
BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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**BLUE
BANNER
FAITH
AND
LIFE**

VOLUME 7

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NUMBER 1

“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

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

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J. G. VOS, Editor and Publisher

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

The Glass

"Now we see through a glass, darkly" — 1 Cor.
13:12

By M. W. Dougherty

The glass is dim!
'Tis frosted o'er
By chilling unbelief
That lurks continually
In little niches of my heart.
In times of trial it clouds the glass
Through which I look for comfort,
And for Him.

The glass is dim!
It is befogged by doubt,
The close companion of my unbelief.
It scurries back and forth
Upon the glass with great uncertainty;
With dimness less intense
Than lack of faith, it none the less
Obscures my view of yonder home
That's made by Him.

The glass is dim!
By grief of loss;
We fear to face the path
That I must walk, bereft
Of fellowship and words.
Though dimmed by tearful streaks,
It hinders, as I try to find the hand
Held out by Him.

The glass is dim!
All this I know,
And Oh! the turmoil of the soul
It brings. But this
I also know, there is a time
When what I faintly see
With hindered view, will all be clear,
Made so by Him.

The glass is dim!
But by the flame of faith
The frost is cleared.
A gentle voice gives courage,
And my tears of grief
Are gently wiped away
With tenderness. He grasps my hand,
I walk with Him.

The Coming Creed

By Horatius Bonar

The creeds have gone, so speaks the age,
The era of the sects is past.
Forward! In spite of saint or sage,
True freedom has begun at last.

The Christ of God is now no more;
The Christ of man now sits supreme;
The cross is part of mystic lore,
The resurrection morn a dream.

The age's progress fears no God,
No righteous law, no Judge's throne;
Man bounds along his new-found road,
And calls the universe his own.

Not faith in God, but faith in man
Is pilot now, and sail, and oar;
The creeds are shrivelled, cold, and wan;
The Christ that has been is no more.

Old truth, which once struck deep in hearts,
Fights hard for life, but fights in vain;
Old error into vigor starts,
And fable comes to life again.

Old mischief now becomes earth's creed;
The falsehood lives, the truth has died;
Man leans upon a broken reed,
And falls in helplessness of pride.

He spurns the hands that would have led,
The lips that would have spoken love;
The Book that would his soul have fed,
And taught the wisdom from above.

The ever-standing cross, to him,
Is but a Hebrew relic vain;
The wondrous birth at Bethlehem
A fiction of the wandering brain.

He wants no Saviour and no light;
No teacher but himself he needs;
He knows not of a human night,
Save from the darkness of the creeds.

Eternal Light, hide not Thy face:
Eternal Truth, direct our way;
Eternal Love, shine forth in grace;
Reveal our darkness and THY day.

"The veracity of God, and not the reasonableness of any doctrine, is the ground of our faith. It is the work of the gospel to cast down reasonings against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ."

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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NUMBER 1

Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter I

The Land of the Covenants

All history is interesting and much of it is inspiring. Scotland furnishes a large measure of that quality of history, that awakens the soul, and appeals to the faculties by which life is transfigured with moral grandeur.

History yields its best results when we use our best powers in pursuing its paths. Let the creative genius, a healthy imagination, be employed in restoring the scenes of former times, mingling with the people and participating in their high endeavors; then will the quiet page of history become a world of thrilling activity. In this manner let us here endeavor to follow the chain of events which gave Scotland two Reformations and a Revolution. Let us keep our horizon wide by resuscitating the former generations and associating with the Covenanted fathers, who, in their faithfulness to God and loyalty to Jesus Christ, were like the burning bush, enswirled with fire but not consumed.

Scotland — the very name awakens fondest memories, revives holiest scenes, makes dearest associations throb with life. Scotland — charming in her romances of love, mighty in her struggles for freedom, pathetic in her sufferings for Christ, and glorious in her oft-renewed covenant with God — Scotland in many respects is incomparable among the nations. The Covenanted Church of Scotland, coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved in holy dependence and dauntless faith, while heaven looks down with admiration — how beautiful, how instructive, how inspiring!

Extending from the north boundary of England, Scotland thrusts her rocky shores with rugged irregularity into the deep sea on three sides. Her granite cliffs, resisting the ceaseless waves, teach her people the lesson of constant vigilance and unconquerable courage.

In this country the summer days are long and delightful, the echoes of good-night linger till the voice of good-morning may be heard. The days almost touch each other, twilight scarcely leaves the sky. The winter reverses the order, making the path of the sun short and bringing it down

close to the hilltops. The storm loves the long night; the winds rise and sift the treasures of hail and snow over mountain and meadow.

Scotland contains about 30,000 square miles and 4,000,000 souls (about five million today — ed.). The shores, especially the western and northern, are beautifully fringed with narrow lochs and steep indentures of the sea, making the coast picturesque beyond description. The surface is mostly mountainous and rugged, presenting to the eye natural scenery, which for beauty and magnificence can scarcely be surpassed. On the mountain side mists suddenly form, dense as thunderclouds and bright as snowdrifts. We were one day pointed to a certain hill where, it is said, Peden was hunted by dragoons, and found shelter in the heart of a mist-cloud, which he called "the lap of God's cloak." In answer to prayer he thus found safety in the secret place of the Most High; heaven seemed to touch earth where he knelt upon the dripping grass.

These mountainous grounds furnish luxuriant pasture for numerous flocks of sheep. Here is the shepherd's paradise, who, with his dog and crook, keeps careful watch. While the brow of the mountain is white with mist, its cheeks are often crimsoned with heather, and its breast verdant with pasture. The associated colors are very grateful to the eye, while the sublimity ennobles the heart.

Many picturesque lochs nestle among the hills, in whose placid waters is mirrored the sky in the brilliant variations of day and night. Poets and novelists have thrown a charm over these waters, and their shady isles and deep coves, relating the stories of love and the tragedies of war. Castles, some in ruins, some in excellent preservation, dot the country from sea to sea, crowning prominent hill tops, and grimly telling of the era of savage strife and imperiled life. Splendid cities, thrifty towns, and modest country homes are an index of the present prosperous and peaceful conditions. The industry, intelligence, and happiness of the people are everywhere apparent. Numerous churches, schools, and colleges bear testimony to the high tide of Christian civiliza-

tion, which, through the labors and fidelity of the fathers, have carried the present generation into enviable prominence.

The climate is pleasant and healthful. The asperity of winter is softened by the ocean streams coming from the south; the heat of summer is reduced by the high latitude and the mountains. Withal the Lord has blessed this celebrated country with rare natural advantages for producing an indomitable and resourceful race. Something in their environment seems to have given the people more than ordinary qualities of mind and heart. Through the centuries they listened to the deep music of the sea, gazed upon the majesty of the mountains, meditated upon the solitude of the moore, kept vigil over their flocks in the fields, laboriously tilled the rugged soil; and grew solemn, vigorous, magnanimous, and unconquerable; they became a distinguished people.

But above all this, God in the early ages gave them the Scriptures, and the Truth made them free. From the dawn of the evangelization of Scotland there has ever been a band, and sometimes a host, whose heart God touched, whose lives He enswathed with the fire of zeal for Christ and His royal rights. They grasped the meaning of the Word of God, heard His voice calling them into the marvelous light, and lived in the radiance of His dreadful presence. They stood upon the solid foundation of the infallible Book, and grew solid as the rocks of granite in their conviction of truth and right. How much of this Scotch granite is apparent in the faith and firmness of the present generation?

The matchless inheritance we have received from our Covenanted ancestors, an inheritance of truth, liberty, and high example, should be more inspiring to us than nature's grandest scenery. Our eyes should be open to the moral significance of present conditions. We should be alive to the weighty obligations transmitted by the fathers to their children. Filled with the spirit and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and enthusiastic in our work for God, we should throw our strength into the service of our Lord Jesus, striving to bring all people into covenant with God. The covenant relation is the normal state of human society.

POINTS FOR THE CLASS

1. Locate Scotland on the map.
2. What is the size? What the population?
3. Mention the main physical features.
4. Give some characteristics of the people.
5. What contributed much to their prominence in history?
6. What moral inheritance did the Covenanted fathers leave their children?
7. What obligation comes with the inheritance?
8. How should the obligation be met in our day?

(To be continued)

The Visible Church: Its Nature, Unity and Witness

By J. G. Vos
(Continued from last issue)

Note: This article is reprinted by permission from *The Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 2 (May, 1947).

III. The Witness of the Visible Church

Scripture affirms that the Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth", and it must be the visible Church that is referred to, for in the same verse it is called the house of God, in which persons are to conduct themselves according to the instructions Paul had just written concerning public worship, the silence of women, and the qualifications for the offices of bishop and deacon. But in what sense is the visible Church the pillar and ground of the truth? Although Roman Catholic commentators naturally take the phrase as relating to the alleged infallibility of the Church,

most Protestants who have interpreted the phrase as referring to the Church rather than to Timothy have followed Calvin in holding that the Church is the pillar and ground of the truth because it is the divinely appointed instrument by which the truth is perpetuated, lest it perish from the memory of men. The visible Church is thus the custodian, defender and proclaimer of divinely revealed truth. Although this proposition will be readily accepted by orthodox Christians in general, a problem inevitably arises in connection with it. Of what truth is the Church the pillar and ground? To how much divinely revealed truth is the visible Church to bear testimony? Human fallibility results in diverse and conflicting views of divinely revealed truth. In view of this diversity of

faith, how can the visible Church really bear witness to the truth?

The problem under consideration at this point should not be mistaken for the problem of the degree of conformity to the Church's creed which ought to be required of officers, members or applicants for membership. That is indeed a real and important problem, and it will be discussed later in the present article. But the question before us now is how the visible Church, in view of the diversity of faith which inevitably exists among those who profess the true religion, can have a creed at all. We are raising not the question of what should be required of candidates for Church membership or office, but the question of how those who are already members can express their Christian faith not merely as so many individuals, but in a corporate testimony for the truth. It is true, of course, that the Church decides who can be its members; but also true that the members determine what the Church shall stand for. This may perhaps be illustrated by considering the civil government of a nation. The government indeed decides who is qualified for citizenship in the nation; but it is also true that the citizens determine what shall be the character of the constitution and government itself. Similarly there exist two reciprocal functions in the visible Church: (a) the function of determining the membership of the Church itself; and (b) the function of the members in determining what shall be the character of the Church's corporate witness to the world. The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth, certainly; but after all, the Church is not an abstract ideal; it is a real body made up of individual members each of whom is subject to error and therefore views the truth somewhat differently from all others. If the Church is in any real sense the pillar and ground of the truth, it must bear a corporate witness to the truth. But that witness cannot be merely an ideal detached from the actual beliefs of the Church's members. In some sense it must be the collective product of the doctrinal convictions of individual persons as these view the divine special revelation. How can the visible Church, made up as it is of fallible individuals, bear a corporate witness to the truth?

The fact that every Christian is subject to error must always be reckoned with. Just as every Christian, even the most holy, has within him a remaining element of the corruption of original sin which inevitably finds expression in actual transgressions, so every Christian, even the most enlightened, has within him a remaining element of intellectual perversity which inevitably finds expression in some degree of doctrinal error in his personal convictions. Every Christian, it must be realized, has within him the germs of heresy. Just as the corruption of original sin, and its expression in actual transgressions, are subdued, but not eradicated, by the process of

sanctification, so the germs of heresy in the Christian, and their tendency to find expression in actual errors, are kept under control, but not eradicated, by the gradual process of illumination by the Holy Spirit which accompanies the work of sanctification. And like sanctification, illumination cannot be total in the present life. There are also those in the visible Church who are only **professing** Christians, and who lack the Spirit's work of regeneration, sanctification, and illumination. Such persons have only those operations of the Spirit which pertain to the realm of common grace. Yet they exist and have an influence among the regenerate members of the visible Church, and will inevitably have an effect on the character of its witness to the world.

In seeking a solution of this problem, two extremes must be avoided as destructive of any real testimony to the truth. In the first place, it is necessary to avoid the conception of the Church bearing witness to the truth by means of a total body of dogma issued by an inner hierarchy and published to the world as an infallible statement of truth, to be accepted by all men with an implicit faith. This is the Roman Catholic conception. In criticism of this it may be said that it is destructive of a real testimony to the truth because in this system everything is made contingent upon the validity of the hierarchy's claim to infallibility. Moreover in this system it is not really the visible **Church** that is the pillar and ground of the truth, but a select inner hierarchy headed by the Pope. The lay members, even though constituting perhaps more than ninety-nine percent of the total number, have no part in the Church's corporate witness except by an unquestioning and absolute acceptance of whatever is placed before them by the hierarchy. As the Westminster Confession asserts, this is "to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also", (XX,2.) and we may add, it is to destroy all real corporate witness to the truth on the part of the **Church**. Rome virtually equates the Church with the hierarchy, so far as testimony to the truth is concerned; the laity is not regarded as essential to this function.

In the second place, it is necessary to avoid the extreme which lies at the opposite pole from that of Rome, and which would give full play to the so-called atomistic tendency of Protestantism. If we reject the claim of the Pope of Rome to be infallible, we must also avoid that disproportionate recognition of the right of private judgment which would allow every individual Christian to claim to be a pope. While it is certainly true that Rome is wrong in virtually excluding the lay Christian from participating in the corporate witness of the Church, and that there must be a real, and not merely a fictitious, relation between the Church member as such and the Church's testimony to the world, nevertheless it must be realized that as long as human fallibility exists there will be

no two Christians, who think at all seriously about divinely revealed truth, who are in complete agreement in their view of the truth.

Now if the principle of private judgment is to be exalted above measure, every individual Christian can demand that the visible Church as a body bear witness to the entirety of revealed truth **as he sees it**. Since every other Christian could with equal right make the same demand, and the various demands thus made would conflict with each other, the result of this tendency would be only confusion and anarchy. There being no agreement concerning the extent and content of the truth to which the Church is to bear witness, and every Christian naturally being unwilling to surrender his own private judgment to some other Christian's view of the truth, a corporate witness to the truth would be impossible. The logical end of this state of affairs would be the existence of as many denominations as there are individual Christians in the world. Only so could each be a member of a denomination which would fully bear witness to the truth as each, in the exercise of his right of private judgment, views the truth. That is to say, if the right of private judgment is to be allowed unlimited scope, there can be no visible **Church** on earth, but only a multitude of individual, and individualistic, Christians. Now this "atomistic tendency" of Protestantism is only too real, and while it would be unthinkable to surrender the right of private judgment to Rome's demand for an implicit faith, still this does not mean that private judgment may be allowed to assert itself without any limits, and demand an ecclesiastical confession of every element of doctrine that any individual Christian believes to be truth. If every Christian were to refuse, as a matter of principle, to be a member of any Church that did not bear a corporate witness to **everything** that he held to be divinely revealed truth, all agreement and hence all corporate testimony would be impossible. Again, if every Christian were to refuse, as a matter of principle, to be a member of any Church that bore a corporate witness to **anything** that he regarded as error, all agreement and hence all corporate testimony would be out of the question.

Thus it is clear that the Scriptural doctrine of the visible Church as a witnessing body requires a balance to be struck between the concept of corporate ecclesiastical testimony and the concept of private judgment. Somewhere between the two extremes represented by Rome and by the atomistic tendency of Protestantism in its full logical development, the true course must lie. A line must be drawn, an area must be defined, within which unity of confession exists and is insisted upon even at the cost, if need be, of excommunicating those who dissent, but outside of

which divergence of belief is tolerated. Thus in the nature of the case no Church can really bear a corporate witness to **all** the truth which God has revealed in his Word, nor may any denomination make such a claim. To claim such a total testimony to divine truth would amount to claiming infallibility as Rome does. And in the nature of the case no Christian can expect to find a Church which will bear a complete and exact testimony to his own personal faith. Inevitably there will be divergence, at least at the periphery which lies outside the area of ecclesiastically defined dogma. Those zealous persons who look for a visible Church on earth which will fully and precisely embody their personal faith — no more and no less — as its corporate witness, are looking on earth for what can exist only in heaven. They overlook the truth that even the best Christians are still subject to error, and that neither in individuals nor in Churches can there be such a thing as total orthodoxy on earth. The removal of the intellectual effects of sin, like the removal of the moral effects of sin, is a gradual process, and can never be complete in this life.

Just where this line is to be drawn — just what area is to be marked off — constitutes the confessional problem of Protestantism. Divergent ideas on this question have produced denominationalism, at least in its creedal aspect. This is a very serious and difficult problem. The present generation is not even inclined to face it frankly. We live in an age when creeds are seldom taken very seriously, and are more often bypassed than honestly accepted or rejected. Men are not seldom ordained to ecclesiastical office who have not even read the confessions which they profess to accept, and who after they have been ordained go blithely on their individualistic way in utter disregard of the express statements of the creed they have solemnly vowed to defend and propagate. Where such conditions exist, the problem stated above cannot really be faced, much less can it be solved. When men are indifferent to truth as such, or when they have lost all interest in corporate testimony to truth and care only about their individual witness, there will be no serious concern about the problem of just what and how much doctrine a denomination is to bear witness to in its confession.

(To be continued)

"Prove all things by the Word of God — all ministers, all teachings, all preaching, all doctrines, all sermons, all writings, all opinions, all practices — prove all by the Word of God. Measure all by the measure of the Bible. Weigh all by the balance of the Bible. Test all in the crucible of the Bible. That which can abide the fire of the Bible, receive, hold, believe and obey. That which cannot abide the fire of the Bible, reject, refuse, repudiate and cast away."

—J. C. Ryle

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 III

THE DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES OF THE COVENANTERS

CHAPTER I

THE CONTINUING OBLIGATION OF THE SCOTTISH COVENANTS

4. The Perpetual Obligation of the Covenants as held by the Early Covenanters.

(Continued from last issue)

Having answered these eleven objections to the binding obligation of the Covenant, Guthrie proceeds to show that those who break the Covenant will suffer judgment for it. He warns against partaking of other men's sins, lest we partake of their plagues. "Suppose there were but one family in these lands that would stand to it, and if all that family should turn their back upon it except one person, truly that person is bound to stand to it". Finally he protests that he is not preaching treason: "This is no rebellion or treason, and those who think it censurable I commit to the prophets who are gone to their place, who did these things. First punish them, and then me. I commit all these things unto you. The Lord engrave them on your hearts! Amen".

The foregoing is probably fairly representative of the arguments used by the Covenanters in the persecuting and post-Revolution periods to prove the continuing obligation of the Scottish Covenants. In essence it is an argument that the Covenants were (1) moral in character; (2) Scriptural in content; (3) taken by the lawful rulers and representatives of the nation; (4) purported to be, and were in their nature, perpetual bonds; and therefore (5) are perpetually binding on the Church and nation of Scotland.

Patrick Walker left the United Societies after the Revolution, but continued to maintain the perpetual obligation of the Covenants. It was a great grief to him that these were not recognized by the Revolution Church. He writes that "the General Assembly, and Commissioners at London, in the year 1644, Henderson, Gillespie, and Rutherford, and their brethren the English divines, called the Solemn League and Covenant the foundation and chief part of their work, and obligation of it perpetual that no power on earth could loose. It must be a strange building that we have now, that wants both foundation and chief part; but they are now upon another footing". After the Revolution a sect arose in Scotland which not merely ignored the Covenants, as did the Revolution Church, but preached that they were actually unscriptural and immoral bonds. This was the sect of the Glassites, followers of a

Mr. Glass or Glas. They affirmed that national covenanting was an institution peculiar to the Jews. Walker writes of them thus: "Mr. Glass striking at the foundation of our Covenanted Reformation, overturning the constitution, government and discipline of this Church, which was never heard of before in Scotland". He continues, that this was a breach of ordination vows, that Glass denied the lawfulness of national covenanting under the New Testament dispensation, and held that all the martyrs who had died adhering to the Covenants had died so far unenlightened.

5. The Perpetual Obligation of the Covenants the Formal Principle of the Covenanting Movement.

There is every reason to believe that in 1638 and 1643 the subscribers of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant universally believed these bonds to be of perpetual obligation. Through the twenty-eight years of persecution which followed the Restoration in 1660 this principle was unlawful in the Church and nation of Scotland, but was maintained by the Covenanters who dissented from the Prelatic Church and maintained separate ordinances in the form of conventicles. As the number of one-time Covenanters who conformed to the Prelatic Church increased, the number of dissenters who maintained the principle of the continuing obligation of the Covenants decreased proportionately. This principle was ignored in the Revolution Settlement, although there was some sentiment in the Revolution Church in favor of the National Covenant (but not the Solemn League and Covenant). In the period immediately after the Revolution Settlement, the principle of the perpetual obligation of the Covenants was publicly maintained only by the United Societies and by some very small fragmentary dissenting sects, to which reference has been made in Part II.

The principle of the perpetual obligation of the Covenants was the formal principle of the Covenanting movement in the sense that this principle was characteristic of Covenanters as such in distinction from Presbyterians as such. Every Covenanter was a Presbyterian but not every Presbyterian was a Covenanter. Those who held the principle of the perpetual obligation of the Covenants were Covenanters, both before

and after the Revolution Settlement. And it was this principle that determined the nature of the other distinctive principles held by the United Societies and the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Because they believed in the perpetual obligation of the Covenants, they believed that the Church and nation of Scotland were sworn and bound to maintain the sole headship of Christ over the Church, and a Christian form of civil constitution.

The principle of the perpetual obligation of the Covenants, however, has not been maintained solely by the Reformed Presbyterian Church. It was also maintained by the Associate or Secession Church, although the inferences drawn from it were different from those drawn by the Reformed Presbyterians. The Judicial Testimony of the Associate Presbytery (1737) provided as a query to be answered by candidates for licensure the following: "Do you own the binding obligation of the National Covenant, particularly as explained in 1638, to abjure Prelacy and the five articles of Perth; and of the Solemn League of the three kingdoms, particularly as renewed in Scotland in 1648, with an acknowledgment of sins; and will you study to prosecute the ends thereof"? The Judicial Testimony affirmed the perpetual obligation of the Covenants in the following words: "In like manner they do hereby own and assert the perpetual obligation of the National Covenant of Scotland, frequently subscribed by persons of all ranks in this kingdom. . . as also they own and assert the perpetual obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant. . . Likewise they hereby declare their adherence to the several Testimonies, Declarations and Warnings emitted in behalf of the Covenanted Reformation of this Church from the year 1650 to the year 1688; particularly to the contentings and wrestlings during that period, whereby a great cloud of witnesses resisted unto blood in testifying for the supremacy and headship of the Lord Jesus over his own House, and other branches of our Covenanted Reformation in opposition to abjured Prelacy". In 1743 the Associate Presbytery renewed the bond of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, with religious services, and made approval of this deed a term of ministerial and Christian communion. The way in which the Covenants were renewed was not satisfactory to the Rev. Thomas Nairne, who left the Associate Church and joined the Cameronians, enabling the Reformed Presbytery to be constituted in 1743. In the "bond" sworn by the Associate Presbytery, the Covenants are merely mentioned as binding the swearers to live together in the fear of God and their love one to another.

The principle of the perpetual obligation of the Covenants is maintained by two denominations in Scotland today, the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the United Original Secession Church. The Testimony of the latter Church states "that Covenants entered into by a people

with God which are at once lawful and laudable in their matter and permanent in their objects lay the societies, civil or ecclesiastical, who enter into these Bonds, under continued obligation to discharge the duties engaged in from generation to generation. That, in accordance with this principle, they hold that the National Covenant of Scotland and the Solemn League and Covenant are, in so far their objects or ends have not yet been gained, binding on us as they were binding on our fathers who entered into them; that the obligation descends in the same manner as the National Debt contracted by our forefathers falls to be paid by us. In short, the United Original Secession Church claims to be regarded as a branch of the Reformed and Covenanted Church of Scotland, witnessing in a state of secession for her Reformation principles . . . and . . . lifting up the banner of a judicial testimony on behalf of the perpetual and continued obligation of the National, and of the Solemn League and Covenant. . . ". Strictly, then, the Cameronians or Reformed Presbyterians are not the only body in Scotland entitled to be called "Covenanters" today, for this name must be shared with the United Original Secession Church. Likewise, the principle of the perpetual obligation of the covenants is not, strictly speaking, a distinctive principle of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, for it is also held by the United Original Secession Church. But since the Cameronians or United Societies were the only body publicly maintaining this principle from 1690 to 1733, the present study regards the term "Covenanter" as practically equivalent to "Cameronian" and "Reformed Presbyterian".

The Covenants were publicly renewed by the Reformed Presbyterians at Crawfordjohn in 1745, concerning which the Historical Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland speaks as follows: "As this was the last instance in which the public Covenants were renewed in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, we beg here to offer the following observations:—1st. That covenanting is an occasional duty, to be performed as the circumstances of the Church or of a nation may seem to demand; and that the permanent obligation of the Covenants of these lands depends on their moral and scriptural character, rather than on their being publicly recognized or renewed. 2nd. Yet we believe, that where a Church or people have been brought under the bond of such engagements, it is a duty warranted by reason and Scripture occasionally to renew them, as the aspects of Divine Providence may require. 3rd. We believe that the defection of a great majority of a Church or nation from such Covenants does not cancel their obligation; and that the call upon a minority, who adheres to them, to bring them up to remembrance, becomes the more urgent when the public acts of the majority have a tendency to bury them in oblivion. 4th. We

approve of the zeal and faithfulness which prompted our fathers to engage in this work at seasonable times, and admit that we are placed under super-added obligations to adhere to these Covenants in consequence of their deeds of re-

novation". This represents the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland on this principle at the present day.

(To be continued)

Sketches from Our History

Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER VI

THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION

6. Luther and Doctor Eck

The conference between Martin Luther and the pope's legate, Cardinal Cajetan, took place in October, 1518. As the cardinal was unable to persuade Luther to renounce his convictions, the pope's problem remained unsolved. Meantime the influence of Luther was increasing rapidly. He soon published an account of his conference with Cardinal Cajetan. This aroused widespread sympathy for Luther in Germany. The obvious tide of public opinion in Germany caused the Roman Catholic authorities to proceed rather cautiously for a time.

Deciding to try further persuasion rather than force, the pope commissioned one of his chamberlains, Charles von Miltitz, to deal with Luther as best he could. The pope gave Miltitz a number of letters in which he called Luther "a child of the devil", although a few months later the pope did not hesitate to address Luther as "his dear son"!

Miltitz travelled to Germany, and on arriving there was surprised to find that he would have to deal, not merely with a stubborn monk, but with a whole nation thoroughly aroused by the issue of indulgences and Luther's attack on them. Miltitz decided to try private interviews with both Luther and Tetzel the indulgence merchant. Tetzel, however, could not be contacted, as he was afraid to leave his monastery. But Miltitz met Luther and talked with him several times. In an attempt to appear conciliatory, the papal chamberlain frankly denounced the sermons of the indulgence-sellers, and hinted that he did not approve of Cardinal Cajetan's action. He sought to bring about a reconciliation between Luther and the Roman Church by being reasonable and making some concessions to the Reformer. For a time it appeared as if this concessive policy might be successful and an actual reconciliation be effected. But the church authorities at Rome decided not to support Miltitz. They decided to place their confidence in another man of a very different spirit. This man was a German theologian named Johann Maier Eck (1486-1543).

Dr. Eck, supported by the pope and the Roman Curia, became the most active and important opponent of the reformer Martin Luther. Three years younger than Luther, he had already had a brilliant career as a writer, lecturer and debater on theological and philosophical subjects. At the time when he entered the arena of public controversy against Luther, Eck was only about 33 years old. His success won so early in life had somewhat gone to his head, and he was self-confident, proud and very ambitious. Though filled with zeal for the defence of the existing order and doctrine of the Church, his spirit was essentially pharisaic rather than Christian; "he was notoriously drunken, unchaste, avaricious and almost insanely ambitious" (Encyclopaedia Britannica). Such was the man who now entered into controversy with Luther as the champion of the Roman Catholic Church.

When Luther had first issued his Ninety-five Theses against the doctrine of indulgences, he had sent a copy to Dr. Eck, with whom he was slightly acquainted. Eck did not deign to make any public reply at the time, but the next year (1518) he publicly called Luther a Hussite. Finally a public debate between Luther and Eck was arranged.

This debate took place in the summer of 1519, and was called the Leipzig Disputation. For some ten days, July 4 to 14, the two men debated on such subjects as the supremacy of the pope, the doctrine of purgatory, penance, and indulgences. Eck appealed to the writings of the Church Fathers and the decrees of church councils, whereas Luther appealed to the Scriptures. At the conclusion of the debate, the judges cautiously refused to render a decision as to which party had won. Dr. Eck, of course, felt himself victorious, while Luther, standing on the platform of Scripture, knew that his arguments had not been overthrown.

Eck's strategy had been to try to maneuver Luther into making some statement which would enable the Catholic authorities to accuse him of holding the opinions of John Huss, which had

already been condemned by the Church. He was successful in this effort, for in the course of the debate Luther admitted that there was truth in the doctrines of the Hussites. Eck considered this admission very important.

After the Leipzig Disputation Luther returned home to Wittenberg in a rather discouraged state of mind. Soon he published an account of his debate with Eck for the German people to read. This made it clear at last that the real issue was not merely some minor abuses in connection with the sale of indulgences, but the whole Roman Catholic sacerdotal (priestly) doctrine of salvation. The people rallied to Luther's support. Luther soon got over his discouragement. He began a great work of writing and publishing in defence of the truths of the word of God. In the year 1520 Luther published three books of tremendous importance for the cause of the Reformation, entitled *On the Liberty of a Christian*

Man, An Address to the Nobility of the German Nation, and On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church of God.

Meantime the pope at Rome was planning more drastic action against Luther. A bull or papal decree, with the Latin title *Exsurge Domine* ("Rise up, O Lord") from its first two words, was prepared against Luther, along the line of Eck's contentions at the Leipzig Disputation. This bull decreed the excommunication of Martin Luther from the Church of Jesus Christ. This bull was dated June 15, 1520, but it was some time before it was actually published in Germany. On receiving the pope's bull, Luther posted a notice that on the tenth day of December, 1520, he would publicly burn the bull, and he invited the students of the University of Wittenberg to be present to witness his act.

(To be continued)

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"It will always be evident to persons of correct judgment, that the idea of Deity impressed on the mind of man is indelible. That all have by nature an innate persuasion of the Divine existence, a persuasion inseparable from their very constitution, we have abundant evidence in the contumacy of the wicked, whose furious struggles to extricate themselves from the fear of God are unavailing."

John Calvin

"I agree not with Cicero, that errors in process of time become obsolete, and that religion is increased and ameliorated daily."

John Calvin

"Pride and vanity are discovered, when miserable men, in seeking after God, rise not, as they ought, above their own level, but judge of Him according to their carnal stupidity, and leave the proper path of investigation in pursuit of speculations as vain as they are curious. Their conceptions of him are formed, not according to the representations He gives of Himself, but by the inventions of their own presumptuous imaginations. This gulf being opened, whatever course they take, they must be rushing forwards to destruction. None of their subsequent attempts for the worship or service of God can be considered as rendered to Him; because they worship not Him, but a figment of their own brains in His stead."

John Calvin

"In disquisitions concerning the motions of the stars, in fixing their situations, measuring their distances, and distinguishing their peculiar properties, there is need of skill, exactness, and industry; and the providence of God being more

clearly revealed by these discoveries, the mind ought to rise to a sublimer elevation for the contemplation of His glory."

John Calvin

"It must be maintained, that whoever adulterates the pure religion (which must necessarily be the case of all who are influenced by their own imagination), he is guilty of a departure from the one God."

John Calvin

"It is not surprising if the Holy Spirit reject, as spurious, every form of worship which is of human contrivance; because, in the mysteries of heaven, an opinion acquired by human means, though it may not always produce an immense mass of errors, yet always produces some."

John Calvin

"Liberalism and the religion of the historic Christian Church are not two varieties of the same faith, but two distinct religions, proceeding from altogether separate roots. One is redemptive, while the other is non-redemptive; the one is the antithesis of the other; they can never be reconciled."

J. Gresham Machen

"He that stands beneath the cross and understands the scene dares not sin; not because there is a hell beneath him or an angry God above him, but because Holiness is felt to reign there — the ground on which he treads is sacred, the glory of the Lord encircles him, and, like Moses, he must remove the shoes from his feet. The Cross is a venerable spot. I love to linger around it, not

merely that I may read my title to everlasting life, but that I may study the greatness of God. I use the term advisedly. God never appears to be so truly great, so intensely holy, as when from the pure energy of principle, He gives Himself, in the person of His Son, to die, rather than that His character should be impugned. Who dares prevaricate with moral distinctions and talk of death as a greater evil than dishonor, when God, the mighty Maker, died rather than that truth and justice should be compromised? Who at the foot of Calvary can pronounce sin to be a slight matter?"

James H. Thornwell

"No greater mischief can happen to a Christian people than to have God's Word taken from them or falsified, so that they no longer have it pure and clear. God grant we and our descendants be not witnesses of such a calamity."

Martin Luther

"It is vain to shut our eyes to the fact that there is a vast quantity of so-called Christianity nowadays, which you cannot declare positively

unsound, but which nevertheless is not full measure, good weight, and sixteen ounces to the pound."

J. C. Ryle

"No Church will really carry out Christ's last command save those who know, love, and contend for the truth as it is in Jesus."

Charles H. Spurgeon

"To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men."

Abraham Lincoln

"The fulfilment of irksome duties is the test of sincere obedience. When pleasure and service are identical, it is easy to be diligent in heavenly business; but when flesh and blood rebel against a known duty, it is time to invoke the aid of divine grace. Every personal feeling and private affection must give way before the imperative demands of our Lord and Master. Contention for the faith is far less pleasant than communion with Christ; but the neglect of the precept may involve the withdrawal of the privilege."

Charles H. Spurgeon

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.

INFINITY OF GOD. That quality of God by which He is absolutely perfect and boundless, without any limits, both in His being and in all His attributes.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE. An activity of God the Holy Spirit by which the writers of the books of the Bible were so influenced that the product of their writing is truly the Word of God.

INTERCESSION OF CHRIST. The heavenly ministry of Christ as the High Priest and Advocate of His people, whereby He pleads the merits of His own shed blood and perfect righteousness for each and every one of the elect, for whom He died and to whom He has given His Holy Spirit.

JUDAIZERS. A party of Jewish Christians in the Early Church, who regarded Christianity as a branch of Judaism, and taught that salvation is partly based on the work of Jesus Christ and partly on man's obedience to the requirements of God's law. (Paul's Epistle to the Galatians was written to refute the errors of Judaizing teachers who had confused and misled the Galatian Christians).

JUSTIFICATION. "Justification is an act of

God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." (S. Cat. Q. 33).

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. The authority of church government and discipline committed by Christ, the Head of the Church, to the lawful officers of His Church. (Matt. 16:19; 18:17,18. Westminster Confession of Faith, XXX. 1,2).

LEGALISM. The false notion that salvation, or a righteous standing before God, is attainable, in whole or in part, by human works of obedience to the law of God. (All legalists lack a proper conviction of sin; consequently they vainly imagine that their external and mechanical compliance with the commandments of God is the righteousness which God requires of man. Legalism was the blight of the Pharisees, as it is the terrible error of modern Judaism).

LENT. The period of 40 days ending with Easter, observed by Roman Catholics and some Protestants as a special period of self-denial and humiliation. (The observance of Lent is a mere

human custom based on ecclesiastical tradition; there is no warrant for it in Scripture).

LEVITY. Excessive lightness of spirit, or frivolity, which is inconsistent with Christian soberness, seriousness and earnestness, and which is a base counterfeit of true Christian happiness and cheerfulness. (Those who try to drown the voice of conscience by constant levity and jesting may be laughing themselves to hell).

LIBERTY, CHRISTIAN. The freedom of a Christian from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law, and the bondage of sin and Satan, as well as his future deliverance from all evil of every kind. (Westminster Confession of Faith, XX.1).

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE. The freedom of the human conscience from all doctrines and commandments of men which are in any respect

contrary to the Word of God, and the freedom of the conscience from all requirements in matters of faith or worship which are in addition to the Word of God. (Westminster Confession of Faith XX.2).

LOT. "A mutual agreement to determine an uncertain event, no other way determinable, by an appeal to the providence of God, on casting or throwing something" (Buck's Theological Dictionary).

MARTYR. (1) A witness. (2) A person who suffers death rather than renounce or compromise his religious faith.

MATERIALISM. The false doctrine that nothing exists except material substance and energy. (Materialism denies the existence of God and of the human soul, and the reality of life after death).

Some Misunderstood Scriptures

"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). This text is the favorite refuge of persons who wish to profane the Lord's Day with their own business or pleasures, while at the same time they wish to justify their conduct by an appeal to Scripture. All manner of sports and recreations, all matters of private or public business, are supposed to be legitimate on the Lord's Day because "the sabbath was made for man". This saying of our Lord is regarded as canceling, in effect, not only the Fourth Commandment, but the entire teaching of the Bible on the subject of sabbath observance. From our Lord's statement in this text, the inference is wrongly drawn that it is proper for sinful man to use the sabbath as he pleases, regardless of the revealed will of God concerning it.

No very profound study is required to show that this interpretation is entirely unwarranted. Jesus and His disciples had been passing through the grain fields on the sabbath day (Mark 2:23,24). Being hungry, the disciples plucked and ate some of the ears of the standing grain, a practice expressly sanctioned by the divine law (Deut. 23:25). Because this was done on the sabbath day, some of the Pharisees criticized the disciples, accusing them of doing "that which is not lawful" on the sabbath day. Jesus thereupon answered them, defending the disciples from the charge of sabbath-breaking, and adding "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (verses 27-28).

It is worth noting that those who wish to justify sports or business on the Lord's Day never quote the last clause of Jesus' statement, "there-

fore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath". For this last statement is of course incompatible with the notion that the sabbath is ours to do as we please. If Christ is Lord of the sabbath, then we are responsible to Him, our Lord, for our use of the day.

It is clear that Jesus' statement was not made to contradict or cancel the Fourth Commandment, but to refute a false Jewish interpretation or tradition concerning the sabbath. It is evident that the Pharisees implied that man was made for the sabbath, not the sabbath for man. That is, they had come to look upon the sabbath as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end. This error in turn led to their very external, formalistic, mechanical notions of sabbath observance.

The truth, as Jesus pointed out, is that the sabbath was made for man. It is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. It exists for the purpose of glorifying God by its proper observance by man, and by the benefits, spiritual and temporal, which accrue to man from its proper observance. The sabbath is for God's glory and man's welfare.

But man's welfare means man's **true** welfare. And man's true welfare does not come by doing as he pleases, by indulgence in selfish lusts and pleasures regardless of the moral law of God. Man can never enjoy any real welfare except within the will of God. All "welfare" which is enjoyed in defiance of the authority and law of God is only an illusion.

Jesus' statement, "the sabbath was made for man", implies, then, that the sabbath exists for man's true spiritual and temporal welfare in harmony with the will of God. The sabbath is

for rest and for worship; it is a day of actual present rest, and it is typical of the eternal rest of the people of God (Heb. 4:9). No use of the day which is contrary to its sacred character as a day of rest and worship can be legitimate. (It is, of course a recognized Scriptural principle that works of necessity and mercy may be performed on the sabbath).

Our Lord added, "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath"—a very significant statement, both in what it implies concerning Christ, and in what it implies concerning the sabbath. "But He who is now speaking has taken on himself **Manhood**, the whole nature of Man; and is **rightful Lord** over creation as **granted to man**, and **of all that is made for man**, and therefore **of the Sabbath**. The whole dispensation of **time** is created for **man**, for **Christ as He is man**, and is **in his absolute power**" (Henry Alford). He who cites the words "The sabbath was made for man" to justify his own disregard of the sacredness of the day should remember that Christ is the Lord of the sabbath, and to Christ he will account for his use of the sabbath.

* * * * *

"The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another" (Genesis 31:49). These words have long been used as a closing prayer or benediction in meetings of young people's societies or other organizations of Christian people. They have come to be called "The Mizpah Benediction", and the real nature of the occasion on which the words were first spoken has been quite forgotten. The words are used today in the sense of: "The Lord protect us all and keep us from all evil until we meet together again", a pious wish which is quite proper in it-

self, but quite foreign to the meaning of the verse in Genesis.

Jacob, with his wives and children, had surreptitiously escaped from Laban. Jacob's wife Rachel had stolen her father Laban's idols. Laban pursued after Jacob and overtook him (Gen. 31:25). Very indignant over Jacob's sudden and secret departure, and over the theft of the idols, Laban expostulated, and scolded Jacob roundly. Jacob then became angry (25:36) and answered Laban. Finally Laban proposed that a covenant be made between himself and Jacob (verse 44), and a heap of stones be made as a witness between the two men (46-48). Laban called the heap of stones "Jegar-sahadutha" (Aramaic for "heap of witness"), While Jacob called it "Galeed" (Hebrew for "heap of witness"). It was also called "Mizpah" ("watchtower"), because Laban said, "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another". He added, "This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm" (verse 52).

Thus the heap of stones which was called Mizpah was a sort of boundary marker between Laban and Jacob, who, while formally reconciled, evidently did not fully trust each other. The so-called Mizpah Benediction, far from being an expression of mutual love and fellowship, was rather an invocation of God to see that the terms of the settlement were observed by both parties. The motive was mutual suspicion rather than mutual affection. Thus it is clear that the present-day use of the Mizpah Benediction is improper, because out of accord with the true meaning and context of the verse in the Bible.

Psalm One Hundred Ten

The Victorious Christ

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

I. The KING and His Enemies (verses 1,2)

"Saith Jehovah to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies a stool for thy feet. The scepter of thy power will Jehovah extend from Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."

This Psalm is quoted or referred to in the New Testament more frequently than any other portion of the Old Testament Scriptures. It has very special significance for all time.

The point of departure for correct interpretation was furnished us by the Lord Jesus. His enemies among the Jews had pitted against Him

their keenest minds, from the Sadducees, Herodians, Pharisees, lawyers, and scribes, in desperate effort to trap Him into saying something they could use as an accusation to put Him to death. All their efforts failed. Yet they learned nothing, and their determination to destroy Him was only intensified. Then, the sharp two-edged sword proceeded out from His mouth, and He asked them a question, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They knew their Scriptures, and answered without hesitation, "The son of David". Then, quoting the first verse of this Hundred and Tenth Psalm, He asked for their interpretation of it, saying in effect, "You admit that the Christ is David's son; how then doth David, by the Holy

Spirit, call him Lord?" (Matt. 22:41-46. Mark 12:35-37. Luke 20:41-44).

The only answer, according to the Scriptures which they held to be inerrant, is that Christ is David's Lord as well as David's son. This answer they would not give — could not give without stultifying themselves. So they were silenced, and dared not ask Him any more questions. Plainly here was the Victor standing in the midst of His enemies, while they slunk away.

He marked the ground thus cleared for us by His testimony to four facts: (1) That David wrote this Psalm. (2) That in writing it, David was moved by the Holy Spirit, even as David had said, "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2). (3) That the subject is Himself, the Lord Christ. (4) That He, the Christ, is at the same time both Son of God and Son of Man. In other words, that His divine nature and His human nature are united in one Person. For, in the Hebrew way of thinking, the word for "son" referred, primarily, to nature, not to derivation or origin. When Jesus declared that God was His Father, the Jews correctly understood that He was "making himself equal with God" — of the same nature with God. Likewise, the name "Son of Man", which He gave Himself, declares that He is of the same nature with man. For, "being the eternal Son of God, He became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever."

God, we know, is Spirit. His "right hand" is, for us, a symbolic expression for His executive power. "Sit at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Paul wrote of Christ, "**He must reign** till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:25). "The scepter of thy power will Jehovah extend from Zion." Then the next line is, "**Rule thou** in the midst of thine enemies." There is no inconsistency between these two forms of expression when we remember what Christ said, "I and the Father are one." "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." Of His own works, He said, "The Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." "I do nothing of myself." God, the Father, created the world, but He did it through the Son (Heb. 1:2).

"The scepter of thy power will Jehovah extend from Zion." "Zion" is "the mountain of my holiness" (Psalm 2:6). It became the name of a hill in Jerusalem; afterward of the whole city, as the appointed place for the worship of God, and so it continues as the name of the church. The promise here is to **the church** as set apart for the service of God exclusively. There is no promise that God will extend His power from other places, or other associations of men, for whatsoever purposes they may be formed. The extension of the Kingdom of God is to be realized by divine, not human power.

"Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." The presence of enemies in a kingdom calls for a strong arm to provide and make effective use of defensive and offensive measures. There are friends as well as foes to be considered. And there are many more to be won over to the standards of truth and holiness. "Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies."

"**Rule thou!**" That is exactly what He is doing at the present moment. He has taken to Himself His great power and rules. "And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; . . . And his eyes are as a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems. . . . And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood; and his name is called The Word of God. . . . And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the almighty. And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:11-16).

II. The PRIEST and His People (verses 3,4)

"**Thy people are freewill offerings in the day of thy warfare, in the beauty of holiness: Out of the womb of the morning, to thee (gather), as the dew, thy troops of youth. Sworn hath Jehovah, and he will not repent, THOU art PRIEST forever After the order of Melchizedek.**"

"Thy people", as distinguished from "thine enemies", are volunteers in the strength and eagerness of youth: not unwilling draftees; none are compelled to serve. They offer themselves. They take Thee to be their God, and enter into the covenant to be "Thy people." They gather around their Leader as myriads of dew drops on grass and bush, diamonds sparking in the sunlight—in the beauty of holiness. They are clothed with righteousness, for they are unto our God a kingdom and priests. They follow Him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. "The fine linen is the righteousness of saints", who have come out from among the enemies of Christ and are separated to His service, with a new devotion.

"Sworn hath Jehovah, thou even THOU art Priest forever". Not only King, but also Priest, Priest of Jehovah, the Most High God. Therefore with the right and competency to offer the Acceptable Sacrifice and make intercession for His people. As Priest He deals with God, not for the destruction, but for the salvation of men. By His atoning sacrifice He secures the justifying act of God. He will present the freewill offerings of His people, making them acceptable in His own name.

But, He is a Priest "after the order of Mel-

chizedek", not after the order of Levi, or Aaron; indeed, not of Israel at all. This Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High God **before** he ever met Abraham. He was also, as his name is, King of Righteousness, and as the name of his city was, King of Salem, that is, of the city within whose wall there was **peace**. In Israel the kings were of a different tribe from that of the priests; the two offices were not united. But, in Melchizedek, kingship and priesthood were united; he was a priest-king. So, in this respect, in his being a Gentile, and in many other particulars, he was fitted to be, for all mankind, a necessary type of the great Priest-King of Jehovah.

There is no record of his birth, or of his death. There is no record of the beginning, or of the end of his priesthood. He was never deprived of his priesthood; it was never conferred on another; therefore, as far as the record goes, "he abideth a priest continually" (Heb. 7:3).

Since a priest is a mediator between God and man, he must be accepted by both parties, and "no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God". Jehovah here acknowledges the priesthood of Melchizedek, as constituted by Himself, not in a family, or dynasty, but uniquely in a **person**. Also his priesthood was accepted by Abraham, when Abraham paid him the tithes and received his blessing. "But without any dispute the less is blessed by the greater". The seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews sets forth the pre-eminent greatness of Melchizedek, which consists in that he "was made like unto the Son of God", and that the son of God was ordained "Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek". And He, "because he abideth forever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

III. The PRIEST-KING in His Triumph (verses 5-7)

"The Lord depending on thy right hand Did strike down kings in the day of his wrath. He judges among the nations. He filled (their lands) with dead bodies. He struck down heads over many lands. He drinks of the brook in the way: Therefore he lifts up the head."

"The Lord", not "at thy right hand", as in verse 1 (for the preposition here is a different one), but "**depending on** thy right hand." That is, depending on the power of God, not on what man can do. "He has struck through kings in the day of his wrath" — the kings that were not wise to heed the warning given them in the Second Psalm; the kings that set themselves against Jehovah and against His Christ. He has done it over and over again.

It is a terribly disastrous mistake for the heads and rulers of nations to refuse submission to Christ as King and Priest. It is a terribly disastrous mistake for the leaders and heads of the Church to deny the eternal priesthood of Christ; to scorn the worth of His vicarious sacrifice; to degrade His deity; to explain away His resurrection and ascension as mere ideals without historical reality. It is a terribly disastrous mistake for the people of church and state to refuse to acknowledge Christ as the Head of all government, and as the only Priest available. The Priest-King is sitting on the throne of omnipotence, with the resources of the universe at His command. He will bring all to account and execute the sentence already pronounced. He has done it many, many times. The pages of history attest the facts, even though they be written to obscure the Great Executor. Can men be so deceived as to suppose that His wrath is not already kindled as He sees shameless sin increasing; corruption, duplicity, and incompetence in high places; and open defiance of His rule on every hand? Even now "He is judging among the nations". "Because he is Son of Man, he has been given authority to execute judgment" (John 5:27). It is His prerogative to set the day for the execution of His sentence. And, time after time. "He has filled their lands with dead bodies. He has struck down heads over many lands", "over wide portions of the earth". Surely we can remember the last two World Wars.

The original sentence is carried on to completion, "He shall crush thy head". So must the righteousness and faithfulness of God be shown. But, "a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory, and in his name shall the nations trust." (Matt. 12:20). He will not destroy, if it be possible to save. For, "In righteousness he doth judge and make war."

"He drinks of the brook in the way". In the ancient Greek version, the word we translate "brook" is rendered "winter-flow". For, the "brooks" of Palestine are fed by the winter rains and snows on the mountain tops. In the summer they are dry and parched. The spring season, consequently, is the most favorable time for an army to take to the field. That "He drinks of the brook in the way" informs us that He has come at the opportune time, "at the turn of the year, when kings go out to battle" (2 Sam. 11:1). Where He drinks His followers are supplied. He does not have to go out of His way to search for wells of water that are few and far between. He made the earth and knows how to use it. He takes care of His army.

"Therefore he lifts up the head". This "therefore" certainly refers not merely to a temporary, physical refreshment, but rather to the result that is sure to follow the victory indicated in the preceding lines. The word translated "lift up"

commonly refers to an external lift in position; it means to "set up". As in Psalm 75:7, "God is Judge: He putteth down one, and lifteth up another." As in Psalm 3:3, "Thou, O Jehovah, art . . . my glory and the lifter up of my head." "Having despoiled the principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross." Therefore, He lifts up the Head, the

Head that shall rule, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

"His right hand and His holy arm
"The VICTORY have won!"

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

The Revised Standard Version of the New Testament

Review by the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick

The Revised Standard Version (abbreviated RSV) of the New Testament was published in 1946, accompanied by considerable promotional publicity, by the International Council of Religious Education, as "the most important publication of 1946". Certainly it is not merely another modern translation of the New Testament, in a class with Moffatt's, Weymouth's, Goodspeed's and Williams'. Its publishers do not even call it a modern translation, but "an authorized revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901, which was a revision of the King James Version, published in 1611."

The King James or Authorized Version was revised first in 1881 by a representative group of scholars in Great Britain, in consultation with a similar committee in America. Twenty years later the American committee published its revision, since they had differed considerably from the British, and this version gained preference over the English edition of 1881, but never approached the acceptance with Christian people enjoyed by the AV.

The American Standard Version (abbreviated ARV) of 1901 was copyrighted by Thomas Nelson and Sons, Bible publishers, who in 1929 transferred it to the International Council of Religious Education. That Council in 1937 undertook the publication of another "revision" as they now term the RSV. Thus, this New Testament is claimed to be, not a modern translation, but a revision of the AV.

This is the first thing that sets this version apart, which sets it, in fact, in a class by itself. The hope of its promoters is that it may be the successor to the AV. That was the hope of the revisers of 1881 and 1901 also, but that hope never materialized. It remains to be seen whether or not this one shall. (The RSV of the New Testament is to be followed by a revision of the Old Testament under the same auspices, with publication promised for 1952.) It would seem that its promoters do not intend to leave this version to stand or fall on its merits, as its predecessor, the ARV, was left, but rather to use every means possible to promote its use and popularity.

Oswald T. Allis, in his book, "Revision or New Translation", quotes from the jacket of the initial edition of the RSV, as follows: "The result, critics agree, is a Version of the New Testament more accurate in translation than any previous and, because of its beautiful modern English, more useful, understandable, and pleasurable to the twentieth-century reader." Dr. Allis remarks that his copy of this New Testament came to him with the request that he make no public use of it until February 11, 1946, the date of "publication". As this was apparently the plan followed in distributing the RSV, it is evident that the "critics" quoted for sales promotion purposes are carefully chosen "critics" known to be friendly. Thus, these original recommendations have not come freely from the field.

Then the International Council of Religious Education, an inter-denominational organization "which represents 44 denominations" has great influence on the lines taken by these denominations in their S.S. work, and it is using its influence to cultivate the use of the RSV. Whether due to such means or to merit, one million copies were sold the first year.

As an indication of the success already achieved, the American Bible Society, at its annual meeting on May 10, 1951, learned from its Advisory Council that an examination had been made which "indicated that the denominations supporting the Society would overwhelmingly approve or would not object to" the circulation of the RSV New Testament. Hence, the constitution of the Society was amended to permit this.

It is obvious that this New Testament holds a place of importance which demands its thorough study. One of the most intensive studies made so far is that by Oswald T. Allis, quoted above, a thoroughly competent scholar, formerly a professor of Princeton Theological Seminary. Then there have been numerous shorter studies, reviews and articles, besides the small volume prepared by the revisers themselves, "An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament", designed to help the general public to understand the main principles which have guided

this comprehensive revision of the King James and American Standard Version". Hence, the present article will deviate somewhat from the lines followed in the former ones in this series. Those interested in detailed analysis are referred to the sources mentioned above.

The committee that prepared the RSV included in all 31 names, but several died or retired during the period of preparation, and during the period of preparation, and during the years of World War II it proved to be impractical to try to collaborate with the British members of the committee. The nine that composed the final committee included the following names: Goodspeed of Chicago University, Cadbury of Harvard, Burrows and Weigle of Yale, Bowie and Moffatt of Union Theological Seminary of New York, Wentz of Gettysburg Lutheran, Craig of Oberlin and Grant of Seabury-Western. All are solidly on record as being committed to a liberal attitude with respect to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian Faith, such as the inspiration of the Scriptures, the virgin birth, miracles, and others.

