direct his steps. We should pray for divine guidance both in the study of the Bible, and with reference to the practical matters of

daily living, as well as with respect to important special decisions that have to be made at times. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). The real question is not "Should we pray for divine guidance?", for we certainly should. The real question is, How do we expect this prayer for divine guidance to be answered? Do we expect it to be answered by dreams, visions, direct special revelations from heaven? Do we expect it to be answered by mystical impulses, motions of our sub-conscious mind, mysterious "feelings" or some strange "inner light"? If we do, we are involved in an unscriptural and spiritually dangerous false mysticism.

Divine guidance is not something that supplants and mechanically pushes to one side the God-given faculties of our mind. It works through these faculties, including our faculty of reason, good judgment and common sense. A minister who is preparing a sermon on a difficult portion of Scripture should pray for divine illumination of his mind that he may grasp the true meaning of the Word, but this does not mean that he is to rise from his knees and throw his Hebrew and Greek dictionaries, his commentaries and theological textbooks into the furnace, as if the Holy Spirit would reveal the meaning of the Word to him without the use of the ordinary means. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is not a substitute for the use of ordinary means, and certainly not a substitute for hard work; rather, it is intended to enable us, **by our diligent use of the proper means**, to attain the right result in our labors — "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it" (Psalm 90:17); this applies, of course, to the work of our minds as well as to the work of our hands.

If prayer, and guidance received in answer to prayer, is not a substitute for the use of the ordinary means in the case of Bible study, neither is it a substitute for the use of the ordinary means in matters of practical life. Shall I travel to Synod on the train, or drive my car? I will not decide this question by flipping a coin, nor by expecting God to produce a mystical impulse on my mind as I kneel in prayer. Rather, I am to pray that God will guide me and direct my steps so that when I decide this question by my own best judgment, my decision will be pleasing to God, and will in all respects be used or overruled to His honor and glory. Having prayed, I am then to consider the factors involved. Perhaps my automobile is not in shape for such a long trip; perhaps I am very busy and pressed for time, and can save my time and strength by going on the train. On the other hand, perhaps my car has just been overhauled and is in good condition, and by driving my car, I can at the same time provide transportation for the elder from my congregation, possibly even for more delegates to

the meeting of Synod. I must weigh these different factors, and any others known to me, in my mind, and decide, by my best judgment, what would on the whole be the best course to pursue. Having made my decision, I should act upon it and refrain from worrying about whether it was the right decision. Rom. 8:28.

The case of the minister faced with simultaneous calls from two different congregations is a similar, though more weighty matter. Such a question cannot be decided by Bible study, nor by mystical "guidance" of the "impulse" type. A minister in that position, having prayed for God to direct his mind and his steps, is to survey and evaluate the situation in both congregations and in all its aspects so far as known to him, as well as in relation to such factors as his own abilities, health, welfare of his family, etc., and then decide according to his own best judgment what would on the whole most glorify God and most build up His Church and Kingdom. The decision thus conscientiously and thoughtfully made is to be regarded as the will of God, and to be acted upon without doubts or worries.

False mysticism is and always has been one of the greatest perils besetting the Christian Church. There is indeed a true mysticism, which the Bible speaks of as "drawing near to God" (Psalm 73:28) and which we call "communion with God". This may sometimes involve spiritual experiences which transcend the power of our rational mind to analyze or describe; but true mysticism NEVER pushes aside or supplants the use of God-ordained ordinary means in Bible study or in daily life. The inevitable, uniform result of false mysticism is to lead people to neglect and despise the Bible in favor of the so-called "inner light" (which some wrongly call "conscience"). Of one thing we may be absolutely certain; any tendency which leads people to minimize or neglect the Bible as the infallible rule of faith and life is **WRONG, DISHONORING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, SPIRITUALLY PERILOUS, AND NOT OF GOD.**

In answer to Query No. 1, it may be stated that all supposed impulses or impressions of the Holy Spirit received in prayer must always be tested carefully as to their conformity to the written Word of God. Someone has very aptly said, "If these impressions and impulses are in agreement with Scripture, then we do not need them; if they are contrary to Scripture, then we do not want them." Any impression or impulse that does not ring true to the written Word should immediately be attributed to Satan or to our own corrupt hearts and minds, not to the Holy Spirit.

As to why some people who claim special divine guidance do peculiar things which appear to others to be the result of very bad judgment, it may be said that such people are doubtless the victims of the unfortunate delusions of a false my-

sticism. The undersigned has known of cases of this kind, where the person's actions were most erratic; great plans were started one day and dropped soon afterwards; the person went to one place or another (supposedly as guided by the Holy Spirit) without consistency or continued aim. Such erratic conduct cannot be the product of real divine guidance. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33); there is a stability and a fixity of aim and purpose in the person who is truly living in the will of God for his or her life (Psalm 112:5-8; Jer. 2:36,37).

To summarize: true divine guidance is obtained in answer to prayer, but it does not supplant the Bible as our rule of faith and life, nor does it supplant our faculty of reason and judgment in Bible study and in the decisions of practical life. Genuine divine guidance works THROUGH our God-given faculties, not in place of them. We must be constantly on guard against the wrong tendencies of false mysticism. — J. G. Vos

Question:

Where can I find a brief explanation of the Book of Psalms that is Biblically sound and will be suitable for children?

Answer:

We know of absolutely nothing of this type. If any of our readers knows of a suitable book, kindly communicate with the editor of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" so that the information can be passed on to others. — J. G. Vos

Question:

What do you think of the article entitled "Methodism's Pink Fringe" in the "Reader's Digest" for February 1950?

Answer:

The article cited in this query reveals a deplorable situation in the largest single denomination of American Protestantism. While the "pink" tolerance of Communism, or inclination toward certain features of Communism, certainly exists among prominent Methodist leaders, as the article points out, still we do not believe that it is characteristic of the membership of that denomination in general. However the denomination can hardly escape responsibility for the situation. The trend toward advocacy of collectivism, coupled with extenuation, if not sympathy for Communism, is one of the bad signs in American Protestantism today. See the article "Whither America?" by the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick, in this issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — J. G. Vos

Note: In spite of the large amount of space devoted to the "Question Box" in this issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life", there still remain some unanswered questions in the editor's files. If our readers will kindly bear with us patiently, answers to them all will be published, D.V., in future issues of the paper. — Ed.

PATRICK HAMILTON

(Continued from inside front cover)

"But remember thou, and remember all,
Good countrymen, standing near:
Christ Jesus our Lord will deny in heaven
Who shall shrink to own Him here!

"And sorrow no more for the young life quenched
At a priestly tyrant's nod;
No hurt is theirs in the sevenfold fire,
Who walk with the Son of God!"

Still "Convert! Convert!" roared the Black Friar
As they bound him to the stake;
But he met a glance from the martyr's eye,
And it made the Black Friar shake!

"Thou evil man! in thy heart of hearts,
Thou are witnessing a lie:
To me thou hast owned that for God's good truth,
I am called this day to die!

"To His judgment-seat I appeal thee now,
Thy doom at His hand to take!"
There fell a mist on the Black Friar,
And he staggered from the stake.

The dry wood crackled, the flame rose high;
One groan from the breathless crowd;
But a voice came forth from the mantling fire,
As a trumpet, clear and loud:

"How long, O my God! shall this darkness brood?
How long wilt Thou stay Thine hand?
Now gather my soul to its rest with Thee,
And shine on my native land!"

As the flames rose higher, the daylight paled,
With a wan and sickly light;
And an old man sat by the blackened sod,
Alone, in the dews of night!

But a few brief vigils had barely flown,
Since that martyr passed to heaven,
When the Black Friar died a despairing man,
His brain all frenzy-riven!

And even amid his dark-stoled feres
Did the whispered word pass on:
"He is gone, to meet at the bar of God
With Patrick Hamilton!"

And one who dared mutter a biting jibe
In the Primate's ear — quoth he,
"When ye next shall burn, my good lord, I pray,
In a deep vault let it be!

"For it seemeth as if the clouds of heaven
Dropped heresy with their dew;
And the smoke of young Patrick Hamilton
Hath infected where'er it blew!"

Note: Patrick Hamilton, the first martyr of the Reformation in Scotland, was put to death in 1528, at the age of 24 years, for preaching the truth.

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“Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto: and all to the praise of His glorious grace.”

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J. G. VOS, Editor and Publisher

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

THE MARTYR'S CHILD

By Harriet Stuart Menteth

Oh, the sunrise! the sunrise hath wondrous power
 To gladden all living things;
 It breaks on the chill night's murkiest hour,
 Like a smile from the king of kings!
 'Tis earliest June, and the earth hath thrilled
 With the earnest of summer given;
 And the very city's self is filled
 With the breath and the beam of heaven!

A glory is circling the stern black brow
 Of Dunedin's fortress old,
 And a gleam is waking, more faintly now,
 Her Tolbooth prison-hold,
 Where one hath risen, but not from sleep,
 To gaze on that dawning sky —
 "True wife! what aileth thee now to weep?
 Heaven brightens ere I die!"

There are mustering groups in the silent streets
 That are silent no longer now;
 Though briefly each other his fellow greets,
 As with doubting on his brow!
 It seemeth as if an anguish pressed
 Alike on a nation's heart —
 One mighty load — upon every breast,
 Which yet each must bear apart!

And still in its joy, o'er that joyless throng,
 The brightening day-dawn smiled;
 While threading the crowd's dense maze along,
 Came an old man, and a child;
 The man was woe-worn past all relief;
 The child's young brow was fair—
 So sunny, it seemed that no frost of grief
 Could linger a moment there!

And onward he tripped at the old man's side,
 With many a step for one;
 And smiled at the face of his ancient guide,
 As to bid his grief begone!
 And still as the sunbeam before him danced
 On the shade of the narrow street,
 His little hands he would clap, entranced,
 And chase it with eager feet!

"O whist ye, my bairn", said the old man then;
 "And is this a time for play?
 Your hairs may be white, ere the half ye'll ken
 Of the loss ye shall thole this day!"

"Ye said I should look in my father's face,
 And sit on my father's knee.
 Long, long he has lain in yon darksome place,
 But I know he'll come home with me!"

"O whist ye, my bairn", quoth the old man still;
 "For a better home he's bound.
 But first he must suffer his Master's will,
 And lie in the chill, damp ground!"
 The child looked wistfully up again:
 "His Master is God on high;
 He sends the sun, and He stays the rain;
 He'll make it both warm and dry!"

They have entered in by the dismal door;
 They have mounted the weary stair;
 And the mirth of the young child's heart is o'er,
 For no sunbeam follows there!
 With a shuddering dread, as the harsh key grates,
 By the old man's side he clings;
 But he hears a voice, and no longer waits—
 To his father's heart he springs!

"My child! my own child! am I clasping thee now?
 My God, all Thy will be done!"
 And he whom no terror of earth could bow,
 Rained tears upon his son!
 "Now rest thee, my Willie, upon my knee,
 For thy father's hours are brief;
 And store up my words, with thy love for me,
 Engraved on thy heart's first grief!"

"They will tell thee, my bairn, that thy father died
 A death both of sin and shame;
 And the finger of scorn, and the foot of pride
 Will be busy with my name.
 But heed them not, boy! for the cause of God
 I render this day my breath;
 And tread thou the path that thy father trode,
 Though it lead to thy father's death!"

"For my Master's honor, my Master's Crown,
 A martyr 'tis mine to be;
 And the orphan's God shall look kindly down,
 My pleasant child, on thee!
 I seal thee now, with my parting kiss,
 Till at His right hand we meet.
 Death! death! thy bitterest drop is this,
 All else in thy cup is sweet!"

(Continued on back cover)

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Sketches From Our History Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER V

REFORMERS BEFORE THE REFORMATION

2. John Huss, Czech Reformer and Martyr

John Huss, the illustrious Czech (Bohemian) Reformer, was born about A.D. 1373, and suffered a martyr's death by being burnt at the stake in 1415 at the age of about 42 years. Though little is known about the early life of Huss, it seems that his parents were prosperous Czech peasants, and that his father died early in John's life. After obtaining a good elementary education, John Huss entered the University of Prague, where he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1393, that of Bachelor of Theology in 1394, and that of Master of Arts in 1396. Soon after this, Huss became a lecturer in the University, and probably studied the philosophical treatises of John Wycliffe. Like Wycliffe, Huss was a learned scholar in the fields of philosophy and theology. In 1401 he became dean of the philosophical faculty of the University of Prague, and at one time he was rector or head of the entire university.

In 1402 Huss was placed in charge of the Bethlehem Chapel of Prague, an institution that had been established in 1391 to provide popular preaching in the Czech language. This led Huss to undertake an earnest and careful study of the Bible, and it also led him to read and appreciate Wycliffe's theological writings, as well as those on philosophy.

Huss' attachment to the Bible and to the writings of John Wycliffe did not immediately result in any conflict with the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. He continued to be a priest of the Roman Catholic Church in good and regular standing. In 1405 Huss published a book, in Latin, against forged miracles and ecclesiastical abuses. This book was published without difficulty, with the full sanction of the church authorities.

Gradually Huss became more and more convinced of the truth and importance of Wycliffe's teachings. No coward, Huss did not hesitate to speak and preach what he believed to be true.

Eventually this brought opposition on the part of the Catholic hierarchy. In 1408 the clergy of Prague filed a formal accusation against Huss with the archbishop of Prague. This complaint was occasioned by Huss' outspoken language against abuses on the part of the priests. The result was that Huss was publicly forbidden to exercise any functions of the office of the priesthood anywhere in the diocese of Prague.

In 1409, the archbishop of Prague appointed an inquisitor to investigate the charges against Huss, especially the allegations that his teaching was heretical and his preaching harmful to the people. He was accused of having spoken disrespectfully of the Church, of having stated or implied that the Antichrist might perhaps be found at Rome, and of speaking of Wycliffe as a good man and faithful, orthodox teacher. The outcome of this investigation of Huss is not known.

In December of the same year (1409) the pope, Alexander V, issued a "bull" or decree commanding the rejection of all of the heresies attributed to Wycliffe, and ordering all persons to surrender to the church authorities all copies of Wycliffe's writings in their possession, that the books might be burned. This "bull" was aimed especially at the Bethlehem Chapel of Prague, where Wycliffe's teachings were being proclaimed. Early in 1410 the pope's bull was published in Prague, an act which was followed by great public indignation. Huss himself appealed to the pope to reconsider the matter in the light of fuller information. The archbishop of Prague, however, insisted on carrying out his instructions to the letter, and in July, 1410, he publicly committed to the flames more than 200 volumes of Wycliffe's writings. He also pronounced a sentence of excommunication against Huss and certain friends of Huss. In the mean time, a new pope had been chosen at Rome (John XXIII) and Huss had appealed to him. The reformer, being strongly supported by the people of Prague, continued his preaching in the Bethlehem Chapel, while in the University of Prague he did not hesi-

tate publicly to defend the condemned writings of Wycliffe.

The Czech people were solidly on the side of Huss in this conflict. A petition, urging reconsideration of the papal decree, was signed by the king and queen of Bohemia and by many prominent citizens of the kingdom, and forwarded to the pope at Rome. The ecclesiastical authorities were adamant, however, and in 1411 the ban of the Church against Huss was publicly reaffirmed, and all persons were warned against siding with him. Finally the entire city of Prague was placed under an interdict, which meant that the priests were forbidden to administer the sacraments or grant absolution to the penitent. But Huss was not to be intimidated. He continued to preach, and many of the priests administered the sacraments as usual. In September, 1411, Sbynko, the archbishop of Prague, died. It seemed as if all efforts of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to crush and silence Huss had failed.

In May of the following year (1412) a messenger of the pope arrived at Prague with "bulls" declaring a religious war against the king of

Naples, Italy. An "indulgence" was offered to all who would participate in this "holy" campaign. Huss resolutely and outspokenly opposed this enterprise, with the result that he became alienated from the Roman Catholic hierarchy and from the University of Prague. Even men who had been loyal friends and supporters of Huss now forsook him.

In June, 1412, the excommunication of Huss was renewed. All places that might grant him shelter or protection were to be placed under the dreaded interdict. In December Huss was forced to leave the capital for a time. He retired to other towns of Bohemia, where he engaged, from time to time, in open-air preaching, as well as in correspondence and in the preparation of his book *De Ecclesia* ("Concerning the Church"). It was from this book that the charges on which Huss was finally condemned and put to death were largely derived. As a matter of fact, the book was to a great extent a reproduction of a book by John Wycliffe with the same title.

(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 II

THE REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT, 1688-1690

4. The Covenanters' Grounds for Dissent from the Revolution Settlement.

(Continued from last issue)

While the claims and protests of the Covenanters were practically, if not entirely, disregarded at the time of the Revolution Settlement, the subsequent history of the Church of Scotland has demonstrated that they were right in their assertion that the Revolution Church was perverted by Erastianism. The whole history of the patronage controversy, and of the Secession and Relief movements, shows that the Revolution Church was in bondage to the civil magistrate. The Cameronians, who were the only people in Scotland publicly maintaining the Covenants, remained out of the Revolution Church. The Seceders soon came out, and then they too maintained the continuing obligation of the Covenants. The Secession justified the Covenanters in their original refusal to incorporate with the Revolution Church; if Erastianism in practice justified the Secession, then Erastianism in principle, to which

the Covenanters objected in 1690, justified the refusal to incorporate with the Church at that time. The principal difference between the Covenanters in 1690 and the Seceders in 1733 was that the Seceders objected to the Erastian constitution and practices of the Church, while the Covenanters objected not only to these but to the constitution of the State which resulted in an Erastian Church.

It should be stated at this point that the Covenanters or Cameronians, who later became the Reformed Presbyterian Church, cannot be regarded as having seceded, withdrawn or separated from the Church of Scotland, because they never were in ecclesiastical union with the Revolution Church; they remained separate from that body, but at no time became separate from it. For twenty-eight years the Church of Scotland as by law established had been an Episcopal Church; before that, it had been the Presbyterian Church of the Second Reformation. That body of people which became the Reformed Presbytery in 1743 traced an unbroken line, not indeed of ecclesiastical organization, but of dissent and separate worship, first from the Episcopal Church, and later from the Revolution Church, which extended from the Church of the Second

Reformation to the organization of the Reformed Presbytery. When the Reformed Presbytery was organized in 1743, therefore, it was not a schismatic or sectarian organization; no rending of the body of Christ took place, but only the attainment of ecclesiastical organization of those who had never been in ecclesiastical union with the Church of the Revolution Settlement. There are two ecclesiastical bodies in Scotland today which are Presbyterian Churches and which have never separated from any other Presbyterian body. One is the Church of Scotland, and the other is the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Neither can trace a continuous ecclesiastical organization back to the Church of the Second Reformation, for the Church of Scotland was by law Episcopalian from the Restoration to the Revolution. The claim of either, then, to represent the Church of the Second Reformation period, must rest not upon continuity of organization but if anything upon identity of principles. Upon this the Reformed Presbytery, in the Ploughlandhead Testimony of 1761, rested its case, and that Testimony is a detailed argument which purports to demonstrate that the Reformed Presbytery did, and the Church of the Revolution Settlement did not, maintain the principles of the Church of the Second Reformation. Since there was an obvious difference between the constitution of the Church of Scotland in 1592 and that in 1648, and since the Act Rescissory was left on the statute book at the Revolution, and the Revolution Church was founded on the revived statute of 1592 and not on the laws existing in 1648, the contention of the Covenanters that the Church of the Revolution Settlement was not the legitimate continuation of the Church of the Second Reformation must be allowed as valid. Whether the Church of the Revolution Settlement was better, wiser, or more expedient than the Church of the Second Reformation may be regarded as debatable; but concerning the question of the identity or difference of the principles on which the two were founded, there can be no debate. The Church of the Revolution Settlement claimed to be the Church of Scotland as by law established, but it did not claim to be founded on the principles and laws which were the basis of the Church of the Second Reformation.

Something should be said here about what aims of the Covenanters were realized at the time of the Revolution. It has often been stated as an obvious thing that the Covenanters were struggling through the period of persecution for civil and religious liberty. This is true in a sense, but not in the modern sense in which the terms civil and religious liberty are commonly used today. They strove primarily for the rights of God in both Church and State, and for the rights of men only as they regarded these as in harmony with the rights of God. They always approved of the legislation restricting the civil

rights of Roman Catholics; and the National Covenant which was the very textbook of the Covenanting movement approved of the acts of Parliament which "ordain all Papists and Priests to be punished with manifold civil and ecclesiastical pains, as adversaries to God's true religion, preached, and by law established, within this realm". The Ploughlandhead Testimony, 1761, testifies against Oliver Cromwell that he "framed a hellish and almost unbounded toleration in Scotland, of heretical and sectarian errors", and against the Act of 1712 which granted toleration and legal protection to Episcopalianism in Scotland, as "a sinful and almost boundless toleration", which would enable "all sects and heretics (popish recusants and anti-trinitarians some way excepted, who yet are numerous in the nation), to make whatever attacks they please upon the kingdom and interest of our glorious Redeemer, in order to the advancement of their own and the devil's, and all with impunity". The Reformed Presbytery likewise objected to the taking away of the civil pains of excommunication, in 1712, and the provision that none could be compelled by the civil magistrate to appear before ecclesiastical judicatories. To affirm, then, that the Scottish Covenanters, during the persecuting and post-revolution periods, believed in civil and religious liberty, as these terms are understood today, is an unhistorical anachronism. They claimed liberty for themselves, but protested when it was extended to Episcopalians, because they maintained that themselves were right, and the Episcopalians were wrong, and the civil magistrate should support and protect what was right, and not what was wrong. This is very different from the modern doctrine that all religions, so long as they are peaceable and law-abiding and do nothing which menaces the good order of civil society, are entitled to the protection of the civil magistrate. The Covenanters held no such doctrine; the whole idea of the distinction between civil right and moral right does not seem to have occurred to them.

But civil freedom is the sense of freedom from absolutist or arbitrary government, and religious freedom in the sense of freedom to practice and propagate the religion revealed in the Word of God, were undoubtedly among the things for which the Covenanters contended throughout the period of persecution, and both of these they attained in the Revolution. Arbitrary government was at an end; thenceforth the government was to be not an absolute, but a limited, constitutional monarchy. Religious persecution, so far as the Covenanters were concerned, was at an end; henceforth no man troubled them. They could even publicly disown the constitution of the Revolution State as immoral, without the slightest danger. The battle for liberty had been won.

Another principle for which the Covenanters

had contended, which was vindicated in the Revolution, was the principle that a nation has the right to judge when a ruler has forfeited his title to the throne. This right of revolution was boldly asserted by the Covenanters years before it was exercised by the nation as such, and to the followers of Cameron, Cargill and Renwick belongs the honor of having contended for this priceless principle through the time when to do so often meant resisting unto blood. When Charles I was executed by the English Commonwealth, the Scottish Covenanters of that period disapproved and condemned the act; they were still filled with an almost blind loyalty to the Stuarts. When Cameron and his followers posted the Sanquhar Declaration, and openly renounced the authority of Charles II, it was an act of the greatest daring, for which many of them paid with their lives within a few weeks. Of all the population of Scotland, only a few thousand

held that the deed was righteous. Cameron, Cargill and Renwick all lost their lives because they held the principles set forth in the Sanquhar Declaration. Yet they were vindicated by the Revolution, when the nation dethroned James VII and gave the crown to William of Orange in his stead. Henceforth no king in Britain could claim to hold his crown directly from God apart from the consent of the nation.

But apart from the things which have been mentioned, the Covenanters gained at the Revolution little or nothing of the things for which they had contended. Their whole testimony against Erastianism, in favor of the continuing obligation of the Covenants, and in favor of their conception of Christian civil government, was not realized, and became their ground of dissent from the Revolution Church and State.

(To be continued)

Heaven: the Eternal Home of the Redeemed

By J. G. Vos

Scripture Reading: John 14:1-6; Rev. 21:1-27.

Heaven is the eternal home of the redeemed, the elect of God. The word "heaven" is used in more than one sense in the Bible. In Gen. 1:1 we read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Here "heaven" means the sky, or all the material universe except this earth. Again, "heaven" is used to describe that particular place in the created universe where the immediate presence and glory of God are manifested in a special manner (though of course God is everywhere), as in Matt. 5:34 and 2 Cor. 12:2. Finally, "heaven" means the eternal dwelling place of the redeemed, as in 2 Cor. 5:1, Heb. 10:34.

I. Heaven is a Place

Jesus said to His disciples: "I go to prepare a place for you. . . That where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2,3). It is quite wrong to try to explain away or evaporate the simple realism of these words of our Saviour. Some people today say that heaven is not a place, and hell is not a place; that heaven and hell are merely names for certain states of mind. Of course such a manner of speaking presents only a half-truth. Heaven is AT LEAST a state of mind, and the same is true of hell. But heaven is much more than a state of mind, and so is hell.

Heaven is more than a state of mind, because there is more to the human personality than mere mind. We are human beings having a body as well as a mind or soul. Man is a finite, local

being. Unlike God, man cannot be everywhere present at once. If heaven is the eternal dwelling place of the redeemed humanity, then it must be a place.

To say that heaven is a place does not necessarily imply that heaven is a place in this universe in which we are now living, say, on the planet Venus, or on some other planet or star. Heaven is a place suited to the eternal habitation of the redeemed. It may possibly be a place in another kind of universe where the laws of space and time that we know now, which today condition and mold all our thinking and all our existence and activity, will no longer limit and control us.

We get a hint of this, perhaps, from the strange phenomena connected with the resurrection body of Jesus. He rose, apparently, through the solid rock. He entered a room, the doors being shut. He ascended upwards, and a cloud received Him out of the disciples' sight. Here we enter the realm of unfathomable mystery. To say that heaven is a place does not necessarily mean that heaven is a place in just the same way that we mean when we say "Kansas is a place". There is much that we cannot grasp in this present life. But we may confidently say that heaven is a place AT LEAST in the sense that Kansas is a place. When we say that heaven is a place, we mean at least that, and much more. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God

hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

Heaven is where Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, is now. Christ in His divine nature, being God, is everywhere; but as man, in His human nature, He is limited and local as we are, or rather, as we will be in eternity. He was made in all points like as we are, except for sin. To the dying thief Jesus said, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Paradise, of course, is another name for heaven. Paul wrote to the Philippians that to depart from this life is to be with Christ, which is far better than this present earthly life (Phil. 1:23), and to the Corinthians he wrote that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6-8). If heaven is where Jesus is today, then heaven must be a place, for Jesus' human nature must be in some definite place. He ascended, not merely into the sky, but **into the highest heavens** (Eph. 4:8-10), that is, He ascended to the special place where God's glory is manifested.

When the Scripture tells us that Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God the Father (Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 10:12), this is of course an anthropomorphic figure of speech (teaching a truth by speaking of God as if He had a human form); yet it certainly indicates that heaven is, in the transcendent sense, a place. The Bible was not written specially for the philosophers, but for common folks like ourselves. It does not attempt to answer all the difficult questions that our natural curiosity might raise, that we crave to know. But it gives us enough information to support our faith and to satisfy our souls. Heaven is a place. Just what this means, and just "where" heaven is, only God knows. If God were to tell us, during this present life, just what is meant by His calling heaven a place, and just "where" that place is, in all probability the information would be meaningless to us here on earth. We would not be able to connect it with our experiences and knowledge on this earth.

II. Heaven is a Prepared Place for Prepared People

Heaven is a place of absolute holiness. The wicked and the spiritually filthy, the selfish and profane, would not feel at home in heaven, even if it were possible for them to go there. A pig feels much more at home in a mud hole than in a beautiful parlor. Only the holy and good can be happy in heaven. Some people could not be happy there, for they would find themselves out of touch with such a holy environment. They would find it impossible to express themselves without fouling and profaning the purity and holiness of heaven.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and

he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22:11). Character will be unalterably fixed; there will be no possibility of a change. "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 4:7); "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Those who at the end of their earthly life are unjust, selfish, filthy, profane, lovers of worldly pleasures, would not feel at home in heaven, even if it were possible for them to gain an entrance there. To such people, heaven would be the worst kind of a hell.

Moreover, it would be UNJUST for God to admit wicked people to heaven. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27). Heaven is a perfect home for perfect people. "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory" (Shorter Catechism, 37). The Scripture speaks of "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23). In heaven both our personality and our environment will be perfect, and will be in absolute, perfect, complete harmony. There will be no frustrations in heaven. That will make heaven a place of bliss for the redeemed.

That same fact would make heaven a place of misery for the unsaved. They could never enjoy the bliss and happiness of heaven; they lack the capacity for such enjoyment. Their own hearts would always be out of tune with heaven.

It is only a popular fallacy that everyone would be happy in heaven if they could go there. Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people, a holy place for holy people. Of course the common notion that everyone will go to heaven is directly contrary to the plainest teachings of the Word of God. Those who die unsaved will go, not to heaven, but to hell.

III. We Should Look Forward to the Blessedness of Heaven

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21). These and like words of the Bible teach us that God intends us to think about heaven and eagerly to anticipate its blessedness.

This does not mean an ascetic or other-worldly abstraction from the business and responsibilities of the present life. We are not to neglect present duties and spend our hours day-dream-

ing about the wonders of heaven. Roman Catholic asceticism, especially in the Middle Ages, went to an extreme, regarding the present life as contemptible and worthless, and spending all time and attention in contemplation of eternity. Too often among modern Protestants, the tendency is to go to precisely the opposite extreme, to reduce religion to a this-worldly materialism. It is a matter of emphasis, of striking a correct balance between the two.

Even in worldly affairs prudent people prepare for the future. They pay life-insurance premiums, save money for their old age, provide for the future education of their children, and so forth. We sacrifice something of the present for the sake of the future. So too we should sacrifice something of the present life for the sake of the life eternal.

Soviet Russia has had repeated "Five Year Plans", during which her people were asked to economize and be content with the bare minimum of consumer goods, for the sake of a more abundant life in the future. The poor people of Russia may and probably will be bitterly disillusioned. But God's promises are faithful, and God's people who have denied themselves on earth for the sake of heaven will not be disillusioned, not to all eternity.

The Christian is to place **THE CHIEF EMPHASIS** on preparation for the life eternal. This does not mean to spend the greater part of our time on that. We cannot judge the importance of something by the amount of time we spend on it; if we could, we would perhaps have to rate sleeping as the most important single activity of our lives. The early Christians looked forward to the life of heaven with an intense and eager longing. "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God . . ." (2 Pet. 3:12). That was the normal attitude of mind of the early Christians. It should be our normal attitude of mind, too, in spite of the materialism of our age and the worldliness of so much of modern religion.

IV. Heaven Will be a Life of Intense Activity

The present-day newspaper and magazine idea of heaven is a mere childish, foolish caricature of the Bible doctrine of heaven. Harps, crowns, etc., are not to be interpreted literally. The harp is a symbol, representing joyous praise of God. The crown is a symbol for the reward given to God's faithful servants. The palm branch or leaf is a symbol of victory over all foes. The current cartoon notion of heaven, as a place of eternal idleness where the only possible activity is playing a harp, is just nonsense. No such teaching is found in the Bible.

Heaven will not be a state of idleness, but of the most intense activity combined with the

most absolute, perfect rest. Adam and Eve in Paradise (the garden of Eden) were not idle. They had work to do, even before they fell into sin. Sin did not originate work. Man was not created to be an idle being. In his state of original righteousness he had provision made for activity and work. But, while sin did not originate work, it did originate **LABOR**, for sin changed work from a wholesome activity to **WEARISOME, MAN-KILLING TOIL**. "Cursed is the ground (i.e., the realm of nature) for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:17-19). But in heaven, "There shall be no more curse" (Rev. 22:3); there will be a return to Edenic conditions; the redeemed will engage in work without toil, activity without fatigue.

"His servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face" (Rev. 22:3,4). Here "serve" does not mean merely formal worship of God. The "service" of the redeemed in heaven will include the whole scope of human activity, in the new conditions of the life eternal. The redeemed will be absorbed in the most intense, interesting activity, without ever experiencing the slightest fatigue, weariness or need of repair of the body.

In Rev. 4:8 we read of the four living creatures around God's throne in heaven: "And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come". This statement symbolizes continuous, intense, unwearying activity in the service of God. Then in Rev. 14:13 we read: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may **REST FROM THEIR LABORS**, and their works do follow them." These two ideas are not contradictory. Activity and rest are not really opposed to each other. Only our weakness on account of sin, in this present life, makes us think so. In heaven activity and rest will not exclude each other. Heaven will be a life of perfect rest and of perfect activity. The redeemed will not be wearied or fatigued by their work in heaven any more than God was wearied by His work of creating the world. Heaven will be anything but a life of idleness and monotony.

There is only one way to make sure of entering heaven. Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Entrance to heaven is not by good works or good character, but by faith in Jesus Christ, the way, the Redeemer of God's elect.

The Sixty-Ninth Psalm

ONE VOICE OF PRAYER FROM THE DEPTHS; A VAST CHORUS OF PRAISE IN THE HEIGHTS

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

Part I

THE PRAYER OF A POOR RIGHTEOUS MAN IN DISTRESS (Verses 1-29)

1. When He Had Come Among Those Who Hate Him (Verses 1-12)

"Save me, O God; For the waters are come in even to my soul. I am sunk in the mire of the deep, where there is no standing ground; I am come into the depths of the waters, and floods overwhelm me. I am wearied with my crying; my throat is dried; mine eyes have failed;—waiting for my God." (Verses 1-3)

In saying, "my God", he claims a close personal relationship in which his trust and endurance and hope are sustained. It is in fact a covenant relationship, for he calls himself "thy servant" (vs. 17), and depends on the mercy of his God and the certainty of promised salvation (vs. 13).

From the parallels of verses 14 and 15 we understand that the "waters", the "mire", and the "floods" are "those that hate me", "mine enemies", in overwhelming numbers and power.

"Many more than the hairs of my head are they that hate me without a cause: They are powerful who would cut me off, who are mine enemies on account of a lie (i.e., by false accusation): That which I took not away, therefore, I pay for." (Verse 4)

It was the men in power, "the chief priests, and elders, and scribes, and all the Sanhedrin" that falsely accused Jesus, and sought out more false witnesses to put Him to death. Many accused Him of many things which they could not prove.

In the upper room, that same night in which He was betrayed, Jesus spoke to His disciples about the hatred of the world against Himself and His Father. He said, "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father. But, this cometh to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause" (John 15:24,25).

"The word" here quoted occurs nowhere in their law, i.e., in the Old Testament Scriptures, except in this verse 4 of Psalm 69, and in Psalm 35:19. (Equivalent expressions, however, occur in other Messianic prophecies; in Psalms 7:4; 35:7; 109:3; 119:78,85,86,161, and in Lam. 3:52). That Jesus had this particular verse in mind is evident from His identification of Himself with God, the Father, as the speaker in this Psalm identifies

himself with Jehovah. "For thy sake I have borne reproach" (vs.7). "The reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me" (vs. 9). So Jesus said, "He that hateth me hateth my Father also". "I and my Father are one." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father." Precisely in hating JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, they "fulfilled" this prophecy, "They hated ME without a cause." Thus Jesus took the words of this Psalm as a foretelling of His own experience and words which could, therefore, be completely fulfilled in no other person. This is one of the "all things" which He said, "must needs be fulfilled that are written in the Psalms CONCERNING ME" (Luke 24:44).

The Holy Spirit revealed these things beforehand by the agency of the prophet David. We, as Christians, accept the interpretation of them given us by Jesus, and by the Spirit Himself in the dispensation of the New Covenant as He brings to our remembrance all that Jesus said for us. Therefore, we understand them, primarily, of Jesus Christ. But Jesus warned His disciples, "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you." "You shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." For, all who have a right to be called "Christians" are identified with Christ, as Christ is identified with the Father, having received of His glory, "that they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us . . . I in them, and thou in me" (John 17:18-23).

Such intimate relationship with God in Christ involves fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, who was hated and persecuted because, in all He said and did, He witnessed to the truth of God. But the men of the world, having imagined gods to suit themselves, do not like to be reminded of what God really is, and, because they accepted not the love of the truth, they have been left to believe the lie. For the same basic reason they hate and persecute every faithful witness to the truth of God, and so it comes to pass that "all who will live godly in this present evil world shall suffer persecution." But they have the Psalms for their comfort, instruction, and strength. The Psalms have been the "Songs in the Night" and the "Pillows of the Persecuted" in all ages since first written, wherever people of God have suffered with Him who endured all

gainsaying of sinners against Himself, "despising the shame". There are striking evidences in the writing of Jeremiah that his mind was filled with the spirit and wording of this 69th and similar Psalms. See, for example, Jer. 15:15,16; Lam. 3:52-63.

"O GOD, THOU THYSELF knowest about my foolishness; And my transgressions are not hid from thee." (Verses 5)

That is to say, THOU THYSELF knowest about my foolishness, that it is not what they say it is; THOU THYSELF seest that my transgressions are not what they charge against me. The context requires this interpretation. For, he has just said, "They hated me without a cause"; he has just asserted that their enmity is based on falsehood. He is not now admitting that they had some cause for their hatred, or that there is some truth in their lie. The question whether there be actually any foolishness or transgression is left open. No consciousness of guilt is apparent; no asking for pardon.

The verse itself is cast in the form of self-confident appeal to the omniscience of God. If it were a confession of sin, as almost all modern commentators take it to be, why such emphatic appeal to God's knowledge of the facts as over against the false accusations of enemies? The truth is, as more fully appears in the following verses, his enemies are the enemies of God. They hate him because they hate God. In the circumstances no confession of sin is called for.

We may pause here a moment to take account of the fact that this is one of many Psalms written in the first person singular. If it is not a jumble of pieces and interpolations, requiring an "expert" to take it apart and put it together again in a pattern more pleasing to his fancy, as some have attempted to do; if it is meant to be understood as the Holy Spirit has given it to us, then we must assume one speaker throughout, or, rather, a foretelling of the words of one speaker, unless, of course, a change of speaker be plainly indicated. This is also one of the Psalms most frequently quoted in the New Testament. Verses 4, 9a, 9b, 21, 22, 23 and 25 are there quoted, and, in every instance, as "written" concerning, or "fulfilled" or "accomplished" by JESUS CHRIST AND HIS ENEMIES in a period of open conflict.

Since, as we have seen above, verse 4 is, in its fullest sense, the word of Christ, and since there is no indication of a change of speaker in verse 5, we must understand verse 5 as also the word of Christ, and so indeed is the whole Psalm. But the word of Christ was spoken, not for Himself alone, but for all those who are "in Him" by faith, identified with Him as their covenant Head.

The Psalms are given us to use in our praise

to God. When we sing them we have oftentimes to use the "I", "me" and "my" that are primarily of Christ. But, realizing, by faith, that we are included in what Christ said for us, as well as in what He did for us, we can sing with confidence and joy; with joy mingled with trembling as we strive to make His words our own, and to follow Him into the higher levels of His perfect humanity. The reality and completeness of His humanity, and the nearness of His loving, sympathetic approach to men, is everywhere implied in the Psalms. Likewise is the identification with Him of every humble, repentant, believing sinner, not as an unattainable ideal, but as the goal to be grasped. Herein lies the uplifting power of the Psalms. We may, therefore, with Paul, "count all things to be loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may know him and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead."

"Let not them be ashamed in me who wait for thee, O Lord, Jehovah of Hosts; let not them be confounded in me who seek for thee, O God of Israel; Because, for thy sake, I have borne reproach; Shame hath covered my face." (Verses 6, 7)

The shame that covers his face is the reaction of holy innocence to insults revolting and abhorrent, yet borne in silence "for thy sake." They mocked Him with a borrowed purple robe, a crown of thorns, and a reed for a sceptre. Then did they spit in His face, and reviled Him. They beat Him and struck Him on the head, Him, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Then mindful of all the covenant people united in him, he appeals to the covenant God of Israel, to Jehovah of Hosts, that none may be put to shame "in me". This petition received prompt answer in a decree of Jehovah, "Who-soever believeth in him shall not be put to shame" (Isa. 28:16; Rom. 9:32,33; 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:6). And so it came to pass in the experience of the disciples, that what was meant for their shame became their glory and boast. "And they went forth rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41).

"I am estranged from my brethren, And alienated from my mother's sons". (Verse 8. See John 1:11; 6:66; 7:5; Mark 3:21,30; Matt. 26:56).

"For the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up"; (Verse 9a. See John 2:17) "And the reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me". (Verse 9b. See Rom. 15:3. For, He lived, not to please Himself, but to do the will of God).

"When I weep with the fasting of my soul,

That is to my reproach. When I put on sackcloth as my clothing, Then I am for their scorn." (Verses 10 and 11).

Weeping, fasting, sackcloth, are outward signs of sorrow and pain of heart that call for sympathy. They are met with ridicule and disdain. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not." To His disciples He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with me."

"They talk against me who sit in the gate; (the traders, the gossips, the city officials and judges); and I am the song of those who keep on drinking strong drink." (Verse 12)

As a man among men he was low in the depths of ignominy and dishonor. But, as the servant of the God of the everlasting covenant, he has come on a mission of mercy to make known the long-suffering kindness of Jehovah. His mission is not yet accomplished. But it shall be accomplished. His offers of grace are spurned by many; the day of God's judgment and wrath is sure to come, and that suddenly; but, all the people of God shall receive the goodness of God, for now

It is a "time of grace"; Prayer shall be heard

and answered, while God is still waiting to be gracious, waiting in the exceeding greatness and far reach of His mercy.

"But, as for me, my prayer is to thee, O Jehovah, in an acceptable time ("time of grace"), — O God, in the great abundance of thy mercy. O answer me with the certainty of thy salvation." (Verse 13)

The answer to this particular request, and another proof of who this is who prays, and when, is written in the prophecy of Isaiah 49:5-8: "And now saith Jehovah who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him . . . Thus saith Jehovah to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth . . . Thus saith Jehovah, In an acceptable time ("time of grace") have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people."

But while he waits for the answer to come, his enemies gather their forces to accomplish their murderous desire. He is hard pressed. His prayer becomes more urgent and intense.

2. When Those Who Hate Him Are Closing in to Do Their Worst (Verses 14-21)

(To be continued)

RELIGIOUS TERMS DEFINED

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

CONGREGATION. A body of Christian people of common faith, united under the same officers, and assembling together for public worship.

CONGREGATIONALISM. That system of church government which recognizes no authority having jurisdiction over more than a single local congregation. (Held by Congregationalists, Baptists and some others; opposed to the Papal, Presbyterian and Episcopal forms of church government).

CONSCIENCE. That function of the human soul which registers approval when a person's actions are in accordance with what he believes to be right, and disapproval when his actions are not in accordance with what he believes to be right.

CONSISTENCY. Agreement or harmony between a person's vows, or profession of faith, and his words and deeds.

CONSUBSTANTIATION. The Lutheran doc-

trine of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, which teaches that in the sacrament there is present "the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink. . . ." (Luther's Small Catechism). (Opposed to the Roman Catholic dogma of Transubstantiation, which holds that the bread and wine are miraculously changed into the real body and blood of Christ).

COVENANT. A Covenant of God with man is an arrangement made by God and imposed on man, for the purpose of bringing man into religious communion with God, involving certain promises on God's part and certain obligations on man's part.

CREATION. "The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good." (S.C. 9)

CUSTOMS. Religious practices sanctioned

by long usage; may be either good, bad or indifferent. (Customs based on long usage are often confused with practices based on principles having divine authority. It is a sign of decadence when customs are treated as unalterable, while principles are regarded as mere human customs).

DECALOGUE. The Ten Commandments, Ex. 20:1-17.

DECREES OF GOD. "The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the coun-

sel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." (S.C. 7)

DEMONISM, DEMON POSSESSION. An activity of demons or evil spirits described in the New Testament, by which one or more of them gained control of a human personality and dominated it for Satanic purposes. (In the New Testament this is distinguished (a) from ordinary insanity or mental disease; and (b) from bodily disease; Matt. 4:24).

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"'No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him' . . . Go, Arminian, and tell your hearers that they will come if they please, but know that your Redeemer looks you in the face, and tells you that you are uttering a lie. Men will NOT come. They never will come of themselves. You cannot induce them to come by all your thunders, nor can you entice them to come by all your invitations. They WILL NOT come unto Christ, that they may have life. Until the Spirit draw them, come they neither will, nor can."

Charles H. Spurgeon

"As light that passes through the colored glass of a cathedral window, we are told, is light from heaven, but is stained by the tints of the glass through which it passes; so any word of God which is passed through the mind and soul of a man must come out discolored by the personality through which it is given, and just to that degree ceases to be the pure Word of God. But what if this personality has itself been formed by God into precisely the personality it is, for the express purpose of communicating to the word given through it just the coloring which it gives it? What if the colors of the stained glass window have been designed by the architect for the express purpose of giving to the light that floods the cathedral precisely the tone and quality it received from Him? What if the Word of God that comes to His people is framed by God into the Word of God it is, precisely by means of the quality of the men, formed by Him for the purpose, through which it is given?"

B. B. Warfield

"When God pardons sin He takes it off as a burden, removes it away as filthiness, and blots it out as a debt."

Philip Henry

"A head full of vain and unprofitable notions, meeting with a heart full of pride and self-conceitedness, dispose a man directly to be an atheist."

Philip Henry

"He who hears sermons and does not do them is a monster in religion. He is all head and ears, having neither hands to work with, nor feet to walk with. There is a disease which children have, called the rickets, wherein their heads swell as large as two heads, and their legs are crooked, which hinders their going. We have many rickety Christians. They hear much, and their heads swell with empty notions and undigested opinions, but their legs are crooked, their walking is perverse. Every such person is a mocker of God, a deceiver of himself, a discourager of ministers, barren soil, a bad servant, a beholder of his natural face in a glass, a builder of his house upon the sand."

Philip Henry

"They that know heaven to be their home, reckon the world a strange country. There is a more excellent glory sealed up to them in Christ, and they do the less care for worldly advantages; certainly they do not lay out their strength and their care upon them. Who would purchase a rattle with the same price that would buy a jewel? or dig for iron with mattocks of gold?"

Thomas Manton

"A tender conscience is to some people like Solomon's brawling woman, a burden to those that have it; but let it be to thee like those that invited David to go up to the house of the Lord."

John Bunyan

Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

1. The Authorship of the Epistle

The Epistle to the Hebrews does not name its own author. In the case of the Epistles of the apostle Paul, each epistle gives the name of Paul as the author at the beginning of the epistle. Hebrews, on the contrary, enters abruptly upon the discussion of its subject matter without any introduction or salutation whatever.

From the most ancient times the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews has been a debated question. We shall cite some of the ancient testimonies and opinions concerning it.

About 95 A.D. Clement of Rome wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians, in which statements from the Epistle to the Hebrews are quoted or alluded to.

About 200 A.D., Clement of Alexandria wrote concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews: "that the Epistle is Paul's, and that it was written to Hebrews in the Hebrew language, and that Luke translated it with zealous care and published it to the Greeks; whence it is that the same complexion of style is found in the translation of this Epistle and in the Acts; that the phrase 'Paul an Apostle' was not placed at the head of the Epistle for good reason, for, in writing to Hebrews who had formed a prejudice against him and viewed him with suspicion, he was wise not to repel them at the beginning by setting his name there." This theory of Clement of Alexandria may be true, but in all probability is mistaken. The Greek of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not read like something translated from another language into Greek; on the contrary, it is highly polished and idiomatic.

About 245 A.D. Origen wrote that the Epistle to the Hebrews could not have been written by Paul, because the style is very different from that of Paul, and the Greek more literary than Paul's. But Origen added that the contents of the Epistle are not in any way inferior to the Epistles of Paul. Origen's own view was that the teachings of the Epistle to the Hebrews came from Paul, though the Epistle itself was written by someone who recalled Paul's words from memory and committed them to writing. Origen adds: "But who wrote the Epistle, God only knows certainly."

We should note that neither Clement of Alexandria nor Origen asserted that the apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews in the form in which we have it today. They only claimed that Paul may have been the original

source of the contents of the Epistle, while the present (Greek) Epistle was written by Luke, or by an unknown person.

About the third century after Christ, scholars in Alexandria and the eastern portion of the Church came to believe that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, but the western part of the Church did not agree. By the year 400, scholars in the west, influenced by Jerome and Augustine, inclined more to the view that Paul wrote Hebrews, though Jerome himself was doubtful about the question, and Augustine sometimes attributed Hebrews to Paul and sometimes referred to it as anonymous.

From about 500 A.D. to the time of the Reformation — a period of roughly a thousand years — it was generally believed that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Clearly we cannot attain certainty by appealing to the opinions of ancient Christian writers. We shall turn, therefore, to consider the phenomena of the Epistle itself, to see if we can gain any light on the question of who wrote it.

(1) Early Greek manuscripts do not mention Paul in the title of the Epistle.

(2) The contents of the Epistle do not name the author.

(3) The author, whoever he was, must have been personally acquainted with the original readers of the Epistle, to whom he wrote. Note the statements of 6:9ff; 10:34; 13:7, 19. In 13:23 the author speaks of Timothy as "our brother Timothy", apparently implying that Timothy was a mutual friend of the author and the readers of the Epistle.

(4) In 2:3 ff, the author places himself in the second generation of Christians — those who received the Gospel, not from Christ Himself, but from those who had heard Him. This is a great difficulty in the way of holding that Paul was the author of Hebrews, for Paul always claimed that he received the Gospel directly from Christ; see Gal 1:1,11,12. It is clear that the author of Hebrews, whoever he was, could not claim to have received his knowledge of the Gospel directly from Jesus Christ, as Paul did; the author of Hebrews learned of the Gospel from others who, in earlier years, had personally received the Word from Christ Himself.

(5) The Greek style of Hebrews is quite different from that of Paul's epistles. The style of Hebrews is highly polished; everything is per-

fectly smooth and balanced and the grammar is always perfect; sometimes striking alliteration occurs. The Greek of Paul's writings, on the other hand, is forceful and rugged rather than polished. Sentences are often started and left unfinished, or the construction changed midway. (Of course differences in style cannot be fully appreciated by a reading of the English Bible only, though some difference between Hebrews and Paul's epistles can be discerned even in English and other modern versions).

Apart from the theory that Paul wrote Hebrews, quite a number of other persons have been suggested as possible authors of the Epistle. Tertullian, Jerome and a number of modern scholars suggested Barnabas. It is possible that Barnabas was the author, for he was familiar with Paul's ideas; a Levite, he was at home in the Old Testament ritual; a native of Cyprus, he would have a good command of Greek. But there is no real EVIDENCE that Barnabas was the author; it is only a theory and cannot be proved.

Another theory is mentioned by the church historian Eusebius and the Bible-translator Jerome, namely that Paul wrote the Epistle in the Hebrew language, and Clement of Rome translated it into Greek. But this is just another theory without evidence.

The Reformer Martin Luther thought that Apollos was the author. Others have nominated Priscilla and Aquila, Silvanus, and many others. None of these theories can be proved, for all lack substantial evidence. After looking at all these guesses, we will do well to return to the sober judgment of Origen: "As to who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, God alone knows the truth." If we needed to know the name of the author, the Holy Spirit would have given us this information in the Bible. In conclusion, it may be stated that whoever wrote the Epistle, in all probability it was NOT the apostle Paul; there is more evidence against the theory that Paul was the author than there is for it.

2. The Date of the Epistle to the Hebrews

The apostle Paul was put to death under Nero in 67 A.D. Therefore, if Paul was the author of Hebrews, the Epistle must have been written before that date.

If Paul was not the author of the Epistle, at any rate it must have been written before 95 A.D., for that is the date of Clement of Rome's Epistle to the Corinthians, which contains allusions to the contents of Hebrews.

When Hebrews was written, Timothy was still alive (13:23). Therefore in all probability Hebrews was written in the first century. But in 2:3,4 the author indicates that he was a mem-

ber, not of the first, but of the second generation of Christians; therefore the Epistle was probably written in the latter part of the first century. While we cannot determine the date of writing with certainty, the evidence indicates that it was written sometime between 50 and 95 A.D.

In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. It is remarkable that the Epistle to the Hebrews does not mention this fact. There are two possible explanations: (a) Hebrews may have been written BEFORE Jerusalem was destroyed; or (b) Hebrews may have been written MANY YEARS AFTER Jerusalem was destroyed, when the terrible shock of this event had been softened by the passing of time. There is also another possible explanation for the Epistle's failure to mention the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, namely, that the author had no occasion to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. Some have said that Hebrews discusses the Temple worship in Jerusalem, but this is not correct, as will be seen by even a superficial examination of the contents of the book; the Epistle speaks throughout of the TABERNACLE, never of the Temple; it moves in the age of Moses, and describes the tabernacle and ritual as they were in Moses' day; see 9:2,3,4,6; 13:11, 13. Hence the Epistle's failure to mention the destruction of Jerusalem does not really prove anything one way or the other. An argument from silence cannot be relied upon in such matters.

3. The Place of Composition of the Epistle

We cannot be certain about the place of composition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In 13:24 we read: "They of Italy salute you". Some have understood this as implying that the Epistle was written from Italy. But we should observe that it says "They OF Italy", not "They IN Italy". It says nothing as to the whereabouts of these Italians at the time of writing the Epistle. They may very well have been in Greece or Asia Minor, and it is possible that the Epistle was directed TO Italy, and the author conveys greetings of Italians abroad to their friends back home in Italy. The place of composition of the Epistle is therefore unknown.

Questions:

1. What was Clement of Alexandria's theory as to the authorship of Hebrews?
2. What did Origen say about the authorship of Hebrews?
3. What was the common belief from 500 A.D. to the Reformation as to the authorship of Hebrews?
4. What light can be obtained from Hebrews

2:3,4 compared with Gal 1:1,11,12, on the question of whether Paul wrote Hebrews?

5. How does the style of Hebrews, in the Greek, compare with that of Paul's Epistles?

6. Besides Paul, what other possible authors of the Epistle have been suggested, and why can we not be sure that any of these really was the author?

7. If Paul wrote Hebrews, why must the Epistle be earlier than 67 A.D.?

8. If Paul did not write Hebrews, why must the Epistle be earlier than 95 A.D.?

9. In the light of 13:23 and 2:3,4, what must have been the approximate date of the writing of Hebrews?

10. What possible explanations are there for the fact that Hebrews does not mention the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.?

11. Why are we unable to decide where the Epistle was written?

LESSON 2

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, CONTINUED

4. The Original Recipients of the Epistle

Concerning the original recipients of the Epistle—the readers to whom it was addressed and first sent—various theories have been held. Some may hold that it makes no difference today who the original recipients of the Epistle were. But it really does make a difference, for our interpretation of the contents of the Epistle will be affected by our view concerning the identity of the original recipients, and our view concerning the occasion for writing the Epistle. We shall state and consider the three main theories, with the arguments that are urged in support of each.

A. The Theory that the Original Recipients were Jewish Christians Living in Palestine

This is by far the commonest view as to the recipients of the Epistle. It is held that they were Jewish Christians who had separated themselves from the Jewish Temple worship in Jerusalem, but were in danger of returning to it, thereby falling away from Jesus Christ. According to this view, the purpose of Hebrews is to serve as a warning against the danger of forsaking Christianity and returning to the Temple ritual in Jerusalem. Those who hold this view say that it is the plain, obvious meaning of the Epistle, and that this is shown by the many references to the Jewish ritual worship contained in the Epistle.

But this theory that the original readers of the Epistle were Jewish Christians living in Palestine is not so easy to accept as might at first sight seem to be the case. There are certain objections to it which must be faced, as follows.

(1) The Epistle is written in Greek, but the language of the Jewish Christians of Palestine was not Greek, but Aramaic. If the Epistle was written originally for them, it would probably be in their language, not in Greek.

(2) The early Jewish Christians living in Palestine did not abruptly separate from the ritual of the Temple worship, but continued to par-

ticipate in it alongside of their separate practice of Christian worship; see Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42; 21:20,26; 22:17; 24:18. This participation in the Temple worship was not sinful unless they trusted in it as the ground of salvation. In view of the fact that the book of Acts shows that the early Christians did not completely separate from the Temple worship, it is improbable that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written as a warning against falling back into such observances.

(3) If Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians living in Palestine, as a warning against returning to the Temple worship, then the Temple must have been still in existence when the Epistle was written. In that case, the Epistle must have been written before 70 A. D., for Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in that year. But if Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians in Palestine before 70 A. D., there would have been many among the readers who had themselves seen and heard Jesus during His life and ministry on earth. But in 2:3,4 the writer of Hebrews implies that both he himself and his readers were of the second generation of Christians, who had received the Gospel, not directly from Jesus Christ, but from those who had heard Him in person. This would seem to indicate that Hebrews could not have been written to Jewish Christians in Palestine as a warning against falling back into the Temple worship.

(4) In 6:10 the Epistle speaks of the original readers as having ministered to the saints. Apparently this is a reference to large gifts given for relieving the distress of poor Christians somewhere. But in the early Church, it was precisely the Jewish Christians of Palestine that were the RECIPIENTS, NOT THE DONORS, of such gifts, as we learn from Gal. 2:10, Rom. 15:25,26. If the Jewish Christians of Palestine were themselves dependent on relief provided by Christians elsewhere, how could they be in a position to provide relief for others? The statement of 6:10 furnishes a strong argument against the theory that the

readers were Jewish Christians living in Palestine.

B. The Theory that the Original Recipients were Jewish Christians Living in the Dispersion

This theory is much less commonly held than the one we have just been discussing. According to this view, the original readers of the Epistle were Jewish Christians, but not living in Palestine; they were the Jewish Christians scattered over the Greek and Roman world; and the Epistle was not written to warn them against returning to the Temple worship, but as a warning against a spiritual danger of another kind.

In favor of this second theory, it is argued that the writer of the Epistle repeatedly calls his readers "the people of God", "the children of Abraham", etc. Also it is said that the expression "dead works" in 6:1 and 9:14 means "the works of the law", implying that the readers must have been Jewish Christians. Another argument is that in 13:9-13 the readers are warned against being "carried about with diverse and strange doctrines", meaning, it is said, the doctrines of Judaism or the Pharisees.

While this second theory has much in its favor, it also is open to some serious objections, such as the following:

(1) Such expressions as "the people of God" (4:9, etc.) do not necessarily imply that the readers were Jews by race. Christians, whether Jewish or Gentile, have always been called "the people of God" and "the children of Abraham".

(2) The "dead works" mentioned in 6:1 and 9:14 were not necessarily the works of the Jewish law. These works of law-observance were legitimate in themselves (Acts 21:26), but ineffectual for salvation from sin. The works spoken of in 6:1 and 9:14 were such as required to be repented of and expiated by the blood of Christ; therefore they must have been not merely works of law-observance, but actually works of transgression, sinful works in general.

(3) The "diverse and strange doctrines" mentioned in 13:9 could not mean the requirements of the Old Testament law, which would never be regarded as "strange" by Jewish Christians. Therefore these "diverse and strange doctrines" must have been the human traditions and requirements added to the law of God by the Jews. Consequently, 13:9 ff. cannot be a warning against returning to the observance of the Old Testament law.

(4) In 6:1,2, certain doctrines are mentioned which are regarded as something to be laid aside, or advanced from. These are: repentance from dead works, faith toward God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment. These are called "principles" (that is,

"beginnings") in which the readers had been instructed. They are not to be content with these, but to advance from these elementary truths to a fuller knowledge. These "principles" or "beginnings", however, are not such truths as would be taught to Jews, but such as would have to be taught to Gentiles. The Jews already knew all these things from their childhood. The Gentiles, on the other hand, with their pagan background and manner of thinking and living, had to learn the A-B-C's of divine truth from the very beginning. It seems much more natural to suppose that the words of 6:1,2 were addressed to Gentile Christians than to Jewish Christians.

C. The Theory that the Original Recipients of the Epistle were Gentile Christians

This theory is the least common view as to the original readers of the Epistle. In its favor the following arguments have been adduced: Everywhere in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is the TABERNACLE, not the TEMPLE, that is the scene and center of worship. The Temple is not even mentioned a single time in the entire Epistle. The whole Epistle deals with the situation in the age of Moses, when there was no Temple. Therefore the mention of the sacrifices, etc., does not mean the ritual as practiced in the readers' own time in the Temple at Jerusalem, but the ritual as prescribed in the books of Moses in the Old Testament.

In view of the fact that the book deals largely with the TABERNACLE, but does not even mention the Temple, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the sacrifices, etc., are discussed, not as a practical question that faced the readers, but for other reasons, such as for comparison and argument.

On the other hand, this third theory, that the original readers were Gentile Christians, is faced with a serious objection in the fact that the title of the Epistle, in the earliest Greek manuscripts in existence, reads "TO THE HEBREWS". Even though it is possible that the title may not be a part of the inspired text of the book, still the title "To the Hebrews" certainly shows that in very early times it was recognized that this book was addressed to Hebrews, that is, to Jewish Christians.

Conclusion: Which view shall we adopt, as to the original recipients of the Epistle? The objections to the first theory (that the readers were Jewish Christians living in Palestine) seem to be conclusive. But both the second and third views (that the readers were Jewish Christians living outside of Palestine, and that they were Gentile Christians) are possible ones. On the whole it seems best to adopt either the second view (that the readers were Jewish Christians living outside of Palestine), or else a combination of the second

and third views (that the readers were both Jewish and Gentile Christians living outside of Palestine). This last is perhaps the most probable answer of all.

Questions:

1. What three theories are held as to who the original recipients of the Epistle to the Hebrews were?
2. What is the commonest view as to who the original recipients of the Epistle were?
3. According to this view, what was the purpose of the Epistle?
4. What objection to this view is based on the language of Hebrews?
5. What does the book of Acts show concerning the relation of the early Jewish Christians to the Temple worship?
6. What is the bearing of 2:3,4 on the question of whether the original readers of the Epistle were Jewish Christians in Palestine?
7. What is shown by 6:10 compared with Gal. 2:10, Rom. 15:25,26 as to the question of whether

the original readers of the Epistle lived in Palestine?

8. What can be said in favor of the view that the original readers of the Epistle were Jewish Christians living outside of Palestine?
9. Why do such expressions as "the people of God" not necessarily refer to Jewish Christians?
10. What is the probable meaning of the "dead works" mentioned in 6:1 and 9:14?
11. What must be meant by "diverse and strange doctrines" in 13:9, and why cannot the verse be a warning against returning to the observance of the Old Testament law?
12. What is the bearing of 6:1,2 on the question of whether the original readers of the Epistle were Jews or Gentiles?
13. What is the significance of the fact that the Epistle always speaks of the Tabernacle, never of the Temple?
14. What is the main objection to the theory that the original readers of the Epistle were Gentile Christians?

LESSON 3

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, CONTINUED

5. The Occasion and Aim of Writing the Epistle

Turning aside from the question as to who the original recipients of the Epistle were, let us now face the question of what was the occasion, as well as what the aim, of writing the Epistle.

In general, we may say that the condition of the recipients was one of RELIGIOUS EXTERNALISM, and that the Epistle was written in order to correct this condition. Especially, it is clear that the recipients did not properly appreciate the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Epistle therefore opens with a paragraph stressing the pre-eminent nature and position of Christ, the Son of God, Mediator of Salvation, Revealer of the Deity (1:1-4).

From 2:5-18 we can gather the reason for the readers' lack of appreciation of Jesus Christ. In this section, the writer of the Epistle defends the doctrine of the HUMILIATION of Christ. He must have considered this defense necessary; therefore, we may conclude that the readers failed to grasp, or even objected to, the doctrine of Christ's humiliation. It may be that like the disciples during Jesus' earthly ministry, they associated only thoughts of earthly glory with the office and work of the Messiah.

This section, 2:5-18, shows that Christ's hu-

miliation was both REASONABLE and NECESSARY. "It behoved him" (2:17); "It became him" (2:10). Christ's humiliation was not contrary to His glory, as the readers seem to have supposed; rather, His humiliation itself was the basis of His glory (2:9). The writer then proceeds to apply this truth to his readers: Christ's humiliation was not only the ground of Christ's glory, but also the ground of the readers' own future glory (2:10).

The recipients of the Epistle were people who wanted to walk by sight rather than by faith; they wanted to SEE with their eyes, not merely to BELIEVE with their heart. This is shown in 2:8,9, where the natural vision of the eyes is contrasted with the spiritual vision of faith: "But now we see not yet . . . But we see Jesus". In 3:1 to 4:13, the writer of the Epistle emphasizes the majesty of Christ, the Son of God, as compared with Moses, the servant of God. Thus it is clear that the readers lacked a proper appreciation of the person and saving work of Jesus Christ.

In this passage, 3:1 to 4:13, the writer warns against unbelief in the fulfilment of God's promises. He uses God's promises to Israel concerning the inheritance of the land of Canaan as an example. But the readers of the Epistle lived under the New Testament dispensation. The kind

of unbelief to which they were tempted was unbelief in the promises of the Gospel of Christ. They wanted to SEE and were not content with mere BELIEVING.

Christ's humiliation led to His EXALTA-TION, which is mentioned in 4:14, "a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. . .". This same truth is stressed in 7:26, where Christ's SEPARATION FROM SIN-NERS is also emphasized; and in 9:24 is brought out the importance of Christ's ministry IN HEA-VEN, NOT ON EARTH. Thus the writer stresses three ideas (1. Christ's exaltation; 2. His separa-tion from sinners; 3. His ministry in heaven, not on earth), each of which involves THE PRE-SENT INVISIBILITY OF CHRIST. This is a thought that runs through the whole Epistle. Whereas the readers wanted to SEE, the writer directs them rather to BELIEVE in an invisible Christ who is ministering on their behalf in heaven.

In this connection, we should realize that the ministry of the earthly high priest in the Holy of Holies was also invisible. The Epistle seeks to lift the readers' eyes above the things of earth to the glorified Christ in the heavens, to lift them from the plane of SIGHT to that of a spiritual FAITH. All through the Epistle there is an em-phasis on things NOT BEING SEEN (10:36; 11: 7,8; etc.) on PATIENCE, FAITH and HOPE. Thus the writer draws practical applications from all his discussion.

All through the Epistle to the Hebrews the contrast is between FAITH AND SIGHT rather

than between FAITH AND WORKS. It is a con-trast between a spiritual type of religion and a type which is filled with materialistic and carnal expectations. In working out this contrast, the writer undertakes to show the great superiority of the New Testament ordinances of religion to those of the Old Testament.

Summary: The aim of the Epistle to the He-brews is to exhort the readers to exercise a spirit-ual faith in the invisible, glorified Christ who is ministering as High Priest in heaven. The occa-sion of writing was the carnal, childish condition of the readers, with their preference for sight in-stead of faith. The carnal and elementary state of the readers is also shown by 5:11-14.

Questions:

1. What was the general religious condition of the original recipients of the Epistle to the Hebrews?
2. What was the original readers' attitude to-ward the doctrine of the humiliation of Christ?
3. Why did the writer of the Epistle em-phasize the importance of faith as opposed to sight?
4. What three truths does the writer present which involve the present invisibility of Christ?
5. What two types of religion are contrasted by the Epistle?
6. What passage of the Epistle especially shows the carnal and elementary condition of the readers?

An Analysis of the Contents of the Epistle to the Hebrews

The Epistle to the Hebrews is best divided into six main sections, according to the following outline.

I. Christianity is God's Final Revelation to Men: 1:1 to 2:4.

- A. God's Final Word spoken through His Son. 1:1-3.
- B. Christ Superior to the Angels. 1:4-14.
- C. Apart from the Gospel there is no Salva-tion. 2:1-4.

II. Warnings Against the Sin of Unbelief in the Gospel. 2:5 to 4:13.

- A. The Humiliation of Christ not an obstacle to faith, because by it He becomes our High Priest and Saviour. 2:5-18.
- B. Christ Superior to Moses. 3:1-6.

C. Old Testament warnings against unbelief applied to the Christian, and unbelief in the Gospel warned against. 3:7 to 4:13.

III. The Doctrine of the Heavenly High Priest-hood of Christ. 4:14 to 7:28.

- A. Christ's Priesthood the Christian's source of help. 4:14-16.
- B. The Scripture doctrine of priesthood in general. 5:1-4.
- C. Christ a High Priest after Melchizedek's or-der. 5:5-10.
- D. Reproof of the readers for their carnal state. 5:11-14.
- E. Exhortation not to stop short of true sav-ing faith. 6:1-12.
- F. God's promise and oath guarantee Christ's

priesthood for us within the veil. 6:13-20.

G. Christ's Priesthood higher than that of Aaron. 7:1-28.

1. Melchizedek a type of Christ. 7:1-3.
2. Melchizedek's priesthood higher than Aaron's. 7:4-10.
3. The Levitical priesthood made nothing perfect. 7:11-22.
4. The Aaronic priests died, but Christ lives for ever. 7:23-28.

IV. The New Covenant Instituted by Christ is Superior to the Old Covenant. 8:1 to 10:18.

- A. Christ's priestly ministry heavenly, not earthly; in the sphere of reality, not that of shadows. 8:1-5.
- B. Christ the Mediator of a new and better covenant, as prophesied of old. 8:6-13.
- C. The former Covenant only temporary, unable to perfect the worshiper, and it prefigured Christ. 9:1-10.
- D. The sanctuary and sacrifice of the New Covenant are realities, the antitype of those of the Old Covenant. 9:11-15.
- E. The New Covenant is also Christ's Last Will and Testament, sealed by His own blood. 9:16-22.

F. The heavenly sanctuary purged with a better sacrifice than the earthly sanctuary was. 9:23,24.

G. The one Sacrifice of the New Covenant is better than the many sacrifices of the Old Covenant. 9:25 to 10:18.

V. Exhortation to Live and Walk by Faith. 10:19 to 12:29.

- A. Exhortation to confidence in Christ and to the maintenance of Christian associations. 10:19-25.
- B. Warning against the danger of apostasy. 10:26-39.
- C. The example of the Hebrew heroes of faith. 11:1-40.
- D. Christ Himself both the Example and the Object of our faith. 12:1-3.
- E. Chastening experienced should not discourage faith, for it is but the discipline which prepares us for a glorious salvation. 12:4-29.

VI. Exhortations Connected with Certain Practical Christian Duties. 13:1-25.

- A. Practical Exhortations. 13:1-17.
- B. Concluding remarks and benediction. 13:18-25.

LESSON 4

CHRISTIANITY IS GOD'S FINAL REVELATION TO MEN. 1:1 to 2:4

(A) God's Final Word spoken through His Son. 1:1-3.

The first two verses of the Epistle contain a certain comparison of God's Old Testament revelation with His New Testament revelation, which may be represented by the following diagram:

O.T.	GOD	N.T.
Who spake	-----	Hath spoken
At sundry times and in		
divers manners in		
time past	-----	In these last days
Unto the fathers	-----	Unto us
By the prophets	-----	By his Son

Compare Matt. 21:34, 37, "servants . . . son"; John 1:17, "Moses . . . Christ."

"The last days" or "these last days", 1:2, began with the incarnation or resurrection of Jesus Christ, and will continue to all eternity. For proof of this, note the following Scriptures, which show that the coming of the Messiah marked the

beginning of "the last days": Heb. 1:2; 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; 4:7; 1 Cor. 10:11.

The Old Testament revelation was in divers portions and manners, this is, it was given through many men, spread over many centuries, in many forms (such as dreams, angels, visions, direct speech, etc.). The revelation of the New Testament is a unit in that it is through Christ, God's Son. The Old was through the prophets, many in number, but the New is through one only, "a Son", Jesus Christ. No distinction is made between revelation given immediately by Christ, and that given through His apostles. The New Testament revelation is regarded as a unity because it is all through Christ, and was all given in a very brief period of years. For Scripture proof that the teaching of the apostles is part of God's speaking through His Son, see John 13:20; 1 Cor. 14:37.

Christianity is God's FINAL revelation, because God has spoken through Christ and revealed in the New Testament Scriptures all we need to know (in addition to the Old Testament,

of course), hence we need no additional truth outside of the Bible. We should not use the term "revelation" of our present-day Christian experiences; at best, it is inexact and misleading, while at worst it is positively dangerous. It is better to speak of the "illumination" of the Holy Spirit who guides us into the truth already fully deposited in God's final revelation, His written Word, the Bible.

1:2b and 1:3 speak of Christ's dignity and position. Compare John 1:1-3, 14, 18; Phil. 2:6. Christ surpasses all the prophets, because He is God's Son; see John 14:9. 1:2 says that God appointed Christ heir of all things, and that through Him He made the worlds, etc. These words refer to Christ's eternal, essential deity, both before and after His incarnation.

1:3b speaks of Christ's humiliation, in the words "when he had by himself purged our sins", and continues by mentioning His exaltation, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high". These two statements speak of the crucifixion and the ascension of Christ. As in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, His resurrection, without being definitely mentioned, is presupposed between His sufferings and His glory.

(B) Christ is Superior to the Angels. 1:4-14.

Several Old Testament passages are quoted here, namely Psalm 2:7; 2 Sam. 7:14; Psalms 97:7; 104:4; 45:6; 102:25-27; 110:1.

Christ is better than the angels, (1) because He has inherited a more excellent name than they, 1:4 that is, the name of "Son", 1:5. "This day" may refer to the day of Christ's resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4), but more probably refers to the "day" of eternity, meaning Christ's ETERNAL sonship. The angels are not God's "sons" in the sense that Christ is God's Son.

(2) Because Christ at His incarnation received the worship of the angels, 1:6. They are created beings, and therefore they worship Christ who is the Creator of all.

(3) Because the angels were created at a certain time (maketh his angels . . . ", verse 7), whereas Christ, their Creator, is very God, from all eternity, verses 8, 10.

(4) Because the angels are servants, while Christ is their Lord, verses 13, 14.

We should note that the angels have a very high rank; indeed, they are reckoned as Christ's

"fellows" (verse 9), but He far exceeds them all in His essential nature and dignity. The Epistle to the Hebrews in its opening sentence presents the highest possible view of Jesus Christ. It gives all honor and glory to the Son of God. We may compare this passage with Matt. 11:27 and John 1:1-14. The Messiah is God manifest in the flesh, the Word become flesh, which once dwelt among us, but is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet.

(C) Outside of the Gospel there is no Other Way of Salvation. 2:1-4.

This section is of the nature of a practical exhortation, warning us not to let slip unheeded the word of doctrine that was heard, 2:1. In the Old Testament period the people received the law of God through angels (Acts 7:53). At that time those who did not keep the law which was ministered to them by angels, were sure of punishment, 2:2. How much more those who neglect the Gospel of Christ will be unable to escape! 2:3. For the Gospel was not proclaimed by angels, but by the Son of God Himself, 2:3, and it was accompanied by miracles, wonders, signs and gifts of the Holy Spirit, as proofs of its divine character, so that the hearers were left without excuse, 2:4.

Questions:

1. What comparison is drawn in the first two verses of the Epistle?
2. What is the meaning of the expression "these last days"?
3. How does the New Testament revelation differ from that of the Old Testament?
4. What do we mean by saying that Christianity is God's final revelation to mankind?
5. What truth concerning Christ is implied, but not expressed, in verse 3?
6. What four arguments does the Epistle use to prove that Christ is superior to the angels?
7. How does the view of Christ presented in the opening verses of Hebrews differ from the modern "liberal" view of Christ?
8. What practical exhortation is presented in 2:1-4?
8. Why are those who neglect the Gospel without excuse?

LESSON 5

WARNINGS AGAINST THE SIN OF UNBELIEF IN THE GOSPEL. 2:5 to 4:13

(A) The Humiliation of Christ not an obstacle to Faith, for by it He becomes our High Priest and Saviour. 2:5-18.

The "world to come" in verse 5 is the world

after the second advent of our Lord. God did not subject that world to angels, but to His Son Jesus Christ. 2:6,7 is a quotation from Psalm 8:4-6. All things are to be subjected to man, that

is, to the human race, and therefore to Christ, the ideal and representative man, 2:8. This prophecy has not yet been completely fulfilled. In 2:8, "we see not yet. . ." refers to the ordinary sight of the eyes, but in 2:9, "But we see . . ." refers to the spiritual sight of faith. Christ has ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He has entered upon His glory; all this is a part of His estate of exaltation. But we cannot see His glory with our natural eyes, because Christ is hidden in heaven, while we are still on earth. By faith, however, we can see His crown of glory and honor. But how did He acquire it? By suffering death and by becoming a little lower than the angels. "A little lower" can also be translated "a little while lower". Christ was originally greater than the angels, and the angels are greater than men. But Christ became man to save men, by taking a human nature. Therefore he had to become a little (while) lower than the angels. This was a part of His humiliation, which was evidently a stumblingblock to the original readers of the Epistle. So this passage emphasizes Christ's humiliation, showing that it was essential to His glory. First the cross, then the crown; first humiliation, then exaltation; first death, then glory. Therefore the closest connection exists between Christ's humiliation and His exaltation, and the believer ought not to regard Christ's humiliation as a difficulty in the way of his faith, but as a part of the proper content of his faith.

2:10 states the REASONABLENESS of Christ's humiliation, as does also 2:17. 2:11, in order to save men, it was necessary that Christ be identified with men, so He became man with us, and therefore He calls the recipients of redemption "brethren". 2:12 is a quotation from Psalm 22:22, which was a prophecy of the fruits of Christ's sufferings. 2:13 is a quotation from Isaiah 8:17,18. The latter was originally Isaiah's statement about himself and his own children, but it included a spiritual meaning prophetic of the relation between Christ and the believer, the relation being that between a parent and his children. Many places in Scripture speak of the believer as a child of God, but only here in Heb. 2:13 is the believer called a child of Jesus Christ.

2:14,15 shows the reason for the necessity of Christ's incarnation — it was necessary because the persons to be redeemed were partakers of flesh and blood, therefore Christ also had to partake of flesh and blood. The AIM of His incarnation is also stated: it was by means of death to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and to deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. So Christ's humiliation and suffering of death were not in vain; they were in order to the attainment of this great aim. Therefore this truth of Christ's humiliation

should cause no one to stumble, for it was the very heart of the Gospel.

2:16 goes on to state that it was not angels that Christ undertook to redeem, but the human race ("the seed of Abraham"). The angels are not a race or organic unity as humanity is; they were all created out of nothing at one time, and are not related to each other by natural generation as human beings are related to each other; hence, Scripture knows nothing of a plan of redemption for fallen angels. The elect angels never sinned; the non-elect angels sinned and perished; but there is no salvation for angels. Not to angels did Christ give help, but to the seed of Abraham, both the Jewish and the Gentile (spiritual) seed of Abraham. The seed of Abraham being not angels but men, and men with flesh and blood bodies, it was necessary for Christ to take the same. This was in order to His becoming "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people", 2:17. Here we are for the first time in this Epistle brought face to face with the doctrine of Christ's priesthood. Christ's becoming in all things like unto His brethren was the necessary qualification for His becoming an adequate high priest. 2:18 informs us that a part of this qualification for the priesthood was the suffering of temptation. As high priest His work was to succor them that are tempted, and He could only do this by having suffered temptation Himself.

Chapter 2:5-18 lays the foundation for the rest of the Epistle by clearing up the readers' difficulty with respect to the doctrine of the humiliation of Christ. From this point the Epistle goes on to set forth the doctrine of Christ's priesthood, but from the end of chapter 2 to 4:13 is a parenthetical practical exhortation against unbelief.

Questions:

1. What is meant by the expression "the world to come" in 2:5?
2. What two kinds of sight are spoken of in 2:8,9?
3. How is Psalm 8:4-6 related to Jesus Christ?
4. Why was it necessary for Christ to be made a little lower than the angels?
5. What is the connection between Christ's humiliation and His exaltation?
6. Why can Christ call the recipients of redemption "brethren"?
7. What truth concerning the believer's relation to Christ is derived from Isa. 8:17,18?
8. Why was Christ's incarnation (partaking of flesh and blood) necessary?

9. What was the aim of Christ's incarnation?
10. What is meant by "the seed of Abraham" in 2:16?

11. What necessary qualification for Christ's office of priesthood is set forth in 2:17?
12. What is the relation between suffering temptation and being an adequate high priest?

LESSON 6

WARNINGS AGAINST THE SIN OF UNBELIEF IN THE GOSPEL. 2:5 to 4:13, Continued

(B) Christ Superior to Moses. 3:1-6.

Christ and Moses resemble each other in one respect, namely, that each was faithful to Him that appointed him, 3:2. But Christ is far superior to Moses, because the builder of a house of worthy of more honor than the house itself, 3:3. From this verse we see that Moses is a part of the house. This passage of the Epistle uses the figure of a house and builder. From verse 3 we see that Moses was part of the house, whereas Christ is the builder of the house; therefore Christ has more honor than Moses.

But what, in particular, is represented by the figure of the house? From 3:6 we learn that the house consists of **THE PEOPLE OF GOD**: "whose house are we, if we hold fast . . .". In this house Moses had a place, but Christ was the builder, so in this respect He had more honor than Moses. From 3:4 we learn that the builder of the house is God: "he that built all things is God". Since Christ is Himself God, it is still true that God is the builder of the house, even though verse 3 implies that Christ is the builder.

The passage goes on to assert two more differences between Moses and Christ, namely, as respects their position in the house, and as respects their functions in the house. With respect to their position in the house, Moses' position is that of a servant, while Christ's position in God's house is that of a son. Also Moses' position was **IN** the house, whereas Christ's position is **OVER** the house: "Moses . . . was faithful **IN** all his house as a **SERVANT**" (3:5); "But Christ as a **SON OVER** his own house. . ." (3:4).

With respect to their functions in the house, Moses' function was that of a prophet, "for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken" (3:5b); but Christ's function is that of Lord over all, to rule. So there are three respects in which Christ is superior to Moses, as follows:

1. Christ built the house, Moses was a part of the house, therefore Christ, the builder, had more honor than Moses, who was part of what was built.
2. Moses' position is that of a servant **IN** the house, but Christ's position is that of a Son **OVER** the house.
3. Moses' function is that of testifying with reference to future things; Christ's function is that of ruling over all.

3:6b, "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end", is not contrary to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (eternal security of the believer). The statement made simply serves to define what constitutes God's house. God's house is the body of His people, made up of true believers; true believers are sure to hold fast their faith unto the end; if any person does not, that simply demonstrates that he was originally not a true believer and therefore not really a part of God's house.

(C) Old Testament Warnings against Unbelief Applied to the Christian, and Unbelief in the Gospel Warned Against. 3:7 to 4:13.

3:7-11 is a quotation from Psalm 95:7-11. That section deals with the events in the wilderness after the people of Israel came out of Egypt. At that time they tried and tempted God, and saw His works forty years. Because God was displeased with them in this matter, He swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest. The rest spoken of was the rest of the land of Canaan. Because God would not permit them to enter in, they all died in the wilderness. Centuries later the Psalmist used this matter to warn the Old Testament believers against the sin of tempting God by unbelief (Psalm 95). Finally, the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes the passage from the Psalm, using it to warn the New Testament people of God, lest there be some among them, or in their assemblies, who came short of true repentance and full faith in Christ, and therefore were without the new birth and real spiritual life, as we see in 3:12: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." We should note carefully that 3:14 is not contrary to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints ("For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end"). Every true believer is a partaker of Christ. No person who has in him an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, is a partaker of Christ. No person who is really a partaker of Christ will ever have in him an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. We see, therefore, that **THOSE WHO DEPART FROM THE LIVING GOD** and **THOSE WHO ARE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST** are two mutually exclusive classes of persons.

3:15-19 shows the effects of unbelief, both in Moses' time and now. The consequence of Is-

rael's unbelief was that they were unable to enter into rest, 3:19. The warning in 4:1 again shows that this passage does not teach the Arminian doctrine of "falling from grace". It is not a warning to true believers to be on guard against falling away, but a warning to persons who have heard the Gospel, lest they fall short of a true and full saving faith in Christ, "Lest any of you should seem to come short of it" is the condition warned against, not "Lest any of you, having obtained it, should later lose it."

From 4:2 we see that faith as well as mere hearing is necessary for salvation. This of course means a true, saving faith. We may divide faith into three kinds: (1) Historical faith, believing in the facts of the Gospel simply as historical events; this kind of faith is necessary, but not sufficient for salvation; (2) Temporary faith, as in the Parable of the Sower, which is the product of a purely natural religious experience, and does not bring salvation; (3) Saving faith, which is the product of regeneration by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:8). Throughout the passage we are considering, the faith spoken of is not mere "belief", but a true, saving faith.

In 4:3 we learn that the believer enters into (eternal) rest. The rest spoken of is that of heaven. In 4:3-10 three kinds of Sabbath rest are spoken of, as follows:

1. God's own Sabbath rest, upon which He entered after completing His work of creation. 4:3,4.
2. The Sabbath rest of Canaan, into which Israel entered under Joshua. 3:16-19; 4:6,8.
3. The eternal Sabbath rest of the people of God, which was prefigured by 1 and 2, and which was still future in David's time, as shown by 4:7,8. 4:7-9.

(Note: The word translated "rest" in 4:9 is *sabbatismos*, meaning "Sabbath rest" or "keeping of a Sabbath". The word "Jesus" in the King James Version of 4:8 should be translated "Joshua"; the reference is to Joshua the son of Nun, not to Jesus Christ. See this verse in the American Revised Version, and Acts 7:45 in the King James and Revised versions).

The argument in the passage we are considering is calculated to prove that the Sabbath rest of Canaan was not the fulfilment of the type of God's own creation Sabbath rest, for if it were, Scripture would not afterward (in David's time) have spoken of another day of Sabbath rest. But since it did (Psalm 95), we must conclude that the great Sabbath rest which God's creation rest prefigured, is still future. This conclusion is stated in 4:9, "There remaineth therefore a (Sabbath) rest to the people of God". That it was future not merely in David's time but also in the time of writing the Epistle to the Hebrews, is

shown by the term "remaineth", and also by 4:10 which shows that the character of a Sabbath is CESSATION FROM WORKS. Compare 4:10 with Rev. 14:13, where the same thought is brought out.

So we conclude that the believer's Sabbath rest is not merely that peace of conscience and enjoyment of assurance which he has here and now in Christ, but that eternal rest which is laid up for God's people in the world to come. Of course in principle and promise we are possessed of it now, but the realization and enjoyment of it still lies in the future. This passage sets forth with great clearness the eschatological character of Christianity — its concern with the future life.

4:11-13 are an exhortation to give diligence to enter into that rest. This exhortation does not imply salvation by human effort or will power, but simply that we are to be intensely concerned about our own salvation. Verses 12 and 13 constitute one of the most keenly debated passages in the Bible, as they form one of two or three passages on the interpretation of which hinges the question of the two-fold versus the three-fold constitution of the human personality (Dichotomy versus Trichotomy). It is quite beyond the scope of the present course of lessons to enter into that controversy. We shall merely note the practical point of these verses. They are introduced to show the power and effectiveness of the Word of God, meaning by "word" not merely Scripture, but every word of power by which God accomplishes His designs in the world. The term no doubt includes Scripture, too, and it is by a patient and careful study and taking to heart of the written Word of God that man can become certain of entering into that eternal Sabbath rest which is spoken of just above. The Word of God can show man what is in his own heart, and can distinguish between a true faith and a false faith which is at bottom nothing but an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Furthermore, as verse 13 tells us, God knows all things and nothing can be concealed from Him, so no hypocritical faith or partial acceptance of Christ can save anyone; as all things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, nothing but a true and hearty faith can bring salvation to the soul and give entrance into that eternal Sabbath rest which is laid up for the people of God.

Questions:

1. In what respect is Christ said to resemble Moses?
2. What argument is given to prove that Christ is superior to Moses?
3. What was the position of Moses in the house of God?