Though the committee was unanimously liberal, there is abundant evidence of a studied effort to win the support of the whole Christian Church, including the conservative wing. The original jacket stated that "no changes in doctrinal or fundamental concepts" were produced. It lauds the "near perfection" of the ARV, and states that such errors as have become "known by study of recently discovered manuscripts have been corrected." Two points in the ARV especially have drawn criticism from conservatives, the text of 2 Tim. 3:16 and a footnote on John 9:38; the ground for criticism in both has been eliminated in the RSV. Then in the "Preface" the charter of the committee is quoted to the effect that "all changes in the text shall be agreed upon by a two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Committee", and they state that this is "a more conservative rule than that which had governed revision hitherto, which required only a two-thirds vote of members present." Of course, this last matter has nothing to do with whether the resultant revision is "conservative" theologically or not, since the whole committee was liberal.

There is no question that the RSV has regained something of the "rhythmic beauty of the 335-year-old King James Version", which the ARV lost. Neither is there any question that many words and phrases not readily understandable to the reader little acquainted with the Scriptures, have been eliminated. And, if this version were merely presented as a modern translation, to stand or fall on its merit when tested in the mills of time, these two salutary features would carry considerable weight. For the "majesty and purity" of the Word of God, its "light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation", its unique, divine char-

acter, these are not easily obscured to the uncritical reader.

However, when this version is presented as one that should replace the AV and the ARV, it is quite a different matter. If it is to be used for detailed and analytical study by those not acquainted with the critical aspects of the transmission of the Word of God, then the care with which the version presents accurately the original is of first importance. Accuracy of translation, not rhythmic beauty or even elimination of difficult words, must be the first goal.

It is abundantly clear that these revisers have not been primarily concerned with reproducing accurately what the original manuscripts say, but what the revisers think they meant to say. Dr. Cadbury says, "To this (the mere translation) he (the translator) adds whatever he may modestly claim to have achieved of real insight into the meaning of the original." In further comparing the work of the original N.T. authors with the modern translator, he says, "As they wrote with neither grammatical precision nor absolute verbal consistency, he is willing to deal somewhat less meticulously with the data of a simple style that was naturally not too particular about modes of expression or conscious of some of the subtleties which some later interpreters read into it" (emphasis mine, L.E.K.) So when you come to a change in the RSV from the AV, you cannot be sure whether the difference came from the study of a newer and better manuscript of the original, or whether it is merely what Dr. Cadbury thinks the writer meant to say.

Dr. Moffatt, in speaking of the difficulties that confront the translator, has expressed his convictions: "But once the translation of the N.T. is freed from the influence of the theory of verbal inspiration, these difficulties cease to be so formidable." Thus, as we found in the study of Moffatt's own translation ("Blue Banner Faith and Life", 1950, p. 83), he dealt quite freely with the text. Mr. Wentz says, "It has been our effort not only to determine as precisely as possible what we understand the original author to mean, but to take that exact message and transmit it in terms that the reader and hearer of our day cannot misunderstand." In other words, Mr. Wentz is not trying to tell us just what the N.T. writer said, but what he, Mr. Wentz, thinks the writer meant — two very different things. To tell what the Bible means is interpretation, and two men may differ radically as to what a particular sentence means, because of differing premises, though the words may be explicit and readily agreed on.

When we realize that Greek scholars have charged that the translation is loose, often to the point of being a paraphrase, then one sees the need for critically questioning the version's more understandable language in some of the difficult places in the Scriptures.

Thus, this volume has much to indicate that it may go far to achieve the place intended by the committee that prepared it. It is of pleasing style and uses a phraseology readily understandable today. It has the backing of a powerful interdenominational organization which may well take the place of a critical study on the part of many denominational leaders. It claims to build on the achievements of the ARV in correcting the admitted defects of the AV. (This, Dr. Allis insists it has not done.) Its publicity program has been thorough and there was insurance that the initial reports of its appearance were favorable. And finally, the AV does stand in need of some correction which the ARV failed to achieve acceptably. And no version can be expected to be without fault and free from criticism.

On the other side of the ledger stands the well-known liberal character of the Committee that prepared the RSV. Because of this, from some, at least, of conservatives it will receive critical study. Then, there is the immense and well established popularity of the AV. Its diction, unchanged in 300 years, has left its mark imperishably in the literature of the English language and in memorized passages in the hearts of multitudes. Then, finally — and this may well be the determining factor — it is simply not, and does not claim to be, a faithful, scientific reproduction of the original. Scholars of the next generation — and at best it would take that long to establish the RSV as a successor to the AV — though likewise liberal, may well think the N.T. writers meant something different from that

which the present Committee thought they meant, so that the RSV will be no more acceptable to them than the AV. Cold, scientific fact and honesty, coupled with evangelical faith, may well spell out "also ran" for the RSV.

But in the meantime, the warning of Dr. Allis that this is really a modern translation rather than a revision of the AV, should be observed.

(Besides the book by Allis, studies by R. C. Foster of Cincinnati Bible Seminary and by N. B. Stonehouse of Westminster Theological Seminary, have been used freely in the preparation of this article).

Additional Note to the Article on Williams' N.T. in the Last Issue

A reader has called attention to Williams' translation of Rom. 10:4, "For Christ has put an end to law as a way of right standing for everyone who trusts in Him." (In a footnote Williams gives, "is the end of the law", which is identical with the AV reading.) As our reader points out, Williams' translation of this verse indicates that the law was once a way of gaining right standing before God, but Christ put an end to that. Such an idea is not in accord with the rest of Scripture, though it is an idea basic to the scheme of interpretation of the **Scofield Reference Bible** and the **Pilgrim Edition of the Holy Bible**. This is a significant observation in evaluating this translation, and thanks are hereby tendered to the reader who has called attention to it.

— L. E. Kilpatrick

Studies in the Epistle to the Romans

LESSON 40

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

B. The Jews Rejected Because of their Unbelief, as Predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures. 9:25-33

In 9:1-24 Paul has shown that God's rejection of the Jews and His calling of the Gentiles is not inconsistent with His promises, and he has set forth with emphasis the truth that God is absolutely sovereign in bestowing His gracious favor upon men. God is accountable to no one but Himself, and He has always acted in absolute consistency with Himself — with His own nature, Word and promises.

Next, the apostle undertakes to show that the Jews were rejected for their unbelief, as predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures. First, he quotes from the prophet Hosea (2:23; 1:10), "I will call them my people, which were not my people, and her beloved, which was not beloved.

And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God." The name "Osee" in Rom. 9:25 is of course merely a Greek form of the Old Testament "Hosea". It will be noted that Paul's quotation of Hosea differs somewhat from the wording in the Authorized Version of the Old Testament. This is not a serious difficulty, for Paul's version is a legitimate translation of the Hebrew original, as in the Hebrew the same word can mean both "have mercy on" and "love". Moreover, the Holy Spirit is the real author of both the prophecy of Hosea and the Epistle to the Romans, and when an author is quoting from his own earlier writings, absolute literal identity is not required; an author has some liberty in quoting his own words, that would be improper in quoting the words of another.

A more serious problem concerns the fact

that in Hosea the promise concerns the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel, whereas Paul (and also Peter in 1 Pet. 2:10) applies it to the Gentiles. Because Hosea was writing of the ten tribes, some scholars have supposed that Paul in Rom. 9:25 had a restoration of the Jews in mind. This interpretation is untenable, however, because it cannot be made to fit the context in Romans 9, where the subject is very plainly the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles. The most probable solution of the difficulty is that in Hosea's time the ten tribes were in a heathenish condition, being deeply involved in idolatry, and therefore from the religious point of view they were practically on a par with the Gentile nations. Hence what Hosea said of the Gentile-like ten tribes, Paul could properly apply to the Gentiles in general — the time would come when those who were not God's people, would be called His people, and when she who was not beloved, would be called beloved.

In considering verses 25 and 26 we should realize how utterly contrary these verses are to the common popular notion of "the universal brotherhood of man". There are in the world two classes of people, those who are God's people, and those who are not God's people; those who are beloved with God's redemptive love, and those who are not so beloved. The one class are in a covenant relationship with God; they know God as their own God; God is their God, and they are God's people. The other class are strangers and foreigners, aliens from God, at enmity with God, far away from any religious communion or covenant bond with God. By the gracious calling of God, those who were not His people may become His people. But what we should note is, that this comes to pass only by the gracious calling of God. It is not true that all mankind are God's children (in the religious and ethical sense) by nature. By nature they are the children of wrath. By the special, saving grace of God alone do they become children of God, His people, beloved. We should keep this truth clearly in mind in a day when the liberal dogma of "the universal brotherhood of man" seems to be regarded as an unquestionable truth by many of the leading religious teachers of our day.

The Old Testament, then, predicted the calling and salvation of Gentiles. While this seems quite obvious to us today, we must remember that it was a strange and difficult teaching to those who had been brought up in the tenets of Pharisaic Judaism, as many of Paul's original readers had been. If the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles had not been regarded as an extremely difficult doctrine, certainly the apostle would not have labored so long and elaborately to prove the point.

Next, the apostle quotes from the prophecy of Isaiah (10:22,23: 1:9), to prove from the Old

Testament Scriptures that the Jews as a nation were not to be saved, but only a remnant or inner core of the external nation of Israel. It will be observed that Paul's quotation varies somewhat from Isaiah 10:22,23 as it appears in the Authorized Version. The apostle's version is more like the Septuagint (Greek translation of the O.T.) than like the Hebrew original, although the general meaning is identical. Here again it must be borne in mind that this is a case of the divine Author, the Holy Spirit, quoting his own previous writings. It is not, therefore, inconsistent with the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of Scripture.

The point is evidently that, according to Isaiah's prophecy, it is not the whole body of Israel, in number as the sand of the sea, that is to receive salvation, but only a small fraction of this whole body, namely, "remnant". This plainly implies, then, the divine purpose of rejection of the Jews as a nation. Verse 28, quoting from Isaiah, predicts the divine work of judgment which is threatened against the apostate mass of the Jews.

Verse 29 is from Isaiah 1:9. Where Paul has "a seed", Isaiah has "a very small remnant". The word "seed" is taken by Paul from the Greek version of the O. T., and its meaning in this context is precisely the same as that of "a very small remnant" — the seed reserved for sowing the future crop, which is a very small fraction of the total harvest of the previous year. It was only the grace of God that prevented Israel from becoming completely like Sodom and Gomorrah. The great majority became thus apostate and heathenish. But God preserved a "seed", a "very small remnant" of saved, spiritual persons, to maintain the continuity of the covenant people. How mistaken it is, then to hold that the gracious promises of God were given to Israel after the flesh, to the Jews as Jews, as those physically descended from Abraham!

Questions:

1. What does Paul undertake to show in 9:25-33?
2. From what Old Testament prophet does the apostle first quote?
3. How can we explain the fact that Rom. 9:25 differs from Hos. 2:23 as found in the Authorized Version?
4. Who is the real author of both Old Testament and New Testament?
5. What liberty may an author properly take in quoting from his own previous writings?
6. Concerning whom was Hosea speaking in Hos. 2:23?
7. How can it be explained that Paul applies Hos. 2:23 to the calling of the Gentiles?
8. What is the bearing of Rom. 9:25,26 on the

liberal notion of "the universal brotherhood of man"?

9. Why does Paul argue at such length to prove the rejection of the Jews and the calling of Gentiles?

10. What Old Testament prophet is next quoted by Paul?

11. What does Isa. 10:22,23 show concerning the salvation of the Jews?

12. Why is the meaning of "seed" the same as that of "a very small remnant"?

13. How was the continuity of God's covenant people maintained in the face of general apostasy?

LESSON 41

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

B. The Jews Rejected Because of their Unbelief, as Predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures. 9:25-33, Continued

From the human point of view it would have seemed very improbable to the Jews that the Gentiles would receive salvation. But that which was contrary to human probability, actually took place. The Gentiles, who were deeply sunk in sin and very far from God, received righteousness and salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ, while the Jews, who considered themselves specialists in achieving righteousness, failed to attain it. This is Paul's argument in 9:30,31. The Gentiles "followed not after righteousness"—it was not a serious concern to them as it was to the Pharisaic Jews. Yet, through the saving grace of God, they actually attained to "the righteousness which is of faith"; that is to say, they came to believe on Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and were justified, or pronounced righteous before God, by the perfect righteousness of Christ being imputed to them.

It was the paradox and tragedy of Israel that those who were intensely concerned about righteousness and who prided themselves on the attainment and possession of righteousness, failed of the righteousness which can meet the requirements of God's holy law. They "followed after the law of righteousness" — they made a business of seeking righteousness. There is some difficulty as to precisely what is meant by "the law of righteousness". Calvin interprets the expression as meaning the law which they thought would result in their attaining righteousness, or being justified.

The reason why the Jews failed to attain righteousness is stated in verse 32. It was "Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law". That is, they refused to accept the only way of justification that meets the need of sinners; and they attempted to attain righteousness on the basis of works, as Adam and Eve might have done before the fall. Just as Cain attempted to stand before God on the basis of his own works or character, so the Jews of Paul's day attempted to stand before God on the basis of their own works or character. Just as Cain was unwilling to approach God by faith, confessing himself a sinner and placing his trust

simply in the slain lamb of the sacrifice (as Abel did), so the Jews of Paul's day were unwilling—perversely and stubbornly unwilling — to approach God by faith, confessing themselves sinners and placing their trust simply in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Thus their rejection by God was their own fault; no one but themselves was to blame for it. Those who are saved, are saved solely because of the sovereign grace of God. But those who are rejected and condemned, are rejected and condemned because of their own sin.

"... as it were by the works of the law." The phrase "as it were" here means that **THEY SUPPOSED** that righteousness could be attained by the works of the law. Actually, it is impossible for sinners to obtain righteousness by their own personal works of law observance (3:20); but the Jews were self-deceived and so went on with their vain quest for righteousness with zeal and earnestness.

"For they stumbled at that stumbling stone" (9:32). "That stumblingstone", of course, is Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The Jews stumbled at accepting Jesus Christ as the Messiah; they were not willing to confess themselves sinners and accept salvation according to God's plan and on God's terms.

That Christ would be "a stumblingstone" was revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul here refers to Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14. The apostle has evidently combined parts of these two texts of Isaiah into a single statement in Rom. 9:33. Being inspired by the same Holy Spirit who was the real author of the Prophecy of Isaiah, it was of course entirely proper for Paul to do this. As already explained in the previous lesson, in every case where the New Testament quotes the Old, we really have a case of the Author (God the Holy Spirit) quoting from His own previous writings; consequently a freedom is proper which would be out of place in one human author quoting the writings of another, apart from divine inspiration.

Isaiah 28 is a prophecy directed against those who trusted in others than God, seeking an alli-

ance with Egypt as protection against the danger of Assyrian aggression. In other words, those who placed their confidence in man and in human methods and power rather than in the power of God. To such persons, the message of God was that he would "lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (Isa. 28:16). This is a prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Israel could not be destroyed by enemies until the promised Messiah had come. Therefore they need not fear the power of Assyria; they should place their trust in the promises of God, in the coming Messiah and His work of redemption, rather than in worldly alliances and methods.

Isaiah 8:14 urges the people of Judah not to fear the alliance between Syria and Ephraim. "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Isa. 8:12-14). God thus announced that He would be a sanctuary or refuge to one class of persons, but a rock of offense to another class of persons. Some would put their trust in Him, while others would stubbornly refuse to put their trust in Him. The apostle Paul properly uses this text as applying to people's attitude toward Jesus Christ. He, as the Son of God, would be accepted by some, but proudly rejected by others. "The whole spirit, opinions, and expectations of the Jews were adverse to the person, character, and doctrines of the Redeemer. He was, therefore, to them a stumbling-block, as he was to

others foolishness. They could not recognize him as their fondly anticipated Messiah, nor consent to enter the kingdom of heaven on the terms which he prescribed. In them, therefore, were fulfilled the ancient prophecies, which spoke of their rejection of Christ, and consequent excision from the people of God" (Charles Hodge).

Questions:

1. What seemed very improbable to the Jews, from their human point of view?
2. What is meant by the statement that the Gentiles "followed not after righteousness"?
3. How did the Gentiles attain to righteousness?
4. What was the great paradox and tragedy of Israel?
5. Why did the Jews fail to attain to righteousness?
6. How did Cain attempt to approach God?
7. How was Abel's approach to God different from Cain's?
8. In what way were the Jews of Paul's day similar to Cain?
8. On what ground are some people rejected and condemned by God?
10. What is the stumblingstone at which the Jews stumbled?
11. How does Isaiah 28:16 apply to Paul's argument?
12. What is the bearing of Isaiah 8:14 on Paul's argument?

LESSON 42

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

C. The Simplicity and Adequacy of the Gospel Way of Salvation. 10:1-10

In the closing verses of chapter 9 Paul has explained how Israel came to miss salvation, and how the Gentiles came to receive it. The Jews attempted to substitute a wrong, counterfeit, impossible way of obtaining righteousness. They were sincere and intensely earnest, but completely wrong. Paul himself had been of their persuasion, before his conversion to Jesus Christ. Sincerity and zeal are not enough to save us. We must also be in the pathway of truth. Why do so many sincere and earnest people reject the Gospel of Christ today? They reject it because, like the Jews of old, their minds are already prejudiced in favor of false notions of their own.

In the opening verses of chapter 10 Paul expresses his affectionate desire for the salvation

of the people of Israel. It was his heart's desire and prayer to God that they might be saved (10:1). As the truth which the apostle was teaching was most distasteful to Jewish readers, he takes special pains to assure them of his affection and real desire for their welfare. "We see here, with what great solicitude a holy man will avoid offenses" (John Calvin). We, too, should seek to avoid giving offense as far as possible without sacrificing loyalty to the truth. Bearing witness to divine truth does not imply that we must make the truth seem as distasteful as possible; on the contrary, we should make every right effort to remove difficulties and occasions of offense. If people insist on contradicting the truth of God, that is their responsibility; but we should see to it that we present the truth in as acceptable and winsome a manner as possible, lest our spirit of anger or impatience or hostility turn men away from the truth we proclaim.

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (10:2). Having a zeal of God was good; it was commendable, as far as it went. However, the Jews' zeal of God was really worthless because it was "not according to knowledge". Their zeal was directed to a wrong object, and therefore it was a sinful and ineffective zeal. The word for "knowledge" here is the very strong Greek term **EPIGNOSIS**, meaning "moral knowledge", "correct knowledge and appreciation" (Charles Hodge). The ordinary Greek term for "knowledge" is **GNOSIS**, which means simply "knowledge", "information"; whereas **EPIGNOSIS** means right knowledge, a morally discerning knowledge. "Their knowledge was neither enlightened nor wise; neither right as to its objects, nor correct in its character" (Charles Hodge). The Jews were very zealous for their inherited traditions and for the establishment of their own legal righteousness, and at the same time, naturally, they were very proud and censorious. Their zeal, so far as it was a zeal for God, was better than indifference, which explains why the apostle could commend it with reservations.

"For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (10:3). In spite of all their earnest zeal, the Jews were completely wrong about the most important question, namely, how can a sinful man be justified by the holy God? To this vitally important question they gave the wrong answer that man can be justified by God on the basis of his own personal observance of the law of God. This error was not a mere innocent mistake; it was an error that involved deep moral guilt on their part. For their notion of justification implied wrong views of God, of the requirements of God's law, and of their own moral and spiritual condition. They had much too low an idea of the character of God, they had much too low an idea of the requirements of God's law, and they had much too high an idea of themselves, their own powers and attainments. To be wrong about such matters as these is not only the result of sin, it is itself great sin. Those who were wrong at these crucial points were spiritually blind men, and it was no advantage to them that they were perhaps in the right on many other matters — minor matters.

Here "their own righteousness" is contrasted with "the righteousness of God". The former expression clearly means the righteousness which they attempted to establish by their own actions. There is some difficulty as to the exact meaning of the phrase "the righteousness of God" in this passage. As it is contrasted with "their own righteousness", the meaning is probably "the righteousness of which God is the source", "the righteousness which is received from God".

Not realizing that there is a "righteousness

of God" available to sinners by faith in the Redeemer, the Jews went busily about attempting to establish their own righteousness by a careful, laborious life of obedience to all the precepts of the law of God. Knowing nothing of the availability of salvation as a gift of grace, they went right on in their vain, impossible effort to attain righteousness by their own good life.

We should realize that this error was not peculiar to the Jews of Paul's time. It is characteristic of sinners of every time and place. The human heart, in its sinful pride and stubbornness, naturally tends to attempt to establish its own righteousness by good works. This is the explanation of the tremendous popularity of what is today called "the religion of the Golden Rule". Prominent men are quoted as saying "the Golden Rule is all the religion I need", and similar statements. As there is no Gospel, no Christ, and no salvation in the Golden Rule, such men are saying that they need no Gospel, no Christ and no salvation. Their religion, though differing greatly in outward form, is essentially the same as that of the Pharisees of old. They regard religion as a matter of human works and character, no more and no less. It is the old theology of Cain, still alive in the world today. Though it is still the same old error, it goes by different names today. Some of the common ones are "salvation by character", "high ideals", "spiritual values", "service", "the Jesus way of life", "the Christian way of life", "character building", "character education", "being true to one's own better nature", "seeking the higher things of life", "brotherhood", "religious emphasis", "social service". All of these, if not founded upon the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner (and they usually are not) are only forms of the false religion of human works or merit, and are essentially identical with the efforts of the Pharisaic Jews to establish "their own righteousness" while they remained ignorant of the righteousness of God.

"... have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God". This expression ("have not submitted themselves") indicates a sinful stubbornness, a guilty unbelief. It implies an unwillingness to know, accept and yield to the plan of salvation revealed by God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So also at the present day, those who reject or by-pass the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and seek to substitute for it their own miserable make-shifts such as "character building", are not only unfortunately mistaken, they are involved in guilty unbelief. This is not mitigated by the fact that they may seem to be very earnest, very pious, very religious, and to be doing a lot of good in human society.

Questions:

1. Why do sincere and earnest people reject the Gospel of Christ today?

2. What desire does Paul express in 10:1?
3. What lesson can we learn from Paul's statement in 10:1?
4. Why was the Jews' zeal of God really worthless?
5. What is the meaning of the Greek word translated "knowledge" in 10:2?
6. Concerning what vitally important question were the Jews completely wrong?
7. What was wrong with their idea of God's character and of the requirements of God's law?

8. What was wrong with their idea of their own powers and attainments?

9. What is meant by the expression "the righteousness of God"?

10. What error is characteristic of sinners of every time and place?

11. What are some of the popular terms used today to designate the religion of salvation by human works?

12. What is implied by the expression "have not submitted themselves" in 10:3?

LESSON 43

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

C. The Simplicity and Adequacy of the Gospel Way of Salvation. 10:1-10, Cont.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (10:4). The heart of the Gospel is the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Salvation comes not by our own keeping of the law, but by Christ's work for us. He contains within Himself all that the law demands for our justification.

Though the general meaning of this verse is perfectly clear, there is some difficulty concerning the precise meaning of the expression "end of the law". There are three possible meanings. (1) "Christ is the end of the law" may mean "Christ is the One toward whom the law, in all its parts and elements, pointed and to whom it leads the sinner" (compare Gal. 3:24). (2) Or the meaning may be: "Christ is the One who fulfills and completes all the requirements, types, etc., of the law, and who satisfies all the demands of the law". (3) Or it may mean: "Christ is the One who terminates the law, who puts an end to the law, abolishes the law, transfers the believer from the Covenant of Works to the Covenant of Grace". Charles Hodge states that the first meaning is adopted by Calvin and most of the commentators; that the second is Scriptural in doctrine, but is not consistent with the meaning of the Greek word for "end" (TELOS, which does not properly mean "completion" or "fulfilment", for which the Greek word would be not TELOS but PLEROMA); and that the third meaning is the correct one. "The doctrine is clearly taught in Scripture, that those who are out of Christ are under the law, subject to its demands and exposed to its penalty. His coming and work have put an end to its authority, we are no longer under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14); we are no longer under the system which says, Do this, and live; but under that which says, Believe, and thou shalt be saved. This abrogation of the law, however, is not by setting it aside, but by fulfilling its demands. It is because Christ is the

fulfiller of the law, that he is the end of it. It is the latter truth that the apostle here asserts" (Charles Hodge).

The meaning, then, we take to be: "Christ has put an end to the law as a requirement for righteousness before God, by fulfilling its demands and satisfying its penalty". So far as being counted righteous before God is concerned, the believer is FINISHED with the law. He has been transferred from the Covenant of Works to the Covenant of Grace. No longer is he under the penalty of the broken Covenant of Works; no longer need he continue the desperate and futile attempt to attain righteousness by obedience to the law of God. Just as a person who is naturalized as a citizen of the United States of America is finished with the claims of his former country, so the Christian, so far as obtaining righteousness is concerned, is finished with the requirements of the law.

This may be illustrated as follows: a person who is burdened with a heavy load of debt finds himself unable to pay it off. He would like to get free, and he tries hard to do so, but finds that it is all he can do just to pay the interest on the debt, let alone paying anything on the principal. It takes all his efforts to pay the interest from time to time; in fact, he cannot even do that, so that, instead of getting out of debt, he gets deeper and deeper in debt all the time. Then a wealthy friend steps in and magnanimously pays off the entire debt for him, all in one lump sum. Then he is FINISHED with trying to wipe out his obligations by paying small instalments that do not even take care of the interest on his debt. He is finished with that, because the principal has been paid off for him by another. Just so the Christian is finished with the law, so far as being justified before God is concerned; Christ has paid off the obligation for him, once for all.

In considering the interpretation of this verse, Romans 10:4, two errors must be carefully avoided. The first of these errors is the idea that the

people of Israel from Moses to Christ lived under a system of justification by works of the law. Such is not the meaning of the apostle, nor of Charles Hodge in his comments upon this verse. Some modern Dispensationalists, however, have held (though usually inconsistently) that Israel from Moses to Christ lived under a system of justification by works; that from Abraham to Moses salvation was by "promise", from Moses to Christ by "law", and after Christ by "grace". This doctrine involves a serious misunderstanding of the Old Testament. The Pharisaic system of Judaism, of course, taught salvation by works, as Judaism still does today. But this is nowhere taught in the Old Testament. Judaism is one thing; the religion revealed in the Old Testament is another. The former is legalistic; the latter is gracious.

The Covenant of Works as an actual way of obtaining eternal life began and ended in the Garden of Eden. When Adam sinned, the Covenant of Works came to an end as an actual way by which human beings could obtain eternal life. But all sinners who have not come under the provisions of the Covenant of Grace are still under the curse and penalty of the broken Covenant of Works. Such persons try to gain eternal life by their own works — a vain and futile attempt, to be sure, but still the attempt is continually being made. Paul in Gal. 5:3 informs all who attempt to gain eternal life that way that they are debtors to keep the whole law of God. That is, God's law requires perfect obedience and absolute moral perfection, and those who attempt to gain eternal life by law observance are in the position of undertaking to render this—a manifest impossibility.

Actually, the religion of the Old Testament is gracious through and through. It is not "a covenant of works", but the Old Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace. Through the sacrifices, provision was made for salvation by grace through faith in the promised Redeemer. When Paul says that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, he does not mean that before the time of Christ, the Jews obtained or could have obtained righteousness by the law. He only means that they **attempted** to obtain righteousness by the law, and that for every one that believeth, Christ puts a stop to the futile attempt. What the sinner could never really do, Christ has done for him, once and for all. The law always says "Do!" but the Gospel of Christ says "Done!"

The second error that must be avoided is the teaching that the Christian believer is no longer under the law in any sense whatever. There are those who teach that since Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth, the Christian is no longer under any obligation to obey the law of God. Those who teach thus include both the ceremonial law and the moral law. Even the Ten

Commandments, they claim, are no longer binding upon the Christian, because he is not under law, but under grace. The writer of these studies has noted the sad results of this kind of teaching on the foreign mission field. "We are not under law but under grace" becomes the ready excuse for serious lapses from moral rectitude.

It must be pointed out that while the believer is delivered from the law as a supposed way of obtaining righteousness, and has been delivered from the penalty and curse of the law (Gal. 3:13), this does not mean that the Christian is no longer under the moral law of God as the rule of his life. The moral law is an expression of the character of God and hence is eternal and unchangeable. It cannot be repealed; no rational creature can ever, to all eternity, be exempted from the duty of obeying it. Paul himself specifically disclaimed being exempt from the law in this sense (1 Cor. 9:21). The Christian is saved unto a life of righteousness (1 Peter 2:24). But what is a life of righteousness? How is the Christian to know what is righteous and what is not, what is right and what is wrong, in his daily life? By the moral law of God, which is summarized in the Ten Commandments and expanded in the whole Bible. Day by day, the Christian is to strive after a life that is in harmony with the moral law of God, not in order to obtain eternal life, but because he has already obtained eternal life and now desires to thank and please God. The moral law tells the Christian what is right (pleasing to God) and what is wrong (displeasing to God). In this sense the Christian remains under the law.

Questions:

1. What three possible meanings have been suggested for the phrase "the end of the law"?
2. Which of these possible meanings is probably the correct one?
3. How has Christ put an end to the law for the believer?
4. How may the truth that Christ has put an end to the law for the believer be illustrated?
5. What error concerning the period from Moses to Christ is held by some modern Dispensationalists?
6. What is the difference between Judaism and the religion of the Old Testament?
7. When did the Covenant of Works end as an actual way of obtaining eternal life?
8. In what respect are unsaved sinners still under the Covenant of Works?
9. How can it be shown that the religion of the Old Testament was gracious?
10. In what respect is the Christian believer still under the moral law?

11. What did Paul state in 1 Cor. 9:21 concerning his own relation to the law?

12. Why should a Christian try to obey the law of God?

13. Why can the moral law never be canceled or repealed?

14. What text in Peter's first Epistle teaches that the Christian is saved unto a life of righteousness?

LESSON 44

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

C. The Simplicity and Adequacy of the Gospel Way of Salvation. 10:1-10, Cont.

"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (10:5). This verse quotes from Leviticus 18:5. The meaning is that the law requires perfect obedience, and only by rendering such perfect obedience could anyone obtain righteousness by the law. Neither Paul nor Moses meant that it was ever, since the Fall, actually possible for men to render perfect obedience and so obtain righteousness and eternal life. Paul (and Moses) merely set forth the principle of righteousness by works; there had been a time (in Eden, before the Fall) when men could actually obtain righteousness and life in accordance with that principle; but in the time of Paul (as in the time of Moses) that was no longer an actual possibility, because man had fallen into sin and had become corrupt in heart and life. Though righteousness by works was no longer an actual possibility, the principle of it could still be cited, for the purpose of contrast with the principle of righteousness by the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

The life mentioned in verse 5 "is a life which includes the whole man, soul and body, and the whole course of his existence, in this world and in that which is to come" (Charles Hodge). This is the life which was symbolized by the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, of which man was deprived after his fall into sin (Gen. 3:22-24). Since that sad day, man's only way of obtaining righteousness and eternal life has been through the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)" (10:6,7). Paul has just been implying (10:5) that it is impossible for man to attain righteousness by rendering a perfect obedience to the law of God. The law as set forth by Moses calls for performance which sinful man cannot render. Hence the attainment of righteousness by that method is impossible.

Paul next proceeds to show that the Gospel way of salvation does not involve any such impossibilities. It does not make righteousness and

life depend upon conditions which are utterly beyond the power of sinful man to meet. We do not have to climb to heaven to obtain righteousness, nor do we have to descend to the abyss to get it — both of which are utterly beyond human power. Paul is alluding here to the language used by Moses in Deut. 30:10-14. In that passage, to bring something down from heaven, or to go over the sea to bring something from beyond the sea, are represented as impossible tasks, beyond human power of accomplishment. In contrast to these impossible tasks, what God set before the people of Israel was within the capacity of those enabled by divine grace: "But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (Deut. 30:14). What is spoken of is, of course, not merely the moral law (which no sinner can perfectly fulfil), but the whole system given to Israel through Moses, including its sacrifices, types, symbols, ordinances, priesthood and prophecies, by which the way of salvation through a Redeemer was placed before the minds of the people. This was the system of salvation by grace, and by accepting and living in this system, the Israelite professed his faith, and was a recipient of salvation.

Clearly "to ascend into heaven", "to go beyond the sea", "to descend into the deep (or the abyss, the bottomless deep)" were proverbial expressions used to designate something regarded as utterly impossible. Various parallels from other parts of the Scriptures can be cited (Psalm 139:6. Prov. 24:7. Amos 9:2. Psalm 139:8,9). Paul changes Moses' expression "who shall go over the sea for us?" to "Who shall descend into the deep?" The Greek word for "deep" is the word from which our English word "abyss" is derived. Its proper meaning is "bottomless". In the New Testament, except for Rom. 10:7, this word always means the place of lost souls and fallen angels (Luke 8:31. Rev. 17:8; 20:1). Probably Paul changed Moses' expression about going over the sea to one about descending into the abyss, because the latter is more suitable for referring to Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Paul's purpose in the present passage is to show the simplicity and adequacy of God's way of salvation. Accordingly, he first refutes the notion that it requires impossible achievements of men. It does not require men to render absolute perfect obedience to God's law as the con-

dition of righteousness and life — something which is, in reality, as impossible as to climb to heaven or to descend to the abyss. We do not have to try to save ourselves; we have a Saviour. We do not have to attempt to provide a Saviour for ourselves, by bringing Him down from heaven to earth, or by bringing him up from the realm of death; all this has already been done for us by God, and salvation is now offered to men in the Gospel of Christ.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of Levit. 18:5, "The man which doeth those things shall live by them"?
2. Why does Levit. 18:5 not mean that sinful man can actually obtain righteousness by his own works?
3. When did the principle of righteousness by works operate as an actual way by which man could obtain eternal life?

4. What is the meaning of the life referred to in 10:5?

5. What was represented by the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden?

6. Why were Adam and Eve debarred from access to the Tree of Life?

7. What expressions does Paul use to serve as examples of something impossible for man to accomplish?

8. What is the meaning of Deut. 30:10-14?

9. What is the meaning of the word "deep" in the Greek of 10:7?

10. What place does this word almost always designate in the New Testament?

11. What has God done for sinners, which they could never do for themselves?

LESSON 45

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

C. The Simplicity and Adequacy of the Gospel Way of Salvation. 10:1-10, Cont.

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; . . ." (10:8). The Gospel way of salvation is not something inaccessible, beyond human reach, too far, too high, or too low to be taken hold of; it does not require us to perform impossible feats before we can be saved; on the contrary, what the Gospel way of salvation asks of a person is something near at hand, within reach, easy to take hold of. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach". The person who really wants salvation is not baffled and frustrated by impossible demands; the person who really hungers and thirsts for righteousness is not mocked by being told to do some great thing. As Naaman the Syrian finally learned, what is required is not grand achievements, but a simple, childlike, obedient faith in the Word of God.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (10:9,10). Here we have presented to us what the Gospel way of salvation requires of men: confession and faith. With the mouth we are to confess the Lord Jesus (or, more precisely, "that Jesus is Lord"); with the heart we are to believe that God has raised Him from the dead.

Faith comes before confession (or profession)

in a person's experience, but confession is here mentioned first because it is the outward evidence of faith. "The thing to be confessed is that Jesus Christ is Lord. That is, we must openly recognize his authority to the full extent in which he is Lord; acknowledge that he is exalted above all principality and powers, that angels are made subject to him, that all power in heaven and earth is committed unto him, and of course that he is our Lord. This confession, therefore, includes in it an acknowledgment of Christ's sovereignty, and a sincere recognition of his authority over us. To confess Christ as Lord, is to acknowledge him as the Messiah, recognized as such of God, and invested with all the power and prerogatives of the Mediatorial throne. This acknowledgement is consequently often put for a recognition of Christ in all his offices" (Charles Hodge) (Compare 1 Cor. 12:13; Phil. 2:11; Rom. 14:9; Acts 11:20; Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8; 1 John 4:15).

Besides confession, faith is required by the Gospel: "and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead". We are not merely to have faith in Christ as a Person, nor even merely in Him as crucified for our sins; but specifically, we are to have faith that God has raised Him from the dead. Faith in His bodily resurrection really includes all the rest. It involves believing that He was and is all that He claims to be, all that He is represented in the Scriptures as being. By raising Him from the dead, God the Father has placed His seal of endorsement and approval on the whole finished work of Christ. The person who does not believe in Christ's resurrection cannot really believe on Him as Saviour.

At the present day some religious leaders and teachers very perversely set up an antithesis between "faith in a person" and "faith in a doctrine". They claim that "faith in a person" (that is, in Christ as a person) is much better and more important than faith in a doctrine (such as Christ's atonement, or His resurrection). This perverse teaching has a pious sound, on the surface of it, and many are deceived by such smooth language. As a matter of fact, this distinction is just a subtle way of denying or evading the doctrines, such as the atonement and resurrection of Christ. The man who says "Faith in Christ as a person is more important than belief of doctrines about Christ" really means: "The doctrines are not true and cannot be accepted, but we intend to keep on calling ourselves Christians, and claiming to have the person without the doctrines". This manner of denial or evasion is just one of the sophisticated subtleties of present-day unbelief.

Actually, it is not possible to have faith in Christ as a Person apart from faith in doctrine about Christ. Jesus Christ is separated from us by more than nineteen centuries of time. We cannot come into direct contact with Him in the way His contemporaries did, by meeting Him on the roads of Galilee or Judea and seeing Him face to face. That is impossible for us. How, then, can we come in contact with Christ? Only by the truth concerning Him which is given to us in the Bible. Truth about Christ is our means of contact with Christ. No one can really believe in Christ without believing certain definite statements (truths or doctrines) about Christ, including especially the statement "that God hath raised him from the dead". Christianity is not a form of vague, hazy mysticism; it involves contact with the Christ of history through belief of the Scriptural doctrines concerning Him.

Faith in Christ, to be real, must not only involve acceptance of the true doctrines concerning Him; it must also be **IN THE HEART**. Not only in the mind, or intellect, but in the **HEART**. The term "heart" here means not merely the affections or emotions, but the whole inner man. Real faith in Christ is much more than a mere mental assent to doctrines. Even the devils have that kind of faith (James 2:19). Saving faith involves two elements. Both of these elements must be present, or it is not true saving faith. The first element is **KNOWLEDGE**, that is, knowledge of the **TRUTH**. This is absolutely necessary, but it is not enough of itself. The second element is **TRUST**, that is, personal trust or commitment to Christ for salvation and eternal life. Trust cannot exist without some knowledge; we cannot trust Christ unless we know Him to be trustworthy. The person who really believes **IN HIS HEART** will have not merely true knowledge, but also personal trust in Christ as Saviour.

How different this concept of faith is from the cheap, diluted "believism" of the present day!

Many raise their hands in an evangelistic meeting, or sign a "decision card" stating that they accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, who show not the slightest evidence of real heart faith in Him, and who certainly do not in any adequate way confess Him as **LORD** before the world. Thousands feel sure of their eternal salvation because they have "accepted Christ" in some meeting, who have not the slightest desire or intention of really acknowledging Christ as the Lord of their lives. They have no intention whatever of separating from their sinful lusts and habits, of taking up the cross and suffering the reproach of Christ before the world. They just claim they are saved because they have "accepted Christ", period. What the apostle Paul places before us here in Romans 10 is very different. It is very simple, indeed; it involves no gigantic tasks, no impossible achievements; but it calls for a **CONFESSION OF THE TOTAL LORDSHIP OF CHRIST OVER THE UNIVERSE AND OVER MY OWN LIFE, AND A HEART FAITH WHICH INVOLVES A PERSONAL COMMITMENT OF MY ALL TO HIM**. Anything short of this is not genuine.

Verse 10 again stresses the importance of both heart faith and public confession. A public confession (profession) is the proper evidence of faith. The person who because of fear, embarrassment, shame or any other reason refrains from confessing Christ publicly before men, is not a Christian, though he may secretly be a believer. If his faith is real, he will overcome his reluctance and will confess Christ before men, as commanded in Scripture.

Questions:

1. What does the person who really wants salvation find in the Gospel?
2. What did Naaman the Syrian finally learn?
3. What two requirements are involved in the Gospel way of salvation?
4. What is involved in confessing Jesus Christ as Lord?
5. Why is faith in Christ's resurrection required for salvation?
6. Why do some teachers set up an antithesis between "faith in a person" and "faith in a doctrine"?
7. What do those who make this distinction really mean?
8. Why is it not possible to have faith in Christ as a Person apart from doctrines about Him?
9. What is meant by the word "heart" in 10:9,10?
10. What is meant by believing in the heart?

11. What two elements are involved in true saving faith?

12. Why can we not trust in Christ apart from knowledge about Christ?

13. What is wrong with the "believism" of the present day?

14. What is the relation between confession and faith?

15. What should we think of a person who claims to be a Christian but is unwilling to confess Christ publicly before men?

LESSON 46

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

D. The Gospel is Suited to the Needs of all Men, and to be Preached to All. 10:11-21

"For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (10:11, quoted from Isaiah 28:16). Paul confirms what he has been saying by this quotation from Isaiah, which sets forth two truths. First, the Gospel way of salvation is suited to all mankind: "Whosoever". It is therefore not limited to the nation of Israel, but adapted equally to both Jews and Gentiles; it is universal. It is suited to the needs of sinners regardless of race, nationality, or other distinctions.

In the second place, the verse from Isaiah teaches that faith is the means by which salvation is secured: "Whosoever believeth". Moreover it is not mere general faith by which salvation is secured, but specifically FAITH IN CHRIST: "Whosoever believeth ON HIM" — on the precious corner stone and sure foundation laid by God in Zion. Many people talk about faith today in a very vague and general way. It is not faith as a psychological attitude, nor religious faith in general ("faith in religion", as some people say) that saves us, but specifically FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST. The Bible never regards faith as a psychological attitude, and it never regards faith as a force. Many people today speak of faith as a force, and say such foolish things as "Faith has more power than dynamite". Actually, faith has no power whatsoever. Faith is not a power, it is not a force, it is a channel of connection. Christ has the power, and faith is our channel or link of connection with Christ. The modern notion of faith as a psychological attitude that has value or power of its own is destructive of Christianity. Faith is not our Saviour; Christ is our Saviour.

Saving faith terminates and rests upon Christ as its object: "Believeth ON HIM". These two words, "on him" indicate that faith involves the element of personal trust or committal. This means receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel.

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (10:12). This verse explains the meaning of the "whosoever" of verse 11: there is no difference, in the matter of salvation, between Jews and Gentiles. There

were indeed many differences between Jews and Gentiles, but as to their being sinners needing salvation, and as to the way by which they could be saved, there were no differences — all were upon the same footing, guilty and needy before God; and all could receive salvation in exactly the same way, by the free grace of Him who is Lord over all.

It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to decide whether the word "Lord" in verse 12 refers to God or to Christ. Arguments can be given on both sides. However this is not really a question of any great importance. "Doctrinally, it matters little which view be preferred. Faith in God is faith in Christ, for Christ is God. This is the great truth to be acknowledged. The condition of salvation, under the gospel, is the invocation of Christ as God" (Charles Hodge).

To "call upon" the Lord is an expression frequently found in the Bible (Gen. 4:26; 12:8. Isa. 64:7. Acts 2:21; 9:14; 22:16. 1 Cor. 1:2. 2 Tim. 2:22). To call upon the Lord, in the religious sense, implies a true faith in Him. "Whosoever believes" and "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord" are really just two ways of saying the same thing.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (10:13, quoted from Joel 2:32). This quotation from the prophet Joel is really identical in meaning with the verse quoted from Isaiah in Rom. 10:11. Joel's prophecy which is here cited, deals with the coming of the Messiah and the period of blessing which He would bring. In that period, whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved — regardless of whether Jewish or Gentile, irrespective of all national or racial distinctions. Note that this same text of Joel was quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:21. The apostle has thus shown that the salvation of all believers in Christ, regardless of whether they be Jew or Gentile, was not only his own doctrine, but also that of the Old Testament, as evidenced by the words of the prophets Isaiah and Joel.

Though this truth was so plainly taught in the Old Testament, the Jews of Paul's day were quite blind to it. Even the apostle Peter learned it with difficulty (Acts 10; Galatians 2:11-16).

The notion of the special position of Israel had become so deeply impressed upon the Jews that they failed to realize that this special position as the people of God was not an end in itself, but a means to an end — that through Abraham's seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. And they failed to realize that the special position of Israel was not intended by God to be permanent, but only temporary, during the preparatory stage of redemption, until the coming of the Messiah. So, thinking of their special position as permanent and as an end in itself, they were blind to the Old Testament prophecies of the salvation of the Gentiles; they failed to take account of these prophecies and to take them seriously.

Questions:

1. What two truths are taught by Isaiah 28:16, which Paul quotes in Rom. 10:11?
2. What is the difference between faith in Jesus Christ, and faith as a mere psychological attitude?
3. Why is it wrong to speak of faith as a force?

4. What is the object of saving faith?

5. What truth is indicated by the words "on him" in 10:11?

6. In what respect was there no difference between Jews and Gentiles?

7. What is implied by calling upon the name of the Lord?

8. What text from the prophet Joel does Paul quote?

9. What is the meaning of Joel's prophecy?

10. How can we explain the fact that the Jews of Paul's day were blind to the Old Testament prophecies of the salvation of the Gentiles?

11. What error did the Jews hold concerning the purpose of their special position as the people of God?

12. What error did the Jews hold concerning the God-intended duration of their special position as the people of God?

LESSON 47

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

D. The Gospel is Suited to the Needs of all Men, and to be Preached to All. 10:11-21, Cont.

Paul has shown that the Gospel way of salvation is suited to the needs of all men, both Jews and Gentiles; he has shown that the Old Testament prophesied the calling and salvation of the Gentiles. These truths imply that the Gospel must be made known to all mankind. Accordingly, the apostle next proceeds to discuss the propagation of the Gospel by the method of preaching.

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (10:14,15). This is an argument to prove the necessity and obligation of missionary work, of sending the Gospel message forth to all mankind.

It is a recognized Biblical truth that when God wills an end, He also wills the means thereto. When He willed that Noah and his family should be saved from perishing in the flood, He also willed that Noah should build the ark and that he and his family should enter into it. When He willed that Jonah should be saved from perishing in the sea, He also prepared a great fish to swallow the prophet. When He willed that Cornelius and his family should be saved, He also

willed that Peter should go and preach the Gospel to them. This principle holds true, regardless of whether we are speaking of God's will in the sense of his decree or foreordination, or in the sense of his commands addressed to men. Except in the special case of miracles, God's way of attaining the end is through the use of appropriate means.

This is eminently true in the case of the salvation of the Gentiles. Since God has from of old planned and predicted their calling and salvation, as we have seen by the statements from Isaiah and Joel, then it must also be God's intention that the MEANS of their calling and salvation shall exist. As Paul points out, to call upon the name of the Lord implies faith in the Lord (Jesus Christ); to have faith in the Lord implies possession of knowledge about the Lord; to have knowledge about the Lord implies someone who can impart this knowledge, a preacher; to go as a preacher (missionary) implies being sent as one. The proper inference from this is that it is the God-given task and duty of the Church to send out missionaries to preach the Gospel to all mankind.

Many Christians of the present day are comparatively indifferent to the missionary obligation. What they contribute toward this task is small indeed compared to what they spend upon themselves, and upon the ordinances of religion at home. Some have the curious idea that mis-

sionary work is a form of "charity" or philanthropy comparable to the work of the Red Cross, to which they are willing to give a nominal contribution from time to time. Such is not a proper idea of the missionary task. It is a God-given commission, binding upon the Church by divine authority, which it is the business of every Christian to be concerned about and to support liberally. When we support true missionary work we are not "giving" money to "charity", we are rather paying an obligation. We are debtors, as Paul said he was (Rom. 1:14), "both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians, both to the wise, and to the unwise" — that is, to all the world.

Much that is called missionary work today is not truly the preaching of the Gospel in the sense of the apostle Paul. In the large, "liberal" denominations much "missionary work" is carried on which is in reality merely a form of humanitarianism or social service, rather than a real preaching of Christ crucified to sinners. What God has laid upon His Church is the obligation to carry on, and liberally to support, real missionary work which carries the saving truth of the Gospel of Christ to sinners at home and abroad. Needless to say, no person who is not a believing, saved Christian can be a real missionary to others. The last two or three years, much attention has been called in the secular and religious press to Dr. Albert Schweitzer of Africa. He has not only been called "a great missionary", but by some he has even been called "the greatest Christian in the world". That Dr. Schweitzer is a great man no one can deny. He is truly a many-sided genius, with outstanding achievements in the three fields of theology, medicine and music. But Dr. Schweitzer is not a Christian at all according to the Bible and the orthodox Christian faith. The enthusiastic articles about him fail to call any attention to his theological views, which are well-known in theological circles from his voluminous writings. For example, his famous book *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* sets forth the theory that Jesus expected to return to this earth on the clouds of heaven within the lifetime of His disciples, but that He was mistaken and the victim of a delusion. Needless to say, such a Jesus cannot be the Saviour of the world, and such a Jesus is not the Christ presented in the Scriptures, nor the Christ whom Paul preached. The present writer has heard real Christians speak in the highest and most enthusiastic terms about Dr. Schweitzer. They should know better, but have been misled by articles in the secular and liberal religious press. Dr. Schweitzer's work, remarkable as it is, is in reality humanitarian service rather than a preaching of the Biblical Gospel to the people of Africa. The same statement may be made with truth concerning the work of the great Japanese author and social worker Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa. He is a great man, but what he promotes is not the Gospel of God's Word.

10:15 is a quotation from Isaiah 52:7. This verse gives us the real meaning of the word "Gospel": it means "glad tidings", "good news". What is this "good news"? According to the Bible, it is the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified as the Saviour of sinners. "How beautiful are the feet" means, of course, what a wonderful, delightful, attractive errand it is that the missionary goes on. This is a joyful, beneficent task, to bring the light of the Gospel to those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. How willingly, how eagerly, we should support it. How sinful it must be to be grudging, reluctant and stingy in our support of the Church's missionary task. The church which neglects or refuses to carry on missionary work will tend to wither and die of its own self-centeredness. In this matter as in others, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Questions:

1. What is Paul trying to prove in 10:14,15?
2. When God wills an end, what does He also will?
3. Give some examples from the Bible to show that when God wills an end He also wills the appropriate means thereto.
4. What is the bearing of this truth (that God wills the means as well as the end) on the subject of the salvation of the Gentiles?
5. What is implied in calling upon the name of the Lord?
6. What is implied in believing in the Lord?
7. What is implied in having knowledge about the Lord?
8. What is implied in going out as a missionary?
9. What is the proper inference to be drawn from Paul's argument in 10:14,15?
10. Why is it not correct to regard missionary work as a form of "charity"?
11. What is the real character of much so-called missionary work in some of the large denominations at the present day?
12. Why cannot a person who is himself not a saved, believing Christian be a true missionary of Christ?
13. Why is it not correct to speak of Dr. Albert Schweitzer as "a great missionary" and "the greatest Christian in the world"?
14. What is the true meaning of the word "Gospel"?
15. Of what great sin are Christian people sometimes guilty in connection with the support of missionary work?

LESSON 48

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

D. The Gospel is Suited to the Needs of all Men, and to be Preached to All 10:11-21, Cont.

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (10:16). It is no argument against the duty of preaching the Gospel to all mankind, to say that many who hear the Gospel do not accept it. God has commanded that the Gospel be preached to all mankind, but He has not elected all human beings to eternal life, nor is it to be expected that all who hear the Gospel will accept it and be saved. This rejection of the Gospel by many is not merely a fact of present-day experience; it is also stated and predicted in the Bible. Paul quotes from the prophet Isaiah to show that it was predicted by him (Isa. 53:1). Isaiah's statement concerns the general rejection of the Gospel. This is taught also elsewhere in the Bible. Jesus Christ came unto His own, and His own received Him not (John 1:11). Jesus carefully instructed His disciples as to how they were to conduct themselves in the face of a refusal to hear and receive their message (Matt. 10:14. Mark 6:11. Luke 9:5). Later Paul and Barnabas carried out this instruction at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:50, 51).

It is sometimes urged as an objection against missionary work today that the work is not successful. Those who urge this objection mean "not successful" if measured by worldly standards such as might be applicable to a business enterprise — an oil company or an automobile factory, for example. The unconscious assumption back of this objection is that missionary work is expected to bring about the immediate or early conversion to Christianity of all or most of those who are reached with the Gospel. But this assumption is unwarranted. The command to preach the Gospel to all mankind is not based upon the expected results of the work. It proceeds from the will and command of God. The work will be successful, if faithfully performed, in the sense that it will have the result which God intends it to have, namely, the salvation of those persons throughout the world whom He has foreordained unto eternal life. That multitudes of people show no interest whatever in the Gospel, and even wilfully reject it, is no more than what the Bible has predicted. It does not constitute a valid objection to the missionary obligation which rests upon the Church.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (10:17). In this verse the word "hearing" is used in reference to the word "report" in verse 16 (Isa. 53:1). The Greek word used for "report" means literally the act of hearing, and so it is used to designate that which is heard. Isaiah's question, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" implies that BELIEVING depends

upon a REPORT, that is, on something HEARD, on HEARING. Before men can believe the Gospel, they must first hear it, they must first come in contact with it. Faith consists in accepting the heard message as true, and putting one's trust in the One of whom the message speaks. "So then faith cometh by hearing".

The apostle adds, "and hearing by the Word of God." The expression "the word of God" in this verse of course does not mean simply the Bible or written Word of God. It means the word or command of God which is the real basis of the missionary task. The missionary enterprise is no mere voluntary effort of Christian people; it is a divinely appointed task; it brings an authoritative message; it proceeds from the word or command of God.

Two truths which Paul has already stated, are confirmed in this verse, namely: (1) that knowledge is necessary to faith; and (2) that it is God's purpose that this knowledge shall be sent to the Gentiles.

"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (10:18). Here Paul's argument is rather condensed and abrupt, making it difficult to understand. Just what is the apostle speaking about in this verse? Some scholars hold that he has the Jews in mind. But this would not be in harmony with the subject under discussion, which is not now the rejection of the Jews, but rather the calling of the Gentiles. If verse 16 refers to the Gentiles, the presumption is that verse 18 must still be speaking of the Gentiles, for there is no indication of a change of subject. Moreover in verse 19 where Paul certainly intends to speak of Israel he uses the name.