4. Wherein is Christ's position different from that of Moses?

5. What was the function of Moses in the house of God?

6. Wherein does Christ's function differ from that of Moses?

7. Why is 3:6b not contrary to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints?

8. How is the conduct of the people of Israel in the wilderness used in chapter 3 as a warning to the readers of the Epistle?

9. How does 4:1 show that 3:14-19 does not teach the Arminian doctrine of "falling from grace"?

10. What kind of faith is spoken of in 4:2?

11. What other kinds of faith are there, and how do they differ from the faith mentioned in 4:2?

12. What is the rest into which the believer enters, mentioned in 4:3a?

13. How many kinds of Sabbath rest are spoken of in chapter 4, and what are they?

14. How does the Epistle prove that the rest of Canaan is not the true Sabbath rest of God's people?

15. How does the quotation from Psalm 95 show that the true Sabbath rest of God's people is still future?

16. Who is the "Jesus" mentioned in 4:8?

17. What special power of the Word of God is emphasized in 4:12,13?

LESSON 7

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. 4:14 to 7:28.

The high priesthood of Christ is first mentioned in 2:17, and again in 3:1. But the discussion and elaboration of the doctrine of Christ's priesthood begins at 4:14 and continues to 7:28.

(A) Christ's Priesthood the Christian's Source of Help. 4:14-16.

Christ is called a GREAT high priest (4:14) because He is the Son of God, made higher than the heavens (7:26). The expression "passed into the heavens" (4:14) is literally, "passed THROUGH the heavens". This refers to Christ's ascension, and was typified by the Aaronic high priest passing through the veil of the Tabernacle which separated the holy place from the holy of holies. Compare 6:19, "that which is within the veil".

Neither Moses nor Joshua could bring God's people into that eternal rest which is on the other side of the veil, but Christ did, as from the time of His ascension. Having such a high priest, we have added reason for holding fast our confession.

In 4:15 we see that though our great high priest is so highly exalted above us, yet He is able to sympathize with sinning and suffering humanity, for He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. In this verse we find the TEMPTATION of Christ, together with HIS ABSOLUTE SINLESSNESS. Both were essential to His priesthood: His temptation, that He might be able to sympathize with the tempted, and so help them; and His sinlessness, that He might offer a sin offering without blemish to atone for guilty men. Note Exodus 28:29 where it is recorded that Aaron, the type of Christ, bearing the names of the twelve tribes on the breastplate of

judgment on his heart for a memorial before the Lord, entered into the holy place.

In 4:16 we see that Christ's exalted priesthood is an incentive to the believer to "draw near" with boldness to the throne of grace. God's throne can be called a "throne of grace" because of Christ's atonement and intercessory work; because the Christ who was crucified is now at the right hand of that throne making intercession for His people. So the believer is sure of obtaining the needed help from that source. Compare Job's complaint, Job. 23:3-8, and Elihu's answer, Job 33:23-28, accompanied as it is by an "if". The high priest which Job needed, and the mediator that Elihu spoke of with an "if", are provided for us in Jesus Christ our heavenly high priest. Grace to help "in time of need" means grace to help us at whatever time we have need of it; when we need it and seek it, it will be granted to us at once.

(B) The Scripture Doctrine of Priesthood in General. 5:1-4.

This section does not speak specifically of Christ, but of the priestly office in general, stating the qualifications and duties of priests as such. What is set forth here may be summarized as follows:

I. The Qualifications of a Priest.

1. Must be a man, 5:1.
2. Must not have assumed the office himself, 5:4.
3. Must have been appointed by God, 5:4.
4. Must be able to sympathize with man's weakness, 5:2.

II. The Functions of a Priest.

1. To represent men in things pertaining to God, 5:1.
2. To offer gifts and sacrifices for sins, 5:1.
3. To make intercession for men, 7:25.

Of course part of 5:3 cannot apply to Christ ("so also for himself, to offer for sins"), for He was sinless; this phrase applies to priests in general, including the Levitical priesthood, but not to Jesus Christ the sinless, perfect priest. Christ is the unique and sole exception to this general rule.

(C) Christ a High Priest after Melchizedek's Order. 5:5-10.

After setting forth the Scriptural doctrine of the qualifications and functions of a priest, the Epistle goes on to show how Christ is a priest. In the first place, He did not glorify Himself to be made a high priest, 5:5, but was appointed by God who said of Him, "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee" (Psalm 2:7), and who also said of Him, "Thou are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). Here we have Christ's SONSHIP linked with His priesthood. Because Christ was the Son of God, He could be a perfect high priest. Because, and only because, He was the Son of God, could He be appointed by God to this office of high priest. Compare 2 Sam. 8:18, "and David's sons were chief rulers (ARV, ministers)"; the Hebrew word here translated "rulers" or "ministers" is COHENIM, which literally means "priests". David's sons of course could not hold the Levitical priestly office, for they were of the tribe of Judah, not of the tribe of Levi, therefore the word COHENIM applied to them must have referred to some other functions, as is suggested by the context. At the same time the passage in 2 Samuel may typify the connection between Christ's priesthood and His sonship.

In the quotation from Psalm 110:4 Christ is called a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. There were three respects in which Melchizedek could typify Christ's office of priesthood: (1) he was a man; (2) he was a priest; (3) he was also a king. Compare Zech. 6:13 where the two offices of priesthood and kingship are joined in one person—beyond question a prophecy of Christ's offices. We shall learn much more about Melchizedek later. The point of the reference here is to show that Christ GLORIFIED NOT HIMSELF TO BE MADE A HIGH PRIEST, but was appointed to the office by God. Note that in 5:5a Christ is called a "high priest", but in 5:6 He is merely called "a priest". In order to understand this distinction, we must pay attention to the context, 5:4, where it is stated that Aaron glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but was called of God. Aaron was a high priest; Christ as the antitype (fulfilment)

of the Aaronic high priestly office is also a high priest. But Melchizedek was never called "a high priest"; he was simply a priest, that is, a priest in the fullest, absolute sense. This is confirmed by the added words "for ever" in 5:6. Neither Aaron nor Melchizedek were priests for ever, but only during their lifetimes on earth. Christ is a priest for ever — He has an absolute, unchangeable priesthood.

We have so far shown that Christ possessed the Scriptural qualifications for priesthood in that He did not assume the honor unto Himself but was called of God. Two qualifications remain to be examined, namely that He was required to be a man, and that He must be able to sympathize with human weakness. These are set forth in 5:7-10. In 5:7a we read of "the days of his flesh", an unmistakable reference to Christ's human nature, showing that He was truly human, and therefore, having been taken from among men, was possessed of this necessary qualification. The remaining requirement was that He must be able to sympathize with human weakness and need. This is covered by the SUFFERINGS of Christ which are mentioned in 5:7,8. The reference to "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" undoubtedly refers to our Saviour's agonies in Gethsemane and on Calvary. Compare Psalm 22:1; Matt. 26:37,39; Mark 14:33; Luke 22:44; etc. The Gospels nowhere state that Christ shed tears (except at the time of the raising of Lazarus from the dead), but the fact that He did is implied in the Gospel narratives of His agony in Gethsemane.

In 5:7 it is stated that He prayed "unto him that was able to save him from death", and in the second part of the verse it is stated that He was "heard", that is, His request was granted. Since as a matter of historical fact Christ was not saved from death, but on the contrary was crucified, dead and buried, the question arises as to precisely what the prayer of Heb. 5:7 was, and just how it was answered. We should note carefully that the text does not say that He prayed to God to be saved from death, but that He prayed "unto him that was able to save him from death". Precisely what He prayed for is not stated here. From the account in the Gospels (Matt. 26:39) we know that what Christ prayed for was that the cup might pass from Him. But what was meant by "this cup"? Probably what it meant was the wrath of God and the hiding of the Father's countenance, which took place because He was under the curse, bearing the guilt of His people's sins. It was doubtless this wrath of God, and hiding of the Father's countenance, from which He shrank, and from which it would have been wrong for Him not to shrink. That Christ did not and could not have prayed to be spared from physical death is proved by John 10:17,18.

But in what sense was His prayer heard and

answered? Certainly not in preventing Him from experiencing the wrath of God, and removal of the Father's countenance. But (1) in giving Him strength to endure the bitterness; and (2) in limiting its duration.

Verse 8 sums up: Christ's sufferings fit him to sympathize with suffering humanity. It is now demonstrated that Christ possessed all the Scriptural qualifications for the office of priesthood. 5:8-10 draw the inference from this fact, that Christ has been made perfect, that is, complete, brought to the goal, that He is the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him.

Note the two doctrines that are stated in 5:9: (1) The complete EFFECTIVENESS of Christ's work. He is the author of ETERNAL SALVATION, not merely of "saveability". He does not merely give men "a chance" to be saved; He actually and eternally SAVES them. (2) The eternal security of the saved person. It is ETERNAL salvation, not temporary salvation. Those who teach that a saved person can later "fall from grace" and perish in hell, teach a kind of salvation that is not ETERNAL, but may be only temporary. But Christ is the author of ETERNAL salvation. Those who receive this salvation are not only SAVED, but also ETERNALLY SAFE.

5:10 summarizes what has been discussed: Christ is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Questions:

1. Why is Christ called a "great" high priest?
2. What event is referred to in the words "passed into (through) the heavens" in 4:14?
3. What action of the Aaronic high priests typified this event?
4. What two facts concerning Christ are

stated in 4:15?

5. Why was it essential that Christ experience temptation?

6. Why was it essential that Christ be absolutely sinless?

7. Why can God's throne be called a "throne of grace"?

8. How do Job's complaint (Job 23:3-8) and Elihu's answer (Job 33:23-28) show the need for such a high priest as Christ is?

9. What four qualifications for the office of priesthood are set forth in 5:1-4?

10. What three functions of a priest are set forth in 5:1-4 and 7:25?

11. What phrase in 5:3 cannot apply to Christ?

12. What two facts concerning Christ are linked in 5:5?

13. In what three respects could Melchizedek typify Christ's priesthood?

14. Why is Christ called "a high priest" in 5:5 but simply "a priest" in 5:6?

15. When and where did our Saviour pray "with strong crying and tears"?

16. What did He pray for with strong crying and tears?

17. How was His prayer answered?

18. How does John 10:17,18 show that Christ could not have prayed to be spared from physical death?

19. What does 5:9 teach concerning the effectiveness of Christ's saving work?

20. What does 5:9 teach concerning the eternal security of the saved person?

LESSON 8

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. 4:14 to 7:28, Continued.

(D) Reproof of the Readers for their Carnal State. 5:11-14.

At this point the writer of the Epistle turns aside from the subject of the high priesthood of Christ, to reprove the persons to whom he is writing for their inexcusable religious stupidity and spiritual immaturity. He has many things to say about Melchizedek, that mysterious figure of the age of Abraham, but he feels frustrated in his effort to present this truth by the fact that those to whom he writes "are dull of hearing". The Greek indicates that they had actually DECREASED in their religious receptivity: "are BECOME dull of hearing". Any presentation of Christian truth which required thinking only

wearied them; they were averse to any mental effort in connection with their religion. A presentation of anything beyond such elementary truths as are taught to children, left them either bored or baffled.

This spiritual deafness and incapacity was, moreover, quite without excuse. These people were not new Christians, who had only lately come in contact with the Gospel, or had made a profession of the Christian faith for but a short time. On the contrary, they had been church members for a long time—long enough that by the time of writing the Epistle they should have been able to instruct others in the truths of the Gospel. But instead of being able to teach oth-

ers, they themselves were so ignorant of Christian truth that it was necessary for someone to start back at the kindergarten stage and teach THEM over again from the beginning "the first principles of the oracles of God"—the most simple and elementary truths, the very A-B-C's of the Christian religion. Anything beyond the A-B-C's they would immediately object to as "too deep".

Such was their spiritual and religious condition that they could not digest "strong meat" (ARV, "solid food"). They were incapable of receiving and profiting by such a presentation of Christian truth as would befit people who had been Christians for a long time. Religiously they were examples of arrested development; they were still in their infancy, and, being infants, had to have "milk"—such a simple presentation of Christian truth as should be required only for children and new converts from paganism.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews faces this situation realistically. He deplores the fact that his readers "are dull of hearing" and have to be nourished with baby food as if they were little children. At the same time he points out to the readers that they ought not to feel complacent about their condition. The fact that they demanded religious "milk" was evidence that they were "babes" and "unskillful in the word of righteousness". He adds that the ideal for Christians "of full age" (those who have been Christians for some time) is to use "strong meat" (ARV, "solid food"). By experience and practice, they should be able to "discern both good and evil", and thus to advance beyond the state of religious infancy.

Milk is the ideal and perfect food for infants; for them, nothing can take its place. But if adults have to live on a diet of milk alone, there must be something seriously wrong with them. Certainly such could not be regarded as normal persons. If normal, they would thrive on solid food such as meat and vegetables. Some modern Christians are reluctant to be weaned from an all-milk diet, and immediately object to religious meat and vegetables as "too deep" or "too doctrinal". Those who are content to remain year after year in the state of religious infancy, without adding one new truth to their meager little stock of "essential truths" that they knew when they first became believers on Christ, need to be aroused from their "dull of hearing" condition, and to realize that there are vast treasures of truth in the Scriptures for those who are willing and eager to learn—truth which will build them up and make them happier, better Christians and much more effective citizens of the Kingdom of God.

(E) Exhortation not to Stop Short of True Saving Faith. 6:1-12.

6:1-3 shows the importance of pressing on to

fuller knowledge. The first principles, five of which are mentioned in these verses, are important, and must be known and believed. But the Christian is not to be satisfied with these alone. He is to press on to fuller knowledge. This is what the Epistle proposes to do from this point.

Note that the "dead works" of 6:1 cannot mean non-saving works of law-observance, but must mean works of law-transgression, as shown by the fact that they require to be repented of.

6:4-8 and 6:9-12 contrast two kinds of faith, or two kinds of religious experience. The kind of faith and experience set forth in 6:4-8 is a kind which does not include the new birth, and the end of which is to be burned (verse 8). It is the religious experience of the unsaved or natural man who has heard the Gospel but is not born again. On the other hand, the experience set forth in 6:9-12 is one that accompanies salvation (verse 9). This whole passage may well be compared with the Parable of the Sower, *Matt. 13: 5,6,20,21*. The experience described in 6:4-8 corresponds to the second kind of soil in the Parable of the Sower. These people have a certain kind of religious experience, but it does not go deep enough; it does not include real renewal and salvation. So in the end they fall away.

When we turn to the experience itself, we find five items listed. We shall take these up one by one.

1. They were once enlightened. This means that they heard the Gospel, as shown by many references in the Gospels and other parts of the New Testament. See *Matt. 4:16; Luke 2:32; John 3:19; Acts 26:23*; etc. This kind of enlightenment comes to every individual who hears the Gospel message. It is external calling, a great benefit in itself.

2. They tasted the heavenly gift. Compare *2 Cor. 9:15*. The heavenly gift is Christ, whose redemption is promised in the Gospel. The persons referred to had not only HEARD the Gospel; they had also come to see that it was good and true. They were convinced of its divine origin and character. To say that they "tasted" of the heavenly gift, by no means implies that they savingly appropriated it. It simply means that they came to know enough about it to realize that it was good and from God. For a person to be saved it is necessary not merely to "taste" (or "sample") but to eat and drink Christ's body and blood (*John 6:52-58*, especially verse 53, from which we note that except a man EAT AND DRINK, he has no life in himself). Judged by this standard, those spoken of in *Heb. 6:4* had no life in themselves, for they had not eaten and drunk, but merely "tasted"; their experience, which was valid enough as far as it went, stopped short of salvation.

3. They were made partakers of the Holy Spirit. This implies that the influences of the Holy Spirit had worked in their hearts, but it does not imply that the Holy Spirit took up His permanent dwelling there. Compare John 14:16, 17. The Spirit **INDWELLS** the saved person, but apart from this permanent indwelling, the Holy Spirit **INFLUENCES** all who hear the Gospel, and in fact even all who do not hear the Gospel, by his common (non-saving) operations. That the operations of the Holy Spirit are not confined to the elect, but include the world, is proved by John 16:8. To be a partaker of the Spirit is a very different matter from being sealed by the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit, baptized by the Spirit, or filled with the Spirit. To be a partaker of the Spirit simply means to receive a portion of the Spirit's influence, which, in the case of the non-elect, can of course be successfully resisted.

4. They tasted the good word of God. Here again the comments on "tasted" under No. 2, above, are to the point. It means a sampling, sufficient to give an idea of the nature of the thing tasted, but not implying appropriation of that thing. The phrase "tasted the good word of God", being linked to "the powers of the age to come", probably refers to the future, meaning God's good word of promise concerning the future, that is, the Christian message of **HOPE**. Compare 1 Kings 8:56, "There failed not one word of all his good promise". So here the expression means that the persons spoken of had arrived at a certain appreciation of the nature of the Christian's hope for eternity, but it does not imply that they had themselves personally appropriated that hope. Compare Matt. 4:4, "Man shall live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Also Heb. 6:18,19, which pictures God's oath and promise as that which guarantees our **HOPE**, which we have as an anchor of the soul. To "taste" or "sample" Christian hope is one thing; to appropriate it as the anchor of one's soul is quite another matter.

5. They tasted of the powers of the age to come. The age to come is the future age, of which the present life is in some sense a fore-taste to the Christian. The age to come will be entirely supernatural in its structure and operation. Christ's resurrection body, the pattern of the Christian's resurrection body, was one that entirely transcended natural law in its character and operations. Hence the characteristic of the age or world to come is the **SUPERNATURAL**, the immediate power and agency of God; and of this supernatural power and glory, the resurrection of Christ was an example and a pledge. Not only so, but the **MIRACLES** of the apostolic age were samples of the powers of the age (or world) to come; and also the supernatural gifts of the Spirit, such as healing, speaking with tongues, etc., were samples of the powers of the age to come. The class of persons referred to in the

passage we are considering, had witnessed some of these "powers" or mighty works, and **WERE CONVINCED OF THEIR TRUTH AND REALITY**, hence they had "tasted" them and so experienced their evidential value, so as to leave themselves entirely without excuse.

To summarize: We have considered five elements in the religious experience of the class of persons under discussion: 1. They were enlightened, had heard the Gospel; 2. They tasted of the heavenly gift; they became convinced that Christ is the Saviour of sinners; 3. They became partakers of the Holy Spirit; they were made recipients of His pleading and rebuking influences; 4. They tasted the good word of God; they became convinced of the truth of the Christian promise of eternal life; 5. They tasted the powers of the age to come; they witnessed supernatural events and had become convinced of their truth and reality.

None of the experiences described by any means implies being born again, true repentance, true saving faith, or divine election to eternal life. What these people had was a religious experience common to multitudes of people who are not really born again. That the experiences described do **NOT** pertain to salvation is proved also by the contrast contained in verse 9, "But, beloved, we are persuaded **BETTER** things of you, and things that accompany salvation . . .". If the things that accompany salvation are **BETTER** than the things described in 6:4-8, then the things described in 6:4-8 are **NOT** things that accompany salvation. They are a lower grade of religious experience, which may **APPROACH** salvation, but does not **ACCOMPANY** it.

6:6-8 speaks of falling away, and renewing again unto repentance. Those spoken of had a certain kind of religious experience, but it was only temporary, for they "fell away". Compare Luke 8:13, "fall away"; the Greek word is not the same, but the meaning is related. This "falling away" is characteristic of a faith which does not proceed from the new birth; it cannot stand the blasts of tribulation, but soon passes away.

Note that 6:6 states that it is **IMPOSSIBLE** to renew them again unto repentance. In what sense are we to understand this "impossible"? Of course all things are possible with God. On the other hand, it is always impossible for man to bring any person to repentance; that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Even those who have never fallen away can be brought to repentance only by the work of the Spirit in their hearts. We conclude, therefore, that "impossible" in this verse is to be taken in a qualified sense, as meaning "impossible in God's appointed scheme of dealings with men". Not that it is abstractly impossible to God, who is almighty, but that it is impossible without His repudiating His own plan of salvation and published Word.

Is the sin spoken of here the same as the sin against the Holy Spirit spoken of in Luke 12:10, and especially Mark 3:28,29 ("eternal sin")? First we must note precisely what is the "unpardonable sin", and second, why it is unpardonable. It is a conscious, deliberate, permanent, resisting of the Holy Spirit, who finally forsakes the person, abandoning him to his own wickedness and stubbornness. It is unpardonable, not because of its enormity, nor because it is in itself greater than a sin against the Son of man, but because it results in the Holy Spirit leaving the person, so that repentance is thereafter impossible. With this in mind, we may say that the sin that is mentioned in Heb. 6:6 is an example of the "unpardonable sin", and that it is "impossible" to renew such people to repentance again, **SIMPLY BECAUSE THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS FOREVER LEFT THEM.** Bear in mind that such are **NOT ELECT PERSONS**, for if they were, the Spirit would never have wholly left them, nor could they have finally resisted and driven away the Spirit. Also we should bear in mind that not every person who hardens his heart in unbelief has committed the sin of Heb. 6:6. It speaks only of those who "fell away", that is, those who ultimately, finally, after deliberation, and once for all, forsook the doctrine of the Gospel of Christ. It is not a sin that could be committed in ignorance. It could only be done deliberately and against light. Those who have committed it know full well that they are without excuse. After committing this sin the person become utterly indifferent to spiritual things, has no qualms of conscience, and is utterly unconcerned about his soul's salvation. The reason for all this is simply that the Holy Spirit has departed from him, and no longer influences or pleads with his soul.

Heb. 10:26,27 is closely parallel to the passage we are now considering. Note that it says "if we sin wilfully"; this does not mean any ordinary sin, but a deliberate, considered rejection of Christianity; compare 10:29, "trodden under foot the Son of God". Such people have no more desire for salvation, but only "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation", 10:27. That the sin spoken of consists in final, deliberate rejection of Christianity is proved by 6:6b, which states that they "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an OPEN shame." It is the deliberate, public, final rejection of the Gospel and of the Spirit's pleadings, after which repentance is impossible, that is spoken of.

6:7,8 is an illustration, similar to the Parable of the Sower. The land which brings forth herbs, receives blessing from God; this corresponds to the third and fourth classes in the Parable of the Sower. The land which bears thorns and thistles, 6:8, corresponds to the first and second classes in the Parable of the Sower—those who have no

faith, and those who have only temporary faith. (Note that the present passage and the Parable of the Sower are not entirely parallel; in the parable the third class bore thorns and thistles **AS WELL AS** good fruit, and was accepted; here in Hebrews, that which bears thorns and thistles is to be burned. So here in Hebrews the thorns and thistles are not something **IN ADDITION TO** a true faith, but something **IN PLACE OF** a true faith. In the parable, the thorns and thistles are the cares of this life, which choke the Word; here in Hebrews they are radical unbelief).

6:9 proves conclusively that the experience described in 6:4-8 is not an experience of salvation. In contrast to the temporary faith described in 6:4-8, we find true saving faith in 6:9-12. It is distinguished from temporary faith, not only by its permanence in spite of afflictions, but also by the fact that it brings forth good fruits, namely, love to God (6:10), ministering to the saints (6:10b), diligence (6:11) and patience (6:12). Verse 12 is in direct contrast to verse 8; the two verses set forth the final destinies of two different kinds of people; of one kind, the destiny is "to be burned", of the other, the destiny is "to inherit the promises".

Questions:

1. Why did the writer of the Epistle feel frustrated in his effort to present Christian truth to the readers of the Epistle?
2. What does 5:11-14 show concerning the religious condition of the readers?
3. How long had the readers already been Christians?
4. How much progress ought they to have made, and how much had they actually made, since they became Christians?
5. What is the character of a Christian who continues to require a diet of nothing but "milk"?
6. What are the benefits of a diet of religious "solid food"?
7. What contrast is presented in 6:4-8 and 6:9-12?
8. What kind of religious experience is described in 6:4-8?
9. What is the meaning of "were once enlightened" in 6:4?
10. What is meant by "tasted of the heavenly gift" in 6:4?
11. What is the meaning of "were made partakers of the Holy Spirit" in 6:4?
12. What is the meaning of "tasted the good word of God" in 6:5?
13. What is the meaning of "tasted the pow-

ers of the age (world) to come" in 6:5?

14. How does 6:9 show that the experience described in 6:4-8 does not pertain to salvation?

15. What is meant in 6:6 by the statement that it is impossible to renew such people again to repentance?

16. What is the nature of the "unpardonable sin", and why is it unpardonable?

17. What does the second part of 6:6 ("they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and

put him to an open shame") show concerning the nature of the sin spoken of?

18. What are the points of similarity and difference between 6:7,8 and the Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:5,6,20,21)?

19. What kind of faith and religious experience is described in 6:9-12?

20. How is the faith in 6:9-12 shown to be true, saving faith? What kind of fruits does it produce?

LESSON 9

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. 4:14 to 7:28, Continued.

(F) God's Promise and Oath Guarantee Christ's Priesthood for us Within the Veil. 6:13-20.

1. The nature and purpose of an oath. This is stated in 6:16. As to the nature of an oath, it is "by the greater", that is, it consists in an appeal to a higher person or power to witness that the statement made is true, and a real oath is always an appeal to the Deity to witness to the truth of the statement made. For this reason an atheist or a pantheist cannot really swear an oath, for a person who does not believe in a personal God cannot call that God to witness to the truth of his words.

As to the purpose of an oath, its purpose is to put an end to all dispute by the certain confirmation of a matter. A sworn statement is accepted as true unless and until proved by evidence to be false. An oath may be for confirming a STATEMENT OF FACT, or it may be for confirmation of a PROMISE OF FUTURE ACTION, as an official's oath of office. In either case, its purpose is the attainment of certainty.

2. God's oath and promise to Abraham as an example. This is contained in 6:13-15. The reference is to Gen. 22:16-18. God made three great promises to Abraham: first, that he should have an innumerable posterity; second, that his seed should possess the gate of his enemies; and third, that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. These three promises were made to Abraham on more than one occasion, in substantially the same form; but on the occasion recorded in Gen. 22:16-18, they were CONFIRMED BY AN OATH; so we read, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord. . .". God's promise alone would be sufficient and reliable, but for the further strengthening of Abraham's faith, God added the oath to the promise. Thus encouraged, Abraham not only believed God, but also PATIENTLY ENDURED, 6:15, and so obtained the promise, that is, obtained the thing promised. We should note, however, that none of the promises was fulfilled during Abraham's lifetime. It was over 400 years before the first two promises were

fulfilled, and almost 2,000 years before the third promise began to be fulfilled. Yet we read that Abraham "patiently endured" and so obtained the promise. In this respect he serves as a pattern and example of true faith.

3. God's oath and promise concerning Christ's priesthood. "Wherein God . . . confirmed it by an oath", 6:17. The oath referred to is the one stated in Psalm 110:4, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek", and mentioned again in Heb. 7:21. The purpose of this oath was to confirm THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD'S COUNSEL (concerning Christ's priesthood) to the heirs of the promise (that is, the heirs of the promise made to Abraham). So in addition to God's promise or pledged word, which of itself should be sufficient to a believer, God gave the additional assurance of an oath, in order "more abundantly to show" to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His plans and purposes. This idea of immutability is contained in the actual words of Psalm 110:4, "The Lord hath sworn, AND WILL NOT REPENT". So Christ's heavenly high priesthood is guaranteed to the believer by this double and infallible assurance, "in which it is impossible for God to lie". Of course it is always impossible for God to lie, oath or no oath, but the oath and promise render the believer certain of this impossibility.

4. Christ's heavenly priesthood the Christian's encouragement. 6:18-20. The purpose of the oath and promise was to give the believer "a strong consolation" (ARV, "a strong encouragement"). The believer has "fled for refuge", as from a shipwreck, or as to one of the cities of refuge (Num. 35:6). "To lay hold upon the hope", means to grasp the hope as an object to preserve one from sinking.

In the following portion we find two figures beautifully combined, namely, the figure of the anchor and the figure of the tabernacle.

In the first figure, the soul is the ship, the

world is the sea, the bliss beyond the world is the distant shore, hope resting on faith is the anchor which prevents the soul from being tossed to and fro; faith based on the encouraging consolation through the promise and oath, is the chain or cable connecting the ship to the anchor.

In the second figure, the tabernacle is in view. The world is the fore-court, heaven is the holy of holies, within the veil, Christ is the high priest going before us, as our representative, so as to enable us after Him, and through Him, to enter the realm within the veil.

We should note the meaning of the word "hope" in the Bible. It is used somewhat differently from the common modern usage. We often use the word "hope" to express a mere WISH or POSSIBILITY, for example, a farmer plants seed, and hopes to get a good harvest; we plan a trip, and hope for pleasant weather. But in the Bible where "hope" is used in the religious sense, it means not a mere wish or possibility, but a certainty. Christian hope is just as sure and certain as Christian faith; the difference is, that hope deals with the future.

6:19, as the anchor goes below the water and grips the unseen sea bottom, so our hope goes beyond the world of time and space, and grips the inner reality of heaven.

Questions:

1. What is the nature of an oath?

2. Why cannot an atheist or a pantheist really swear an oath?

3. What is the purpose of an oath?

4. What three great promises were made to Abraham?

5. How long after Abraham's time were these promises fulfilled?

6. Why did God confirm the promises to Abraham with an oath?

7. How does Abraham serve as a pattern of true faith?

8. What oath of God is referred to in 6:17? Where in the Old Testament is it mentioned?

9. What was the purpose of this oath referred to in 6:17?

10. What is the meaning of "a strong consolation" in 6:18?

11. What two figures of speech are combined in 6:19,20?

12. What is the meaning of hope as the anchor of the soul?

13. What is the meaning of hope entering within the veil?

14. Why is Jesus called our "forerunner" in 6:20?

15. What is the difference between "hope" in the Bible sense and the common modern usage of the word "hope"?

LESSON 10

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. 4:14 to 7:28, Continued

(G) Christ's Priesthood Higher than that of Aaron. 7:1-28.

1. Melchizedek a Type of Christ, 7:1-3. Melchizedek is mentioned in the Bible, outside of the Epistle to the Hebrews, only twice, Gen. 14:18 and Psalm 110:4. He was king of Salem, that is, king of Jerusalem. His name "Melchizedek" means "king of righteousness"; his office, "king of Salem", means "king of peace". The statement of 7:3 that he was without father, mother, beginning of days, end of life, etc., means of course that these facts about him are not RECORDED in Scripture. Being a human being, he doubtless was born, and also died. But these facts about him not being recorded in the Bible, he stands in the pages of Scripture as the type of ETERNAL PRIESTHOOD, and also (being both king and priest in one person) the type of Christ, who combines in Himself the kingly and priestly offices. Among the people of Israel, kingship and priesthood were always distinct. Israel never had a king who was at the same time a

priest. But Melchizedek, who was not an Israelite, combined these two offices in himself.

1. Melchizedek's priesthood higher than Aaron's, 7:4-10. The argument here is very closely reasoned, as follows: (1) Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek. (2) The Levitical priests take tithes of their brethren, according to the Law, though these brethren themselves are descendants of Abraham. (3) Melchizedek, who was not descended from Abraham, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed Abraham. (4) It is a recognized principle that he who blesses is greater than he who receives the blessing; therefore Melchizedek was greater than Abraham. (5) The Levitical priests, though they receive tithes, nevertheless eventually died; but Melchizedek, as a type of eternal life, received tithes and "LIVETH", therefore his priesthood is higher than that of Aaron. (6) Through Abraham, Levi himself paid tithes to Melchizedek, for Abraham represented his posterity in the act of paying tithes.

We have thus three proofs that Melchizedek's

priesthood is higher than Aaron's priesthood, as follows:

(1) Through Abraham, Melchizedek blessed Levi; therefore Melchizedek was greater than Levi.

(2) The Levitical priests died, but Melchizedek "liveth".

(3) Through Abraham, Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek, thus recognizing the latter's superiority.

3. The Levitical priesthood made nothing perfect, 7:11-22. Note here the following details: (1) The prophecy that another priest should arise, after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4), demonstrates the inadequacy of the Levitical priesthood, 7:11. (2) The change of priesthood, prophesied in Psalm 110:4, involves also a change of the law, that is, a change of dispensation, and of the form of God's dealings with His people, 7:12. (3) If Christ is a priest at all, He must be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, for He is of the tribe of Judah, not of the tribe of Levi, hence he could not LITERALLY be a Levitical priest, though of course He could be the fulfillment of the type of the Aaronic high priest, 7:13,14. (4) The prophecy of Psalm 110:4 must have the meaning explained above, 7:15. Verse 16 is a sharp contrast between Christ and the Levitical priests; "the power of an endless life" is contrasted with "the law of a carnal commandment". (5) The Levitical priesthood made nothing perfect, but the priesthood of Christ is a better hope, by which we draw near to God, 7:18,19. (6) The Levitical priests were constituted without an oath, but Christ WITH an oath, therefore His priesthood is superior to theirs in efficacy, 7:20-22. (7) Conclusion: "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament"; ARV, "By so much also hath Jesus become the surety of a better covenant", 7:22.

4. The Aaronic priests died, but Christ liveth for ever, 7:23-28. The Levitical priests were many in number, because by death they were hindered from continuing, 7:23. Christ, the anti-type of Melchizedek's priesthood, abideth for ever, and so has His priesthood unchangeable. This is the final proof that Christ's priesthood excels that of Aaron. Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost (uttermost limit of time) those who come to God through Him, 7:25. This is the practical significance of Melchizedek's priesthood as fulfilled in Christ.

Verses 26-28 are a summary of the doctrine of Christ's priesthood, before the Epistle leaves this subject and turns to another matter. Verse 26 stresses the HOLINESS and IMMEASURABLE EXALTATION of Christ. Verse 27 emphasizes the sufficiency and finality of His sacrifice: "once" (ARV, "once for all"). Verse 28 again contrasts Christ with the Levitical priests. They were "men", that is, MERE men; Christ is "a Son", that

is, God-man. They were appointed by the Law; Christ was appointed by an oath, which was AFTER the law (in David's time). They were persons "having infirmity", that is, original and actual sin; Christ is "perfected for evermore" (King James Version, "consecrated for evermore"), that is, for ever free from all contamination of sin, as had been asserted in 7:26a.

It has been abundantly shown that Christ's priestly office is not merely the antitype or fulfillment of the Levitical priesthood, but also far excelled that priesthood in every way. The Levitical priests (in and of themselves) made nothing perfect; Christ saves to the uttermost all beneficiaries of His priestly mediation.

The following section, 8:1-5, forms a connecting link between the doctrine of Christ's priesthood and that of the New Covenant, which is about to be discussed. It is precisely because of Christ's heavenly high priesthood that He could be the Mediator of a new and better Covenant.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that Melchizedek was a type of Christ?
2. What is the meaning of the title "king of Salem"?
3. What is the translation of the name "Melchizedek"?
4. What is the meaning of the statement of 7:3 that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother, without descent", etc.?
5. Of what kind of priesthood was Melchizedek a type?
6. What two offices did Melchizedek hold, and what does this show concerning Christ?
7. What three arguments does the Epistle give to prove that Melchizedek's priesthood is higher than that of Aaron?
8. What does Psalm 110:4 show concerning the Levitical priesthood?
9. Why could not Christ be literally a priest after the order of Aaron?
10. What contrast between Christ and the Levitical priests is stated in 7:16?
11. How does the fact that Christ was appointed priest with an oath show Him to be superior to the Levitical priests?
12. How does the fact that the Levitical priests were "many" (7:23) show their priesthood to be inferior to that of Christ?
13. Why is Christ able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by Him?
14. What two truths concerning Christ are stressed in 7:26?
15. What truth concerning Christ's sacrifice is brought out in 7:27?

LESSON 11

THE NEW COVENANT INSTITUTED BY CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT.

8:1 to 10:18

(A) Christ's Priestly Ministry Heavenly, not Earthly; in the Sphere of Reality, not that of Shadows, 8:1-5.

8:1-5, while still dealing with Christ's priesthood, nevertheless belongs to the new section of the Epistle, for it forms a part of the argument to demonstrate the superiority of the new covenant over the old. Verse 1 summarizes the preceding section on Christ's priesthood: "We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Verse 2 goes on to enlarge on this idea. Christ is "a minister of the sanctuary" — but **WHAT** sanctuary? The sanctuary of the "true tabernacle" — the tabernacle "which the Lord pitched, and not man". This is the first introduction of this idea in the Epistle. The tabernacle pitched by man, in the days of Moses, was merely a copy or replica of the "true tabernacle", which is in heaven. (Note that the tabernacle, not the temple, is spoken of).

Verse 3 states a general principle: every high priest must offer both gifts and sacrifices. From this principle it draws an inference: since Christ is a high priest, He too must offer something. Verse 4 goes on to explain that His offering is not parallel to or coordinate with those of the Levitical priests: "For if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." Note that this verse does not deny that Christ was a priest while He was on earth; it merely denies that while on earth He was a priest to "offer gifts according to the law"; that is, it denies that He was a member of the Levitical priesthood. Heb. 7:27 plainly teaches that Christ **WAS** a priest during His earthly ministry. 8:4 however means that if Christ were on earth at the time of writing the Epistle, He would not be a priest, since there already were plenty of earthly priests. 8:5 expands the doctrine that the earthly tabernacle was a copy or replica of the heavenly tabernacle, the real tabernacle pitched in heaven by God. The pattern was revealed to Moses in the mount.

(B) Christ the Mediator of a New and Better Covenant, as Prophesied of Old. 8:6-13.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is the only New Testament book in which the idea of the covenant occurs with prominence, though of course it is presupposed in every chapter of the New Testament. Christ spoke of a covenant only in connection with the Lord's Supper. The following references occur in Paul's Epistles: Rom. 9:4; 11:27; Gal. 3:15-17; 4:24; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 2:12. Compare Luke 1:72; Acts 3:35; 7:28; Rev. 11:19. In Hebrews

the term occurs 17 times, though 6 of these are translated as "testament" by the King James Version. In the Old Testament the "covenant" idea is extremely prominent; in the New Testament, the terms "Church" and "Kingdom" become more prominent, while "covenant" occurs less frequently. But in the Epistle to the Hebrews the covenant idea is very important.

8:6 affirms Christ's ministry to be more excellent than that of the Levitical priests, because He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. This is the general truth, which the rest of the chapter undertakes to demonstrate. 8:7 affirms that the fact that the Old Testament prophesied that there would be a second covenant, shows that the first (or "former") covenant was imperfect or inadequate. This is a repetition of the argument of 7:11, which was there applied to the priesthood, but here to the covenant. If a new covenant is predicted, this implies that the old was not satisfactory, that it was inadequate. But 8:8 goes on to state that it is a fact that a new covenant had been predicted, and therefore "fault" was found with the old covenant.

Verses 8b-12 are a quotation from Jer. 31:31-34. In the context in Jeremiah the prophecy is closely connected with the return of the people of Judah from their captivity in Babylon. The reason for this can easily be discerned. The great purpose of the return from Babylon was in order that the Messiah might be born in Palestine, according to the prophesied plan of God. The birth of the Messiah, of course, involved the establishment of the new covenant. So the prophecy of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31 was in exactly the proper place. Lest any one err by supposing that the prophecy of Jer. 31:31-34 referred exclusively to the time after the second advent of Christ, it is cited in Hebrews 8 as already fulfilled, at least in part. Concerning this passage we may note the following facts:

(1) The two covenants contrasted are the Sinaitic (8:9) and that of the Christian dispensation; in the language of the Reformed theology, these are the old dispensation of the Covenant of Grace and the new dispensation of the Covenant of Grace.

(2) The "new covenant" spoken of is the one which was established by Jesus Christ at the time of the institution of the Lord's Supper, Luke 22:20.

(3) Therefore the "Israel" and "Judah" referred to in Heb. 8:8, 10 and Jer. 31:31, 33, are **CONTINUOUS AND IDENTICAL** with the Christian

Church of which the Lord's Supper is the highest privilege and most prominent ordinance. The modern "dispensational" distinction between "promises made to Israel" and "promises made to the Church" is a false distinction. The Scofield Reference Bible, note on Jer. 30:1, states that "These chapters constitute a kind of summary of prophecy concerning Israel as a nation. . ." (page 804). We believe that this teaching of modern dispensationalism is erroneous.

(4) The new covenant is characterized by a greater degree of SPIRITUALITY than the old covenant, 8:10; compare John 4:23,24. Under the old covenant the law of God was written on tables of stone; under the new covenant the law of God is written on the hearts of His people.

(5) The new covenant is characterized by a greater degree of UNIVERSALITY than the old covenant, 8:11. The words of this verse will of course not be completely fulfilled, in their absolute sense, until the eternal state after the second advent of Christ. But they have a partial and relative fulfilment even today. Under the old covenant God's saving grace was confined to the one nation of Israel (John 4:22). Outside of this narrow sphere, God's saving grace was withheld from the children of men (Rom. 1:24,26,28). But under the new covenant the Gospel is universal, to be preached to all nations, and it breaks through every barrier of class, race, language and nationality.

(6) The new covenant differs from the old covenant in a greater freedom of forgiveness of sins, 8:12. Since sins forgiven are forgiven, and there can be no middle ground between sins forgiven and sins not forgiven, and since it is an undoubted fact that the sins of Old Testament believers were forgiven (Psalm 32:1,2), we must therefore understand Heb. 8:12 in the subjective sense of a greater degree of CONSCIOUSNESS or ASSURANCE of the forgiveness of sins, and greater peace and joy in the believer's heart because of the forgiveness of sins. (See the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chap. XX, Sec. 1). The Old Testament believer's sins were forgiven, objectively, in God's sight, but he did not ordinarily have the same fulness of assurance and joyous consciousness of the forgiveness of his sins that the Christian believer is privileged to have.

(7) The old covenant itself professed to be only temporary. The great error of the Jews, in the time of Christ and today, consisted in regarding the institutions of the Old Testament as permanent, as if God had intended them to last until the end of the world. It was prophesied long ago, in the Old Testament, that there would some day be a NEW covenant, Jer. 31:31, Heb. 8:8,13. The mention of something "new" implies the correlative existence of something "old". This is quite plain from Heb. 8:13. But if the former covenant

is to be regarded as "old", then it must also be regarded as TEMPORARY, and therefore to be in due time superseded by a new and better covenant.

We have shown above three particulars in which the new covenant is superior to the Old covenant (1. More spiritual. 2. More universal. 3. Fuller and freer forgiveness of sins). These are the "better promises" of 8:6b. Since the new covenant involves these "better promises", it is a "better covenant", 8:6b, of which Christ is the Mediator. This is the truth which this section of the Epistle undertook to prove.

Questions:

1. What is "the true tabernacle" and who pitched it?

2. What general principle is stated in 8:3?

3. What pattern was shown to Moses in the mount?

4. How many times does the Greek word for "covenant" occur in the Epistle to Hebrews? How many of these does the King James Version translate by "covenant", and how many by "testament"?

5. What truth concerning Christ is laid down in 8:6?

6. What is implied concerning the old covenant, by the fact that the Old Testament itself predicts the coming of a new covenant?

7. From what book and chapter of the Old Testament are 8:8b-12 quoted?

8. What is the connection between Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant, and the return of the people of Judah from Babylon?

9. What two covenants are contrasted in 8:8-12? What are these two covenants called in the language of theology?

10. When and by whom was the "new covenant" established?

11. Why is it not correct to regard the promises of Jer. 31:31-34 (and Heb. 8:8-12) as "promises to Israel, not to the Church"?

12. How does 8:10 show that the new covenant is more spiritual than the old covenant?

13. What is meant by saying that the new covenant is more universal than the old covenant?

14. In what respect does the new covenant provide greater freedom of forgiveness of sins than the old covenant?

15. What is the great error of the Jews, ancient and modern, with reference to the institutions of the Old Testament?

LESSON 12

THE NEW COVENANT INSTITUTED BY CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT. 8:1 to 10:18, Continued.

(C) The Former Covenant only Temporary, Unable to Perfect the Worshiper, and it Prefigured Christ, 9:1-10.