Taking verse 18 as referring to the Gentiles, then, what is Paul's purpose in this verse? Paul's language is taken from Psalm 19:4, but in the Psalm the subject dealt with is God's revelation in the realm of nature, whereas Paul is speaking of the Gospel of Christ. The apostle is merely using language borrowed from the Psalm to express a different idea. It is true, of course, that the universal revelation of God in nature was in a sense a providential prediction of the universal proclamation of the Gospel; both were intended by God to be universal. Paul's meaning, however, is that the Gospel had already, in his time, broken out from the narrow channel of the ancient covenant nation of Israel and had become a universal message sent to all the world. This of course must not be pressed to mean that in Paul's day the Gospel had already reached every continent and nation and tribe, for this was manifestly not the case. It was true, however, that the Gospel had been widely preached through the then-known world.

Questions:

1. Is it an argument against missionary work to say that many who hear the Gospel do not accept it?

2. What text from Isaiah does Paul quote to show that the rejection of the Gospel by many was foreseen and predicted by the Old Testament?

3. What do many people mean when they assert that missionary work is not successful?

4. What assumption is back of the charge that missionary work is not successful?

5. In what sense is Christian missionary work truly successful?

6. What is the literal meaning of the word "report" in 10:16?

7. What is meant by the statement "Faith cometh by hearing"?

8. What does the apostle mean by saying that hearing comes by the word of God?

9. What two truths are confirmed by verse 17?

10. In verse 18, is Paul speaking of the Jews or of the Gentiles?

11. From what place in the Old Testament is the language of verse 18 derived?

12. What is the meaning of the statement in the Old Testament?

13. What is Paul's meaning in the words quoted in verse 18?

14. In what sense were the words of verse 18 true in Paul's time?

LESSON 49**THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.****D. The Gospel is Suited to the Needs of all Men, and to be Preached to All. 10:11-21, Cont.**

"But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation will I anger you" (10:19). Here again Paul's extreme brevity and condensation of his argument raises problems of interpretation. "Did not Israel know?" But what was it that Israel knew or did not know? One answer is, that it was the Gospel. Another view holds that it was the truth of their own rejection and God's purpose to call and save the Gentiles. Of these two possible interpretations, the second is probably the correct one, for two reasons: (1) Paul has been discussing the rejection of the Jews and calling of the Gentiles; and (2) the quotations from the Old Testament in verses 19-21 fit the second view best.

We may take the meaning, then, to be: "Did not Israel know the announced purpose of God to reject them and to save the Gentiles?" Paul next quotes from Moses (Deut. 32:21). He says "First Moses" because he intends to quote from Isaiah immediately afterwards. The passage in Deuteronomy deals with the great mercies of God received by Israel, and the people's stubborn rebellion and lack of thankfulness to God. In Deut. 32:21 Moses warns the children of Israel that as they had provoked God to jealousy by that which is not God (that is, by idolatry), God would provoke them to jealousy by those that are not a people. The meaning clearly is that God would eventually reject Israel and choose in their stead Gentiles who formerly were not His people. Certainly this statement of Moses is very plain, and if the Jews of Paul's day had not been entirely blind

to this truth, they would have known it from Moses.

"But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (10:20,21). The statement of Moses in Deut. 32:21 was plain enough, but here is one from Isaiah that is even plainer, one that is unmistakable and cannot be evaded, a "very bold" statement. The words are quoted from Isa. 65:1,2. It will be noted that the wording in Rom. 10:20,21 differs somewhat from that found in the Authorized Version of Isaiah 65:1,2. The reason for this is that Paul is here following not the Hebrew but the Septuagint (ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament), and he transposes the clauses. The King James or Authorized Version of the Old Testament was of course made directly from the original Hebrew. Paul often quotes from the Septuagint or Greek Version, which was natural inasmuch as he was writing his Epistle in the Greek language and to Greek-speaking readers. The sense of the original Hebrew is accurately given by Paul's quotation; the differences are merely in form. "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." This statement of course describes the Gentiles. They were not God's covenant people, they did not know God, they were not specially interested in or concerned about the true God. Each nation had its own religion, its own philosophers, its own myths, legends, customs, laws, ethical standards, and so forth. All were turned aside to their own way in dense spiritual darkness. They were not looking for the true

God, but they found Him through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Isaiah, then, predicted the inclusion of the Gentiles in the kingdom of God. This, of course, implies that the day would come when Israel would no longer be exclusively and uniquely the people of God, a time would come when Jews and Gentiles would be in the kingdom on the same terms and on an equal footing.

"But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (verse 21). To stretch forth the hands, in the Bible, signifies invitation, entreaty. In this verse we see the tender love of the Father for His erring and rebellious children. How often this was true of them through their long history! How many times they rebelled against God and turned to their own stubborn, sinful way! And yet the Father's heart yearned for their return to Himself. "All day long" means continuously. The rejection of Israel was not caused by any unwillingness of God to love and save them. It was caused by their own stubborn, stiff-necked unbelief, sinking finally into complete apostasy. It was their own fault.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of Paul's question in 10:19, "Did not Israel know?"
2. Why does Paul say "First Moses . . ." in 10:19?
3. What passage from Moses' writings does Paul quote in verse 19?

4. What subject is dealt with in the passage quoted from Moses?

5. What sin is described by the expression "provoking God to jealousy by that which is not God"?

6. What is meant by the statement: "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people"?

7. Why does Paul say that Isaiah was "very bold"?

8. How can we explain the fact that Paul's quotation from Isaiah 65: 1,2 differs from the form found in the book of Isaiah in the Authorized Version?

9. What people are described in the statement: "I was found of them that sought me not"?

10. How did it come to pass that God was found of them that sought Him not?

11. What is implied by Isaiah 65:1,2 concerning the position of Israel?

12. What is signified, in the Bible, by stretching forth the hands?

12. What attitude of God toward Israel is revealed by the statement that all day long He had stretched forth His hands to them?

14. Whose fault was it that Israel was finally rejected by God?

LESSON 50

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

E. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Total, for a Remnant shall be Saved. 11:1-10

Paul has plainly proved that the Old Testament predicted both the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews. In the first ten verses of chapter 11 he proceeds to teach that although God has rejected the Jews as a nation, this rejection is not total, for a remnant of the nation shall receive salvation.

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (11:1). The question asked here, "Hath God cast away his people", is obviously raised because many might infer from chapters 9 and 10 that God HAS cast off His people; that is, that God has been unfaithful to His own declared purposes and promises. Paul says in effect, "Does the argument I have presented in chapters 9 and 10 mean that God has cast off His people, thus going back on His own word and promises?" This question, he answers in his habitual way of making a strong negative

assertion: "God forbid" — meaning, "Far from it; certainly not".

He then cites himself as an example to prove that God has not cast off His people. Paul himself was an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, but he had not been cast off. Although an Israelite, he had been saved by the grace of God and was now a member of the true people of God, the Christian Church. And if Paul the Israelite was not cast off, certainly there were many others like himself, Jews who had become Christians; they were not cast off, but wonderfully saved. The rejection of Israel, therefore, could not be a total rejection. There would be some Israelites, at least, that would receive salvation and would be true children of God, true citizens of God's Kingdom.

"God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (11:2a). In interpreting this sentence, much depends upon where the emphasis is placed. If the emphasis is placed upon "his people", the sentence means one thing; if it is placed upon "which he foreknew", it means something else. In

the first case, if we place the emphasis on "his people", then "his people" would mean the nation of Israel, and the meaning of the sentence would be: "God has not cast off the nation of Israel; he would not cast off those whom he foreknew". But if the emphasis is placed upon "which he foreknew", then "his people" means, not the nation of Israel, but the **ELECT** within the nation of Israel, the true Israelites, the spiritual Israel, the Israel within Israel, that part of Israel which God had foreknown (regarded from eternity with special love and favor).

The second of these two possible interpretations is to be chosen in preference to the first. On the first interpretation, verse 2a is merely a repetition of the implication of verse 1. But on the second interpretation, verse 2 has a definite meaning of its own. Moreover, in Rom. 9:6-8, Paul has already laid down the distinction between the external nation of Israel and the inner spiritual core of true Israelites, so that this is not a new idea in this Epistle. Also, the second interpretation best fits what follows in chapter 11, where Paul speaks (verse 5) of "a remnant according to the election of grace". For these reasons, the second interpretation of 11:2a is definitely the better one. According to this interpretation, then, 11:2a means: "God has not cast away His elect people, those members of the nation of Israel whom He specially foreknew". This is not only in harmony with the context in Romans; it is also in harmony with the doctrine of the whole Bible, which teaches that an external, visible society and its members may be cast off and perish in sin, but the elect of God can never be cast off nor perish.

The word "foreknew" is used in the Bible in more than one sense. As used in 11:2a, it certainly means more than mere "knowing beforehand". In the sense of "knowing beforehand" or "knowing from eternity", God's foreknowledge includes all creatures and all events without distinction; in this sense, therefore, He "foreknew" the Gentiles

equally with the Jews; consequently it would involve no uniqueness or distinction for the Jews to say that God "foreknew" them, if "foreknew" in 11:2a meant nothing more than "knew beforehand". But it is obvious that in the expression "His people, which he foreknew", the word "foreknew" is intended to set Israel apart as the recipients of some special attention or favor of God, in distinction from the other peoples of the world. Accordingly, we take "foreknew" in this verse as meaning "regarded as objects of God's special favor from eternity". Those whom God foreknew as His own can never be cast off; they shall live in communion with Him to all eternity.

Questions:

1. What is the subject dealt with in 11:1-10?
2. Why does Paul mention the fact that he himself was an Israelite?
3. In the statement of 11:2a, on which phrase should the emphasis be placed?
4. What is the meaning of the expression "his people" in 11:2a?
5. How can it be shown that "his people" in 11:2a does not mean the nation of Israel as such?
6. In what two senses is the word "foreknow" used in the Bible?
7. What is included in God's foreknowledge, in the sense of knowing beforehand?
8. Why does "foreknew" in 11:2a not mean merely "knew beforehand"?
9. What is the meaning of "foreknew" in 11:2a?
10. What can never happen to those whom God has foreknown in the special sense of "known from eternity as His own"?

LESSON 51

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

E. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Total, for a Remnant shall be Saved. 11:1-10, Cont.

"Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life" (11:2,3). Paul now seeks to bring out the truth that a remnant of Israel shall be saved, and in order to do this, he speaks of the situation in the time of the prophet Elijah. The reference is to 1 Kings 19:10. It was under the reign of the wicked king Ahab, when the great majority of the nation had followed their rulers in turning from Jehovah to the worship of Baal.

In Elijah's day, as in Paul's, it seemed that the apostasy of Israel was complete. But in each case it was only partial. For in Elijah's day there remained a faithful minority: there was Obadiah, and the hundred prophets he had concealed in caves; and there were the seven thousand whom God had reserved unto Himself, who had not bowed the knee to Baal, nor kissed his image. Doubtless the faithful in Elijah's day were but a small fraction of the total population of the nation, a "remnant", yet they constituted the real Israel, the Israel within Israel, God's people, whom He foreknew. Similarly in Paul's day, the rejection of Israel was not total. God still had His remnant, whom He had reserved for Himself, who were true

believers. "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (11:5).

"According to the election of grace." What is meant by this expression? "Grace" means more than merely "kindness" or "favor"; it means **God's favor bestowed on the undeserving**; thus the reason why a particular person receives grace is not anything in that person himself, but merely the sovereign love and mercy of God, the sheer good pleasure of God, for which creatures cannot assign any reason other than that "it pleased God" to act as He did. Therefore "remnant according to the election of grace" means "remnant according to God's sovereign, unmerited choice" (compare 9:11 and 11:21,24).

In the days of Elijah, the number of the faithful was much greater than Elijah supposed. He thought that he alone was left to serve God, but God informed him that there were seven thousand others. Similarly in the time of the apostles, the number must have been much greater than was outwardly apparent to a casual observer. James in Acts 21:20 speaks of "many thousands" (Greek, "many myriads") of Jews which believe", that is, of course, which believe on Jesus Christ. So it was not as if all or nearly all of the Jews had been rejected.

"And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (11:6). This is Paul's explanation of the meaning of the word "grace" in verse 5. He points out that the two principles, grace and works, are incompatible. Their election cannot be based on both grace and works, for the two ideas are mutually exclusive. To speak of election being both of grace and also of works is like speaking of an honest thief, or a truthful liar; it is a contradiction in terms. Election is either of grace, or it is of works, one or the other, but not both. Grace would not be grace if it were of works; the very idea of grace means "not of works". It is clear, too, that FORESEEN works are excluded from the ground of election, just as much as any other kind of works. The common Arminian view of election is that it is based on foreseen works; that is, that God has elected those whom He foresaw or foreknew (from eternity) would repent and believe on Christ. If this Arminian theology is correct, then election is not of grace but of works, for Arminianism represents God as electing men to salvation because He

knows beforehand that they will repent and believe. Repentance and faith, in this system, are the works on which election is based. Such an election is not an election of grace.

It is apparent that Paul considered it of very great importance to exclude rigidly every element of personal works or merit from the doctrine of election. He stops in the middle of his argument about the Jews and Gentiles to make this emphatic statement about grace and works in 11:6. Many today who claim to believe in the doctrine of election as taught in the Bible yet pay very little attention to this truth. They seldom mention it, and perhaps are a little embarrassed by it, and so try to avoid speaking about it, or they speak of it apologetically, trying to tone it down a little bit, as if it were something to be just a little ashamed of. Evidently Paul did not feel that way about the doctrine of God's sovereign election. He considered it a main point of the Gospel and he taught it both consistently and insistently. We should go and do likewise. If it is a doctrine of God's Word it is nothing to be afraid of, ashamed of, or embarrassed about.

Questions:

1. Why does Paul mention the prophet Elijah and his time?
2. What was the religious situation of Israel in Elijah's day?
3. What mistaken idea did Elijah himself have about the religious situation?
4. What is the meaning of the word "grace"?
5. What is the reason why a particular person receives God's grace?
6. How many Jews were believers in Christ in the time of the apostles?
7. Why can election not be both of grace and of works?
8. What is the common Arminian view of the ground of election?
9. Why can foreseen repentance and faith not be the ground of election?
10. What was Paul's attitude toward the doctrine of sovereign election?
11. Why should we not be ashamed of or embarrassed about the doctrine of election?

LESSON 52

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

E. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Total, for a Remnant shall be Saved. 11:1-10, Cont.

"What then? Israel hath not obtained that

which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of

slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day" (11:7,8).

The word here translated "seeketh" means an earnest, intense, persistent search. The Jews sought earnestly for righteousness, but they failed to obtain it, because they sought it not by faith but by works. This verse is a summary of Paul's argument to this point. Israel as a nation — the majority of the people — did not obtain righteousness, but those whom God had foreknown and elected obtained it. Since the rejection of Israel is not total, but only partial, the promises of God made to Israel in the Old Testament have not been abrogated or canceled. The believing, saved remnant are the real Israel, the real continuity of the Israel of old, the real inheritors of the promises. This truth may be illustrated as follows. Suppose that at some future time all of the United States except the states west of the Rocky Mountains were to sink beneath the waters of the sea. Although the greater part of the land area and population of the nation would be lost by such a calamity, the part of the country remaining would still constitute the nation. It would still be the United States of America, and would be recognized as the legitimate continuation of our national life, throughout the world. Similarly, the remnant of Israel that receives salvation through Christ is the real Israel, it (along with all Gentile Christians) is the true inheritor of the Old Testament promises. The promises have not been broken or canceled. They are fulfilled to the election of grace, to whom they were really made.

"And the rest were blinded" (11:7b). The Greek word here translated "blinded" means basically, "to harden". Therefore Paul's statement could be translated: "And the rest were hardened". It is a recognized principle in Scripture that God may and often does punish sin by hardening the sinner; that is, by abandoning him to his sinful tendencies, so that as a result he becomes worse and worse. "They were hardened by God, i.e., abandoned by him to the hardness of their own hearts" (Charles Hodge).

Verse 8 is taken from several places in the Old Testament (as Isa. 6:9,10; Deut. 29:4; Isa. 29:10). These old Testament passages apply partly to conditions in the times when they were first written, and partly they predict what would be in the future. They are thus properly applicable to the Jews of Paul's time. (Compare Matt. 13:14). Many such prophecies have successive fulfillments being first fulfilled on a smaller scale, and later fulfilled on a larger scale, or in a more complete manner. What had occurred time and again in the Old Testament period, namely, people having eyes that could not (spiritually) see and ears that could not (spiritually) hear, happened much more completely among the Jews of apostolic times. In

their blindness they could not see Jesus as the Messiah, and so they went on in their unbelief until dire disaster and destruction overtook them at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

"This blindness and hardness were not mere calamities, nor were they simply the natural effects of the sins of the people. They were punitive inflictions. They are so denounced. God says, I will give you eyes that see not. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The strokes of his justice blind, bewilder, and harden the soul" (Charles Hodge). Since this is true, how important it is that we beware of offending God, of presuming upon His mercy! "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "seeketh" in 11:7?
2. What did Israel seek but fail to obtain?
3. What is implied, concerning the promises of God, by the truth that the rejection of the Jews is not total but only partial?
4. Who are the real inheritors of the Old Testament promises?
5. What is the basic meaning of the word translated "blinded" in 11:7?
6. In what way does God sometimes harden sinners?
7. What did their blindness prevent the Jews of Paul's day from seeing?
8. What was the result of the Jews' unbelief?
9. Why should all people beware of offending God by presumptuous sinning against Him?

(Note: This series of lessons on the Epistle to the Romans will be continued, D.V., in the next issue. — Ed.)

"Nothing . . . is more common than to hear the ignorant decry all human learning as entirely useless in religion; and what is still more remarkable, even some, who call themselves preachers, entertain the same sentiments. But to such we can only say what a judicious preacher observed upon a public occasion, that if all men had been as unlearned as themselves they never would have had a text on which to have displayed their ignorance."

— Charles Buck

Reviews of Religious Books

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

A HARMONY AND COMMENTARY ON THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL, by Frank J. Goodwin. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1951, pp. 240. \$2.50.

Most Bible students are familiar with the nature and value of a harmony of the Gospels. Biography is best studied in this way, by comparing the source-materials, gleaned additional and supplementary facts from all possible references. Dr. Goodwin has made it convenient for us to follow the life of Paul in this manner, and Bible students will appreciate his work.

The book is Scriptural. This is a study of the Bible, not of traditions, though tradition is sometimes referred to. The author is orthodox in his views, and maintains the supernatural conversion of Paul, as well as the miracles performed by Paul.

Besides the main body of the text, valuable helps are given by outlines of the life of Paul, and of each of eleven periods of his life; seventeen articles in the appendix; an index of places visited by Paul, and an index of persons connected with Paul's life.

The author's method has been to select from the Book of the Acts and from Paul's epistles verses which tell in chronological order the story of Paul's life. In some cases, an event recorded in Acts is alluded to by Paul in a speech recorded in the same book, and again in one or more of his letters. When this is the case, Dr. Goodwin arranges the references in parallel columns, as is traditionally done in a harmony of the Gospels. There are a number of episodes in the life of Paul, which can be established from his letters, to which Luke makes no references in the book of Acts. Famous among these is the visit to Arabia when he left Damascus just after his conversion.

The author contends that Paul was twice imprisoned in Rome, and holds that a period of freedom after the first captivity is necessary to account for several events mentioned in his letters to Timothy and Titus. He states that authentic travels in this period were to Ephesus and Macedonia, Crete, Miletus, Ephesus upon a different occasion, Troas, Corinth, and Nicopolis. He lists as conjectural travels visits to Philippi, Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis, and to Spain. The authentic travels are established by references in the pastoral epistles; the conjectural travels sug-

gested by references in other places. For instance, Romans 15: 24, 28 speaks of Paul planning a trip to Spain. Goodwin believes there is no basis for thinking that Paul ever made the trip, but acknowledges that a few scholars still maintain that he did.

Throughout the book, Goodwin quotes students of the life of Paul, both those who agree with him and those who do not. Notes on the cities which Paul visited, and people associated with him, are especially helpful. Here is information for biographies of other characters, as well as of Paul.

This volume will put one straight on the chronology of Paul's life, and brings out obscure facts which make the reading of the book a delight and the possession of the book for reference a great benefit to anyone studying the New Testament Church.

— T. R. Hutcheson

THE PSALMS, by W. Graham Scroggie. Pickering & Inglis, Ltd., London, England (and Fleming H. Revell Co., U.S.A.) 1950. Three volumes (on Psalms 1-134) Price per volume, 12 shillings sixpence or \$1.75.

(Whether the final volume of this series is to be published from Dr. Scroggie's notes is not known by the reviewer. Dr. Scroggie died before these volumes were printed. There is no publisher's preface.)

Dr. Scroggie is widely known through his excellently clear, instructive notes on various books of the Bible in "DAILY NOTES", a fine daily Bible reader published by the Scripture Union of London. Thus Union publishes reading outlines for consecutive Bible reading for juniors, intermediates and seniors.

Dr. Scroggie's notes on the Psalms are carefully outlined, clear, concise, instructive studies. With but a few exceptions they are very much like what comes from the pulpits of the Covenant-er ministers who delight in leading their congregations in praising the Lord through the "new songs" of the Psalter. After a short introduction linking the Psalm with the rest of the Psalter, the historical setting, and the poetic form, he proceeds to set forth the Spirit's message in the Psalm. They are indeed delightful devotional reading.

One example is typical: Psalm 1, Vol. I, pp. 48-9: "The Poem is in two parts: 1 The Godly Man (1-3). He is described first **negatively** (1), then **positively** (2), and then **consequently** (3) The secret of a life that is acceptable to God is (a) delight, (b) meditation, and (c) continuance in the 'law of the Lord'. The true Christian is a Bible Christian. And such an one will be characterized by Vitality, 'a tree'; Security, 'planted'; Capacity, 'by the runnels of water'; Fertility, 'that bringeth forth its fruit'; Propriety, 'in its season'; Perpetuity, 'its leaf also shall not wither'; Prosperity, 'and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper'. Is this a portrait of you? It is of your Master."

Volume I begins with a 44 page introduction to the study of the Psalms, in which such items as the authorship, age, titles, figures of speech, divisions of the Psalter, the historical, prophetic, theological and devotional elements of the Psalms are discussed in an enlightening fashion. A number of very helpful tables in the study of the Psalms are given. Dr. Scroggie is soundly evangelical; he is untouched by the theories of destructive higher criticism; he quotes frequently from the sound exegetes of the Psalms. His interpretation of the Messianic Psalms is premillennial, to which we take exception. His explanation of the Imprecatory Psalms is unsound and to be refuted.

In his general discussion of the Imprecatory Psalms in the Introduction, Vol. I, p. 32, he states that "the previous dispensation was inferior to the present. . . . We must be careful not to judge the expressions in the Psalter which savour of vindictiveness and vengeance by the standards of the Pauline Epistles". Under Psalm 18, Vol. I, p. 119, he continues this line of thought, "It is only right to say that the psalmist's expressions of delight in his enemies' despair and destruction are far removed from the Christian spirit. . . . Let us accept the fact that the Old Test. is ethically and spiritually behind the New Test., that religion, as well as revelation is progressive, that the Gospel is greater than the law." In Vol. III, on p. 77 he states that there is an "obvious difference between the Old dispensation and the New. In the Old the Covenant is of Law, and in the New it is of Grace." This effort to find a difference in the ethical and spiritual standards of the Old and New Testaments is a false and unscriptural explaining away of the plain revelation of God's retributive justice upon sinners, His and His people's enemies.

It does not differ between man's conception of God in different dispensations, but makes God differ. There is no such thing as a Covenant of Law over against the Covenant of Grace. Law was a part of the full revelation of the Covenant of Grace; the O.T. is the old dispensation of the Covenant of Grace.

Under Psalm 69, Vol. II, p. 116, "In the time of the Psalmist there was no revelation of a final judgment in which evil will receive its condemnation, and good its reward, so that these things were looked for in the present." Though their knowledge of the Day of Judgment was certainly not as definite as ours, yet the Old Testament saints undoubtedly committed themselves to a just God and looked forward to a time when God would vindicate the righteous and condemn the wicked to Hell, Psalms 9:16-18; 58:11; 75:7,8; 96:13; 98:9 (Heb. 4:9) and 73.

To say that the Psalmists have slipped into expressions belonging to the limitations and modes of thought of their particular age is to forget (or deny) that though David and the Psalmist of the Exile were as men subject to ungodly hatred of their enemies, the Holy Spirit would not allow them to bring within the scope of the Divine Word anything in the least out of harmony with the eternal justice and love of God, "with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning." The Holy Spirit in the final analysis is the Author of these Psalms, not David nor any other Israelite.

God's enemies are unrepentant sinners; the enemies of God's people are sinners; God is identified with His people — they are His body; those who fight against God's people fight against God; and God will destroy all who refuse the Gospel. Sin does not exist in the abstract; it is identified with the sinner; the children of God cannot pray for the destruction of sin apart from the destruction of unrepentant sinners. The real difficulty does not lie in whether Christians can today pray the imprecatory prayers of David, but in whether they can pray them as **he did**: after he had prayed for their salvation and had labored for it.

Though in these instances the author has deviated from the truth, I have received great blessing from the reading of these volumes, and I recommend them to ministers as a fertile source of helpful material in making the Psalm explanation a truly interesting, devotional, instructive part of the weekly worship service.

—E. Clark Copeland

A Word of Explanation

As Editor of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" I wish to express regret for the small number of book reviews published in the present issue. As will be seen from the list of Books Received, we have received from various publishers a consider-

able number of volumes on interesting and important subjects. Although it was planned to publish reviews of most of these in the present issue, it was not possible, in the face of numerous other responsibilities, to get the reviews prepared in

time. It has been our aim in "Blue Banner Faith and Life" to maintain a high standard of book reviewing. Rather than publish superficial or hastily prepared reviews, it seems best to hold the volumes over until the April-June issue, in which

it is hoped, D.V., to publish reviews of all or nearly all of the books listed below. Meantime may I request the patience of readers, and of the publishers who have submitted books for review. — 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, by Oswald T. Allis. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. Pp. x, 355. \$3.75.

WHAT IS BOUND TO HAPPEN, by William J. McKnight. Meador Publishing Co., Boston, Mass. 1951, pp. 317. \$3.00.

THE INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE OF THE GOSPEL, by Cornelius Van Til. The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1950, pp. 40, paper cover. 2 shillings.

MILLENNIAL OR PERENNIAL? by John Wilmot. Published by the author, Rev. John Wilmot, Highgate Road Chapel, London, N.W. 5, England. 1951, pp. 26, paper cover. One shilling.

A GOOD SOLDIER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, by James Putt. The Fulton Book Shop, Fulton, Ill. Pp. 64, paper cover. 50 cents.

SACRED MARRIAGE VOWS, by Bernard Brunsting. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1951, pp. 55 including page with form for marriage certificate, paper cover. 75 cents.

Published by the Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 2561 North Clark St., Chicago 14, Illinois:

THE CASE FOR THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, by Chester E. Tulga. 1951, pp. 64, paper cover. 25 cents.

THE CASE AGAINST THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, by Chester E. Tulga. 1951, pp. 60. 25 cents.

Published by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan:

WILL H. HOUGHTON, A WATCHMAN ON THE WALL, by Wilbur M. Smith. 1951, pp. 191. \$2.50.

ASPECTS OF LIBERALISM, by Louis Berkhof. Pp. 163. \$2.50.

INTRODUCTORY HEBREW GRAMMAR, by R. Laird Harris. Pp. 90. \$2.50.

THE BIBLE STORY, by Marian M. Schooland. Pp. 149. \$2.00.

SELECTIONS FROM LACTANTIUS: DIVINAE INSTITUTIONES (Latin), with Introduction, Commentary and Vocabulary, by W. T. Radius. 1951, pp. 139. \$2.00.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD, by Louis Berkhof, 1951, pp. 177. \$2.50.

BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST (Vol. VI of Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism), by Herman Hoeksema. 1951, pp. 179. \$2.50.

THE QUEST FOR SERENITY, by G. H. Morling. 1951, pp. 91. \$1.50.

STUDIES IN THEOLOGY, by Loraine Boettner. 1951, pp. 351. \$3.50.

THE WITNESS OF LUKE TO CHRIST, by Ned B. Stonehouse. 1951, pp. 184. \$3.00.

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD, by Herman Bavinck, translated, edited and outlined by William Hendriksen. 1951, pp. 407. \$5.00.

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:

In a book review in "Moody Monthly" it is stated that "the Christian is neither lawless nor under law, but in a special relationship to Christ

(1 Cor. 9:20,21)." Is this statement Scriptural?

Answer:

The Scripture passage cited in this query reads as follows: "And unto the Jews I became as a

Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law." We shall consider presently what these statements of the apostle Paul mean.

The statement of "Moody Monthly" that "the Christian is neither lawless nor under law, but in a special relationship to Christ", is certainly not Scriptural, and moreover it is both a logical and a theological impossibility. It is like saying that a man is neither dead nor alive, but in a special condition. If the Christian is not lawless, then he is related in some way to God's law. It is the very nature of God's law that it requires obedience. If the Christian is related in some way to God's law, which requires obedience, then he must be in some sense "under law". What other relation could a human being who is "not lawless" sustain to the law of God except to be UNDER it in some sense? Certainly the Christian cannot be OVER God's law; he is not the Lawgiver; he is not the ruler of God's Kingdom, but a subject in it. There can be no middle ground between being "under law" in any specific sense, and being "lawless" in that same specific sense.

The statement of Moody Monthly proceeds from a type of Modern Dispensationalism which is certainly not Biblical. This type of Dispensationalism greatly over-simplifies the Biblical concept of God's law and the Biblical teaching as to man's relation to that law. It fails to distinguish clearly between the different elements in the divine law (as moral, ceremonial and civil), the different purposes for which these were given and the periods of their validity, the different functions of the moral law with reference to all men, and the different senses in which the Christian is and is not "under the law". Consequently, more or less serious errors result. The reader is referred to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XIX, and the Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. 91-97, for an excellent, clear and eminently Scriptural discussion of the moral law of God in its various relations to different classes of men. In particular we shall here quote the Larger Catechism, answer to Q. 97 ("What special use is there of the moral law to the regenerate?"): "Although they that are regenerate, and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned: yet, beside the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use to show them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead and for their good; and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their great care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience."

Briefly, the Christian believer is delivered from the curse of the law and from the penalty of the law, but he is not delivered from obligation to conform his life to the PRECEPT of the law. The moral law is an expression of the character of God, and no rational creature can be exempted from perpetual obligation to conform his life thereto. The Christian's duty is to obey the precept of the law, not in order to try to earn his salvation, but because of thankfulness to God for salvation received as a gift through Christ. Because the Christian loves God and wishes to please God he will desire, in his inmost being, to obey the moral law which is the expression of that which is in harmony with the character of God. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22). The Christian must strive to please God. How is he to know what is pleasing to God? Only from the Bible in which the WILL of God is revealed to him. The will of God as revealed in the Bible is what is called in theology "the moral law". To say that the Christian is not under the moral law as the standard of right and wrong for his life, is to say that the Christian is exempt from the will of God as revealed in the Bible. The regenerate Christian is a moral being, capable of distinguishing between right and wrong. As such he must have a standard of right and wrong; and this standard is just the will of God revealed in Scripture, or, in technical language, the moral law of God.

Now a few words as to the meaning of Paul's statements in 1 Cor. 9:20, 21. The apostle is writing of his earnest efforts directed toward the salvation of all kinds of men. By "them that are under the law" he clearly means the Jews, who not only possessed the written law of God, but wrongly supposed that they could earn eternal life by obedience to it. To them, Paul became "as" under the law in the sense that he tried to meet them on their own ground and so lead them to Christ. By "them that are without law" Paul certainly means the Gentiles, who, as pagans, lacked the written Word of God. To them, Paul became "as without law", that he might win them. In speaking to the Athenians at Athens, he did not reason at length from Moses and the prophets, as he did in the case of Jews; he spoke of their altar to the unknown God, of God's revelation in creation and providence, and so finally of Christ and His redemption. The apostle at once explains, in 1 Cor. 9:21, that he does not mean to say that he was really "without law" in his relation to God, for he was truly "under the law to Christ". His trying to meet Jews and Gentiles on their own ground, to win them for Christ, did not imply that he was "under the law" in the sense that the unsaved Jews were, nor that he was "without law" in the sense that the pagan Gentiles were. The point of the apostle's statements is far removed from the teachings of Modern Dispensationalism which teaches that when a man becomes a Chris-

tian he is no longer "under the law" (in any sense) but in "a special relationship to Christ".

The writer believes that "Moody Monthly" and other Dispensationalist publications and authors sincerely believe that they are in the highway of truth in their teachings concerning the law of God in relation to the Christian. But an unscriptural over-simplification inevitably leads to errors. To all who are concerned about this subject, we earnestly commend the sections of the Westminster Standards cited above. — J. G. Vos

Question:

What is the duty of a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church toward a member of the Church who has requested a "certificate of standing" in order to join a denomination which is known to be seriously unfaithful to the fundamental truths of Christianity?

Answer:

The responsibility before God for a change in membership must be wholly borne by the person making the change. Inasmuch as we believe in religious liberty and the right of private judgment, a "certificate of standing" must be issued by the Session to any member who requests one,

provided the member is actually in good standing in the Church. The Church Session which issues such a certificate is not responsible for the member's change in church relationship. But the member who makes the change will have to give answer to God at the Judgment Day for his decision and action. If actuated by other motives than loyalty to the Word of God as he understands it, his action is sinful.

A pastor who knows that the denomination a member intends to join is grossly unfaithful to the fundamental truths of Christianity, certainly has the duty of warning the member before the final step is taken. He should be warned that after the change he will be giving his moral and financial support to a denomination which is dominated by modern unbelief and which imperils men's souls by preaching another Gospel than that of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It should be made clear to such a person that he may be placing the eternal salvation of his children and his children's children in deadly peril, and that it is his duty before God to **investigate thoroughly** not merely the particular congregation he intends to join, but the denomination of which it is a part, for he is about to become responsible before God for a share in its policies, doctrines, and activities. — J. G. Vos

R E V E R E N C E

"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts"—Isa. 6:5.

Reverence is "a feeling of profound respect often mingled with awe and affection". Reverence is an attitude, but more than a mere mental attitude. It is an attitude that controls our conduct in speech and action. We may have reverence for our country, for great men, etc., but in the highest sense reverence concerns God. Reverence is greatly lacking in present-day religion. Modern religion has stressed the Fatherhood of God while neglecting the holiness and majesty of God, until little real reverence remains. Some have even dared to refer to God as their "Pal".

Reverence is intended to please God, not men. Not to please the minister and officers of the Church, but to express our devotion to God. Think of God's transcendent greatness: He is the Creator of the universe, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, to whom a thousand years are as one day, whose word called the solar system, the constellations and the nebulae into being. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Compassed with the limitations of time and space, and the weakness of our mortal body, we are totally de-

pendent on God. God and man are not equals. He is our Creator, we His creatures.

When God's awful majesty and holiness come home to a person, an attitude of reverence will result. Think of Isaiah crying out "Woe is me!", of Peter saying "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord", and of Moses who "hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God". God is the One who dwells in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen nor can see, to whom be honor and power eternal (1 Tim. 6:16). If all God's rational creatures have reason for reverence, how much more the Christian, who has been adopted into God's family and made a child of the Heavenly Father! Far from familiarity breeding contempt, the Christian's special relation to God ought to result in an attitude of greatly increased reverence.

There are many common forms of irreverence which we should avoid. One is profanity and levity in speech. Especially should we avoid light and careless speaking of divine things, jesting about the Bible and religion. Also we should cultivate reverence in connection with divine worship. This involves presence, punctuality and attentiveness. It is forbidden to chew gum, eat candy or peel an orange in the British Parliament; how much more should we avoid irreverent conduct during divine worship! Needless talk-

ing, whispering, note-passing, staring at late comers, reading books or papers not connected with the service—all these are forms of irreverent conduct.

We should also treat our church buildings in a manner fitting their function as the place of worshipping God. Our church buildings are mostly plain; very few of them could in any sense be called ornate. But they can be as clean and neat as Westminster Abbey. It is disgraceful that there should be burnt matches, trash and paper and other refuse scattered on the floor during divine service. Worn out Psalters that are falling to pieces are a shame when clean new ones can be purchased for \$1.50 each. Unseemly writing in church Psalters or Bibles is also irreverent. "It is not fine clothes, but clean ones, that mark a gentleman"; similarly, we may affirm,

"The change which our Lord declares needful for salvation is evidently no slight or superficial one. It is not merely reformation or amendment or moral change or outward alteration of life. It is a thorough change of heart, will and character. It is a resurrection. It is a passing from death unto life. It is the calling into exist-

ence of a new creature, with a new nature, new habits of life, new tastes, new desires, new appetites, new judgments, new opinions, new hopes, new fears. See this, and nothing less than this, implied, when our Lord declares that we all need a new birth." — Bishop Ryle, in Exposition of John iii.

it is not elaborate, expensive buildings, but ones that are kept clean, neat and orderly, that mark reverent congregations. We should be ashamed to have the place of divine worship less clean and neat than the parlor of our own homes. If small children drop papers or trash on the floor, the parents should be ashamed to leave without cleaning this up after the service.

The real secret of reverence is a personal knowledge of and devotion to God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom". And it is only through Christ that we can truly know God. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

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“All synods or councils, since the Apostles’ times, whether general or particular, may err; and many have erred. Therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice; but to be used as a help in both.”

The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXXI.4

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

Subscription \$1.50 per year postpaid anywhere

J. G. VOS, Editor and Publisher

R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

Christ's Self-Restraint

By R. C. Trench

He might have reared a palace at a word
 Who sometimes had not where to lay His head.
 Time was when He who nourished crowds with
 bread,
 Would not one meal unto Himself afford.
 He healed another's scratch, His own side bled;
 Side, hands and feet with cruel piercings gored.

Twelve legions girded with angelic sword
 Stood at His beck, the scorned and buffeted.
 Oh, wonderful the wonders left undone!
 Yet not more wonderful than those He wrought.
 Oh! self-restraint surpassing human thought!
 To have all power, yet be as having none.
 Oh, self-denying love, that thought alone
 Of needs of others, never of its own.



Jerusalem's Anguish

(Based on Isaiah 51:18-23)

By J. G. Vos

Among her many sons
 There is not one
 Of all she hath brought forth
 To guide her on.
 There is not one to stand
 And take her by the hand
 That my afflicted land
 May falsehood shun.

For unto thee are come
 These evils twain —
 Now who shall pity thee
 For all the slain?
 What desolation sore,
 Destruction, and yet more,
 Famine and sword of war:
 How great thy pain!

How shall I comfort thee?
 In every street
 All thy sons helpless lie —
 Bitter defeat!
 Helpless, as a wild bull
 Snared in a net, and full
 Of the Lord's fury, till
 Wrath is complete.

Now thou afflicted one,
 Hearken to this:
 Oh drunken, not with wine,
 Yet thou art His!

Thus saith the Holy One,
 The Lord thy God alone,
 Pleading well for His own,
 Hearken to this:

Behold I, even I
 Now have removed
 The cup of trembling I
 Gave my beloved.
 Even the dregs thereof,
 My bitter wrath, whereof
 Thou who didst spurn my love
 Sadly hast proved.

Never again shalt thou
 Drink of that cup;
 From thy hand I have now
 Taken it up.
 But I will put it in
 The hand of all the men
 That thee afflicted; then
 Thou shalt rise up.

They said unto thy soul:
 Bow down, that we
 May proceed to our goal,
 Destroying thee.
 And thou didst prostrate then
 Thy body low, as when
 A street is tramped by men —
 So didst thou lie.

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Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter II

The Battlefield of Presbyterianism—A.D. 200

The beginning of Scotland's evangelization is pre-historic. The records fail to give any satisfaction concerning the entrance of the Gospel into that lovely land. The ruins of numerous altars of stone bear grim testimony to the idolatrous worship practiced by the early inhabitants. These are known in history as the Druids. They held their religious meetings in groves, and evidently offered human sacrifices to their gods. The oak was accounted by them a sacred tree, and the mistletoe, when growing upon it, was worshipped. Thus the land of our forefathers, in the far off ages, was without a ray of Gospel light. The people sat in darkness, in the region and shadow of death.

In the first three centuries of the Christian era, the successive persecutions at Rome drove many Christians out from that Gospel center, to wander in all directions over the world. They suffered banishment for Christ's sake. In their wanderings they became missionaries. They loved Jesus more than their lives, and their religion more than their homes. By them the Gospel was carried to the ends of the earth. It seems that some of them drifted into Scotland and brought to that land the bright morning of a day that carried storms in its bosom, and after the storms, peace, quietness, prosperity, Christian civilization—an inheritance of light and liberty unparalleled in history.

As these witnesses of Jesus told the story of God's love and of Christ's death, the Holy Spirit came down with power and wrought wondrously upon the people. They readily believed the faithful saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

In the later centuries the Gospelized communities developed into an organized Church, with doctrine, worship, and government based upon God's Word. These primitive Christians were careful to preserve the apostolic simplicity, purity, manner, and substance, of Divine service. The Infallibility of the Bible, the Divinity of Christ, the Inspired Psalmody, and the Presbyterian form of government, were fundamentals in the faith of the Church of Scotland from her

youth. She appears exceedingly beautiful in her first love, coming up from wilderness with her right hand taking firm hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ, her gracious Redeemer and mighty Protector.

The Church of Scotland was then known as the Church of the Culdees. They had a flourishing theological seminary on the isle of Iona. The ruins of it still remain.

Papal Rome however quickly scented this noble vine, with its rich, ripe clusters of grapes. Embassies were sent to win these children of light over to the Papacy. But they had tasted of the freedom and blessedness in Christ and refused. A long sanguinary struggle ensued, which resulted in the apparent suppression of the Protestant faith in the twelfth century. The ministers in general, under the severity of prolonged persecution, surrendered their liberty and became servants of the Roman pontiff.

Yet there were always some to resist the cruel conqueror. The excellent of the earth are always to be found at their unpurchasable value, when mankind is on the market selling cheap. These had the courage to challenge popes and kings, who dared to assume the power of the prerogatives of Jesus Christ. They believed that Christ was the Head of the Church, and were willing to yield up their lives rather than their convictions. The doctrine of Christ's supremacy was incarnated in these worthies, and they became invincible in its defence. As the granite rocks, beneath whose shelter they worshipped, withstood the blasts of winter, so these insuppressible men withstood the storms of persecution. The sovereignty of Christ over Church and nation was dearer to them than life. They saw the glory of God involved in this fundamental truth, also the honor of Jesus Christ, and the liberty, purity, and permanence of the Church. They counted the pre-eminence of the Lord Jesus Christ worthy of every sacrifice. They suffered bonds and imprisonment, exile and slavery, torture and death, for its sake. Their blood watered the moss of the moors and the heather of the mountains. Thousands and tens of

thousands of Scotland's noblest sons and purest daughters gave their lives freely for the contested doctrine of Christ's crown rights and royal supremacy. As these valiant soldiers of the cross fell, their children arose, and, grasping the banner of the Covenant crimsoned with the blood of their fathers, carried it defiantly along the firing line of the fierce battle. The dreadful conflict continued while century followed century.

Victory finally crowned the martyr's cause, and peace spread her white wings over the crimson field, which in our day yields a rich harvest of happiness and prosperity. Out of that great struggle we have inherited the civil and religious liberty, which today is the crowning glory of Great Britain and America.

But the victories of our fathers were not final: they only placed us on vantage ground to continue the struggle, until the whole world shall be redeemed from every system of false religion and despotic power. Much land yet remains to be possessed. Animated by their noble example and encouraged by their success, we should press forward in the same cause, for the glory of Christ and the salvation of souls. How can we hesitate? Great obligations have descended from the fathers to us as their successors; future generations are dependent on our faithfulness.

POINTS FOR THE CLASS

1. Describe the religion that prevailed in Scotland before the Gospel was introduced.
2. What is known concerning the beginning of the Church in this country?
3. What was the success of the Gospel during the early centuries?
4. What were the chief doctrines of the Church in those times?
5. What foe attempted her suppression?
6. Describe the resistance offered by the martyrs.
7. What was the great doctrine around which the battle was waged?

(To be continued)

Editorial Note

The view of the Old Celtic Church presented by Dr. McFeeters in the foregoing chapter is quite commonly found in Protestant and especially Presbyterian writers of past generations. It is the judgment of the Editor of "Blue Banner Faith and Life", after having devoted some time and effort to a study of the subject, that Dr. McFeeters somewhat overstated the case for the "Protestant" and "Presbyterian" character of the Old Celtic or "Culdee" Church. It was "Protestant" in the sense that it was not subject to, and did not recognize, the jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome. It was "Presbyterian" in the sense that its "bishops" were essentially pastors, and did

not have the powers of diocesan bishops as in the episcopal system. On the other hand, monasteries and their abbots seem to have been quite prominent in the government of the Church. Properly speaking, the Protestant Reformation took place in the 16th century, and those Christians who in earlier ages held to a relatively pure form of Biblical Christianity should be called, not "Protestants", but adherents of Primitive Christianity. Also it would seem that Dr. McFeeters' reference to "thousands and tens of thousands" of martyrs in Scotland prior to the Reformation can hardly be substantiated by valid historical evidence; the statement seems to be hyperbolic.

The apparent implication of Dr. McFeeters' statement in the next to the last paragraph of the chapter ("Victory finally crowned the martyrs' cause") that at least a remnant of the Old Celtic Church continued to exist in Scotland until the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, is also unsupported by the historical evidence. When the Protestant Reformation finally came to Scotland, its leaders were not men who formed a lingering remnant of the ancient "Culdees", but men who had been born and reared in the Roman Catholic Church — Patrick Hamilton, George Wishart and John Knox, for example. Similarly, the Protestant Reformers on the Continent of Europe, such as Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, were not adherents of dissenting sects outside the Catholic Church, such as the Waldensians; on the contrary, they were born and reared in the Roman Catholic Church. When the Reformation came, it came from within, not without, the Roman Catholic Church.

As for Scotland, the historical evidence indicates that the Celtic form of Christianity known as the Old Celtic or "Culdee" Church finally succumbed to Romanism in the latter part of the eleventh century, in the time of Queen Margaret. "The last Celtic 'bishop of Alban' died at this time; and when the dynasty of Malcolm Canmore was established after an interval of turmoil, English ecclesiastics began to oust the Celtic Culdees from St. Andrews" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, eleventh edition (1911), volume 24, page 432b). From the time of Queen Margaret to the middle of the sixteenth century—a period of more than 400 years—the Church of Rome held control of the religious life of Scotland, though papal decrees were often ignored by the political rulers.

Those who are interested in a further study of the Celtic Christianity and Church of the early centuries are referred to the following articles published in previous issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life": *Columba of Iona*, in volume 1 No. 1 (January, 1946), pages 13 and 14; *Patrick and the Evangelization of Ireland*, in volume 1 No. 2 (February, 1946), pages 19-23. The supply of these two issues is exhausted and therefore copies of them cannot be furnished.—Ed.

The Visible Church: Its Nature, Unity and Witness

By J. G. Vos

(Continued from last issue)

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Nor can the problem be solved by the short-cut of concentration on a few generally recognized "essential truths". Such a solution would be an unscriptural over-simplification. Moreover it cannot solve the problem because there will inevitably still be disagreement as to which truths are to be regarded as "essential". One Christian insists that the doctrine of Christ's two natures is of the essence of Christianity; another holds that it is unimportant, and may be omitted. One asserts that the so-called "Apostles' Creed" is an adequate statement of the "essential truths" of Christianity; another replies that it is inadequate because it leaves out everything that was gained by the Protestant Reformation. One maintains that the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture must be included in a Church's confession; another counters by saying that it is only a "theory" and by no means to be insisted on. The inevitable result must be that any creed pared down to such a few "essential truths" as to suit the generality of professing Christians would in reality suit very few of them, and would leave the visible Church to bear a corporate witness to almost nothing. No Christian who believes that the Bible as a whole, with its wealth of divinely revealed truth, is the Church's supreme authority, will be satisfied with attempts to solve the confessional problem of Protestantism by concentration on a few selected "essential truths". This is a false trail which must necessarily result in the rejection as "non-essential" of the greater portion of what God has committed to the Church in his Word.

There can be no short-cut or easy solution to this problem. To say that the Church as the pillar and ground of the truth ought to bear witness to all that God has revealed in his Word is axiomatic, but does not solve the problem we are considering. For the problem consists precisely in the fact that Christians differ in their conceptions of the content of the system of truth revealed in the Word. If all were in agreement there would be no problem. The Church is faced with the task of bearing a corporate witness for divine truth while no two of her members are in complete agreement as to what that truth is. Now unless it is attempted to solve the problem in a purely arbitrary way, a key to its solution must

be sought in the Scripture itself. Although the Scripture does not present a body of doctrine already formulated in logical, systematic form, still it does present not merely an aggregate of individual doctrines, but a system of doctrine which possesses an organic character. Now if we regard the Scripture in its entirety as special divine revelation, and discover in it an organic system of doctrine, and if the visible Church is to bear a corporate witness to divine truth, then at least the system of doctrine presented in the Scriptures, in its integrity, must be insisted on as the content of the visible Church's corporate witness for the truth. Nothing that is essential to that system of doctrine may be disregarded or omitted. (We are not of course considering what is necessary for a person's salvation, but what is logically essential to the system of doctrine).

There are indeed professing Christians who deny that the Bible presents a system of doctrine. Some hold that it presents elements of mutually contradictory systems of doctrine. Others say that the doctrine contained in the Bible incidental and "the life" is the important thing. And of course there are those who maintain that Arminianism, Socinianism or even "Christian Science" is the system of doctrine presented in the Bible. We can only say that we believe they are profoundly mistaken and that their convictions are not substantiated either by express statement of Scripture or by valid logical inference from the Scriptures. But among Calvinists (not necessarily among members of Calvinistic Churches) there is general agreement that the Bible presents a definite system of doctrine, and also general agreement as to what system of doctrine is. There exists a certain organic complex of doctrine, every element of which is logically essential to the system, which every Calvinist will insist must be exhibited in its integrity in his Church's confession as a matter of public corporate witness.

There are also certain truths revealed in the Scripture—even truths generally recognized as such—which are not essential to the system of doctrine. For example it is generally recognized among Calvinists that defensive warfare, "upon just and necessary occasion", is sanctioned by Scripture. There is also perhaps general agreement that Scripture teaches that pastors are justly entitled to adequate compensation for their services. Few Calvinists would question the

Scriptural character of either of these principles, yet it can hardly be maintained that they are essential to the system of doctrine set forth in the Scriptures. That system would still possess its organic integrity even though neither of these principles were found to be taught or implied in the Bible. On the other hand, it is universally recognized by Calvinists that the doctrines of election, creation, providence, total depravity, the limited and substitutionary atonement, and many others, are not only Scriptural but also essential to the system of doctrine revealed in Scripture; if any one of them were to be omitted, the system would be deformed and inconsistent, or it would fall to the ground.

To affirm that the Church's corporate witness must at least be a witness for the system of doctrine set forth in the Scripture, in its integrity, still does not eliminate all difficulties. There remain some divergent views with respect to various elements of the system of doctrine itself. For example, all Calvinists believe that the doctrine of election is essential to the system of doctrine, yet among them some hold the supralapsarian view of the logical order of the divine decrees, while others accept the infralapsarian view on the same question, and there are those who hold a post-redemptionist scheme. What shall be our attitude toward such divergences as these? No doubt the great majority of Calvinists would readily agree to dispose of post-redemptionism at once by saying that while it may indeed be logically capable of being fitted into the framework of Calvinism, still it is so plainly unscriptural that it cannot be regarded as an open question. With respect to the other two views of the logical order of the decrees, the Westminster Standards are prudently non-committal, thus leaving this an open question on which diversity may exist within the Church. Similarly the question of the origin of the human soul, with the three competing views of creationism, traducianism and pre-existentism, has generally, and no doubt very properly, been left as an open question, not only because the Scripture does not afford sufficient data for a confident decision concerning it, but also because no one of the three views, as over against the others, is essential to the system of doctrine. To select one of these views and exalt it to be an element of the Church's public corporate testimony would amount to an unjustifiable sectarianism.

There will also inevitably remain a whole series of problems arising from the difficulty of attaining agreement concerning the implications of those doctrines which may have been agreed upon as being essential to the system of doctrine. Here the Church must face the danger of affirming too little and also the contrary danger of affirming too much in its corporate testimony. What is the bearing of the doctrinal system of

Calvinism on evangelism? On foreign missions? On the civil magistrate? On the family? On the realm of economics? Since Calvinism is precisely that system of doctrine which recognizes the sovereignty of God and the authority of Holy Scripture in every sphere of life, its implications and applications in these various spheres cannot be neglected or regarded as matters of indifference, nor can they be entirely omitted from the Church's corporate witness and left to the individual convictions of ministers and people. As a matter of fact it is just such questions as these that have occasioned some of the historical divisions among Churches holding the Reformed Faith. It is not the purpose of the present article to attempt to solve, or even to state, all these problems, but it is in order to call attention to their existence and the difficulty of their solution. It may be suggested that there has been a tendency, especially among some of the smaller Calvinistic denominations, to elevate to the status of public corporate testimony points of doctrine concerning which there is not only no general agreement among Calvinists, but for which the Scriptural proof may be exegetically or logically doubtful. There should always be a thorough searching of the Scriptures before anything is made a matter of public corporate witness, but when the matter in question is one on which there is general disagreement even among those who hold the Scriptural system of doctrine, then there exists far more need for an extremely thorough and deliberate searching of the Scriptures. Under such circumstances to adopt a point of doctrine as an element of corporate witness after a hasty and superficial study of the Scripture bearing on it, or no study at all, is inexcusable. There are always those who would like to make a requirement of the practice of a particular method of stewardship, or of abstinence from certain amusements, or peculiar and highly debatable eschatological views, or special views on economic questions, matters of corporate witness for the Church, who yet evidence little or no grasp of the doctrinal and exegetical problems that are involved, and who quite fail to appreciate the real difficulty—or it may be impossibility—of presenting a really relevant and cogent Scriptural proof for their doctrinal specialties. On such naive over-simplification of problems sectarianism thrives.