9:1-5 is a brief statement of the ritual worship of the old covenant. The sanctuary of the old covenant is called a "worldly" sanctuary (Greek, "kosmikon", "of this world"), 9:1, as over against the heavenly sanctuary of which it was a replica. 9:2 speaks of the holy place; 9:3 of the holy of holies, behind the veil or curtain; 9:4 of the objects pertaining to the holy of holies. None of the objects mentioned existed in the time of the apostles, when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. 9:5b indicates that there is more symbolism involved in the various objects mentioned than the present chapter undertakes to discuss. 9:6, the services "continually" of the holy place; 9:7, the service "once every year" in the holy of holies. 9:8 gives the religious meaning of the restrictions placed on entrance into the holy of holies: "the way into the (heavenly) holiest of all was not yet made manifest. . .". 9:9 gives the real significance of the earthly tabernacle: "a figure for the time then present"; the sacrifices were ceremonial, and unable of themselves to perfect the worshiper "as pertaining to the conscience". That is, the believer's faith could not rest in them as terminal points, but must reach out to that which they represented. 9:10 brings out the temporary character of the Old Testament ordinances; they were imposed "until the time of reformation", that is, until the advent of the Messiah and Mediator of the new and better covenant.

(D) The Sanctuary and Sacrifice of the New Covenant are Realities, the Antitype of those of the Old Covenant. 9:11-15.

Here the sanctuary and sacrifice of the new covenant are contrasted with those of the old covenant. In 9:11 we read of "the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands", meaning the tabernacle in heaven, where Christ ministers today at the Father's right hand. In 9:12 we read of the greater and more perfect sacrifice, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by Christ's own blood. The old high priests had to carry the blood of atonement, to enter the holy of holies. By the shedding of Christ's own blood, He entered, not the holy of holies in the "worldly" tabernacle, but into the holy of holies in heaven itself, into the very presence of God the Father, "having obtained eternal redemption for us".

Note also the contrast between ceremonial or technical cleansing, and spiritual cleansing; cleansing "of the flesh" and cleansing "of the conscience", 9:13,14. There is also a contrast between

"dead works" and "service of the living God", 9:14b. The ritual of the old covenant did not really, of itself, take away people's sins; it only conferred a technical or ceremonial purification. Only by true faith in the promised Messiah, who was represented by all this ritual, did Old Testament believers obtain the forgiveness of their sins.

We know that under the old covenant any animal offered as a sacrifice had to be a perfect specimen of its kind. So we read here of Christ that He offered himself WITHOUT SPOT to God. In order to offer the perfect sacrifice for the sins of His people, Christ had to be personally sinless and holy.

9:15 gives the conclusion drawn from what has been said. Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant. It was by means of His sacrifice that even God's people under the old covenant could be saved unto eternal life. Note the strong emphasis which is placed on the death of Jesus Christ as our Saviour. In the Word of God the chief emphasis is not on the life of Jesus, nor on His example, nor on His teachings, but on His death as our Saviour. His death had significance both for the old covenant and also for the new covenant. The result is that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance". (Note: 9:15 does NOT mean that there was no forgiveness of sins in the Old Testament period, but merely that the actual atonement, on which forgiveness was based, had not yet taken place. The sins of Noah, Abraham, David, etc., were forgiven on the basis of a future atonement. This could be done because the future atonement, by the decree of God, was absolutely certain to take place. When Christ died on Calvary, it was not only for the sins of New Testament believers, but for the sins of Old Testament believers which had already been forgiven in anticipation of His death on the cross; He died "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant".

(E) The New Covenant is also Christ's Last Will and Testament, Sealed by His own Blood. 9:16-22.

To understand this passage we must know that in Greek "covenant" and "testament" are the same word. Almost always in the New Testament this word is rightly translated "covenant", but in two places it has to mean "testament" (both in Heb. 9:16,17).

As 9:16,17 explains, the efficacy of a testament (last will and testament) depends entirely upon the DEATH of the person who made it. This brings in the idea of BLOOD, and it is stated that

even the first testament (covenant) was not dedicated without blood (9:18), that is, the blood of the animal sacrifices, which represented the blood of Jesus Christ. This truth is expanded in 9:19, 20, quoted from Ex. 24:8. 9:21 goes on to show the prominence of blood in the Old Testament ritual, and 9:22 states the general principle that, according to the Old Testament law, (1) all things are cleansed with blood; (2) without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. This brings out the true importance of Christ's **SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT**. His death was necessary for the establishment of the covenant, which is also His last will and testament in the believer's favor, by which we receive the inheritance of eternal life with God in heaven.

Questions:

1. Why was the sanctuary of the old covenant called "worldly"?
2. What was the real value or significance of the earthly tabernacle?
3. What truth does 9:10 state concerning the Old Testament ordinances?
4. What and where is "the greater and more perfect tabernacle"?
5. What is the "holy place" which Christ has entered, mentioned in 9:12?
6. What has Christ obtained for His people, according to 9:12?
7. What kind of cleansing was accomplished by the ordinances of the tabernacle ritual?
8. How does the cleansing effected by Christ differ from that of the tabernacle ritual?
9. What is the significance of the words "without spot" in 9:14?
10. What fact concerning Jesus Christ receives the chief emphasis in the Bible?
11. How was it possible for believers under the old covenant to obtain forgiveness of sins?
12. What other meaning does the Greek word for "covenant" have?
13. What did the blood of the animal sacrifices represent?
14. How does the idea of a last will and testament serve to bring out the importance of Christ's death?
15. What great truth is stated in 9:22, and where is it found in the Old Testament?

LESSON 13

THE NEW COVENANT INSTITUTED BY CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT. 8:1 to 10:18, Continued.

(F) The Heavenly Sanctuary Purged with a Better Sacrifice than the Earthly Sanctuary was. 9:23,24.

At this point we may pause to sum up the Epistle's teaching concerning the Old Testament types of the tabernacle, etc. These were not merely prefigurations of the New Testament facts, but, as shown by 9:23, they were actually "patterns of things in the heavens" (ARV, "COPIES of the things in the heavens").

The original realities were in heaven — the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. The Old Testament types (tabernacle, etc.) were "shadows" or "copies" of these things in heaven. The New Testament facts are the heavenly realities come down to earth in Christ.

In 9:23, "the patterns (copies) of things in the heavens" means the earthly tabernacle and the objects associated with it. "The heavenly things themselves" means the spiritual realities in the heavenly world where God dwells and His glory is manifested.

In 9:24, "holy places made with hands" means the earthly tabernacle and its objects.

These are said to be "the figures of the true". "The true (holy places)" means, of course, the heavenly realities — the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. Again, we are told that Christ has entered "into heaven itself" — not into an earthly holy of holies which only symbolized heaven, but into the real heaven above.

In 10:1, the Old Testament ordinances are called "a shadow of good things to come"; the fulfilment in Christ is called "the very image of the things". The "good things" (9:11; 10:1) were **THE THINGS IN THE HEAVENS**. These "things in the heavens" were faintly represented on earth by the Old Testament tabernacle, so the tabernacle could be called a "shadow" of the things in the heavens. But when Christ came to earth and wrought out redemption with His own blood, that was something more than a mere "shadow" of the heavenly things; that was **THE VERY IMAGE OF THE THINGS** (10:1) — not a mere "copy" or "shadow", but the reality come down to earth. For the redemption which was planned by God from all eternity was actually wrought out and accomplished on this earth, when the Son of God suffered and died on Calvary.

(G) The One Sacrifice of the New Covenant is Better than the Many Sacrifices of the Old Covenant. 9:25 to 10:18.

This is the seventh and last argument adduced by the Epistle to prove that the new covenant is better than the old covenant. The sacrifices of the old covenant were characterized by multiplicity and endless repetition. There were many different kinds of sacrifices, and each kind was offered many times, over and over again.

The "holy place" mentioned in 9:25 must mean the holy of holies, as shown by the reference to the high priest entering "every year" (not "always" as in 9:6), and "with blood"; compare 9:6,7.

9:26, if Christ were to suffer repeatedly, this would involve endlessly repeated crucifixions since the foundation of the world, which of itself would prove His sacrifice to be ineffective; just as if a person were to take medicine, and keep on taking it year after year, this would show that the medicine was not really effective in curing the disease. If the disease were really cured, the person could stop taking the medicine. Christ's sacrifice, however, is not endlessly repeated, nor is it ineffective. It is a once-for-all transaction, "once in the end of the world", 9:26b, that is, once, at the time of fulfilment of prophecy in the advent and work of the long-expected Messiah. Also His sacrifice was TO PUT AWAY SIN, that is, to put it clear out of the way, so that it would no longer be a problem or condemning power.

9:27,28 states a parallel between the history of every individual and that of Christ. In the case of every individual, death occurs once (and in this sense, death of the body, once only), and after death comes judgment, that is, the final result of a person's life. In the case of Christ, death also occurs once (and only once) in the form of a substitutionary sin-offering, and after this comes His second advent, that is, the final result of His finished work of atonement, which is SALVATION (in its ultimate meaning and implications) to His people, "them that wait for him". The purpose of 9:27,28 is to bring out the finality and sufficiency and unrepeatability of Christ's one sacrifice for sin, by comparing it to the individual's one experience of physical death, the dissolution of the union between body and soul.

10:1-4 explains the reasons for the endless repetition of the Old Testament sacrifices. Being merely "shadows", not the "very image" of "the things in the heavens", they could not accomplish the removal of sins, or make the worshiper perfect. This is proved, 10:2, by the fact that they continued to be offered. If they really removed sins, why should they be offered continually, year after year? An efficacious atonement would need to take place only once, after which the worshippers would "have had no more

conscience (consciousness) of sins", that is, they would be freed from guilt and the need of an atonement. This, however, was not the fact in the case of the Old Testament sacrifices, 10:3, for in point of fact they acted out the ritual of atonement for sin over and over again, year by year. The basic reason for this is stated boldly in 10:4, "IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THAT THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND OF GOATS SHOULD TAKE AWAY SINS". Animal sacrifices could not really take away any person's sins. They never could, never did, and never were intended to. It was merely the error of the Jews to imagine that they ever could do it. Their real meaning was (1) DECLARATIVE, by shadowing, of the heavenly realities involved; (2) TYPICAL, by prefiguring, of the New Testament work of Christ's atonement which really does take away sins.

This truth, that the ritual sacrifices were not efficacious and not permanent, was itself stated in the Old Testament, Psalm 40:6-8, which is quoted in Heb. 10:5-7. Psalm 40 in a Psalm of David, and like so many of the Psalms, it presents elements of Messianic prophecy. From Heb. 10:5-7 we learn that Psalm 40:6-8 is Messianic and refers to the incarnation of the Son of God: "when he cometh into the world, he saith . . .".

Note that 10:5,6 does NOT state that God did not ordain the animal sacrifices; He DID, as the Old Testament shows. It merely states that He did not DESIRE them, nor have PLEASURE in them. The whole statement is a Hebrew way of emphasizing the fact that the Old Testament sacrifices were temporary, ineffective in themselves, and not what God really required as a satisfaction for human sin. What God really did require was Christ's sufferings and death as a satisfaction, and this was accomplished once for all on Calvary, and therefore it need never be repeated. For the atonement, however, the incarnation was necessary. Hence the inefficacy of the Levitical sacrifices has for its corollary the coming of Christ into the world: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God", 10:7; compare verse 9, "He (Christ) taketh away the first (the Old Testament sacrifices), that he may establish the second (the satisfaction of Christ for the sins of men)." Since Christ's satisfaction is efficacious in saving sinners, it need never be repeated, 10:10; in this respect it is in contrast to the oft-repeated but ineffective sacrifices of the Old Testament. The contrast is repeated in verses 11 and 12. Sacrifices which are often repeated can never take away sins. A sacrifice which is accomplished once for all, really cancels the guilt of sin. The fact that Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient for ever, is demonstrated by the fact that after it He sat down at the right hand of God, not again offering Himself as a sacrifice, but "expecting" (waiting), till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet, 10:13. Verse 14 re-emphasizes this same thought:

by one single offering, Christ has "perfected forever" them that are sanctified, that is, the beneficiaries of His redemption.

This truth is next confirmed by repeating the quotation from Jer. 31:33 ff, in Heb. 10:15-17, showing that the effect of the new covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator, and which was established by His blood, is a COMPLETE and ETERNAL remission of sins, 10:17. But this only proves again that NO FURTHER OFFERING FOR SIN IS NEEDED, 10:18. If a person's sins are forgiven completely, all his sins forgiven, and forgiven forever, what further need could he have of a sacrifice for sin? Hence it is proved that Christ's one sacrifice is superior to the many and repeated sacrifices of the old covenant.

Questions:

1. What is meant by "patterns (copies) of things in the heavens" in 9:23?
2. What is meant by "the heavenly things themselves" in 9:23?
3. Why are the Old Testament ordinances called "a shadow" in 10:1?
4. Why is Christ's redemption referred to as "the very image of the things" in 10:1?
5. How many arguments does the Epistle present to prove that the new covenant is better than the old covenant?

6. If sacrifices had to be repeated endlessly, what did this show concerning their effectiveness?

7. What is the significance of the word "once" in 9:26?

8. What is the importance of the words "to put away sin" in 9:26?

9. What is meant by the expression "in the end of the world", 9:26?

10. What parallel is drawn in 9:27,28 between the history of Christ and that of every individual?

11. What was the real meaning and purpose of the Old Testament sacrifices?

12. What does 10:5,6 teach as to God's attitude toward the Old Testament sacrifices?

13. Why was the incarnation of Christ necessary?

14. How does 10:12,13 prove the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice for sins?

15. According to 10:14, what has Christ done for His people?

(Note: This series of lessons on the Epistle to the Hebrews will be concluded in our next issue.—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".

OF ANOTHER WORLD: THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S CHURCH, by Harold Petroelje. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1949, pp. 172, \$2.50.

"It is because the Church everywhere is seeking to consolidate her position in this world and employing all her energies to emphasize a **this-world** attitude, that she is failing. She is occupying herself too much with **Time** and not enough with **Eternity**. Her strength is being spent in becoming a big name in the world's 'Who's Who', and she gives scant attention to God's 'What's What'. Her members hear many preachments about their earthly program, but few words are spoken about their preparation for eternity."

Thus the author of this book digs to the root

of the church's failures and weaknesses. He suggests that the church today needs to confer with Christ, and to re-learn what He desires and requires His Church to be. For Christ taught that although His church is **IN** the world, it is not **OF** the world. This book has been written to emphasize that truth, and to remind us that the church, in its true character and calling, is **of another world**.

The author gives full honor to the Lord Jesus Christ, as the one to whom the church belongs. Of those who read the Bible and yet deny that Christ is the Eternal Son of God, he says, "Those folk are not suffering from poor eyesight; they are the victims of bad hearts. They can see the words all right, but they do not want to see the Christ." With regard to the Church's vital re-

lationship to her Lord he has this to say: "Without Him, she is no Church, has no right to the title, and has no saving mission to undertake. With Him, she is everything God intends her to be: the Body, Bride and Building of His beloved Son."

God's sovereignty in the control and building up of the church is clearly set forth. Its members are those whom He has elected from eternity unto salvation. Saving faith itself is given to them from above. It is this faith which links Christians on earth with the Christ who is in heaven. "The vast distance between heaven and earth is spanned by the bond of belief."

The author then proceeds, on this sound basis, to outline the mission and calling of Christ's Church. The Christian must be heavenly-minded, since his life is hid with Christ in God. As a child of God he must reflect the glory of his Father. The Church must exemplify within her own being that God is her life and that she lives for God. Mr. Petroelje warns that the Church's primary concern is not to make this a better world in which to live; rather, it is to make men live better in this world. The Church is not to bend her efforts to create a "Utopia", or "heaven on earth". "She has a single, sublime message — calling men everywhere to behold God in Jesus Christ. Such a belief will change men and will bring about a corresponding change in their lives, habits, and in their surrounding conditions, because it is God-wrought." Such chapters in the book as "Satan versus God" and "Help from Heaven" deal with the importance of God's Truth as the Church's one weapon of warfare, and the place which prayer must have, as the Church depends upon God for spiritual power, which alone makes her mission victorious.

This book is an excellent treatment of a timely subject. It is written in colorful, present-day language, and holds the reader's interest from beginning to end. It provides a strong stimulus for more consecrated Christian living. Throughout the book, the author has combined clarity and vividness with a faithful and reverent use of God's Word. For these reasons, this book is commended to the church member — minister or layman, young or old — as very profitable reading.

—J. M. McMillan

THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST, by Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1950, pp. xiii, 575, \$4.50.

The author of this book was descended from the Warfields and the Breckinridges of Kentucky, so we would expect him to be a scholar and a gentleman. His writings show him to have been more than that: a member of the family of believers who have an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Dr. Samuel G. Craig edited the volume, which is a collection of Dr. Warfield's works which, with one exception, were published by the Oxford University Press after his death in 1921. The present volume is a very helpful book, one part on the person of Christ, the second part on the work of Christ. The work of Christ as Redeemer is confined mostly to His office of a Priest, but Dr. Warfield makes clear that this emphasis does not discount His work as a Prophet and as a King. "He did come to make us know what God is . . . He did come to implant in human society a new principle of health and organization." But he insists it was by offering Himself as a sacrifice for sin that Christ made knowledge and social regeneration possible.

A statement from the Foreword, by Dr. Craig, summarizes the special contribution this book makes to the studies of the work of Christ: "Every article contributes (helps in distinguishing between genuine Christianity and its counterfeits) but most of all the articles entitled 'Christless Christianity' and 'The Cross of Christ and the Essence of Christianity' — the former of which is aimed at those who deny that Jesus himself occupies an indispensable place in the religion He founded, and the second of which is aimed at those who deny that the death of Christ as an expiatory sacrifice belongs to the essence of Christianity. Taken as a whole, it cannot be said that Warfield regarded one group of these articles as more important than the other. He constantly insisted that the object of our faith as Christians is never Christ *simpliciter* but ever Christ as crucified, and that it is no more possible to have a Christianity without an atoning Christ than it is to have a Christianity without a divine Christ."

We have heard reports of the "higher critics", and the evil influence they have had upon the beliefs of Christian churches. We have realized that the reading of their works would be an unwholesome pastime, and not to be recommended to the congregation. But here was a man, Dr. Warfield, who moved in their world, understood their philosophies, had made a profound study of their ideas, could compare critic with critic. In the articles which Dr. Craig has collected, the author refuted the arguments of those who attacked the historicity of the Gospel accounts. He shows that the gospel which Jesus taught, which the apostles received and gave to others, which the Christian church has maintained, is the gospel of God-man, two distinct natures in one person, who lived an historic life, died and was buried, and rose again. The chapters on the atonement explain the nature of the cross in terms of an innocent person sacrificed as a substitute for guilty persons. One chapter is called "Chief Theories of the Atonement". Another is entitled, "Modern Theories of the Atonement", from which we quote: "The doctrine of substitutive atonement has not been lost from the con-

sciousness of the Christian Church. It is in its terms that the humble Christian everywhere still expresses the grounds of his hope of salvation. . . It has not even been lost from the forum of theological discussion. It still commands powerful advocates wherever a vital Christianity enters academic circles; and, as a rule, the more profound the thinker, the more clear is the note he strikes in its proclamation and defense. But if we were to judge only by the popular literature of the day—a procedure happily not possible—the doctrine of substitutive atonement has retired well into the background. A tone of speech has grown up regarding it which is not only scornful but positively abusive.”

Scorn and abuse have not halted the beliefs of the elect. A knowledge of critical theories did not undermine the faith of B. B. Warfield. Rather, he shows that a reader of the New Testament must accept the orthodox view of Christ, or accept some mythical, manufactured opinions about a Christ who never existed at all.

This is a happy way to become acquainted with the writings of religious teachers who are opposed to a supernatural, substitutive Lord. However, Warfield's purpose is not to set up straw men for the delight of tearing them apart. He believed in the vital importance of a correct view of a person of Christ, and of the work of Christ. These articles present a positive faith in a definite gospel.

A report that a lady novelist said, “I would be a Christian even if Jesus never lived”, perhaps gratified liberals and shocked conservatives. But one is not so concerned with her particular statement when it becomes apparent that the viewpoint is not novel. Critics who tried to see a more “primitive” gospel than the one Paul preached, and then a more “primitive” gospel than that which Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote—who tried to dig under the disciples’ “prejudices and wishful thinking”, to get at what Jesus himself taught—were brought up shortly by more consistent critics who maintained that Jesus had never lived at all. So, the next stop was to ask, “What if Jesus did not live at all? Does Christianity depend upon the life of any one person, even though he may have been the ‘first Christian’?”

“The Person and Work of Christ” shows the folly of such speculations; the vanity and vexation of spirit which comes to the disbeliever who still wants to be called a “Christian”. Indeed, such critics of John and Paul have contended that the Church fathers were not “Christians” at all, but misguided men who superstitiously believed in a human sacrifice to atone for sin.

The reader may be surprised to find in the book considerable quotation from Professor Douglas Clyde Macintosh of the Yale Divinity

School. He is famous since his application for United States citizenship, which was denied by the Supreme Court in 1931 because he refused to subordinate his conscience to the Constitution. But in the light of his writings, it appears that his stand on that occasion was not due to his worship of Jesus Christ. For he said of “the older Christianity” (belief in a sacrificial atonement for sin, and a religion founded upon historic events), that if this is Christianity, “he would have to confess not only that he is not a Christian, but that he does not see how he ever could be a Christian.”

Dr. Warfield writes of “The Essence of Christianity”, discussing the opinions of such liberals as Macintosh, and shows the real essence of Christianity to be such that liberalism is an altogether different religion. A fitting Bible reference, therefore, would be Galatians 1:8, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

Let him be accursed. It will be hard to be indifferent to liberal theology after reading “The Person and Work of Christ”. If you have a friend who considers that his “scholarship” will not let him believe in salvation by the blood, urge him to read this book.

—Richard Hutcheson

GOD'S THREE DEAD LINES, by J. Harold Smith. The Radio Bible Hour, Del Rio, Texas. 1949, pp. 60, paper cover, \$1.00.

This little book by an earnest radio evangelist contains several Bible studies, of which the first, entitled “God's Three Dead Lines” takes up about half the book. Of the others, several concern the second coming of Christ and related subjects.

As presented by the author, the first “dead line” is “blaspheming against the Holy Ghost”, or “the unpardonable sin”; the second is “sinning away your day of grace”; the third is the “sin unto death” referred to in 1 John 5:16. The author states that the first two can be crossed only by an unsaved sinner, while the third “dead line” can be crossed only by a saved but backslidden believer.

Most orthodox Bible scholars would hold that the first and second “dead lines” are essentially the same, that is, that “sinning away your day of grace” is just one way of committing “the unpardonable sin”. Although author Smith distinguishes these, he certainly holds that “sinning away your day of grace” is AN unpardonable sin, which really amounts to the same thing as the common view of the matter.

Many Bible students will take issue with Mr. Smith in his interpretation of 1 John 5:16, where he holds that the “sin unto death” is a sin committed only by a real, but backslidden, believer

in Christ. It should be noted that this verse does NOT say that a "brother" (that is, a Christian) can commit the "sin unto death". It speaks of a brother committing "a sin which is NOT unto death", and then adds, "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." The verse does not say that a Christian brother commits this sin unto death; and many Bible scholars have held that the person who commits the sin unto death is not a real Christian ("brother") but a hypocrite or merely nominal Christian, and that by his committing the sin unto death he proved that he is not really a "brother" after all. According to this last interpretation, the "sin unto death" is really a form of "the unpardonable sin" or "blaspheming against the Holy Spirit."

However, it is possible that Mr. Smith may be correct in his interpretation of 1 John 5:16. And apart from this particular verse, there can be no doubt that his "Dead Line Number Three" is a truth of the Bible. This truth does not depend on any one verse. It is taught in various parts of the Bible. For example, 1 Cor. 11:30,31 certainly teaches that God may and does take away the earthly life of a sinning Christian to prevent that person from being condemned with the world. Some have interpreted the sin of Achan (Josh. 7) along this line. Achan confessed his sin (verse 20), yet he was put to death because of it. Also the incident of Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:6,7) and that of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) have been interpreted by some in the same way.

The expression "give God a chance in your heart" (page 21) is not Scriptural, and seems to imply that repentance and faith come from man's free will rather than as a gift of God's free grace. However, the author may not have intended any such implication.

In the second part of the book, the article on "The Offense of the Cross" is excellent. It is true to the Bible and much needed at the present day. The article on "The Rapture of the Church" presents the particular type of premillennial interpretation that is known as the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Theory. Mr. Smith's teaching on this subject is practically identical with that of the Scofield Reference Bible. While believing as firmly and enthusiastically as author Smith in the personal, visible return of Christ to this earth, the reviewer must dissent from this Pre-Tribulation Rapture theory.

The last article, entitled "The Whole Truth", is an earnest polemic against the heresy of Antinomianism; namely, the heresy which holds that since Christians are saved by Grace, they need not cultivate good works. The author forcefully exposes the error and harm of this teaching.

While in the judgment of the reviewer this book contains some serious errors in its dealing

with the subject of prophecy, and an occasional doubtful interpretation of a text of Scripture, still it presents much needed truth. The author is dead in earnest, and seeks to point men to Christ for salvation. He writes with deep conviction that men are lost sinners on the road to hell, and can only be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross. There should be more of such preaching on the radio at the present day.

—J. G. Vos

OUTLINES OF THEOLOGY, by Archibald Alexander Hodge. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1949, pp. 678, \$5.00.

Archibald Alexander Hodge, who lived 1823-1886, was the son of the renowned Presbyterian theologian and author Charles Hodge. After serving as professor of theology in the Presbyterian theological seminary at Allegheny, Pa., he was called in 1878 to the professorship of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, which had been left vacant by the death of his father in the same year. A. A. Hodge held this position and discharged its duties with great ability until his death in 1886.

"Outlines of Theology" was first published in 1860, with a new edition in 1875, followed by an enlarged edition in 1879. The present volume, issued in 1949 by the Eerdmans firm, is a reprint of the revised and enlarged edition of 1879. Though a much shorter work than the large three volume "Systematic Theology" of Charles Hodge, the present work is scholarly, thorough, and covers the whole range of systematic theology. The material was originally prepared for the instruction of church members, when the author was a pastor; later, it was enlarged and revised for theological students at the Allegheny and Princeton seminaries. The result is a book which while theologically orthodox and accurate in its statements, is yet intelligible to the church member of ordinary education.

Throughout the book, the question and answer method is followed. Subjects are broken up into their component elements, questions are definite, and answers are always precise and to the point. There is no vague, general discussion, nor is there any indefinite rambling around the edges of subjects. Each question concerns a particular matter, and the answers are uniformly brief, clear and forceful. Paragraphs are nearly always short, so that the book is quite readable. At the close of several of the chapters there are citations from the historic creeds, giving authoritative statements of the doctrine that has been discussed, from the standpoint of the different branches of Christendom. Thus, for example, at the close of the chapter on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed views of the subject are shown by cita-

tions from: (a) "Decrees of the Council of Trent"; (b) "Dogmatic Decrees of the Vatican Council", 1870; (c) "Formula Concordiae Epitome"; (d) Second Helvetic Confession; (e) "The Belgic Confession"; (f) "The Westminster Confession of Faith". All these citations together occupy only a little more than one page, exemplifying the conciseness of the book.

The theology of this work is the orthodox Calvinism of the Westminster Confession of Faith. This is clearly presented, shown to be taught in the Scriptures, and contrasted with contrary systems of doctrine. It is shown that orthodox Calvinism is indeed the system of doctrine set forth in the Scriptures, and that it is nothing more nor less than consistent Biblical Christianity.

From the standpoint of the present-day study of theology, the chief drawback of this book is the lack of any treatment of the Barthian theology ("Neo-orthodoxy" or "Theology of Crisis"). Of course, a reprint of a book published in 1879 cannot be expected to discuss a new type of theology which originated in the twentieth century. Yet "Neo-orthodoxy" is coming to be the burning theological issue of the day, and for this reason the present volume needs to be supplemented by some work providing an analysis and critique of this present-day movement.

The doctrine of the Church is not treated as a separate doctrine, but instead is taken up under "The Mediatorial Kingship of Christ" and "The Sacraments". Yet, under these heads, there is a good treatment of the Church.

Reformed Presbyterians will note with approval the author's insistence on the duty of the State to recognize the Lord Jesus Christ. In discussing this he states: ". . . that every nation should explicitly acknowledge the Christ of God to be the Supreme Governor, and his will the supreme fundamental law of the land, to the general principles of which all special legislation should be conformed" (p. 434).

The reviewer noted a few typographical errors, of which the only important one occurs on p. 209 (Q. 22), where the word "faith" is obviously a misprint for "fate".

The Eerdmans firm has done a real service by making this theological classic again available to the Christian public. It is a pleasure to recommend this book heartily. Its doctrine is solid and will last while the world endures, and indeed forever. Even if buried under the rubble of modern theological fads and fancies, the system of truth presented in this book cannot be buried so as not to have a resurrection.

—J. G. Vos

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, by L. Berkhof. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1949, pp. 784, \$7.50.

This is a revised and enlarged edition of Professor Berkhof's work which was first published in 1938. The author is well known in Calvinistic circles, as he was for many years, until his retirement, professor of theology in Calvin Seminary at Grand Rapids, Michigan. The work is a sound, orthodox, informative treatment of the subject matter of Systematic Theology from the Reformed or Calvinistic point of view.

The contents are divided into six main parts, as follows: **I. The Doctrine of God** (His existence, knowability, relation between His being and His attributes, His names, His attributes, communicable and incommunicable, the Trinity, the divine decrees, predestination, creation, providence). **II. The Doctrine of Man in Relation to God** (Origin of man, constitutional nature of man, man as image of God, man in the Covenant of Works, the origin of sin, the essential character of sin, the transmission of sin, sin in the life of the human race, the punishment of sin; Man in the Covenant of Grace; name and concept of the covenant, the Covenant of Redemption, nature of the Covenant of Grace, external and internal aspect of the covenant; dispensations of the Covenant of Grace). **III. The Doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ**. (The doctrine of Christ in history, the names and natures of Christ, Christ's unipersonality, His state of humiliation and His state of exaltation, His office of prophet, His office of priest, the cause and necessity of the atonement, the nature of the atonement, various theories of the atonement, the purpose and extent of the atonement, the intercessory work of Christ, the kingly office of Christ). **IV. The Doctrine of the Application of the Work of Redemption**. (Soteriology in general, the operation of the Holy Spirit in general, common grace, the mystical union, calling in general, external calling, regeneration and effectual calling, conversion, faith, justification, sanctification, the perseverance of the saints). **V. The Doctrine of the Church and of the Means of Grace**. (Scriptural names of the Church, the doctrine of the Church in history, the nature of the Church, the government of the Church, the power of the Church, the means of grace in general, the Word as a means of grace, the sacraments in general, baptism, the Lord's Supper). **VI. The Doctrine of the Last Things**. (Introduction to eschatology, physical death, immortality of the soul, the intermediate state, the second coming of Christ, millennial views, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, the final state). At the end of the volume there are a bibliography, an index of authors, an index of subjects and an index of Scripture texts.

Though this is a relatively new book, the doctrine presented in it is not new; it is the

classical, recognized system of truth known as Calvinism or the Reformed Faith, which is set forth in the great Reformed creeds and confessions. But Professor Berkhof has presented the old truth in a fresh and timely manner, in relation to present-day movements of theological thought, and in its relevance to the world of today. This constitutes a great advantage over such works as Charles Hodge's "Systematic Theology" and A. A. Hodge's "Outlines of Theology", though these books, of course, were fully up-to-date when they came from the pen of their authors. The present work has the great value of presenting the Reformed theology in the context not of yesterday but of today.

A very valuable feature of this work is its presentation and criticism of the teachings of "the theology of crisis" — that "neo-orthodox" system (if it can be called a system) which is associated with the names of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner. Dr. Berkhof states or comments on Barth's teachings at 32 points in the volume, and on Brunner's at 15 points. Thus the student of the work is enabled to learn not only what the principal teachings of these men are, but wherein they differ from the Calvinism of the Reformation. Ministers and theological students who depend for their knowledge of Systematic Theology wholly on works written a hundred years or more ago obviously cannot hope to have an intelligent judgment concerning the Neo-orthodox teachings which are so widely held at the present day.

Readers who are accustomed to the arrangement of doctrines in the Westminster Confession of Faith will be somewhat surprised to discover that in Dr. Berkhof's book Adoption is not treated as a distinct doctrine but as a part or element of the doctrine of Justification. The author devotes only about a page on Adoption (pp 515, 516), and while what he says about it is entirely sound and acceptable, still in the judgment of the reviewer Adoption is a distinct act of God (though inseparable from Justification) and should be treated as a distinct doctrine.

The reviewer is reluctant to offer any criticisms of so good, timely, helpful and necessary a book as Dr. Berkhof's "Systematic Theology". However, he feels constrained to call attention to two defects of the book, one of which seems to him much more important than the other. First, there is in the volume no discussion of Holy Scripture as the Rule of Faith. Scripture is treated only as a means of grace, and that very briefly. Most orthodox works on Systematic Theology contain at or near the beginning of the book a careful, detailed discussion of the doctrine of Scripture as the Rule of Faith, including the doctrine of the Plenary Inspiration and Authority of the Bible. What the Bible teaches about itself is as truly a part of Systematic Theology as what the Bible teaches about God and man, sin and salvation. And in the present day of confused

and diluted views of the inspiration and authority of Scripture, it is the more necessary that ministers and students be thoroughly grounded in the doctrine of Scripture, not only as a means of grace, but as the Rule of Faith. It is possible that this subject is treated by Dr. Berkhof in the separate "Introductory Volume", which the present reviewer has not seen. However, the work now being reviewed is advertised as "Complete in One Volume", and in the judgment of the reviewer it is really incomplete as it lacks a study of the Scripture as the Rule of Faith. That the Scripture is the Rule of Faith is, of course, presupposed on every page of the book. But it needs to be taught expressly, along with the other doctrines. As the book stands, the reader must get his doctrine of Scripture from some other source.

In the second place, the subject index at the end of the volume is far from complete. The reviewer looked in the index for the following terms, and did not find them there: Calvinism, Trichotomy, Consubstantiation, Transubstantiation, Bible, Canon, Apocrypha, Infallibility, Adoption, Remonstrants. It would greatly increase the value of the work if a much fuller index of subjects could be provided for the next printing of the book.

Unfortunately there are also quite a number of editorial and typographical errors. In examining the doctrinal contents of the book, the reviewer stumbled upon the following: p. 187, "Batisson" should be "Bateson"; p. 172, "The Kingdom and the Church" should be "The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church"; p. 743, the date of publication of "What is Faith?" by Machen, which was actually 1925, is given as "1915"; p. 186, "Dr. Wood" should be "F. Wood Jones"; p. 719, the title of B. B. Warfield's book, "Biblical Doctrines", is incorrectly given as "Biblical Studies"; p. 742, "Der Mitler" should be "Der Mittler". Some of these are mere trifles, but it is to be hoped that they can be weeded out of future printings of the work.

The reviewer also believes that the author has done an injustice to Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, in attributing to him a view of miracles which is essentially the same as that of Schleiermacher (pp. 176, 178). See the discussion of Augustine's and Schleiermacher's views of miracles in Trench, "Notes on the Miracles of our Lord", Chapter V ("The Assaults on the Miracles"), Section 5, where Trench well brings out the fact that Augustine did not really hold that the miracles are "only relatively miraculous", for Augustine meant something very different by "nature" from which Schleiermacher and other moderns have meant by it. It is unfortunate that Dr. Berkhof attributes to Augustine the view that miracles "are merely exceptions to nature AS WE KNOW it, implying that, if we had fuller knowledge of nature, we would be able to account for them in a perfectly natural way" (p.

176). Of course Dr. Berkhof himself heartily rejects any such view of the miracles. The reviewer believes that the real belief of Augustine on this subject was in harmony with that of Dr. Berkhof, not with the modern naturalizing view.

This is an excellent book for ministers and theological students. Those who study it patiently will gain a real grasp of the system of truth set forth in the Scriptures, in its consistency and integrity, over against the errors and half-truths of contrary systems. We praise God for this trumpet voice of testimony to His truth, a voice with no uncertain sound. May it be read, studied and appreciated by many.

—J. G. Vos

CALVIN'S CALVINISM: 1. THE ETERNAL PREDESTINATION OF GOD. 2. THE SECRET PROVIDENCE OF GOD, by John Calvin; translated by Henry Cole. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1950, pp. 350, \$3.50.

These two treatises by the Reformer John Calvin were originally published at Geneva, Switzerland, in 1552 and 1558, respectively, and were translated into English by Henry Cole of Cambridge University and published in 1856. The present volume is a reprint of the 1856 edition, very attractively printed and bound. It forms a valuable addition to the English translations of Calvin's commentaries on the books of the Bible, and his "Institutes of the Christian Religion", now being published by the Eerdmans firm of Grand Rapids.

Many present-day Christians, not to add non-Christians, know Calvin's doctrine of Predestination only in the form of caricatures which are really only straw men set up by opponents of Calvinism in order to be knocked down. According to a writer (Professor Cecil De Boer of the University of Idaho) in the current issue of "The Calvin Forum" (May 1950, p. 204), "The vast majority of Protestant 'laymen' in this country know next to nothing about Calvinism. The average Presbyterian, for example, knows only that, whatever it is, he is supposed to believe it; whereas the average Methodist knows only that, whatever it is, he is NOT supposed to believe it. The non-religious know nothing about it except that it is supposed to stand for 'a kind of fatalism'. Those who happen to know a little more about it invariably associate it with a 'humorless and fanatical little Frenchman' by the name of John Calvin, who approved of burning those who disagreed with him; with the revolution in England under the regicide, Cromwell; and with the more unsavory features of the New England theocracy, including the Salem witch hangings. And try to stamp this out." It is surely a pity that so many present-day Christians have no fuller or more accurate knowledge of John Cal-

vin and his thought than they have of Gautama Buddha or Zoroaster. The reviewer recalls being asked, on one occasion, by a college classmate, whether anyone still believed in the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination. Obviously this inquirer classed Calvinism along with alchemy and the Holy Roman Empire. He was quite surprised when his question was answered by: "Why, certainly, I believe in it myself!"

As long as people get their ideas about Calvinism wholly from popular mythology and from opponents of Calvinism, they are bound to have a sadly distorted conception of the system of truth associated with the name of the great Reformer of Geneva. But at the present time there is observable a new interest in Calvin's own writings, and this is encouraging. Those who take the trouble to read Calvin's own writings, or even accurate books about Calvinism, will learn that Calvinism is NOT fatalism, that it does NOT deny human responsibility and free agency, that it does NOT regard God as the author of sin, and that there is very much more to Calvinism than just the doctrine of Predestination or just the so-called "Five Points of Calvinism".

The present volume contains two treatises by Calvin. The first, entitled "A Treatise of the Eternal Predestination of God", was directed against the errors of Albertus Pighius and George the Sicilian. The second is entitled "A Defence of the Secret Providence of God by Which He Executes His Eternal Decrees, being a Reply to the 'Slandorous Reports' (Rom. 3:8) of a Certain Worthless Calumniator Directed against the Secret Providence of God." The identity of this "certain worthless calumniator" is now unknown, but he may very likely have been the anti-trinitarian Michael Servetus. Patiently Calvin takes up the arguments of these men, brings them to the test of Holy Scripture, and exposes them as false and wrong. But this is much more than the refutation of certain false teachers who have been dead nearly four centuries. For the errors of those false teachers did not die with the errorists; they are perennial, and in one form or another must continually be faced by the friends of the consistent Christianity of the Bible.

In refuting the errorists of his day, Calvin digs deeply in the mine of Holy Scripture, and opposes the Word of God to the false opinions and theories of men. In it all, the deep insight into divine truth which Calvin possessed, and his clear, logical, straightforward way of presenting the truth, are manifested. The result is a positive presentation of the truth which gives all glory to God, and tells the real truth about the relation between God and His creatures.

Modern readers may easily be offended by the uninhibited language of Calvin in speaking about his opponents. For example: "I propose, now, to enter into the sacred battle with Pighius

and George, the Sicilian, a pair of unclean beasts (Lev. 11:3) by no means badly matched. For though I confess that in some things they differ, yet, in hatching enormities of error, in adulterating the Scripture with wicked and revelling audacity, in a proud contempt of the truth, in forward impudence, and in brazen loquacity, the most perfect likeness and sameness will be found to exist between them. . . " (p. 27). It should be realized that such abusive language, though extremely bad taste and almost universally disapproved today, was the prevalent style of controversial writing in Calvin's day. The blame for it must therefore not be placed on Calvin personally so much as on the age in which he lived. Such language was used by all parties in the sixteenth century, and we must not be too ready to judge writings of 1552 by the standards of 1950. It is just possible that in our modern ideal of smoothly polite controversy there is an element of insincerity. Our Lord and His apostles on occasion spoke quite plainly and called things by their right names. We must remember, too, that in Calvin's day the truth of Protestant Christianity was fighting for its very life against systems of error.

Those who are prone to label all belief in real eternal predestination. "Hyper-Calvinism" will do well to read this volume and see for themselves that what they call "Hyper" (Extreme) Calvinism is in reality just the Calvinism of Calvin himself.

The treatises are well translated into readable English. This book will reward patient reading and study.

— J. G. Vos

THE CITIES OF ST. PAUL: THEIR INFLUENCE ON HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT, by William M. Ramsay. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1949, pp. xv, 452, \$4.00.

This book is a photographic reprint of a work first published in 1908. The book does not concern all the cities connected with the life of the apostle Paul, but only those of eastern Asia Minor, namely, Tarsus, the apostle's birthplace, and Antioch, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra where he proclaimed the Gospel. Sir William Ramsay was an outstanding expert in the geography and archaeology of Asia Minor. A very patient, exact and thorough scholar, he was never satisfied with superficial investigation, but sought carefully for valid knowledge. His researches have discovered and assembled a great amount of historical, geographical and archaeological information about some of the places in which the apostle Paul lived and worked. The book is provided with 18 photographs of scenes in Asia Minor, 55 drawings of coins, medals, inscriptions, temple decorations, and the like, and four maps. Beautifully printed

and bound, the volume presents a very attractive appearance.

The author is most satisfactory as a student of the archaeology and geography of the regions connected with the apostle Paul, and least satisfactory in his dealing with the ideas and doctrines of the apostle. In the judgment of the reviewer, it is very easy to over-emphasize the influence of the cities where Paul lived and worked on his life and thought. Paul himself insists that his teachings, at any rate, were directly revealed to him by Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:1, 11, 12). While we must recognize that the surroundings and social conditions in which a man grows up and receives his education are part of the factors which make him what he is, and that God prepared Moses, for example, for his great task by providing that he should be "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22), still in the case of an organ of special divine revelation such as a prophet or an apostle we cannot hold that the man's environment was determinative of his teachings. Ramsay comes close to doing this, both in his discussion of "The Pauline Philosophy of History", pp. 10-15, and in the section on "St. Paul and Hellenism", pp. 30-43, as well as in some other parts of the book. For example, the author says: "That the unfettered development of the individual was the aim of Hellenism, and that the cities in which the Hellenic ideal was best realized were those in which freest play was given to the individual to live his own life according to his own judgment, needs merely to be stated; it is a matter of universal agreement. . . No other ancient people aimed so steadfastly as the Greeks at freedom as the greatest good in life. . ." (p. 35), and goes on from this to speak about Paul's insistence on freedom in the Epistle to the Galatians and his other epistles, arguing that Paul had in mind not merely freedom from Jewish ritual, but, at least by implication, "freedom generally in political and social and philosophical relations" (p.37). Certainly Paul's idea of freedom in the Epistle to the Galatians involves more than freedom "from Jewish ritual", for it means freedom from the condemning power of the broken law of God, and freedom from the spiritual bondage of attempting to merit salvation by human works. But as certainly, freedom in the Greek sense is quite distinct from freedom in the Christian sense, and must not be confused with it. The Greeks thought of man as autonomous, a law unto himself, whereas any Christian view of freedom (even "in political and social and philosophical relations") must always think of man as subject to the sovereignty of God, and man's freedom as subordinate to the divine sovereignty and law. There is a danger of confusing Greek thought with Christian truth, and of attempting to trace elements of the latter to a source in the former, which must be guarded against.

This is not to say that Ramsay's discussion of

Paul's thought is without worthy features. His criticism of the popular notion of an evolutionary progress of religion which moves ever upward and onward to nobler and higher things is very interesting. "Our survey of the Mediterranean lands reveals no sign of development. It shows us only a process of degeneration and decay. . . One who looks at the facts must ask whether religion naturally develops from the lower to the higher stage, or whether Paul was not right in declaring that religion tends to degenerate among men. So far as the history of the Mediterranean lands reaches I find only degeneration, corrected from time to time by the influence of the great prophets and teachers like Paul" (pp. 22,23).

Here and there in the book appear ideas which are quite unorthodox. For example, the author says: "I quite admit that the Brazen Ser-

pent was an instance of savage ritual at an early period in Hebrew history. . ." (p. 25). Again: "A later period understood the conquest by Joshua differently; the later taste demanded that the purpose and result of the Hebrew conquest should be a universal massacre. . . and partly explained by the trick of the Gibeonites the obvious fact that the previous population was not annihilated, partly shut its eyes to the actual condition of Palestine, where a considerable remnant of the older race did actually remain" (p. 434). The reviewer hardly need add that no believer in the orthodox doctrine of the inspiration and authority of the Bible could make such statements.

This book has a value for those qualified to use it, who will read it with discernment, and brings its doctrinal and philosophical statements to the test of agreement with the Scriptures.

— 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.

THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES: A Reexamination of the Modern Theory that the Pentateuch is a Late Compilation from Diverse and Conflicting Sources by Authors and Editors whose Identity is Completely Unknown, by Oswald T. Allis. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1949, pp. xii, 355, \$3.75.

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE, by Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1948, pp. ix, 442, \$3.75.

NOTES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT, EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL: JOB (2 vols.), by Albert Barnes. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1950, pp. 363 and 339, per set, \$6.00.

PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY, by William Goulouze. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1950, pp. 266, \$3.50.

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:

In "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Jan.-March 1950, p. 25 (Lesson 19, Q. 3), it is stated that private administration of the sacraments is never proper. How can this be reconciled with the account of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)? And what about the baptism of the first convert on a new foreign mission field?

Answer:

The statement to which this query refers, in Lesson 19 of the series on the Covenant of Grace, should have been qualified by an explanation that the rule laid down applies only where a group of believers exists. What was being discussed was the proper practice for the normal life

and work of the Church. It is obvious that there may sometimes exist extraordinary circumstances when a departure from the ordinary rules would be warranted. This principle, that extraordinary circumstances may justify a departure from normal procedures, is generally recognized by sound writers on theology and church polity.

Clearly the case of the Ethiopian eunuch was an exceptional case. If his conversion had taken place in Jerusalem, he would no doubt have received baptism in the presence of a company of believers. But as his conversion occurred in the wilderness, this was not possible. Moreover, Philip was acting under the direct, special revelation of the Holy Spirit at the time. What he

did under those circumstances cannot warrant departure from the ordinary rule that applies where a group of believers, or a congregation, exists. At that time the Church was just in process of being formed; its normal, organized life had not yet fairly begun.

Obviously, too, a missionary on a new mission field must baptize his first convert with no other Christians present, unless he happens to be accompanied by other missionaries. This is inevitable; everything, including a church, has to have a beginning. The evil of private baptism arises, however, when Christian people come to regard baptism as ESSENTIALLY a private matter, and PREFER to have it administered privately in a home, or in a church sanctuary at some other time than the time of public worship. This tendency is widespread in American Protestantism. It is a bad tendency because it leads people to disregard the character of the sacraments as CHURCH ordinances. The congregation is a party in the administration of the sacrament; it has a responsibility to the person baptized; also, the vows of baptism are taken before God and the congregation; the congregation witnesses the taking of the vows.

There are, of course, cases where it is not possible to administer baptism at the ordinary time and place of public worship, because of serious illness or other reasons. In such cases the sacrament may properly be administered in a home, hospital, prison, etc., but the ecclesiastical or church character of the ordinance should be preserved by the congregation being represented by the elders and, if possible, a few other members. Even though such an observance is not really "public", still the objection to PRIVATE administration is avoided, and the fact that baptism is a church ordinance is maintained. The same principle applies to administration of the Lord's Supper to persons long shut-in by illness, etc. — J.G.V.

Question:

What thought was in Pilate's mind when he asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38)?

Answer:

While of course we cannot know with absolute certainty what Pilate had in mind in asking this question, yet it is possible to form a probable opinion on the matter. Pilate had just asked Jesus "Art thou a king then?" and Jesus had answered this question in the affirmative: "Thou sayest that I am a king." Jesus, however, went on to explain that he was not the kind of a king that the Roman official Pilate would think of; He said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18:37). That is to say, "Certainly I am a king. But my kingdom is the

kingdom of truth. It is based upon the truth, and my office as king is to bear witness to that truth. My subjects, the citizens of my kingdom, are those who know and acknowledge the truth. Because they believe in the truth, they hear my voice, they obey me as their king."

Jesus Christ, like the Bible as a whole, insisted on the existence and importance of ABSOLUTE, UNCHANGEABLE TRUTH, REVEALED BY GOD TO MEN, WHICH REFLECTS THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF GOD TO MEN. He said, "Ye shall know THE TRUTH, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Jesus Christ, and the Bible as a whole, insists always upon THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH. Knowledge of the truth is absolutely necessary for communion with God, for acceptable service, for eternal life. The truth is to be spoken, borne witness to, maintained, and suffered for, REGARDLESS OF CONSEQUENCES. A man may be blamed, reproached, persecuted, imprisoned, burned at the stake, thrown to the lions or crucified, but he is not to deny the truth. For the truth is of God, and to deny the truth is to deny the God of truth. And because the truth is of God, the truth will be vindicated by God in the end. "The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment" (Prov. 12:19). Adherence to the truth is more important than comfort, convenience, praise of friends and companions, immediate good results in Christian service — and even than life itself. Those who are really citizens of Christ's kingdom will manifest His loyalty to the truth.

Over against Jesus and His insistence upon the supreme importance of the truth, was Pontius Pilate, an official of the Roman government. By his question, "What is truth?" Pilate apparently indicated his impatience with discussions of such matters as truth. Perhaps Pilate regarded truth as unattainable — something the philosophers had been pursuing for hundreds of years, but had never succeeded in finding or coming to agreement about. It is quite possible that his attitude was that of the Greek skeptics who held that man can never know the truth.

As a Roman official, Pilate very likely also regarded questions of truth as unimportant. He was a "practical" man; what counted with him was not TRUTH, but RESULTS. His impatience can be detected in the fact that having asked Jesus, "What is truth?", he apparently did not expect, nor pause for, any answer, but went on with the procedure according to his own ideas of what was "practical". In the particular case in hand, this meant condemning an innocent man to be crucified — a most flagrant violation of the truth. But from his point of view, as a scheming Roman politician, this was "practical", it was "expedient".

As in the time of Jesus and Pilate, so in all ages and at the present day, there are those who

insist upon the supreme importance of the truth, and those who hold that "practical" considerations are more important. The first class are the citizens of the kingdom of truth. They are often unpopular, often reproached, often slandered, often persecuted, but they are the citizens of the kingdom of truth. The second class are the "children of this world", who rate something else as more important than the truth. Some of these are nominal members of the visible Church, yet they are "children of this world", not citizens of the kingdom of truth. When someone says of a prominent minister: "Dr. Blank is not very orthodox; he does not believe in the infallibility of the Bible or the substitutionary atonement, but he is a very spiritual man, a friendly, sociable pastor, and he can offer the most wonderful prayers!", that person is saying that other things are more important than truth. When one church member says to another: "According to the Bible you are right, of course, but it will not do to bring the matter up, because Mr. X, who is a liberal contributor to the budget, will be offended, and the budget will suffer", that person is saying that money is more important than truth. When one elder says to another, "Mr. Y, who has not attended church services for several years, really ought to be dealt with according to the discipline of the Church. But we had better let him alone, because if anything is done about him, his numerous relatives will be offended and some of them may leave the Church", that person is saying that to please men is more important than truth.

The American philosophy called Pragmatism teaches that there is no absolute truth; truth is whatever "works" or gets results. Our forefathers, in harmony with the Bible, believed that truth is absolute and unchangeable, but Pragmatism teaches that truth changes with the times; a thing may be true today, but false tomorrow, and true again the day after tomorrow, according to circumstances. This false philosophy has had a great influence on public education in America, and has also influenced the churches and the religious thinking of the American public. The whole emphasis on "results" or "practical things" as more important than truth, is characteristic of the philosophy of Pragmatism. The baneful fruit of this tendency can be seen today on a nationwide scale in the current insistent demand for general church union regardless of doctrinal differences. It could almost be said that the keynote of the present-day "liberal" church union movement is Pilate's question, "What is truth?"

When there is real, deep revival in American Protestantism, one phase of it will certainly be a return to devotion to truth as the most important of all things. "His truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5). — J. G. V.

Question:

For several weeks before Christmas the downtown merchants of our city have been playing Christmas carols over loudspeaker systems. Can this practice be approved by Christians, or should they feel that since the motive is admittedly commercial on the part of the merchants, the practice is a sacrilege and violation of the second commandment, and perhaps of the third also? In "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Oct.-Dec. 1947, pages 165 and 175, you treated as sacrilege the profession of religion for sinister ends. A minister with whom I discussed this defended the practice of the merchants, on the ground that the carols do proclaim Scriptural truth concerning the incarnation of Christ and the way of salvation. But in Acts 16:16-18 we find an evil spirit moving a girl to proclaim truth about the way of salvation, yet the apostle Paul did not approve; on the contrary, he was "sore troubled" and put a stop to the outcry. Will anyone argue that it is NOT taking God's name in vain to blast the air with Christmas carols in order to speed up department store sales?

Answer:

The practice mentioned in this inquiry is quite common in American towns and cities at the "Christmas" season. Because of limitations of space, we cannot here discuss the propriety of Christmas observance in general, nor the propriety of singing religious songs other than the Psalms of the Bible on various kinds of occasions. These matters have been discussed in past issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". We shall confine our answer to the specific point raised by the query, namely, is it legitimate for business men to utilize religion for commercial purposes, and what attitude should Christian people have toward this practice?

Probably there can be no doubt as to the motive, in the great majority of cases, at least. It is commercial. Both "Christmas" and "Easter" have been terribly commercialized. This is partly done through features of a religious character, and partly by such devices as Santa Claus, bunny rabbits, baby chicks in bright colors, chocolate easter eggs, and the like.

Nor can there really be any doubt that profession of religion for sinister ends is wrong. There is something truly horrible in the idea that men should proclaim the birth of the Saviour of the world in order to stimulate the sale of radio sets, electric toasters, neckties and new automobiles. There is indeed something sacrilegious in the idea that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead should be made the occasion of a drive to sell women's hats. The whole practice is involved in hypocrisy and insincere lip-service. Therefore, as far as the merchants are concerned, it cannot be justified, and Christian people should

not approve of this commercialization of truths of their holy faith.

On the other hand, in spite of the wrong motive and the hypocrisy that are involved in this practice, Christian people, while not justifying the practice, can rejoice that in the providence of God some truth concerning Christ is proclaimed to the world. The apostle Paul wrote of persons who preached Christ with a wrong and wicked motive. Their motive was not to glorify God by proclaiming Christ to sinners; on the contrary, their motive was one of "envy and strife", a desire "to add affliction" to the already great sufferings of the apostle. Clearly, Paul could not approve of or endorse their motive. But in spite of this hypocrisy, he rejoices that truth concerning Christ was being made known. It was "not sincerely", it was "in pretense" — yet it was truth concerning Christ. The **CONTENT** of the message was true, even though the **MANNER** of proclaiming it, and the **MOTIVE** for proclaiming it, were false and wrong. And so far as the **CONTENT** was concerned, the apostle Paul could say: "Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. 1:15-18). We must not over-simplify ethical problems. A practice may give us ground for rejoicing in one respect, and not in another. While indeed condemning and deploring the commercialization of the Christian religion involved in present-day American observance of "Christmas" and "Easter", we can

(without any approval of the practice itself) be thankful that, in the providence of God, some truth is proclaimed by it, and some thoughtless, selfish people may perhaps be led to think of God and the salvation of their souls by it. — J.G.V.

CORRECTION

In the April-June 1950 issue, page 77, Lesson 35, in the quotation from a sermon of Ralph Erskine, the Bible reference was incorrectly given as Psalm 79:20. This should have been Psalm 74:20 ("Have respect unto the covenant"). The editor thanks the alert reader who called attention to this slip.

ANNOUNCEMENT

"Blue Banner Faith and Life" is published as a service to God, a witness to His truth, and a help to His people. Financially it is a "non-profit" enterprise. Though the circulation has grown steadily since publication was started (1946), printing and mailing costs have also risen sharply. "Blue Banner Faith and Life" carries no advertising, and seeks to provide only substantial material for the serious Christian. Receipts from subscriptions are not sufficient to pay the cost of printing and postage. According to present indications, about \$250 additional will be needed to finish 1950 without debt. If God has enabled you, will you not help by making a contribution? — J. G. Vos

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Contributions gratefully received. As funds are available, "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is being sent free of charge to missionaries, pastors, evangelists and other suitable persons on the foreign mission fields of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

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J. G. VOS, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Route 1

Clay Center, Kansas, U.S.A.

(Printed in U. S. A.)

THE MARTYR'S CHILD

(Continued from inside front cover)

The child clings close to his father's heart,
 But they bear him by force away—
 A gentle force; but they needs must part,
 And that old man guides his way.
 Once more they are treading the crowded street,
 But no longer the sunlight smiled;
 And looks of pity from some they meet,
 For they know the martyr's child!

"Yon darksome thing that shuts out the sky,
 O tell me what may it be?
 It scares my heart, though I know not why,
 For it seems to gloom on me!"
 With a quivering lip, and a thrill of awe,
 Was the old man's answer given:
 "'Tis a ladder, poor bairn, such as Jacob saw,
 By which angels mount to heaven!"

They have set his head on the Nether Bow,
 To scorch in the summer air;
 And months go by, and the winter's snow
 Falls white on its thin gray hair.
 And still the same look that in death he wore,
 Is sealed on the solemn brow—
 A look as of one who hath travailed sore,
 But whose pangs are ended now!

Through years of oppression, and blood, and
 shame,
 The earth as a wine-press trode—
 That silent witness abides the same,
 In its mute appeal to God!
 And many a saint hath waxed strong to bear,
 While musing in that sad place;
 And the heart of the tyrant hath failed for fear,
 In the awe of that still, stern face.

There were prophet-words on those lips in death,
 That Scotland remembers still;
 And she looks for her God's awakening breath,
 Through the long, long night of ill!
 "They may scatter their dust to the winds of
 heaven—
 To the bounds of the utmost sea;
 But her Covenants, burned, reviled and riven,
 Shall yet her reviving be!"

There sitteth a child by the Nether Bow
 In the light of the summer sky;
 And he steals there yet in the winter's snow,
 But he shuns the passers-by;

A fair, pale child, with a faded cheek,
 As a lily in darkness reared,
 And an eye, in its sad abstraction meek,
 As if nothing he hoped or feared!

In the early dawn, at the fall of eve,
 But not in the noon of day;
 And he doth not weep, and he doth not grieve,
 But he never was seen to play!
 A child in whom childhood's life is dead;
 Its sweet light marred and dim;
 And he gazes up at that awful head,
 As though it held speech with him!

Oh! a strange, sad sight, was the converse mute
 Of the dead and the living there;
 And thoughts in that young child's soul took root
 Which manhood might scarcely bear!
 But ever he meekly went his way,
 As the stars came o'er the place;
 And his mother wept, as she heard him say,
 "I have seen my father's face!"

Years faded and died, and the child was gone,
 But a pale youth came instead,
 In the solemn eve, and at early dawn,
 To gaze on the awful head!
 And oft when the moonlight fell in showers,
 He would linger the night long there;
 And his spirit went up through those silent hours
 To his father's God in prayer!

The shadow had passed from his heart and brow,
 And a deep calm filled his breast;
 For the peace of God was his portion now,
 And his weary soul had rest!
 The martyr's God had looked kindly down
 On the martyr's orphan son;
 And the Spirit had sealed him for His own,
 And his goal was almost won!

There was fond hope cherished and earnest given,
 Of a course like his father's high;
 But the seed that had ripened so soon for heaven,
 God gathered to the sky!
 He comes no more to the 'customed place;
 In vain would affection save.
 He hath looked his last on his father's face,
 And he lies in his mother's grave!

Note: The martyr referred to in the above poem is James Guthrie, Scottish Covenanter pastor and leader, who because of his loyalty to Christ's Crown and Covenant was convicted of high treason, and put to death by hanging at Edinburgh, June 1, 1661. His last words on the scaffold were: "The Covenants! the Covenants shall yet be Scotland's reviving!"



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"All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace."

The Westminster Confession of Faith, X.1

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J. G. VOS, Editor and Publisher

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

THE RIVER OF SALVATION

(Based on Ezekiel 47)

By J. G. Vos

In distant Babylon brought low
Ezekiel saw the waters flow
Forth from beneath the Temple broad,
Ev'n from the altar of his God.

Jerusalem was far away,
And yet he saw it clear as day.
In vision then the holy man
Stood watching as the waters ran.

Eastward he saw the waters run;
Forth from the city gate, and on
And on they flowed, and yet increased,
And further flowed, and never ceased.

A thousand cubits on they ran,
And through them forth there went a man,
Who led the priestly seer on,
Whose vision had but just begun.

To ankle depth, to knees, to waist,
Three thousand cubits soon were passed;
Another thousand, and the flood
Became a river deep and broad.

Too deep for any man to wade —
Waters to swim in God had made.
And all this mighty flood of water
Flowed from the Temple and the altar.

Then standing on the river's bank
The seer noted rank on rank
Of growing trees that fringed the river,
Both on the one side and the other.

The seer's guide then spoke to him,
And told the prospect of the stream:
"This river, flowing toward the east,
Waters the desert, and at last

"It flows into the great Salt Sea,
In which no living thing can be;
And by the river's wondrous feat
The briny water shall be sweet.

"And where the mystic river flows,
What once was dead both lives and grows.
Where once no life could be at all,
The fish shall teem, both great and small.

"And all along, upon the shore,
The fishers stand, to catch and store
Fish of all kinds, exceeding many,
Where formerly there were not any.

"Yet not all places shall be healed
By this great river, God-revealed:
The marshes and each miry place
Shall still remain devoid of grace.

"But all along the river's flow
On either bank the trees shall grow,
Whose fruit shall be for food of men,
And leaves for healing medicine.

"Arising from its Temple-source
It shall bring life through all its course;
For, flowing from that altar-place,
It is the river of God's grace."

O seer in far Babylon
Of long ago, thy work is done!
Thy vision is a revelation
Of the divinely-wrought salvation.

And from thy vision we have learned
This truth: salvation is not earned,
But is a gift of God's free grace
Which puts all boasting out of place.

Nor does it come by pow'r of man,
But by God's great eternal plan,
According to His own election,
To bring His people to perfection.

And from the river's origin —
The altar, remedy for sin —
We, who are sinners, realize
Salvation is by sacrifice:

The sacrifice of One who laid
His own life down, and fully paid,
By shedding His own precious blood,
The awful debt His people owed.

Oh, may that river yet increase
Through all the earth, and never cease,
Till God's elect in every nation
Are brought to their ordained salvation.

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VOLUME 5

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NUMBER 4

Sketches From Our History

Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER V

REFORMERS BEFORE THE REFORMATION

2. John Huss, Czech Reformer and Martyr (Continued from last issue)

Dissatisfaction with conditions in the Church throughout Europe caused a general demand for a council to be held for the purpose of bringing about a reform of the Church and the papacy. After negotiations between Sigismund, emperor of the Holy Roman (German) Empire and Pope John XXIII, a general council of the Church was called to meet at Constance, a city on the Swiss border of southern Germany. Because of the prominence of John Huss, and the desire of Church leaders to settle the agitation in Bohemia, the reformer was invited to attend the council.

Huss gladly accepted the invitation to attend the Council of Constance, as he felt that now at last he would have an opportunity publicly to proclaim and vindicate the truth before the world, and to clear himself of false and unjust charges. Before leaving Bohemia in the autumn of 1414 he set all his affairs in order, evidently considering it probable that he would not be permitted to return home. He had been promised an imperial "safe conduct", that is, a written pledge of the emperor that, regardless of any decisions of the council concerning him, he would be permitted to return home again. Soon after his arrival at Constance on November 3, 1414, the promised safe conduct was placed in his hands. This document did not promise that Huss would not be punished as a heretic; it only guaranteed that he would be permitted to return safely to Bohemia after the council. If found guilty of heresy or other charges, he could still be punished by the king of Bohemia after his return home. Certainly the promise of this imperial safe conduct influenced Huss to leave Bohemia and go to Constance, but the fact that he set all his affairs in order before leaving home shows that he did not regard the emperor's pledge as wholly trustworthy. The outcome showed that his suspicions were well-founded.

Early in December a commission of three

bishops was appointed by the pope to handle the case against Huss. The reformer demanded that he be permitted to engage counsel to represent him in his defence, and this petition was granted for a time, though later the commission's consent was withdrawn and Huss had to plead his own cause without assistance of counsel.

The investigation of Huss dragged on slowly. Early in May, 1415, the council revealed its attitude by unanimously condemning John Wycliffe as a heretic. On June 5 an open hearing was held in the case of Huss, at which he was charged with heresy on the basis of his writings, especially his book *De Ecclesia* ("Concerning the Church"), a work which was largely based on the writings of Wycliffe.

As soon as Huss began to speak in his own defence, he was interrupted by violent and disorderly shouts and yells, with the result that he could not make himself heard by the council. Accordingly, he refrained from speaking, saying: "In such a council as this I had expected to find more propriety, piety and order". Truly Huss was in the position of a sheep in the midst of wolves. Because of the disorder, the session was adjourned for two days, meeting again on June 7. On this occasion the emperor Sigismund was personally present, and better order was maintained. The charges against Huss were repeated, and the relation between his teachings and those of Wycliffe was discussed by the council. Obviously the aim of this procedure was to prove, if possible, that Huss adhered to the teachings of Wycliffe, which had already been condemned as heretical.

Speaking in his own defence, the Czech reformer emphatically denied that he had departed from the truth of the Catholic faith, although he admitted that he cherished a great respect for the memory of Wycliffe. Huss was then asked to express willingness to render unqualified submission to the findings of the council. This he refused to do, though he professed willingness to

change or abandon any of his teachings what might be proved to be false.

On the following day the trial of Huss was continued, with further discussion of quotations from his book *De Ecclesia*. Huss denied some of the quotations, stating that he had been inaccurately quoted; but he defended other propositions cited from his book, and refused to make any general confession or repudiation of his teachings, stating that it would not be honest to do so unless their falsehood could be proved.

One of the propositions which Huss refused to repudiate was to the effect that Christ, not Peter, is the real head of the Church and the final Judge to whom appeal is to be made. Huss defended this proposition resolutely, but the council was deaf to his arguments based on Scripture. Finally the council reached a decision which consisted of three points, as follows: 1. Huss must humbly admit that he had erred in all the matters charged against him. 2. He must promise on oath that never in the future would he again hold or teach these doctrines. 3. He must make a public recantation of all the teachings with which he had been charged. On hearing this verdict, Huss immediately and flatly refused to submit. He was thereupon removed from the bar.

The emperor Sigismund declared that it had been abundantly proved that Huss had taught many serious heresies, and that even if he should recant, he should never be permitted to preach again, or to return home to Bohemia; whereas if he should refuse to recant, the only alternative would be death by burning at the stake. In spite of this opinion expressed by the emperor, the Church authorities made every effort, for a whole month, to persuade Huss to recant, but the reformer steadfastly refused to act contrary to truth and conscience. In a letter written to some friends in Bohemia he said: "I write this in prison and in chains, expecting tomorrow to receive sentence of death, full of hope in God that I shall not swerve from the truth, nor abjure errors imputed to me by false witnesses."

On July 6, 1415, in the presence of the emperor Sigismund and the entire council, sentence was pronounced against John Huss. The reformer tried to speak again in his own defence, but failed in this attempt, and thereafter sat silently in prayer. He was publicly degraded from the priesthood of the Church, and his soul was delivered over to Satan. Meantime Huss continued in silent prayer, committing his soul to Christ.

Immediately after this Huss was delivered to the civil authorities and led to the place of execution, while the council continued with its docket for the day.

The execution of John Huss was one of the great judicial murders of history. He went to his death—the terrible death of being burnt alive—with great courage, faith and even cheerfulness. Having been tied to the stake, with the faggots piled about his feet, he was once more called upon to recant, but he replied: "God is my witness that I have never taught or preached that which false witnesses have testified against me. He knows that the great object of all my preaching and writing was to convert men from sin. In the truth of that Gospel which hitherto I have written, taught and preached, I now joyfully die." After this the fire was lit, and the voice of John Huss, as he endeavored to pray, was soon choked by smoke and flames. After the fire had consumed his body, his ashes were cast into the Rhine river.

The emperor Sigismund cannot be cleared of treachery in connection with the execution of John Huss. Sigismund had given Huss an imperial safe conduct which solemnly promised, on the word of the emperor, that regardless of the outcome at the council, Huss would be permitted to return home to Bohemia in safety. After the reformer's condemnation as a heretic, this solemn pledge was lightly broken on the flimsy pretext that Christians are not required to keep faith with heretics. Since Huss had been condemned as a heretic, it was held that the safe conduct was no longer valid and need not be regarded as binding. Thus the Church of Rome of that day proved that its ethical principles were as corrupt and immoral as its doctrines were false and unscriptural.

Thus perished from this earth a man of whom the world was not worthy, and one who being dead yet speaketh. But John Huss did not live and die in vain. Though this noble servant of God was cruelly done to death by a shameless travesty of law and justice, the truth for which he witnessed and suffered could not be permanently suppressed. In the providence of God, Huss received the torch of truth from Wycliffe, and handed it on so that a century later it could be taken up by Martin Luther in the Protestant Reformation.

The influence of Huss and his teachings long continued in the Hussite movement, which we shall hope to take up in the next instalment of this series.

(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 III

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIANS SINCE THE REVOLUTION

1. The Accession of John Macmillan to the Covenanting Societies.

The United Societies had been organized in 1681, and it was not until 1743 that an ecclesiastical form of organization was attained. From the Revolution Settlement in 1690 to the accession of Macmillan in 1706, the Societies were without an ordained pastor, and since it was against their principles to hear the preaching of, or receive the sacraments from, the ministers of the Revolution Church, there was a period of sixteen years during which they were deprived of the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. The only exception to this was that the Rev. David Houston, Covenanting minister in Ireland, ministered ordinances to Covenanters from Scotland who resorted to him. Houston died in 1696, leaving the Covenanters of Britain and Ireland entirely without a ministry. They continued to meet for worship in "Society Meetings", the services usually being led by the elders.

John Macmillan was born in 1669 of parents who attended the services of the Prelatic Church. He studied at the University of Edinburgh, and later became associated with the United Societies. After a time he left them, however, and in 1700 he was licensed in the Revolution Church, and later ordained, becoming pastor of the parish of Balmaghie.

In 1702 the Synod of Galloway directed the ministers under its jurisdiction to explain the National Covenant to their congregations. Macmillan, who had a zeal for the Covenants, took counsel with the Balmaghie Session, and with their approval, added to the National Covenant the Solemn League and Covenant, and expounded both.

There was some controversy about the oath of allegiance imposed on the accession of Queen Anne. The presbytery to which Macmillan belonged decided to leave the taking or not taking of the oath an open question, but this did not satisfy Macmillan, who filed a protest with the presbytery, complaining not only about their attitude toward the oath, but about the whole constitution of the Church of the Revolution Settlement. The presbytery was unmoved by Macmillan's com-

plaint, and attempted, somewhat lamely, to refute his arguments. Macmillan became so disgusted that he decided to stop attending presbytery meetings. The presbytery dealt with him and he promised to resume attendance, but later retracted this promise. The presbytery was about to try him when Macmillan declined its authority and appealed to the "first free and lawfully constituted General Assembly of the Church of Scotland". The next day, in his absence, Macmillan was deposed from the office of the ministry. He continued to occupy his pulpit, was summoned to appear before the General Assembly, failed to appear, and finally in June, 1704, met with the Assembly's Commission. In July he signed a paper acknowledging his great sin in leaving off attending presbytery meetings and in declining the authority of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright. After this Macmillan appealed to the presbytery to revoke the sentence of deposition against him, but this was not done. He then retracted the promises he had made to the Assembly's Commission, of obedience to ecclesiastical authority, and renewed his appeal to the "first free and lawfully constituted General Assembly of the Church of Scotland". In 1705 he addressed an appeal to the General Assembly of the Revolution Church. Because he continued to occupy his pulpit in spite of the sentence of deposition against him, he was summoned to appear before the Privy Council at Edinburgh, but failed to do so. Three years after his deposition, Macmillan was still preaching in his parish Church and had possession of the manse and glebe.

While these negotiations were going on Macmillan was also carrying on negotiations in another direction, namely with the United Societies, of which he had once been a member but whose fellowship he had forsaken to seek licensure and ordination in the Established Church. The Societies approved of Macmillan's zeal for the Covenants and of his disapprobation of the evils of the Revolution Settlement. They needed a minister badly, having been without ordinances for years. But before they would receive Macmillan they required him to confess his sin in leaving them and conforming to the Revolution Church. This procedure was not unique in Macmillan's case; the Societies

followed it in the case of all persons who had conformed to the Revolution Church. On August 14th, 1706, Macmillan signed the required confession, as follows: "I, Mr John M'Millan, minister at Balmaghie, having displeased the Godly Remnant and greatly offended them before I entered the ministry, and that in my leaving them when then joined with them, and also since, in tampering with the ministers after I had declined them, which I desire to lament, do oblige myself, for Truth's vindication, and the Godly Remnant's satisfaction, to stand to the determination of any faithful, lawfully constituted Church Judicatory of Christ within this land when it shall happen to be, which both they and I can own, submit to and concur with according to the comely order of the Church in her best times, in whatever has been sinful or offensive in my walk, way or carriage, ever since I left them to this very day. As witness my hand, at Crawfordjohn, this 14th day August, 1706. Sic subscr. J. M'Millan".

The next day Macmillan signed an additional paper approving of the position taken by the United Societies: "I, John M'Millan, minister at Balmaghie, heartily approve of, assent to and comply with all the Testimonies that have been carried on with respect to the Covenanted Reformation, and that in the by-past and present times by the honest godly and faithful Remnant against both Church and State, as they were and are agreeable to the Word of God and the Covenanted work of Reformation, as witness my hand, at Crawfordjohn, this 15th day of August, 1706. J. M'Millan."

At this time the United Societies were about twenty in number, with a total membership of some seven thousand. Having satisfied themselves as to the soundness of Macmillan, they extended to him a call to be their pastor. Macmillan accepted the call and became pastor-at-large to the seven thousand members of the twenty or more Societies, which were not divided into congregations. In addition to this Macmillan continued to live in the manse at Balmaghie and to occupy the pulpit when at home. He divided his time between preaching in the parish Church there and itinerating among the scattered Covenanter Societies.

Although it took Macmillan a long time to make up his mind to separate entirely from the Revolution Church and identify himself exclusively with the Covenanters, the evidence indicates that when he finally did so, he became a strict Cameronian. Patrick Walker, who seems to have cherished a hearty dislike for Macmillan and his followers, reports an illustrative incident: "Notwithstanding I can instruct place and persons, where Mr. M'Millan refused baptism to an honest man's child asking no other question, but, 'If he paid the cess'. He said, 'It was not required of him'. Mr. M'Millan said, 'If it were, would he pay

it?' He answered, 'He would, for he did not look upon the paying of it now, as in the time of persecution'. He said, 'He would administer Church-privileges to none who were of that judgement'".

Walker, who had been a member of the United Societies but left them after the Revolution, also asserts that only a minority of the United Societies adhered to Macmillan and his party: "All know that it was the fewest number of the United Societies, that was led off with Robert Hamilton to the disowning of King William as King of Britain and his Government; the greater part reckoned it their duty to take a legal unite way of witnessing, by humble pleadings, representations, and protestations, pleading for and with their mother to put away her whoredoms". The Robert Hamilton referred to was one of the Covenanters who had participated in the publication of the Rutherglen Testimony in 1679. After the Revolution part of the members of the United Societies wished to renew the Covenants in such a way as to include a pledge of allegiance to William of Orange. Robert Hamilton opposed this plan so vigorously that it was defeated. When the United Societies called Macmillan to be their pastor in 1706, the action was taken by the Societies as a body; therefore Walker's statement cited above must mean that the majority of those who before the Revolution adhered to the United Societies, left the Societies after the Revolution, earlier or later, and joined the Revolution Church, so that only a minority of the pre-Revolution membership of the Societies retained membership in them and adhered to Hamilton and Macmillan.

In 1712 the Societies renewed the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant at Auchenscaugh. The occasion for this act was a double one. They objected to the treaty of union between Scotland and England (1707) and to the Act of Toleration (1712) which gave legal protection to Episcopalian worship in Scotland. The renovation of the Covenants took several days. The members swore to the Solemn League and Covenant with uplifted hands, article by article.

Not long after Macmillan's accession to the United Societies, a licentiate named John Macneill was received by them. Macneill had been licensed during the period of persecution, by the Presbytery of Penpont, 1669. He held the same views as Macmillan and joined him in his appeal to the General Assembly in 1708. The United Societies refused to ordain him as they had only one minister and no presbytery. Macneill continued as a licentiate and preached for the Covenanters until his death in 1732. He was never ordained, and when he died he had been a licentiate for sixty-three years.

2. The Organization of the Reformed Presbytery, 1743.

The Covenanters' lack of a presbytery caused them to lose another candidate for the ministry, Andrew Clarkson, who grew up in the fellowship of the United Societies and continued with them until over thirty years of age. Before he left them, he published a book, entitled "Plain Reasons", which set forth the Covenanters' grounds of dissent from the Revolution Church and State. Clarkson felt called to the Gospel ministry, and seeing no possibility of ordination among the Covenanters, he forsook them and joined the Seceders or Associate Presbytery, which had recently (1733) been organized. The Associate Presbytery, before receiving him, required him to renounce his former Cameronian profession. Patrick Walker took the trouble to attend the meeting of the Associate Presbytery to testify against Clarkson, that the latter had been joined with Macmillan in disowning the civil magistrate, but Clarkson's statements satisfied both Walker and the Associate Presbytery, which received him as a candidate. The United Societies were indignant at the action of the Associate Presbytery in requiring Clarkson to renounce Cameronian principles, and in 1741 they went on record to express their grief that "the Associate Presbytery have made subjection and loyalty to the present possessors of civil power a necessary term of communion . . . as was done in the case of Mr. Andrew Clarkson, who behaved to make an open renunciation of his former principles on that point before they would license him".

During the period from the Revolution to the organization of the Reformed Presbytery in 1743 there existed a number of fragmentary dissenting parties, not connected with the United Societies but holding somewhat the same ground, which never attained an ecclesiastical organization. One of these was the Adamson party. Adamson was a licentiate of the Revolution Church. At one time he wished to join the United Societies, but they put him off until they could learn more about him and his principles, which offended Adamson. Patrick Walker says that Adamson was a man "on whose head the moon had influence, especially at its height; his publick letters to the Presbytery and Magistrates of Perth are a sufficient evidence of this". Adamson then gathered disciples about himself and started a separate dissenting party. The Established Church excommunicated him, and he retaliated by excommunicating it. Walker reports that a group of Christians concealed themselves in his premises and watched him for forty-eight hours, and noted that in all that time he did not once engage in prayer, whereupon they decided he was devoid of grace, and deserted him. Adamson was not ordained, but did not hesitate to administer the sacrament of baptism. The followers of Adamson were commonly called Cameronians, but

really were not, and Adamson preached strongly against Macmillan for disowning the civil magistrate.

Two other fragmentary Covenanting parties outside the United Societies were the Harlites or Harleyites and the Howdenites or Howdonites. Patrick Walker states that these differed from each other and from Macmillan in some points, but that they agreed in disowning the Revolution State, separating from the Revolution Church and from all ministers who did not agree with them, and against paying all crown-dues. The United Societies allowed payment of all ordinary taxes, while they protested against payment of the "cess" which had been a special tax levied to support the forces which persecuted the Covenanters before the Revolution. Walker states that the leaders of the Harleyite party were men "over-driven with enthusiastick quakerish notions, acted and led by John Gib's spirit, and Mr. Patrick Grant and some few with him", who had "been dotting with a dizzy head these 14 years, since I was in debate with him". Walker adds that John and Andrew Harleys usurped the office of the ministry, to which they had not been properly called, and says "and yet all these are foolishly called Cameronians". The Grant referred to was Peter or Patrick Grant, a man who had opposed James Renwick. In 1714 he published a pamphlet entitled "An Bond of Union wherein the Land's sins and defections are discovered and witnessed against, also Truth vindicated and the Land's duty espoused. . . .". Walker states that in 1714 Grant's party numbered three men and three women, and that by 1724 they had increased to six men and six women. In the "Bond of Union" they rejected King, government and Parliament, and repealed the acts which imposed the "cess" and other laws. They held that a mere passive dissent from the Revolution State was insufficient and inconsistent with Christian duty, and affirmed that "our will, inclinations and intentions are to change the form of government that has been in this land by monarchie", and "to set up a common-wealth government, the form and fabrick of which is a little touched at in the Smoaking-Flax". For the time being they would confine the exercise of power to their own membership, while waiting for the Lord's appointed time to "exercise it in full extent over the adversary". The existence during the post-Revolution period of these fanatical dissenting Covenanting sects no doubt explains the fact that the modern Reformed Presbyterian testimonies reject as an error the doctrine "that Christians are bound to take up arms in order to effect a change in the moral state of the nations", or "that Christians, under pretence of bearing an active testimony, are bound to effect a change in the moral state of nations with the sword".

In 1743 Thomas Nairne, a minister who had forsaken the Revolution Church to join the As-

sociate Presbytery, left the latter to join the United Societies. Nairne was in agreement with Macmillan, and his doctrine of the civil magistrate caused his breach with the Seceders. The Ploughlandhead Testimony witnesses against the Associate Presbytery because the latter excommunicated Nairne for his views on civil government, and adds: "although, in adorable providence, he has since been left to fall into the practice of such immorality, as has justly rendered him the object of church censure by this presbytery", that is, by the Reformed Presbytery.

The accession of Nairne to the United Societies opened the way for the constitution of the Reformed Presbytery, which was done on August 1st, 1743 at Braehead, by Macmillan, Nairne and ruling elders. The General Meetings of the United Societies continued for several years after this, but all ecclesiastical functions were in the hands of the Presbytery. All the minutes of the Reformed Presbytery from 1743 to 1758 are lost, and the only sources of information about the actions of

the presbytery during that period are pamphlets, letters, and the minutes of other judicatories.

In 1745 the Covenants were renewed at Auchensaugh, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered at the same time. Some of the communion tokens used on that occasion, bearing the letters "G M" (General Meeting) are still in existence.

From 1744 to 1751 five young men were licensed to preach and ordained to the office of the ministry by the Reformed Presbytery. Among these was John Cuthbertson, who went to America and in 1774 was one of the constituent members of the first American Reformed Presbytery, which in 1782 united with the American Associate Presbytery to form the Associate Reformed Church, the majority of which in 1858 united with the Associate Synod of North America to become the United Presbyterian Church of North America.

(To be continued)

The Sinfulness of Raffles and "Chances"

By J. G. Vos

It is a common practice to "raffle" some article by selling "chances" and giving the article to the person holding the "lucky number". The raffle is simply a form of gambling and is certainly sinful. Many Christians fail to realize this, and have participated in raffles without realizing that they were doing wrong.

The fact that the article raffled is not of great value, and that the "chances" cost only a few cents each, does not change the principle that is involved, nor make it right to participate. If it is sinful to gamble for thousands of dollars at roulette, it is also sinful to raffle a \$1 box of candy for "chances" sold at 5 cents each. If anyone can tell the difference in value TO GOD between \$1 and \$1,000, he may be able to tell the difference in sinfulness between "taking a chance" on winning \$1 and "taking a chance" on winning \$1,000.

All gambling is sinful because it is an attempt to gain something without giving an adequate value in return. The fact that the parties agree to this transaction does not make it right, any more than the fact that two men agree to fight a duel makes it right for one of them to kill the other. An agreement to do something that is wrong is itself wrong. Gambling stands in the same relation to stealing that dueling does to murder. If the gambler wins, he is a thief; if he loses, he is guilty of having wasted his Lord's property.

Moreover, gambling is IRREVERENT, be-

cause it attributes to "chance" what is really the providence of God. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. 16. 33). There is really no such thing as "chance". What men call "chance" is simply that which cannot be humanly predicted or calculated or controlled. In reality God's providence controls every event, even the smallest, that ever comes to pass. If a coin is flipped, it is not "chance" but GOD that decides whether it turns out to be "heads" or "tails". In every raffle, it is not "chance" but GOD that really determines who shall have the "lucky number". When Christian people participate in a raffle, they are really asking God to give them success in getting something from others without giving an adequate value in return.

Christian people who participate in raffles or any other form of gambling are guilty either of atheism or of irreverence. If they believe that the outcome of the raffle depends on "chance", then they are guilty of atheism (see "The Larger Catechism", end of answer to Q. 105). On the other hand, if they believe that the outcome of the raffle depends on GOD, then they are guilty of a form of irreverence, for they are trying to use God's providence to enable them to gain by other people's loss.

The Christian, having consecrated his life to serving God, may never stoop to the world's level of trying to USE God. We should understand that this is wicked, and should leave all forms of gambling strictly alone.

The "punch board" is another very common form of gambling. In principle it is identical with the raffle. No Christian should ever purchase punch board "chances". To do so is to sin against God.

At the present time we are witnessing in America a wave of merchants using "chance tickets" as a form of publicity or advertising. Customers who purchase merchandise above a certain value (commonly \$1) are given a numbered "chance ticket" by the salesman. The person who has the "lucky number" when the drawing is held may win a new automobile, a washing machine, a radio set or television receiver, or some other "prize". Some Christian people justify participation in such schemes on the ground that they are not required to pay out any money to obtain the "chance ticket"—it is given them without charge because the merchant appreciates their patronage. This, however, is a very flimsy argument to justify participation in such a drawing. The "chance ticket" is paid for, of course, by the purchaser of merchandise. It is not paid for directly, by an additional payment, but the payment is included in the cost of the merchandise. The merchant must contribute his share to the cost of the prizes which are given at the drawing, and this money comes, of course, from the profits on sales to his customers. If the amount which the merchant contributes to the fund comes to 1% of the value of merchandise sold, then one cent out of each \$1 purchase really goes to pay for a lottery or raffle ticket. The person who wins a prize wins at the loss of others who have purchased goods but do not win a prize. If it were not for the "chance ticket" scheme, all the merchandise could have been sold 1% cheaper without interfering with the merchant's legitimate profit. By this system of "chance tickets" a few gain articles of value by the small but real losses of a great many people.