(To be continued)

"A true Christian Church cannot make common cause with other faiths. It cannot agree not to proselytise . . . All are lost in sin; none can be saved except by the way set forth in the Gospel. Therein lies the offence of the Christian religion, but therein also lies its glory and its power. A Christianity tolerant of other religions is just no Christianity at all."

J. Gresham Machen

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 III

THE DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES OF THE COVENANTERS

CHAPTER II

THE SOLE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST OVER THE CHURCH

1. The Anti-Erastian Character of the Covenanter Movement.

A. P. Stanley, an Anglican writer, speaks of "that extreme sensitiveness of the Scottish clergy to regal or legislative interference, which Hallam well calls 'Presbyterian Hildebrandism', which has caused the name 'Erastian' to be placed in the blackest list of heresies". This sensitiveness is the result of long contending for a principle which was characteristic of the Covenanting movement, the principle of the sole headship of Jesus Christ over His House, the Church. While some of the Reformed Churches on the Continent saw no harm in an Erastian establishment of religion, and while the Church of England, since the Reformation, has always been an Erastian establishment, this idea early became anathema in Scotland. The fact is that unlike most other Protestant countries, Scotland was not reformed by the civil magistrate from above, but by popular religious teachers who permeated the whole of society with their doctrines. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland which came into being in 1560 was not the creature of the State nor was it subject to the civil magistrate at that time.

The opposition to Erastianism in Scotland can be traced to a very early period. In 1561 John Knox said to Maitland of Lethington, who had challenged the right of the General Assembly to meet without the Queen's consent, "Take from us the liberty of assemblies, and take from us the gospel. If the liberty of the Church must depend upon her allowance or disallowance, we shall want not only assemblies, but the preaching of the gospel".

Much of the history of the Church of Scotland after the time of Knox has been the history of a desperate struggle to maintain the spiritual independence of the Church, the principle of the sole headship of Christ over the Church, in the face of Erastian encroachments on the part of the civil power. These encroachments became most severe during the period of persecution between the Restoration and the Revolution, but were also characteristic of a large part of the period before the Second Reformation and of the period after the Revolution Settlement.

The Church of the Second Reformation, which the later Covenanters always regarded as the purest period of the Church of Scotland, was not Erastian in character, notwithstanding allegations that have been made by some writers that it was. It is true that the Confession of Faith and other standards were ratified by acts of Parliament, but this did not constitute Erastianism, for the Parliament merely stated its formal approbation of what had already been authoritatively determined by the General Assembly. Nor did it violate the principle of the sole headship of Christ over the Church, for the position of the Second Reformation was precisely that Christ was the Head of the State as well as of the Church. The land, as well as the Church, had been given away in Covenant to be the Lord's. The Covenants had been accepted by Parliament, as well as by the General Assembly. They were civil, as well as ecclesiastical bonds. They bound the nation as such, as well as the Church. So for the Christian State to sanction what had been done by the Christian Church did not usurp any of Christ's prerogatives, for Christ was the Head of both Church and State. Erastianism is not any connection of the State with the Church or with religion, but **the claim of the State to be supreme over the Church**, so that the Church is not a co-ordinate authority with the State but an inferior authority under the State. The civil and ecclesiastical constitution of Scotland at the Second Reformation was one which provided for a union of Church and State, but that union was not of an Erastian character.

The Covenanters' opposition to Erastianism was manifested in many situations after the Second Reformation. They protested against the dissolution of the General Assembly by Cromwell's forces in 1653. They opposed the legislation which made the King supreme in causes ecclesiastical after the Restoration. They opposed the Indulgences, because these flowed from that usurped supremacy in causes ecclesiastical. And finally they opposed the Revolution Settlement because of the Erastian method by which it was brought about, the lead being taken throughout by the civil magistrate, and because of the Erastian character of the Settlement itself, the Church being dependent on the civil magistrate

for the summoning and dissolving of its supreme judicatory. The Covenanters were often regarded as unyielding, extreme and even fanatical, but they were contending for a principle, and when men are contending for a principle, obstinacy is a virtue. The man who can yield the smallest fraction of an inch of ground on a real and valid principle is at heart a compromiser, and when times become difficult, he will usually be found "at ease in Zion" or walking indifferently down the middle of the road maintaining what the Covenanters called a "detestable neutrality".

2. The Covenanters Not Opposed to the Principle of Establishment.

The fact that the Covenanters always opposed Erastianism, and scorned all compromise of the principle of Christ's sole headship over the Church, does not mean that they were opposed to the idea of an established or national Church, or that they believed in the separation of Church and State as it is commonly understood in America today. A reading of the Solemn League and Covenant is sufficient to show that that document is based upon the philosophy of Christian civil government and presupposes the idea of an established Church. The modern idea that the State has nothing to do with religion and the Church nothing to do with politics, the Covenanters would have utterly abhorred and anathematized.

The conception of the relation between the Church and State held by the Covenanters was, in brief, that both are divine institutions, each independent and supreme in its own sphere, united in an alliance of mutual support and helpfulness, the Church to teach the Christian doctrine of the civil magistrate, and the State to establish the Church by appropriate legislation and to provide for its financial support out of the national resources. According to this view, the fact that the Church is established by the State as the national Church, does not imply that the State has the right to dictate the policy or review the decisions of the Church. The Church is subject only to Christ, though by law established as the national Church.

This view of the relation between the Church and the State has its roots in the Second Book of Discipline (1578), where it is set forth in considerable detail. According to the Second Book of Discipline, the "power and policy" of the Church "is different and distinct in the own nature from that power and policy which is called the civil power, and appertains to the civil government of the commonwealth, albeit they be both of God and tend to one end, that is, to advance the glory of God, and to have godly and good subjects". "Notwithstanding, as the ministers and others of the ecclesiastical state are subject to the magis-

trate civilly, so ought the person of the magistrate to be subject to the Church spiritually and in ecclesiastical government". "The civil power should command the spiritual to exercise and to do their office according to the word of God; the spiritual rulers should require the Christian magistrate to minister justice and punish vice, and to maintain the liberty of the Church, and quietness within their bounds". "The magistrate ought neither preach, minister the sacraments, nor execute the censures of the Church, nor yet prescribe any rule how it should be done, but command the minister to observe the rule prescribed in the word, and punish transgressors by civil means; the minister again exercises not the civil jurisdiction, but teaches the magistrate how it should be exercised according to the word". "The magistrate ought to assist, maintain, and fortify the jurisdiction of the Church; the ministers should assist their princes in all things agreeable to the word, providing they neglect not their charge in involving themselves in civil affairs". "Although all members of the Church are holden, according to their vocation, to advance the kingdom of Christ Jesus so far as lies in their power; yet chiefly Christian princes, kings and other magistrates are holden to do the same, for they are called in the Scripture nurses of the Church, because by them it is, or at least ought to be, maintained and defended against all those that would procure the hurt thereof". The principles thus laid down in the Second Book of Discipline represent substantially, though not always precisely, the ground taken on the relation of Church and State by the Covenanters and Reformed Presbyterians through their history to the present day.

3. The Effectiveness of the Covenanters' Testimony for the Sole Headship of Christ over the Church.

Of the three distinctive doctrines of the Covenanters, the principle of the sole leadership of Christ over the Church is the only one that has been at all widely accepted outside of Cameronian and Reformed Presbyterian circles. Their testimony for this principle was a major reason, perhaps the supreme reason, for their refusal to incorporate with the Church of the Revolution Settlement in 1690. They were the only body that publicly protested against the Erastianism of the Revolution Settlement at the time. The later history of the Revolution Church, and especially the patronage controversy and the Secession and Relief movements and the Disruption of 1843 have shown that the Covenanters were correct in alleging that the Revolution Settlement was Erastian in nature and that the Revolution Church was in bondage to the State. These movements of secession were not protests against the pure principle of Erastianism, however, so much as protests against practices which resulted from

the Erastian establishment of the Church. The Covenanters objected not merely to the abuses and practical evils when these occurred, but to the **principle of Erastianism** in the Revolution Church, prior to and apart from all actual working out of this principle in specific overt acts of dominion of the State over the Church. Even if the Revolution State had set a record of model conduct in relation to the Revolution Church, and even if the patronage controversy had never taken place, the Covenanters would have been opposed to the principle of Erastianism which they saw in the constitution of the Revolution Church.

The various secessions from the Revolution Church were, however, protests against Erastianism, either in practice, or in theory and practice both, and in this respect they no doubt were to

a considerable extent fruits of the publicly expressed dissent of the Covenanters from the Revolution Settlement. The uniqueness of the Covenanters' testimony consists in the fact that they were the first to maintain this principle after the Revolution Settlement, and the only ones to maintain it at the time of that Settlement. What they alone maintained at that time became widespread in later times. It is needless to add that the principle of the sole headship of Christ over the Church is today maintained by Presbyterian and other bodies in many countries where the separation of Church and State, in the modern sense, is the rule. The separation of Church and State as ordinarily understood today, however, never was a doctrine of Covenanters or Reformed Presbyterians in Scotland.

(To be continued)

Sketches from Our History

Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER VI

THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION

7. Luther at the Diet of Worms

Luther had announced that on the tenth day of December, 1520, he would publicly burn the pope's bull, that is, the pope's decree excommunicating Luther from the Church of Jesus Christ. Luther had also invited the students of the University of Wittenberg to witness his act of defiance.

At nine o'clock in the morning on the appointed day a large number of people, including university professors, students and other citizens, had assembled to witness Luther's act. In the presence of these witnesses the reformer solemnly committed the papal bull to the flames, saying: "As thou (the pope) hast vexed the Holy One of the Lord, may the eternal fire vex thee!" Luther also called the pope's decree "the execrable bull of Antichrist". Besides the bull, Luther also cast into the fire the writings of his opponent Dr. Eck, with a copy of the Roman Catholic canon law, and certain other documents.

By this courageous act Luther once for all renounced the jurisdiction of the pope of Rome. It is difficult for us today to realize the tremendous faith and courage involved in this action. The papacy was at that time the greatest power on earth. Kings and emperors had bowed in fear and trembling to its decrees. The pope claimed to be above all human authorities, both spiritual and temporal. As a matter of fact the pope was the visible head of the organized Church

as it existed in that day. Throughout western Christendom the pope's authority was acknowledged. To resist or defy such an authority was almost an unheard of thing. On that memorable tenth of December, 1520, Luther boldly repudiated the pope's authority as false and antichristian. Now there could be no turning back. He had burned his bridges behind him.

A few weeks previously Charles, the king of Spain, had been crowned emperor—Charles V—of the Holy Roman (German) Empire. In January, 1521, Charles V opened the diet of the Empire at the city of Worms. The pope sent two envoys to the emperor; one of these, named Jerome Aleander, was specially appointed to get Luther placed under the ban of the Empire, that is, declared an outlaw, without civil rights, throughout the Holy Roman (German) Empire. Luther had already been excommunicated from the Church; now the pope wanted the diet and the emperor to declare him an outcast from civil society also.

Charles would no doubt have yielded to the pope and placed Luther under the ban of the Empire by an imperial edict. The German princes and nobles, however, were not willing for such hasty action to be taken. They reminded the emperor that no imperial edict could be published without their consent, and they asked that Luther be invited to Worms and there examined in person. The members of the diet also wished Luther to be heard concerning the claims

of the papacy, and they requested the emperor to rescue Germany from the tyranny of Rome. Charles agreed to send for Luther and to give the reformer a safe-conduct guaranteeing him freedom to travel to Worms and home again without interference. The emperor refused, however, to combine the case of Luther with that of the German princes' grievances against Rome.

The safe-conduct was sent to Luther, and the reformer, in spite of efforts made to dissuade him, journeyed to Worms to appear before the diet of the Empire. He reached the city on April 16 and was called to appear before the diet on the 17th. Luther's opponents hoped to prevent any real discussion of the issues involved, and attempted to prevent Luther from giving more than yes or no answers to specific questions addressed to him. But Luther was not to be muzzled so easily.

When he appeared before the diet, Luther was asked whether he was the author of the books and writings on the table, the titles of which were read to him by a clerk. He at once acknowledged that he was indeed the author of these writings. Next he was asked whether he was willing unconditionally to retract the contents of the books. Luther's opponents, of course, expected an immediate yes or no answer to this question. But Luther realized that it would be folly to give them what they expected. If he were to say yes, he would be acting against truth and conscience; on the other hand, if he were to say no, he would immediately be condemned without having any opportunity to discuss the real issue and defend himself. So Luther requested time to consider the matter and prepare his reply. This was granted and he was given until the next day to consider. The members of the diet were eager to hear Luther speak, even though the emperor was not.

The next day, the 18th, Luther appeared before the diet the second time, and spoke for about two hours explaining the contents of the

books which he had been required to retract. After carefully explaining the meaning and purpose of his books he was asked by the emperor, who did not understand German well, to repeat his speech in Latin, which he did. After this the notorious Dr. Eck demanded that Luther give a definite, unconditional answer as to whether he would recant or not. Thus challenged, Luther uttered his famous statement: "Unless I shall be convinced by testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason . . . I neither can nor will make any retraction, since it is neither safe nor right to act against conscience. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, so help me God! Amen."

This heroic reply caused the diet to adjourn in confusion. The Spaniards among the members would have assaulted Luther, but the Germans formed a protective ring around him and escorted him to his lodgings.

The following day the emperor read a statement of his own views to the diet, and proposed that Luther be placed under the ban of the Empire. The diet, however, objected to this. Conferences with Luther followed, but compromise was impossible and nothing was accomplished. Finally Luther was ordered to leave Worms and return home to Wittenberg. His safe-conduct would expire on the 7th of May, after which he could be seized and put to death as an excommunicated heretic. Luther left Worms to return home.

Still the expected ban of the Empire was not published. Suddenly all Germany was electrified by the news that Martin Luther had mysteriously disappeared. No one seemed to know what had happened to him. Then a story began to be circulated to the effect that Luther's dead body, pierced by a dagger, had been found in a mine. All over Germany people jumped to the conclusion that Luther had been murdered by the pope's servants. It was not till long afterwards that the truth about what had happened to Luther became publicly known.

(To be continued)

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"When a great and true revival comes in the Church, the present miserable, feeble talk about avoidance of controversy on the part of the servants of Jesus Christ will all be swept away as with a mighty flood. A man who is really on fire with his message never talks in that feeble and compromising way but proclaims the Gospel plainly and boldly in the presence of every high thing that is lifted up against the Gospel of Christ."

J. Gresham Machen

"The hearing and granting of prayer are the Lord's property, and His usual practice, and His pleasure, and His nature, and His glory."

David Dickson

"Christians should become aware of their citizenship in a better country, that they may rightly adapt themselves to this world."

Martin Luther

"We find no permanent hope for society in the mere 'principles of Jesus' or the like; but we

find it in the new birth of individual souls. Important indeed are the social applications of Christianity; but, as Francis Shunk Downs has well said, there can be no applied Christianity unless there is a Christianity to apply, and there can be no Christianity to apply unless there are Christian men. And men are made Christian by the Spirit of God."

J. Gresham Machen

"It now becomes a serious question how far those who abide by the faith once delivered to the saints should fraternize with those who have turned aside to another gospel. Christian love has its claims, and divisions are to be shunned as grievous evils; but how far are we justified in being in confederacy with those who are departing from the truth? It is a difficult question to answer so as to keep the balance of the duties. For the present it behoves believers to be cautious, lest they lend their support and countenance to the betrayers of the Lord. It is one thing to overleap all boundaries of denominational restriction for the truth's sake; this we hope all godly men will do more and more. It is quite another policy which would urge us to subordinate the maintenance of truth to denominational prosperity and unity. Numbers of easy-minded people wink at error so long as it is committed by a clever man and a good-natured brother, who has so many fine points about him. Let each believer judge for himself; but, for our part, we have put on a few fresh bolts to our door, and we have given orders to keep the chain up; for, under color of begging the friendship of the servant, there are those who aim at robbing THE MASTER."

Charles H. Spurgeon

"You need not be afraid of too much grace. Great grace never makes a man proud. A little grace is very apt to make a man puffed up."

A. A. Bonar

"Humility must be taught us as Gideon taught the men of Succoth, with briars and thorns. These will frequently fetch blood from the old man. O that we may be made willing to have him bleed to death. Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him! Crucify him! May this be the language of your heart and mine."

George Whitefield

"To be in Christ is the source of the Christian's life; to be like Christ is the sum of his excellence; to be with Christ is the fulness of his joy."

Charles Hodge

"No point in the history of a soul has such importance as its new birth. At this moment only it begins to live, in a spiritual sense. The very transition into heaven is not so critical; for this is but the continuance of a life already begun. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, at every such transformation. We may talk of

great junctures in human life; but it were mere trifling to compare any of them with the translation from being an heir of wrath to being a member of Christ."

James W. Alexander

"If we regard one sin in our hearts, it is a sure sign that our repentance is not genuine. And God has declared, that the prayers of such he will not hear."

Archibald Alexander

"I believe that the testimony of conscience, which Paul calls the rejoicing of the pious, consists in three things. For it is necessary to believe, first of all, that you cannot have remission of sins but through the mercy of God; secondly, that you cannot have any good work, unless he bestow this also; lastly, that you cannot by any works merit eternal life, unless that also be freely given."

Bernard of Clairvaux

"Now it ought not to be doubted that repentance not only immediately follows faith, but is produced by it. For since pardon, or remission, is offered by the preaching of the gospel, in order that the sinner, liberated from the tyranny of Satan, from the yoke of sin, and the miserable servitude of his vices, may remove into the kingdom of God,—no one can embrace the grace of the gospel, but he must depart from all the errors of his former life, enter into the right way, and devote all his attention to the exercise of repentance. Those who imagine that repentance rather precedes faith, than is produced by it, as fruit by a tree, have never been acquainted with its power, and are induced to adopt that sentiment by a very insufficient argument."

John Calvin

"As wood, hay, and stubble, brought into contact with fire, are speedily consumed, so the inventions of men, unsupported by the Word of God, cannot bear the examination of the Holy Spirit, but must immediately fall to the ground."

John Calvin

"It is not lawful for you to make such a compromise with God, as to undertake a part of the duties prescribed to you in his Word, and to omit part of them, at your own pleasure."

John Calvin

"The cross of Christ triumphs, in the hearts of believers, over the devil and the flesh, over sin and impious men, only when their eyes are directed to the power of the resurrection."

John Calvin

"Ordinary politics sometimes has its sordid side; politics in church affairs always has."

Herman Bavinck

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.

MEANS OF GRACE. "The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the Word, Sacraments and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation." (S. C. 88)

MEDIATOR. One who intervenes between two parties who are at enmity against each other, and brings about reconciliation between them. "It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man" (Westminster Confession of Faith, VIII.1)

MERCY, CHRISTIAN. The Christian virtue and duty of endeavoring to relieve, in the name of Christ, the sufferings and distress of those who are miserable, whether from sin or from its consequences.

MERCY OF GOD. That attribute of God by which He is inclined to pardon the guilty, and to relieve the distress of the miserable. God's mercy is free, being bestowed according to His sovereign choice; and it is gracious, being bestowed upon those who not only have no merit of their own, but have offended against Him.

MERIT. That which is earned or deserved. This is contrasted with grace or mercy, which is not earned or deserved. It is not by his own merit, but by the merit of Jesus Christ, that the Christian receives eternal life.

MESSIAH. A Hebrew term meaning "Anointed", equivalent to the Greek "Christos" or "Christ". In the Old Testament, kings and high priests were anointed with oil to set them apart to their office; the oil symbolized the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ as the perfect, final prophet, priest and king, is pre-eminently the Messiah.

MILLENNIUM. The thousand year period of restraint of Satan and of the reign of Christ, which is spoken of in Revelation 20:1-10. (There are various views as to the meaning and the fulfillment of this prophecy).

MONOPHYSITES. The adherents of a heresy in the early Church which denied that Jesus Christ has two *distinct* natures, divine and human, and held that these two are united so as to form only one nature.

MIRACLE. An event in the external world, for the purpose of bearing witness to the truth of God, which has no other cause than the will of

God. (In God's ordinary providence He works through the sequence of cause and effect in the realm of nature; in the case of miracle, God works directly, by His supernatural power, to produce an effect which lacks an efficient cause in the natural order. A miracle has natural effects, but no natural cause).

MISSIONS. The task of the Church, in obedience to Christ's Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) to undertake the establishment of the Christian Faith throughout the world, which involves three elements: (1) Evangelism, or preaching the Gospel; (2) the establishment of the Visible Church and its ordinances; (3) the teaching of the entire system of truth revealed in the Bible.

MONOTHELITES. The adherents of an ancient heresy which denied that Jesus Christ has two wills, a divine and a human, and held that He has only one will. (This was condemned as heretical by the sixth general council, A. D. 680, on the ground that it was contrary to the full and true humanity of Jesus Christ).

MONTANISTS. A sect of Christians which sprang up in the second century after Christ as a reaction against worldliness and deadness in the orthodox or catholic Church. The Montanists were named after their founder, Montanus, a Phrygian by birth, who claimed divine inspiration and the gift of prophecy. They were much more strict than the catholic Church in their insistence upon holiness and separation from the world. The most famous Montanist was the great Tertullian, who insisted upon a clean, clear separation of Christians from everything pagan.

PRAYER

By R. C. Trench

Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will avail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take!
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear!
We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong—
That we are sometimes overborne with care—
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled—when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?

A Misunderstood Scripture

"Abstain from all appearance of evil" — 1 Thess. 5:22. This verse affords a classic example of an incorrect translation of a text of Scripture which has led many people into a false idea. This text, in the form in which it is translated in the King James Version, has been cited times without number in support of the notion that Christians are commanded to abstain, not only from what is really evil, but also from whatever may have the mere semblance or appearance of being evil, even though not really evil. According to this idea, this text is a divine command to abstain from whatever may in any way resemble evil, or seem like it. This interpretation of the text is frequently used in an effort to prove that it is the Christian's duty to abstain from various pleasures and recreations which are not really evil, but which may in some respect resemble other actions which are really evil, and thus which may have the "appearance" or semblance of evil to some people. To mention only a single example, the present writer has heard it seriously stated that Christians should refrain from drinking the common soft drink called "root beer", because it has the word "beer" in its name, and it is the Christian's duty to "abstain from all appearance of evil". No doubt other examples will readily occur to the minds of our readers.

The error involved in this wrong interpretation of the text is not a slight or unimportant one. Though the things which the Christian is urged to avoid are often trivial, the error is not trivial. For this error clouds and obscures the clear distinction between good and evil, between right and wrong. The Bible plainly and emphatically teaches that it is the Christian's duty to abstain from evil, that is from what is wrong, from what is sinful. But according to the interpretation of 1 Thess. 5:22 which we are discussing, it is also the Christian's duty to abstain from innumerable things which are not really evil, wrong or sinful, but which may have the mere semblance or appearance of evil. This must inevitably entangle the conscience in a labyrinth from which escape will be all but impossible. The natural result will be one of two things. Either the conscience will become hardened and deadened to all moral questions, since the real and the merely seeming evil have been lumped together as equally to be avoided; or the conscience will become morbidly sensitive, so that the person will have conscientious scruples about a great host of matters which are not really moral problems at all, and will forfeit all his peace of mind and lose most of his usefulness in God's kingdom. Calvin in his chapter on Christian liberty (*Institutes*, Book III, Chapter XIX) illustrates this latter tendency by a man who feels that a Christian should not indulge in the luxury of having fine linen napkins on his table, so he uses cheaper ones; but after a while he

comes to feel that a Christian should not use linen napkins at all, so he substitutes cotton ones; and finally he decides that the true path of Christian duty is to avoid the use of any kind of napkins whatever. Calvin rightly describes this as the conscience becoming entangled in a labyrinth.

The error in the King James Version's translation of 1 Thess. 5:22 consists in two points: (1) Verse 22 is made a separate sentence, whereas it should be regarded as part of the same sentence as verse 21. (2) The Greek noun *eidōs* should not be translated as "appearance" for this English word is ambiguous and may mean "mere appearance" or "semblance".

Nestle's Greek New Testament and practically all modern translations punctuate the text so as to make verse 22 part of the same sentence as verse 21. The present writer found only the King James making verse 22 a new and separate sentence.

The word *eidōs* occurs 5 times in the Greek New Testament. In the King James Version these are translated once by "appearance" (1 Thess. 5:22), once by "fashion" (Luke 9:29), once by "sight" (2 Cor. 5:7), and twice by "shape" (Luke 3:22; John 5:27) To give an idea of the usage of the word we shall give these texts here, emphasizing the words used as translations of *eidōs*: "Abstain from all **appearance** of evil"; "And as he prayed, the **fashion** of his countenance was altered"; "For we walk by faith, not by **sight**"; "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily **shape** like a dove"; "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his **shape**".

According to Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, *eidōs* means (1) the external appearance, form, figure, shape, of something; (2) form or kind. Thayer adds that in Greek writers, *eidōs* corresponds to the word "species" as distinguished from "genus" (p. 172). Alford's *Greek Testament* comments on 1 Thess. 5:22, "These words cannot by any possibility be rendered as in E. V., 'abstain from all appearance of evil'. For (1) *eidōs* never signifies 'appearance' in this sense: (2) the two members of the sentence would thus not be logically correspondent, but a new idea would be introduced in the second which has no place in the context: for it is not against being deceived by false **appearance**, nor against giving occasion by behaviour which **appears like** evil, that he is cautioning them, but merely to distinguish and hold fast that which is good, and reject that which is evil. *Eidōs* is the species, as subordinated to the genus."

Some more modern translations of verses 21 and 22 follow:

American Standard Version: "prove all

things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil." Twentieth Century New Testament: "Bring everything to the test; cling to what is good; shun every form of evil." Revised Standard Version: ". . . test everything; hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil." It will be noted that all of these translate *eidos* by "form". Alford in his commentary suggests "every species of evil", with "every form of evil" as a possible alternative translation.

It is clear that verses 21 and 22 are a unit and properly constitute a single sentence. First there is a general command: "Prove all things" or "bring everything to the test". The result of bringing everything to the test will be the division of "all things" into two classes, namely, good and evil. Therefore the command to "prove all things" is followed by a specific command concerning the Christian's duty with regard to each of these classes. With regard to what is good, the Christian is to hold it fast. With regard to every kind of evil, the Christian is to abstain from it. Verse 22 is co-ordinate with the second half of verse 21, and subordinate to the first half of verse 21.

The interpretation of 1 Thess. 5:22 as a command to abstain from whatever has the mere semblance of evil is often put forward in the interests of what is represented as a superior type of piety or holiness. In reality, however, it is not a better piety or higher holiness, and it will lead to the opposite of piety and holiness in the end. True piety does not handle the Word of God in a slipshod or inaccurate manner. And the mistranslation or misinterpretation of a text of Scripture cannot but be productive of evil.

It may be remarked that our Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples did not seek to avoid "the appearance of evil" in the sense in which this phrase is often understood. Jesus wrought miracles of healing on the sabbath, which certainly had the "appearance of evil" to the Pharisees. His disciples ate the ears of grain as they passed through the fields on the sabbath, and Jesus defended their action as legitimate. Instead of deferring to people's erroneous ideas of evil, Jesus said: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

The Scriptural Pattern of Worship

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

It is an accepted article of orthodox religion that God exercises His moral sovereignty over His intelligent creation by means of law. In the case of man, this, at the first, was the moral law written on the heart. But as time went on it grew into the proportions represented in the Word of God as a whole.

In this Word it appears that God has a particular care to and special zeal for His own worship. (Cain and Abel, Gen. 4; Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10; Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Num. 16; Moses at Kadesh, Num. 20; the rejection of Saul 1 Sam. 15; the handling of the ark, 1 Chron. 13 and 15; Uzziah's presumption, 2 Chron. 26; and the cleansing of the temple, Matt. 21).

Appropriately to this zeal it appears that God has ever exercised the right of the prescription in every part of the pattern of man's worship of Him. A clean-cut worship principle is revealed, namely, that God has reserved to Himself full and absolute control over the content of all worship. This has been expressed as follows: "God is to be worshipped only in ways prescribed in Holy Scripture and the Holy Scripture prescribes the whole content of worship" (adapted from the title of a paper by the Rev. William Young, Th.D.).

This principle is taught in Scripture in many ways and by numerous pointed sayings all to

the same effect. (Ex. 20:4,5 and the Shorter Catechism comment, Q.50,51; Deut. 4:2 and 12:32; Jer. 7:31; Mark 7:1-13 and Matt. 28:20). The figure of a pattern to describe God's worship prescription appears in three places: Ex. 25:9 and 40 and Heb. 8:5. The admonition of strict adherence to the pattern pertains more particularly to the material equipment prescribed, but, by inescapable inference, passes over to the prescribed use of this equipment.

The idea of a pattern in relation to a construct of any kind is one that is familiar to all. A woman who has bought a pattern by which to make a dress expects to derive benefit from it, but is under no obligation to adhere strictly to it. However, such is not the case in respect to a God-given worship pattern. This pattern, in contrast to the obvious flexibility present in such a case as the above, is laid down by law and is the fixed rule or standard, not of man, but of God, and allows not the slightest deviation from the content prescribed.

We may be most grateful to God that His grace unto us in Christ covers the whole multitude of sins, inclusive of all faults and imperfections in our worship. No work or worship, however correct in itself, is acceptable in itself apart from grace. Nevertheless, that worship which most fully follows the Scriptural principle and

conforms to the divine worship-pattern comes the nearest to being acceptable in itself and is pleasing to God in point of its conformity as otherwise it could not be. Consequently it is more blessed of God than it would be otherwise. We may be sure that the rule of God with respect to man's worship of Him is strictly enforced and that every violation of it is sure to receive its just recompense of reward. God judges our worship of Him by the rigid application of the pattern given in His Word, and as He judges so are we to judge. The lesson is plain that we are to adhere strictly to the pattern; and to this end earnestly endeavor to discover what it is and to correct every departure from it, as soon as discovered, so as to bring our worship into line with the divine plan.

It may be noted in passing that the worship here advocated is that of our Calvinistic and Reformed division of Protestant Christendom in its original form. It was the worship of Calvin and his friends and of the Reformed churches as originally constituted and of their creeds. The Westminster and all other Reformed standards witness clearly both to the principle of prescription and the prescribed content as here set forth.

Let us consider what is to be done in the determination of the truly Scriptural and spiritual worship of God relative to the day and age in which we live. First, there should be a thorough study of the Scriptures for the teaching concerning the principle of Scripture prescription. This must be followed by close study for the content of the worship prescribed; that is, the several elements of which it is composed and which together make up the true and pure worship of God as a whole. And again, in connection with these two, there should be clear discrimination of the two kinds of worship taught in the Bible, the one for the Old and the other for the New and still continuing dispensation. We are naturally more concerned with the worship which God by His Word has taught is to be the worship for us today. But it is an elementary fact that Scripture exhibits in the main two dispensations and has prescribed for each its own worship. The Old dispensation was typical, preparatory, disciplinary and temporary, and for it God prescribed a distinct type of worship. This was very elaborate as to detail; highly complex and involved. The main body of this was revealed at Sinai by the hand of Moses, the servant of God, and was yet further elaborated and gloriously consummated in the days of Solomon and his temple, and was later re-established in the temple of Zerubbabel.

But time came for a change. "When the fulness of the time was come God sent forth his Son". The Gospel story shows plainly how the Lord Jesus conformed as far as He was able conscientiously with the worship of His day, but also informs us how the Lord Himself pronounc-

ed the end of that day and the doom of the city and the temple and the old economy, and how the veil of the temple was rent in twain and the new worship was introduced, supplanting the old. This had its beginning even in the days of the Saviour's presence among us in the flesh. The words of John 4:21-24 tell us of the change, a very distinct change which was coming in worship. These words signified the abrogation of the old and the setting up of the new, even then present in its formative stage and soon to be completed. This new worship, emancipated from the former bondage to race and place, was, in form and content, worship universalized, spiritualized and greatly simplified. The seat of its authority, while mainly the New Testament, is really the Bible as a whole with the exception of all direction pertaining to the ceremonial worship of the former period.

The fact is that a whole new order, in many ways supplanting the old, was ushered in. Among the changes made was a day for the Sabbath, new sacraments, and a new worship. But it is unthinkable that the new order, instituted of God, was to be any the less subject to His regulation and direction than the old. Whatever its content, it was all of God, to be regulated by the pattern given in His Word which is to be faithfully followed always and everywhere throughout the world.

Let us be clear with regard to the principle itself that it is God's own rule enjoining the complete, Scriptural worship content. As to its constituent elements it is not at all of man or of man's design, will and devices. Whatever may be found in our worship which is not found appointed in the Word of God, we may be sure, is wrong and out of place. Every such thing is forbidden by the Word, forbidden by its very silence regarding it. For all that is not appointed is forbidden.

Were we to inquire concerning God's reasons for this we can see, for one thing, that worship holds the place of supreme importance in the divine scheme of things for the life of man in relation to his Creator-King. Worship is the high point of man's relation to his Maker and it is here that not only God's authority but also His glory is most immediately involved. Hence the supreme measure and intensity of the zeal which He has to His own worship and the jealousy which He reveals in connection with it.

But underlying and paralleling this aspect of the matter is the fact that man, even in the perfect state, much less totally depraved as he is and far from perfect even in the regenerate state, is in no position to dictate in any way how God is to be worshipped. God, and God alone, infinite and perfect in His being and in all His attributes is perfectly qualified to prescribe that in man's worship of Him which is right and good and pleasing to Him.

It follows that God has given us the pattern which contains all that He has in mind for the content of our worship of Him. Consequently there is to be a complete inclusion of the prescribed content to the exclusion of any kind of alteration, whether by way of modification, omission or addition. Only that which Scripture teaches, authorizes and prescribes is to have place and be done in our worship. Only so shall we worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth and be such worshippers as the Father seeks.

Many questions arise and many matters might profitably be considered in connection with the subject as a whole: as, the time and place of worship, agent and Object, mode and spirit, form and content, means and end and present aid. It remains for the present, to consider the prescribed content both positively and negatively, both as to what is to be included and what excluded.

With deliverance from the bonds of the worship of the Old dispensation, the new worship burst into full bloom in the spiritual life of the early church. Its form was taken from that of the synagogue, but its regulation was still by the Word of God whether oral or written. The authority determinative of the new mode was vested in the apostles and for the time being their influence and authority prevailed, since which time we have been limited to the authority of the Word of God written. Exhaustive study of the Scriptures will reveal a four-fold worship content, namely, prayer, song, Bible reading and Bible preaching; with the addition of the benediction and possibly the collection, the authority for the latter being limited to the words of 1 Cor. 16:2. These four are the principal elements of worship in the New dispensation. Ample evidence and proof may be marshalled for each of the four elements named. Three of these present only minor difficulties and no major problem. All Bible believing and educated people will readily accede to the place and importance given to prayer, Bible reading and Bible preaching in worship according to the Bible teaching.

This applies also to the praise of God in song, but there is the question of the material of song or, more specifically, the kind of songs and the very identical songs themselves which are to grace our lips and sing themselves in our hearts to the praise of our Sovereign God. Song in worship does for us present this special problem, but the fact that such a problem exists is a fault which must be laid at our own door and to the blindness of our hearts and not at all to God and His Word.

Clear indication and even express command is given concerning the Psalms as the songs to be sung to the praise of God both in Old Testament times and the New. Whatever songs besides those

of the Book of Psalms are found in the Old Testament, songs composed and used on certain special historical occasions, it is evident that only those incorporated in God's own book of songs were meant for the permanent use of the people of God. And as regards any songs alleged to be found in the New Testament, poetic compositions which might be regarded as suitable for singing, there is no mention, not to say any slightest indication of any singing of them or of any intention on God's part that they were to be sung. On the other hand the New Testament plainly authorizes and enjoins the singing of the Psalms (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; 1 Cor. 14:26; James 5:13; Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16). The only legitimate conclusion to be drawn from the application of the Scriptural principle to the facts as they lie upon the pages of the Word is the inclusion of the Book of Psalms to the exclusion of the use of all other songs.

Now if we desire to penetrate behind this particular part of the divine pattern concerning the reason for such a limitation, it may be said that God's design in the worship of this dispensation is apparently to make it simple and universal, that is, of the same kind universally, and to keep it pure. What better provision for the attainment of these ends could there be than that the songs of the church should be restricted to the songs of the Word? And yet there are other, deeper reasons. One such is certainly the provision so made for the preservation of the most solemn and reverent sense of the majesty and greatness of our God. These songs invariably breathe in every word nothing but the deepest and the purest reverence. But can this be said of other songs? Is it really true of any, or at least of the generality of extra-biblical, uninspired songs?

Summing up on the positive side, is it not a blessed thing and wonderful to contemplate that God has provided two whole parts of worship—two out of four—and provided even to the extent of having supplied the very words? Prayer and preaching fall into a somewhat different category, but what parts of worship were capable of being provided in complete detail have been so provided. These two partake of the divine perfection and are normative in character, and by their presence in our worship are bound to have a profound influence on the form and content of the other two.

Total inclusion as to content involves a corresponding exclusion. As has just been seen the total inclusion of the Book of Psalms involves the exclusion of all other songs. But the same is true of the other parts. Prayer, of the kind taught in the Word excludes all other prayer. Bible reading and Bible preaching exclude reading and preaching of any other kind. So the total prescribed worship content excludes all other content. This brings us to the negative side of the subject. It may readily be seen what

a world of impropriety in worship which goes by the name of Christian, both Romish and Protestant, is thus excluded.

Without any effort to be exhaustive, and approaching the matter mainly from the Protestant standpoint, there are certain things to be considered, which, not having been enjoined, are therefore and thereby excluded.

Worship in the present dispensation has been emancipated from the bonds of place. The conventional surroundings afforded by a churchly edifice are not nearly so important as we are wont to think. The ideal church building—ideal, that is, for those who are fully resolved to worship the Father in spirit and in truth—requires no organ, choir loft or picture windows. Let the worship auditorium be lighted from without by plain or stained glass windows, air-conditioned, and provided with comfortable seats suitably arranged with reference to the pulpit; but the demands of pure worship as taught in the Word require nothing further. Organs and other instruments, soloists and choirs and their music are automatically excluded by the rule of the Word. Since when did human entertainment acquire any lawful place in the worship of God? All that is not required is forbidden. And where do we find any sign of any prescription of organs, choirs, and other similar adjuncts of modern worship given in the Word for the worship of the New dispensation? As for pictures, there are none save such as have been conjured in the imagination of sinful men, and certainly all such are excluded on the principle of the worship of God *"in truth"*. As for pictures of Christ, these are expressly forbidden by the law which forbids the worship of God by images.

A further automatic negation, one which poses a very serious problem and is productive of a very acute situation, is that of the special "Sundays" and week-days of "the Christian Year" and other "Sundays" which are designated as days for special observance. In this, as in other matters, it is amazing how simple the solution is where the principle regulative of the worship of God is clearly understood and faithfully applied.

The first thing to observe in this connection is the fact that reference to historical events has always had a place in worship as divinely ordered. We see this in the ancient Hebrew worship in the annual observance of the feast of the Passover, in the Sabbath on the seventh day commemorating the day succeeding the six days of creation, and in the blood of the sacrifices foreshadowing that of the one great Sacrifice. So in the new worship of God's new day, arrangement was made for the commemoration of two principal events in the history of redemption. By divine provision we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord on every Lord's Day. And the Saviour provided for the periodic remembrance of His

death for His people upon their every observance of the Communion. However, this is the full extent of the matter insofar as God is concerned.

Why then should we go beyond to add to what has been enjoined by the addition of an annual celebration of these two events on "Easter" and "Good Friday", and again add to this an annual celebration of the Saviour's birth? Certainly if God intended a certain day of the year to be observed in honor of the birthday of our Lord it ought to be kept as a most sacred, holy day. All perversion of it for mere carnal pleasure and enjoyment, not to mention exploitation of it for commercial purposes, would be extremely out of place. But the question is, where in Holy Writ do we find any identification of the day or time of year or any slightest indication that such a day was to be observed? In this connection Christians should observe how readily such special days and occasions as "Christmas" and "Easter" lend themselves to abuse and exploitation, which the God-appointed days for the commemoration of the death and resurrection of the Lord do not.

To the already tortured situation presented by the many days of "the Christian Year", all of which are the products of the invention of man and not at all of God, modern man has added many others such as "Mother's Day", "Father's Day", "Children's Day" and "Memorial Sunday". Yet nothing could be plainer than that, one and all, they are not of divine, but of human origin, not of God, but of man.

Whatever man introduces into the worship of God cannot fail to deprive God of something which He intends should be there. Where the prescribed content is complete all intrusion must involve a corresponding extrusion. And whatever is brought into worship by the will of man is a blot on the sublime simplicity and beauty of pure worship as instituted of God. The extent to which such intrusion may obtain may be seen at "Easter" time. Observe to what an extent the services of this day are surrendered to sheer high class musical entertainment, designed above all to attract the largest possible attendance on that day. The net result is that in some ways we go far beyond what is required, while in others we fall far behind. Yes, these annual days and seasons are, one and all, post-biblical and extra-biblical in origin, which means that they have had their origin in the world. But the world, it seems, has never entirely relinquished its hold upon them, and now today is gleefully taking them back unto itself again. The situation regarding "Christmas" and "Easter" especially is a shame and disgrace to all Christendom; but the only effectual remedy is the surgical treatment: "cut it off and cast it from thee".

In closing, let us sum up the results of the position taken. What do we lose in consequence? Nothing, for it is still true that "every creature

of God is good", "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above", and "God hath given us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 4:4; 6:17; James 1:17). Some things will have to go permanently into the discard, but for the most part those things which may be barred from our worship are not thereby banished from our lives. God in His goodness has decreed a time and a place for everything; but apart from His blessing there is no real good or pure enjoyment anywhere. No; nothing that is good is lost; but on the contrary one of God's best gifts, and the one most supremely enjoyable, has been gained. This is the precious boon not merely of worship at its best,

as though it were a mere matter of degree, but true worship in its purity as it has been revealed and with which alone God can be and is well pleased. In the practice of such worship what pure and wholesome and exquisite enjoyment may be ours!

"My soul with marrow and with fat
Well satisfied shall be;
Then shall my mouth with joyful lips
Sing praises unto thee"

(Psalm 63:5)

Note: The author of the above article, the Rev. John C. Rankin, is the pastor of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at Worcester, N. Y.—Ed.

Studies in the Epistle to the Romans

LESSON 53

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

E. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Total, for a Remnant shall be Saved. 11:1-10, Cont.

Verses 9 and 10 are quoted from Psalm 69: 22,23, a prophecy of Christ's sufferings and of the judgments which shall be visited upon His enemies. We should note that this is one of the so-called imprecatory Psalms which some people say is savage, vengeful and unfit for Christian devotional use. Yet it is plainly a prophecy of Jesus Christ, and is referred to as such in the New Testament; note Psalm 69:9, "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (compare John 2:13-17), and Psalm 69:21, "they gave me vinegar to drink" (compare John 19:28-30).

Paul cites Psalm 69:22,23 as an Old Testament statement of the divine judgments that would surely fall on the unbelieving, apostate nation of the Jews. "The Judgments here denounced are expressed in figurative language. The sense is, their blessings shall become a curse; blindness and weakness, hardness of heart and misery shall come upon them. This last idea is forcibly expressed by a reference to the dimness of vision, and decrepitude of old age; as the vigor and activity of youth are the common figure for expressing the results of God's favor" (Charles Hodge).

What Psalm 69 prays for, actually happened to the Jews in Paul's day and since his day. Thus what Paul has been stating about God's rejection of the Jews is nothing new, for it was already predicted in the Old Testament.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36

We now come to a very difficult problem in the interpretation of the Epistle to the Romans,

namely, does 11:11-36 predict a future conversion of the Jews (many, most or all of them) to Christ? On a superficial reading of the chapter this may seem an easy question to answer with "Yes", but the matter is not so simple as that. Some of the most careful, learned and devoted Bible scholars have come to divergent conclusions concerning this question. We shall consider this problem further in the following lessons. At the outset we should realize that we are entering a portion of the Epistle concerning which Bible scholars differ, so that we must recognize the debatable character of the matter, and proceed very cautiously, avoiding positive assertions except where they can plainly be supported by valid proof.

For those who wish to undertake a more thorough study of the questions involved, we shall cite here some publications that are well worth careful reading:

"**And So All Israel Shall Be Saved**", by William Hendriksen, a professor of Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids. This 36 page booklet was published in 1945 by Baker Book House, but is now out of print. It is a painstaking exegesis of Romans 11:26a. Professor Hendrikson comes to the conclusion that the words "And so all Israel shall be saved" refer to "the full number of elect Jews whom it pleases God to bring into the kingdom through the ages until the very day when also the pleroma (fulness) of the Gentiles shall have been brought in"; and he adds that "All Israel" is identical with the "remnant according to the election of grace" mentioned in 11:5. For Professor Hendriksen's arguments which lead to these conclusions, the student is referred to the booklet as a whole.

Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, by Charles Hodge. A new reprinting of this class-

ic was issued by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich., in 1950; pp. 458. \$5.00. Hodge concludes that "There is to be a future and general conversion of the Jews to Christ, and thus all Israel shall be saved" (pp. 11,12 and 360-382).

Phrophecy and the Church, by Oswald T. Alis. This 339 page book is published by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. \$2.50. The sub-title is: "An examination of the claim of Dispensationalists that the Christian Church is a mystery parenthesis which interrupts the fulfilment to Israel of the kingdom prophecies of the Old Testament". This book contains a discussion of Paul's figure of the olive tree (Rom. 11:16-24), pp. 108-110; though primarily a critique of Dispensationalism, this book is very much worth reading in connection with the study of Rom. 11:11-36. See review in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", 1947, pp. 54-57.

The Seed of Abraham, by Albertus Pieters. This book of 161 pages was published in 1950 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. \$2.50. Its sub-title is "A Biblical study of Israel, the Church, and the Jew". See review in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", 1951, pp 156,157. On the problem of Rom. 11:11-36, Dr. Pieters says: "St. Paul knows of no territorial restoration of his people in time to come, and takes no interest in it. He does speak, in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, of a spiritual restoration; but it is not clear in what form he expects it, whether after the Gentiles have been gathered in or parallel to it. He says that 'All Israel shall be saved', from which it is not unnaturally concluded by some that eventually there will be a conversion, not of scattered individuals only, but of the group as a whole, so that there will no longer be in the world a body of Jews, standing in opposition to the gospel, as there is now and has been ever since his day. This may be the true interpretation, but a doubt is cast upon it by the frequent insistence of St. Paul on the 'remnant' idea, according to which the promises of God are fulfilled to only a portion of the people, and yet therein are truly and adequately fulfilled. If this conception must apply here, 'all Israel' will mean the elect among Israel, and this agrees with his assurance that God did not cast off his people 'whom he foreknew' " (p. 147).

The Bible and Things to Come, by David Freeman. This 139 page book was published in 1939 by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, and is now out of print. A chapter entitled "The Jews, their Conversion and their Land" (pp. 58-77) is very helpful and illuminating. Mr. Freeman says: "There is unmistakable teaching to the effect that God will again visit them (the Jews) with His grace in their racial capacity" (p. 67), and "The Jews as a nation will be saved but only in the way in which they are converted now. Some day they, with others from all nations and kind-

reds, shall acknowledge with true faith their Messiah and Savior" (p. 77). In the judgment of the present writer, Mr. Freeman presents some arguments which have not been fully answered by those who hold the contrary view.

Among those Bible scholars who have held that Rom. 11:11-36 predicts a future conversion to Christ of the Jews collectively are Henry Alford, Charles Hodge, W. G. T. Shedd, Geerhardus Vos. Among those who have held the contrary view are Philip Mauro, Theodore Graebner, William Hendriksen. Enough has been said to indicate that Rom. 11:11-36 is a very difficult passage. Those who claim that it is simple and its meaning obvious only betray their own ignorance of the problems involved and the literature which has been written on the subject.

The present series of lessons will adhere to the view that a future collective conversion of the Jews to Christ is predicted in Rom. 11:11-36. It must always be borne in mind, however, that the subject is debatable and that the last word on it has not yet been written.

Questions:

1. From what Psalm is Rom. 11:9,10 quoted?
2. What is the character of this Psalm?
3. What objections do some people raise against the so-called imprecatory Psalms?
4. How can these objections be answered?
5. What is the meaning of the statements of 11:9,10?
6. What is the relevance of 11:9,10 to the apostle's argument?
7. What difficult question is involved in the interpretation of Rom. 11:11-36?
8. How might this question be answered on the basis of a superficial reading of the passage?
9. Why is caution necessary in the interpretation of this passage?
10. What does Prof. William Hendriksen hold concerning the conversion of the Jews to Christ?
11. What is the view of Charles Hodge on the conversion of the Jews?
12. What does Dr. Albertus Pieters say is "not clear" in Rom. 11:11-36?
13. What view of the conversion of the Jews is maintained by Mr. David Freeman?
14. Name some Bible scholars that have held the view that Scripture predicts a future collective conversion of the Jews to Christ.
15. Name some Bible scholars that have held the contrary view.

LESSON 54

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

"I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (11:11). We should note that chapter 11 opens with the same form of expression: "I say then. . . God forbid". In verses 1-10 Paul has raised and answered the question, "Hath God cast away his people?". He has answered it by explaining that the rejection of the Jews is not total, because there is "a remnant according to the election of grace" that shall be saved. Having disposed of this question, he proceeds to another question, "Have they stumbled that they should fall?", which he answers in the verses that follow.

The gist of Paul's answer to this second question is that God's rejection of the Jews, as it was not total, is also not final. There is a contrast or comparison between the words "stumble" and "fall". They have stumbled, yes, but was this in order that they might fall? Was it in order that they might be permanently and irrevocably rejected? Clearly the word "stumble" implies a temporary disaster, while "fall" implies a permanent one. So the apostle teaches that the rejection of the Jews was not permanent and irrevocable, for he immediately answers his own question with an emphatic negative: "God forbid". God's intention in permitting the apostasy of the Jews was not that their rejection should be permanent and final, but rather (1) in order to bring about the salvation of the Gentiles, and thus (2) to provoke the Jews finally to jealousy.

We might wonder just how the unbelief of the Jews could facilitate the salvation of the Gentiles. That it did have that effect is the teaching of Scripture (Act 13:46; 28:28 compared with Isaiah 49:4-6.) "The Jews, even those who were professors of Christianity, were, in the first place, very slow to allow the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles; and in the second, they appear almost uniformly to have desired to clog the gospel with the ceremonial observances of the law. This was one of the greatest hindrances to the progress of the cause of Christ during the apostolic age, and would, in all human probability, have been a thousand-fold greater, had the Jews, as a nation, embraced the Christian faith. On both these accounts, the rejection of the Jews was incidentally a means of facilitating the progress of the gospel. Besides this, the punishment which befell them on account of their unbelief, involving the destruction of their nation and power, of course prevented their being able to forbid the general preaching of the gospel, which they earnestly desired to do" (Charles Hodge). "By this stumble

of the Jews out of their national place in God's favour, and the admission of the Gentiles into it, the very people thus excluded are to be stirred up to set themselves in the end effectually to regain, as a nation, that pre-eminence from which they are now degraded" (Henry Alford).

"For to provoke them to jealousy". This means, of course, that the salvation of the Gentiles is intended to provoke the unbelieving Jews to jealousy. God's rejection of the Jews was not intended as a permanent and final casting away, but to bring about the more rapid evangelization of the Gentiles, and then ultimately, by the reaction of this upon the Jews, to lead to the conversion of the latter to their Messiah. The expression "to provoke them to jealousy" of course does not mean a sinful kind of jealousy. The apostle only means that the salvation of the Gentiles was intended to stir the Jews up to seek salvation for themselves through the Gospel.

"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" (11:12). If the rejection of the Jews has brought so much benefit to the world, then certainly even more benefit can be expected from their conversion to Christ. The word "fulness" (Greek, *pleroma*) here is in contrast to the "diminishing" in the first part of the verse. This word *pleroma* is used with various meanings in the New Testament. It may mean "fulness" (John 1:16; Eph. 1:233; or it may mean a supplementary portion which is needed to make something complete (Matt. 9:16, where *pleroma* is translated "that which is put in to fill it up"). Here in Rom. 11:12 we take it in the common sense of "fulness", as meaning the "full restoration" or "blessedness" (Hodge), or "replenishment" (Alford) of the Jews.

Questions:

1. How does Rom. 11:11 resemble 11:1?
2. What is the meaning of the expression "God forbid"?
3. What question is raised by Paul in 11:11?
4. What is the gist of the apostle's answer to this question?
5. What two purposes did God have in permitting the apostasy of the Jews?
6. What is the difference in meaning between "stumble" and "fall" in verse 11?
7. Give some Bible references which show that the unbelief of the Jews facilitated the salvation of the Gentiles.
8. What was the attitude of many early Jewish

Christians toward the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles?

9. What hindrance did many Jewish Christians tend to place upon Gentile converts?

10. If the Jews as a nation had accepted Christianity during the apostolic age, what would have been the probable effect upon the Gentile world?

11. What is the meaning of the phrase "For to provoke them to jealousy"?

12. What meanings does the Greek word *pleroma* have in the New Testament?

13. What is the meaning of this Greek word in 11:12?

14. What is Paul's argument in verse 12?

LESSON 55

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them" (11:13,14). These two verses are of the nature of a parenthesis in the apostle's argument. He pauses in his argument about the fall and restoration of the Jews to say a word about his own sentiments and conduct with reference to this great subject. Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles. Yet we know from his history as recorded in Acts that it was his fixed practice to preach the Gospel to the Jews first in the places he visited. Here he speaks to the Gentiles, in the hope that his references to them may stir up some of his Jewish kinsmen to seek salvation and find it in Christ. It is clear that the salvation of the Gentiles and that of the Jews were closely inter-related. Every Christian should be deeply concerned about both. There was no real ground for ill-feeling on the part of either Jew or Gentile. Paul longed for the salvation of the Gentiles, not only for their own sake, but because this would prepare the way for the conversion of the Jews to Christ.