Many a faithful pastor has been shocked to find members of his congregation participating in gambling schemes with no apparent qualms of conscience, or consciousness of doing anything wrong. Many a spiritual Christian has been scandalized and grieved by seeing fellow-Christians engage in such practices, apparently without ever having given so much as a thought to the question of whether it is right or wrong. And who shall say how much the Holy Spirit is grieved by such participation in sinful practices on the part of Christian people (Eph. 4:30), or how much the spiritual revival of the Church is hindered by it?

Duty to brother

Gambling is a practice that is sinful in itself, and therefore always forbidden by the law of God. Even if it were not sinful in itself—which of course it is—consideration for the feelings of other Christians should not be callously brushed aside as seems often to be the case today. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Rom. 14: 21). Do we care more for material gain than we do for a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men? (Acts 24:16). Do we Christians of today lack the courage to say "NO" when the easy and popular thing is to say "Yes" or to say nothing at all? How can we talk about revival and pray for revival when we are not willing to separate ourselves from the sins of the world? If and when real revival comes—not merely emotional revival, but real, deep, spiritual revival—one of its effects will certainly be to restore sensitivity to the conscience of church members who are today living a life of compromise with the sins of the world. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7,8).

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.

DEITY OF CHRIST. The truth that the historical person Jesus Christ, by reason of His divine nature, was and is the only true God, Creator of the universe, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (1 John 5:20. John 1:1-3. Col. 2:9).

DEPRAVITY, TOTAL. The truth that the unsaved sinner is corrupted by sin in every part of his personality, including both body and soul,

so that apart from the special work of the Holy Spirit he cannot choose to love God, nor do anything spiritually good in God's sight.

DEVIL, THE. The chief of the fallen angels, who, by the providential permission of God, heads the kingdom of evil in opposition to the kingdom of God until the time appointed by God for him to be cast into hell (Rev. 20:10).

DISPENSATION. A particular manner of

God's dealing with His creatures, or the period of time that coincides with the same. In the Bible, three dispensations are distinguished: (1) The Covenant of Works, from the creation of mankind to Adam's fall. (2) The Old Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, from Adam's fall to the crucifixion of Christ. (3) The New Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, from the crucifixion of Christ to His second coming. These three are dispensations of HISTORY. Beyond them is "the age to come" or ETERNITY.

DOCTRINE. A truth of the Bible set forth in logical form in its relation to other truths of the Bible. True doctrines consist of (1) facts, plus (2) the divinely revealed meaning of the facts.

DONATISTS. A separatist sect of North African Christians in the fourth and fifth centuries A. D., which held that the validity of a minister's official acts depends upon his personal piety, and that those who had denied Christ under persecution could never be restored to good standing the Church. These errors were strongly opposed by the North African bishop Augustine of Hippo.

DORT, SYNOD OF. A synod summoned by the authority of the government, at Dort in the Netherlands, 1618-1619, for the purpose of settling the Arminian controversy. It was attended by delegates from Holland, England, Scotland, Switzerland and Germany. The Synod condemned the five leading propositions of the Arminians as false, and affirmed the contrary propositions of Calvinism as Biblical truths. The Westminster Assembly of Divines, 25 years later, built upon this foundation.

EASTER. Originally the festival of the Saxon goddess of springtime, Eostre. The name was taken over by the Church for a day to commem-

orate Christ's resurrection. Easter observance is not even mentioned in the Bible, and must be regarded as a corruption of the appointed worship of God. The word "Easter" occurs once in the King James Version (Acts 12:4), but it is incorrect, and should be translated "passover" (see Amercian Revised and Revised Standard versions).

ELDER. An officer of a Christian congregation ordained to participate in the government of the Church. All elders share in governing the Church, but some, called "ministers" or "pastors" also preach the Gospel. I Tim. 5:17. In the New Testament the word "bishop" is used interchangeably with "elder"; every elder is a bishop, and every bishop an elder.

EPISCOPACY. An unscriptural form of Church government in which bishops are regarded as a distinct office higher than pastors or elders, each bishop having jurisdiction over a number of congregations and their officers. The New Testament knows nothing of bishops as officers distinct from, and superior to, ministers and elders.

ERASTIANISM. The doctrine (named after Erastus, a Swiss physician of the 16th century) which teaches that the State should be supreme over the Church and should support, manage and legislate for the Church.

ERASTIAN TOLERATION. An act or policy of a government which claims a totalitarian supremacy over the Church, by which a limited freedom of worship or other activity is allowed to religious bodies which are willing to recognize the State's supremacy in principle and to comply with the State's rules and regulations concerning religious matters. Erastian Toleration is a base counterfeit of religious liberty, proceeding from the false notion that the State is supreme in matters of religion.

Some Noteworthy Quotations

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

Archibald Alexander

"Men are considered in Holy Scripture, as in bondage, under the slavery of sin, and subject to the tyranny of Satan. From this state of thralldom, they can be delivered only by an almighty Redeemer. But POWER alone is not adequate to the work of redemption. A PRICE --- a ransom sufficient to satisfy divine justice must be paid.

Silver and gold, and all earthly treasures, avail nothing in the redemption of the soul. Blood must be shed, and life sacrificed. . . The blood shed, and the life given, must be divine. But how can this be? The eternal Son of God offers Himself to be the Redeemer, and to pay the price required. . . 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.' He was named JESUS because He should save His people from their sins."

Archibald Alexander

"Do these things. See sin to be the worst of evils, and depart from it. See Christ to be the best of goods, and choose Him, and cleave to Him. See the world passing away, and set not thy heart upon it. See the ways of God to be the best ways, and His people the best people; and walk in those

ways, and with those people. See heaven and hell before you, and conduct accordingly. Love the Word of God; make it your guide, your food."

Philip Henry

"God reserves three things to Himself: the revenge of injuries, Rom. 12:19; the glory of deeds, Isa. 42:8; and the knowledge of secrets, Deut. 29:29."

Philip Henry

"There is a wicked man that goes blinded, and a wicked man that goes with his eyes open, to hell; there is a wicked man that cannot see, and a wicked man that will not see, the danger he is in; but hell-fire will open the eyes of both."

John Bunyan

"The whole family in heaven and earth.' The difference betwixt us and them is, not that we are really two, but one body in Christ, in divers places. True, we are below stairs, and they above; they in their holiday, and we in our working-day clothes; they in harbor, but we in the storm; they at rest, but we in the wilderness; they singing, as crowned with joy, we crying, as crowned with thorns. But we are all of one house, and are all the children of one Father."

John Bunyan

"It is a great dishonor to God to trust Him no further than we see Him. You trust the ground with your corn, and can expect a crop out of the dry clods, though you do not see how it grows, nor which way it thrives in order to the harvest. It is a great folly to distrust the Lord, because the mercies we expect do not presently grow up and flower in our sight and apprehension."

Thomas Manton

"It is a usual observation, many parents go to hell in getting an estate for their children, and their children go to hell afterward in spending that estate."

Thomas Manton

"Religion, in all its manifestations, waits, like all other human functioning, on the operation of ideas: here too the line of action is from perception, through emotion, to volition. And nothing can be more certain than that if the theology of the Bible is discarded, the religion of the Bible is discarded with it. We shall certainly have religion: we cannot avoid that: man is a religious animal. But our religion will not be the religion of the Bible unless — among other elements of it — our religious conceptions, that is, our theology, be the religious conceptions, that is to say, the theology, of the Bible."

B. B. Warfield

Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews

LESSON 14

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29.

(A) Exhortation to Confidence in Christ and to the maintenance of Christian Associations. 10:19-25.

This section of the Epistle draws practical inferences from the preceding doctrinal sections. The Old Testament believer could not even enter the earthly Holy of Holies; but the New Testament believer, in Christ his Mediator, enters into the heavenly sanctuary through the blood of Jesus Christ, 10:19. This is through "a new and living way", through "his flesh", which is "the veil". The meaning of this verse appears to be, that the veil or curtain in the Tabernacle barred entrance into the Holy of Holies, except on the part of the high priest according to the law. When the veil of the Temple was rent in two at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, it was thereby shown that the way into the (true) Holy of Holies was now opened. But it was not the rending of the veil of cloth that opened the way, but that which the rending of the cloth signified, namely the rending or breaking of Christ's body on the cross. It is by that that the way into the heavenly sanctu-

ary is really opened to the Christian. It is called a "new" way because it is in contrast to the old way under the Levitical priesthood. It is called a "living" way because the way is Christ Himself, in whom is life (John 1:4; 14:6).

So much for our access to God through Christ's atonement. But we have also "a great priest" over the house of God, that is, Christ in heaven as our intercessor. (In 10:21 the King James Version reads "a high priest", but the correct translation is "a great priest", as in the American Revised Version). The fact that Christ is in heaven as our Intercessor guarantees our increase in grace and our final perseverance unto eternal life. Since these things are so, we ought, first, to have great confidence in Christ; and secondly, we ought to cultivate Christian associations.

Verse 22 presents a problem in interpretation. Is the reference to "sprinkling" and "pure water" a reference to baptism? If not, why does the verse say "our BODIES washed"? We may be

reasonably certain that this verse refers to the sacrament of baptism, including, of course, not merely the external rite of water baptism, but also the spiritual reality signified and sealed by baptism, that is, spiritual cleansing and regeneration. Compare Titus 3:5, and note that the verse speaks of "the washing of regeneration", not of "the regeneration of washing"; that is, it does not teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, or the idea that the new birth is effected by the instrumentality of baptism.

With reference to sprinkling with blood, compare Ex. 29: 21; Levit. 8:30. With reference to washing with water, compare Ex. 29:4; 30:20; 40:30-32; Levit. 16:4. Our hearts are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, bringing relief from an evil conscience, which is the result of an evil life. Our bodies are washed with pure water which (in the sacrament of baptism) signifies the new birth or regeneration.

Verse 23: therefore we should hold fast the profession of our faith ("the confession of our hope", ARV) without wavering, for He is faithful that has promised. The Christian's free access to the heavenly sanctuary, and his experience of full and free cleansing from sin, should be the greatest encouragement to a strong, steadfast, unwavering PROFESSION of his Christian hope before the world.

Concerning the cultivation of Christian associations (verses 24,25), the Christian must cultivate LOVE and GOOD WORKS. Note that these are not mentioned as grounds of salvation, but as fruits of salvation. We are not saved by good works, but if really saved, we will not be without them.

Next, the Christian must not omit the duty of assembling with other Christians for worship and fellowship. From verse 25 we see that even in the early time when this Epistle was written, some Christians had already become ACCUSTOMED to non-attendance at meetings. Note the expression used: "the assembling OF OURSELVES together" (ARV, "OUR OWN assembling together"): What is warned against is not merely staying home from church services, but the bad habit of "church-trotting", or frequent unnecessary absence from the particular congregation of which the person is a member. We are exhorted not merely to "assemble" (or attend church), but to attend to OUR OWN assembling together, that is, faithful attendance upon the ordinances of divine worship and fellowship in that particular congregation of which we are members. If this warning was needed in the early day when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, surely it is much more needed at the present day, when many professing Christians think it makes little difference what church they attend, so long as they attend some church, while many others attend their own church only oc-

asionally, perhaps one-fourth of the time. No minister can preach so as to build up the people in Christian knowledge if the members are irregular or have the "church-trotting" habit. The person who hears only one-fourth or one-third of a consecutive series of sermons cannot get any adequate idea of what it is all about. Every such church member is a discourager of ministers and a deceiver of himself.

"The day approaching" in verse 25 (compare 1 Cor. 3:13) beyond question means the day of Christ's second coming. The recipients of the Epistle to the Hebrews probably lived either about the time or not many years after the destruction of Jerusalem, which was a type, or sample on a small scale, of the Day of the Lord. Verse 25 would call their attention to the fact that the great Day is always approaching, always "at hand" in the Biblical sense of the expression.

Questions:

1. What is meant by "the holiest" in 10:19?
2. Why is the body of Jesus Christ called "the veil" in 10:20?
3. Why is the way which Christ has opened called a "new" way in 10:20?
4. Why is the way which Christ has opened called a "living" way in 10:20?
5. What is meant by the statement of 10:21 that we have "a great priest over the house of God"?
6. What encouragement should we draw from the truth that Christ is our great Intercessor in heaven?
7. What is the probable meaning of the reference to "sprinkling" and "pure water" in 10:22? What word of the verse indicates that this is the probable meaning?
8. In what way are Christians exhorted to provoke one another in 10:24?
9. What is the relation between good works and salvation?
10. What Christian duty is set forth in 10:25?
11. What can we gather concerning the religious habits of some of the original readers of the Epistle from verse 25?
12. What is the force of the word "ourselves" in 10:25, and how is this translated in the American Revised Version?
13. What bad results may come from the habit of frequently attending other churches instead of one's own?
14. What is "the day" mentioned in 10:25?
15. What should the thought of the approach of the Day of Christ's second coming lead Christians to do?

LESSON 15

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29, Continued.

(B) Warning Against the Danger of Apostasy. 10:26-39.

This passage runs somewhat parallel to 6:1-12. In that passage, as in the present one, two classes of people are contrasted. In both passages the dangers of unbelief, or falling away from the truth, are set forth, and then by way of contrast the experience of the true believer is set forth. In 6:9 we read: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak". In 10:39 this is paralleled by: "But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul" (ARV). With this parallelism in mind, let us examine the present passage, 10:26-39.

This passage is by no means to be taken as contrary to the doctrine of Perseverance (or the eternal security of the true believer in Christ), but rather as an earnest exhortation to make our calling and election (subjectively) sure; that is, to make ourselves absolutely sure of our calling and election. For an illustration of this, compare Acts 27:21-26 with Acts 27:31. The fact that an event is certain to occur, because foreordained by God, does not imply that it has been foreordained to occur apart from the use of appropriate means. The believer cannot lose his salvation, or eternal life, but this does not imply that he need make no effort to persevere and increase in grace.

10:26-31 describes the sin of apostasy, and is parallel to 6:4-8. In chapter 6 it is stated of this class of persons that their "end is to be burned" (6:8); but here in chapter 10 it is affirmed of them that a "fiery indignation" ("a fierceness of fire", ARV) "shall devour" them, 10:27. Also it is stated that they shall "fall into the hands of the living God", 10:31. In 10:26 the expression "the knowledge of the truth" does not necessarily mean a SAVING knowledge of the truth, but it certainly means more than a MERE HEARING with the ears; it corresponds to the experience of those who had been "enlightened", had "tasted of the heavenly gift", had been "made partakers of the Holy Spirit", etc., in 6:4-8. These persons had heard the Gospel, had been INFLUENCED (not regenerated or indwelt) by the Holy Spirit, and were intellectually convinced that Christianity is true.

The "sinning wilfully" in 10:26 must not be understood of any sin whatever, but must be taken in connection with the rest of the verse, that is, with the matter of THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH; it means, therefore, a deliberate rejection of that truth which the Holy Spirit had already convinced them of. These persons having deliberately rejected the Christian Gospel with its doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement.

THERE REMAINS NO MORE A SACRIFICE FOR SINS; for outside of Christ, whom they have rejected, there is no other sacrifice which could take away their sins. God has only one Only begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and there is only one sacrifice that can cancel sin, the sacrifice of the cross of Calvary. When men reject that, there is no other for them to fall back on.

The statement that "there remains no more sacrifice for sins" (10:26) of course does not mean that Christ's atonement, objectively considered, is not sufficient for the sins of such people; but that, they having rejected that atonement, there remains no OTHER sacrifice that could atone for their sins. In 10:27 we see, therefore, that all that is left to such people, after they have rejected GRACE, is divine JUDGMENT. The language used leads us to conclude that a deliberate, final, complete apostasy in the face of a powerful conviction of the truth of Christianity, is the sin dealt with here. It is, in other words, a form of the sin against the Holy Spirit.

We should realize that no person who has not heard the Gospel could possibly commit this sin. Nor could an honest doubter commit this sin. Only the convinced person, who knows the truth, but rejects the light, is spoken of.

The second part of 10:27 has often been observed in the case of people who have rejected the Gospel of Christ. Entirely without concern about their salvation, they only experience "a certain fearful looking for of judgment". Such people know, in the bottom of their hearts, that they are destined for hell, for, having a knowledge of the truth, they know that there is such a place of eternal punishment. Naturally the thought of this inspires fear. But they have been abandoned by the Holy Spirit, and consequently are entirely devoid of any real desire or hope for salvation, or spirit of seeking the Lord.

10:28 cites the Mosaic law (Deut. 17:2-6) as an illustration of the punishment for apostasy, and follows with an argument from the less to the greater: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (10:29). In this verse the phrase "wherewith he was sanctified" creates a difficulty, which must be honestly faced. Arminians appeal to these words as proof that a Christian can be "sanctified" and still "fall from grace" and perish in hell. It is quite true that the text does not say "Wherewith he might have been sanctified", but "Wherewith he WAS sanctified". However we may be sure that the class of persons spoken of are not backsliding

saints, but **ADVERSARIES**, as is shown by 10:27b. We must remember that in the Epistle to the Hebrews the term "sanctify" has a special meaning, somewhat different from its technical or doctrinal meaning by which it is distinguished from Justification in the order of salvation. Compare Hebrews 9:13, "sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh"; 13:12, "Jesus . . . that he might sanctify the people with his own blood". On the Great Day of Atonement (Levit. 16), the blood in the Holy of Holies sustained the covenant relation between God and Israel. The blood of the New Covenant, Christ's own blood, sustains the covenant relation between God and the New Testament Church. As a member of the **VISIBLE** covenant society, the Church, the person spoken of in 10:29 was "sanctified" in this sense, not as to his inward spiritual condition, but as concerned his outward position and privileges, as a visible member of a society constituted by the blood of the New Covenant. He counted that blood "common" or "unholy" (that is, ordinary, without any special efficacy), and **DID DESPITE** to (insulted) the Spirit of grace (the Holy Ghost). The last words of verse 29 show that the sin spoken of is the sin against the Holy Spirit.

10:30,31 emphasizes the terrible consequences of this sin. Verse 30 contains two quotations from Deut. 32:35,36. Having discussed the apostate, the passage goes on to speak, by way of contrast, of the true believer, in 10:32-39. Verses 32-34 set forth the readers' past sufferings for Christ. God's grace upheld them under those trials, a strong evidence of the reality of their Christian faith and experience. 10:35 says "Cast not away therefore your confidence (**ARV**, boldness)", that is, courage in professing Christ and obeying Him. Note that it does not say: "Cast not away therefore your profession", but "Cast not away therefore your **BOLDNESS**".

10:36 stresses the need for patience, that the readers may receive the promise, that is **THE THING PROMISED**. This emphasis on patience occurs over and over again in Hebrews. Christ is hidden in heaven; the believer is suffering affliction on earth; therefore he requires patience to endure in order to receive the thing promised, namely, complete redemption and **SIGHT** at Christ's second coming (10:37). This is quoted from Hab. 2:3, and 10:38 from Hab. 2:4. It must be stated that 10:37 sets forth the eschatological character of Christianity (its concern with Christ's second coming and eternity), and has nothing whatever to do with the actual number of years between Christ's first coming and His second coming; if it did, how could a period of over 1900 years be called "a little while" (**ARV**, "a very little while")? Christ's second coming, being the next great redemptive event in God's program, is always "near" or "at hand", in every age of the Church, and when He comes, every Christian of

every age and period of history will see Him (Rev. 1:7; 1 Thess. 4:15-17).

10:38 again contrasts the one who "lives by faith" with the one who "shrinks back", and 10:39 strongly affirms that we (i.e., regenerate believers) are not in the latter category, but in the former, those who have faith to the saving of the soul. This brings out all the more clearly that two distinct classes of persons are spoken of in this passage.

Questions:

1. What passage previously studied in Hebrews is closely parallel to 10:26-39?
2. What danger, and what contrast, are set forth in both passages?
3. Why is 10:26-39 not to be regarded as contrary to the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints?
4. What is the principal message of 10:26-39 to the Christian?
5. How does Acts 27:21-26,31 show that God's foreordination of something does not eliminate the necessity of using appropriate means?
6. What is meant by "the knowledge of the truth" in 10:26?
7. What kind of sin is spoken of in the expression "if we sin wilfully" in 10:26?
8. Why is it true, in the case of those who commit this sin, that there remains no more sacrifice for sins?
9. Why could not a person who has never heard the Gospel commit this sin?
10. What is the mental and spiritual condition of those who have deliberately rejected the Gospel of Christ, as described in 10:27?
11. What special meaning of the term "sanctify" occurs in Hebrews, and what is the meaning of the term in 10:29?
12. What is the meaning of "done despite unto the Spirit of grace" in 10:29?
13. What fact in the past experience of the readers of the Epistle furnished evidence of the reality of their Christian faith (10:32-34)?
14. Why does the Christian need patience?
15. What is meant by "the promise" in 10:36?
16. What is the meaning of the phrase "yet a little while" in 10:37?
17. Why is it true that Christ's second coming is always near to every Christian of every period of history?
18. What two classes of people are contrasted in 10:38,39?

LESSON 16

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29, Continued.**(C) The Example of the Hebrew Heroes of Faith. 11:1-40.**

11:1 approaches a formal definition of faith, in its subjective aspect. It is a "substantiation of things hoped for, a conviction of things unseen". This is illustrated in verses 2 and 3 by a statement of the doctrine of creation. The ancients obtained witness through faith, in God's history of the world, though not in man's. By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which appear. This doctrine of creation is **BASIC TO ALL OTHER DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY**, and it can be known only by faith. In the nature of the case, it cannot be tested by experiment or demonstrated by scientific induction. The Bible offers no arguments to prove that it is true, but states it simply at its very beginning (Gen. 1:1). By faith, then, we know that the world did not always exist, that it was created out of nothing by an infinite, almighty God who is entirely distinct from, and transcendent above, this created and visible universe. This is the very basis of faith, and if a man does not believe this, it makes no difference whatever else he may profess to believe. From this point, the Epistle goes on to speak of the ancient heroes of faith.

First come three who lived before the Flood, Abel, Enoch and Noah. It was by faith that Abel offered a blood sacrifice to God, thus recognizing his own guilt and mortality (11:4). If this was not faith, then it was the height of folly. Death came into the world through sin; Abel takes death, in the form of a slain animal, and offers it to God as a sacrifice, and is accepted by God.

Verses 5 and 6 speak of Enoch's translation as a testimony to his faith. Enoch's walk with God was the result of faith, Enoch believing (1) that God exists, which is the opposite of atheism; and (2) that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, which is the opposite of deism and pantheism.

Verse 7 presents Noah as an example of faith. In Noah's case, faith dealt specifically with the future, that is, with the Flood, which had been predicted, but which was "not seen as yet". Noah's making the ark, and that on dry ground remote from water, in the sight of disbelievers and scoffers as it doubtless was, constituted a strong testimony to his faith in God's spoken word; for faith is not merely believing a thing with the intellect, but believing it firmly and deeply enough **TO ACT ACCORDINGLY**. Noah believed that if he did not make the ark, he and his family would be drowned, so, "moved with godly fear", he prepared the ark, let men say what they might. Thus

he became the heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Next, in verses 8-16, the truth is set forth, and illustrated from the Old Testament, that faith gains by having the blessing delayed. If the benefits had been given immediately after being promised, little or no faith would be called into exercise. Abraham's faith is shown, first, in his leaving his own country, not knowing whither bound (11:8); if he had known where he was going it would have been sight, not faith. His faith was next shown (verse 9) in his being a **SOJOURNER**, dwelling in tents, not in houses, in the land which had been promised to him, because (verse 10) he realized that nothing on earth could be the real and final fulfilment of God's promises to him: he looked for the heavenly city, whose builder and maker is God.

The word "builder" in the Greek means "architect" or "planner", while the word "maker" means the one who puts the plan into execution. From this verse we gather that Abraham knew more than is recorded of him in the book of Genesis. His faith, or Sarah's, is next shown in connection with the birth of Isaac, obviously a supernatural event (verses 11,12). By this faith there sprang of one old man, a vast multitude. Verse 13 applies the above to the point in hand: these patriarchs did not, in their life-time on earth, obtain the things promised. To the end of their earthly life they continued to exercise **FAITH**, without obtaining that for which it was exercised. The trial of their faith did not last half a year, or a year, but their whole lives. And, in the end, they "died in faith". Up to their death, faith had not turned into sight. They saw the promises and greeted them from afar; that is, they realized that these promises related to the remote future; hence they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and seeking a country of their own. All this time the earthly country which they had left was near at hand, to which they might have returned, and would have returned had they not been controlled by a higher principle, that of **FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES CONCERNING THE FUTURE**. It was better for them to wait for the heavenly country than to return to the earthly country; and it was better for them to **WAIT** for the future inheritance of the heavenly country, than to receive it immediately. This process was educational or disciplinary on God's part, to wean their souls from this earth and to fit them for the world to come.

This brings up the question, What are we in this world for? and its answer, To develop a soul and a personality with which to glorify God to all eternity in a better world than this, a world

for which this world is only a brief preparation. It may seem hard, even bitter, to the Christian to have to walk by faith, instead of by sight; to have to exercise patience, instead of immediately obtaining the thing promised by God; but God's way is the best way. "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (11:16). God's eternal city is prepared, however, for those who are but tent-dwellers and pilgrims in this present world, in contradistinction to the pagans, ancient and modern, who regard this world as permanent, independent of God, and an end in itself.

Questions:

1. What is the importance of the doctrine of creation?
2. Why can the doctrine of creation be known only by faith?
3. What was implied in Abel offering an animal sacrifice to God?

4. How was Enoch's faith contrary to atheism, deism and pantheism?

5. What special feature is shown in the faith of Noah?

6. What truth concerning faith is set forth in 11:8-16?

7. What was the spiritual significance of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelling in tents instead of permanent houses?

8. What is the meaning of the Greek words translated "builder" and "maker" in 11:10?

9. Why did not the patriarchs return to the earthly country from which they had come?

10. Why did God not give Abraham, Isaac and Jacob the thing promised during their earthly life-time?

11. What is the real purpose of our life in this world?

12. Of what class of persons is God not ashamed to be called their God?

LESSON 17

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29, Continued.

(C) The Example of the Hebrew Heroes of Faith. 11:1-40, Continued.

The next section, 11:17-22, deals with faith as belief in the apparently impossible. Four instances are cited. The first is that of Abraham offering up Isaac. Abraham had gladly received the promises. One of these was the promise of an innumerable posterity; another, the promise that through his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Both of these promises were contingent upon Isaac's living to grow up, for it had been revealed to Abraham by God that his "seed should be called" in Isaac. Yet he was commanded to do something which seemed to be utterly inexpedient, even to the extent of rendering the fulfilment of God's promises impossible. **BUT HE OBEYED THE COMMAND OF GOD.** Abraham did not follow the pagan (ancient and modern) ethics of expediency, by doing evil that good might come. He obeyed God.

Note, too, that when God's will had been clearly revealed to him, Abraham did not go aside to pray about the matter for several days to obtain "guidance" as to what action he should take. Prayer can be not only a hindrance, but a positive sin, if we make it an excuse for disobedience or delayed obedience to God's Word. Prayer is of the utmost importance, but it is not to be made an excuse for lack of the necessary action on our part.

In verse 19 we learn a great truth: Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead. Remember that, so far as Scripture records,

there had been no instance of resurrection in the world's history up to that time. Consequently it would require much greater faith to believe that God would raise Isaac from the dead, than would have been required if Abraham had lived in later times. Also, Abraham's faith in the possibility of Isaac's resurrection did not rest upon any express statement by God, but was based on logical inference from two known facts, namely, (1) God's promises, and (2) God's power. If God gave a command which seemed to render the promises impossible of fulfilment, then God's almighty power would find a way out of the difficulty. Abraham did not take matters in his own hands, and say, "For me to sacrifice Isaac will do more harm than good; I will disobey God in this one instance, because I am in a very difficult situation"—on the contrary, he left God's burdens on God, and went about obeying the revealed will of God without delay or hesitation.

The second instance cited (11:20) is that of Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come. Here we see the recognition of God's rights against nature. By nature, Esau, not Jacob, would have had the birthright and the first blessing; but it turned out the other way, showing God's absolute sovereignty (compare Rom. 9:10-13). Isaac blessed his sons concerning "things to come"; it might seem impossible that Jacob would really receive the future blessings rather than Esau, but it really was so in God's plan.

The third instance cited (11:21) is that of Jacob, when about to die, blessing the two sons

of Joseph. We know from Gen. 49 that this blessing was of a prophetic nature, including a prophecy of the coming of Christ. Jacob was in Egypt at the time, and it might seem improbable, even impossible, that his descendants should ever return to Canaan, but his blessing implied a belief that they would certainly do so.

The fourth instance cited (11:22) is that of Joseph, who when dying prophesied of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, and "gave commandment concerning his bones", leaving his bones as a continual admonition to the people, to remind them of the great deliverance that God had in store for them. All four of these instances, each in its own way, showed faith in God's power to accomplish that which to men is impossible, even to the extent of raising the dead—a matter utterly contrary to nature.

The remaining section of the chapter (11:23-40) is a more miscellaneous catalogue of the trials, experiences, and triumphs of faith in the Old Testament and Maccabean periods. First, 11:23, the faith of Moses' parents is mentioned. Note in passing that obedience to the commands of kings and governments is not always a duty; it was BY FAITH, and therefore with God's approval, that Moses' parents disobeyed the command of the king of Egypt. Secondly, in 11:24-26, we come to Moses himself, with whom "faith argues, as it might seem, in the very teeth of a most wonderful providence". "He will not be a patron of the people of God, but a sharer of their humiliation, which he esteems as the 'reproach of Christ', and values it above all the treasures of Egypt." In 11:27,28 we find the secret of Moses' victory over fear—his abiding in the presence of the unseen God, against which even the wrath of Pharaoh is powerless to harm. By the passover and the sprinkling of the blood, the people of Israel are delivered from the judgment of God upon human sin, and brought into communion with the holy God.

In 11:29 we have a contrast between the victorious experience of faith, and the vain attempt of unbelief at the Red Sea. To those who truly believed, God opened the way; the Egyptian unbelievers, seeing the way open, tried to enter it, and perished. In verses 30 and 31 we again have two contrasted examples of human weakness and divine power. The walls of Jericho, a mighty fortress, fell down at the mere blast of trumpets; and Rahab, whose house was situated on the walls that fell, was saved amid the general destruction.

In 11:32-38 we have the period which followed Israel's entrance into the land of Canaan. Six persons are listed by name, followed by a long catalogue of those "in whom faith overcame, most

often by the way of the cross, by what seemed the way of defeat". We pause to note the meaning of verse 35: "that they might obtain a better resurrection". Christ appointed a bitter cross for them; they had an opportunity to shift it, and escape the suffering, but BY FAITH they declined to do so, in the hope of a better resurrection. This must be considered the victory of faith at its highest point—martyrdom.

Finally, in verses 39 and 40, we see that all these ancient heroes of faith must wait for their perfect fruition (the resurrection of the body), until the time when we, too, shall receive it together with them, namely at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions:

1. What special aspect of faith is dealt with in 11:17-22?
2. Why did it require great faith for Abraham to obey God's command to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice?
3. Why did Abraham not pray for guidance before proceeding to offer Isaac as a sacrifice?
4. When is prayer a sin?
5. What do we learn about Abraham's faith in 11:19?
6. Why would it be difficult for Abraham to believe that God would raise Isaac from the dead?
7. On what was Abraham's faith in the resurrection of Isaac based?
8. What truth is brought out by the incident of Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau?
9. What conviction concerning the future was manifested by Jacob and Joseph in their dying statements?
10. What height of faith is seen in Moses' decision to suffer affliction with the people of God?
11. What was the secret of Moses' victory over fear?
12. What lessons concerning faith can be learned from the fall of Jericho and related events?
13. What is the meaning of "not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection", in 11:35?
14. When will the heroes of faith of Hebrews 11 fully receive what God promised them? What is the meaning of the expression, "that they without us should not be made perfect" in 11:40?

LESSON 18

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29, Continued.

(D) Christ both the Example and the Object of our Faith, 12:1-3.

The figure in 12:1,2 is that of an athletic field or stadium. The runners are about to run a race. Surrounding the field are the seats of a large number of spectators. The runner must lay aside all burdens which would hinder his running. He must have endurance. He must keep his eye on the goal. So much for the figure itself. Now as to the spiritual realities represented by these things. Beyond question the "cloud of witnesses" is the Old Testament heroes of faith discussed in chapter 11. The expression "compassed about" must not be taken literally, any more than "lay aside weight" or "run" is to be taken literally, as referring to the body and its exercise. The blessed dead are not hovering about us in the air; they are with Christ in Paradise. However, it is true, by reason of the communion of saints, that there is at least a knowledge of the state of the Church on earth on the part of the saints in heaven. (This is confirmed by Rev. 6:9,10. If the saints in Paradise are totally ignorant of the state of the Church on earth, how could they know whether their blood had been avenged yet or not?) The "cloud of witnesses" are not only OBSERVERS OF US, but also WITNESSES FOR THE FAITH. (Compare 11:39).

The Christian must "lay aside every weight". But what is a "weight"? A weight is something we take up and need not, which hinders us in our Christian life. As the text (12:1) distinguishes between "weight" and "sin", we must understand that the "weight" is something which is not necessarily sinful, something which is not sinful IN ITSELF, but which may be sinful by reason of special circumstances or considerations.

Who could run a race carrying a heavy load? Whether it refers to superfluous body weight, or to a carried burden, the spiritual application is the same. Then the Christian must also set aside "the sin which doth so easily beset" him. Note that it is sin in the abstract, sin in general, not this or that particular form of sin, that is spoken of. The figure is that of sin as a garment, which clings to a person. Who could run a race wearing a tight-fitting overcoat? This must be discarded first, then progress can be made. No doubt every Christian has certain particular "besetting sins", but SINS always come from SIN, and we can never deal effectively with SINS until we deal with SIN. If we only attack sins, then the sin which is checked in one manifestation, will break out in other forms.

This text (12:1) does not teach the doctrine called "total sanctification" or "sinless perfection", but it teaches the Bible doctrine of sancti-

fication, and no sanctification is real which does not make a real break in our old man.

Finally, we must run with PATIENCE, that is, according to the Greek, with ENDURANCE, the race that is set before us. The race of the Christian life is run on a race-course plotted by God, beginning with the new birth and ending at our glorification. Also, the Christian must keep his eye on the goal-mark, which is Jesus Christ Himself. This will exclude all morbid introspection and subjectivism. It is Christ, not our own religious experience, that is the object of our faith, the terminus on which our faith is to rest. This section may be outlined as follows: (1) Something to realize: compassed by a cloud of witnesses. (2) Something to lay aside: weights and sin. (3) Something to do: run with endurance. (4) Someone to whom to look: Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

Christ, as the One to whom we look, is the object of our faith. But he is also, as the "author and finisher of our faith", our EXAMPLE in living the life of faith. This is illustrated in four statements about Christ's own life of faith: (1) He looked forward to future joy. (2) He endured the suffering of the cross. (3) He despised shame. (4) He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. In all four of these respects, Christ is the example of a perfect life of faith.

Questions:

1. What figure of speech is presented in 12:1,2?
2. What persons constitute the "cloud of witnesses" mentioned in 12:1?
3. Why must the expression "compassed about" in 12:1 not be understood literally?
4. How can it be shown from the Bible that the saints in heaven are aware of the state of the Church on earth?
5. What is meant by the "weight" which the Christian must lay aside?
6. What is the difference between SIN and SINS, and which must be dealt with first in the Christian life?
7. What figure of speech is involved in the mention of sin in 12:1?
8. What is the meaning of "patience" in 12:1?
9. What events form the beginning and end of the Christian race-course?
10. On what goal-mark must the Christian keep his eye?
11. What spiritual peril or harmful tendency will be avoided by keeping our eye on the goal?
12. What is meant by saying that Jesus is the object of our faith?
13. In what four respects is Jesus the perfect Example of the life of faith?

LESSON 19

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29, Continued.

(E) Chastening Experienced should not Discourage Faith, for it is but the Discipline which Prepares us for a Glorious Salvation. 12:4-29.

Verse 3 connects this section with what preceded: the danger is that Christians, in running the race of the Christian life, will "be wearied and faint in your minds" ("wax weary, fainting in your souls", ARV). It is not a physical weariness, but a spiritual, that is warned against. Verse 4 sets forth the partial, incomplete character of the readers' suffering for Christ. Christian people often speak of their "rights", but actually the only real right we have is to lay down our life for Christ's sake. He laid down His life for us, and if He were to ask us to do the same for Him, it would be no more than right. For us to suffer martyrdom would be no injustice on God's part. So if God in His providence causes us to suffer lesser things, we should not faint in our souls. No matter how much we suffer for Christ, we shall be eternally and infinitely in His debt.

Moreover, the sufferings experienced by Christians are not punishments or judgments in the strict sense, but chastenings, intended for our benefit. The key to this thought is found in 12:10b, "but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness". Chastening is rendered necessary by the remains of sin, the "old man", in the believer. By God's chastening, the old man is mortified. Scripture teaches that Christians have already crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts (Gal. 5:24). This truth has often been misunderstood. Crucifixion and death are not equivalent terms. A crucified man is not necessarily a DEAD man. Crucified persons sometimes lived on for days. A crucified man is still alive, but greatly restrained in his movements, and his ultimate death is a certainty. So in the case of the Christian: his "old man" is "put to death", but not yet entirely dead; he is not the "bondservant" of sin any more; and by the process of sanctification, the old man is more and more mortified — more and more killed off. Chastening is for the furtherance of our sanctification, that is, to make us more holy in our hearts and character.

We should clearly understand the distinction between God's CHASTENING of His own children and His PUNISHMENT of the wicked. Two entirely different relationships are involved. The relation between the wicked person and God is that between a criminal and his judge. The judge imposes and inflicts a just penalty. But the relation between the Christian and God is that between a child and his father. Any suffering that is inflicted on a child by a father proceeds not from righteous wrath, but from LOVE. Chastening is disciplinary, but not penal.

Verses 5 and 6 are quoted from Prov. 3:11,12. Verses 7,8 lay down the general principle that sons are chastened by fathers. By adoption the Christian is a son or child of God, therefore he too must receive chastening. Verse 9 compares the chastening of earthly fathers with that of the Heavenly Father, and verse 10 continues this comparison: God's chastening is for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Incidentally, we must say at this point that if the doctrine of "entire sanctification" is true, there should be a multitude of Christians in the world who no longer need God's chastening. Chastening is in order to holiness; if they are already perfectly holy, why should they need further chastening? Further, why should perfectly holy persons die? The mere asking of these questions is enough to show the unscriptural character of perfectionism, or the doctrine of "total sanctification".

But why do Christians die? Surely not as the penal consequence of sin, for that would nullify their justification (Rom. 8:1). The real answer is that, for the Christian, death is the final step in the process of chastening. Believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory. But if any person is already "perfect in holiness" (at some time prior to his death), why should he die at all?

Verse 11 compares the PRESENT EXPERIENCE of chastening with the ULTIMATE FRUIT of chastening: the present experience is bitter, but the ultimate fruit is peaceable, even "righteousness". This means, not imputed righteousness, which every believer already has from Christ, but PERSONAL righteousness, righteousness of character, the complete victory of the new man. Verse 12 shows that chastening should not cause discouragement, but (verse 13) we should rather learn from affliction the lessons that God has for us to learn, and follow after righteousness.

Questions:

1. What kind of weariness is warned against in 12:3?
2. What does 12:4 tell us concerning the character of the readers' sufferings for Christ's sake?
3. What right do we have that we can plead against God?
4. Why must Christians experience God's chastening?
5. What is the divinely intended purpose of chastening (12:10b)?
6. What is the difference between God's

chastening of His own children and His punishment of wicked people?

7. How does the teaching of 12:8 prove that the doctrine of "total sanctification", or perfectionism, is false?

8. Why must Christians die?

9. What is the contrast between the experience of chastening, and its final fruit (12:11)?

10. What attitude toward affliction should we avoid? (12:5)

11. What should be our response when God sends afflictions upon us? (12:12,13)

LESSON 20

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29, Continued.

(E) Chastening Experienced should not Discourage Faith, for it is but the Discipline which Prepares us for a Glorious Salvation. 12:4-29, Continued.

In 12:14-17 we learn that peace with all men is to be sought, but not at the expense of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, and which is therefore even more important than peace. So Christians must be watchful, lest any of them "fail of the grace of God" (ARV, "fall-eth short of"; this means to fail to attain unto; it does not mean to LOSE the grace of God once attained), and so a root of bitterness spring up to the defilement of many others. The case of Esau is mentioned, which shows how a single act may disclose a person's real character. Esau sold his birthright for a meal, and thereby showed himself to be a PROFANE person, that is, one who left God out of his thoughts. Esau desired the blessing of the righteous, but he was not willing to live the life of the righteous. Similarly, Balaam (Num. 23:10) wished that he might die the death of the righteous, but he was not willing to live the life of the righteous. So, since Esau did not really want righteousness, but only its blessing, he did not even obtain the blessing. He found no place of repentance (ARV, "no place for a change of mind in his father") though he sought it diligently with tears. He "valued the gain of godliness, without the godliness; and the nature of God would have had to be changed to gratify him in that which was his sole desire."

12:18-24 compares the experience of Israel at Mount Sinai with the Christian's experience by faith. Israel came to a material, tangible mount, every aspect of which was terrifying, and to the sound of a trumpet, and a still more terrible sound of words, which moved the people to request that no more words should be spoken, and even Moses was thoroughly frightened. This was their experience at Mount Sinai: "darkness over the face of God; obscurity over the future; God when he drew nigh inspiring terror!" Contrasted with this is the New Testament believer's standing and experience by faith. The Christian has not come unto Mount Sinai, but unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the mountain of freedom and saving grace in its fulness (Gal. 4:21-26). Of course the Mount Zion here referred to is NOT the earthly mountain at Jerusalem, but the anti-

typical Zion, that is, the real, true Zion, in heaven (compare Rev. 14:1). The readers of this Epistle, whether Jewish or Gentile Christians, had certainly NOT come to the earthly Mount Zion. The Christian has come to the HEAVENLY Jerusalem (12:22), the city of the living God, the abode of glorified saints, and to innumerable hosts of angels. These are the first of the citizens of the heavenly city which has just been mentioned. Next comes "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven", that is, the company of the redeemed, whose names are in the Lamb's book of life. They are called "firstborn" because of their adoption into the family of God. Christ Jesus is pre-eminently God's firstborn (1:6), but believers become so by adoption.

The expression "God the Judge of all" means God the sovereign ruler who awards to every one his due, according to justice.

What is meant by the expression "the spirits of just men made perfect"? According to Alford this means "the whole number of the just who have passed into their rest, from the righteous Abel downwards"; the text does not say that we have come to "just men made perfect", but to their SPIRITS; their spirits are perfected, and at the resurrection they shall be perfected with us in the sense of 11:40, by the spiritual body.

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (12:24). Note that the text does not say "Christ" but "Jesus"; it uses the personal name, not the official title, perhaps to call attention to His human nature and the sufferings through which He was "made perfect" (2:10).

"The blood of sprinkling" (12:24) means Christ's own blood, the antitype or fulfilment of the Old Testament blood of sprinkling in the Holy of Holies. Christ's own blood is spiritually applied to the believer for the remission of his sins. "That speaketh better things than that of Abel" —this of course means better things than the blood of Abel's sacrificed lamb; it does not mean "better things than Abel's own blood that was shed by Cain". The comparison is between something good and something better. Abel's own blood was in no sense "good" for what Christ's blood was effectual for, namely, as a sacrifice to atone for sin. So it must be the blood of the animal sacrifice offered by Abel that is spoken of.

Some have held that Christ's own blood is preserved, incorruptible, in heaven. This is an interesting but difficult question. Christ's blood was shed at the crucifixion. His body did not see corruption (Acts 13:37). The blood is the most important part of the human body, for the life is in the blood. Our Lord's resurrection body seems to have been bloodless (Luke 24:39; John 20:27). Alford says: ". . . the words imply that the marks were no SCARS, but THE VERITABLE WOUNDS THEMSELVES; — that in His side being large enough for a hand to be thrust into it. This of itself would show that the resurrection body was BLOODLESS". If His resurrection body was bloodless, and His shed blood saw no corruption, we face the question, What happened to it, and where is it today? Bengel affirms that the Lord's blood remains, as it was poured out, before God in heaven, incorruptible, an eternal testimony to the finished work of atonement. While this is an interesting idea, the matter is one of speculation, for Scripture is silent on the subject.

12:25-29 follows with a practical application of the foregoing. The readers are exhorted not to refuse Him that speaketh; the argument is from Israel's case at Sinai to that of the New Testament believer. If the Israelites at Sinai could not refuse God's Word without coming under judgment, much less can the readers of the Epistle, with their far greater privileges and opportunities.

12:26 is quoted from Haggai 2:6 and is of an eschatological character (concerning the end of the world): "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven", referring to the great cataclysmic upheaval which shall bring about the end of all things temporary, as well as of all things that are sinful and against God, and shall be followed by the eternal order of things. This will be at the second coming of Christ. Nothing of the present order can last over into the future (eternal) order, except such things as "cannot be shaken", that is, those things established in God, and written in His book in heaven.

12:28 speaks of the kingdom of grace which cannot be shaken. The world to come will be characterized by stability and permanence, freedom from the change and decay which surround

us in this present world. Receiving this unshakable kingdom of grace, the Christian has the greatest reason for gratitude to God — gratitude which is not a mere empty expression of words, but which issues in service to God with reverence and godly fear. "For our God is a consuming fire" — service to God is a serious matter, for God is the great and holy One, who is not mocked, and cannot be trifled with or deceived.

Questions:

1. Why is the Christian not to seek "peace at any price"?
2. What is the meaning of the expression "fail of the grace of God" (12:15)?
3. Why was Esau called a profane person?
4. What effect may one profane person have upon many other members of a church?
5. How do we know that the Mount Zion mentioned in 12:22 does not mean the earthly Mount Zion in Palestine?
6. Why is the Church called the "church of the firstborn" in 12:23?
7. What is meant by "the blood of sprinkling" (12:24)?
8. What is meant by the blood of Abel in 12:24?
9. Why does "the blood of sprinkling" speak "better things than that of Abel"?
10. What was Alford's opinion concerning the resurrection body of our Lord?
11. What did Bengel hold concerning the blood of Jesus which was shed at the crucifixion?
12. What great future event is mentioned in 12:26?
13. What will be the effect of that event on all that is merely temporary and all that is sinful?
14. What kind of a kingdom has the believer in Christ received?
15. Why and how should the Christian serve God (12:29)?

LESSON 21

EXHORTATIONS CONNECTED WITH CERTAIN PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN DUTIES. 13:1-25.

(A) Practical Exhortations. 13:1-17.

In the closing words of chapter 12 we read that the Christian should "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (12:28). But what does this involve? The believer's duty to serve God concerns not merely words but also deeds; not merely religious worship in the strict sense, but the whole range of human life as well. There-

fore 13:1-6 mentions a number of important matters which the Christian must not neglect, namely: (1) To maintain the spirit of love among Christian brethren. (2) To be hospitable toward strangers, that is, Christians away from their homes. (3) To remember those that are in bonds, that is, Christians suffering imprisonment or other persecution for their loyalty to Christ. (4) To be

separate from uncleanness. (5) To avoid the sin of covetousness. (6) In all things to trust the Lord. If a person lacks these things, or is neglectful of them, it makes no difference how pure his belief may be.

In 13:7-9 the believer is urged to follow those leaders who are or were (in their lifetime) loyal to the Lord, and not to be carried away by diverse and strange teachings. "The end of their conversation" (13:7) probably refers to the martyrdom of the persons spoken of. 13:8, those who had formerly been their leaders were now asleep, and other men had taken their places as their leaders in Christ, but there is one Leader who never changes, and that is Christ Himself. To all eternity He is and will be the great Head and Captain of the Church.

The "diverse and strange doctrines" of 13:9 in all probability were the traditions and regulations added to the Old Testament law by Jewish teachers; compare Col. 2:20-23. These teachings were NOT commandments of God and they were NOT of divine authority, but mere human inventions, and therefore valueless.

The "altar" of 13:10 is Christ Himself; compare John 6:53-56. The believer by the Lord's death has received eternal life; therefore the believer ought to follow the Lord. But whither? To the place of REJECTION BY MEN and to the PLACE OF SUFFERING. The Lord suffered 'without the gate', therefore the Christian ought to go to Christ without the camp, bearing His reproach. Those who receive eternal life from Christ must also confess Christ before men, and regard the REPROACH of Christ as greater riches than the treasures of this world. Moreover the believer is only a pilgrim on this earth, therefore to be rejected by the sinners of the world is not a calamity. 13:15,16 mentions the sacrifices which the Christian should offer. These are not sin-offerings, to atone for sin, but thank-offerings, to express gratitude to God. Two kinds are mentioned: (1) the fruit of lips which make confession to His name (ARV); To do good and communicate. In these two ways the Christian can express his love for God and for the people of God. 13:17, the Christian should, according to his own position, be in submission to the recognized leaders or officers of the Church, for they act on behalf of the Lord, and by His authority.

**(B) Concluding Remarks and Benediction.
13:18-25.**

Some have regarded 13:18,19 as an evidence that this Epistle was written by the apostle Paul, but this is unfounded. Others than Paul were providentially separated from churches to which they were deeply attached.

13:20,21, the benediction. The "everlasting covenant" which is mentioned is the New Cove-

nant established by Christ; it is called "everlasting" (or "eternal", ARV), because it will continue without termination to all eternity, being in this respect distinguished from the old or Sinaitic covenant, which was only temporary. From verse 21 we learn that all good works ever done by Christians, proceed only from God's grace working within them, and all are done only through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The plea of 13:22, "I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation", is one which is much needed in the modern Church. There are too many at the present day who are not willing to listen to, or to submit to, any word of exhortation which is according to the truth of God's Word. The need of the hour is not for a more popular type of message, but for a message that rings true to the inspired Word of God, and for a Church that will patiently hear and heed such a message.

The statement "Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy", which appears at the close of the Epistle in the King James Version, is not part of the inspired text of the Epistle, and is not found in the most reliable Greek manuscripts.

Questions:

1. What practical ways of serving the Lord are mentioned in 13:1-6?
2. What is the probable meaning of the expression "the end of their conversation" (13:7)?
3. What great truth concerning Jesus Christ is implied in the statement that He is the same yesterday, today and for ever?
4. What were the "diverse and strange doctrines" of 13:9, and what should be the Christian's attitude toward such teachings?
5. What is the altar mentioned in 13:10?
6. Whither should the Christian follow Christ?
7. What two kinds of sacrifices should the Christian offer to God?
8. Why should Christian people be in submission to the lawful officers of their church?
9. What is the "everlasting covenant" mentioned in 13:20, and why is it called "everlasting"?
10. What truth about the good works of Christians is stated in 13:21?
11. How can the words of 13:22 be applied to the Church of our own day?
12. Why does the postscript "Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy" not shed any light on the question of where the Epistle was written?

THE END OF THE AGES

A Study of Scripture Truth Concerning the Last Things

Note: The material presented in the following series of lessons was first published in booklet form in China in 1935, with a second edition, revised and enlarged, in 1936. The booklet has now been out of print for several years, and the author

has been unable to supply copies to those who, from time to time, have requested them. In view of continued requests for copies of this material, it is published here in a revised form.—J.G.V.

LESSON I

CHRIST'S TWO COMINGS

The Word of God speaks of two comings of the Lord Jesus Christ to this world. He came once to suffer; he will come again to judge. His first coming took place nearly two thousand years ago: it is history. His second coming will take place at a time in the future unknown to men: it will be the final fulfilment of prophecy. We, who live in the interval between the two comings, look backward to the historical coming and forward to the final coming.

The Old Testament was written before the first coming of Christ; from its standpoint both the first and second coming were still far in the future. For this reason the Old Testament does not distinguish very clearly in its prophecies between the two comings of Christ. As we might look at a distant mountain range, and see the range clearly, but not distinguish clearly between two individual peaks, so the Old Testament predicts the coming of the Messiah, sometimes speaking of things which we, of the New Testament period, know pertain to his first coming, and sometimes of things which we now know pertain to his second coming. Actually approaching the mountain range, we might pass one peak, leaving it behind us, while still looking forward to the next great mountain peak. Christ's two comings are two great mountain peaks in divine revelation and in God's plan of redemption. The Old Testament looks forward to both. In Isaiah 61:1-3 occurs this prophecy of the coming of the Messiah: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." Now turn to Luke 4:16-21. Our Saviour opened the book of the prophet Isaiah, found the place above quoted, and read as far as the words **To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord**. Then he closed the book and said **Today hath this scripture been**

fulfilled in your ears. Why did he stop reading at that point? Because up to that point only it was a prophecy of his first coming, fulfilled that day in their ears. **The acceptable year of the Lord or the year of Jehovah's favor** was the time of Christ's first coming. The next phrase, **the day of vengeance of our God**, refers to the time of his second coming, specifically to the judgment. In Isaiah there is only a comma between the two, but in the actual fulfilment there is a period of at least 1900 years, the entire interval between the two comings.

The following are some Old Testament references to prophecies of the coming of Christ:

Already fulfilled in the first coming:

Psalm 22:1-21; Isaiah 7:14; 53:1-12; Micah 5:2.

Still to be fulfilled in the second coming:

Isaiah 11:1-10; Daniel 7:13-14; Malachi 4:1-3.

Relating equally to both comings:

Genesis 3:15; Psalm 2 (Cf. Acts 4:25ff.); Isaiah 9:1-7; 42:1-4.

Questions:

1. Of how many comings of Christ to this world does the Bible speak?
2. Why does the Old Testament not distinguish very clearly between the first and second comings of Christ?
3. Why can we who live in the New Testament period distinguish, in reading the Old Testament, between predictions of Christ's first coming and predictions of His second coming?
4. At what point did Jesus stop in reading Isaiah 61:1-3, and why did he stop at that particular point?
5. Name some old Testament prophecies of Christ's first coming.
6. Name some Old Testament prophecies of Christ's second coming.
7. Name some Old Testament prophecies that concern Christ's coming without distinction between His first coming and His second coming.
8. What was the purpose of Christ's first coming?
9. What will be the purpose of His second coming?

LESSON II

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING SURE, PERSONAL, VISIBLE

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven". Acts 1:11.

His coming is sure: "This same Jesus. . . SHALL. . . COME."

His coming is personal: "THIS SAME JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall . . . come."

His coming is visible: "Shall so come IN LIKE MANNER AS YE HAVE SEEN him go into heaven."

There is a mighty testimony in the Scriptures to the sure, personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unbelieving historical critics of the New Testament have been forced to admit that Jesus predicted his own coming on the clouds of heaven, while holding that he was sadly mistaken about the matter. Modernistic theology in general "spiritualizes" the prophecies of the second coming into the thin air of the vague hope of a new social order in the world and the final victory of righteousness over evil. The following excerpt from *The Christian Century*, January 9, 1935, page 53, is an example of this:

"The New Testament is full of the expectation of an early return of the Lord in power. That return did not take place in the manner expected. It has never taken place, although every generation has witnessed explicit and convinced predictions that it was about to transpire. There is no reason to believe that it will ever take place in the vivid and spectacular manner in which literalists and millenarians have insisted. Such a view is simply unconvincing in the light of the total teachings of history and the experience of the centuries.

"The reality of the 'coming of the Lord' is not in question. It is one of the certainties of the gospel disclosure. It is not a momentary episode, but a continuous experience. The Master is coming in individual life, in social transformation, in industrial and commercial response to his ideals, in national and international relations. The Lord is coming in and new revelations of his grace and his redemptive power in the church. He is coming as surely and as rapidly as we give him place in our lives and our institutions. This is the kind of 'parousia' which meets all the needs of a troubled and anxious world. Why storm the heavens for the coming of a Lord who is already here, if we but have the intelligence and the vision to perceive him at work in the thousand activities of the kingdom of God?"

This is not explaining the teachings of the Bible, but explaining them away. The modernist, having no faith in the Scriptures as the inspired word of God, feels free to take liberties with their contents, even to the extent of making plain statements mean something quite different from their grammatical, historical and altogether obvious meaning. But let the word of God speak to refute the Christian Century:

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:3-8). "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Which is right, the Christian Century or the Lord Jesus Christ? To those to whom the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, there can be no doubt about the absolute certainty of the Lord's personal and visible return to this earth from which He ascended nineteen centuries ago.

Again and again in Scripture, Christ's second coming is associated with the clouds of heaven, that is, of the sky. This idea occurs first in Daniel 7:13,14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Note that here Daniel saw in a vision the Son of Man (that is, the Messiah), coming with the clouds of heaven.

In Matt. 24:30 we have our Lord's own prophecy of His coming on the clouds: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Again, before the Sanhedrin He testified (Matt. 26:64): "I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." In Rev. 1:7 the

clouds are again associated with His coming, and the visibility of the event is strongly emphasized: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Twice during the life of Jesus Christ on earth the clouds of heaven are associated with the revelation of His supernatural power and glory. First, at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8), where we read (verse 5): "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Then at the Ascension (Acts 1:6-11) we read (verse 9): "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

These references to clouds, and especially those of the Transfiguration and the Ascension, of course involve more than natural clouds. These clouds are of a supernatural character, and have a special meaning. A study of the subject in the Bible leads to the conclusion that the meaning of clouds, as at the Transfiguration and the Ascension, is the revelation and at the same time the concealment, of deity. The clouds indicated the presence of God Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity, as well as the First and Third Persons of the Trinity, and at the same time the clouds concealed the divine glory from the eyes of men.

When the Old Testament tabernacle was erected, a cloud indicated the presence of God and his glory (Ex. 40:34-35). At the dedication of the temple by Solomon, God's presence and glory was again shown by a cloud (1 Kings 8:10-11). The cloud of glory, or Shekinah, in the tabernacle and temple was a manifestation of God's special presence among his people in the place where blood sacrifices were offered for sins. Jesus Christ is Immanuel, God-with-us, for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9), and so he is the fulfilment of all that the temple and the tabernacle foreshadowed. During our Lord's earthly life, his estate of hu-

miliation, his divine glory was largely hidden from human eyes, but it shone forth at his Transfiguration; and at the Ascension the cloud appeared to indicate that this person was none other than the Lord of glory come from heaven to earth and ascending into heaven again. So when it is prophesied that Christ shall come again with the clouds of heaven, it means that his coming will be supernatural, visible and glorious.

"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). How did He go into heaven? "He was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). How will He come again? "Behold, he cometh with clouds" (Rev. 1:7). Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Jesus Christ shall not pass away. He is coming, surely, personally, visibly.

Questions:

1. What verse of the Bible teaches with special clearness that the second coming of Christ is sure, personal and visible?
2. What view of the second coming of Christ is held by modernists, as exemplified by the Christian Century?
3. What portion of Scripture gives a specially fitting answer to the view of the Christian Century?
4. In what book and chapter of the Bible is Christ's coming first associated with clouds?
5. On what two occasions during the earthly life of Jesus Christ were clouds associated with the manifestation of His divine glory?
6. What is the significance of the clouds which appeared on these two occasions?
7. Where in the Old Testament was a supernatural cloud associated with the glory of God?
8. What is the importance of maintaining faith in a personal and visible second coming of Christ to this earth?

LESSON III

THE CHRISTIAN'S BLESSED HOPE

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). "Set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13, ARV). "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

That the first of the above-cited texts of Scripture refers to Christ's second, final coming, and not to any merely spiritual coming during this present age, is shown by the use of the word "glorious". It is His coming IN GLORY that is spoken of: when He comes, it will be with the glory of the great God. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. 25:31). The coming IN HIS GLORY is the final, visible coming with the clouds of

heaven. This appearing of Jesus Christ is declared in Scripture to be the Christian's blessed hope. While we are not to stand idly looking into heaven as the disciples did after the Lord's ascension, yet we are to set our hopes definitely on **A FUTURE EVENT**, and that event can only be the appearance in glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

At the time of the birth of Jesus, "there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him" (Luke 2:25). The Holy Spirit led this Old Testament believer to set his heart on a future event in God's redemptive program, namely, "the consolation of Israel", meaning the appearance of the Messiah. He lived to witness what we now know was the first coming of Christ. The aged prophetess Anna on seeing the baby Jesus "gave thanks . . . unto the Lord, and spake of him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem (for the redemption of Jerusalem, ARV)" (Luke 2:38), that is, to all that looked forward to the appearance of the Messiah.

Because such persons as Simeon and Anna were waiting for the Lord's Anointed to appear in fulfilment of prophecy, they were the most godly and spiritual of the Jews in the time of Christ's first coming. We of the New Testament dispensation look back into history nineteen hundred years to the first coming of Christ and believe on him who **died for our sins according to the scriptures** (1 Cor. 15:3): that is faith. We also look forward to his glorious second coming: that is hope.

Christians suffer a great deal of heartbreak, discouragement and disillusionment when they set their hope on the wrong thing. Some have thought that by evangelism and missions the whole world would be converted to Christ, and are discouraged because the fruits of missionary effort are so pitifully meager in comparison with the vast natural increase of the world's population. Others have hoped for a warless world in the present age, and are disillusioned by seeing treaties and peace pacts torn to shreds while the nations arm for conflict as never before. Others have thought that education and democracy would result in a better world, only to see democracy displaced by dictatorship in nation after nation, and tyranny usurp the place of freedom

in many lands until the state claims ownership of men, soul and body. Still others have had visions of a new social order and the reign of righteousness on earth in the present age, only to see the old social order growing worse and worse before their eyes while iniquity bounds on every hand. It is the duty of Christians to witness against sin of every kind, personal and social, and to preach the Gospel to every creature; but the Christian's blessed hope is something quite different from the results of any of these activities. It is that complete redemption which shall come with the appearance in glory of our Saviour Jesus Christ. He has told us that when we see certain things begin to happen, we are to **look up and lift up our heads because our redemption draweth nigh**. Plainly the Christian's hope is to be centered on one definite future event, the Lord's coming. As we see in the world about us the signs prophesied as preceding that event, we are to realize that the time of God's next great redemptive act is approaching, and receiving from this realization new strength and courage we are to look forward in eager expectation to his appearing, saying with the beloved disciple, **Amen: come, Lord Jesus!**

Questions:

1. What event is called in the Bible "that blessed hope"?
2. What is the significance of the words "glory" or "glorious" in connection with predictions of Christ's coming?
3. On what future event in God's redemptive program had Simeon and Anna set their hearts?
4. Why were persons such as Simeon and Anna the most godly and spiritual of the Jews of their time?
5. What causes Christians a great deal of heartbreak and disillusionment?
6. Why is it wrong for Christians to make events within the present age the object of their ultimate religious hope?
7. What was the apostle John's attitude toward the second coming of Christ?
8. Show from the Bible that the Christian's hope is to be centered on the second coming of Christ.

LESSON IV

THE TIME OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING UNKNOWN TO MEN

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only . . . Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:36, 42, 44).

That these texts do not refer to any purely spiritual coming or comings of Christ during the present age is shown by the context, verse 30, which speaks of the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and verse 31, which speaks of sending forth the angels

with a great sound of a trumpet to gather the elect from one end of heaven to the other. These are events which take place once only, at the end of this age, and the coming of Christ spoken of is therefore his second coming in glory.

Note that the time of the second coming is unknown to men, for it has not been revealed by the Father. Therefore all attempts to set a date for the second coming are futile and unscriptural. **Of that day and hour knoweth no man.**

While it is impossible to set a date for the Lord's return, it is possible to know whether or not that event is drawing near. "So likewise ye, when ye see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24:33). As will be shown in the next chapter, certain signs have been prophesied as preceding the Lord's return, and the appearance of all of these signs will show Christian people that His return is near.

Our ignorance of the time of his second coming is urged by Christ as a reason for watchfulness. Since we cannot know the day and hour, we are to be always ready and watchful. The closing words of the Westminster Confession of Faith express the matter with force and clearness: **"As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater con-**

solation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared so say, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen." (Chapter 33 Section 3).

Not only is the time of the Lord's coming unknown to men, but it will be a time when Christians generally do not expect His coming: "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44). Many Christians if asked: "Do you believe the Lord's return is near?" would reply: "I do not believe so" or "I think not". But He is coming at a time when we think not. We have no right to assert positively that the Lord's coming is not near, any more than we have to try to set a date for that event. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Luke 21:34,35). The Lord's return will come suddenly as a snare upon the world, and unspiritual Christians may be involved in this sudden astonishment because their minds are filled with earthly things. The Lord's word to all His people is: **"THEREFORE BE YE ALSO READY"** (Matt. 24:44).

LESSON V

THE SIGNS PRECEDING THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors (ARV, that he is nigh, even at the doors)" (Matt. 24:32,33).

We learn of the signs preceding the second coming of Christ from the discourse on the Last Things in Matthew 24 together with the parallel passages in Mark 13 and Luke 21. The signs may be divided into three groups, as follows: (1) Those which remotely precede the second coming, and may therefore be said to characterize nearly the whole period between the first and second comings. These are: 1. Appearance of false Christs. 2. Wars and rumors of wars. 3. Famines. 4. Earthquakes. 5. Pestilences (Luke 21:11). Concerning these signs the Lord, said **The end is not yet** (Matt. 24:6) and all these are the beginning of sorrows (Matt. 24:8).

(2) Those which more nearly precede the second coming, and may therefore be said to characterize the latter part of the period between the first and second comings. These are: 1. Persecution and slaughter of Christians. 2. Christians hated by all nations. 3. Stumbling, treachery and hatred among professing Christians (Matt. 24:10).

4. Rise of false prophets leading many astray. 5. Multiplication of iniquity. 6. The love of the many shall wax cold. 7. The Gospel preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations. Concerning these signs the Lord's word is: **And then shall the end come** (Matt. 24:14).

(3) Those which immediately precede the second coming, or are nearly contemporaneous with that event. These are: 1. The appearance of the Antichrist or abomination of desolation. 2. A short time of fearful tribulation. 3. Appearance of false Christs and false prophets, working miracles, who claim that the second coming has already taken place. 4. Darkening of sun and moon, stars falling, the powers of the heavens shaken. 5. Appearance of the sign of the Son of man in heaven. After predicting these signs the Lord said: **And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory** (Matt. 24:30).

It should be noted that the disciples asked Jesus three questions (Matt. 24:3): 1. When shall these things (the destruction of Jerusalem) be? 2. What shall be the sign of thy coming? 3. What shall be the sign of the end of the world (or age)? It is plain that the disciples associated these three

things in their thinking, and as their question was a triple one, Jesus' answer must be understood as dealing with all three of these matters. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in A. D. 70. The second coming and the end of the age have not yet taken place. We now know, what the disciples at that time did not know, that the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ would be separated by many centuries. It is probable that Matthew 24:15-22 is a prophecy of events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, but as prophecy may have a multiple fulfilment, there may be a wider and more complete fulfilment of this prophecy still future.

A widely held interpretation holds that the predictions of Matthew 24, or at least the first 35 verses of the chapter, are limited, as to their fulfilment, to events which took place at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. Those who wish to study a detailed exposition of the passage along that line are referred to a recent publication entitled "Matthew Twenty-four: an Exposition", by J. Marcellus Kik (Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa., 1948, pp. 97, \$1.50). This book is reviewed in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, May, 1949, pages 164-167; and in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, Oct.-Dec., 1949, pages 182, 183. Mr. Kik holds that verse 34 is the key verse of Matthew 24: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled". His interpretation is that all in the chapter that precedes this statement of Jesus refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70, while the portion of the chapter that follows verse 34 refers to the second coming of Christ and the end of the world.

The Rev. Arthur W. Kushke, Jr., in reviewing Mr. Kik's volume in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, agrees with Mr. Kik that the word "generation" in Matt. 24:34 must be taken in its natural sense as referring to "that generation of men living at the time of our Lord", but he points out that the real question concerns the meaning of the word "fulfilled" (the Greek verb is *ginomai*), and he points out that according to Thayer's *Lexicon*, this Greek verb does not necessarily mean "to be finished" but may also mean "to begin to be". Mr. Kushke holds — rightly, we believe — that "there can be reference both to the destruction of Jerusalem and to the Second Coming in the very same verses." He cites Joseph Addison Alexander's comment on the parallel passage Mark 13:30, as follows: "the meaning of the verse before us then will be, that the contemporary generation should not wholly pass away without beholding one great cycle of fulfilment, i.e. without seeing this prophetic picture realized, as to all its essential parts, in one specific instance, although not exhausted of its whole prophetic import, which is yet to be developed in

a course of ages" (*The Gospel According to Mark*, N.Y., 1858, p. 363).

There is good reason for holding that the above criticism of the view which would limit Matt. 24:1-34 to the destruction of Jerusalem is a valid criticism. We believe that some parts of that section may refer PRIMARILY to the destruction of Jerusalem, while other parts may refer PRIMARILY to the second coming of Christ. Yet we have a right to hold that the prophecy throughout deals BOTH with the destruction of Jerusalem AND with the second coming of Christ, because there is an organic connection between the two events. The one is a type, the other its antitype or complete realization. That is to say, the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was a true fulfilment of Matt. 24 and a true instance of the coming of Christ and the judgment of God upon sin, ON THE TYPICAL PLANE, while the prophecies of Matt. 24 will be not only truly fulfilled, but actually EXHAUSTED, by the second coming of Christ and associated events, at the end of this age.

Our study of the signs preceding the second coming of Christ will be continued in the next lesson of this series, in our next issue.

Questions:

1. Where in the Gospels do we find the great discourse of Jesus which concerns the signs preceding His second coming?
2. How may the various predicted signs be grouped or classified?
3. What three-fold question was asked of Jesus by His disciples?
4. What is the bearing of the triple character of their question on the interpretation of Jesus' discourse which followed?
5. What can be said for and against the interpretation which holds that the prophecies of Matt. 24:1-34 are limited to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans?
6. How should the word "generation" in Matt. 24:34 be understood?
7. What possible meanings does the Greek word translated "fulfilled" in Matt. 24:34 have?
8. What was Joseph Addison Alexander's interpretation of Mark 13:30, and what bearing does it have on the interpretation of Matt. 24?
9. Why can the same verses refer both to the destruction of Jerusalem and also to the second coming of Christ?

Note: This series of lessons on "The End of the Ages" will be continued in the next issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life".

The Sixty-Ninth Psalm

ONE VOICE OF PRAYER FROM THE DEPTHS; A VAST CHORUS OF PRAISE IN THE HEIGHTS

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

Part I

THE PRAYER OF A POOR RIGHTEOUS MAN IN DISTRESS (Verses 1-29)

1. When He had Come Among Those Who Hate Him (Verses 1-12)

2. When Those Who Hate Him Are Closing In To Do Their Worst (Verses 14-21)

(Continued from last issue)

Repeating his cry for deliverance from the angry flood of "those who hate me", he pleads,

" . . . Answer me, O Jehovah, for thy loving kindness is good: According to the multitude of thy tender mercies turn thou unto me. And hide not thy face from thy servant; For I am in distress; O answer me speedily!" (verses 14-17).

Resting on omnipotent grace and faithfulness, the servant is sure of the answer, but prays that it may come **speedily**, for he has reached the limits of human strength and endurance. His enemies are cruel, implacable, and relentless; they are doing their utmost to destroy him. There is nothing now that can frustrate their purpose but the one power that is greater than theirs. His hope is in Jehovah alone.

"Draw near to my soul, redeem it; Because of mine enemies ransom me" (verse 18).

Thus he claims Jehovah's covenant promise when His people cried to Him out of the bitterness of their afflictions in Egypt, "I will **redeem** you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments" (Ex. 6:6). He **ransomed** them by destruction of the power of their enemies.

In support of his claim, the servant appeals, as in verse 5, to the omniscience of Jehovah. "THOU THYSELF knowest my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor:" (that it is without cause): "In thy sight are all mine adversaries." (Thou seest they are mine adversaries). (Verse 19).

"Reproach hath broken my heart: I am sick unto death. I had hoped for sympathy, but there is none; And for comforters but have found none" (verse 20).

"Then saith he unto the disciples, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me." "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." "And he cometh to the disciples and findeth them sleeping, and saith, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

"They even put gall in that which was to sustain me; — And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (verse 21).

In the fulfilment of this prophecy, between the two clauses of this verse, there occurred THE CRUCIFIXION. "And when they were come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, the place of a skull, they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it he would not drink" (Matt. 27:33,34. "And there they crucified him" (Luke 23:33).

"In connection with this, Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the Scriptures might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit" (John 19:28-20).

His receiving the vinegar from His tormentors was the last detail of prophecy concerning Jesus Christ to be fulfilled before HIS DEATH, which therefore now followed immediately.

Between verses 21 and 22 there is a sudden, wide break in the thought and literary form of this prophecy. Nothing short of the New Testament record of fulfilment could possibly bridge this gap, a fulfilment far beyond the conception of any merely human author or reader, until it became a matter of history.

We remember that, in His last public discourse, Jesus warned the Jews, "NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS WORLD". "And when the sixth hour was come there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour." Darkness at noon was a portent of divine judgment which no man could be aware of without trembling. Then an earthquake rent the rocks and added further warning still more terrifying.

"And the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, (particularly the loud, strong cry of Jesus to his God), feared exceedingly, saying, TRULY THIS MAN WAS SON OF GOD".

3. When, in Sorest Grief, He Leaves Them to the Judicial Consequences of Their Hate (Verses 22-29).

That the prophecy continues is proven by the fulfilments noted in the New Testament. That the prayer continues is evident from the repeated forms of direct address to God. They have killed His body, but, "after that have no more that they can do". His soul continues in communion with God, uninterruptedly, but it is of judgment that He must now speak.

"Let their table before them be for a snare: And let that which is for their welfare be for a trap. Let their eyes be darkened that they cannot see: And make their loins continually to shake" (verses 22,23).

Rom. 11:9,10 quotes these two verses as fulfilled in the incurable hardening of Israel in consequence of their rejection of Christ. When men find fault with God, they misuse His providence, so that even the best things of life become a curse. When men will not see, it soon follows that they cannot see. When they boast themselves against God, they become as "men shivering for fear and expectation of the things that are coming upon the world."

"Pour out upon them thy wrath, And let the fierceness of thine anger overtake them" (verse 24).

Which came to pass, in the case of Israel, when "the wrath was come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. 2:16); when, in the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman army, A.D. 70, they did more to destroy themselves and their city than their enemies. As Jesus said, "There shall be great violence upon the earth and wrath unto this people" (Luke 21:23). "Then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21).

"Let their habitation be desolate; In their tents let there be no dwellers" (verse 25).

Burdened with infinite sorrow, Jesus repeated this prophecy to the Jews on more than one occasion, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. **Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!** (Matt. 23:37,38). "And when he drew near, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, . . . and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:41-44).

Peter quoted this prophecy (Acts 1:16-20) as that which "the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas." For God's judgments, as well as His mercies, have to do, primarily, with individuals.

"For him whom THOU THYSELF hast smitten they persecute; And to the sore grief of thy wounded ones they scoff" (verse 26).

"Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." For, "It pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." "And we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." "He was wounded for our transgressions." "They talked to the grief of the Lord Jesus, when He was on the cross, saying, 'He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him', than which nothing could be said more grieving" (Matthew Henry). Their attitude to the servant of God reveals their attitude to God Himself. Their judgment is determined accordingly.

"Give them up to iniquity unto their iniquity. And let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And with the righteous let them not be written" (verses 27,28).

For such is their own choice. The Hebrew word here translated, "Give them up", was rendered in the ancient Greek version of the Old Testament in no less than 143 places, by the verb which Paul uses in Rom. 1:24,26,28 to describe God's **judicial abandonment** of those who reject His every word of command, of mercy, and of truth. "God gave them over." They are of wholly reprobate mind. Their heart is fully set in them to do evil, in deliberate defiance of God, and knowledge, and conscience. They spurned the offer of life. They hate the righteous.

"But, as for myself, I am in low estate, and grieving sore" (verse 29).

Here is the "Man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief." He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He has done everything possible to prevent it. He finds no assuaging of his grief in the destruction of his enemies. He bears no personal resentment. He desires no personal revenge. He is concerned only that the reproaches of them that reproach God be stopped; that the name of God be glorified; that the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven. There is not the least ground any where in this Psalm for calling his prayer "cursing", or "imprecatory", in the common usage of these terms. There is not the slightest excuse for sinful men to read into it their own selfish pride and seeking for revenge.

Having now finished the work given Him to do on earth, the Servant of God asks for the reward of the covenant promise,

"Let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high."

Having expressed (in verses 22-29) His full agreement with the decree of God (Gen. 3:15), and hence also His readiness to execute it, the Son of God asks that He be given this position assigned Him for that purpose. See Psalm 2:2-9. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. . . and hath

given him authority to execute judgment, because he is Son of Man" (John 5:22,27).

Here again, between verses 29 and 30, there is a sharp break in the structure of this Psalm. And, again, it is the record of fulfilment in the New Testament, the record of THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST, that enables us to bridge the gap.

The answer of God has come. "Behold my

servant shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high" (Isa. 52:13). "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:8-11). "God raised him from the dead. . . even as it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Acts 13:30-33).

Part II

HIS SONG OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING BECOMES THE SONG OF A GREAT MULTITUDE

"I will praise the name of God with song, And will magnify him with thanksgiving. And it will please Jehovah better than an ox, a bullock with horns, with divided hoofs. The meek have seen it; they rejoice. Ye that seek for God, let your heart live! For Jehovah always hears the needy. And his prisoners he hath not despised. Heaven and earth shall praise him, Seas and everything that moveth in them. For God shall save Zion, and build the cities of Judah; And they shall abide there, and have it in possession. The seed also of his servants shall inherit it; And they that love his name shall dwell therein" (verses 30-36).

The sacrifice is finished, and is accepted. The song of God begins! This is the song that gives full, glad, unfettered expression to the spirit of obedience, of thanksgiving and praise that was embodied in the ONE REAL SACRIFICE.

There is here no disparagement of the typical sacrifice as God appointed it — an ox, or bullock, with horns (i.e., mature), with divided hoofs (i.e., clean), the most valuable of the sacrificial animals. God had often shown His pleasure in sacrifice offered after His ordinance, chiefly, of course, because of the faith and obedience of the offerer. But now the offering and sacrifice to God is of a sweet savor, even JESUS CHRIST in whom God is WELL PLEASED.

The answer of God included, with His Servant, all those united in Him by faith, having His Spirit; all those who, like Him, are "poor in spirit", and "mourn"; who are "the meek", who "seek for God", "the needy", "prisoners for His sake", "persecuted for righteousness' sake".

"Zion" stands for Jerusalem, the capital of Judah. "Judah" is the tribe out of which "it is evident that our Lord hath sprung", and therefore stands for all those related to Him by birth from above, wherever they may be. So heaven and earth and sea. — all that move in them — join in this song.

The Servant who "endured the cross, despising the shame" has now entered into the joy that was set before Him. His song is caught up by all who hear the voice of the Son of God and live. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed out of death into life" (John 5:24).

"These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

(Note: Mr. Frazer's series of studies in the Psalms will be continued in our next issue.—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 Non-millennialism a half-way station to Premillennialism?

Answer:

In the judgment of the editor this question must be answered in the negative. The term "Non-millennialism" or "Amillennialism" is perhaps misleading, in that it seems to classify a doctrine only negatively, that is, by naming what

it is not, rather than positively, by naming what it is. This negative emphasis may be unavoidable at the present day, since Millennialism (both "Pre" and "Post") has come to be widely held. The term is unfortunate, however, in that it may tend to give people the impression that Amillennialism is a reaction against Millennialism, or a newly-invented substitute for Millennialism. We would not call the orthodox doctrine of God "Non-Unitarianism", but "Trinitarianism"; we would not label our doctrine of salvation "Non-

sacerdotalism", but "Evangelicalism". However, the terms "Non-millennialism" and "Amillennialism" seem to be here to stay.

It seems that these terms themselves are not very old, from which fact some have inferred that the doctrine they stand for must also be something quite new. This, however, is a mistake. Dr. Louis Berkhof, in his "Systematic Theology" (p. 708), says that the view known as "Amillennialism" is as old as Christianity; that it had at least as many advocates as Premillennialism among the Church Fathers of the early centuries; that it has always been the most widely held view; that it is the only view that is expressed or implied in the great historic creeds and confessions of the Church; and that it has always been the prevalent belief in Reformed or Calvinistic circles. It is said that Dr. B. B. Warfield, himself a convinced Postmillennialist, frankly admitted that the Amillennial view of the Last Things has the best right to be called the historic Protestant view of the subject. The truth seems to be that the doctrine today called "Amillennialism" is quite ancient, but never had to have a special name for itself until the increasing prevalence of Millennial views made it necessary to coin a term to distinguish the Non-millennial view from the Millennial views of the Last Things.

Thus it would appear that what is today called Amillennialism is not merely a negative view, or a reaction against Millennialism, but a form of Christian doctrine which is at least as old as any form of Millennialism, and which must therefore stand or fall on its own merits (according as it can or cannot be shown to be Scriptural). Amillennialism is much more than negation of Millennialism; it has a rich positive content of its own.

Apparently the first form of Millennialism in the Church was Premillennialism, which came in from Jewish sources and had a strongly Jewish character, but was always a minority view among Christians and was always opposed by a view of the Last Things which did not believe in an earthly Millennium.

Apparently, too, Postmillennialism was first defined or advocated in a systematic way by Augustine of Hippo, about four hundred years after Christ. Augustine, however, did not hold it consistently, but apparently also wrote that he expected the END of the Millennium about 650 A.D. According to Dr. O. T. Allis ("Prophecy and the Church"), Postmillennialism was revived in the 18th century by Whitby (1707 A.D.). There is, however, evidence that John Bunyan preached a similar doctrine in the preceding century.

The present writer has not known of anyone moving from Postmillennialism to Premillennialism via Amillennialism, though of course there may have been cases of such a change of views.

But there are on record numerous cases of ardent Premillennialists after careful study coming to accept the Amillennial view — Philip Mauro, Arthur W. Pink, George B. Fletcher, for example. Some persons have become Amillennialists after coming to realize that Postmillennialism and Premillennialism are not mutually exhaustive of the field, that is, that these two views are not the only possible views of the subject. Somehow many Christians have gotten the notion that Premillennialism and Postmillennialism together exhaust the possibilities, and "If you aren't a Pre you're a Post". This, of course, is a gross error. Both Premillennialism and Postmillennialism are subordinate to the question: DOES THE BIBLE TEACH AN EARTHLY MILLENNIUM? (The term "Millennium" is derived from the Latin, and means a thousand year kingdom).

IF the Bible teaches an earthly Millennium, then of course we must decide between Premillennialism and Postmillennialism. But if the Bible does NOT teach an earthly Millennium, then Amillennialism is the truth, and Premillennialism and Postmillennialism are both wrong. The first question to be faced is, "Does the Bible teach an earthly Millennium?" Only if this is answered in the affirmative must we proceed to face the subordinate question, "Will this Millennium be before or after the Second Coming of Christ?" Many Christians who have never seriously studied the question of whether the Bible teaches an earthly Millennium, but have more or less taken for granted that it does, have adopted one of the Millennial views (Pre or Post, as the case may be) because they felt that they could not accept the other Millennial view (Pre or Post) as Biblical. The real crux of the question, which requires serious exegetical study, is whether the Bible teaches an earthly Millennium or not.— J.G.V.

Question:

Where in the Bible do we find grounds for insisting on the practice of family worship as a condition of membership in good standing in the Church? It is easy to point to the benefits of family worship but how can it be proved from the Bible that the practice is obligatory?

Answer:

Perhaps ministers in advocating the practice of family worship have sometimes placed too much stress on the benefits which result from it, and have not sufficiently emphasized the fact that it is a duty which God requires of Christian families. When the chief stress is placed on the anticipated benefits of family worship, people will tend to think that they can properly omit its observance sometimes for reasons of convenience or expediency. The true conception of Christian ethics involves doing what is right **because it is the revealed will of God**, that is, because it is

our duty. Considerations based on expected benefits must be regarded as strictly subordinate. Unfortunately much of the available literature on the subject of family worship places the chief emphasis on the probable benefits of the practice, rather than on the fact that it is a Christian duty.

Some things may be matters of Christian duty, which are not enjoined in any particular verse or verses of the Bible. Although not expressly commanded in particular texts, they are correctly derived by logical inference from known truths of the Bible. For example, when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper there were no women present, but only men. Nowhere in the Bible is there an express command for women believers to partake of the Lord's Supper. Yet no one would question the right and duty of women church members to partake of the Lord's Supper. This is derived by logical inference from known truths of the Bible, as follows: 1. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament committed by Christ to the Visible Church. 2. Those who are members of the Visible Church are to partake of the sacraments. 3. Therefore women who are members of the Visible Church should partake of the Lord's Supper.

Similarly, the obligation to practice family worship is derived by logical inference from known truths of the Bible, as follows: 1. The family is a divine institution (Gen. 2:23,24), and as such is a moral person with a responsibility to God. 2. The Christian family is a basic unit in God's administration of the Covenant of Grace (Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:39; Eph. 5:21 to 6:4; etc.). 3. Therefore Christian families are under obligation to practice family worship in order to acknowledge their responsibility, as families, to God, and to express their thanks to God, as families, for the benefits of the Covenant of Grace, and to seek His help, as families, in living up to their high calling and obligations under the Covenant of Grace.

The whole idea of "the Christian family", as well as the obligation of family worship, is involved in the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace. The duty to practice family worship is an ethical implication of the Covenant of Grace. Perhaps the reason that family worship has sometimes been neglected is that Christian people are not COVENANT-CONSCIOUS. The remedy is not more stress on the "value" of family worship, but a return to a real covenant-consciousness. Ministers should preach and teach the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, with its ethical implications, over and over again. It will require years and years of such preaching to correct the unscriptur-

al individualism which has infiltrated most denominations holding the Reformed Faith. For a treatment of the Covenant of Grace see the series of lessons entitled "The Covenant of Grace: Its Meaning and Its Implications for the Church, the Family and the Christian" in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 4 No. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1949), pages 152-180; Vol. 5 No. 1 (Jan.-Mar. 1950), pages 18-36; Vol. 5 No. 2 (April-June 1950), pages 64-79. The subject of "The Christian Family" is discussed in Lesson 8 of the series, Oct.-Dec. 1949, pages 166-168. — J.G.V.

Question:

What course should be recommended to one who has been divorced for some trivial reason, re-married to a spouse in a similar circumstance, and then has become a Christian? (Children were born to each union).

Answer:

An adequate answer to the question here raised, accompanied by exegesis of the relevant passages of Scripture, would require far more space than is available in this Question Box. It is the belief of the editor of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" that where the unscriptural divorce and subsequent re-marriage took place **while the person concerned was in the state of ignorance, that is, before he or she became a Christian**, Scriptural principles do not require the breaking up of the second marriage. This view of the matter is held by a number of Biblical scholars of undoubted orthodoxy and conservative tendency. Those who wish to examine the grounds on which this position is based are referred to the following publications. (1) "The Right and Wrong in Divorce and Remarriage", by William Evans, published by Zondervan Publishing House, 847 Ottawa Ave., N.W., Grand Rapids 2, Mich. Price 50c. (2) "Divorce", by John Murray, in "The Westminster Theological Journal", vol. IX, No. 1, pp. 31-46; No. 2, pp. 181-197; vol. X, No. 1, pp. 1-22; No. 2, pp. 168-192; vol. XI, No. 2, pp. 105-122; vol. XII, No. 1, pp. 30-52. Published by Westminster Theological Seminary, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia 18, Pa. Price for each issue, 50c.

Where the unscriptural divorce and subsequent re-marriage take place **AFTER** the person concerned has become a Christian, the situation would be different. In such a case the person obtaining the divorce and later remarrying would be liable to the censures of church discipline, both because of the unscriptural divorce and because of the re-marriage. For a full discussion of the matter, see the above-cited publications.—J.G.V.