"And might save some of them". This does not imply, of course, that Paul, or any other preacher of the Gospel, could actually save sinners. The salvation of sinners is wholly a work of God, though it is a work in which God at some points makes use of human instruments. In our own day some preachers and evangelists speak very unguardedly about how many people they have "saved" or "converted". The impression is easily given that the evangelist's efforts were sufficient to accomplish the salvation of his hearers. As Paul wrote, there was no such implication. The clear meaning is simply: "That I might be the instrument in God's hand toward the salvation of some of them."

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (11:15). This verse is in part parallel to 11:12. The first part of the verse presents no special difficulty. "The

casting away" plainly means God's rejection of the Jews; "the reconciling of the world" means the salvation of the Gentiles; "the receiving of them" means the future conversion of the Jews to Christ. But the last phrase presents a real difficulty. What does Paul mean by the expression "life from the dead"? There are two opinions as to the meaning of this expression in 11:15.

One view is that the expression "life from the dead" is a figure of speech meaning "the transition from a state of depression and misery to one of prosperity". This is the view held by Charles Hodge. According to this view, the conversion of the Jews to Christ will be such a great joy and blessing that it can figuratively be spoken of as "life from the dead". The Jews in their unbelief, without Christ, are spiritually dead. When converted to Christ, they will be spiritually alive.

The other view of this expression, "life from the dead" is that the bodily resurrection of the dead at Christ's Second Coming is referred to. According to this view, the idea is that the Jews are to be converted to Christ shortly before His Second Coming. Soon after their conversion, therefore, the resurrection of the dead will follow. Therefore their conversion can be spoken of as "life from the dead". This view is taken by David Freeman in his book **The Bible and Things to Come**. He says: "What is meant by 'life from the dead' here? Does Paul mean that the conversion of the Jews will bring with it the resurrection of the dead? If so, Israel's acceptance of the Messiah will bring the coming of Christ from heaven. This is exactly what the apostle means, because he relates the 'life from the dead' to the 'reconciling of the world'. The former is the climax of the latter. 'Life from the dead' must be something far higher and greater than the 'reconciling of the world'. What is that which can be greater than the reconciliation now experienced by the world, but the resurrection of life? Paul, in one sweep, views the blessedness of the redemption purchased by Christ from its beginning to its glorious consummation" (pp. 67,68). In a footnote Freeman adds: "The phrase, *zoe ek nekron*, 'life from the dead', cannot be toned down to a metaphorical meaning, implying

a mere spiritual revival. The context will not permit this interpretation. The opposite of 'casting away' requires a condition that is more glorious than 'the receiving of them'. The beginning of the closing act of God's dealing with man only can be meant" (p. 68).

In favor of the view held by Hodge is the consideration that nowhere else in the New Testament is the resurrection referred to as "life from the dead" (*zoe ek nekron*). Elsewhere the term for the resurrection is "the rising of the dead" (*he anastasis ton nekron*). Still we must admit that Paul could use the phrase "life from the dead" as a description of the event commonly referred to as "the rising of the dead". In the judgment of the writer, the interpretation given by Freeman is correct, and Rom. 11:15 means that the conversion of the Jews to Christ will bring the return of Christ from heaven and the resurrection of the dead.

Questions.

1. What is the place of 11:13,14 in Paul's argument?
2. To whom did Paul regularly preach the Gospel first when he entered a new field of work?

3. What was Paul's motive in speaking to the Gentiles in 11:13,14?

4. Does Paul's statement "If by any means I . . . might save some of them" imply that salvation is a work of man?

5. To what previous verse is 11:15 partly parallel?

6. What phrase in 11:15 is difficult to interpret?

7. What is the view held by Charles Hodge as to the meaning of the phrase "life from the dead"?

8. What other view is held as to the meaning of "life from the dead"?

9. What argument can be given to show that "life from the dead" must mean something more than a spiritual revival?

10. What difficulty is involved in understanding the phrase "life from the dead" as referring to the bodily resurrection of the dead?

11. If "life from the dead" means the resurrection, what great event will follow the conversion of the Jews to Christ?

LESSON 56

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

"For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches" (11:16). We have here two striking figures of speech, both of which teach the same truth. The "firstfruit" is that portion of the kneaded dough which was offered as a heave-offering to the Lord (Num. 15:21, "Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the Lord a heave offering in your generations"). This offering of the first of the dough sanctified the rest which was used by the people for food. The "root" is that portion of a tree from which the growth and life springs up. The root nourishes and sustains the branches. First there must be the root, before there can be any branches. We may therefore take "root" here as meaning "origin" or "original portion". Obviously "root" is parallel and equivalent to "firstfruit". The argument is that the whole lump partakes of the character of the firstfruit, and the branches partake of the character of the root.

We must now consider what is meant by the "firstfruit" and "root". Some have held that the firstfruit and root mean the first Jews converted to Christianity (at Pentecost and soon after) who became the root of the Christian Church.

A much more plausible view is that the firstfruit and root are Abraham, or perhaps the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is clear that this view fits the context much better than the other one. Paul is arguing that the Jews shall be converted to Christ. He proves that they are in a certain sense "holy" because of their relation to their ancestor, Abraham, who was holy.

Next we must consider what is meant by the "lump" and the "branches". The only meaning that is consistent with the apostle's argument in this passage is that the "lump" and "branches" mean the Jews collectively, the Jews as a people. Paul's argument is, then, that as the patriarch Abraham was holy, so the Jews collectively are holy. The "lump" partakes of the holy character of the "firstfruit", the "branches" partake of the holy character of the "root".

We must take care to avoid a wrong understanding of the term "holy" in this connection. This is not the holiness of personal character produced by sanctification, but a technical holiness of position or standing. The terms "holy" and "holiness" are used in the Bible in more than one sense. There is the personal holiness of sanctification ("Follow after . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord", Heb. 12:14). There is also the external holiness of position or

relationship; for example, Jerusalem is called "the holy city" (Matt. 4:5); "every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14:21); note also Matt. 7:6; 24:15; 27:53; 1 Cor. 7:14; Luke 2:23. These passages, or at least some of them, use the terms "holy" and "holiness" in the technical sense of "consecrated to the service of God", "set aside for the service of God", "singled out as specially belonging to God." Paul says in 1 Cor. 7:14, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife. . ."; clearly this cannot be the sanctification or holiness of heart and life which follows the new birth, for it is an unbeliever that is said to be "sanctified". It must be a technical holiness of position or relationship.

Similarly in Rom. 11:16, when Paul says that the "lump" and branches" are holy, he does not mean that the Jews collectively possessed that holiness of heart and life which is produced by the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in believers. Clearly the Jews collectively considered are unbelievers and therefore they are not sanctified, or holy, in that sense. Yet there is a true sense in which they can be called "holy". They can be called "holy" in the technical sense by reason of their connection with their "root" and "firstfruit", the holy Abraham. Abraham was called away from his home and country, that he might be in a special relation to God. That was a kind of holiness. The Jews of Paul's day and of our own are the branches of which Abraham was the root. Therefore they are in a certain technical sense holy.

When God called Abraham and separated him from the world that he should be in a special relation to God, this did not concern Abraham alone. God also had Abraham's posterity in mind. "God, in selecting the Hebrew patriarchs, and setting them apart for his service, had refer-

ence to their descendants, as well as to themselves; and designed that the Jews, as a people, should, to the latest generations, be specially devoted to himself. They stand now, therefore, and ever have stood, in a relation to God which no other nation ever has sustained; and, in consequence of this relation, their restoration to the divine favor is an event in itself probable, and one, which Paul afterwards teaches (ver. 25), God has determined to accomplish" (Charles Hodge).

Questions:

1. What two figures are used in 11:16 to teach the same truth?
2. What Old Testament ordinance does the term "firstfruit" refer to?
3. What is meant by the "firstfruit" and "root"?
4. What is meant by the "lump" and "branches"?
5. What two kinds of holiness are spoken of in the Bible?
6. What kind of holiness is referred to in Rom. 11:16?
7. What does Paul's argument prove concerning the Jews as a body of people?
8. Why can the word "holy" in 11:16 not mean the holiness of heart produced by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit?
9. Does Paul's calling the Jews of his day "holy" imply that they were saved from sin unto eternal life?
10. What great future event is probable by reason of the "holy" position of the Jewish people?

LESSON 57

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

We come now to Paul's figure of the olive tree, which is one of the most important passages in the whole Bible for testing the system of Bible interpretation called Dispensationalism, which has been popularized by the writings of John Nelson Darby, by the Scofield Reference Bible and by the Pilgrim Edition of the Holy Bible. In the course of the study of this passage, we shall note its bearing on the teachings of Dispensationalism.

"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the

root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee" (11:17,18).

Here Paul seeks to guard against the Gentile Christians harboring a wrong attitude toward the Jews. In view of the teachings of the apostle up to this point, it would be easy for his Gentile Christian readers to harbor a self-important, triumphant feeling over against the Jews. God has rejected the Jews and called the Gentiles to salvation! But this is no ground for any spiritual pride or carnal glorying; on the contrary, this affords reason for humility, thankfulness to God, and spiritual watchfulness. The apostle's statements beginning with verse 17 are intended to guard against Gentile Christians feeling boastful over against the Jews.

Paul is speaking of a good or cultivated olive tree. Some of the branches were broken off, and branches from a worthless wild olive tree were grafted into the tree in their place. (The King James version uses the old form of the verb, "grafted", but in this lesson we shall use the modern form, "grafted", except when quoting from the Bible). Thus there is a good olive tree with its original branches, and a wild olive tree with its branches. Some branches are cut off from the good olive tree and cast aside; some branches are cut from the wild olive tree and grafted into the good olive tree.

We must consider, first of all, what is meant by the good olive tree. It cannot represent the Jewish nation as such, because the apostle teaches that by unbelief some branches were broken off from the tree (verse 20) and that by faith some (Gentile) branches were grafted in. Obviously those Jews who refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah were not broken off from the Jewish nation as such, nor were Gentiles who accepted Christ incorporated into the Jewish nation as such. What, then, is the good olive tree? It must represent the true Israel, the body of people truly in covenant with God, to whom the gracious promises of God were addressed and to whom those promises really belonged—in a word, the Israel that really had a right to the name "Israel".

There is only one good olive tree. Branches may be broken off and others grafted in but the one good olive tree lives on. There is just one covenant people of God on earth and it is continuous through both the Old Testament and the New Testament. This covenant people of God, represented by the one good olive tree, is the Old Testament Church and it is the New Testament Israel. The figure of the good olive tree proves the essential unity and continuity of the New Testament Church with the Old Testament Israel. Modern Dispensationalism draws a sharp distinction between Israel and the Church, insisting that "Israel is Israel and the Church is the Church" — that is, denying the essential unity and continuity of the N. T. Church with the O. T. Israel — but Dispensationalism cannot do justice to Paul's figure of the olive tree. As a matter of fact this passage has proved rather embarrassing to Dispensationalist interpreters.

Dispensationalism teaches that the promises of the Old Testament to Israel, Zion, Jerusalem, Judah, etc., do not belong to the New Testament Church but strictly to the Jews, and must be literally fulfilled to the Jews in a period still future. To apply these promises to the Christian Church is called "robbing Israel" by some writers. But in the light of Paul's figure of the olive tree we must hold that the genuine Israel, to whom the promises were really addressed, is the covenanted body represented by the good olive tree which is one and the same in both dis-

pensations. The Christian Church is therefore the true Israel to which the gracious promises of God in the Old Testament are addressed.

Remember that the good olive tree cannot be the Jewish people as such, for those Jews who rejected Jesus Christ are represented as broken off from the tree, but they certainly were not broken off from the Jewish people as such. The Jews who persecuted the apostle Paul and tried to kill him were still Jews, they were members of the Jewish people, but they were no longer branches in the good olive tree. They had been broken off by unbelief. So the good olive tree must mean the believing, covenant-keeping people of God, not the Jewish people as such. Into this tree some wild olive branches—Gentile Christians—were grafted. They did not become members of the Jewish people but they became members of the genuine Israel, for they were incorporated into the organism of the olive tree and nourished by its life-giving sap.

The Gentiles are represented by wild olive branches. The wild olive is a worthless tree in itself. This impresses on our minds the spiritually destitute condition of the Gentile world, both of Paul's day and of our own day. The Gentiles were far from God, sunk in sin, deeply depraved, "without hope and without God in the world". But they were incorporated into the good olive tree and became new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Surely, then, there was no ground for boasting on the part of any Gentile Christians. They must remember that they did not bear the root, but the root bore them. They had been aliens, wild olive branches, but were incorporated into the good olive tree. All spiritual good that they might possess came to them through the good olive tree. They were only recipients, not contributors, of spiritual good. Human pride and vanity might lead them to boast themselves over against the Jews but Paul warns against this spirit, "Boast not against the branches"—that is against the Jewish branches that were broken off.

Questions:

1. What is the special importance of Paul's figure of the olive tree at the present day?
2. What two editions of the Bible have specially promoted the teachings of Modern Dispensationalism?
3. What is Paul's purpose in setting forth the figure of the olive tree?
4. What is signified by the good olive tree?
5. Why can the good olive tree not signify the Jewish nation as such?
6. What truth is taught by the fact that there is only one good olive tree in Paul's figure?

7. What truths concerning the relation between Israel and the Church are denied by Dispensationalism?

8. To what practice do some interpreters apply the term "robbing Israel"?

9. What was the relation of the Jews who

tried to kill Paul to the good olive tree? To the Jewish nation as such?

10. What truth about the Gentiles is brought out by Paul's representing them as wild olive branches?

11. What was the source of all spiritual good possessed by Gentile Christians?

LESSON 58

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

"Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee" (11:19-21).

Here Paul guards against another possible kind of boasting on the part of Gentile Christians. Even though the Gentile Christians might have to admit that all their spiritual good had come to them through their connection with the good olive tree, yet they might be inclined to boast that God had cut off Jewish branches in order that the Gentile branches might be grafted in. They might get the idea that it was because of some goodness or worthiness of their own that God made room for them in the olive tree.

But the truth was that the Jewish branches were broken off because of their unbelief, not because of any fine qualities of the Gentiles. They rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah, so they were broken off. And the Gentile Christians, by the grace of God, had come to believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and so they stood by faith where the Jews fell by unbelief. Here Paul teaches that the only way that anyone can retain a covenant relation to God is by faith. Those who have saving faith are in the good olive tree; those who lack saving faith are out of the good olive tree, or cut off from that tree.

The Gentile Christians, of course, might have ventured to assert that their faith was an act or work of their own, which they could claim credit for. While admitting that they did not have perfect righteousness of their own, they could conceivably claim to have faith and could claim credit for a decision of their own free will to accept Christ when others rejected Him. But apparently the Gentile Christians of Paul's day did not make this claim, for the apostle does not undertake to answer it. The fact is that the errors of Pelagianism and Arminianism were invented at a later date; they did not exist in Christian circles in the time of the apostles. Ap-

parently it never occurred to the Gentile Christians of Paul's day to claim any credit for their faith. Of course, when Paul represents standing by faith as the opposite of a ground of boasting, he has the Biblical idea of saving faith as pure receptivity of God's free mercy.

Paul earnestly warns the Gentile Christians as a class, and by implication all Christians of every time and place, to "Be not high-minded, but fear". "The Gentiles will not be secure, because Gentiles, any more than the Jews were safe, because Jews" (Charles Hodge). Paul's statement, "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee", must not be taken as contrary to the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints (eternal security of believers). It does not imply that a true believer can fall away from grace and perish. We must bear in mind that Paul is not here speaking primarily of individual believers and their salvation, but of Gentile Christians as a class, over against the Jews. His words are an earnest warning against complacency, against a merely formal religious faith, against a presumptuous taking advantage of the goodness of God. The Gentile Christians must not suppose that their connection with the church and its privileges was for ever safe just because they themselves, of that particular generation, had been grafted into the good olive tree. We see the pertinence of the apostle's warning throughout the history of the Church. North Africa was once dotted with Christian churches, where today the religion of Islam is almost universal.

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (11:22). Here Paul mentions two aspects of God's character: His goodness and His severity. In our day religion has suffered a great deal from a one-sided emphasis upon the love of God. While the Bible says that "God is love" modern religion has held that God is love and nothing but love. The wrath of God has been objected to as an old-fashioned and harsh doctrine. But in the Bible both the love and the wrath of God are insisted on and neither is emphasized to the exclusion of the other. In God's relation to men we

see both displayed, His goodness and His severity.

"There is nothing in this language inconsistent with the doctrine of the final perseverance of believers, even supposing the passage to refer to individuals; for it is very common to speak thus hypothetically, and say that an event will not come to pass, unless the requisite means are employed, when the occurrence of the event had been rendered certain by the previous purpose and promise of God; see Acts 27:31. The foundation of all such statements is the simple truth, that He who purposes the end, purposes also the means; and he brings about the end by securing the use of the means. . . Paul is not speaking of the connection of individual believers with Christ, which he had abundantly taught in chap. 8 and elsewhere, to be indissoluble, but of the relation of communities to the church and its various privileges. There is no promise or covenant on the part of God, securing to the Gentiles the enjoyment of these blessings through all generations, any more than there was any such promise to protect the Jews from the consequences of their unbelief. The continuance of these favors depends on the conduct of each successive generation. Paul therefore says to the Gentile, that he must continue in the divine favor, 'otherwise thou also shalt be cut off' " (Charles Hodge).

Questions:

1. What kind of Gentile boasting is Paul warning against in 11:19-21?
2. Why were the Jewish branches broken off from the good olive tree?
3. What is the only way that a covenant relation to God can be retained?
4. What is the Biblical idea of saving faith?
5. Why can no person claim any credit for his faith?
6. How do we know that Paul's warning of 11:19-21 is not contrary to the doctrine of the final perseverance of the believer?
7. What is the relevance of 11:19-21 at the present day?
8. What two aspects of the character of God are mentioned in 11:22?
9. From what wrong tendency has present-day religion suffered?
10. How does Acts 27:22-24, 31, 34 help to show that warnings against apostasy are not inconsistent with the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints?

LESSON 59

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

"And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again" (11:23). Just as the continued standing of the Gentiles in the church and its privileges depends on their faith, so the Jews are excluded by nothing but by their unbelief. Ceasing to have faith would exclude the Gentiles, and ceasing to be unbelievers would admit the Jews again. "For God is able to graff them in again". God's power is not limited or frustrated; the obstacle is in the Jews themselves, and if that obstacle, in the course of God's mysterious providence, is removed at a future time, there is nothing to prevent the Jews from being grafted into the good olive tree again.

"For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" (11:24). There is a contrast here between the natural growth of branches in the tree which produced them, and the artificial ("contrary to nature") practice of grafting alien branches into the tree.

The Jews were the natural growth produced by the tree. The Gentiles were the alien branches grafted "contrary to nature" into the good tree. As a matter of fact, God had grafted the Gentile branches into the tree, though this, as "contrary to nature", might have been regarded as improbable. If the grafting in of the Gentiles actually took place, then surely it is probable that the Jews, who are "the natural branches", shall be grafted in again. The unnatural and therefore improbable has already taken place; it is therefore highly probable that something which would be according to nature will at a future time take place, namely, that the natural branches, the Jews, shall be again incorporated into the true Israel, the covenant people of God, the good olive tree. Paul calls it "their own olive tree". They were separate from it by their unbelief, but still the olive tree was where they belonged. Not that they in their unbelief had any claim to such a standing, but that in God's arrangement of things that was where they belonged.

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (11:25). The great question concerning this verse is, does it predict a future

conversion of the Jews collectively to Christ? Charles Hodge states that while there have been many interpretations of the verse, all of them can be reduced to two main views of the passage: (1) One interpretation holds that this verse does not predict a future general conversion of the Jews, but only teaches that their blindness is not total, so that some of them will continue to be converted as long as Gentiles are still being saved. (2) The other view holds that Paul here teaches that there is to be a general conversion of the Jews to Christ, which shall not take place until the fulness of the Gentiles shall have been brought in.

Hodge states that the first of these two views was prevalent at the time of the Protestant Reformation, and that scholars who sought to answer the extreme views of the Millennialist teachers of that day reacted to the opposite extreme and almost entirely explained away the prophetic character of the verse. He cites a statement attributed to Martin Luther, who declared that the hearts of the Jews are so extremely hard that their conversion is impossible, and added that "some invent such a madness from the Epistle to the Romans".

Hodge declares that the second view of the passage has been the one generally accepted at all periods of the Church's history except the period of the Protestant Reformation, and that in his judgment it is the correct view. In support of this, Hodge states that this view best fits the whole trend of the context; that it is clear that the Jews are to be restored in the same sense that they were rejected, that is, as a body or community, which cannot be fulfilled by the small number of Jews converted along with the Gentiles through the history of the Church; and that it is plain that Paul is speaking of a great event, as shown by his manner of introducing the statement, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery. . .". If Paul was not introducing something new or specially important, why should he use such a form of words? "The gradual conversion of a few Jews is no **mystery** in the Scriptural sense of the word." He adds that the word "mystery" in the New Testament is not generally used in the modern sense of "mystery", that is, something which baffles our understanding, but that it means something "hidden, or unknown; whether because it is an unrevealed purpose of God; or because it is future; or because it is covered up in parables or symbols. . . ; or because it lies beyond the reach of the human mind". This last sense, of course, corresponds to the modern usage of "mystery". Paul speaks of the blindness of the Jews until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in as a mystery, because this truth can be known only by special divine revelation. Thus Paul's use of the term "mystery" in 11:25 implies that he is speaking of something more and greater than that con-

version of individual Jews to Christ which was already taking place in his own day.

"Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits". This is Paul's reason for the statement which he is about to make. He warns the Gentile Christians that they should not proudly assume that God has rejected the Jews forever, for this is not the case.

"Blindness in part is happened to Israel". This statement is true in two respects. Israel's blindness is not a total but a partial blindness, for all through the centuries of the history of the Church there has been a steady conversion of some Jews to Christ, so that the blindness has not been total at any one time; and it is not total with respect to their future history as a whole, for it shall not continue permanently; there shall come a time when not only scattered individuals but the Jews as a community shall be brought to Christ. Paul is not referring to the degree of blindness. Those that were blind were completely blind. But he is referring to the fact that at no time are all Jews blind to the truth, and that the blindness of the Jews collectively shall have an end.

"Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." This clause is differently interpreted, according to the two types of interpretation already mentioned. Some hold that it merely means that as long as Gentiles are still coming in, the Jews will continue to be partially blind, so that only a minority of them will be converted to Christ; but that nothing is implied as to any conversion of the Jews after the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. According to this view, the verse simply means that the status quo which existed in Paul's day will continue unchanged to the end of the world, after which (the fulness of the Gentiles having come in), there will follow Christ's second coming and the judgment day. This interpretation seems hardly to do justice to the way Paul introduces his statement as an important mystery.

The other interpretation of the clause is that Paul implies that after the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, the Jews' blindness will be removed and they will be converted to Christ. The Greek words translated "until" in our English Bible are **achri hou**, followed by a verb in the aorist subjunctive. The correct translation is "until"; the usage of the Greek New Testament is against the idea of the meaning being merely "as long as the conversion of the Gentiles is continuing". The following instances of **achri** ("until") may be cited: Rev. 15: 8, ". . . and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled" (implying that after the seven plagues were fulfilled it was again possible to enter into the temple); Rev. 17:17, "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (imply-

ing that after the words of God have been fulfilled, the beast will no longer possess this dominion).

This second interpretation appears to be the correct one. The blindness of Israel will continue until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, after which, it is implied, their blindness will cease and they will be converted to Christ. This leaves the question of just what is meant by the fulness of the Gentiles coming in. The most probable meaning of "the fulness of the Gentiles" is the whole number of God's elect among the Gentiles. Some scholars hold that "the fulness of the Gentiles" means Gentiles converted to Christ from every nation of the world. In any case, when God's principal purpose concerning the salvation of Gentiles has been accomplished, the Jews' blindness will be removed and their conversion will follow.

It must be remembered that we are here dealing with unfulfilled prophecy, which is never completely clear until the time of fulfilment. Many questions will inevitably arise in our minds as to the exact time and manner of the fulfilment. These questions cannot be answered, and need not be answered. It is possible, of course, that the Jews will be very suddenly and quickly converted to Christ. We must remember, too, that we cannot tell exactly when the fulness of the Gentiles have come in. These matters are part of God's secrets, which He has not revealed to us.

Questions:

1. Where did the obstacle lie which prevented the Jews from being grafted back into the good olive tree?
2. What is Paul's argument in 11:24 concerning the conversion of the Jews?

3. Why does Paul call the good olive tree "their own olive tree" in 11:24?

4. What unnatural and improbable event had already taken place in Paul's day?

5. What difficult question is involved in the interpretation of 11:25?

6. How many main types of interpretation of 11:25 are there?

7. What interpretation of 11:25 was common at the time of the Protestant Reformation?

8. What opinion concerning the conversion of the Jews was held by the Reformer Martin Luther?

9. What arguments can be given to prove that 11:25 predicts a future conversion of the Jews to Christ?

10. What is the importance of Paul's statement in 11:25, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery . . . "?

11. What is the Biblical meaning of the term "mystery"?

12. In what respects is Israel's blindness partial?

13. What two views are held as to the meaning of the clause, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"?

14. Give some New Testament references where the word "until" implies that after a certain event happens, a change will occur.

15. What is the probable meaning of "the fulness of the Gentiles"?

16. Why can we not fully answer the questions which may arise in our minds as to the fulfilment of 11:25?

LESSON 60

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (11:26). This is one of the most difficult verses in the Epistle to the Romans. The difficulty is in the first clause, "And so all Israel shall be saved". What is meant by the expression "all Israel"? Does this mean (1) the Jews collectively; or (2) the elect of God from both Jews and Gentiles; or (3) the elect of God among the Jews of all ages? Arguments have been put forth for each of these answers.

The first answer, that "all Israel" means the Jews collectively, is the answer given by Charles

Hodge, Alford, W.G.T. Shedd, Geerhardus Vos. The second answer, that "all Israel" means the elect of God from both Jews and Gentiles — that is, the Church — is the answer given by Augustine, Calvin, Philip Mauro. The third answer, that "all Israel" means the elect of God among the Jews of all ages, is the answer given by Herman Bavinck, William Hendriksen, O. Hallesby, Louis Berkhof. The arguments for and against each of these answers are summarized by Professor Hendriksen in his booklet **And So All Israel Shall Be Saved**. For himself, he concludes that the "all Israel" of verse 26 is identical with the "remnant according to the election of grace" of verse 5.

One of the arguments against the view that "all Israel" means the Jews as a people is the alleged silence of Jesus Christ on the subject of a

future conversion of the Jews. One verse that is sometimes cited as evidence that Jesus foretold a conversion of the Jews is Matt. 19:28 ("And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel".) This verse can be immediately dismissed as without relevance to the subject we are discussing. It speaks of something which shall take place in the kingdom of glory after the second coming of Christ; therefore it has no bearing on the question of a conversion of the Jews before His second coming.

Another verse that is sometimes cited in this connection is Luke 21:24, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Against the idea that this speaks of a future restoration or conversion of the Jews, it is held that it only teaches that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles to the very end of the times of the Gentiles, without implying that there may or will be a change after that. This may be correct, but on the other hand if the meaning is merely "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles to the very end, until the end of the world", it seems a peculiar way to express this idea by speaking of the times of the Gentiles being "fulfilled". The natural reading of the verse would seem to imply that Jerusalem shall no longer be trodden down of the Gentiles after the times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled. (This is another instance of the Greek *achri hou* with a subjunctive aorist verb). However, as this verse speaks of the future of Jerusalem, and not of the conversion of the Jews to Christ specifically, we will leave it to one side as of doubtful bearing on our subject.

There is, however, one saying of Jesus which seems to have a definite bearing on the subject, namely, Matt. 23:29, "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord". Needless to say, Jesus is here speaking to the unbelieving Jews, who despised and rejected Him and

who soon after this crucified Him. He tells them that they shall not see Him again till **they shall say** "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord". Can this refer to the scattered conversions of individual Jews through the ages of church history? The words certainly seem to imply that a time will come when the Jews as a people shall accept Jesus as their Messiah. This saying of Jesus of course does not make it clear when and under what circumstances the Jews will say "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord". But as to the fact that at some time they will say it, the text seems to be clear. It seems, therefore, to prophesy a future conversion of the Jews to Christ.

Questions:

1. What three views have been held as to the meaning of "all Israel" in 11:26?
2. Name some Bible scholars who have held that "all Israel" means the Jewish people.
3. Name some Bible scholars who have held that "all Israel" means the whole body of the elect of God from both Jews and Gentiles.
4. Name some Bible scholars who have held that "all Israel" means the elect of God among the Jews of all ages.
5. What argument concerning the meaning of "all Israel" in 11:26 is based upon the alleged silence of Jesus Christ concerning the future conversion of the Jews?
6. Why does Matt. 19:28 not have any bearing on the question of a future conversion of the Jews to Christ?
7. What can be said about the bearing of Luke 21:24 on the question of a future conversion of the Jews?
8. What saying of Jesus seems definitely to predict a future conversion of the Jews, and where is it found?
9. What does this saying of Jesus fail to tell us about the future conversion of the Jews?

LESSON 61

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (11:26). In the last lesson we canvassed the various views that have been held as to the meaning of "all Israel" in 11:26, and then we considered the argument that "all Israel" cannot mean the Jewish people because of the alleged silence of Jesus Christ upon the subject of a future conversion

of the Jews. We rejected one often cited text as irrelevant to the subject, dismissed another as doubtful, and found that a third (Matt. 23:39) seems definitely to prophesy a future conversion of the Jews to Christ.

"Israel, here, from the context, must mean the Jewish people, and **all Israel**, the whole nation. The Jews, as a people, are now rejected; as a people, they are to be restored. As their rejection, although national, did not include the rejection of every individual; so their restoration, although in like manner national, need not be assumed to

include the salvation of every individual Jew" (Charles Hodge). Hodge adds that "all Israel" in this verse therefore does not mean (1) "all the true people of God", nor (2) "the remnant according to the election of grace". The present writer believes that Hodge and those who agree with his position are correct in this.

Those who reject the idea of a future conversion of the Jews make much of the opening words of the verse: "And so . . .". They point out that Paul did not say "And then. . .", but "And so. . .", meaning (they say) that "all Israel shall be saved" **while the fulness of the Gentiles is being brought in**. We readily admit, of course, that there is a difference between "And then. . ." and "And so. . .". But the phrase "And so. . ." does not necessarily eliminate the idea of a future conversion of the Jews to Christ. The Greek can equally well be translated "And thus. . .". Alford explains this as meaning "when this condition shall have been fulfilled", that is, when the condition described in the last words of verse 25 shall have been fulfilled, namely when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in. This seems a perfectly proper and reasonable explanation of the force of the "And so. . .".

In the second part of verse 26 Paul cites the Old Testament in support of what he has just said. There is some difficulty in deciding just what Old Testament passage or passages he is quoting. Isaiah 59:20 is the closest to the language used by Paul. Hodge suggests that Paul may be giving a sort of summary of a number of passages, such as Isa. 59:20,21; 27:9; Jer. 31:31-34; Psalm 14:7. "The apostle teaches, that the deliverance promised of old, and to which the prophet Isaiah referred in the passage above cited, included much more than the conversion of the comparatively few Jews who believed in Christ at the advent. The full accomplishment of the promise, that he should turn away ungodliness from Jacob, contemplated the conversion of the whole nation, as such, to the Lord" (Charles Hodge).

It will be observed that we have said nothing about the possibility of a return of the Jews to Palestine. The reason is that the apostle Paul says nothing whatever about such a return. On this Alford says: "I have not mixed with the consideration of this prophecy (Rom. 11) the question of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, as being clearly irrelevant to it: the matter here treated being, **their reception into the Church of God.**"

LESSON 62

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they

"For this is my covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins" (11:27). This verse is apparently quoted from Isa. 59:21 and 27:9, the latter in the form given in the LXX or Greek translation of the Old Testament. It completes the proof from the Old Testament of the truth that Paul has been setting forth. "All the apostle intended to prove, is proved by the language of the prophets. The covenant of God with his ancient people secured, after their apostacy and consequent banishment in Babylon, and their dispersion over the earth, and their rejection of Christ, the ultimate purging away of their sin, and their restoration, as a nation, to the Messiah's kingdom. This national conversion is also predicted in Zech. 12:10, and in many other passages of the Old Testament" (Charles Hodge).

In speaking of a future conversion of the Jews to Christ, we must of course realize that this does not imply that every individual Jew is to become a Christian. "Now, of course, the Apostle does not mean that all the Jews will be saved when Christ comes. If he meant this he would have to be understood as teaching that all the Gentiles are to be saved. Just as he does not mean by the 'riches of the world' and the 'riches of the Gentiles' the conversion of all Gentiles, so he does not mean by the 'fulness' of the Jews the conversion of all the Jews. Any idea of a universal salvation is foreign to the teaching of the Bible." (David Freeman, *The Bible and Things to Come*, p. 69).

Questions:

1. What view was held by Charles Hodge as to the meaning of "all Israel" in 11:26?
2. What argument is based on the opening words of 11:26 by those who reject the idea of a future conversion of the Jews to Christ?
3. How can this argument be answered?
4. What is Paul's purpose in quoting from the Old Testament in 11:26,27?
5. What can be said about the bearing of Rom. 11 on a return of the Jews to Palestine?
6. What verse in Zechariah is understood to predict a future conversion of the Jews to Christ?
7. How can it be shown that the apostle Paul's statements do not imply that every individual Jew shall be converted to Christ?

are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (11:28, 29). These two verses form a summary of what the apostle Paul has taught about the rejection and future conversion of the Jews up to this point. "As in the whole context Paul is speaking, not of

individuals, but of the rejection and restoration of the Jews as a body, it is evident that the calling and election which he here has in view, are such as pertain to the Jews as a nation, and not such as contemplate the salvation of individuals" (Charles Hodge). This consideration must be borne in mind or we will not be able to understand these two verses. If the calling, election and salvation of individuals were under discussion, it would be quite impossible to say that the same people were both enemies as concerning the Gospel, and also beloved because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. But when we bear in mind that Paul is speaking of the rejection and future conversion of the Jews as a people, it all becomes clear.

"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes". The Jews were rejected for their unbelief. They were branches cut off from the good olive tree. By this rejection of them, salvation was brought to the Gentiles. In order to accomplish the salvation of the Gentiles, God regarded and treated the Jews as enemies. This implies, of course, that those who died in their unbelief were eternally lost. They had rejected the one and only way of salvation, Jesus the Messiah. From the book of Acts and from Paul's epistles we can see what bitter enemies the Jews were of the Gospel of Christ. However the statement that "they are enemies for your sakes" probably means that they are enemies of God, since it is of God that they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. Being enemies of God, they were of course also enemies of the Gospel and of those faithful servants of God who proclaimed the Gospel.

". . . but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes". Even while in the state of enmity against God and while being treated as enemies of God as concerning the Gospel, they were in another and very different sense beloved of God — they were beloved of God as touching the election, for the fathers' sakes. That is, these very Jews that were enemies of God as concerning the Gospel, were still being carefully watched over and kept by God, against the day when the Jews as a people shall be converted to Jesus their Messiah. All in unbelief must perish in their sin, of course, but still they were beloved in one sense, as the stock whose descendants would one day be converted to the Messiah.

"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance". This verse as translated in the King James version is not entirely clear. It is hardly necessary to mention the very crude misinterpretation that regards it as teaching that a sinner need not repent of his sins in order to be saved. "Repentance" in this verse means a change of mind or purpose on God's part. The American Revised Version reads: "For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of"; the Revised Standard Version, "For the gifts and the call of God are

irrevocable"; The Book of Books version, "For the gifts and the calling of God are such that He does not change His mind." God's gifts is a general, inclusive term for His favors; God's calling is the best and most important of His gifts. Paul states the principle that God's gracious purposes are not changeable, but irrevocable. The term "calling" is here equivalent to "election", as shown by the context, where they are used interchangeably. Those individuals whom God has elected to eternal life shall certainly be saved; and if God has chosen a people to be His peculiar people, they shall remain His people, for His gracious purposes are unchangeable. The choice of the Jews as a people of course implies nothing as to the personal salvation of particular individuals within that people. When God chose the Jews as His people this did not imply that the majority of any one generation of Jews in Old Testament times should be personally saved unto eternal life. There exists today in some circles a very crude error which holds that from Moses to Christ each and every Israelite who complied with the external requirements of God's law was personally saved unto eternal life. This is of course entirely unfounded and untrue. God's choice of a people as a people is one thing; His election and salvation of individuals is another matter. In neither case does God "repent" of His purposes, or change His mind. But we must not confuse the election of a people to connections and privileges, with the election of individuals to personal salvation and eternal life.

Questions:

1. What is the place of 11:28,29 in Paul's argument?
2. Is Paul here speaking of God's choice of the Jews as a people, or of His election of individual Jews to eternal life?
3. Why did God regard and treat the Jews as enemies?
4. How can it be shown that in 11:28 "enemies" means "enemies of God"?
5. In what sense were the Jews beloved of God?
6. For what reason were they beloved of God?
7. What is meant by saying that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance"?
8. What is the difference between God's "gifts" and His "calling"?
9. What other word does Paul in this context use as equivalent to "calling"?
10. What kind of "calling" is Paul speaking about here?

LESSON 63

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

"For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy" (11:30,31). In these two verses Paul repeats and confirms what he has already said, and brings out the remarkable parallel between the cases of the Jews and the Gentiles. The Gentiles were once unbelieving, but obtained mercy through the unbelief of the Jews. The Jews are now unbelieving, but shall obtain mercy through the salvation of the fulness of the Gentiles. This is not an exact parallel because the occasion of obtaining mercy is different in the two cases. Yet the resemblance is noteworthy.

"For as ye in times past have not believed God" — in the Greek "have not believed" is literally "have disobeyed". This brings out the truth that the Bible represents faith as an act of obedience to God, and unbelief as disobedience to God. Men are not merely invited to believe on Christ; they are commanded to believe on Christ and those who do not believe are disobedient to this command of God.

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (11:32). "Here the idea is, that God, in the dispensation of his providence and grace, has so ordered things, that all Gentiles and Jews, first the one, and then the other, should reveal their true character as sinners, and stand out in history confessed as unbelievers Nor is mere permission all that is expressed. God's efficiency or control is directly asserted The agency of God in giving men up to sin is punitive; it is consistent with their liberty and responsibility, and with his own holiness. He does not cause their sin, but he so orders his dispensations, that their sinfulness is revealed, and the mode of its manifestations determined. It seems also to enter into the design of the apostle to show that God had dealt alike with Gentile and Jew. They stood on the same ground. Both were dependent on sovereign mercy. Both had sunk into a state from which the grace of God alone could save them. As all were equally miserable and helpless, God determined to have mercy upon all, and to bring all, Jews as well as Gentiles, into the fold of Christ" (Charles Hodge).

This brings us to the close of Paul's treatment of the plan of redemption. The next four verses (33-36) are a sublime expression of the wisdom,

knowledge, goodness and grace of God. "Few passages, even in the Scriptures are to be compared with this, in the force with which it presents the idea that God is all and man is nothing" (Charles Hodge). Henry Alford says of these four verses that in them "the Apostle, overpowered with the view of the divine Mercy and Wisdom, breaks forth into the sublimest apostrophe existing even in the pages of Inspiration itself."

The question naturally arises, just what is the place of these four verses in the Epistle to the Romans? Do they have a special relation to the subject matter of chapters 9-11, namely, God's rejection of the Jews and calling of the Gentiles? Or is the reference to the whole doctrine of the Epistle up to this point? Or is the reference limited to the single matter of the future conversion of the Jews to Christ? Charles Hodge observes that there is nothing to indicate any limitation to the immediate context, and so he concludes that the occasion for this wonderful outburst of praise is the entire plan of salvation revealed in the Epistle up to this point.

Three main ideas are presented in verses 33-36, namely, (1) In Himself and in all His works God is not only infinitely great and good, but also incomprehensible to the human mind; He transcends human understanding. (2) God is entirely and absolutely independent of man. (3) God is all-comprehensive, for He is the source, the means and the end of all that exists.

Questions:

1. What parallel is brought out in 11:30,31?
2. Why is this parallel not a perfect one?
3. What is the literal meaning of the phrase "have not believed God" in 11:30?
4. What is meant by the statement that God has concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all?
5. Why does God's concluding men in unbelief not make God responsible for their sins?
6. What is the character of 11:33-36?
7. What question exists as to the relation of 11:33-36 to the rest of the Epistle?
8. How is this question probably to be answered?
9. What three main ideas concerning God are taught in 11:33-36?

LESSON 64

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final, for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

God is not only infinitely great and good, but also incomprehensible to the human mind. 11:33

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (11:33) The first part of this verse may also be translated: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God", making "riches" parallel to "wisdom" and "knowledge". If this translation is adopted, God's "riches" would mean His grace, His mercy to sinners. On the other hand, the translation given in the King James Version makes "riches" a description of God's wisdom and knowledge. As far as the grammar of the Greek is concerned, either translation is proper. Charles Hodge states that inasmuch as the grace of God is a prominent subject in this Epistle, the translation which regards "riches" as parallel to "wisdom" and "knowledge" is to be preferred. Henry Alford points out that in Phil. 4:19 the "riches" of God (same Greek word) is mentioned as a special attribute or quality of God. Alford also prefers to take "riches", "wisdom" and "knowledge" as parallel or co-ordinate attributes of God. He explains "riches" as meaning "the riches of the divine goodness".

God is the Infinite Being. He is infinite in His being and in all His qualities or attributes. That is, there are no limits that can be applied to God. "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth" (Shorter Catechism, 4). While much modern religion tends to believe in a finite or limited God, the Bible teaches that God is infinite. Modern man has tried to make a god in his own image, a god who is really only a superman, a mere projection of the human mind. A prominent churchman of our own day has publicly said that the cry of humanity today is for a limited God, and that we can no longer respect any absolutes except those in the moral realm. Another prominent preacher holds that God can help us to love our fellow men but God cannot control the weather, so it is folly to pray for rain. This is just another instance of the modern notion of a finite God. Over against the finite god of modern theology, the infinite God of the Bible has one tremendous advantage: He is real, He really exists, He is the living and true God, not a mere figment of the human imagination.

People object to the idea of an infinite God today because this idea cannot be analyzed by the human mind. It always baffles us. We cannot

draw a circle around it and say we understand it. Those who will worship no God except one whom they can fully understand and analyze will not worship the God of the Bible. In reality they will worship only their own human mind. They are idolaters just as truly as any heathen that ever bowed down to wood and stone. The true God baffles the human mind just because He is God. If we could understand Him He would not be God and we would not be creatures.

"We can only wonder and adore. We can never understand. And it is well that it is so. What can be understood must be limited. What is fully comprehended no longer exercises, excites, or enlarges. It is because God is infinite in his being, and incomprehensible in his judgments and in his ways, that he is an inexhaustible source of knowledge and blessedness" (Charles Hodge). We must realize that the Christian Faith ends in mystery. Our little knowledge which is possible by divine revelation soon carries us to the borderland of mystery, where, as Hodge said, "we can only wonder and adore", but never understand.

Christianity has suffered terribly from the inroads of 18th century rationalism, which has continued to have its baneful effects to the present day. The aim and ideal of 18th century rationalism was complete comprehension of all reality. This required the rejection of everything in the Christian Faith that could not be completely understood or explained by the human mind. It involved the rejection of the God of the Bible and the setting up of a false god made in the image of the human mind. Over against this false religion of reason, we believe in the awful, mysterious, incomprehensible God of the Bible — the living and true God.

There is a shade of distinction between God's "judgments" and His "ways". God's "judgments" in this verse probably means His plans, counsels, purposes, decrees. These are declared to be "unsearchable", that is, not accessible to human study or investigation. They lie in the realm of the secret things of God, which man cannot approach to inquire into. God's "ways", on the other hand, would mean His methods of procedure, His implementation of His eternal decrees in the works of creation and providence. God's "ways" are said to be "past finding out". The Greek literally means "untraceable"; it is an adjective formed from the Greek word for "footprint". God executes His decrees in the works of creation and providence, but it is beyond human ingenuity or research to trace out these mysterious pathways; at most we can have only a very limited, incomplete idea of God's "ways".

Questions:

1. What two opinions are there as to the meaning and purpose of the word "riches" in 11:33?
2. What verse in another of Paul's epistles shows that "riches" can be regarded as a distinct quality or attribute of God?
3. If "riches" is taken as a distinct quality of God, what is its meaning?
4. What is meant by saying that God is the Infinite Being?
5. What does much modern religion teach as to the being of God?
6. What great advantage does the God of the

Bible possess over the "God" of modern theology?

7. Why do many people today object to the idea of an infinite God?
8. What is meant by saying that the Christian Faith ends in mystery?
9. What is rationalism?
10. What harm has rationalism done to Christianity?
11. What is the difference between God's "judgments" and His "ways"?
12. Why are God's judgments unsearchable and His ways untraceable?

LESSON 65**THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.**

F. God's Rejection of the Jews was not Final for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

God is Entirely and Absolutely Independent of Man. 11:34,35

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" (11:34,35). The first of these two verses teaches the absolute independence of God in His plans and purposes. God's counsel—His eternal decree—is **God's** counsel; it is not in any sense based on anything in His creation. The questions "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? who hath been his counselor?" of course imply the answer "No one". The teaching of the verse therefore is that God stands alone in His plans and purposes and is not in respect of any of them limited by His creatures.

This is the truth of the sovereignty of God. It is expressed many times in the Bible by such phrases as "It pleased God. . .", "It pleased the Lord. . .", "According to the good pleasure of his will". The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms also use similar expressions repeatedly to designate the sovereignty of God—His absolute supremacy and independence in His plans and purposes.

This truth of the sovereignty and independence of God is greatly spoken against at the present day. In the first place, it is denied by all liberals and modernists who believe in a limited or finite God. Only an infinite God can be truly independent in His plans. In the second place, it is denied by all those who say that when God created mankind He "limited Himself" so that after the creation of man He is no longer supreme and independent. Such people confidently assert that God is limited by the free

will of His creatures. They do not even hesitate to use such expressions as "God's hands are tied"; "God wants to save you but He is helpless until you make your own decision"; "Give God a chance" (or an "opportunity", which is evidently the same idea, namely that God cannot act until the human will gives Him an "opportunity" by acting first); "God has done all He can; now it is just up to you to make your own decision" and many similar modes of speaking. All of these flatter the natural man and his powers and detract from the glory and honor of God by an implied denial of His independence and sovereignty.

There are those who assert that God has from all eternity fore-ordained what shall come to pass but that this foreordination is based on His eternal foreknowledge of what would come to pass anyway. In the matter of the salvation of sinners, this becomes the teaching that God has from all eternity elected some to eternal life, but He has elected those whom He foresaw would at some time of their life by their own human free will decide to repent and accept Christ. This, of course, is just an elaborate, roundabout way of saying that God's eternal foreordination and election are not real and effective, but a mere verbal fiction. If God has foreordained the salvation of those whom He foresaw would choose to be saved, then God's foreordination is a fiction. This really amounts to God, in His eternal decree, deciding to leave the eternal issues of life to the free will of sinful creatures. It amounts to God leaving the whole matter to sinful man, and simply **ratifying** the all-important decision made by human free will. This has accurately been named the doctrine that "God elects those who elect themselves". It regards man's choice as real and effective, whereas God's choice is a merely formal ratification of man's choice.

These denials of God's sovereignty and in-

dependence do not arise from careful exegesis of the text of Scripture. Talk with those who advocate these views and in a few minutes it becomes evident that they are basing them upon a kind of human reasoning. Because they cannot harmonize God's sovereignty with man's freedom and responsibility, they try to escape from this paradox by virtually denying God's sovereignty in the interests of man's freedom. The Reformed theology for which our Church stands, on the other hand, reverently lets the paradox stand unsolved, recognizing that this paradox (between God's sovereignty and man's freedom) is deeply imbedded in the Scriptures, and holds the two truths of God's sovereignty and man's freedom without sacrificing one or the other.

A very crude misstatement of this subject is sometimes met with. It is sometimes stated that Calvinism teaches God's sovereignty, Arminianism teaches man's freedom and responsibility, and you have to take both Calvinism and Arminianism to get the whole truth. If it were not for the fact that this form of statement evidently appeals to some people and has some popularity, it would hardly be worth answering. In the first place, it is an absurdity to represent Calvinism and Arminianism as mutually complementary systems, which have to be combined to get the whole truth. Anyone who knows anything about the history of this controversy knows that at the points of difference between them Calvinism and Arminianism are mutually **contradictory** systems. In the early 1600's the Arminians in Holland (then called Remonstrants) issued a paper in which they called in question five articles of the creed of the Reformed Church of Holland. This created controversy and a special synod was held — the Synod of Dort, 1618-19 — to settle the controversy. The Synod of Dort condemned the five points of the Arminians, and adopted five articles of its own to set forth the truth. The five "Canons of Dort" are not complementary but contradictory to the five points of the Arminians. To say that Calvinism and Arminianism are just two sides of the same picture, as some say, is to talk through one's hat. It is like saying that the statement "Caesar crossed the Rubicon" and the statement "Caesar did not cross the Rubicon" are two sides of the same picture.

In the second place, the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism is not that Calvinism believes in God's sovereignty while Arminianism believes in man's freedom and responsibility. The real difference is that Calvinism believes fully in both God's sovereignty and man's freedom and responsibility, without trying to solve the rational paradox that is involved, while Arminianism feels that the paradox must be solved, therefore it denies the real sovereignty of God in the interests of holding on to man's freedom and responsibility. The real difference between the two systems, then, is a difference in

their attitude to this paradox. Arminianism faces the paradox with a rationalistic attitude: the paradox must be solved at any cost. If this involves denying the real sovereignty of God, so be it; we must then say that God elected those whom He foreknew would of their own free will repent and believe. Calvinism, on the other hand, approaches this paradox with an attitude of reverence and godly fear: the paradox is one of the secret things that belong to the Lord our God; we need not solve it; we need only adhere to what the Scripture teaches concerning both of these truths which we cannot fully harmonize.

The Arminian view is prevalent today in American evangelical or fundamentalist circles. Some consider this only an academic question, of no practical importance. The truth is that nothing is more important than the truth about God and our relation to Him. The Arminian view implies that it is in the power of sinful man, without the effectual calling or irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit, to make a "decision" to repent and accept Christ. This in turn implies that the natural man cannot be really totally depraved and dead in trespasses and sins. So it will be seen that Arminianism involves very serious consequences.

Questions:

1. What great truth is taught in 11:34,35?
2. What expression is frequently used in the Bible and the Westminster Standards to designate the sovereignty of God?
3. What is the attitude of present day liberals and modernists to the sovereignty of God?
4. What are some of the statements made by those who say that God has "limited himself" in His dealings with man?
5. What is wrong with the common saying "Give God a chance"?
6. Why is it not correct to say that God has from eternity elected those whom He foresaw would of their own free will decide to repent and believe?
7. What paradox is deeply imbedded in the Scriptures?
8. Why is it not correct to say that Calvinism and Arminianism are both true, and only two sides of the same picture?
9. What controversy was settled at the Synod of Dort? When and where was this synod held?
10. What is the real difference between Calvinism and Arminianism?
11. What is the right attitude toward the paradox between God's sovereignty and man's freedom?
12. Why is the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism an important matter?

(Note: This series of lessons on the Epistle to the Romans will be continued, D.V., in the next issue. — Ed.)

Psalm Forty-Eight

Jehovah Is Greatly to be Praised

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

I. For the City Where Men May Come to Him for Refuge (verses 1-3)

"Great is Jehovah, and to be praised exceedingly, In the city of our God, the mountain of His holiness! Beautiful! a lofty eminence! the joy of the whole earth! Mount Zion, the rampart of the north, the capital city of the mighty King! God in her strongholds is known for a refuge!"

God is to be praised for what He is, and for what He has done. Here is the City "whose builder and maker is God", the City that has its foundations in the mountain of His holiness. The city and the mountain are one and inseparable. Look not for the city except where the holiness of God is dominant. And holiness, remember, is a matter of character, not of place or of time.

"In the city of our God", that is, of our covenant God, the city of His covenant grace. Here is His House, in which is the Ark of His Covenant, with the tablets of His law, and over it the Mercy Seat, which is the place of His throne. In His temple courts (mentioned in verse 9), and in the city round about, God has prepared a place for His covenant people, where he will be with them, and be their God, and they His people.

This city is beautiful, in the matchless beauty of holiness; it is high in overtowering majesty; distinguished and far-famed, it is the joy of the whole earth, for in it and from it are heard the good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.

The name of the city and mountain is "Zion", which Jehovah chose for His habitation: "This is my resting-place forever; here will I dwell". As a protection for His people it is "the rampart of the north", for out of the north come the storms; out of the north come the enemies of His people in greatest force and frequency. But, "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved." "JEHOVAH IS THERE" is the name by which it shall be called (Ezek. 48:35). "It is the capital city of the great King". "Yea, I have enthroned my King on Zion, the mountain of my holiness. . . Blessed are all they who take refuge in HIM" (Psalm 2). For, in truth, it is not the city, but God Himself who is our refuge. The city marks the place where men may find Him, and be at peace with Him. For the city of the great King is Jerusalem, "the foundation", or "possession of peace" (Matt. 6:5).

"God in her strongholds is known" or, as the form of the verb suggests, "has made himself known for a refuge". The Hebrew word here, and in verse 13, translated "strongholds", occurs 30

times in the Old Testament. 29 times the A. V. translates "palaces", but in Prov. 18:19, "castle"; "like the bars of a castle". In 1 Kings 16:18 and 2 Kings 15:25, the R.V. translates "castle"; "in the castle of the king's house", i.e., evidently, "in the private, fortified compartment of the king's house". So, all the houses in this city have an inner, secret place fortified, where God makes Himself known, and where His people are safe, "in the secret place of the Most High". "He will cover thee with his pinions, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth is a shield and a buckler". "When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father".

Thus the church is set before us in its objective reality. It is a divine institution established among men in this world. It is a visible church, made to be seen, and heard, and felt; set on a hill so that it cannot be hid. Whatever there is about it that is "invisible" belongs to the unrevealed counsel of God. All that is essential for man's salvation is made plain.