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".

MODERN TOWER OF BABEL, by Carl McIntyre. Christian Beacon Press, Haddon & Frazer Aves., Collingswood, N. J. 1949, pp. xiii, 304. Cloth \$1.50; paper \$1.00.

There have been several critical analyses written of the World Council of Churches (formally constituted in Amsterdam, August 24 to September 4, 1948), but this is easily the best. It is clever, factual and devastating. It is clever in the way the author takes several of the leaders of the WCC at their own words. Before the Council convened, Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the WCC, had made this appeal on a coast-to-coast radio broadcast:

"This is what you should pray for: that the Babel of languages, of national viewpoints, of religious ideas, which Amsterdam will be on the human side, may become a Pentecost. . ."

Following the Amsterdam assembly Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr referred to Babel ("Christianity and Crisis", Oct. 4, 1948):

"Certainly the proceedings of the First Assembly sounded more like Babel than Pentecost."

Dr. Niebuhr went ahead to admit that the real confusion of tongues consisted not in the differences of language but in the differences of viewpoints.

This explains the title. With an abundance of quotations, and references, with the fruits of much research, the author documents his thesis that the WCC is in truth a MODERN tower of Babel.

Probably no man in America is more violently hated by his enemies nor more affectionately loved by his friends than Carl McIntyre. Fifty-two years ago James Stalker wrote:

"At the present time controversy has an evil name; the mere mention of it excites alarm; and the image of the controversialist, in most people's minds, is anything but an amiable or admired figure. He who is called in providence to undertake the function of controversy can reckon less than almost any other servant of Christ on the sympathy and appreciation of Christ's people; for even those who agree with his view of the truth will be sorry that he has allowed himself to enter the atmosphere of strife, and regret that he has not rested content with other kinds of work."

The author of "Modern Tower of Babel" is

an out-and-out controversialist. His book is polemic. For this reason it will offend not only the modernist and neo-orthodox, but many a timid brother who feels that nothing is worth fighting for.

"There are men today who like to honor and revere the name of Luther, but their Luther must not be the one who called down invectives upon the Pope or the one who burned his papal bull when the Pope excommunicated him. They want to honor the name of John Knox, but their John Knox must not be the one who defied the Queen. Had he been only 'positive' in his message, he would have won the victory without disrupting the nation. And so the conflict continues. There will always be an Erasmus on hand. This situation ought not discourage those who see the issues and are willing to stand in the struggle for them. Wherever any issue is drawn, there are always those who try to compromise" (p. 284).

This reviewer believes that the author of "Modern Tower of Babel" is fighting a good fight. Ernest Gordon has said, "Carl McIntyre stands out like a lightning rod, willing to draw down upon himself all the vitriolic abuse that the modernists can heap upon him that the 'faith which was once delivered unto the saints' might be defended."

The author's enemies (and who has more!) are quick to criticize his "spirit" or his "methods", but seldom have they disproved his facts. As one who studied law before entering the ministry this is his strongpoint. His charges against the modernists are carefully documented, often using their own words.

The author devotes five of the twenty-one chapters to showing the inadequacy of the WCC's concept of the character of Christ, of the Bible, of the nature of the Church, of society, and of the Reformation. Another five chapters are devoted to an appraisal of some of the brilliant and able men who hold places of prominence in the WCC. A host of these are "liberals" who are committed to a theology and philosophy which are definitely anti-Christian in the Biblical sense. Others are avowed enemies of Protestantism and many of the basic principles for which it stands.

"There are Bible believers in the World Council of Churches, but — this is a most significant point — they are accepting the inclusivist church and are willing to be members of an in-

clusivist council. . . A man who believes the Bible and who is willing to work with unbelievers in the fellowship of a church or church council has to answer to his Lord. He is setting a wrong example for other believers, as well as depriving himself of great blessing and freedom" (p. 91).

The reader need not agree with all that the author has written (for example, his opinion of the National Association of Evangelicals) to appreciate this exhaustive study of Amsterdam and the WCC. The book is carefully indexed, including an index of Scripture references. — Robert W. McMillan.

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE, by Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, with Introduction by Cornelius Van Til. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1948, pp. vii, 442. \$3.75.

This volume may be described as a republication of ten of the twelve articles of a compilation of Dr. Warfield's writings on the subject, published in 1927, six years after his death, by the Oxford University Press, American Branch, under the title, "Revelation and Inspiration", now out of print.

The present editor, Dr. Samuel G. Craig, has made a few changes of caption and arrangement; has substituted a condensation, by Dr. Warfield himself, of the article, "'Scripture', 'The Scriptures' in the New Testament"; and has added a timely Introduction by Professor Cornelius Van Til of the Westminster Theological Seminary of Philadelphia. A good index to the volume would add much to its usefulness.

The first article, "The Biblical Idea of Revelation", sets forth the nature, process, and different modes of God's revelation of Himself and His will for men. Two species, or stages of revelation are distinguished, general and special, natural and supernatural, or natural and redemptive. The history of redemptive revelation was committed to writing as "the Word of Jehovah".

Then that particular mode of revelation, technically called "Inspiration" and which, in another place, Dr. Warfield calls "the culminating category of special revelation", is taken up for intensive study. The second article offers "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration" as a starting point for the seeker after the truth. This doctrine, held by the church from its beginning to the present, is to the effect that the Bible is "the word of God in such a sense that whatever it says, God says, — not a book in which one may, by searching, find some word of God, but a book which may frankly be appealed to at any point with the assurance that whatever it may be found to say, that is the Word of God" (p. 106). The church derived this doctrine from the Bible itself.

The third article presents "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration", arrived at by a judicious exposition of the Bible's own statements. Inspiration is defined to be "the action of the Spirit of God in so 'bearing' its human authors in their work of producing Scripture, as that in these Scriptures they speak, not out of themselves, but 'from God'. It is this act by virtue of which the Scriptures may properly be called 'God-breathed'" (p. 161). And it is this act that guarantees the trustworthiness and authority of the Bible.

The fourth article confronts us with "The Real Problem of Inspiration" raised by the attacks of modern destructive criticism. The crucial question is, "What does an exact and scientific exegesis determine to be the Biblical doctrine of Inspiration?" Accordingly the next four articles are thoroughgoing exegetical studies of some additional words and phrases of Scripture which clarify and confirm its explicit claim, and establish the Reformed (Calvinistic) doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible.

In an Appendix are placed an article on "The Formation of the Canon of the New Testament", and one on "Inspiration and Criticism", which assays the "assured results" of modern criticism and finds them valueless.

The Introduction by Dr. Van Til is a searching analysis of the present situation in the field of criticism, and a valuable contribution toward clarifying the main issue concerning which multitudes are confused, and consequently easily led astray. In addition to all the old claims of human autonomy, the modern theory of knowledge comes forward with the notion that "facts", for example, the facts of history and experience, are no longer to be taken as objective realities, independent of the interpretation that may be put upon them, but as subjective, dependent upon and inseparable from man's interpretation of them; in other words, all facts are relative to man as their central point of reference. Even "God" is merely what man takes Him to be. Hence the idea of an infallible revelation of truth is absurd.

Thus a sharp issue is raised, and "That issue may be stated simply and comprehensively by saying that in the Christian view of things it is the self-contained God who is the final point of reference, while in the case of the modern view it is the would-be self-contained man who is the final point of reference in all interpretation" (p. 18).

In further clarification of this issue, Lutheranism and Arminianism, but more especially Romanism and the so-called "New Orthodoxy" of Barth and Brunner, are examined, an shown to be holding positions of compromise.

For defenders of the Bible, the method of argument in this situation is the old method of preaching and teaching, (p. 38 f.) — clear, posi-

tive, unequivocal testimony to the sovereignty of the triune God in nature and in grace, and to the authority of the Bible as God's final redemptive word.

But no one can give effective testimony to something he does not know and understand. There is no better place to begin to understand real Christianity than with the doctrine of the infallible Bible, the Word of God, ably defended by Dr. Warfield in this book.

And no reader can afford to by-pass the Introduction. It is rather long, and not all easy reading for a young student unfamiliar with the philosophical dialect. But let such a one make extra use of his dictionary, and he will find good help here toward making his labor for the truth count in the all-out war that is on. The whole book is earnestly commended to all preachers and teachers of the Word, especially to the young-er students. — F. D. Frazer.

STEPS TO NEBO: BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, by J. A. Van Gorkom. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1950, pp. 137. \$1.50.

This book consists of a series of Bible studies of Old Testament characters. The title comes from the fourth chapter in the book, which is entitled: "Moses — Steps to Nebo". "Most of these studies were given over WMBI at the Moody Bible Institute" where the author was formerly a faculty member. In this book they are prepared as "Bible Studies for Young People". Each chapter is a study in itself. At the beginning of each chapter is an outline which gives the reader a clear cut preview of the contents of the study. The Scripture passages are given in the outline and also in the chapter itself at the beginning of each division. These Scripture verses should be read as one prepares to read that part of the chapter. If the book is read with this accompanied reading of the background passages, it will be a great aid in developing practical Bible study.

The author writes with a vivid living style. In these days when the Old Testament is discounted by so many, this book comes on the scene and meets that challenge by showing young people that the characters of the Old Testament met situations much like we meet today. Mr. Van Gorkom writes concerning one Bible person that we see "revealed certain traits of character". This is his way of presenting most of the characters in the book. Many are traits which a young person, or any of us, might not readily see, but which when pointed out to us are very easily discerned.

Although the book is prepared especially for young people's classes or study groups, it might well be a book for every home where there are young people. In Christian homes where there are children, Bible story books are common. It

is taken for granted that after a child has been graduated from these he is able to handle the Bible for himself. "Steps to Nebo" is the type of book needed in such homes for the young people that they may be helped in their individual study of the Word. It would encourage Bible study and perhaps revive it in a life which has drifted from the faithful feeding upon the Bread of Life. By no means is its usefulness limited to young people. Parents will be refreshed by it; they may see in it the type of book they need and can recommend to other parents. It should be a great boon to Bible teachers as it gives the materials in such a well outlined and well written way. Ministers will find it offering a real challenge for better preparation in their pulpit or classroom work.

In this book the reader will not find stressed the way of salvation through Christ or the sustaining power of the Holy Spirit, as it is an Old Testament book, yet the author does speak of God in a way that credits Him with doing all the things that Jesus and the Holy Spirit did after they were sent to the earth for their specific tasks. One can not help but receive rich blessings and a vision from this book to go out and meet life's challenge today as these Old Testament characters did in their day. This book deserves a place in every home. It can contribute greatly, if rightly used, to more victorious lives in the advancing kingdom of God.—Paul E. Faris

PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY, by William Goulooze. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1950, pp. 266. \$3.50.

William Goulooze is Professor of Historical Theology at the Western Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America ("Dutch Reformed Church") at Holland, Michigan. His thinking in the field of "pastoral theology" was crystallized during a crisis in his own life. For it was during a year of enforced inactivity because of severe illness that he saw the need of more effective means of bringing to bear the oft-times untapped riches of the grace of Christ upon the problems of sickness, suffering and sorrow.

This book was written particularly for pastors who feel the need of a better understanding of the human nature with which they must deal, and whose only hope rests in the Divine Son of God. Of all the books published in recent years that have come to my attention, this makes the most definite attempt to correlate the presuppositions of the Christian faith with respect to fallen man in need of being made "a new creature", with tested psychological techniques which may be adapted to the unique work of the Protestant pastor.

The scope of the book can best be shown by the divisions of the material presented.

Part I contains an historical survey of the growth of the study and use of "pastoral theolo-

gy" from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present. The language used in older textbooks on "pastoral theology" is quoted at some length to show that although the vocabulary used differed in marked degree from current scientific terms, "in essence, pastors of earlier days had most of what we call "strictly modern and new" (p. 62).

There is throughout the book a recognition of a basic divergence in perspective between the theology which rests upon the revealed Word of God, and the materialistic and humanistic attempts to understand and describe the nature of human life. It is at this point that the Christian pastor has been justly suspicious of the contributions of modern psychology. But where that conflict is recognized, there is much in psychological techniques adaptable to pastoral work.

Part II is a description of an experimental questionnaire which the author submitted to a select group. In it he sought their description of their own experiences of the effectiveness of their Christian faith with reference to "sickness, suffering, and sorrow." No claim is made on the statistical level, and the fact that 1,009 replies were received from a total of 3,661 questionnaires sent out indicates something of the difficulty of making a survey of this kind. The summary of the replies from such a select group who apparently were consistently mature Christians, might provoke interest in the possible findings of a similar survey, if one could be conducted to include the immature Christian or the non-Christian in their reactions to sickness, suffering and sorrow. For it is from the ranks of the latter group that the most baffling problems come to the present-day pastor.

Part III seeks to find a solid foundation for a harmony between scientific techniques in Pastoral Psychology and a faithful adherence to the Scriptural analysis of basic human problems. It is heartening to find in a text of this kind the following paragraph:

"The fundamental difference between the viewpoint of the social scientists in the field of psychology and the conservative Biblical theologian is the battle line on which the interpreter of pastoral psychology must take his stand. That stand must include a firm belief in the inability of man, the total depravity of human nature, and the need of divine supernatural redemption through Jesus Christ. Apart from Christ, through the working of the Holy Spirit, sinful man cannot be redeemed because he is lost in trespasses and sins. Christian living means dynamic, effervescent and spiritual living through Jesus Christ" (p. 137).

Part IV would be of most practical interest to the pastor or prospective pastor, for it is here that the author deals with the qualifications of the

pastor, pastoral counselling, relations with the doctor and the sick, and the larger area of pastoral responsibility to the community in which he serves.

The practical value of this book is further enhanced as a source-book for further study by the addition of 23 pages of classified bibliography. Here the author has gathered together what appears to be a comprehensive catalogue of the literature of this field.

—S. Bruce Willson

THREE LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION, by William Hendriksen. Zondervan Publishing House, 847 Ottawa Ave., N.W., Grand Rapids 2, Mich. No date. Copyright 1949. Pp. 70. \$1.00.

This little book presents three lectures on the message of the Book of Revelation, in a popular, non-technical style. The three lectures are entitled, respectively, "The Book of Revelation: Its Program, Challenge, and Comfort"; "The Dragon's Allies"; "Jerusalem the Golden". The contents of this book are simple, yet not superficial. The material is interestingly, and even fascinatingly, presented. The scheme of interpretation followed is the same as that of the author's larger book, "More Than Conquerors". With respect to the Millennium, he is an advocate of the Amillennial or Non-millennial view. The book draws many pointed practical lessons from the Book of Revelation.

—J. G. Vos

THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL, by Albert Barnes. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1950, pp. 496. \$3.50.

This is a photographic reprint of a book by Albert Barnes (author of Barnes' "Notes"), originally published sometime before the author's death, which occurred in 1870. Albert Barnes was a Presbyterian minister, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia from 1830 to 1867, and a diligent student and writer. Besides his extensive "Notes" on the entire New Testament, and part of the Old Testament, he wrote a number of other books on religious and moral issues. He wrote two books on the evils of slavery, since he was an ardent abolitionist.

This book, "Scenes and Incidents in the Life of the Apostle Paul", etc., takes the outstanding scenes, drawing freely, as he says, from the scholarly "Life and Epistles of St. Paul" by Conybeare and Howson, and after a brief statement of the facts in each incident in the life of Paul, gives an extended lecture pointing the practical lessons. We expect to find a strong appeal for human rights from an abolitionist and we do.

Since Barnes was at one time accused of heresy, reprimanded by the Synod of Philadel-

phia, but finally acquitted by the General Assembly of 1836, and since he was a leader of the New School party of the Presbyterian Church, we may expect to find some statements that will raise questions in our minds. A reference to demon possession on page 160; an attitude toward Scriptural order of church government and worship, page 280; a discussion of the necessity of God's use of human agency in the conversion of souls, page 407, etc., may cause the reader to put a few question marks in the margin, just for further study of the Scriptures. But, on the whole, we are happy to see how true to the Scriptures the book is.

Some practical and helpful material may be found on the subject of guidance in the discussion of Paul's obedience to the Heavenly Vision, Chapter IV. Also Chapter V, on Paul's residence in Arabia, gives help in the choice of a life work, by setting forth the variety of things that need to be done in the world and the variety of endowments among men adapted to these various occupations.

In his discussion of Paul coming to Antioch Barnes shows how emergencies arise which call forth buried talents, provide ample fields of work and so fulfill God's purpose. The presentation of the problems faced by Christian workers, based on the study of Paul and Barnabas sent forth, is as timely today as when Barnes wrote it nearly a century ago. Barriers of nationality, social "caste", color or race, and religion must be met. One may read into his discussion of the work of Christ in behalf of people of all races a denial of limited atonement, yet, in the light of the problem of slavery, in the statement on page 147, "All have been atoned for alike; all have the offers of salvation made to them alike; all are placed by the Gospel on the same level here; all may occupy the same rank in heaven", one sees his desire to prove the equality of the human race since "they all have been redeemed by the same blood. . ." Yet, in other places he seems to set forth the clear doctrine of God's choice of a people out of the world. He was simply emphasizing that race, rank, nationality have nothing to do with that choice. The slave may be chosen rather than the master.

The chapters on Paul's work in Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus (IX to XI) are very helpful, as also the chapters XVI-XVIII, which deal with Paul's addresses before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. These six chapters give the contact of Christianity with various types of people.

Barnes rises to eloquence in these chapters, and gives a thrilling message. One is moved from city to city, from the presence of one personage to another, with a sense of reality. The reasoning from the incidents of Paul's shipwreck at Malta does not seem as strong, especially in the use

of the passage, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" in proving the proposition that the purposes of God are dependent on human agency for their accomplishment. Also the reasoning as to the sense of justice revealed by the people of Malta may be a little weak. But the conclusion that Divine Justice does detect and punish crime is conclusive. It is a very interesting discussion of how crime is detected, worthy of a mystery novel.

The chapter on Paul's first trial before Nero is strong. The desertion of Christian friends during a trial of this kind is shown to be proof that real piety and real friendship may shrink back for a time and then come back to a fuller faith and fortitude.

On the whole, this book is readable and helpful. No book which seriously studies the life of the Apostle Paul could be otherwise.

—D. Ray Wilcox

CHRIST THE GREAT UNKNOWN, by H. R. H. Princess Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1950, pp. 31, paper cover, 25 cents.

This booklet by the former Queen of the Netherlands bears a strong testimony to Christ, and appeals to men to believe on Him and follow Him and serve Him. It is very refreshing and encouraging to be thus reminded that some of the great and noble of this world are also humble believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and not ashamed of His testimony and His cross.

"You cannot approach God but through Christ. Give Him the place that is due to Him in your own lives, and in the lives of others" (pp. 17,18). "Christ directs all things according to His holy will and fixed plan" (p. 13). "I am very well aware that what I have said is nothing but poor human stammering about the great deeds of God, which were fulfilled in Christ" (p. 14). "This is the love God offers us, and as long as man turns away from that love, and lives in a freedom which he thinks to have gotten for himself, he lives in the oppressive atmosphere of a world filled with darkness and sin, which threatens to choke him, until God's mercy lifts this man out of his self-chosen freedom into the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, in whom he is redeemed and liberated, and so experiences the love of the Father in the Son" (p. 15). These quotations will afford a sample of the booklet, and show the quality of the author's testimony to Christ.

The reviewer regrets that he must dissent from the author's views on the subject of church union. Concerning the churches, she says: "Christ calls on them now, in the chaos of the present day, to put aside their problems and everything that divides them, and to seize this moment to

prove that their love for Him is stronger than all dissension. . . by founding a unity which unites them all" (pp. 24,25; cf. also p. 26). This impresses the reviewer as a question-begging plea, for one of the things that divides the churches — really the MAIN thing that today divides the churches — is the question of "WHAT Christ?" Actually, loyalty to Christ requires that there be no general church union NOW, that is, no union between faith and unbelief, orthodoxy and liberalism, historic Christianity and Barthianism, those who have faith in Christ as God and those who see in Him merely a great and good human leader.

The author says: "Sprung from one and the same source — the preaching of salvation through Christ — they (the churches) all share together the glory of having received the power to save" (p. 27). But where the truth of the Bible is denied, there is no power to save. The booklet specifies no basis of union save a common devotion to "Christ". Herein is the ambiguity. There is no general agreement among the churches today as to WHAT Christ — who or what He is.

—J. G. Vos

WHEN LOVED ONES ARE CALLED HOME, by Herbert H. Wernecke. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1950, pp. 52, paper cover. 60c each, \$6.00 per dozen.

This booklet is intended to be used as a gift to bereaved friends or relatives, or for pastors to place in the hands of those who have lost a loved one through death. In using a book of this kind it should of course be borne in mind that its message is applicable only to Christians. There is no blessed immortality for those who are without Christ, and when such die they are not "called home", but "cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30).

The booklet contains many Scripture quotations, and many prose and poetical quotations from well-known writers. Some of these might have been more carefully chosen. For instance, on p. 3 we read:

"When God sends forth a spotless soul
To learn the ways of earth,
A MOTHER'S LOVE is waiting here;
We call this wonder BIRTH."

But this idea that an infant is born with "a spotless soul" is not Biblical; it is Pelagian denial of original sin. According to the Bible, infants are born guilty before God, because Adam's breach of the Covenant of Works is imputed to them, and with a soul corrupted in sin (Rom. 5:18; Psalm 51:5).

Again, the poem by Whittier, "Love Can Never Lose Its Own" (p. 45), is true only of Christian people. Those who are out of Christ, alas,

can and will lose their own, for ever and ever. However, the booklet is obviously intended for the use of Christian people, and in its general character it is Scriptural and helpful. It presents not a vague sentimental mysticism, but the Biblical truth of immortality and resurrection in Christ. It will provide much balm for aching hearts.

—J. G. Vos

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST, by Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen, translated and edited by Albert Hyma. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1950, pp. 116, pocket size. \$1.00.

This is not the well-known "Imitation of Christ" by Thomas a Kempis, but an earlier work by Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen, teacher of Thomas a Kempis, translated from the Latin and published in English for the first time. The author lived 1367-1398. The translator states in his Introduction that Zerbolt's work is really far superior to that of Thomas a Kempis, particularly in its avoidance of the anti-intellectualism and the extreme asceticism of the latter. Those who are familiar with Thomas a Kempis' renowned "Imitation of Christ" will, however, have some idea of the tenor and spirit of the present book. It contains a great deal of sound spiritual counsel on such subjects as "Self-Knowledge", "Prudence in Our Actions", "Inordinate Affections", "Adversity", "The Solitary Life", "Human Misery", etc. But — in spite of the translator's statement mentioned above — the reviewer finds a large part of the content of the book spoiled by the false ascetic ideal of the Middle Ages. Some examples may be cited:

"For anyone who withdraws from friends and family, him shall God approach through grace" (p. 86). "If in the beginning of your conversion you desire a solitary cell and live in it and keep it well, it will later be like a dear friend and a most welcome comfort" (p. 84-5). "If it be lawful and expedient for you to speak, speak about your salvation and those things that may edify your neighbor. For we have to give account of idle words" (p. 45). "But if you desire to make spiritual progress, keep away from the things you hear and see" (p. 51). "Think how strict and renunciatory a life the hermits led in forests, passed in desert places, (how they) put away all worldly fellowship, often talked with God. . . What strict abstinence did they adhere to . . . With what contempt did they put aside all worldly delights and temporal good, renounce their friends and disregard their kinsmen, in order to be able more steadfastly to cling to God; they desired nothing from the world. They scarcely cared for necessity and lamented the fact that they had to serve the needs of the body. . ." (pp. 75-6).

We can understand, perhaps, how the medieval hermits came to think as they did, and we can be very sorry that they fell into such grievous error as to imagine that it is impossible "steadfastly to cling to God" while living an active life amid family and friends and other relationships of human society; we can regret that they embraced the heathenish notion that the human body is evil and contemptible. But how can we, after four centuries of the glorious light of the Protestant Reformation, find real spiritual challenge or edification in writings which, though intensely earnest, are warped by the viewpoint of an unbiblical asceticism? This notion of flight from human society, of denial of the service of God in the whole realm of nature or "common grace", is not Biblical, and if taken seriously is likely to lead present-day believers astray from the truth into an unsound isolation of the spiritual life from the spheres of nature, human society and the multiplicity of aspects of "ordinary" life.

Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen was roughly a contemporary of John Wycliffe, who lived 1320-1384. It is in the active, energetic, reforming spirit of Wycliffe, interested in the public affairs of his time, serving God in the midst of human society, rather than in the retiring, monastic, contemplative, world-renouncing spirit of Gerard Zerbolt and Thomas a Kempis, that we find an embodiment of the Biblical ideal of Christian life and service.

Students of Church History will find this little book valuable for the light it sheds on the character of the later medieval monastic piety at its highest and best.

—J. G. Vos

CHRIST — THE BREAD OF LIFE, by William Childs Robinson. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1950, pp. 190. \$2.50.

This volume presents six lectures which were delivered by the author at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, in 1949. The author is a member of the faculty of Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia.

The theological viewpoint of the book is that of historic orthodox Protestantism of the Presbyterian type. The author strives throughout to present the old truth concerning Christ in a fresh and appealing manner. The six chapters are entitled respectively: I. Immanuel: The Clue to Life's meaning. II. The Saviour of Sinners. III. The Lord of All. IV. God Incarnate for Suffering Men. V. The Word Became Flesh. VI. The Shepherd and His Flock.

This book contains many fine and forceful presentations of truth. For example: "We are not saved by general truths, but by specific events — by the advent of God in Christ, by His death

for our sins and His resurrection for our justification. We are saved by what God did for us in our nature, by His human acts and agony, by His flesh torn and His blood shed, by His perfect human obedience and His precious human death. He died in the human nature which God the Word assumed. The tendrils of our faith cling not to mere principles, but to Him who loves us" (p. 31). Again: "Now the Church carries out her commission as she bears witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, not as she seeks to substitute her own authority for His Lordship. We are not to pin our hopes on human institutions which ignore Him. We are not to set up our programs in lieu of His program which is the preaching of the crucified Saviour, the risen, reigning Lord" (p. 87). Every true Christian will say Amen.

The author carefully avoids the Arminian tendency which is so common today. "The creature's freedom can only be freedom in the freedom of the Triune God, the Lord of the universe, the Creator and Governor of men. Absolute freedom does not exist for us in this world. Otherwise the sovereign Lordship of God would be put in question. Our freedom is under and within, not beyond, the Providence of God. The Reformation does not set forth the Providence of God and the freedom of man as equal magnitudes; man's responsibility stands in a subordinate relationship to Providence. To speak of man's absolute self-determining freedom independent of the limits of his creaturehood or of the power of God is self-deception" (pp. 70,71).

The author quotes extensively from a wide variety of authors. Quotations from Barthian or "Neo-orthodox" writers are extremely common. This impresses the reviewer as unfortunate, for these men are commonly quoted, not on points where they differ from Dr. Robinson's position, but on points where they seem, on the surface, to agree with his position. The volume abounds in quotations from, and references to, Barth, Brunner, Piper, Niebuhr and others equally unorthodox. There are of course many statements in the writings of such men which can be lifted from their books and quoted so as to bear an orthodox sense. But this creates the unfortunate illusion that Barth, Brunner, Piper, Niebuhr, etc., are really orthodox in the main. As a matter of fact, these men mean something quite different by these sayings from what Dr. Robinson means by them, and the message of their works as a whole is entirely alien to the historic orthodoxy which Dr. Robinson defends. "Neo-orthodoxy" takes the whole body of Christian doctrines and transmutes them into "limiting concepts", while still using the old orthodox terminology, including such words as "atonement", "resurrection", "revelation", etc. To quote such men repeatedly without pointing out that they are fundamentally unorthodox seems to this reviewer misleading.

It is a pity that the volume is marred by a

superfluity of editorial and typographical errors, such as "wholly" (holy), p. 76; "Welch" (Welsh), p. 57; "Ducan" (Duncan), p. 58; "Satin" (Satan), p. 74; "Tennants" (Tennents), p. 92; "Livingston" (Livingstone), p. 93; "Almigty", p. 144; and many others. It is to be hoped that these can be corrected, and an index added, if a second edition is published.

—J. G. Vos

JOHN CALVIN, EXPOSITORY PREACHER,
by Leroy Nixon. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing
Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3,
Mich. 1950, pp. 136. \$2.50.

This well-written book is a study of John Calvin as a preacher. He has usually been regarded as a reformer and theologian, a master of the Bible and a commentator. But in his own eyes he stood out first of all as a preacher.

The first chapter, largely introductory, traces Christian expository preachers and preaching before Calvin. At least twenty-five are mentioned, chief among them perhaps: Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine and Martin Luther.

The second chapter contains impressions of Calvin as a preacher. Beza is quoted as saying that "Calvin preached 286 sermons a year and delivered 186 lectures on theology a year." In plan, Calvin's sermons were simple, unadorned by oratorical expression, not even marked by "headings or points". His language was that of the common people. He made frequent use of proverbs, word pictures and portraits. "Therefore Calvin made himself to be listened to: that is the first point for all speakers" (Emil Doumergue). "Above all, the earnestness with which he made the truth of God shine forth in his words made him a great preacher and deeply impressed on his hearers the great verities of the Christian faith" (E. C. Dargan).

In a chapter on Calvin's theory of preaching we find this: "While there is no magic in the way in which the Word of God operates in our lives, yet it is approximately true that the Holy Spirit witnesses to us in proportion as we are steeped in the knowledge of the real meaning of the words of the Book. Hence if there is to be a real Church, a body of the Spirit of Christ, a common requirement is that the members shall be full of the knowledge of the Word. . . Preachers must not put forward their own dreams and fancies, but what they have received they must pass on faithfully without any addition." In this chapter there are lengthy quotations from Calvin's sermons. In these are given helpful expositions of 2 Tim. 3:16,17 and Titus 1:7-9, wherein Calvin shows how the Word of God should be accepted and regarded by all believers, especially by preachers, and the qualities required in ministers. It is pointed out that the preacher must be called by

God, a fully consecrated man, and that he must preach only the pure Word of God. "Above all, he must set an example and point out the way. He must, to be a minister, show himself to be the first pupil. To be a good corrector, he must correct himself first."

Calvin's method of interpretation was remarkably clear and simple. Instead of questioning the early commentators, collecting their testimony, to learn from them the meaning of the Bible, he searched it himself. "Calvin uses the only sincere and consistent method of interpretation: namely, the historical and grammatical method."

The longest chapter is: "The Gospel as Calvin Preached It." The author says: "Much of Calvin's theology that sometimes seems cold and intellectual when taken merely as a part of his system of thought was warm and living as he preached it." It is shown how Calvin preached such doctrines as: (1) the sovereignty of God; (2) the corruption of man; (3) predestination; (4) the power of the Word of God; (5) our salvation; (6) the work of the Holy Spirit; (7) the Lord's Supper; (8) the final advent of our Lord; (9) prayer; (10) the devil; (11) obedience to God rather than to the papacy. In showing how he preached such doctrines the author has quoted freely from Calvin's sermons as contained mainly in two volumes: "The Mystery of Godliness" and "The Deity of Christ."

This method of quoting at length may seem wearisome to some readers, yet there is value in it. Dr. Andrew W. Blackwood, in his introduction to this book says: "He (the author) has followed the plan of letting Calvin speak for himself, and that largely out of his sermons. This way of approaching the study of preaching seems to many of us full of practical helpfulness. Instead of coming to the subject with many ready-made theories, the student learns all that he can about the life and work of a master preacher."

Dr. Blackwood goes on to give his own estimate of Calvin as a preacher: "The man of Geneva drew all of his sermons from the Bible. He preached from it as he found it, book by book, and passage by passage. Instead of 'going everywhere preaching the Gospel', he stayed by the passage in hand. He strove to show clearly and strongly what his passage meant, and what difference it ought to make in the hearts and lives of the hearers. In other words, he looked on himself in the pulpit as a preacher from Holy Scripture, and not merely as an expositor of ancient truth."

The final chapter on "Application to Preaching Today", contains practical suggestions drawn from Calvin's life and work. (1) Be a real student of the Bible. Stress content. (2) Preach often. If Origen could preach every day and Cal-

vin could preach five times a week, the average minister could preach three times a week with profit to the congregation and to his own soul's welfare. (3) Appeal to the deepest spiritual needs of the hearers. (4) Speak plainly. Let the subject bear the weight of the interest. Be conversational, not oratorical.

—Waldo Mitchel

NOTES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT, EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL: JOB, by Albert Barnes, enlarged type edition, edited by Robert Frew, with numerous additional notes and a series of engravings. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1950, two volumes, pp. 363 and 339. Per set, \$6.00.

These two volumes are very attractively bound and would be a credit in any library. The Baker Book House is to be thanked for the republication of this work by an early American minister and commentator. The books are not only valuable as a storehouse of the thinking of the men of that day regarding this book, but also as an attempt honestly to deal with the problems of the book of Job. One wishes that Barnes had been more outspoken in his convictions, yet his unwillingness to be dogmatic where dogmatism is unwarranted is a commendable feature.

In his very lengthy introduction Barnes deals quite frankly with most of the problems of the book. He makes it perfectly plain that he is convinced that Job was a real and historical person who walked this earth and faced the same problems that you and I face. He makes it plain that we are not dealing with fictitious characters who treat of hypothetical questions.

While much is left to be desired in his treatment of the problems of inspiration, he clearly states: "The existence of such a being as Satan is everywhere recognized in the Scriptures; the account which is here given of his character accords entirely with the uniform representation of him; he exerts no power over Job which is not expressly conceded to him; and it is impossible to prove that he does not even now perform the same things in the trial of good men, which it is said that he did in the case of Job" (Vol. I, p. vi). "It shows how little can be accomplished in removing those difficulties by human reasoning, and how little light the most careful observation, and the most sagacious reflections, can throw on this perplexing subject. . . So we feel at the end of all the arguments of man without the aid of revelation, on the great subjects pertaining to the divine government over this world. The reasonings of philosophy now are no more satisfactory than were those of Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad, and it may be doubted whether, since this book was written, the slightest advance has been made in removing the perplexities on the subject of the divine administration, so beautifully stated in the

book of Job. . . The reasonings in this book show the desirableness and the value of revelation" (Vol. II, p. 281).

One also feels that this commentator is very weak in expressing his views with regard to Job's idea of a future life. The author holds that Job was a contemporary of the three patriarchs, therefore, I feel, he would have been justified in quoting Hebrews 11:6 to support his conviction that Job believed in a future life.

This commentary is also valuable for its practical application of Scripture. "He, though a pious man, was not opposed to it (proper social relationships at a banquet), but he apprehended merely that they might have sinned in their hearts, ver. 5. He knew the danger, and hence he was more assiduous in imploring for them the divine guardianship. . . Job felt as every father should feel in such circumstances, that there was reason to fear that God had not been remembered as he ought to have been, and he was therefore more fervent in his devotions, and called them around him, that their own minds might be affected in view of his pious solicitude. . . he took measures to make them holy on the apprehension that they had sinned; that is, he took the usual means to procure for them forgiveness" (Vol. I, pp. 95-97).

His high regard for the book of Job may be seen from the following quotations: "But the sublimity and beauty of the poetry in this book stand still unsurpassed, unrivalled . . . this book has a higher value than can be attached to any other record of the past, and demands the profound attention of those who would make themselves familiar with the history of the race. The theologian should study it as an invaluable introduction to the volume of inspired truth; the humble Christian, to obtain elevated views of God; the philosopher, to see how little the human mind can accomplish on the most important of all subjects without the aid of revelation. . . It will teach invaluable lessons to each advancing generation; and to the end of time true piety and taste will find consolation and pleasure in the study of the BOOK OF JOB" (Vol. II, p. 282).

—Philip W. Martin

THE CHURCH IN RED CHINA "LEANS TO ONE SIDE", by Samuel E. Boyle. Fraternity Book Room, 216 Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong. 1950, pp. 152, paper cover. Also for sale by Rev. J. G. Vos, Route 1, Clay Center, Kansas. \$1.00.

The sub-title of this book states that it is "A Documented Study of the Influence of Communism on the Protestant Churches in China". The author has had several years of experience as a missionary to China of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church of North America. This books shows his thorough alertness to the

political, economic and religious changes which are taking place with great rapidity in China today.

The expression "Leans to One Side" in the title is based on a quotation from Mao Tse-tung, the Communist dictator of China ("On the Democratic Dictatorship of the People", 1949). Dictator Mao boastfully asserted that the Chinese people must "lean to one side" (i.e., in the direction of Marxism): "We well know that if we achieve victory and make that victory secure we must 'lean to one side'. If the Chinese people do not lean to the side of the imperialists they must lean to the side of socialism. There is no exception. You cannot walk if you sit on a wall. There is no third way. We are opposed to Chiang Kai-Shek's reactionary clique on the side of imperialism; we are also opposed to the vain illusion of a third way. Not only China, but the whole world as well must either lean toward imperialism, or, if not, they must lean toward socialism. Absolutely no exception. Neutrality is hypocrisy, and there is no third way!" Mr. Boyle's book is a carefully documented analysis of the impact of Communism on the Protestant churches of China, showing that the Red authorities are taking Dictator Mao's statement "Absolutely no exception" very seriously, and are systematically attempting to force the Christian movement in China to become a subservient tool of the Soviet State.

To Dictator Mao's dogmatic assertion that "there is no third way", Mr. Boyle boldly opposes the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me", adding "There is no other way!"

A considerable portion of the contents of this book consists of documentation in the form of articles, press reports, announcements, etc., assembled from various sources. These have been very ably chosen with a view to their relevancy, and have been well analyzed by Mr. Boyle in his concluding chapter.

Just a few days before the writing of this review (September 1950) a noted modernist missionary (Dr. Lucius Porter) was quoted in the public press as having stated that the Communist regime in China has not interfered with the religious freedom of the churches in that country. The emptiness and unreality of such a claim is overwhelmingly proved by the contents of this book. The Chinese Communist "People's Government" has not only interfered with the freedom of the churches and Christian institutions — it is carrying out a program calculated to destroy the real Christian witness of the churches and to make them mere "puppet churches", mere slavish tools of the Communist State.

The fact that Christianity is being attacked by the Communist power in China is sad enough. What is even more sad is the sober fact that this attack on Christianity is being furthered by a "fifth column" of Communist sympathizers and "fellow travellers" within the churches themselves. These blind leaders are seeking to re-shape the churches to make them fit the pattern of totalitarian Communism. Some even welcome the "liberation" (i.e., Communist domination) of Christian institutions. The chapter entitled "From Martin Luther to T. C. Chao" (by Mr. Boyle) and the one entitled "The Enemy in the Camp" (by Mr. Arie Kok) abundantly show the sad reality of "fifth column" sabotage of the churches in China. Today Christianity in China is being betrayed and subverted by people who profess to be its true friends, and who have been regarded by many as devoted and trustworthy leaders. Especially is this true of Dr. T. C. Chao, of the School of Religion of Yenching University, Peiping. Dr. Chao, as is well-known, is one of the six co-presidents of the World Council of Churches. The exposure of his views and activities by Mr. Boyle and Mr. Kok makes sorry reading, yet it should be read and the truth made known, lest the Christian public in America be terribly deceived.

Equally saddening is the chapter on "Liberated Lutheranism in Hankow", which documents and analyzes the downfall of the once valiant-for-the-truth Lutheran magazine *Hsin I Pao* ("Justification by Faith Magazine"). This periodical has yielded to "liberation" until today a large part of its contents consists of Communist propaganda.

Because there have not been widespread arrests, torture and killing of Christians in China by the Communists, some in America have jumped to the conclusion that the Communist regime is not really attacking Christianity. The truth, as clearly brought out by this book, is that the attack is much more subtle and also much more effective than mere physical violence. Chinese Communism is attacking Christian institutions ideologically and by this ideological attack is very effectively neutralizing their Christian witness. The lack of outright physical violence, to date, is to be explained by a number of factors, such as (a) that the Reds have been busy with political troubles and have not yet had time to deal fully with religious bodies; (b) that the Communist strategy is to destroy Christianity by ideological rather than physical attack as far as possible; (c) the readiness of many churches and institutions, urged on by false, pro-communist "Christian" leaders, to compromise and submit to the State's program of "liberation", Marxist indoctrination and general transformation according to Communist notions.

In spite of the very depressing situation in

China today, Mr. Boyle's book does not end on a note of discouragement, but on one of sober warning and of confident faith and hope:

"If there is any one lesson to be drawn from the material which is presented in this book, it is the Christian duty of separating now from these agencies in China like the National Christian Council and the Church of Christ in China, or any denominational groups which manifest the same anti-Christian adjustment to Communism. Stop sending American money to men who are already our enemies! We must continue to pray for them but we must not share their sins.

"Here once more the question comes down to our Lord's simple rule; Are we willing to 'die' for His truth and His honor? Or do we love the 'broad fellowship' which leadeth to destruction? It is quite evident that serious testing times are ahead of the Christian churches in all lands. Will we fare any better under persecution than these

deluded brothers have in China? I often ask myself this question. Surely it ought to drive us all to more prayer for courage and faithfulness. If we must lean to one side — and according to Mao Tse-tung there is no third way, let the Christian people of the world lean more heavily on the promises of God and go forward in our Lord's footsteps, even though it brings a cross! There is, truly, no third way. There is only Christ's way, the way of obedience even to death.

"'But the Word of God is not bound.'" (p. 152).

This is an important book. Mr. Boyle has done a great service to the Protestant world and especially to all Christian friends of China in publishing it. Its message is urgently needed right now. Why not purchase five or six copies and give them to Bible-believing ministers in your community or elsewhere?

—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.

CALVIN'S SERMONS: THE DEITY OF CHRIST, by John Calvin. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1950, pp. 302. \$3.50.

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION, by Louis Berkhof. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1950, pp. 169. \$2.50.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: A STUDY MANU-AL, by Peter Y. De Yong. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1950, pp. 90, paper cover. 60c each, \$6.00 per dozen.

ABRAHAM KUYPER ON EVOLUTION, by Steve Van Der Weele. Youth and Calvinism Group, 1113 Alpine Ave., N.W., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1950, pp. 15, paper cover. 35c.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CLASS STRUG-GLE, by Abraham Kuyper, translated by Dirk Jellema. Piet Hein Publishers, 1113 Alpine Ave., N.W., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1950, pp. 64. \$1.00.

THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES, by Oswald T. Allis. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1949, pp. xii, 355. \$3.75.

A STUDY OF THE PROPHET MICAH, by B. A. Copass and E. L. Carlson. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1950, pp. 169. \$2.00.

The following are paper covered booklets, all by Chester E. Tulga, published by Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 352 Wellington Avenue, Chicago 14, Ill. Price of each book, 25 cents per copy.

THE CASE AGAINST THE SOCIAL GOS-PEL: A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL THEOLOGY OF THE PROPHETS

THE CASE AGAINST THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

THE CASE AGAINST MODERNISM

THE CASE AGAINST MODERNISM IN FOREIGN MISSIONS

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STEADFAST TOWARD JERUSALEM*

By Christina G. Rossetti

These thorns are sharp, yet I can tread on them;	I lift the hanging hands, the feeble knees—
This cup is loathsome, yet He makes it sweet:	I, precious more than seven times molten gold—
My face is steadfast toward Jerusalem,	Until the day when from His storehouses
My heart remembers it.	God shall bring new and old;

Beauty for ashes, oil of joy for grief,
 Garment of praise for spirit of heaviness:
 Although today I fade as doth a leaf,
 I languish and grow less.

Although today He prunes my twigs with pain,	Although today I walk in tedious ways,
Yet doth His blood nourish and warm my root:	Today His staff is turned into a rod,
Tomorrow I shall put forth buds again,	Yet will I wait for Him the appointed days
And clothe myself with fruit.	And stay upon my God.

* The last five stanzas of the poem entitled "From House to Home".

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