But know that it is set on the mountain of God's Holiness, which includes His perfect, unchangeable righteousness, judgment, truth, purity, integrity, all these and much more. It stands as a challenge as well as a hope to every sinner in the low and high places of the earth. There is a necessary and irreconcilable antagonism between sin and holiness. Sin hates and fears holiness. Sin is bold only in the darkness of ignorance and the confusion of compromise. So long as the church maintains its God-given position and defences, it is safe. "For in Jehovah, JEHOVAH, there is everlasting strength" (Isa. 26:4). "And thou shalt call thy walls SALVATION, and thy gates PRAISE" (Isa. 60:18). "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." Yes, He is greatly to be praised.

II. For Baffling and Scattering the Enemies Without (verses 4-8)

"For, See! the kings assembled themselves; They are all gone away together! They saw; then were they in consternation: They were frightened, they fled in terror. Trembling took hold of them there, Pain, as of a woman in travail. With the east wind Thou breakest the Tarshish ships. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of Jehovah of Hosts, in the city of our God. God establishes her forever!"

"Stand still and see the salvation of God". Times without number the kings of earth, pagan kings, tyrant kings, proud boasters of learning,

wisdom and power, have assembled with great armies of followers, to plunder and destroy the city of our God — but they have been scattered “Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown”.

What verses 4-6 have said, verse 7 repeats with new and striking emphasis. For the city is indeed surrounded by the restless sea of the peoples. Ships, the means of transportation of men and supplies, are on the desert as well as the water. Since Tarshish was supposed to be at earth's extremity, “Tarshish ships” were ships large and strong enough to bring huge cargoes from the ends of the earth. Enemies of the city often come from far. But, no matter how great and imposing they were, they have been broken in pieces and scattered by God's “east wind”. “As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of Jehovah of Hosts, who has all the resources of the universe at His disposal. Human resources may fail, have often failed, but the true and faithful church is not imperiled. God is at no loss for her protection.

“As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God”, “who keepeth covenant and mercy forever”. His promises have never failed. His Word, “the Word of God which liveth and abideth”, is the eternal rock on which the church is built, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”.

“God establishes her forever”. The form of the verb here is intensive, “God maintains her establishment forever”. He has done it, is doing it now, and will continue to do so. He does not alter her foundation or defences. He maintains them. They are sufficient for all time. The church is the “pillar and ground of the truth”; — “pillar” in the sense of having the public declaration and testimony of the truth upheld by it that all men may know; “ground” in the sense of being the support and maintenance of that testimony through the years, that all generations may know. Nothing can be done against the truth that is clearly, openly, faithfully proclaimed.

As we have heard so have we seen the providential arrangements of His never-failing goodness. Certainly, **He is greatly to be praised.**

III. For Marvellous Mercies to His People Within (verses 9-14).

“We have thought, O God, upon thy loving-kindness in the midst of thy temple courts. As is thy name, O God, so is thy praise even beyond earth's remotest parts: Righteousness hath filled full thy right hand. Zion mount is glad; the daughters of Judah rejoice, Because of thy judgments. Go round about Zion and encompass her; Count her towers; Set your heart to know her bulwarks; Consider well her strongholds That you may tell it to the coming generation. For this God is our

God forever and ever: He, even HE, will lead us on beyond death.”

In thy temple courts, O God, where thy people gather, where there is none to make them afraid, “thy lovingkindness is before our eyes” (Psalm 26:3). We know that it is not by any righteousness we have done, but by thy mercy we are saved. How could we think of anything else? “I will extol thee, my God, O King; And I will bless thy name forever and ever”.

“As is thy name, O God, so is thy praise even beyond earth's remotest parts”, great and glorious. “Righteousness hath filled full thy right hand”, the hand of action. Since it is filled full with righteousness, nothing else can have a place in it. Every act of God is a righteous act. And the fame of this is heard afar off. “The whole earth is full of His glory”.

“Zion mount is glad; Judah's daughters rejoice, because of thy judgments”. The judgments of God put His righteousness into effect. They have to do with the enemies without, but, first, with the people within the city. “For thrones of judgment there are set”, that there may be peace within her walls. That is, that there may be nothing but righteousness there. For there can be peace only where there is righteousness. But righteousness and peace and joy have their home in the city of our God. God keeps it fortified. He does not permit its defences to be trifled with.

“Go round about Zion and encompass her”. See for yourselves her beauty and strength. Learn what it is that safeguards your security.

“Count her towers”. They are of God's specifications, of God's building. Not one of them may safely be dispensed with. Towers formed a conspicuous part of the walls of ancient fortified cities. They were erected beside the city gates, at the corners of the walls, and at intervals between. Within their massive bases were rooms for public shelter. Their height allowed for openings for light and air out of reach of enemies. Watchmen were stationed in them, and machines mounted for shooting arrows.

“Set your heart to know her bulwarks”. Not your eyes only, but your heart, for these are things that only heart and mind can measure. The “bulwarks” were the outside trenches and lower walls for protection of the main walls. They were manned by soldiers with swords and spears.

“Consider well her strongholds”. Get acquainted with her inner chambers. Enter in where God makes Himself known.

In other words, Inform yourselves as to the outer and inner defences of the city of God, not only for your own satisfaction, but “that you may tell it to the coming generation”; that they too may know the place of safety; that they may not fool-

ishly weaken its defences, nor surrender to the enemy.

In this connection, Calvin has pointed out that it is here tacitly assumed that the time would come when these outward, material symbols of Zion's glory would be no more. If they were to remain, as then, the coming generation could see them. Why special need to tell of them? Moreover, Jesus Christ told His disciples of a time to come shortly, when not one stone of Zion would be left on another that would not be thrown down. That time came as He said, and for the reason He gave, the sin and unfaithfulness of the people **within** its walls. So we are well informed that what is here spoken of in material and temporal symbols is itself, essentially spiritual and eternal. And this in turn reveals how this city can be captured and destroyed and yet remain; how it can be as the bush that was burned with fire, yet was not consumed.

It is impregnable and inviolable to any enemy so long as its walls, towers, bulwarks and strongholds are maintained. But, if some on the inside begin to imagine, by any subtle deceit, that such strong, unyielding walls are unnecessary, and begin to make compromises with the enemy, and to let some of them in at the gates, or by some other way; to undermine the walls and remove parts, it is only a matter of time until all is thrown down and destroyed. The enemy is cunning to use every advantage to his purpose. Where the truth of God is silenced, we should realize that the church is **not there**. **The Lord is not there**. The place has become a synagogue of Satan. The church, however, can always be found where the truth is upheld for the attention of the world, and supported for consistent and continuous witness, in accord with the requirements of God's holiness. How tremendously important it is that we know, and that we tell the coming generation of this!

"Unto this catholic (i.e., universal), 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" (Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV.3).

These things are made effectual through the preaching and teaching of the Word, through ordering the appointed worship administering the sacraments, and administering justice by the appointed government and discipline, in the presence and by the authority of Christ and the power of His Spirit; in other words, through the individual and united witness of all the people of God by a **pure faith, an acceptable worship, and a holy life**.

Of this **concrete testimony** are the walls, the towers, bulwarks, and strongholds of the city of our God. There is no other effective defence against the weapons of the enemy, which are false

ideas of God, false doctrines, and temptations to evil. With only such deceitful weapons they are afraid to meet the issue openly; they run away until they can devise some scheme of indirect attack. Together these God-given defences are **sufficient**. But every one of them is **necessary**, as we might know by the wisdom of God and the experience of church history.

For instance, the Book of Psalms is a constituent part of Holy Scripture, for the express purpose of being used in the public worship of God. For, **Jehovah is to be praised exceedingly!** We know that its songs, as vehicles of praise, are acceptable to God, and safe for the faith and life of the church, because inspired by the Holy Spirit of Truth. They are in perfect harmony with all the teachings of His Scripture, and add to our knowledge of the character and rule of God.

On the other hand, we know that man-made hymns bear no guarantee of truth. Many are untrue, or trivial, or written to teach error; hence dishonoring to God and dangerous to the faith and life of the church. The introduction of these hymns has always been by imitation, by compromise. With every compromise the enemy strengthens himself and his position, with the result, in every case, that singing of the Psalms is done away. One essential tower has been removed. Error has gained a foothold. How important, then, it is that we know, and that the coming generation know, the defences of the church! "For this God is our God forever and ever." His covenant laws, as well as His covenant mercies, are unchangeable. Indeed His laws are part of His mercy.

"He, even HE, will be our guide". The original word here translated "be our guide" is at times used specifically of the shepherd's care, as in Psalm 80:1, "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that **leadest** Joseph like a flock." The old Greek version translates, "He, Himself will shepherd us forever". "He, none but HE, will be our guide";— but **not** "unto death"; the preposition here, and in verse 10, does not mean "unto"; it means "over", "beyond". The Good Shepherd does not lead His flock to death; He leads them safely through the valley of the shadow, and on, to the heights beyond, where **Jehovah is praised exceedingly**. **Note:** Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued in future issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — Ed.

"The religion of Paul was not founded upon a complex of ideas derived from Judaism or paganism. It was founded upon the historical Jesus. But the historical Jesus upon whom it was founded was not the Jesus of modern reconstruction, but the Jesus of the whole New Testament and of Christian faith; not a teacher who survived only in the memory of His disciples, but the Saviour who after His redeeming work was done still lived and could still be loved."

—J. Gresham Machen

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:

If, as the Larger Catechism (Q. 109) says, the Second Commandment forbids the making of a "picture" of Christ, why then does it not forbid the making of pictures of things "in the earth beneath or the waters under the earth"—or even sculpture?

Answer:

For a correct understanding of the Second Commandment, we must keep in mind the end or purpose toward which the commandment is directed, for this has a bearing on its meaning and applications. Calvin says: "As in the preceding commandment the Lord has declared himself to be the one God, besides whom no other deities ought to be imagined or worshipped, so in this he more clearly reveals his nature, and the kind of worship with which he ought to be honored, that we may not dare to form any carnal conception of him. The end, therefore, of this precept is, that he will not have his legitimate worship profaned with superstitious rites. . . . He marks what is the grossest transgression of this kind; that is, external idolatry. And this precept consists of two parts. The first restrains us from licentiously daring to make God, who is incomprehensible, the subject of our senses, or to represent him under any visible form. The second prohibits us from paying religious adoration to any images. He likewise briefly enumerates all the forms, in which he used to be represented by profane and superstitious nations. By those things which are in heaven, he means the sun, the moon, and the other stars, and perhaps birds. . . I omit the other particulars, as needing no explanation. And . . . whatever visible representations of God are invented by man, are diametrically opposite to his nature; and . . . therefore, as soon as ever idols are introduced, true religion is immediately corrupted and adulterated" (*Institutes*, Book II, Chapter VIII, Section 17).

Thus to interpret the Second Commandment aright, we must keep its scope and purpose in mind. It concerns religious worship, not human art as such. Therefore to take a photograph or make a drawing, painting or sculpture of created persons or objects is not sinful. What is prohibited is not making likenesses, but making likenesses for religious use, or as representations of the Deity.

It may then be inquired, why should "pictures of Christ" be regarded as forbidden? May they not be intended as mere objects of art, en-

tirely apart from all religious devotion and worship? The answer to this consists in the truth that **Jesus Christ is not a human person, but a divine person with a human nature.** He is therefore not a created person. His human nature never existed except in union with his divine person and nature. The artist who attempts to portray Christ's human nature inevitably forgets that Christ is a divine person. No picture can show His deity. The attempt to portray His humanity without His deity inevitably gives a false idea of Christ. The prevalence of "pictures of Christ" is no doubt one cause of the present widespread denial of His deity and the current over-emphasis on His humanity.

Jesus Christ is always a divine person and always the proper object of men's religious devotion and worship. To regard him as a mere subject for artistic efforts is to ignore—and by implication deny—His uniqueness as God manifest in the flesh. To make a picture of Christ for purposes of religious worship is sinful; to make a picture of Christ which is not for purposes of religious worship is also sinful, for it regards Christ as other than the object of religious worship. It tends toward placing Christ on a par with the mere great men of history. It is not without reason that the Bible gives us no information whatever about the personal appearance of our Saviour in the days of His flesh.—J. G. Vos

Question:

Does Christ dwell in heaven in the form in which He appeared to the Twelve after His resurrection? Why did the disciples not at first recognize Christ?

Answer:

As to the form in which Christ dwells today in heaven, this is a matter which the Bible has veiled in mystery, about which we should be very hesitant to make any positive assertions. The statements of Scripture seem to indicate that the forms of our consciousness (such as space, time, motion, etc.) may be quite different in eternity from what they are today. This seems a fair inference from Paul's statements in 2 Cor. 12:1-4. The Bible definitely teaches, however, that Christ dwells in heaven in a human body (Phil. 3:21) and that it is a glorious body. Some have drawn conclusions from the visions of Christ which John saw on Patmos (as Rev. 1:12-16; 5:6, etc.), but this seems unwarranted for the symbolical character of these visions must be taken into consideration; thus (to consider Rev. 5:6) certainly Christ in heaven does not have the

literal form of a lamb, with seven horns and seven eyes.

We do not know what Christ looks like in heaven, but we do know that "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

As to why the disciples did not at first recognize the risen Christ, the Scripture itself gives the explanation that "their eyes were holden, that they should not know him" (Luke 24:16). Certainly there was a reason for this. While it was still the same Christ, yet they were not to think of Him just as they had before His crucifixion. "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him (so) no more" (2 Cor. 5:16). The disciples had to come to realize that Christ was the same, and yet different. He had not risen to return to the earthly life, but to dwell in a higher plane of existence. Also, the slowness of the disciples to recognize Christ and to believe that He had risen indeed, greatly increases the force of their testimony to His resurrection. These men did not grasp at a straw, as if eager on the slimmest evidence to believe that Christ was raised; on the contrary, they doubted and hesitated until they were overwhelmed by evidence which they could no longer resist. — J. G. Vos

Question:

In "Blue Banner Faith and Life", vol. 2, page 162, it is stated that 2 Cor. 5:16 says that we are not to think of Christ as He appeared in the days of His flesh. Does this verse also mean that we should not think of any man as existing with flesh and blood, but should regard only his spirit? Is it wrong as we read the accounts to imagine Christ going about in human form doing all that He did on earth?

Answer:

See the answer to the preceding query. We are not to think of Christ in the glory of heaven as He may have appeared during the days of his flesh on earth. But this does not at all imply that we are to think of Him only as "spirit". Christ on earth was in **His estate of humiliation**; in heaven, He is in **His estate of glorious exaltation**; we are not to form mental images of the latter in terms of the former.

The Bible is, however, extremely realistic in its teaching concerning the resurrection body of Christ and His people. There is no tendency to "spiritualize" or evaporate the resurrection body into mere "spirit". Paul says that there is "a spiritual body" but this is certainly not the same as "a spirit body". A **spiritual** body is still a **body** — it is a body perfectly suited to be a temple of the Holy Spirit. Paul says that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God". This expression "flesh and blood" we take to mean human nature in its present mortal state, subject to pain, disease, old age and death.

Christ after His resurrection had a body with **flesh and bones** (Luke 24:39) — not "flesh and blood", but **flesh and bones**. He invited the doubting Thomas to feel the marks of the nails and spear (John 20:27). So far is the risen Christ from being merely a spirit.

Paul's statement in 2 Cor. 5:16 ("henceforth know we no man after the flesh") does not mean that we are to think of our fellow men as mere spirits — either now or in the life to come. It means that we are no longer to regard our fellow men merely from the human point of view, as non-Christians do, who regard man as their highest category of interpretation. We are to think of our fellow men in the light of Christ — of their relation to Christ, their need of Christ, their belief or unbelief in Christ, etc. The Revised Standard Version translates it thus: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer". The Twentieth Century New Testament translates: "For ourselves, then, from this time forward, we refuse to regard any one from the world's standpoint. Even if we once thought of Christ from the standpoint of the world, yet now we do so no longer". These translations bring the idea out quite well.—J. G. Vos

Question:

Is there any spiritual help at all in viewing a "picture of Christ"?

Answer:

No doubt there are many Christians who feel that they have received spiritual help from viewing so-called pictures of Christ. God in His sovereign and wise providence has often condescended to use corrupt forms of doctrine and worship to bring men to salvation. It is said that in a great revival in Ireland at one time some were converted to Christ through hearing Roman Catholic priests celebrate mass. This does not prove that the Romish mass is according to God, but merely that God, in His sovereignty, chose, on that occasion, to use a very corrupt form of Christian worship and tradition to awaken some sinners and turn them to Himself.

The fact that many Christians claim to have been helped by "pictures of Christ" does not warrant their use. Our standard of faith and life is not **experience** (our own or other people's) but **Scripture**. What is right is to be decided by an appeal to Scripture, not by a pragmatic test of results. Also, we may confidently affirm that whatever benefit people claim to have received from viewing artists' imaginary portrayals of Christ's appearance, they would have received a much greater benefit by a conscientious avoidance of "pictures of Christ" and a closer dependence upon the inspired Word of Scripture

for their ideas of Christ, both as He is now and as He was "in the days of his flesh". Of course it is not wrong to visualize in our minds the scenes of the Gospel history, including our Saviour who was the center of them all. What is wrong is to try to portray these by human art, which results thereafter in depending upon the human art for one's idea of the Christ. — J. G. Vos

Question:

In the January-March, 1952, issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life", page 19, column 2, appears the statement that certain facts are not inconsistent with the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Scripture. Does the "verbal" inspiration of the Scripture mean something different from what is commonly called the plenary inspiration of the Scripture?

Answer:

The term "verbal inspiration" was used as equivalent to "plenary inspiration". Verbal inspiration means inspiration extending to the very words of the Scripture in the original Hebrew or Greek. Plenary inspiration means full or complete inspiration. Both terms are used to distinguish the orthodox doctrine of inspiration from views which regard inspiration as partial or incomplete. Some of these views regard inspiration as extending only to the ideas of Scripture, not to the very words used. Others regard inspiration as limited to the moral and religious teachings of the Bible, while historical and scientific matters are excluded from it. Over against all views of partial inspiration, the orthodox doctrine affirms the **plenary** (full or complete) inspiration of the Scripture, and holds that plenary inspiration, in order to be real, must extend to the very words of Scripture in the original Hebrew and Greek. For ideas are expressed only in words, and only by an infallibly guided choice of words could the divine revelation be infallibly expressed.

The terms "plenary inspiration" and "verbal inspiration" are often misunderstood by those who criticize the orthodox position. Such critics often state that the orthodox doctrine implies that God dictated the whole Bible, and the human writers were mere stenographers, their own personality and literary style being completely ruled out, just as if Moses and Paul were mere typewriters of which the Holy Spirit manipulated the keyboards. This, however, is not the orthodox position. The truth is that Moses, Paul and the other Biblical writers were created and prepared by God for their special tasks. Their personality, education, literary style, and all other factors about them, were all foreordained and providentially controlled by God so that they were just right for God's intended purpose. Moses and Paul each wrote freely, according to his own personal traits and style. Besides this,

there was a supernatural control by the Holy Spirit which ensured that the product of their writing was exactly what God had intended. The terms verbal inspiration and plenary inspiration do not refer to a particular view of the **process** of inspiration, but to the divinely accurate and infallible character of the **product** of inspiration. Positively, that product was exactly what God intended, down to the very words; negatively, that product was entirely free from errors of every kind.

It would be beyond the space available in this Question Box to give a Scriptural proof of the doctrine of verbal or plenary inspiration. We refer interested readers to the following publications: (1) **The Inspiration of the Scriptures**, in **Studies in Theology**, by Loraine Boettner (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1947, \$3.50). (2) **The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible**, by B. B. Warfield (The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1948, \$3.75; see review in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", 1950, p. 181). (3) **The Infallible Word**, by the Faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary (The Presbyterian Guardian Publishing Corp., 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Pa. 1946, \$2.50).

The above-cited works afford a full treatment and defence of the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scripture. We shall here cite merely a single instance of the manifold evidence which the Bible affords on this subject. In Galatians 3:16 the apostle Paul refers to a statement of the book of Genesis, and bases an important argument on the distinction between "seed" (singular) and "seeds" (plural). If the very words of Genesis are not inspired, down to the distinction between the singular and plural forms of a noun, then Paul's argument here must fall to the ground.

With respect to the relation between "plenary inspiration" and "verbal inspiration" we shall quote here a paragraph from Dr. Boettner's book **Studies in Theology**:

"The terms 'plenary inspiration' and 'verbal inspiration' as used here are practically synonymous. By 'plenary inspiration' we mean that a full and sufficient influence of the Holy Spirit extended to all parts of Scripture, rendering it an authoritative revelation from God, so that while the revelations come to us through the minds and wills of men they are nevertheless in the strictest sense the word of God. By 'verbal inspiration' we mean the Divine influence which surrounded the sacred writers extended not only to the general thoughts, but also to the very words they employed, so that the thoughts which God intended to reveal to us have been conveyed with infallible accuracy — that the writers were the organs of God in such a sense that what they said God said."

The reader is also referred to an article on this subject in a previous issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life": **The Infallible Bible, our Authority for**

Faith and Life, in the October-December, 1946, issue, pages 150-154. — J. G. Vos

Question:

Is the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible a part of the official faith of the Reformed Presbyterian Church?

Answer:

The Reformed Presbyterian **Testimony** speaks as follows: "There is a variety in the style and manner in which different parts of the Bible are written. The sacred penmen used means of information, and employed different talents, and peculiar modes of expression; but in all they wrote, they were infallibly guided, as to matter and manner, by the Holy Ghost. Translations may be imperfect; but the genuine text of the Old Testament in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek, is infallible" (III. 6). The same chapter rejects as an error the proposition "That there can be any errors in the Bible" (Chap. III, Error 4).

The **Testimony** affirms that the sacred penmen, in all they wrote, were infallibly guided, as to matter and manner. What they wrote, of course, consisted of words. Written documents consist of words, and of ideas only as these are embodied in particular words. In all their writing of words, then, the sacred penmen were infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit, not only as to the matter but also as to the manner. This is precisely the doctrine of verbal inspiration, and it is a clear and unambiguous statement of it. Modern Liberalism, on the other hand, tends to make a distinction between the matter and the manner — the ideas and the words — and to hold that only the matter (ideas) can be regarded as inspired, while the manner (words) must be regarded as partaking of human fallibility. The Reformed Presbyterian Church teaches that there cannot be any errors whatever, of any kind, in the genuine text of the Bible. — J. G. Vos

Question:

What would you answer a person who states that God never spoke to Moses audibly?

Answer:

It would be interesting to know just what is back of the denial that God spoke to Moses audibly. Perhaps the person who denied this does not believe in the possibility of direct supernatural revelation by God to man. Perhaps he holds the rationalistic notion that Moses and the prophets merely developed certain ideas in their own minds, and then told other people that God had spoken to them. Perhaps the denial arises from antipathy to supernatural religion, and a desire to eliminate as much as possible of it. Or perhaps it is just plain unbelief, a refusal to accept the statements of the Bible as true.

In any case, no one who accepts the Bible as the infallible Word of God can doubt that God spoke to Moses with audible voice, for the Scripture statements are very clear and full on this particular matter. Mention may be made of Deut. 4:33,36; 5:22-26, which tells of an audible voice of God heard by all the people including of course Moses. In Exodus 3:4 we read: "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses". Note that God did not call to Moses out of the depths of Moses' own heart, but out of the midst of the bush. Thus the voice was an external one, and therefore it must have been audible to Moses. In Numbers 7:89 we read: "And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim: and he spake unto him". Since Moses heard this voice, it must have been audible. In Acts 7:31 we read of Moses that "the voice of the Lord came unto him". In the face of all this evidence, to say that God never spoke to Moses audibly is to say that the Bible is false.—J. G. Vos

Question:

I am very much concerned about the trend of the Covenanter Church to observe Christmas and Easter; and now the word Lent is coming into some of our literature. Please show how this is unscriptural, and suggest ways to check this trend.

Answer:

This is a timely and important question, and we are glad to publish an answer. First of all, the reader is referred to the article entitled **The Scriptural Pattern of Worship**, by the Rev. John C. Rankin, in this issue of **Blue Banner Faith and Life**. In the second place, those who possess a file of back issues are referred to the article entitled **The Observance of Days**, which appeared on pages 17-20 of the January-March, 1947, issue. If there is sufficient call for the reprinting of this article it can be reprinted in a future issue. In the third place, a question and answer on this subject which appeared in the July-September 1949 issue is reprinted below. These references furnish full evidence that the religious observance of Christmas, Easter and Lent is without Scriptural warrant and must therefore be regarded as a corruption of the worship of God by human invention and tradition.

As to how to check this trend, the present writer knows of no way to do so which can be guaranteed to avoid all unpleasantness and controversy in the Church. There is not the slightest question as to what the historic, official position of the Covenanter Church on this question is. But when unscriptural corruptions creep into the worship of God, those who resist these in-

novations and stand up for the Church's historic principles will be accused of troubling Israel, they will be called "controversial" and "divisive". Those who are concerned about the situation must count the cost, and decide that they will make the sacrifice involved in standing for Scriptural purity of worship in spite of reproach and unpopularity. Then it may be necessary to speak plainly and courageously, though at the same time with Christian love and tenderness, against unscriptural corruptions of divine worship. The Sessions of our congregations are charged with a special responsibility to maintain Scriptural purity of worship in their churches. They should take this responsibility seriously, facing it by faith, and deciding according to Scripture **without respect of persons**. This may be difficult, but it is right.

Every member of the Covenanter Church is bound by covenant vows to oppose all corruptions of the worship of God. In the solemn words of the Covenant of 1871, "we will tenderly and charitably, but plainly and decidedly, oppose and discountenance all and every known error, immorality, neglect or perversion of divine institutions." To fail to live up to this is to break our covenant vows to God.

The question and answer on Lent follow immediately below.—J. G. Vos

Question:

A minister said that the observance of Lent is a custom at the very heart of the Christian religion, and that those denominations which are opposed to observing Lent are wrong, and oppose it merely because of their conflicts with the Roman Catholic Church long ago at the time of the Reformation. How can such a statement be answered?

Answer:

In the first place, those denominations which are opposed to the observance of Lent do not "oppose it because of their conflicts with the Roman Catholic Church". They oppose it because Jesus Christ has not commanded it. They oppose it on the well established Scriptural principle that, What God has not commanded in His worship is forbidden.

The custom of observing Easter and the forty-day fast in preparation for Easter did not exist in the apostolic church, but grew up slowly as the church became more corrupt, as the commandments of men crowded out the commandments of God, and formalism suppressed spirituality. The "forty-day" period was not introduced until the fourth century, and nothing like uniformity of practice was reached before the seventh century.

The "Lenten Fast", i.e., the "Spring Fast",

developed not from the teaching of Christ or His apostles, but from the Asceticism that crept into the church from without. The New Testament has very little to say about fasting. No set time is appointed for it. Christ once, in circumstances of extraordinary trial, "fasted forty days and forty nights". He did this alone, in seclusion, before He had gathered His disciples about Him. There is no record that He ever repeated this discipline, or in any way indicated that it should be made a "custom" in His church. Instead, He warned against its abuse (Matt. 6:16-18). It has so often been perverted by hypocrisy, by formalism, and by that self-righteousness which expects extra credit for doing "more than is commanded", while it neglects what is commanded, and discounts the all-sufficient atonement and perfect righteousness which Christ provided for the believer. Thus the facts do not support the notion that "this is a custom at the very heart of the Christian religion".

Repentance and prayer, with whatever self-denial may be conducive thereto, according to the peculiar condition and circumstances of the individual, are necessary for all church members in summer, in autumn, and in winter, as well as in spring.

Read "The Observance of Days" in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 2, pp. 17-20; and "Formality Not Christianity", in Vol. 3, pp. 173-176.—F. D. Frazer

Question:

In a tract published by an agency carrying on mission work among the Jews, the following appears:

"If God made a clear, solemn promise to Israel and then switched, as many claim, from 'literal' to 'spiritual' Israel, how may we be assured that He will not, by some quirk, set us aside? If He made specific promise to Judah and Jerusalem (Isaiah 2) and then as many claim He meant the Church, how can we do business with a God that switches names in a contract after the name has been in operation for generations? The business world has a better sense of morals and would not tolerate the practice of such a fraud. We still have just sense enough to believe 'that God said what He meant and meant what He said'".

Is this viewpoint sound and Scriptural? If not, how can it be answered?

Answer:

The above quotation presents a mere caricature of the orthodox Reformed covenant theology which affirms the essential unity and continuity of the Christian Church with the Old Testament Israel. It is very easy to set up a straw man and then knock him down, but not so easy to dismiss the real position of the covenant theology. Of

course those who hold the Reformed position do not for a moment believe that God "switched from 'literal' to 'spiritual' Israel", nor that God "switches names in a contract after the name has been in operation for generations". Nor do believers in the covenant theology for a moment question that "God said what He meant and meant what He said". Of course God said what He meant and meant what He said; the real question is, however, **what did God really mean by what He said?**

The real crux of the question raised by the above query is this: **To whom were the gracious promises of God in the Old Testament addressed?** Were they addressed to the nation of Israel as such, or were they addressed to the believing, covenant-keeping element of the nation? In other words, what was the real Israel in Old Testament times? It is mere question begging to assume without proof that the real Israel to whom the promises were addressed was Israel after the flesh, and then to insinuate that those who hold the contrary view represent God as practicing "a fraud".

In Genesis 17:7 God promised Abraham: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." To whom, besides Abraham himself, was this promise made? Who constituted the real seed of Abraham, in God's reckoning? Everyone descended physically from Abraham? This cannot be, because God rejected Ishmael and said "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12). Does it, then, mean all the descendants of Isaac? This cannot be, for God said "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13). Does it, then, mean all the descendants of Jacob? This also cannot be, for large numbers of them became apostates from God, so that God even forbade the prophet Jeremiah to pray for them (Jer. 7:16, 11:14, 14:11,12). The promise of Genesis 17:7, then, was addressed, not to the covenant-breakers and apostates among Abraham's descendants, but to the believing, covenant-keeping portion of his posterity.

In Galatians 3:16 the apostle Paul writes: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." The apostle's argument here turns on the distinction between the singular (seed) and the plural (seeds). Paul points out that the word "seed" is singular, not plural, and that it refers specifically to Jesus Christ. Certainly this has a bearing on the question we have been considering. The promises were made to Abraham's **seed** (singular), namely to Jesus Christ. The promises were not made to Abraham's **seeds** (plural), namely to all the descendants of Abraham. If the promises were made definitely to one, namely Christ, **then they were not made to the nation of Israel as such; they were not made to Israel after the flesh.** The promises were

made to Jesus Christ and those in Christ, those represented by Him in the Covenant of Grace, which included the believing, covenant-keeping portion of Abraham's posterity.

We prefer to avoid the use of the term "literal Israel" because this term is ambiguous. Greater clarity will result, and the real issue will be more plain, if we speak of **an external Israel**, an Israel after the flesh, a nation of Israel as such, in distinction from the believing, covenant-keeping core of the external nation. This believing, covenant-keeping core, often called "the remnant" in the Scriptures, is truly called **the spiritual Israel.**

Let no one accuse us of "switching names" because we maintain that the word "Israel" is used in more than one sense in Scripture, and that the spiritual Israel is the genuine Israel which really has the right to the name. We can give Scripture proof for these propositions. In Romans 9:6 the apostle Paul says: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Will anyone venture to assert that the first "Israel" in this verse is identical in meaning with the second? Can anyone deny that Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in this verse used the term "Israel" in two different senses? Was Paul "switching names"? Can there be any doubt that in Rom. 9:6 the apostle Paul teaches that the spiritual, believing Israel is the genuine Israel which really has the right to the name "Israel"?

Again, in Rom. 2:28,29 the apostle Paul says: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly. . . . But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly . . . whose praise is not of men, but of God". Here Paul uses the term "Jew" in two distinct senses, corresponding to the two senses of the term "Israel" in Rom. 9:6, and with the distinct implication that **the real Jew**, the one who really has a right to the name "Jew", is the person who is a Jew **inwardly**, "in the spirit, and not in the letter".

We have proved that the Scripture itself uses the terms "Israel" and "Jew" in two distinct senses, which may be designated the **external** sense and the **spiritual** sense. We have also shown that the Scripture implies definitely that it is not the external Israel but the spiritual Israel that is the genuine Israel, which really has a right to the name "Israel". Now this certainly has a bearing on the question: **To whom were the gracious promises of God in the Old Testament addressed?** No doubt many a rebellious, stiff-necked, covenant-breaking sinner among the descendants of Jacob considered himself a genuine Israelite and held that the promises of God belonged to him. But did such people have any real right to claim that the promises were addressed to them? Alas, their claim to be "Israelites" was mere presumption, for they were strangers to the real meaning of the name "Israel". No doubt king Ahab considered himself a regular Israelite; but did God consider him one? No doubt king Saul felt that he had a right to the promises of God; but did God regard him as having a right to them?

In Ahab's day there were seven thousand whom God had reserved to Himself, who had not compromised with Baal-worship. These seven thousand, and not the apostate majority of the nation, constituted the real Israel of that day, to whom the promises of God really belonged. In Jeremiah's day the whole nation was apostate except for a very small remnant — so sunk in apostasy that God even forbade the prophet to pray for them. But that small remnant, and not the apostate majority, constituted the real Israel of that day, to whom the promises really belonged, and for whom the prophet could and did pray. Similarly, in Isaiah 1, the gracious promises in this chapter (verses 24-27) are not addressed to the population of "Judah and Jerusalem" promiscuously, but to the elect remnant. The distinction is carefully maintained:

"Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed" (27,28). **Zion and her converts shall be redeemed; the transgressors and sinners, that forsake the Lord shall be destroyed.** "Zion and her converts" constitute the true, spiritual Israel; "the transgressors", etc., on the other hand, constitute the apostate nation. The same distinction applies to chapter 2 and, indeed, the entire book of Isaiah.

That the genuine "Zion", "Jerusalem", etc., is the believing, covenant people of God (under both Old Testament and New Testament) is abundantly proven by the Scripture. The **genuine** Jerusalem is not a city made of bricks and stones, but the body of redeemed people in covenant with God: "But ye (Christians) are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22.) Again, the apostle Paul uses the term "Jerusalem" in two distinct senses, just as he uses "Israel" an "Jew" in two distinct senses; Galatians 4:25,26: ". . . Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Which is the **real** Jerusalem, which really has the right to the name "Jerusalem" as God uses the name? Note that Paul, immediately after speaking of the **spiritual Jerusalem** as "free" and "the mother of us all", quotes Isaiah 54:1 as a description of, and promise to, not the city of Jerusalem in Palestine, but the **spiritual Jerusalem**. We have, thus, clear Scriptural warrant for holding that the gracious promises of God in the Old Testament addressed to "Zion", "Judah", "Jerusalem", are really addressed to the body of people which possesses the spiritual reality and true meaning of these names. In the Old Testament period that body of people was the "remnant", the inner, believing, covenant-keeping core of the external nation of Israel; in the New Testament period that body of people is the Christian Church.

Lest we be accused of "switching names" in affirming that the Christian Church of the New Testament is the true continuation of the believing core of the Old Testament nation of Israel, we shall cite Paul's figure of the olive tree, Romans 11:16-24. Note well that the apostle speaks of **one good** olive tree, not two; branches are broken off; other branches are grafted in; but the tree lives on. It is one and the same tree. Those who say "Israel is Israel, and the Church is the Church" cannot do justice to Paul's figure of the olive tree. Gentiles who become Christians are not grafted into a new olive tree, but into the same old olive tree from which Jewish branches were broken off; it remains the same tree. Now, what shall we call this tree? Was it the nation of Israel as such? When Greeks at Athens and Corinth and Philippi became Christians, did they become Jews? We know the answer: they did not. Yet they were grafted into the olive tree. Now if the olive tree was not the nation of Israel as such, what was it? What were the Gentiles who became Christians grafted into? (Remember, they were grafted into the same tree from which Jewish branches had been broken off.) We maintain that the Jewish branches were broken off from, and the Gentile believers were grafted into **the spiritual, covenant people of God which is a continuous unity under both the Old Testament and the New Testament.** This covenant people of God is the genuine Israel, it is the true Zion, it is the real Jerusalem, it is the invisible Church, it is the body of Christ. To it the gracious promises of God in both Testaments were addressed, and to it those promises belong.

To the Ephesian Christians Paul wrote that before they became Christians they were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel", clearly implying that after they became Christians they were **members of the commonwealth of Israel.** Now, what is this "commonwealth of Israel"? Is it the external, earthly nation of Israel, commonly referred to as "the Jews"? It cannot be, because the Ephesian Christians had not become members of "the commonwealth of Israel" in any such sense as that. What, then, can Paul mean by his implication that the Ephesian Christians had become members of "the commonwealth of Israel"? Let those who accuse others of "switching names" explain this verse, if they can. We submit that in Eph. 2:12 "the commonwealth of Israel" clearly means the body of the believing, redeemed people of God, into which the Ephesians had been incorporated.

If the genuine Israel of the Old Testament and the invisible Church of the New Testament are not one and continuous, why should the apostle Paul say that the Ephesian Christians, before their conversion, had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel"? Note the exact language used: "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. . .". To be **without Christ** is to be **an alien from the common-**

wealth of Israel; to possess Christ is to be a member of the commonwealth of Israel.

In conclusion, we feel that it would have been much more charitable and brotherly on the part of the author of the tract we have been answering, and on the part of the organization that published the tract, if they had simply stated that they regard some of their brethren as mistaken in their interpretation of the Scriptures, without insinuating that those who disagree with them are guilty of tampering with or denying the truth of what God has revealed in His Word. — J. G. Vos

Question:

In Isaiah 14:12 does "Lucifer" mean Satan, as stated by the Scofield and Pilgrim Bibles?

Answer:

Although both the Scofield Bible and the Pilgrim Bible state that "Lucifer" in this passage means Satan, neither of them gives any real proof that this is true. The Scofield Bible refers the reader to Ezek. 28:12-14, while the Pilgrim Bible refers to Ezek. 28:16. The passage in Ezekiel concerns the king of Tyre (verse 12) and does not contain the name "Lucifer", so it is of no value as a proof that "Lucifer" means Satan.

Isaiah 14:12 ff. plainly refers to the king of Babylon. Note verse 4: ". . . thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" The passage continues without any indication of a change in the person being addressed or spoken of. The most natural and reasonable interpretation, then, is that "Lucifer" in verse 12 is a name applied to the king of Babylon. This is confirmed by the language used in verse 20, "Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial. . . ." — something that could hardly be said of Satan.

"Lucifer" means literally "light bearer" or "shining one". Literally it means the planet Venus, but metaphorically it is applied to the king of Babylon, by reason of his splendor and glory. It is true, of course, that Babylon, as the enemy of God's covenant people, was an objective embodiment of Satan's kingdom, and that back of the worldly pride and ambition of Babylon was Satan, the prince of this world. But inasmuch as the prophecy starts by specifically mentioning "the king of Babylon", and since it contains statements which cannot be applied to Satan (verse 11, "the worms cover thee"; verse 19, "thou art cast out of thy grave"; verse 20, "Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial"), and since in verse 22 Babylon is again mentioned by name, it is proper to conclude that the subject is not Satan himself but Babylon and its king.

Davis' *Dictionary of the Bible* states that the identification of "Lucifer" with Satan is based on an erroneous supposition that Luke 10:18 ("I be-

held Satan as lightning fall from heaven") is an explanation of Isaiah 14:12 ("How art thou fallen from heaven").

The Scofield Bible breaks the passage in Isaiah 14 up into parts by sub-headings, representing verses 12-17 as addressed to Satan, and verses 18-27 as dealing with God's judgment on "Babylon". But this is very arbitrary, for there is no indication of a break in the Biblical text between verses 17 and 18. Apparently the Scofield Bible adopted this division in order to support the claim that "Lucifer" means Satan. Similarly, the Pilgrim Bible divides the passage, entitling verses 12-17 "The sin and doom of Satan", and verses 18-27 "The destruction of Babylon". This amounts to imposing an artificial framework upon a passage which in itself is clearly a unit. — J. G. Vos

Question:

Does Ezekiel 28:10-19 refer to Satan?

Answer:

The reader is referred to the answer to the preceding query, dealing with "Lucifer" in Isaiah 14:12ff. In Ezek. 28, again, both the Scofield Bible and the Pilgrim Bible assert positively that the reference is to Satan, but they do not support this assertion by convincing reasons. The Scofield Bible says that the prophecy does not speak of Satan in his own person, but of Satan fulfilling himself in and through an earthly king. The Pilgrim Bible says that the ancient king (of Tyre) is used as a symbol for a greater personality, namely, Satan.

While this is a possible interpretation of the passage, it is probably not correct. On the face of it, the prophecy is addressed to "the prince of Tyrus" (verse 2). In verse 12 "the king of Tyrus" is mentioned again. The prophecy is immediately followed (verse 20) by a prophecy against Zidon, a neighbor city to Tyre.

In favor of the view that the reference is to Satan, verse 13 is cited ("Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God"), and verse 15 ("Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee"). While these statements would certainly fit the known history of Satan, they do not necessarily refer to him. They may also be understood as hyperbolic descriptions of the glory and splendor of Tyre.

In interpreting the Scriptures, it is always necessary to take account of the context of a particular text or passage. This passage in Ezekiel 28 occurs in a series of prophecies against various Gentile nations: the Ammonites (25:2ff); Moab (25:8ff); Edom (25:12ff); the Philistines (25:15 ff); Tyre (26:1 to 28:19); Zidon (28:20 ff); Egypt (29:1 to 32:32). In such a context, it seems improbable that there would be introduced a history of a spiritual being such as Satan. As a

matter of fact, both the Scofield and the Pilgrim Bible admit that the reference is not **directly** to Satan, but to an earthly ruler as an embodiment or symbol of Satan.

Certainly Ezek. 28:10-19 is in part of a highly mysterious nature. In view of this, it is certainly **possible** that the reference is to Satan. But the present writer believes it is sounder to interpret the statements as referring to the king and city of Tyre, which, however, was a partial and temporary embodiment of Satan's kingdom.—J. G. Vos.

Question:

Does the statement "Behold, he cometh with clouds" in Revelation 1:7 refer to the second coming of Christ as a specific event, or is the meaning a repeated spiritual coming, or continuous process of coming?

Answer:

The common, traditional exegesis, which the present writer believes to be correct, understands this clause of Rev. 1:7 as a reference to the second coming of Christ as a definite future event.

The contrary view is set forth by Dr. W. J. McKnight, in *The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ: A Reappearance. I. John to the Seven Churches*, pages 16-7: "7. How persistently this verse has been misinterpreted! How can anyone, with his eyes fastened on the Greek, deduce from this language the thought of a Second Advent or of the general Judgment? **Idou** (behold) has immediacy in it—**look up, look around you, right now**. The same is true of **erchetai** (He comes)—is coming and keeps coming all the time, never ceases for a moment to come." Dr. McKnight's own translation is: "Open your eyes and look! He has a way of coming unceasingly, even as He is coming now, in conjunction with clouds and darkness and tempests; and not only to His own by way of discipline, but to the wicked as well; for every eye shall see Him—yes, even such as pierced Him on the cross shall see Him; and 'upon the sight of Him' all the tribes that are contented with the earth shall wail, beating their breasts; yes, and even so, so let it be!" (*ibid.*, pp. 18,19).

Dr. W. J. McKnight, of course, believed firmly that Jesus Christ is coming again on the clouds of heaven, personally and visibly, at the Last Day. What he was concerned to deny was that Revelation 1:7 is a prediction of Christ's visible second coming. With due respect to the outstanding scholarship of the late Dr. McKnight, for which the present writer had a very high regard, the following arguments are presented in favor of the traditional exegesis of the verse, namely, that it refers to the visible, public second coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven.

(1) The Greek word **idou** ("behold") does

not necessarily involve the idea of immediacy. It is "used very often in imitation of the Hebrew **hinneh**, and giving a peculiar vivacity to the style by bidding the reader or hearer to attend to what is said: **behold! see! lo!**" (Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, page 297).

(2) The verb **erchetai** does not necessarily imply a repeated coming or a continued process of coming, for the identical form **erchetai** is used in numerous places of the New Testament to mean a particular, definite, once-for-all future event. The following instances may be cited: Matt. 17:11, "Elias truly shall first come"; Matt. 21:25, "Behold thy king cometh unto thee" (a quotation from the Old Testament, Zech. 9:9, which was definitely a prophecy of a single future event, namely Christ's triumphal entry to Jerusalem); Matt. 24:43, "in what watch the thief would come"; Matt. 27:49, "let us see whether Elias will come to save him"; Mark 1:7, "there cometh one mightier than I after me"; Mark 13:35, "when the master of the house cometh"; Mark 15:36, "Let us see whether Elias will come to take him down"; Luke 3:16, "one mightier than I cometh"; Luke 12:54, "There cometh a shower"; John 1:30, "after me cometh a man which is preferred before me"; John 4:25, "I know that Messias cometh"; John 4:35, "yet four months, and then cometh harvest"; John 7:41, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?"; John 7:42, "Christ cometh of the seed of David"; John 9:4, "the night cometh, when no man can work"; John 12:15, "thy king cometh" (quoted from an Old Testament prophecy, Zech. 9:9, referring to a definite future event, Christ's triumphal entry to Jerusalem); John 14:30, "the prince of this world cometh"; John 15:26, "the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you. . ."; John 21:22,23, "If I will that he tarry till I come" (**erchomai**, first person singular of the same verb and tense); 2 Tim. 4:13, "The cloak. . . when thou comest, bring with thee" (present participle, **erchomenos**); Heb. 13:23, "with whom, if he come (**erchetai** shortly"; 1 John 2:18, "ye have heard that antichrist shall come" (**erchetai**); 1 Tim. 4:13, "Till I come, give attendance to reading".

(3) It is sound principle in the interpretation of the Book of Revelation, that whatever is part of a vision seen by John is to be understood figuratively or symbolically, whereas whatever is not part of a vision, is ordinarily to be understood literally. Applying this principle to chapter 1 of the book, verses 12-16 are a vision, and therefore to be interpreted symbolically; for example, "he had in his right hand seven stars" (verse 16) does not mean seven literal stars of the sky; "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword" (verse 16) does not mean a literal sword made of steel. On the other hand, the rest of the chapter, namely verses 1-11 and 17-20, is not part of the vision. Thus the statement that John was in the island called Patmos (verse 9) is to be understood literally; it means the actual

island of Patmos in the Mediterranean Sea. Similarly, the statement, "I fell at his feet as dead", is to be understood literally; it describes John's reaction to the vision of 12:16; John actually fainted away. In the same way, the present writer believes, the statement of verse 7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds", is to be literally understood, as referring to the visible, public second coming of Christ at the Last Day. Moreover, the similarity of the language used to that of Daniel 7:13, Matthew 24:30 and Acts 1:9-11 is significant. In particular, it should be noted that the passage in Matthew 24:29-35 is definitely a prophecy of the final, public second coming of Christ, as shown by the reference to the "great sound of a trumpet" (compare 1 Thess. 4:16) and the gathering together of the elect "from one end of heaven to the other". The appearance of a cloud at the scene of Christ's Transfiguration, when His heavenly glory was manifested, is also significant (Matthew 17:5). If the "clouds" in Matt. 17:5 and Acts 1:9 were **literal, visible clouds**, not to be regarded as metaphorical expressions for "troubles", "calamities", then there is a presumption that "clouds" in Rev. 1:7 has the same meaning as in these other passages.—J. G. Vos

Question:

Is it true that God has prepared a place to care for the spirits of animals throughout eternity? Is there anything in the Scriptures to justify this belief?

Answer:

C. S. Lewis in his book **The Problem of Pain** has an interesting discussion of the possibility of animal immortality. However he frankly admits that the views expressed are speculative and cannot be proved from the Scriptures.

The text of Scripture that is most significant in this connection is Ecclesiastes 3:21, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" In the American Revised Version this verse is translated thus: "Who knoweth the spirit of man, whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast, whether it goeth downward to the earth?" For the right understanding of this verse we must bear in mind that the book of Ecclesiastes presents a succession of false philosophies which are one by one tried and found wanting, and then at the end of the book the true conclusions are stated. The context of Eccles. 3:21 shows that the skeptical point of view is being stated and considered; verse 19 says that "a man hath no preeminence above a beast"; verse 20 says that "all go to one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again". Obviously this is a false philosophy which is being stated and tested in this passage. The truth is, of course, that man does have a preeminence above the

beast, for in Eccles. 12:7 the truth about man is stated: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Thus the skeptical viewpoint represented by 3:21—who can tell whether there is really any difference between man and beast, whether the spirit of man really goes upward and the spirit of the beast downward to the earth?—this skeptical viewpoint is certainly false. We are justified, therefore, in drawing the inference that a right understanding of this passage implies that the spirit of man at death goes upward, returning to God who gave it, while the spirit of the beast at death goes downward to the earth. In other words, man has an immortal soul or spirit, whereas the life of the beast is limited to this present world of time and space, and when that life comes to an end, the existence of that particular individual creature ceases with it.

The question of animal immortality is related to the question of whether animals died before Adam fell, and to Paul's teaching in Romans 8:19-22 that the whole creation shall be delivered, through Christ's redemption, from the bondage of corruption. However, we must remember that the Bible says nothing whatever directly on the subject of animal immortality, and any theory that might be based upon such considerations as those mentioned in the present paragraph would remain speculative and incapable of valid proof. In view of the silence of the Scripture on the subject, we should reverently refrain from making positive statements on the subject.

Those who have access to **The Banner** (Christian Reformed Church) will find an interesting discussion of the question "Did Animals Die in Paradise?" on page 69 of the issue of January 18, 1952.—J.G. Vos

Help Needed

Besides subscriptions and contributions already received, about \$955.00 will be needed to pay the cost of printing and mailing this issue and the remaining two issues of 1952. If you believe this magazine is worth while, please help bear this burden as the Lord has enabled you. See back for further information.

J. G. Vos, Publisher

Reviews of Religious Books

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

THE QUEST FOR SERENITY, by G. H. Morling. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 91. \$1.50.

The restless tension of our day and generation is felt in every fibre of our human life. The recognition of this has been evident in the ready acceptance by the reading public of many books which seek to analyse and prescribe for the troubled heart. "Peace of Mind", ably written by a Jewish Rabbi, probes deeply into the causes of mental unrest. A Catholic monsignor describes the human search as one for "Peace of Soul".

"The Quest for Serenity" is written by a Christian leader in Australia and is directed to the inherent restlessness of spirit of our day. Rev. H. G. Morling is Principal of Baptist Theological College of New South Wales. His book is not an abstract study of the subject but a result of his own quest.

At the very outset, Mr. Morling places his finger upon the crux of the human disturbance. He does not discount the valuable study of the mind, through psychology, nor of society, by the social scientists; but he goes to the heart of the problem by writing of the "calm of sins forgiven". For we must grapple with the spiritual and moral causes of our human disorder.

At times, the Calvinist tradition has been gravely suspicious of the emphasis of mysticism in seeking an inner peace of heart. Mr. Morling uses the language of the Quakers at times, and suggests some of the techniques that have produced serenity of spirit. He is careful to say: "We must balance the fact of the God Who is within by that of the God Who is without and above" (p. 67). With this warning he goes on the point out that much of the restlessness of Christian believers has been because God is considered as wholly transcendent.

This short book will be of real value to any troubled Christian who seeks to "cast his burdens on the Lord", and to find something more of the real meaning of that which J. H. Jowett called "Those gracious energizing words, . . . grace, rest, quietness, assurance" (p. 64).

Dr. Peter Marshall, while chaplain of the United States Senate, once prayed, "Our Father, we are beginning to understand at last that the

things that are wrong with our world are the sum total of all the things that are wrong with us as individuals. Thou hast made us after Thine image and our hearts can find no rest until they rest in Thee." This expresses the longing of the individual and the world today.

— S. Bruce Willson

WHAT IS BOUND TO HAPPEN, by William J. McKnight. Meador Publishing Co., Boston, Mass. 1951, pp. 319. \$3.00. (For sale by Mrs. Henry Pihl, P.O. Box 28, Lexington, Mass., at \$3.00 per copy postpaid to any address).

The subtitle of this volume is "The Disclosure Made to the Apostle John and Transmitted to the Church in The BOOK OF REVELATION, An Interpretation." The catching title gets before us at once the author's premise that the Book of Revelation is the unfolding of God's foreordained plan of Redemption, and therefore will surely come to pass.

That Dr. McKnight thought, lived, spoke and moved in the realm of this volume is clear to all who knew him and have read the book, for the style, phraseology, diction, even the inflections of voice with which he spoke are sensed on every page; and they all aid in making the book delightful reading. Dr. McKnight's vivid portrayal of what John saw in the visions is unique. Though the subtitle calls the work an interpretation it is as truly a devotional volume, for it presses upon the reader the purpose of God's great "Redemptive Enterprise", namely true holiness for God's glory.

The author's interpretation grows out of the exegesis of the Greek text. He makes the fullest possible use of the meanings of verbs in their various tenses, prepositions, particles, adverbs, and conjunctives as used in John's day. After fully developing the interpretation, he closes each section with a very clear summary. The following conclusion of the message to the Seven Churches is a fine example:

" . . . he (John) displays how vast the 'contract' is, and what it takes to make one's work on it acceptable and effective (Ephesus); how 'death' has been dispossessed of its sting, thus making martyrdom but a departure to be with Christ (Smyrna); how earth's principalities and powers are but as instruments under the complete control of Him who employs the 'sharp sword with two edges', and who says, 'Thus far, and no farther'

(Pergamos); how a full and faithful testimony is never unrewarded or lost sight of even where the surroundings are black as night and radically unpromising (Thyatira); how disastrous the sin of over confidence is in the realm of character and conduct (Sardis); how a few sincere followers of the meek and lowly Son of man may become 'pillars' in the temple of God, and the light of the world (Philadelphia); and how the Great Contractor's infinite compassion keeps Him standing at the threshold and pleading for entrance long after the door of the heart has been barred against Him (Laodicea)" (p. 54).

Certainly no one can read this volume without gaining a clearer grasp of the practical every-day message of The Revelation, nor without being lifted into the very heavenlies as he contemplates what God has in store for His children and how graciously He works for the realization of that objective. At the same time one is humbled at the realization that man, even regenerate man, falls so far short of God's ideal.

My limited knowledge of the Greek New Testament and experience in the field of exegesis and interpretation as compared to the lifetime work of Dr. McKnight ill behoove any attempt at a critical review of this work, which has been a very great blessing to me. I am, of course, in full agreement with Dr. McKnight's major premise: that the Revelation is not dealing primarily with the Second Coming of Christ and its immediate events, but with the life and work of the Church as it fulfils its "contract". "It places on the screen, as it were, the entire economy of grace" (p. 191). In a few significant strokes we see how the vast "Redemptive Enterprise" is to be carried on and to be brought to final triumph in the vindication of those who have been true and faithful witnesses and are therefore brought in to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb, and in the casting out of the unrepentant wicked into outer darkness on the Day of Judgment. The witness is encouraged by a revelation of the true facts of the nature of the conflict: only the Gospel is effective for the salvation of men; it is the sword with two edges in the hand of Christ as he leads His Church in the battle against the devil and his cohorts. The Church always faces persecution in one form or another from the devil, making beasts of wicked civil governments and false prophets of apostate churches, yet they cannot touch the true witnesses with the second death, the only thing the child of God is to fear.

There are some disappointing features, however. There is no bibliography. Though there are frequent quotations, there are no footnotes identifying titles and pages of reference. Often the source remains unidentified in any way.

The set-up is displeasing in its frequent use of quotation marks, bold face type and bold face capitals. These seem to the reporter to cheapen the

very fine literary work, and do not seem to justify their use by making the meaning clearer. In fact the statement is so clear that the mechanical means are superfluous.

Other interpretations of The Revelation are not so much as recognized. Therefore no attempt is made to refute conflicting views, and in some cases the justification of the author's interpretation seems unconvincing. Often the interpretation rests on "this would have been so clear to the Greek reader". We might agree if we could be sure the average member of the Seven Churches was as keen a grammarian as the author of this work. In a day when so many conflicting interpretations are being printed, I should be delighted to find here at least a comparison of the main varieties of interpretation by so capable an exegete and writer as this author.

Dr. McKnight seems to find no reason for the symbolisms beyond the desire to hide the message from Roman censors and inquisitors for the protection of his Christian readers to whom they would be perfectly clear. While this may be partly true, it might be equally true that the circulation of such an absurdly senseless document might arouse the suspicions of inquisitors that a coded message of revolt was being passed about and have defeated the suggested purpose. Such an explanation seems hardly to account entirely for the Holy Spirit's choice to express these eternal truths in such symbols; for He was concerned with giving the message to us in 1952 just as much as to those in the Province of Asia in 96 A. D.

This interpretation finds little if anything new in the Revelation. It is presented as a summary in organized form of the continuous battle being waged by the Lord Jesus Christ and His followers against the devil and his followers. The Beast appears in the Roman Empire, the French Revolution, Bismark, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, etc. And the False Prophet appears over and over again in false imitations of the true religion: the Roman Church, Modernism, etc. The Gospel is the weapon that brings results. Surely we expect nothing new in the way of redemption, justification, sanctification. But, what is the climax to be? What about the souls under the altar? Do they remain there forever? The element of time and any specific events at the end of the age are done away with completely. The 1000 years of chapter 20 are made symbolical of the perfect (cubical) holiness 'without which no man can see the Lord'. The obedience and disobedience of the saints bind or let loose Satan. Thus there is no definite period of time in which the power of Satan is limited after which it is to be let loose a little season before the Second Coming of Christ. The purport of the passage seems rather to be that God binds Satan to a limited activity during the greater part of the period of grace (a fixed time in the mind of God) so that he cannot stir up the nations to unite

in opposition to the Gospel, and then near the end, before Christ comes for judgment, Satan is to be let loose so that the nations will unite in their fight against the Gospel, will close the doors of vast areas of the earth to the preaching of the Gospel (compare Rev. 20:3 and 7,8). The Judgment Day scene of the closing verses of Rev. 20 and the opening scenes of the Kingdom of Glory in chapters 21 and 22 are not made use of to climax the great Redemptive Enterprise as John surely intended. This stops one magnificent step short of all that is bound to happen!

We are very grateful for this inspiring work, though unable to understand why the climax is not added to the great felicity of the Church as it struggles in the throes of battle. "What is Bound to Happen" is a book that should be in the reference library of every child of God to encourage and bless him in looking up unto Him who is ever coming again and again in the varied experiences of life, and who rides forth before them "conquering and to conquer", and who most surely will come again as He left on clouds of glory to judge the world and inaugurate the Kingdom of Glory.

—E. Clark Copeland

THE BIBLE STORY, by Marian M. Schoolland. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E. Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 119. Colored illustrations and maps. \$2.00.

We are favored with another book from the pen of the author of **MARIAN'S BIG BOOK OF BIBLE STORIES** and others. This one is written in the vocabulary of children 9 to 15 years of age. It is unique among books written for this age group; it is not simply another book of Bible stories; it is the story of the Bible written to help children grasp the development of revelation throughout Scripture. The Bible is more than a collection of stories, poems, and sermons; it is the unified message of God to men concerning His redeeming grace. The earlier children grasp this important truth, the earlier they will be able to understand the Scriptures.

This is the nearest thing to a Biblical Theology for children we have seen. Of course it is not a theology book, but theology is the warp over which it is woven. We think the sovereign work of God in history, the idea of the covenant relation between God and His people, might be better developed, though they do appear. We specially commend the proper stress on obedience under the Covenant of Grace and the sections on "The Joy of Worship", "The Great Commission", and "Jesus is Coming Again" as apt presentations for children of the truths and events concerned.

We are glad to recommend this book to parents and junior group leaders for the home and church libraries.

—E. Clark Copeland

WILL H. HOUGHTON, A WATCHMAN ON THE WALL, by Wilbur M. Smith. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 191. \$2.50.

This biographical memoir is a delightfully refreshing account of the inspiring life of a great servant of God in our times. The subtitle fitly describes his contribution to the whole world. This volume is the account of the realization of the great ideas of this man of God rather than a detail of the incidents of his life.

I suppose Dr. Houghton was the most unusual man of his accomplishments since D. L. Moody. Beginning his career as a clown of the vaudeville, he left the stage immediately he was moved by the Spirit to consecrate his life to God's service. With less than six months of college and no formal training for the ministry, he was soon to prove his exceptional ability in the Baptist pulpit, in tract and other publication work which brought him national recognition and the close friendship of such men as R. A. Torrey, A. T. Robertson, Curtis Lee Laws, A. Z. Conrad, G. W. Truett, Philip A. Benson, and others. His favorite preaching subject was "Back to the Bible". Having given new life and vigor to several congregations, he was the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, New York, when he was called to succeed Dr. James M. Gray as president of Moody Bible Institute in 1934. He labored sacrificially in this position until his death, June 14, 1947. Throughout his life he excelled as an expounder of Spirit-given ideas to the glory of God.

As a strong denominationalist (he did not join Moody Memorial Church, but remained a Baptist) he made a unique contribution in an inter-denominational way to the whole Church of Christ, and in so doing he adorned the true doctrine of the church. Almost all of his contemporaries in ministries of similar scope are working on "non-denominational" lines. This example from such a man as Dr. Houghton we believe to be a most valuable contribution to evangelical leadership today.

In order to give an accurate portrait of the life and work of Dr. Houghton, the author, Dr. Smith, uses materials from the personal files of the man, magazine articles about him, files of churches where he was pastor, and some portions were written by friends, colleagues, and parishoners who knew him in ways in which the author had no opportunity to know him. A four and one-half page bibliography lists the wide variety of source materials used.

We would urge every Christian home and church library to have a copy of this simply written, yet intensely interesting and challenging biography of this modern "watchman on the wall". (A fifth or sixth grader could read it with ease).

—E. Clark Copeland

STUDIES IN THEOLOGY, by Loraine Boettner. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 351. \$3.50.

This book is composed of five different studies which were written over a period of years. They are brought together in this volume and thus are made more readily available and presented in a systematic order. There is repetition and overlapping but these occasions are few and would have been impossible to avoid when articles were originally written for separate publications.

The reader is impressed by the manner in which the material is presented. Usually, theology is presented in a dry way. But the author presents these truths in a way that makes the book alive. Although he is dealing with deep subjects, it is easy to read.

The studies presented in this book are: The Inspiration of the Scriptures, Christian Supernaturalism, The Trinity, The Person of Christ, and The Atonement.

To present a consecutive and systematic approach, the author has brought together many Scripture passages and has called upon scholars of the past to buttress these truths. His system of research is not ordered to please man, but is based on the integrity of the Scriptures. "The indifference which the Church has manifested toward sound Scripture doctrine in recent days is probably the chief cause of the uncertainty and of the internal dissension with which she is faced. Ignorance concerning the nature of the doctrine of inspiration, or want of clear views concerning it, can only result in confusion. Millions of Christians today are like men whose feet are on quicksand and whose heads are in a fog. They do not know what they believe concerning the inspiration and authority of the Bible." Although this statement is from the chapter on "The Inspiration of the Scriptures", is not this true of all doctrines at the present day? The inspiration of the Scriptures and their authority are the two pillars upon which the author builds the "Studies in Theology".

Dr. Boettner has the ability to make these various truths come to life. With vigor the author defends historic Christianity. The orthodox position is presented in a most interesting and enlightening way.

The reader, if a minister, will find that many ideas for sermons will be suggested to his mind. The lay reader will also find himself saying, "What a wonderful Saviour we have!"

"Quite often we hear it said that it makes little difference what 'theory' of the atonement we hold. The fact of the matter is that it makes all the difference in the world. If when we contemplate the cross of Christ we see there the eternal Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us,

who assumed the curse and bought us with His own precious blood, we shall have the supernatural Christian faith which is set forth in the Scriptures."

What we think on these doctrines is of great importance. This volume ably presents the Calvinistic view of these doctrines.

—Charles S. Sterrett

ASPECTS OF LIBERALISM, by Louis Berkhof. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 163. \$2.50.

Here is just the book the layman has been wanting to acquaint him with the terminology and concepts of present day liberalism written in language he can readily understand. This book not only defines the leading theories of liberal theology, but shows where they go astray, and it is done in a way the layman can grasp and use for his own defence and for the fortification of his brethren. He is also introduced to the leading writers and their works through reference and quotation, so that if he wishes he may read further in special fields.

The volume is also a very worthy one for the minister's reference shelf. Being brief and concise, yet quite complete in its scope, it serves as a ready aid in clarifying various liberal positions and exposing their weaknesses. It is very quotable.

The six lectures which make up this book were delivered at various occasions for different groups with no thought of continuity. They do, however, form a unit in dealing with the vital subject of Modernism. The author has put them together in this volume in the hope that they "may contribute something to a better understanding of the current religious world, may make the unwary more conscious of the dangers that threaten their religious life, and may inspire many to 'contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints' " (Preface).

It is timely in that the subtle, false teachings of liberalism are everywhere encountered in the textbooks in our elementary schools, high schools and colleges, in the leading magazines and in the editorial sections of our newspapers. Our Christian young people meet them everywhere, and almost always disadvantageously: they have not been prepared to meet them intelligently. More work of this kind is necessary in preparing young people who have grown up in Christian homes under the influence of the church, and thus sheltered from these things to some degree, to recognize the pernicious falsehoods often cloaked in the terminology of evangelical Christianity.

In Chapter II the author compares in a discerning fashion the tenets of Modernism with Calvinism or true Biblical Christianity. In Chapter IV he goes a step further to show how Calvinism

applied to education (as it is in the case of the Christian day schools largely sponsored by Christian Reformed people) would free young people from the major disillusionments of life, fill them with gratitude to God for the heritage of the Word of God, and send them forth in obedience to Him to follow the banner of the Cross wherever it leads. Since this does not happen in the public schools, a greater responsibility falls on pastors, Sabbath School teachers and parents.

If you are looking for a book study for any age group, but especially for young people of senior high school or college age, this one certainly should be considered. It is interesting, informative, vital. It will help young people to analyse their own faith so that they can express themselves positively in it. It will help them to analyse what they hear in school, over the radio, from the pulpit, and what they read in the press.

—E. Clark Copeland

OUR BOYS IN BROWN AND BLUE, by Rolf L. Veenstra. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1951, pp. 67. Paper cover, 50 cents.

A GOOD SOLDIER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, by James Putt. Fulton Book Shop, Fulton, Ill. Pp. 64. Paper cover, 50 cents.

Each of these two booklets is written primarily for our boys in the armed service, presumably by a minister of the Christian Reformed Church. This is so stated concerning the second. Each was written primarily for Christians and so deals with Christian conduct. A principal difference between the two books is seen at a glance from the tables of contents. The former has eight chapter titles: "What about Swearing? Sex? Drinking? Gambling? Why the Bible? Chapel-Attendance? Christian Companions?" and "Faith for These Times." The latter has eleven chapter titles based on the various parts of the Christian's armor as found in the classic passage on this subject in Eph. 6:10-17, with a final chapter on "Dare to be a Daniel". The latter book deals with general principles, the former tends to be practical.

The author of the former booklet evidently speaks from a close knowledge of what goes on in the service; the discussion gets to the heart of the temptations of soldiering and meets them squarely and biblically. The latter booklet—except for the first chapter, which defends the right and duty of governments to wage war and of the Christian to participate in war — deals with the general principles of the Christian life. It is simply a good discussion of Eph. 6:10-17 which is equally applicable to all Christians, and not peculiar to the life of a soldier.

There is another respect, too, in my judgment, in which the former booklet is greatly superior

and that is in the treatment of the question of chapel attendance. Mr. Putt says, "All God's people should unite against the powers of darkness. . . . This does not mean that they must discard creeds and erase denominational lines, but that they should manifest a united front against the forces of evil so prevalent and powerful in our day and, particularly, in army life" (p. 14). Mr. Putt's emphasis is entirely on the side of manifesting a united front against the forces of evil. This is typical of the language of modern liberalism, though it is evident that Mr. Putt is not himself liberal in the main elements of his theology. Yet the blanket injunction to chapel attendance with no warning of the need for discrimination, is a serious fault. Also, the author urges all servicemen to observe the Lord's Supper at every opportunity — from the Covenanter point of view, an unbiblical practice.

If a warning against false doctrine is needed anywhere, it is needed in the military service. Mr. Veenstra, in the former booklet, quotes an oft-repeated criticism of military religious services: "Chapel services are just a waste of time. Our chaplain is more of a mixer than a minister. He just tells a Sunday-school story and a few jokes. Hardly anybody goes." Mr. Veenstra comments: "And the more serious a fellow is, the more likely he is to make (such remarks)." After noting that Christ made it a custom to attend the synagogue every Sabbath, though they were polluted with false teaching and hypocrisy, Mr. Veenstra urges chapel attendance. But he gives a solemn warning: "I am simply astounded", he says, "at the number of churchmembers who think that all churches believe pretty much the same thing; that all ministers are more or less 'sincere' (whatever that may mean, for the devil is mighty sincere too, in the wrong way); that most good people will go to heaven, and hell will be inhabited by people that are bad" (p. 50).

While I wish Mr. Veenstra had discussed the thorny problems of the observance of the Lord's Day and obedience to superiors, it is nonetheless an excellent booklet. Get a copy for your friend or loved one in the service.

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

SACRED MARRIAGE VOWS, by Bernard Brunsting. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1951. Pp. 55 including page with form for marriage certificate, paper cover. 75 cents.

This booklet is attractive but not ornate, as are some marriage booklets. The discussion portion includes three parts entitled "Husbands", "Wives", and "Together," respectively. The first discusses (1) Wilt thou love her? (2) Wilt thou keep her? (3) Wilt thou honor her? The second part, (4) Wilt thou obey him? and (5) Wilt thou love him? The third part discusses (6) The family altar and (7) Living together. There follow a

marriage certificate form and a guest and gift register.

The discussion parts of this book are excellent, brief — some may feel they are too brief in places for adequate treatment of the subject — simple and to the point. In my judgment the material might better be divided, with that part of the discussion which is of a more intimate nature provided in a second booklet, less exposed to casual view.

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

THE CASE AGAINST THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, by Chester E. Tulga. The Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 2561 N. Clark St., Chicago 14, Ill. 1951, pp. 60. Paper cover, 25 cents.

The desire to avoid rancor and schism and bitterness among Christians has kept many from even listening to criticism of the NCC. But when this commendable desire shields apostasy and unbelief in high places it becomes sin.

It is a tragic mistake to assume that the question of the NCC does not concern us. The NCC itself seeks the fellowship — or, failing that, the tolerance — of Bible believers. Thus, they can claim with more show of justice to be **the Voice of Protestantism**. Then they charge with schism those who criticize their "great, united, honorable council". Unless we would deny our Saviour, we must learn the facts about this great organization which claims to speak as representative of the Church of Jesus Christ. It threatens to exercise all the authority for Protestants which the Pope exercises for Roman Catholics.

Here are well authenticated and admitted facts. Get this book for a discussion class. It is simply and clearly written, but this subject is not easy. It requires and deserves our careful study.

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

THE KINGDOM OF GOD, by Louis Berkhof. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 177. \$2.50.

There is probably not a more discussed — not mooted — subject of Christian thought today than that of the Kingdom of God. This book has a brief chapter on the idea of the Kingdom of God in the New Testament and another on the idea of the Kingdom of God up to the Reformation. From that point on the author discusses three fairly distinct classifications of modern thought on the subject, the Social Conception of the Kingdom of God, the Eschatological View of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of God as a Millennial Hope.

Dr. Berkhof writes from the sound basis of the Reformed Faith, and his discussion is thorough, keenly analytical and Scriptural. It is indeed refreshing to find these three views, all enjoying

wide popular acceptance, objectively discussed. The two former are promoted chiefly by those holding a liberal view of the Bible, yet the writer points briefly the much needed emphases which these have encouraged, along with those of the millennialists. However, he shows vividly the shortcomings of all three in the light of Scripture.

The important distinction between "the social aspect of the Kingdom of God that is recognized by nearly all schools of thought" and that view which finds the primary substance of the Kingdom of God "in the social organization of humanity" (pp. 44,45), is consistently observed. He shows conclusively how this social conception of the Kingdom reduces the gospel to mere humanism.

The reaction of liberals against this view — of course, orthodox Bible scholars have always opposed it — came from those who saw how unscientific is the treatment of the life of Christ which makes of Him a mere human. While eschatologists recognize transcendental elements in the life of Christ, they do not admit that the Bible is God's personal and purposeful revelation to men. They are liberals still. The thought of J. Weiss, Albert Schweitzer and Reinhold Niebuhr, besides that of Barth and Brunner, is reviewed and shown to lead inevitably to quietism.

Dr. Berkhof recognizes that the Kingdom of God as a millennial hope "now enjoys great favor in many evangelical circles", but after a statement of the doctrine he points out with a ready use of Scripture the utter inadequacy of this view. Thus, whether dealing with views based on a sound faith in the Scriptures, or with views based on a critical and unbelieving attitude, Dr. Berkhof presents his case skilfully.

One idea found stated directly at least three times in the book is the following: "We should carefully guard against the very common misunderstanding, however, that through the gradual extension of the divine power now operating in the hearts of men, and through the ever-growing influence of the truth, the Kingdom of God will, without any miraculous intervention, pass into its final state of completion and perfection. The future form of the Kingdom will only be introduced by a cataclysmic change of such proportions that it can be called, 'the regeneration'. Matt. 19:28. The present universe will make place for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and where all the discords of the present will resolve themselves in perfect harmony."

It would have been a great help if the author had summed up his own idea of the Kingdom, rather than leaving the reader to glean and construct it from the discussion of those views found erroneous. Also, a work involving such research, and on such a timely and significant subject, it would seem, is worthy an index.

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES, by Oswald T. Allis. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. Pp. x, 355. \$3.75.

The book begins with a quotation from Edward Garrett in Kitto's Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature: "The Pentateuch is the thread of gold which runs — now latent, now prominent — throughout the whole body of the Scriptures. Retain it in its place, and the whole is united by a consistent purpose from end to end; take it away, and all the rest of revelation becomes a mass of inextricable confusion."

The practically universal view among both Jews and Christians was that Moses was its author. This view was based on the claims of the Pentateuch itself, the testimony of the rest of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, and the voice of tradition (p.5). Dr. R. D. Wilson stated it thus: "That the Pentateuch as it stands is historical and from the time of Moses: and that Moses was its real author, though it may have been revised and edited by later redactors, the additions being just as much inspired and true as the rest" (p. 306, note 15). The contrary view is stated briefly in the sub-title of the book before us: "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." The adoption of this modern theory results in the rejection of Biblical and extra-Biblical evidence, and an entirely different view of the "Mosaic age". It also casts a shadow over the authority and credibility of the Bible as a whole, because of the rejection of Biblical evidence (pp. 10,11).

Some may have been deceived into thinking that this theory has passed its zenith, and is on the way out. The passing of German leadership, perhaps due in part to the general feeling against Germany after World War I, and recent archaeological discoveries, may have helped to give a false security. But however much the hue and cry may have died down, and however much these discoveries may have required modification of the higher critical view of the Bible, the theory marches on. Dr. Allis tells us as to the present time: "The critics were never more sure that their reconstruction of the Old Testament is demonstrably correct. They regard the question of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as now no longer matter for serious debate. It is only as to the extent, date, authorship, and provenance of these 'post-Mosaic documents' that they are prepared to permit a certain amount of difference of opinion" (p. 205).

He quotes a book (1946) by Canon Richardson: "One thing is certain. There can be no going back on the positions gained by the discoveries of biblical research. There may be modifications here and there, but the broad general conclusions are beyond cavil." But, sad to say, "It is

true that although the knowledge is there, clear and accessible, there still remains the problem of distribution; large masses of the population unfortunately know nothing at all about the Bible, and how it was written, and the door is still open for all kinds of superstition and misuse." As an example of "superstition and misuse" this writer mentions unwillingness to accept the theory of the Deutero-Isaiah (a theory which is actually based on a pre-conceived theory as to prophecy). Therefore by these words he evidently means accepting the Bible as true, and guiding one's faith and conduct accordingly. The Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible (1948) is also cited as putting the conclusions of the critics in the introductory material and in the footnotes under the King James Version text. Thus under Genesis 49 is the note: "v.1 Jacob summons his sons in order that he may tell them about their future. . . . The allusions in the poem are to conditions in the periods of the Judges, Samuel and David. The date of the composition, therefore, is probably the 10th. century B. C."

As to archaeology its findings have been challenged or "interpreted" by the critics (pp. 224-5). Dr. M. G. Kyle, a believing and competent archaeologist of the United Presbyterian Church, in his **The Problem of the Pentateuch: A New Solution by Archaeological Methods** (1920) concluded: "These varied investigations and the striking comparison with the Documentary Theory which they provide tend to establish the trustworthiness of the Pentateuchal records at their face value." Of this and of Dr. Kyle's other volume, **Moses and the Monuments**, G. A. Barton, archaeologist, said: "These volumes were acute and learned, but revealed a mind incapable of appreciating the evidence on which the modern conception of the Pentateuch rests." A reading of Dr. Allis' book will enable the student to identify this so-called evidence as "planted" evidence, to reject it as basically unscholarly and false, and to turn back to the five books of Moses as God's Word—His Revelation to sinful man of the Plan of Redemption centered in Christ, WHO was latent in the Old Testament and patent in the New.

The relationship of this destructive criticism to Naturalistic Evolution is discussed in a separate chapter. Dr. Allis shows how the Higher Criticism has been dominated by three great principles of evolutionary theory: 1. That development is the explanation of all phenomena, 2. That this development results from forces latent in man without any supernatural assistance, and 3. That the comparative method, which uses a naturalistic yardstick, must determine the nature and rate of this development (p. 259). The critics hold that Israel's history, especially its religious history, must have followed in general the same pattern as that of other nations and races (p. vi). Their objective is to reconcile the redemptive supernaturalism of the Bible with naturalistic evolution, by restating the one in

terms of the other (p. 261). It is their hesitation to accept the supernatural or positive rejection of it, which is mainly responsible for their attitude toward the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (p. 272).

We need to keep on the alert. We must remember that even if leaders should abandon their destructive views, still younger men who have learned these views as students and know no better will continue to pass on this false teaching. The truth must be spread abroad. We are thankful, therefore, that scholars like Dr. Allis are available to use their time and ability to defend the Word of God against its enemies. Those who knew and loved Dr. Robert Dick Wilson as their Seminary professor are thankful that a part, at least, of his mantle has fallen on this one of his students. We think we recognize his methods, including that of stating honestly and clearly the arguments of the critics, usually in their own words, and of proceeding then to answer them point by point, accurately and completely.

The book was published first in 1943. Its principal aim is "to convince earnest Bible students, both ministers and laymen, that they need not leave the question to experts and specialists", but can investigate it for themselves. It is designed to enable the reader "to weigh the evidence, to examine the method, and to test the conclusions of the critics for himself." The second edition (1949) gave opportunity to revise and correct, and to expand moderately. An added chapter in Part III., **Negative and Positive Developments**, includes further examples of the disastrous results of the critics' work on the Pentateuch, and brief discussions of Form Criticism and of Barthianism. The main section of the book covers 288 pages. Appendices are entitled: **Driver's Analysis of the Pentateuch** (showing the divisions of verses between P, J, E, JE and D); **Antiquity of Man** (Gen. 5 and 11); **Proper Names and Their Meanings**. There are forty pages of notes.

The subject is a highly technical one. Dr. Allis is well qualified to discuss it. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and of Princeton Theological Seminary. He received his Master's degree from Princeton University, and his Doctor's from the University of Berlin. He taught in the Department of Semitic Philology at Princeton Seminary as instructor and then as Assistant Professor from 1910 to 1929, serving for the last twelve years as Faculty Editor of the Princeton Theological Review. For seven years he was Professor in the Old Testament Department of Westminster Theological Seminary. Since 1929 he has been an Associate Editor, now Editorial Correspondent, of the *Evangelical Quarterly*, Edinburgh. He is the Author of **Bible Numerics, Prophecy and the Church, Revision or New Translation, and The Unity of Isaiah**. He was my teacher in Syriac

and Arabic for two years and my friendly counsellor for a third year. We have kept up the friendly relationship for nearly forty years. It is a pleasure to testify to his thorough knowledge, and to commend his book most highly.

Dr. Allis outlines the higher critical theory, beginning with the documentary hypothesis of Astruc (1753), Eichhorn and Hupfeld, at first a two-document theory; and continuing with the Development or Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis, which rearranged the sources, J, E, D and P (pp. 17, 18). His discussion of the Documentary Hypothesis in Part I. covers the Variations in the Divine Names (there is an excellent discussion of Exodus 6:3); the Secondary Variations in Diction and Style; the Parallel or Duplicate Accounts (Doublets); and the Continuity of the Various Sources. Under Secondary Variations in Diction and Style two passages classified by their use of the name for God are studied — Gen. 1:1-2:4a (Elohim, P) and 2:4b-4:26 (Jehovah, J). Dr. Allis first analyzes carefully the vocabularies of the two sections, listing other occurrences of the words. This analysis becomes more complicated, the farther it is carried. Words which do not occur here in the first section (P) are found in later parts of P; and words which do not occur in the second section (J) are found later in J. Words which occur in one section and not in the other are found in later parts of the other document. From his analysis he states and defends three conclusions (p. 61): that the diction of the Pentateuch is good and effective; that the critical analysis rests on a fundamentally false basis — for variation in diction and style may well indicate a good writer rather than diversity of authorship; and that the critics attempt the impossible. He illustrates from an analysis on the same basis of other literature and of various Bible translations.

The whole divisive plan of the critics, hewing and splitting into documents, P, J, E, JE, and D, is complex and confused. It would not be applied to any other document or to any other than a Biblical writer. It is characteristic of their method that to prove a point they arrange the documents according to their will — and supposed wisdom. When they wish to date documents by the use of the Divine names, they do not hesitate to mutilate even a connected narrative (e.g., Gen. 29:15-30:24). Short passages, even single verses or parts of verses, have at times to be cut apart; or cut out of the context in which they stand, because of the Divine names which occur in them (p. 25). In the chapter on Priestly Religion in the Post-Exilic Period Dr. Allis says that to support their view that the three codes of the Pentateuch reflect three distinct periods in the history of Israel, the critics say that the sharp distinction between priests and Levites in the Priest Code does not appear in the pre-exilic period and that the office of the High Priest is post-exilic; and also that the Priest Code as a

whole fits the post-exilic period, but is out of harmony with the two which preceded it (p. 185). To prove that the JE legislation does not restrict priesthood to the Levites and that this restriction was unknown before the time of Josiah, a verse in Joshua (3:3) which refers to "the priests the Levites" is taken from a passage (3-8) assigned in the main to JE, and is given to D (p. 186 and note 71). As to the high priest, thirteen references to Aaron in J passages in Exodus 4-12 and 24 are attributed to the redactor, and then the statement is boldly made: "Aaron is missing from J" (p. 195 and note 77). This is the method of altering the evidence to suit the theory, and then considering the theory proved by the evidence (p. 214).

Other chapters discuss the Variation in Viewpoint and Subject Matter, the Explanation of the Alleged Doublets, and The Continuity and Extent of the Documents. The closing chapter of Part I. gives conclusions.

The critics try to establish the continuity of the separate documents which have been carved out. One method is to claim accounts of different events as different accounts of the same event (as Abraham's denial of Sarah), and to divide up one account of one event into several accounts (e.g., the Flood, pp. 83, 85). Dr. Allis states: "It is the unity and harmony of the Biblical narratives as they appear in the Scriptures which is the best refutation of the theory that these self-consistent narratives have resulted from the combining of several more or less diverse and contradictory sources." "Many of the repetitions which are adduced as proof of duplicate accounts can be explained as due simply to the frequent use of compound sentences, to the desire to secure emphasis by elaboration and amplification, and to the fondness for a balanced style which finds its fullest development in poetry The contradictions which are alleged to prove the theory of composite authorship would largely disappear if the critics would follow the harmonistic method of interpreting Scripture. That method proceeds upon the natural and proper assumption that the Pentateuch was intended to give a true and self-consistent account of the matters of which it treats, and that the student of Scripture should therefore interpret Scripture in the light of Scripture, instead of putting Scripture against Scripture, chapter against chapter, verse against verse, phrase against phrase." He suggests the advice of Coleridge: "When we meet an apparent error in a good author, we are to presume ourselves ignorant of his understanding, until we are certain that we understand his ignorance" (pp. 121, 125).

Part II. deals with The Development or Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis. This "shifted the emphasis to questions of historical development, to the study of the origin of the customs, institutions, and laws, described in these documents, for the purpose of determining their relative date" (p.

130). Gray's statement of the Biblical argument for the acceptance of their theory is quoted. The three codes are compared with the actual course of history, so far as that is known. Laws are dated according to the time when they seem to have been followed. But, as Dr. Allis points out, the history is not known at all completely, and the Bible itself often states that Israel's history was one of apostasy from the laws given through Moses (p. 134).

Three chapters deal with The Religion of Israel in the Pre-Prophetic Period, Prophetic Religion and the Reform of Josiah, and Priestly Religion in the Post-Exilic Period. One question is, When did the laws of JE become operative in Israel? The critics say that the religion of Israel could not have reached the level of spiritual monotheism until at least as late as the time of Jehoshaphat or considerably later (p. 143). Dr. Allis quotes a statement by them that "we do not know for certain whom or what Israel worshipped in pre-Mosaic times" as a striking illustration of the agnostic attitude toward Scripture which results from this method of criticism (p. 147). The critics read into the Bible account what they think should be there. As Dr. Allis suggests, the retaining of pagan names does not prove the Israelites to be pagan any more than our continued use of the word "Wednesday" proves us to be now worshippers of Woden (p. 151, note 24). But the critics read into the Bible animism, idolatry, religious prostitution, infant sacrifice. They make Jehovah of Israel to be more powerful, perhaps, than Chemosh of Moab, but not essentially different from him (p. 160, note 41).

They make the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries to be not the teachers of the ethical monotheism known long before in the law of Moses, but the virtual discoverers of this heretofore unknown doctrine (p. 161). A critic is quoted: "They destroyed Yahweh, and created God" (p. 162 and note 44). Dr. Allis affirms that the prophets did give a high conception of God, but they were proclaiming the God of their fathers. They were students of what is called today "comparative religion", and knew the gods of the nations around them. In contrast to these, they proclaimed the Incomparable One, who was the God of the Abrahamic covenant (p. 166). The prophets knew the law of sacrifice and the law of the central sanctuary. They knew both to be ancient; and gave to both their full endorsement (pp. 174-184).

Part III. deals with The Present State of the Problem. Chapter I. is entitled "Negative and Positive Developments". Dr. Allis reminds us that "the basic principle of the higher criticism. . . is an utterly lawless one, and cannot be kept within any fixed or definite bounds." So the progressive disintegration of documents has continued, at times approaching an undermining of some foundations of the supposedly secure critical structure (p. 207). The latter's dating of Deuteronomy in

Josiah's time has even been challenged in favor of a post-exilic date about 500 B. C.

Form Criticism is a comparatively recent term for the application of a principle and method long employed by the critics. "It is the attempt to trace back into the pre-literary period the forms and patterns which are found embedded in the literature that has been preserved for us in the Old Testament" (p. 215). Dr. Allis discusses the application of it to the Decalogue and Book of the Covenant in the Pentateuch. He finds a fatal weakness in its building upon the destructive conclusions of the source criticism (pp. 218-225, note 19).

Barthianism has the same weakness. It travels a different road, but reaches the same destination, to deny the trustworthiness of the Bible as a record of historical facts and events. It is a more serious enemy of Historical Christianity than is Higher Criticism in one respect, that it teaches the facts of history can be at one and the same time historically untrue and unhistorically true (pp. 228, 232).

Chapter II., The Pentateuch and Archaeology, reviews briefly some recent findings, including the Isaiah scroll. While critics have been striking up to a thousand years off the supposed age of the Pentateuch, archaeology has been pushing history back much more than a thousand years. Babylon and Mesopotamia are much older than the earliest date assigned to Abraham; Egypt and writing were ancient in Moses' time. New light has been thrown on the Hebrew language by discoveries of letters, vessels, plaques, and, especially, by the Ras Shamra alphabetic tablets (1929). "Aramaisms" in Bible passages may indicate an early date rather than a late date (pp. 234, 242-3). So in general the finds of archaeology have supported confidence in the reliability of the Scripture record. Burrows says that "more than one archaeologist has found his respect for the Bible increased by the experience of excavation in Palestine" (note 49).

Chapter III. deals with The Pentateuch and Naturalistic Evolution, and Chapter IV. with The Fundamental and Abiding Issue in the Problem of the Pentateuch. These have already been cited. It is distressing that, though archaeologists and critics must now admit that Moses could have been able to read and write and to record the events of his time exactly as the Bible says he did, in many cases they cling to their belief in evolution, and are unwilling to concede that he could have written or did write the Pentateuch, and that it is trustworthy history. They stumble at the supernatural (pp. 272, 279).

In the fifth and last chapter of the book Dr. Allis presses the question, What think ye of Christ? If the supernatural appears in the Pentateuch, it appears with equal plainness in the

Gospels; supremely in Jesus Christ Himself. The only consistent and logical course is to accept it in both places, or to reject it in both. Jesus said: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

"If our attitude toward the problem of the Pentateuch will determine our attitude toward Jesus Christ, then the question whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch cannot be an academic question to any one for whom the words of Jesus, words which are 'spirit and life', are precious. This is the reason that, despite the most confident denials of a rationalistically controlled literary and historical criticism, the majority of Christians throughout the world continue and will continue to believe and maintain that the Pentateuch is not a late, anonymous, untrustworthy composite, but is correctly described as 'The Five Books of Moses', the man of God."

—J. B. Willson

DIGGING UP THE PAST, by Sir Leonard Woolley. Pp. 122, paper cover, 35 cents plus 5 cents postage (Catalogue No. A4).

UR OF THE CHALDEES, by Sir Leonard Woolley. Pp. 161, paper cover, 35 cents plus 5 cents postage (Catalogue No. A27).

These two books can be obtained from Penguin Books, Inc., 3300 Clipper Mill Road, Baltimore 11, Maryland (in Canada from Riverside Books Ltd., 47 Green Street, Saint Lambert, Montreal, P. Q.; in Great Britain from Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England). While not written from the Biblical point of view and therefore containing some ideas and theories which the Bible-believing Christian must reject as unsound and harmful, these two little books contain a great deal of fascinatingly interesting factual information about archaeological discoveries. **Digging up the Past** is "An introduction to archaeology showing how excavation has grown from a treasure hunt to a science". **Ur of the Chaldees** tells how "The city Abraham left behind him — a city with good claims to being the oldest in the world — was rediscovered in 1854 by the then British Consul at Basra", and how extensive excavations were carried on after the First World War. "The story of their discoveries made during years of work and covering the successive cities which were built on the site from days far beyond the flood until Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon is here told, and the daily life of the peoples who lived through more than four millennia beside the Euphrates recreated in word and picture". Both books are illustrated by very interesting drawings and photographs.

We take exception to some statements such as the following: "It has long been agreed that the story of the Flood as told in Genesis is based on the Sumerian legend. . . ." (**Ur of the Chaldees**, p. 17).

Also Woolley's theory that the Flood was merely local and that even in its locality some communities survived the Deluge, cannot be accepted by Bible-believing Christians. In reading books of this type the Christian should be on guard against accepting all the theories or conclusions of the author as certainly valid. But the informed Christian certainly should know something about the discoveries of modern archaeology, as distinguished from doubtful theories or interpretations. Both of these books are intensely interesting; **Ur of the Chaldees** in particular presents a story of absorbing interest, giving as it does the historical background of the patriarch Abraham. To be able to obtain these two books for a total of 80 cents, postpaid, is a remarkable opportunity.

—J. G. Vos

MILLENNIAL OR PERENNIAL? by John Wilmot. Published by the author, Rev. John Wilmot, Highgate Road Chapel, London, N. W. 5, England, 1951, pp. 26, paper cover. One shilling.

This booklet is a fresh study of the problem of the Millennium. The author starts out by stating that "All Bible believing Christians are Millennialists" for all accept the divine truth and authority of the passage (Rev. 20) which speaks of a thousand year reign of the saints with Christ. The real question is not whether the Bible teaches a Millennium, but what and when it will be. First II Peter is examined as to whether it makes provision in its third chapter for a Millennium "on this earth which is under the divine curse and consequently, as Peter avers, is 'reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.'" By careful exegesis it is shown that "the day of the Lord" cannot be synonymous with the Millennium, and that "Peter's outline of events in the Day of the Lord allows for no such millennium" — that is, no Millennium of the kind envisaged by Premillennial writers. The question is raised, "Are the glories of the Messianic prophecies to be cabined within a thousand years, or are they like their author 'whose years shall not fail?' Are they millennial or perennial? Peter records the expectation thus: 'we look for new heavens and a new earth,' and John reflects: 'I saw new heavens and a new earth'" (p. 12). In the judgment of this reviewer the booklet presents a series of very telling arguments for the "perennial" view of the Kingdom of God — the view that the final, absolute fulfilment of the Kingdom prophecies is to be, not temporal, but eternal.

—J. G. Vos

THE CASE FOR THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, by Chester E. Tulga. Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 2561 North Clark Street, Chicago 14, Ill. 1951, pp. 64, paper cover. 25 cents.

In this booklet Dr. Tulga inquires, first, as to why people do not believe in the Second Com-

ing of Christ. He lists a number of reasons. Some have adopted a method of Biblical interpretation which makes it possible both to affirm and deny the Second Coming. The author mentions E. Stanley Jones, saying, "Jones, like other liberals, has devised a method of interpretation whereby the return of the Lord vanishes from the New Testament and the kingdom of God is transformed into a socialistic dream" (p. 11). Those who have embraced Neo-orthodoxy make the Second Coming a "myth" or transcendent truth but not an event that will ever take place. Others do not believe Christ; or they have accepted a philosophy which excludes the supernatural. Many liberals have adopted a philosophy of social change which conceives of the Second Coming as unnecessary for the complete realization of the Kingdom of God.

Next, the author shows how clearly and prominently the Second Coming of Christ is set forth in the Gospels and in the teaching of the Apostles. As to the time of the Coming, Dr. Tulga says that liberals and the Neo-orthodox teach that Jesus believed in His immediate return and that Paul transmitted this error to the early church. He quotes Reinhold Niebuhr who flatly charges Jesus with having been mistaken on this matter. Dr. Tulga rightly insists that Christ's teaching about the time of His Coming is paradoxical; it involves a paradox between immediacy and remoteness, but "Nowhere is the actual time of the Lord's return made known" (p. 33). The author then sets forth what should be the Christian's attitude toward the Second Coming, in view of this paradoxical character of the time.

In a chapter entitled **The Return of the Lord, the Hope of the World**, the author enumerates the false panaceas in which mankind has trusted, and shows how one and all of them have failed — non-Christian philosophy, evolution, science, education, politics, war. At this point the present writer thinks Dr. Tulga should have pointed out that the preaching of the true Gospel has not failed, and that while it is true that Christ's Second Coming is pre-eminently the object of the Christian's utmost hope — "that blessed hope" — still until Christ does come again, the only hope of the world lies in the uncompromising proclamation of the Gospel.

A chapter on "**The Signs of the Times: Our Civilization**" gives an excellent appraisal of our God-denying age. All authority outside of and above man has been repudiated; the acceptance of the relative nature of truth and morality is causing modern civilization to reap a dreadful harvest. There is a fearful decay of personal integrity. Civilization faces destruction at the hand of its former idol, science. Science produced the secularism which made God irrelevant to the average man. No relief can be expected from the organized religion of our day, sunk as it is in unbelief and apostasy in the great religious organizations.

After showing that the hope of the return of the Lord is and should be a powerful incentive to faithfulness and holy living on the part of Christians, the author summarizes his conclusions on the last two pages of the book. There are five of these, each of which sets forth some problem or situation for which the Second Coming of Christ is "the only hope". Here again we feel that the author should have made it clear that while only the return of Christ can be the **absolute and ultimate** object of Christian hope, the faithful proclamation of the true Gospel is "the only hope" until He comes. Apparently Dr. Tulga holds a premillennial view which implies that the Second Coming of Christ will not be the end of human history but will introduce a kingdom age which will still be within the confines of history. This idea the present writer is unable to share. He believes that the Second Coming of Christ will mark the end of human history and that it will mean the end of the usefulness of clocks and calendars such as exist now — it will be the boundary line between "this world" and "the world to come". The reviewer believes therefore, that while the preaching of the Gospel is the only hope **within history**, the Second Coming of Christ is the ultimate, absolute object of hope, and will involve the end of history.

—J. G. Vos

DIVINE HEALING: IS IT SCRIPTURAL? by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1952, pp. 26, paper cover. 25 cents plus 10% postage.

This booklet gives a sound criticism of the peculiar error that "Divine healing is in the Atonement", that is, that Christ bore our sicknesses as He bore our sins. The author ably and clearly shows the unsoundness of this popular theory. Turning to the positive side of the subject of health and healing, he shows that the Bible does say much on this subject, and the Christian should grasp it. "Now surely, other things being equal, the Christian ought to enjoy better health than the non-Christian", because if his life is controlled by God's will he will be spared some diseases at least. Faithful Sabbath rest will also prove beneficial. A real trust in God will exclude worldly anxiety and will promote a healthy mind and body.

The author points out that much illness is the result of our own carelessness and folly. Sickness may, however, be a divine chastisement, and the Christian should seek the moral cause for his suffering. In such cases true repentance and prayer for healing are in order. God has the power to heal our bodies when it is His will to do so. But the sovereignty of God must always be recognized and honored.

The last few pages of the booklet form an appendix on James 5:14-16. Mr. Pink states that he

takes up this passage by request of friends, and with diffidence, because of uncertainty as to its interpretation and application. This modesty is highly commendable, especially in view of the dogmatic assertions of some writers on this passage. Mr. Pink gives a survey of the leading views of the passage and his own reaction to them. The error of the Church of Rome, which finds in this passage the so-called sacrament of Extreme Unction, is pointed out. The view of the Reformers and Puritans is cited, namely that what is spoken of was a temporary miraculous gift which existed during the time of the apostles. Next the Irvingite and Pentecostal view that the supernatural gifts of the early Church are still available is examined and rejected. Then the claim of some Dispensationalists that the passage does not belong to this Gospel age is commented on. The author is inclined to agree with Thomas Goodwin that the Reformers and Puritans went too far in concluding that James 5:14-16 was relevant for the apostolic age alone. He believes that the general principle of the passage is relevant "for all generations — seasons of great spiritual declension and deadness alone excepted" (p. 24). The saint, when seriously ill, or suffering great pain, but not for every trifling affliction, has the privilege of sending for the pastors or ministers of his local church, and they are to pray over him, commending him to the mercy of God and asking for his recovery if that be the will of God. Whether the anointing with oil is to be used is a matter on which the author is "not prepared to dogmatize", though he feels it may properly be used if the sick person desires it. This is followed by a number of very sound, helpful, edifying considerations. An interesting question is raised on page 26, "Are not ministers too free in visiting the sick and praying over them, instead of waiting until they are sent for (v.14)?"

—J. G. Vos

LOST AND FOUND, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. No date. Pp. 12, paper cover. 7 cents; 75 cents per dozen, plus 10% postage.

An excellent, Scripturally sound booklet with a Gospel message. It is composed of two parts, entitled respectively "Lost" and "Found". The author shows what it means, according to the Bible, to be lost, and what it means to be found. He utters an earnest Gospel appeal. This is not one of those superficial little tracts presenting the diluted theology of Arminianism which are so often seen today. The doctrine is sound and there is in it no attempt to flatter the natural man.

—J. G. Vos

PREACHING: FALSE AND TRUE, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. No date. Pp. 12, paper cover. 7 cents; 75 cents per dozen, plus 10% postage.

Here Mr. Pink contrasts false preaching with true. False preaching is called "licentious". The author has in mind especially that type of preaching which cannot see that in the Divine revelation Law and Gospel are mutually complementary, and which therefore runs either into legalism or into antinomianism. "To preserve the balance of Truth so that the requirements of righteousness and the riches of grace are equally poised: to avoid Arminianism on the one side and Antinomianism on the other is an undertaking far beyond the capacity of any 'novice' (1 Tim. 3:6). It requires a 'workman' and not a lazy man, a student and not a sloven, one who studies to 'show himself approved unto God' (2 Tim. 2:15) and not one who seeks the applause and the shekels of men" (pp. 3,4). There are many untaught, unregenerate men in modern pulpits. "Some of the men will preach legality under the pretense of furthering morality and honoring the Divine Law. They will preach up good works, but lay no foundation on which they may be built" (p.5). "Others preach Licentiousness under the guise of magnifying the grace of God. They omit the Divine call to repentance, say nothing about the necessity of forsaking our sins if we are to obtain mercy (Prov. 28:13), lay no stress upon regeneration as a being made 'a new creature in Christ' (2 Cor. 5:17), but declare that the sinner has simply to accept Christ as his personal Saviour — though his heart be still unhumbled, without contrition and thoroughly in love with this world — and eternal life is now his" (p. 5). Mr. Pink says truly that "The result of this preaching is well calculated to bolster up the deluded", who "are soothed in their sins and comforted with a false peace until they awake in Hell" (p. 5). These are sound and wholesome words. It is reported that in a certain American city following a city-wide "evangelistic" campaign, of the hundreds who had signed cards signifying that they "accepted Christ", after the campaign was over, less than 5% could be persuaded to attend regularly upon the ordinances of divine worship. This superficial evangelism which omits repentance is sometimes justly called "Decisionism" and it is a great evil today. It is worse than no evangelism at all for it gives the deluded "converts" a false peace and a false sense of assurance and security, which makes it all but impossible to reach them with the true Gospel.

In the second part of the booklet Mr. Pink discusses "Evangelical Preaching". He rightly insists that the Moral Law is the Christian's rule of conduct, and defends those who so preach from the charge of "Legalism". Evangelical preaching presents the true Gospel in terms of the eternal Covenant of Grace, which at every point maintains and secures the Divine righteousness.

This little booklet has more sober truth in it than many much longer discussions of "evangelism". It will prove an excellent antidote to the

superficial and erroneous literature on this subject which abounds today.

—J. G. Vos

VALUE OF THE HOLY BIBLE, by Michael J. Batelja. Published by the author, M. J. Batelja, P.O. Box 135, Portland 7, Ore. 1951, pp. 26, paper cover. No price stated (obtainable on request to the author).

This booklet is a moving tribute to the grace of God in saving a Yugoslavian immigrant from a life of ignorance, superstition, dissipation and despair. Originally knowing only the idolatry, priestcraft and works-righteousness of Romanism, he was finally saved by divine grace through the reading of the Bible. The author gives a clear testimony to the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. Those who think that Roman Catholicism is not much different from evangelical Protestantism will get a different idea from this story.

—J. G. Vos

THE NEW MODERNISM (NEO-ORTHO-DOXY) AND THE BIBLE, by Francis A. Schaefer. Published in Switzerland by the author. Available from The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, 151 Maplewood Ave., Philadelphia 44, Pa. 1950. Pp. 11, paper cover. 10 cents; \$1.00 per dozen.

This is the printed form of an address delivered at the Second Plenary Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches, Geneva, Switzerland, August, 1950. The author gives an appraisal of Neo-orthodoxy in the light of the Bible. He first points out that the term "Barthianism" is inadequate, because "the new Modernism" includes not only the theology of Karl Barth, but also that of others who differ from him in some matters, and also the "Lund Theology" (propagated by certain professors of the University of Lund, Sweden). He next points out that the Transcendental Theology or "the New Modernism" was born to fill the need for a new authority in view of the breakdown of the old Modernism (Liberalism or Rationalism) at the time of the First World War. "By this New Modernism they hoped to retain the Higher Critical theories and yet have an authority strong enough to keep them from their logically necessary descent to agnosticism" (p. 3).

Proceeding, the author shows that Neo-orthodoxy is a denial of the absoluteness of truth. He contrasts Neo-orthodoxy with the old Modernism of the Fosdick type, pointing out that the latter, while a heresy from the Christian standpoint, had a certain intellectual respectability. The old Modernists "had an intellectual honesty in the basic sense that they would say, 'We are right and you are wrong'" (p. 3). Neo-orthodoxy is different. It teaches that "a thing can be historically false and yet religiously true" (p. 4). The affinities of this position are with Pragmatism and with the German philosopher Hegel, not with the Bible.

Tracing the influence of Pragmatism or Relativism, the author declares that this type of thinking dominates our day. "Our contemporaries have given up Bible-believing Christianity which provided the basis for the civilization we have known, and so they are adrift upon a black sea in a black night" (p. 5). The author refers to a statement of Reinhold Niebuhr to the effect that we must never claim to possess the truth, but we may be permitted to say that the truth possesses us. "In the New Modernism statements are made that seem to say something when actually they say nothing. In this way they shift from position to position, and not only are true believers fooled, but they can say constantly to unbelieving modern thought as it changes, either that the changes of science do not matter in the religious realm, or that is what was meant all the time" (p. 6).

The various characteristics of Neo-orthodoxy are pointed out; it is basically dishonest, claiming to be what it certainly is not; it is often self-contradictory; it is irrational; it is non-historical. In many doctrines it is indefinite, but in one particular matter it is definite, namely, in its insistence that the old view of the Bible cannot be held today. It makes a very wrong and harmful distinction between "the Scriptures" and "the Word of God", which results in the claim that man can know and obey "the Word of God" while denying that any part of the Bible is in itself truly the Word of God.

Mr. Schaeffer makes it clear that Neo-orthodoxy is farther removed from true Christianity than Romanism and the Old Modernism are. Neo-orthodoxy is not a system of truth with a few superficial errors or defects. It is fundamentally false and to be repudiated as a whole.

In his closing paragraph Mr. Schaeffer says: "If we are to be used to reach the men who are on this philosophical and theological black sea, we must demonstrate to them the logic of heaven. By that I mean a combination of consistent thinking and consistent living, both conformed to the revelation given by God in the Scriptures. Consistent thinking means having our whole World-view conformed to the Scripture; and consistent living is not only the things we do **not** do, as important as that is, but also the exhibiting of the fact, that we do not just desire to prove men wrong, but that our lives are unreservedly given to the purpose of leading them to our Saviour" (p. 11).

Many are deceived by the seeming piety and orthodox-sounding language of the proponents of Neo-orthodoxy. Every exposure of the real character of this subtle twentieth century counterfeit of Christianity should be welcome. Mr. Schaeffer's booklet is an excellent discussion in brief compass, and should help many to see that Neo-

orthodoxy is not what it seems on the surface to be.

—J. G. Vos

THE INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE OF THE GOSPEL, by C. Van Til. The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W. C. 1, England. 1950. Pp. 40, paper cover. 2 shillings. Available from Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1444 North Astor, Chicago 10, Ill., at 75 cents; from Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 30 St. Mary Street, Toronto 5, Ont., Canada, at 50 cents.

In this booklet Dr. Van Til, who is Professor of Apologetics in Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, presents the Tyndale Biblical Theology Lecture for 1950, delivered at Tyndale House, Cambridge, England. Ministers, theological students, college and university students, and others who have some acquaintance with the problems and terminology of philosophy will find this lecture well worth a very careful reading and re-reading. Those entirely unacquainted with the logical and philosophical studies will probably find it difficult to understand. The lecture was delivered to scholars and the booklet is intended for such.

Dr. Van Til pleads for truly Christian thinking in every field and realm of life. Speaking of the apostle Paul at Corinth, he says that "he did not ask for the privilege of erecting an altar to the living God, Creator of heaven and earth, next to the altars to gods that have been born of human minds. He pleaded for, and in the name of his Lord required of men, a complete reversal of their point of view in every dimension of life. The entire house of their interpretation of life had to be broken down. Many of the building blocks that they had gathered could no doubt be used, but only if the totally new architectural plan that Paul proposed were followed" (p. 4). "Shall we as Christians, facing the wisdom of the world in modern form, dare to do what Paul tells those who are his work in the Lord to do? Shall we dare to be steadfast and unmovable, never doubting the objective truth of the message that we bring, never doubting that the wisdom of the world has again been made foolishness with God? Shall we have full confidence that our labour will not be in vain in the Lord?" (p. 7).

Romanism is taken up and shown to be fatally compromised by adoption of the philosophy of Aristotle. "It is, therefore, the Protestant rather than the Romanist who may be expected to challenge the wisdom of the world" (p. 10). "A true Protestantism... will differentiate its thought from that of the wise men of this world... The Protestant builds his system squarely upon the Creator-creature distinction and opposes those who build on the idea of 'being in general' and 'thought in general'."

Next "inconsistent Protestantism" (that is, Arminianism) is taken up. "Since all men remain

sinful, no Protestant is, of course, fully consistent" (p. 12), but there is a relative consistency on the part of those who have cleansed themselves of the old leaven of Romanism. "And this 'old leaven' of Romanism consists in combining Christian teaching based on Scripture as the final and infallible revelation of God to sinful man with the teaching of 'human experience' as interpreted independently of Scripture" (p. 12). The Arminian Protestant, while "largely controlled by the Protestant principle of submission to Scripture", yet "has retained in his thinking some measure of the Romanist idea of the ultimacy of human experience. And it is this legacy of Romanism which, in the last analysis, is really a legacy of non-Christian thought, that makes it quite impossible for the Arminian to fulfill the requirement of Paul with respect to challenging the wisdom of this world." For Arminianism can never do full justice to the Protestant view of Scripture, since Arminianism holds that man can do what is wholly beyond the control of God. According to the Arminian, "God cannot do this or cannot do that because the nature of reality does not allow it" (p. 15).

"It is therefore mandatory that Reformed theologians urge their fellow Protestants everywhere to call upon modern man to interpret his life in terms of the book of God and therefore in terms of the God of the book. Only thus can there be a real meeting of minds, a real point of contact with those who must be won for the gospel, and a real challenge of the wisdom of the world in its modern form" (p. 21).

Next Dr. Van Til takes up "The Modern Mind", and he starts by saying that "The modern mind will never give permission to believe in the Book." Modern man is really suppressing in his mind the truth that he is a creature of God and can only enjoy freedom in obedience to God. When confronted with the Gospel of Paul, modern man's response "will be based upon the wholly unexamined assumption of his own ultimacy, autonomy, or 'freedom'. On the basis of this uncritical assumption the modern man will find the gospel of Paul to be (a) out of accord with fact and (b) out of accord with the requirements of logic" (p. 22).

"Paul's gospel tells the modern man that he is a creature of God. Modern man assumes that he is not a creature of God. Thus he virtually asserts that the idea of creaturehood is out of accord with the fact of freedom" (p.22).

The author next takes up the modern view of history, with its anti-metaphysical character and its personalist and impersonalist elements. The views of several individual thinkers are stated and analyzed. Finally the author presents an outline of "The Modern Gospel"—the Christian Gospel as visualized by the modern mind: (1) "Mankind, it is said, has a common origin from some form of animal ancestry. Creation

ex nihilo is not to be accepted. . . ". (2) "In the second place, the modern mind suggests that all mankind has evil in it by virtue of its finitude. There was no original perfection in an historical paradise. . . ". (3) "In the third place, says the modern mind, all mankind is being saved through Christ. To be saved does not mean to be free from the wrath of God. Man is not guilty in the orthodox sense of the term. . . " (pp. 35-6).

"Instead of accepting the favours of modern man, as Romanism and Arminianism do, we should challenge the wisdom of this world. It must be shown to be utterly destructive of predication in any field. It has frequently been shown to be such. . . Either modern man will have to admit that he knows everything or else he will have to admit that he knows nothing. The only alternative to this is that he claims both absurdities at the same time" (p.40).

The booklet closes with this earnest counsel: "Let us again remind ourselves that what has been said does not mean that Christians are in themselves wiser than are other men. What they have they have by grace. They must be 'all things to all men'. But it is not kindness to tell patients that need strong medicine that nothing serious is wrong with them. Christians are bound to tell men the truth about themselves; that is the only way of bringing them to recognize the mercy, the compassion, of Christ. For if men are told the truth about themselves, and if they are warned against the false remedies that establish men in their wickedness, then, by the power of the Spirit of God, they will flee to the Christ through whom alone they must be saved" (p.40).

The present reviewer gladly acknowledges his own very great debt, in the providence of God, to the writings and the classroom lectures of Dr. Van Til. More than anyone else, Dr. Van Til has enabled the writer to understand the real meaning of the modern mind that is antithetical to the mind of Christ. **The Intellectual Challenge of the Gospel** is one of Dr. Van Til's shorter writings, but it is one that is very important. The author is not only an orthodox Calvinistic theologian and a humble Christian, but a truly great and original thinker. He is thoroughly at home in the field of modern philosophy; he received his Doctor's degree in philosophy at Princeton University where orthodox Christianity was anything but favored. To a remarkable degree he has impressed his many students with the urgent need for a vigorous propagation of pure Biblical Christianity without compromise with modern non-Christian thought.

—J. G. Vos

BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST (Vol. VI of Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism), by Herman Hoeksema. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 179. \$2.50.

The present volume is the sixth in a series on the Heidelberg Catechism by a well-known minister and theological leader of the Protestant Reformed Church. It discusses the means of grace, preaching, regeneration, the idea of the sacraments, baptism, the covenant relation between God and man, the ground of infant baptism. For the most part of its contents, the book follows the recognized highway of the Reformed Faith. The teaching is sound, clear and helpful. For example, the chapter on Preaching as a Means of grace brings out effectively the difference between the Biblical ordinance of preaching and much that is called preaching today. ". . . when many people speak of a 'nice sermon', they mean not at all a sermon that served as a vehicle to bring the Word of God to them and that is a means of grace to them, but one that for approximately forty minutes could entertain them and play on their emotions" (p.29).

A considerable portion of the book is devoted to a discussion of different views of the covenant relation between God and man. The author refers to the Westminster Confession of Faith, VI.1-3 (evidently an error for VII.1-3), and says: "Here we meet with the idea of the covenant as . . . a means to an end" — an idea which the author rejects, among other reasons, because Scripture speaks of it as an "everlasting" covenant. He says: "A means is not eternal: when the thing to be effected by it has been attained, the means has served its purpose. An everlasting covenant, therefore, is not a way or a means, but is the destination, the end itself" (pp.142-3). The text cited is Jer. 32:40 where the word for "everlasting" is the Hebrew *olam*, a word translated 20 times in the King James Version as "perpetual", which need not have the strict meaning of absolute eternity. Thus in Gen. 9:16 the covenant made "between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" after the Flood is called "the everlasting (*olam*) covenant", yet it can hardly be regarded as eternal in the strict sense; compare Gen. 8:22, "while the earth remaineth".

On page 140 the author rejects as "pure fiction" the idea that God promised Adam eternal life as the reward for obedience to the command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He adds that Scripture does not even suggest such a promise. This seems a rash assertion. Surely the promise of eternal life as the reward for obedience in the Covenant of Works was implied by the presence of the tree of life in the garden of Eden. That Adam, if obedient, would eventually have received the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life is implied by the fact that after he sinned he was put out of the garden "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Gen. 3:22). Compare the statement of Geerhardus Vos: "The tree was associated with the higher, the unchangeable, the eternal life to be secured through the proba-

tion. . . After man should have been made sure of the attainment of the highest life, the tree would appropriately have been the sacramental means for communicating the highest life. After the fall God attributes to man the inclination of snatching the fruit against the divine purpose. But this very desire implies the understanding that it somehow was the specific life-sacrament for the time after the probation" (*Biblical Theology*, p. 38).

It is clear that though much of the teaching of this book is acceptable, it needs to be read with some discrimination.

— J. G. Vos

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD, by Herman Bavinck, translated, edited and outlined by William Hendriksen. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 407. \$5.00.

Herman Bavinck was a giant among Calvinistic theologians of recent times. He was born in 1854 and died in 1921. A very learned man as well as a devout Christian, Bavinck was extremely influential in the Netherlands. Professor Hendriksen observes: "The titles of his published works fill several columns. They concern themselves mainly, though not exclusively, with theology, psychology, and pedagogy." Bavinck was also interested in politics and was a very popular preacher and lecturer. His outstanding work is his *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* ("Reformed Dogmatics"), which in the original Dutch consists of four volumes. The first deals with Apologetics. The second, of which the volume under review is a translation, is on the doctrine of God.

To give anything like an adequate review of such an important work would require far more space than is at our disposal here. But it may be possible to give some idea of the contents, with a general appraisal, and to quote a paragraph or two as a sample. The book contains seven chapters, entitled respectively God's Incomprehensibility, God's Knowability, God's Names, God's Incommunicable Attributes, God's Communicable Attributes, The Holy Trinity, God's Counsel. These divisions are familiar to students of the Reformed theology.

One quality that is very evident is the author's great devotion to the Scripture. Scripture, not human reasoning, is the decisive authority with Bavinck. And Scripture is not merely cited, but by accurate exegesis its force and relevance are shown. All manner of unsound views and teachings are fairly stated, patiently tested by the rule of Scripture, and rejected as false. Over against unsound views the positive truth is expounded.

Another outstanding characteristic is the author's caution, the sign of a judicious mind, which led him to avoid extreme and one-sided state-

ments of the truth. His is not the zeal of the debater trying to make a point, but the steady, cool, patient earnestness of the judge endeavoring to see all the evidence in its bearing on all sides of a question. Professor Hendriksen remarks in his preface that Bavinck sometimes changed his position on a burning issue, and was then charged by his contemporaries with lack of integrity. But to change one's mind on a burning issue is no sign of lack of integrity; rather, it indicates honesty, candor, and a love of truth above all practical considerations. Only little minds never change their position; great minds have the courage to criticize their own thinking, admit wrong, and make a change.

The translation is in good clear English, readable and easy to understand. Professor Hendriksen has added running heads and summarizing captions throughout the book, which are a great advantage. These summaries are printed in bold-face type and really form a detailed outline of the entire contents of the volume. It is a great pity that such an important and worth-while book should be published without an index.

As a sample of Bavinck's treatment of the doctrine of God we shall quote the following paragraph from his discussion of God's omnipresence:

"In connection with God's immensity we must avoid on the one hand the error of pantheism, namely, that God is really the substance of all things and that he is spatial; and on the other hand, the error of deism, namely that God is omnipresent in power but not in essence and nature. Though God is essentially distinct from his creatures, he is not separate from them. Every particle of matter and every point of space require God's immensity to sustain them in their existence. The deistic idea that God dwells in a place far distant from the world and thence governs all things by his omnipotence does injustice to the proper conception of the being of God. In reality this representation is in conflict with all of God's attributes: with his simplicity, immutability, infinity, etc.; accordingly, God becomes man, and creation becomes independent. It needs to be emphasized that God is not present in creation as a king in his realm or a captain aboard his ship. He does not act upon the world from a distance; but with his whole being he is present powerfully here and everywhere with respect to his essence and power. He is present in hell as well as in heaven, in the wicked as well as in the pious, in places of filth and darkness as well as in palaces of light. Because his essence, though omnipresent, is of a character different from that which pertains to creatures, he remains pure in the presence of all impurity. Hence, Anselm made the statement that it is more correct to say that God is **with** time and space, than that he is present **in** time and space" (p. 162).

The translator and the publishers have done a great service to English-speaking Christians and

churches by providing this English translation of a truly great book. Here is theological learning at its best. The wide circulation and patient study of this book would do American evangelical Christianity a vast amount of good.

— J. G. Vos

THE WITNESS OF LUKE TO CHRIST, by Ned B. Stonehouse. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 184. \$3.00. In Great Britain: The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 7s. 6d.

Dr. Stonehouse is Professor of New Testament in Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. In 1944 his book **The Witness of Matthew and Mark to Christ** was published (by The Presbyterian Guardian, Philadelphia) and favorably reviewed in conservative publications at home and abroad. **The Witness of Luke to Christ** is of the same high quality as the former volume, and will be eagerly welcomed by the world of believing Biblical scholarship.

"In this volume Dr. Stonehouse is concerned to discover by careful exegesis of key passages in Luke's writings the exact nature of the testimony of this evangelist to Jesus Christ. The book is not intended as a commentary on the whole Gospel. Passages have been selected for study in which Luke's portrait of our Lord seems to contain something distinctive. In this way the author has been able to give a more thorough and detailed treatment to many of the questions concerning the Gospel which have come to be regarded as important in the modern critical debate" (dust jacket).

The volume presents, in expanded form, the special lectures which Dr. Stonehouse delivered under the auspices of the Free Church College, Edinburgh, in April, 1949. In the preface Dr. Stonehouse says that "the basic concern has been exegesis of the sacred text" and that "The importance of turning back again and again to the Bible itself to discover what it actually says can hardly be exaggerated". He adds that "Contemporaneous study of the New Testament abounds with modernizations of Jesus and the Gospels which betray a tragic lack of exegetical fidelity. Conservatives may and ought to do better, because they generally approach the exegetical problems with a sympathy rooted in their commitment to the Christian presuppositions of the authors of Scripture. But conservatives are prone to a traditionalism which is uncritical of the past and is not sufficiently alert to the distinction between what is written and what may have been erroneously inferred from the biblical text. In particular it has seemed to me that Christians who are assured as to the unity of the witness of the Gospels should take greater pains to do justice to the diversity of expression of that witness" (pp. 5,6). These statements give the keynote of the book.

A general introduction to the subject occupies some 15 pages. This deals, among other things, with the Lucan authorship of Luke-Acts, and with the bearing of various critical perspectives on Luke's reputation as a reliable and accurate historian. Following this introduction, the evidence is presented in Chapters II-VIII, which are entitled respectively Christianity according to the Prologue, The Gospel and the historical beginnings, Preaching and conflict at Nazareth, the Galilean ministry as a whole, From Galilee to Jerusalem, Death and Resurrection, the Kingdom and the Messiah. At the end of the book there are indexes of names and subjects and of Scripture references.

This is not a book for easy "devotional" reading. It is a scholarly work dealing with the problems raised by critical study of the New Testament. Ministers and theological students with some familiarity with New Testament studies will not find it difficult. Other intelligent readers will be able to understand it quite well as soon as they become somewhat acquainted with the terminology and the kind of problems the author is facing.

Throughout the book Dr. Stonehouse's careful, patient exegesis is manifested. His work is far removed from the kind that gives opinions as if they were reasons in an effort to support some preconceived theory. He really goes into the sacred text to see what it actually says.

Throughout the book Luke's trustworthiness and accuracy as a historian are defended, and the orthodox position as to the divine inspiration and authority of the Gospel is upheld. In discussing Luke's treatment of the death of Jesus he shows that Luke was in agreement with the redemptive view of Christ's death as an atonement for sin. He says that Luke "would obviously have been quite out of sympathy with the modern notion of the Christian message which allocates to Christ and His history, with its climax in His death and resurrection, at best a peripheral place. He plainly believed not only that Christ brought the Gospel but also that He was its principal content. For Luke, Christ was pre-eminently the Saviour who came to seek and to save the lost" (p. 141).

The chapter on The Kingdom and the Messiah is particularly timely. Dr. Stonehouse shows that the Kingdom of God as presented in Luke is not exclusively future but also present: "The conception of the kingdom of God is by no means restricted to the final consummation, but is in view also when earlier aspects of the realization of the rule of God through the decisive action of Christ are being reflected upon. And in all the records there is a powerful accumulation of testimony to the effect that God's purposes of grace, whereby His rule would be established, His name would be hallowed and His will would be done, did not have to remain merely prospective until the day of the return of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven, but were decisively, though somewhat preliminarily, realized through the min-

istry of the Son of Man upon earth and through His entrance upon His glory by the resurrection on the third day" (p. 158). The section on The Nature of the Kingdom is excellent.

The appearance of such a book as this should cause Christian people to thank God and take courage. It is simply not true that all learned scholarship is arrayed against the integrity and inerrancy of the Scriptures. God is raising up believing scholars to defend the truth of His Word. We should hope and pray that there may be many more such.

— J. G. Vos

SELECTIONS FROM LACTANTIUS: DIVINAE INSTITUTIONES, by W. T. Radius, Ph. D. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951. Pp. xviii, 139. \$2.00.

If I were teaching Patristics, I would certainly desire to use this volume as a text. It is attractive in appearance, well arranged, with 57 pages of the "Divine Institutions" well edited, 45 pages of commentary, 30 pages of vocabulary, and an index.

As the Loeb Classical Library has not yet included Lactantius, it would be well for its editors to consider Dr. Radius of Calvin College as the possible author of Lactantius' works for that remarkable series of the classics.

Students of Lactantius who are near university or seminary libraries may find the translation by Wm. Fletcher, D. D., available. See Volume 21 in the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, 1871. The Eerdmans press has recently reprinted Fletcher's translation.

Lactantius is included in Volume VI of Migne's *Patrologia*.

If Dr. Radius' publishers had allowed him to use as many commas and semicolons as the Migne edition has, the reading would be easier for undergraduate students. However, this slight shortcoming is made up for by the careful marking of long vowels.

We compliment the author on very excellent emendation and proofreading. The English headings for his paragraphs of the selections are better than Fletcher's and make a fine outline of the text. In the commentary the excursions will be of far more interest to the general reader than the translational and grammatical notes. I would recommend them for reading by any Christian who wants to understand better the difficulties of evangelical work in the third century after Christ.

All readers of *Blue Banner Faith and Life* will be pleased to know that its Editor, the Reverend J. G. Vos, is a brother-in-law of Dr. William T. Radius.

— Charles Marston Lee, Ph.D.

Geneva College
Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania

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.

GOD-CENTERED LIVING: A SYMPOSIUM PREPARED UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE CALVINISTIC ACTION COMMITTEE. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1951, pp. 271. \$3.50.

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, by Benjamin B. Warfield, edited by Samuel G. Craig. The Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1952, pp. xlviii, 580. \$4.50.

Published by **Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan:**

INTRODUCTORY HEBREW GRAMMAR, by R. Laird Harris. 1951, pp. 90. \$2.50.

A PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, by Edward J. Carnell. 1952, pp. 523. \$6.00.

AFTER THIS MANNER: THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S PRAYER, by J. C. Macaulay. 1952, pp. 86. \$1.50.

ISAIAH FIFTY-THREE: A DEVOTIONAL AND EXPOSITORY STUDY, by Edward J. Young. 1952, pp. 91. \$1.50.

Help Needed

Blue Banner Faith and Life is now in the middle of its seventh year of publication. As in the case of nearly all religious papers today, the income from subscriptions is far from sufficient to defray the costs of publication. Most denominational papers have to be heavily subsidized to make publication possible. Those which are not official church publications are largely dependent on voluntary contributions by Christian people who believe in what they stand for. And this is the case with **Blue Banner Faith and Life**. Roughly one-half of the money needed is obtained from subscriptions; for the rest the publisher is dependent upon contributions. Most of the contributions have come from individual donors, though some help has been given by the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

To all who have helped by contributing, I wish to express hearty thanks. Numerous contributions of 50 cents or \$1 have been received, as well as many of larger sums—some of \$100 and \$200. All these gifts, both large and small, are most welcome, and for all I express thanks. Some donors have sent contributions repeatedly, with almost calendar-like regularity; it is a great encouragement to receive such support in an enterprise of this kind.

During these past years of inflation the cost of printing **Blue Banner Faith and Life** has in-

creased considerably, and the cost of mailing has also risen. Yet the subscription rate has remained the same since the end of 1946—\$1.50 per year. To make the magazine fully self-supporting it would be necessary at least to double the subscription rate, or else to reduce the annual number of pages by half. It is not my intention to adopt either of these procedures. I hope to continue to issue a magazine with 200 to 250 pages per year (in 1951 the magazine had 222 pages) at the present low subscription rates (\$1.50 for individual and \$1.00 for club subscriptions). This low rate encourages many to subscribe to the magazine who otherwise might not do so. It also encourages many to send in gift subscriptions for relatives and friends. To reduce the number of pages drastically, or to double the subscription rates, would have a serious effect on the influence and usefulness of the paper.

Blue Banner Faith and Life is intended to be a missionary effort, by its witness for the system of truth which it expounds and defends. It is read and appreciated by many outside the membership of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. There has been a slow but steady growth of the number of subscribers who are members of other denominations. The paper is also sent free to a considerable number of suitable persons on various foreign mission fields. A number

of these have written their thanks and appreciation. One thousand copies of each issue are printed, and of these about 800 are immediately circulated; the remainder are held to make up sets of back issues.

As this issue goes to press, I have on hand about \$400.00—not enough to pay for the printing and mailing of this issue. It costs \$8.15 per page to print the magazine and prepare it for mailing; envelopes and postage are in addition to this. A 50-page issue costs \$407.50 plus perhaps \$25.00 for postage and envelopes. Besides the \$400.00 now on hand, about \$955.00 will be needed to pay the cost of printing and mailing this issue and the remaining two issues of 1952.

Those who prepare the material published in **Blue Banner Faith and Life** are trying hard to

provide a paper that will be a real witness to the truth and a real help to Christian people. If you agree that our effort is worth while, will you not help with this financial burden by contributing as the Lord may have enabled you?

This appeal is not intended as an attempt to obtain contributions from those who cannot afford to contribute. But I believe there are those who are in a position to contribute, whether little or much, and who will gladly do so if the need is made clear to them.

The accounts of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** are always open to the inspection of contributors. Please do not send cash through the mails; loss can be prevented by using check, bank draft or money order.

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J. G. Vos, Publisher

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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 various foreign mission fields, including those of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Only about one-half of the cost of publishing and mailing "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is obtained from subscriptions and sales of back issues. For the balance the publisher is dependent on contributions from individuals and churches. It is purposed to keep the subscription rates low with a view to maintaining a wide circulation, as a form of Christian witness and missionary work.

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**BLUE
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VOLUME 7

JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1952

NUMBER 3

“The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his Word. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God’s sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.”

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, 51,52

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R. F. D. No. 1

Clay Center, Kansas

The Desolation of Tyre

(Based on Ezekiel 26:15-21)

By J. G. Vos

The Lord Jehovah spake
To Tyre this all:
Shall not the islands shake
Hearing thy fall —
All of them shocked thereby,
Hearing thy wounded cry,
When thy dead slaughtered lie
Beyond recall?

Then the sea's princes shall —
Princes of Tyre —
From their thrones one and all
Quickly retire;
Then they shall lay away
Robes and brodered array,
Because it is the day
Of the Lord's ire.

With trembling, not with mirth,
Then shall they all
Sitting upon the earth
Clothe them withal;
Trembling without a pause,
Smitten with griefs and awes,
Greatly amazed because
They see thy fall!

For thee they shall lift up
A sad lament:
Drinking of sorrow's cup,
How art thou rent!
Home of seafarers bold,
City renowned of old,
Which of the sea took hold;
Now thou art spent!

She and her dwellers all,
Strong in the wave,
Caused terror great to fall
On all the brave.

Now shall the islands shake,
And troubled, they shall quake;
All in the sea shall take
Note of thy grave.

The Lord Jehovah saith:
When I shall make
Thee empty in my wrath,
And thee forsake;
When I shall bring the deep
Upon thee in thy sleep,
Great waters on thee heap,
Lest thou awake,

When I shall bring thee low
Into the pit,
With them of old that go
Down into it—
Down in the lowest place,
In desolate disgrace,
Without a human trace,
There shalt thou sit.

And in thine utter end,
By my decree,
I shall my glory send
To those who see.
The world of living men,
They shall behold it then;
But nevermore again
Shall men see thee.

A terror I will then
Make thee to be,
And thou shalt far from men
For ever flee.
Though they may seek for thee,
Found thou shalt never be,
By the Lord God's decree,
Eternally.

"The greatest charity is to tell the greatest truth; the least is to be complacently indifferent to a man drinking slow poison and not tell him, or allowing emigrants to embark in leaky, ill-found vessels, and not prevent them!"

— J. C. Ryle

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Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter III

Some Early Martyrs

The Roman hierarchy, having gained a foothold on the shores of Scotland, pushed hard for the ascendancy. At length the papal religion prevailed. The black wings of apostasy, as of an ominous bird, were stretched from sea to sea. Dense darkness fell upon Scotland. The Thirteenth century was the horrible midnight, during which the people slept helpless in the grasp of a terrorizing nightmare. Kings combined with priests to crush all who asserted their right to a free conscience in the worship of God. The Bible was officially condemned and publicly burned; its perusal by the people was accounted a crime worthy of death. Poor Scotland! how ruinously overwhelmed beneath the briny waters of adversity.

The providences of God are mysterious. We become mystified and distressed when we ask for reasons. God's circles are vast; we cannot take in His horizon. We know however that all His works are done in truth and righteousness. The wheels of Christ's chariot never move backward. In getting over the rough places, progress may seem to be reversed, yet this is an illusion. In every such case the mysterious operation of providence is merely preparation for advancement. The great work of redemption goes forward through all stages to perfection. The storms that dash against the face of spring prevent not the coming of summer with its abundant harvests and songs of joy.

The light of the Gospel seemed to have been quenched beneath the seething tide of Papal corruption. Still there were incorruptible men and women here and there, who devoutly worshipped God according to His Word. Their hearthstone was their church. There may have been many in those days deeply rooted in the faith, but for the most part they remained invisible. To be known as true to Christ imperiled life. Not many had the courage to publish their convictions. Yet there were some who arose in the majesty of redeemed manhood and confessed Jesus, testifying to his Truth in defiance of the powers of darkness. To them truth was sweeter than life.

John Resby is on record as one among the first witnesses, who heralded a glorious reformation for Scotland. He was a voice crying in the wilderness, proclaiming the sovereignty of Christ

over the Church and denouncing the pope who claimed to be the representative of the the Lord Jesus. He was quickly silenced by death at the stake. This occurred in 1407. The spirit of religious liberty was thereby crushed and disappeared for twenty-five years.

Paul Craw was the next to be lifted into prominence by the power of the Gospel, and thrust into publicity by the courage of his convictions. His love for the truth of the Gospel filled him with abhorrence of Roman errors; his pity for souls carried him into the fight for their freedom. He testified boldly against Papal idolatry, prayer to saints, and the confessional. For this he was sentenced to suffer in the flames. His martyrdom took place in 1432.

Patrick Hamilton was another distinguished hero in this age of darkness. Nearly a century had passed between the last mentioned martyr and this. Doubtless lesser lights had appeared, for the record cannot possibly be complete. Winter snows and summer showers often fell on smoking embers, where the charred bones and precious names of martyrs are now forgotten, and the annual sward of green conceals the sacred grounds from the knowledge of man. Hamilton was a young man of education and refinement having fairest worldly prospects. However, the Lord showed him "the way, the truth, and the life", and his soul was fired with the love of God. He counted all things but "loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ". His enthusiasm carried him boldly into controversy with the enemies of his Lord, and won for him the honors of a noble martyr. As the flames leaped around him at the stake, his voice rose calm on the crisp winter air, exclaiming, "How long, O Lord, shall darkness cover this realm? How long wilt thou suffer this tyranny of man?" This man was sacrificed in 1528.

The light was rising, springtime was coming, the early rain of God's grace was falling upon Scotland. Godly lives now sprang up thick as flowers in the meadow. They must be uprooted in bunches, thought the Romanists, or the people, gaining light, will cast off the Papal religion and be free to worship God according to His Word. During the next few years many were condemned and executed for their faith.

Helen Stark deserves honorable mention. She and her husband were sentenced to death

for their fidelity to Jesus. She begged for the poor consolation of dying with her husband, pleading that the flames that would consume his flesh might also consume hers. This privilege was denied. She stood by him while the fire did its work, and the chariot of flame bore his soul to heaven. She encouraged him to endure bravely and glorify God. When life had departed from his quivering body, she was pushed aside and hastened to a pond of deep water. Withdrawing a babe from her warm breast where it would never again rest, she gave it to a woman near by, resigning it to the loving Father of orphans. She was then plunged into the water where death quickly ended her sorrows. This martyrdom was in 1543.

George Wishart arose at this time in the spirit and majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, and displayed the banner of truth with an invincible faith. His heart was true, pure, fresh, and fragrant as the heart of a rosebud, through the indwelling Spirit of God. His life was wonderfully attractive. His eloquence was seraphic; his lips had been touched with a live coal from the altar of God; his soul was aflame with the Gospel. He was animated with transfiguring revelations of Christ and His redeeming truth. He was a burning and shining light. The light he shed was too bright to last long in those dangerous times. The cardinal, prelates, and priests consulted for his overthrow. He fell suddenly into their hands and his death was decreed. To the stake he was hurried where the flames once more did their work, and another faithful soul appeared before the Throne, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and arrayed in a white robe, rejoicing in the victory

won through Jesus Christ. At the stake his executioner begged forgiveness. Wishart kissed his cheek, saying, "Go, here is a token that I forgive thee; do thine office." One standing near said to him, "Be of good courage". He replied, "This fire torments my body, but in no way abates my spirit." This execution was in 1546.

The success of life is not measured by the years we live, but by loyalty to Jesus Christ and service in the Gospel; the might of our faith, the healthiness of the soul, the greatness of the heart, and the intensity of the light shining from a character radiant with the presence and glory of Jesus Christ.

Are we every day trying to make our lives rich, radiant, successful, and certain of reward, through earnest effort to bring others into the possession of the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

POINTS FOR THE CLASS

1. What was Scotland's condition when over-ridden by the Roman religion?
2. How was the true Church kept alive?
3. Describe the sufferings endured by the witnesses of Jesus.
4. Give the death scene of John Resby, Paul Craw, Patrick Hamilton, Helen Stark, George Wishart.
5. How may the study of the martyr's lives purify, strengthen, and ennoble our lives?

(To be continued)

The Visible Church: Its Nature, Unity and Witness

By J. G. Vos

(Continued from last issue)

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It has been stated that for the visible Church to bear a corporate witness to the truth involves at least a testimony for the system of doctrine set forth in the Word of God, and that it is desirable for a Church to bear corporate witness to some of the implications and applications of that system of doctrine. This is not to be taken as implying that the Church's witness must stop with these. The system of doctrine forms not the maximum but the minimum content of a corporate witness. There is certainly no valid reason

why other doctrines should be excluded. Nor have the historic Reformed creeds so limited themselves. The Westminster Confession, for example, deals with a number of matters which are not elements of the system, nor, in the strict sense, implications or applications of it. Yet these matters are unquestionably teachings of the Word of God. Mention may be made of the Confession's teaching on war, on oaths, and on marriage and divorce, for example. Certainly nothing revealed in the Scripture can be regarded as without importance, and the visible Church may properly maintain a corporate testimony for any proposition which can be demonstrated to be a real teaching of the Word of God. But when we

are off the beaten path of the system of doctrine and its implications and applications in the strict sense, the danger of falling into unwarranted and erroneous interpretations of Scripture is greatly increased. We have only to think of the diverse views which exist on some details of the subject of prophecy, and in particular of the maze of interpretations of the Apocalypse, to realize that this is so. It has long been recognized as a sound principle that no creedal doctrine should be based solely on symbolic portions of Scripture, because of the danger of misinterpretation. It is of the greatest importance that the Church confine its witness to propositions which can be clearly and unanswerably shown to be the truth of God. Where the teaching of the Scripture is not clear the Church should maintain reserve, and wait for further light from the sacred volume before venturing to bear a public testimony. Needless to say, where the Scripture is silent on a question the Church has no right to utter any testimony. To do so would amount to a presumptuous attempt to improve upon the revelation of God. To respect the silences of Scripture is a sign of true reverence.

We have been considering the problem of the visible Church's public corporate testimony to the truth. Such testimony of course is to be embodied in confessions and other creedal standards. These set forth the Church's official doctrine and constitute not only the norm of truth, subordinate to the Scriptures, for its own life, but its manifesto to the public. We must now consider the question of the degree of conformity to a Church's testimony that is to be required of its own membership. It is generally recognized as sound in principle, and it is certainly unavoidable in practice, that a less complete knowledge may be required of members as such than is properly required for ordination to ecclesiastical office. Should members as such be required to profess their acceptance of the confession or creed of a denomination? The practice of Churches holding the Reformed Faith has varied in this matter, the majority, including the large bodies, having no such formal requirement, but some of the smaller ones maintaining it. Even in the latter it is unavoidable that some dissent on the part of members be tolerated. It would be out of the question for any Church to require of every communicant member an *ex animo* acceptance, without permitting any dissent whatever, of every proposition contained, let us say, in the Westminster Standards. To attempt to enforce such conformity would inevitably lead to one or the other of two results. Either the membership would readily profess acceptance of the whole by an implicit faith, and the matter would rest there as a mere formality, or (in the case of more conscientious and serious-minded persons) some proposition or other would be likely to prove a stumbling block to the member, and being forced to choose between his conscience and his Church,

he would have no alternative except to leave the denomination. Some dissent on the part of members, then, must be tolerated. How much, and what kind, will in some cases be very easy, and in other cases extremely difficult, to decide. In any case, this decision must be made by the judicatories of each denomination. Such decisions by Church courts, made originally in specific cases that have arisen, will in the course of time develop into a body of precedent having the effect of common law in dealing with similar cases which may arise later. Where the judicatories of a denomination take no cognizance of the doctrinal conformity of the membership as such, a condition of doctrinal indifferentism is likely soon to prevail. It is easy to think of specific examples of dissent which may have to be faced by Church courts. For example, a man and his wife wish to join a denomination holding the Westminster Standards. They profess general acceptance of the Standards and give evidence of an intelligent understanding of them, but have scruples on the subject of infant baptism. May they be admitted as members with the understanding that their children are to remain unbaptized until they reach an age when they can make their personal profession of faith and thereupon be baptized? Obviously unless there is to be an anarchic condition in which every man does that which is right in his own eyes, a denomination must have a definite policy concerning such matters. Suppose that several such families, each with children growing up unbaptized, were to be admitted to a Presbyterian congregation. Each in turn might be regarded as an exception to the ordinary rule; but what would then become of the Church's corporate witness for the doctrine of infant baptism, and for the doctrine of the covenant of grace which lies back of it? Clearly it would be hazardous to admit members who oppose infant baptism, even in exceptional cases. But suppose an applicant for membership gives a satisfactory account of his faith except that he is a convinced pacifist, and is therefore opposed to the affirmation of the Confession of Faith that to wage war, upon just and necessary occasion, is not inconsistent with Christian duty. Although, from the standpoint of the Confession, pacifism is an error, still, so far as the Church itself is concerned, to tolerate this error will not necessarily destroy the corporate witness of the Church, for the doctrine concerning which error exists directly concerns neither the system of doctrine nor the Church as such, but the sphere of the civil magistrate. To admit a member who is a pacifist would not of itself introduce an element of anarchy into the life of the Church as would the toleration of a family with children growing up unbaptized. While every denomination will have a growing body of precedent for dealing with such matters, obviously no body of precedent or formulation of rules can prove adequate for all cases which will arise. Cases are bound to come up which will tax the Christian

wisdom and prudence of those whose office it is to govern the house of God.

To affirm that the Church must unavoidably tolerate some degree of dissent on the part of members as such, does not at all imply that the Church may tolerate a **contrary propaganda**. The applicant for Church membership who has scruples about this or that point of doctrine in the Church's creed is in the position of the weak brother of Romans 14. As such he is to be treated with sympathy, and if it can be consistently and honestly done, he should be received into membership, but always with the understanding that he has no right to carry on a propaganda within or without the Church for his personal convictions which are at variance with the corporate testimony of his Church. The "weak brother" who claims, and exercises, a "right" to engage in propaganda against the official standards of his Church, thereby claims to be not weak, but strong, and to regard the Church as occupying the position of the "weak brother". The Church may properly receive a weak brother and tolerate his weakness and the error associated with it, but the weak brother who claims to be strong, and acts accordingly, becomes intolerable. For the Church to tolerate a weak brother is one thing; to tolerate a contrary propaganda is quite another matter. Even with respect to minor points of doctrine which are defined in the official standards of a Church, to tolerate a contrary propaganda amounts to tolerating anarchy in the ecclesiastical sphere. It is true here as elsewhere that a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Lest this be misunderstood, it should be explained that by "a contrary propaganda" is not meant any discussion of an issue whatever, nor

any effort to have the Church's standards amended to bring them into line with the dissenter's personal convictions. These may be entirely legitimate and proper provided they are carried on in a lawful rather than a lawless manner. The Church member who has scruples about, or dissents from, a point of doctrine set forth in his Church's creed certainly has the right to seek to have that creed altered, by addressing the judicatories of the Church with a petition setting forth his reasons for the desired change. Such a petition may of course properly be supported by discussion before the appropriate judicatory, and the latter may decide that the question shall be discussed, pro and con, in writing in some Church periodical for a certain period of time. None of this legal and orderly procedure is to be regarded as "a contrary propaganda". Rather, "a contrary propaganda" is one which disregards and bypasses the judicatories of the Church and addresses itself to the public just as if the matter were not one already defined in a certain way in the creed of the Church. Even worse is that form of contrary propaganda which addresses the public, within or without the Church, in denouncing the standards of the Church themselves because of their statements on some matter. Thus a minister who has scruples about some doctrine set forth in the creed of his Church may properly bring the matter before the judicatories of his denomination, but for him to preach from the pulpit against official doctrines of his Church is intolerable. A denomination which tolerates this practice is indeed a house divided against itself, and cannot long stand. It may continue to exist as an organization, but it will no longer bear a real corporate testimony.

(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 III

THE DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES OF THE COVENANTERS

CHAPTER III

THE COVENANTERS' DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN CIVIL GOVERNMENT

1. The Mediatorial Kingship of Christ over the Nations.

The Reformed Presbyterian doctrine concerning the kingship of Christ over the nations is that Christ, not merely in his divine nature, as God, but in his mediatorial capacity, as God-man, has been appointed by God the Father to rule over the nations, and indeed over the universe,

during the present age and until the end of the world. Reformed Presbyterians reject as erroneous the doctrines "that Christ's mediatorial power is restricted to saints or to His Church", "that civil rulers are not, in their official character, subject to the Messiah and bound to recognize His revealed will and promote the interests of His kingdom", and "that nations and associations of men are not, in their corporate capacity, subject to the law and authority of Christ". They hold that Christ "has authority over nations, governors, and legislatures, and it is their duty to own and obey Him".

This doctrine of the mediatorial kingship of Christ over the nations as such does not appear to be traceable farther back than the period of the Second Reformation. Before that there had been a clear conception of civil government as a divine institution, of the relation between Church and State, and of the lawfulness of resisting and even of punishing tyrants. But in the period of the Second Reformation the idea was held that the nation as such had, by its Covenant, accepted Christ as King, not only of the Church, but of the commonwealth as well. One of Rutherford's letters exemplifies this conception: "Alas! that we will not pull and draw Him to his old tents again, to come and feed among the lilies till the day breaks and the shadows flee away. O, that the nobles would come, in the strength and courage of the Lord, to bring our lawful King Jesus here again. I am persuaded that He shall return in glory to this land; but happy sure they who would help convey Him to this country, and set Him up again on the mercy-seat between the cherubim. O Sun, return again to darkened Britain! . . . I know He can also triumph in suffering, and weep, and reign, and die, and triumph, and remain in prison, and yet subdue his enemies. But how happy could I live to see the Coronation-day of Christ, to see his mother who bare Him put the crown upon His head again, and cry with shouting, till the earth shall sing, 'Lord Jesus, our King, live and reign for evermore' ". To be sure this might be understood to refer only to Christ's headship over the Church, but the probability is that it included the nation as well.

During the period of persecution the doctrine of Christ's kingship over the nation became more clearly defined. There are a number of references to this doctrine in the sermons of Richard Cameron. Cameron conceived of the doctrine of Christ's kingship as implying that there could be no lawful magistrate except in subjection to Christ: "There is none to help you at all, except you acknowledge Him as your King and Head, and except you acknowledge no other magistrate but according to what He ordains in His word", Preaching in 1680 on Hosea 13:9-10, he said, "Our Lord is saying, 'I will tell you what are the terms; if you would have help from Me you must take Me to be your King; you must take Me to be the Head of the Church'. Our Lord Jesus is and must be King upon His holy hill of Zion. There is no king in the Church besides Him". . . . " 'I will be thy king' supposes more than this: ye shall have no other king besides Me. I will tell you, the most part of the land cry out, We will have no other king but Caesar—no other king but king Charles. But we must cry we will have no other king but Christ. What is that? Say ye, Are ye against all monarchy and civil Government? We are much taken up with that, if God let pure government be established, that is most for the good and advantage of civil and ecclesiastical society. But we set up kings and princes, but not by Him. If ye would have Him be for you

ye must cut off this king, and these princes, and make able men be your rulers, endued with suitable qualifications both of body and mind, that may employ their power for the cause and interest of God. What would we do with such persons as state themselves in opposition to God? If we had the zeal of God within us we would not call him our king, and even with regard to the nobles and magistrates of this land we would not acknowledge them to be magistrates". . . "Our Lord will set up other magistrates according to His promise: 'And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers'. And who knows but God will make out that yet? 'And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them'. Indeed by governor we principally understand our Lord Jesus Christ. But when He turns back the captivity of His Church and people, none shall be governors but such as shall be for Him, at least by profession. Indeed when our king was set up in better case than we are now in, he professed himself to be a Presbyterian, though any rational man might have known he was but a treacherous man. It was but a dreadful mocking of God to require such oaths of him who would be bound by no oaths. Yea, none of them will be bound by any oath whatever. And now are ye ready to take Christ for your king in the sense we have explained?" Preaching on Isaiah 49:24-26, Cameron said: "I do not desire to reflect upon our fathers for bringing home Charles Stuart to get the crown; . . . yea, his actions since, and the connivances of those who had his favour or any power under him, evidence that it is impossible to manifest or maintain the royal prerogatives of Jesus Christ and yet maintain the king's civil rights. Since it is so declared that we must either quit him as king or Christ, indeed for my part I am for no king but Jesus Christ, since they will have none but Caesar. When Christ is seated upon His throne and His crown upon His head, let such magistrates be appointed in every particular station as will employ their power for the advancement of His kingdom, and for destroying the kingdom of darkness in this land and in every place where Christ shall reign; and then let them be owned".

Alexander Shields, preaching at the end of the period of persecution (March 11th, 1688) stated that the Covenanters' disowning the king and magistrates was no new doctrine but a principle long recognized in Scotland: "Was not Charles I. opposed by two armies, and his son Charles II. refused to be admitted to the government till he subscribed the covenants? Did not our Church, by their acts and constitutions, declare what magistrates they would have reign over them, and what qualifications were requisite to them? So that what we have done in disowning the present authority is no new nice notion, but consonant to the principles of the Church of Scotland. It is those that own the authority of the Popish usurper that espouse new notions and not we: for this

principle is maintained by the generality of the enemies thereof, that when by providence any are in government, they have a right to govern. This is to make the Holy One the author of sin (seeing that though the ordinance and office of magistracy be according to His preceptive and approbative will), yet tyranny cannot be, but only by His permission and providential will; for where tyranny is, it is the throne of iniquity, which is the throne of the devil, which should not be owned".

It will be seen from the foregoing that during the period of persecution the Covenanters drew a distinction between the preceptive will of God and the providential will of God. Tyranny might exist by the providential will of God, but it could not exist by the preceptive will of God. It might be God's providential ordinance, but it could not be God's moral ordinance, for that would be to make God the author of sin. For God to command approval of magistrates which were not his moral ordinance, would be for God to command approval of that which God himself did not approve, which could not be. The Covenanters, therefore, disowned the civil magistrate as contrary to the revealed will of God and the kingship of Christ over the nation.

The whole testimony of the Covenanters on this subject must be understood in the light of the Covenants. Scotland was not simply a kingdom; it was a kingdom that had been given away to be the Lord's by solemn Covenant, and that Covenant had been sworn by the civil power as well as by the Church. The situation in which they were placed after the Restoration was not simply that of Christians living under a non-Christian form of civil government, but Christians living in a land which had by covenant recognized the kingship of Christ over the nation and which had later by legislative act repudiated that Covenant. The Stuart government was not simply a non-Christian government; it was a perjured usurpation of Christ's crown already placed on his head in Scotland. The Covenanters therefore not merely dissented from the civil constitution but declared the whole system in its entirety to be positively unlawful and the magistrates to be no magistrates. Since the Covenants were ignored in the Revolution Settlement, they continued this attitude of protest in the post-Revolution period. In 1693 four persons who had been imprisoned before the Revolution were liberated from prison. Together they signed a protest stating that they had been detained a long time by "the present pretended powers" and that hearing of their designed liberation, they wished the world to know that they were not liberated because of any petition made to the government whom they "could neither own nor supplicate as our lawfull rullers".

In more modern times the Reformed Presbyterians have considerably modified the position taken during the persecuting period and at the

Revolution Settlement, by the introduction of two distinctions. The first of these is the distinction between countries favored with the light of divine revelation and lands not so favored. "In every nation which professes Christianity it is the duty of civil rulers, including not only kings, presidents, ministers of State, legislators and magistrates, but also political electors, to honour the King of Kings and Lord of Lords by moulding the national life and laws according to the principles laid down in Scripture for nations". "If a nation that is favoured with the light of divine revelation rejects in its constitution and legislation the heavenly light thus bestowed; still more, if a nation that has pledged itself by covenant to be the Lord's, or otherwise made high attainments in the recognition of Christ and His will, turns away from Him again and renounces its obligation and allegiance; the Christian, to be faithful to his Lord, must dissent and separate himself from the nation, because of its rebellion against Christ". On the other hand, the Christian who lives in a land not illuminated with the light of Scripture "may even cooperate with and befriend the government, if he be allowed to act according to the law of God and the dictates of an enlightened conscience and without coming under any unchristian obligation".

The second distinction is the distinction between **obeying** a government which rejects Christ, and **incorporating** with such a government. Even under a covenant-breaking and Christ-rejecting civil government, the Christian ought to be subject to the government and obey the laws in all things not contrary to the law of God. He ought to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. "It is the duty of Christians to give their support to whatever is in itself moral, praiseworthy, and beneficent, in the administration under which they live, and as much as in them lies to be quiet and peaceable in their deportment, and thus to promote the peace and order of society and other ends of good government. When the government, though antichristian, grants civil and religious liberty, Christians may, quite consistently with their testimony, pay their share of the common taxation in return for the protection and other advantages which they receive; but they may not pay taxes levied for an immoral purpose or exacted as a pledge of allegiance to an unscriptural constitution". Even though the government is not regarded as God's moral ordinance, it is God's providential ordinance and the Christian should be subject to it in all things moral and lawful. But this is a very different thing from **incorporating** with the civil government, which would in effect amount not merely to submitting to the government but actually becoming a part of the government itself, and which, in a democracy, would take the form of holding public office or exercising the elective franchise. There are two possible relationships between the Christian citizen and the civil government. The first is the relationship between the subject and the ruler, or

between the citizen and the civil magistrate, which implies obedience and submission. This relationship is legitimate in all things lawful, even when the civil government is not definitely Christian in its constitution and character. The other relationship between the Christian as a member of the political body and the civil government. In this relationship the Christian is not ruled but a ruler; he is not subject to the government, but a part of the government; as an office-holder or voter he has incorporated with the political society and is an integral part of the same. The Reformed Presbyterian principle is, that this second relationship ought to exist only when the civil government is constituted on a definitely Christian basis. The first relationship implies simply recognition of a fact, namely that a certain civil government exists as the providential ordinance of God, and that in this sense the powers that be are ordained of God, and ought to be obeyed by Christians except when they command something which is contrary to God's commandments; the first relationship implies then, no approval of the government or its constitution, but simply the recognition that by God's permission it exists and therefore ought to be obeyed in things moral so long as it continues to exist. The second relationship, that of incorporation with the political body, implies approval of the constitution, for it makes the Christian an integral part of the government and therefore responsible for the character and policies of the same. This is the Reformed Presbyterian conception as it is held today in Scotland, Ireland and America; and it will be observed that this is a considerable modi-

fication of the doctrine as held, for example, at the time of the Revolution Settlement. Covenanters today hold that the civil constitution of Britain is defective, and that Christians, while they ought to obey the government in all things not contrary to God's commandments, yet ought not to incorporate with the government, become a part of the governing body, swear allegiance to the constitution or express approval of the constitution so long as the constitution does not recognize Christ's kingship over the nation. The constitution is regarded as defective, and the magistrates as ruling upon a wrong basis, but still they are magistrates and to be obeyed in their legitimate commands. But at the Revolution the Covenanters positively disowned the government, and held that the magistrates were no magistrates, but "pretended magistrates". They appear to have confused two things which differ. One is the question of the right of the magistrate to rule; the other is the question of the duty of the Christian to obey the magistrate. Whether the magistrate has a moral right to rule is one question; according to the Covenanters, then and now, he has not, unless he recognizes the kingship of Christ and rules according to Scripture. Whether the Christian ought to obey even such magistrates as by divine providence are permitted to rule on a secular or non-Christian basis, is quite another question. The modern Reformed Presbyterian Testimonies recognize this elementary distinction, while the Covenanters at the time of the Revolution do not appear to have developed their conceptions to this point.

(To be continued)

Bible Authority for Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

Note: This article was originally prepared for the Question Box in answer to a question submitted by a reader. Because of the great importance of the subject at the present time, and the need for clear convictions concerning it, it is published here as a separate article. One of the most prominent developments in the Protestant scene of the present time is the trend toward independent or "denominationally unrelated" church congregations. Many serious Christians apparently feel that independency is more Scriptural than denominational church government. On the other hand there is a general decay of Scriptural church government in several large denominations which still retain the name "Presbyterian". Not only is the Presbyterian form of church government represented as a matter of human expediency rather than of divine appointment, but in some cases there has been a growth of ecclesiastical bureaucracy which has rendered the term "Presbyterian" a mere dead letter. Mr.

Frazer's clear and Scripturally grounded article should help us to see the real Bible basis of the essential features of the Presbyterian form of church government. — Ed.

Question:

What Scripture proof can be given for the principle of Presbyterian church government that the church is subject to the jurisdiction of a series of graded courts (session, presbytery, synod) each representing a larger portion of the body?

Answer:

Since this question asks for the Scripture proof of only one principle of Presbyterian church government, we take for granted:

1. That the church has a government, the one and only Head of which is the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. That the government of the church is

equipped with laws, officers, and courts. Its fundamental laws are prescribed of God in the Scriptures. Its officers, called "presbyters", that is, "elders", are (a) **all of one kind, of equal authority**, though of different classes according to different endowments for the different duties of their office. (b) **All to be elected by the people** of such as have God's prescribed qualifications. The principle of **representation** begins in popular election and permeates the entire system. (c) **A plurality of elders is required in every particular church.**

Since the elders are all of equal authority, no one may lord it over another, or over the church.

Since there is more than one elder in every church, peace, unity and efficiency demand a collective, well-considered decision, not merely individual opinions. Hence, a **court** is required in every church. The Scripture name for this court is "**the presbytery**" (1 Tim. 4:14).

Laws and officers are not enough. For no government in human hands is stable or efficient without a **judiciary** in addition to its legislative and executive departments. Otherwise its laws would be misinterpreted, ignored, and violated; its officers would become tyrants, or mere figure-heads. We know by history and experience that when the courts fail, the whole structure of government and of the society itself falls. We are today confronted with such disasters in both church and state. But, "the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; he will save us" (Isa. 33:32). As long as the church holds to Christ its Head, it will have courts, as needed. "For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace."

Scripture does not systematize its doctrine of church government any more than its other great doctrines; but it reveals to honest searching the essential principles, the basic laws. And the laws of God are perfect; they meet every case that can occur; they are closely inter-related in a system, yet comparatively simple in form and few in number.

The principle in question is proven.

L By the Pattern of the Jewish Church

The whole outward form of the **church** was, in large measure, derived from the **synagogue**. The laws of both were the same, so far as revealed in the Old Testament. The **officers** of both were, as to qualification, called "**elders**", inducted into office by ordination. In their official capacity they are always spoken of in the plural. Their decisions were handed down jointly, in banc, not individually. There were elders of the city", "elders of the tribes", "elders of the congregation", i.e., they held a **graded jurisdiction**.

Some were of the priests, the Levites; some of the princes. At first civil and religious duties were more or less combined; afterwards separated. The courts then became of two kinds, ecclesiastical and civil.

The institution of **superior courts** is recorded in Deut. 17:8-13. Jewish tradition cites this passage as the origin of the "**sanhedrin**", which word is the Hebrew transliteration of the Greek "**synedrion**", i.e., "a sitting together", from which we take our word "**synod**". Cf. Ex. 18:13-26; Num. 11:16,17,24,25; Deut. 1:9-18; 19:15-20; Hag. 2:11-13; Mal. 2:7.

The courts, having become corrupt and useless, were restored by king Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 19); the local courts, verses 4-7; the superior, verses 8-11. The ecclesiastical dealt "in all matters of Jehovah"; the civil "in all the king's matters". These continued until the coming of Christ. The local ecclesiastical courts, of 3 to 23 judges, were held in the **synagogues**, of which there was one or more in every town and city. The "**Great Sanhedrin**", with 71 judges, sat in Jerusalem. This, in the Greek original of Luke 22:66 and Acts 22:5, is called the "**presbyterion**", whence our word "**presbytery**".

Accordingly, there were distinct ecclesiastical courts in Israel, which were **graded**, with subordination of smaller to larger, of local synagogue courts to the national. The grading was according to number of judges required and extent of their jurisdiction.

The basic reason is stated in Prov. 11:14: "Where no wise guidance is the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

II. By the Form in which the Christian Church Developed

Whether regarded as a **divine institution**, a **building**, or a **living organism**, the word "**church**", as it occurs in our English version of the Scriptures, has only one meaning: it is the **society of Christians**, continuing "**the congregation of Israel**", i.e., of the **covenant people of God**. The church is the **covenant society**. Since the covenant is one, and Christ, the Head, is one, the church is **one** in so far as the covenant is kept; in so far as the revealed will of Christ is obeyed. While "church" has but one meaning, it is applied equally to smaller or larger groups of Christians, in local or extended territory.

At first, the believers met for worship "**from house to house**" (Acts 2:46, i.e., "**in various houses**", as for instance, in the house of Mary (Acts 12:12). Thus the first churches in any locality came to be designated as "**the church in So-and-so's house**", etc. (Rom. 16:15; Col. 4:15. Philemon 2).

From Pentecost onward, "the number of the disciples kept multiplying" (Acts 6:1); "multi-

plied in Jerusalem exceedingly" (Acts 6:7). To the 120 (Acts 1:15), were added 3,000 souls (Acts 2:41); then 5,000 men (males) (Acts 4:4); then "multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14); and so on.

We know the Jews had numerous synagogues in Jerusalem; it was but natural for them, when they became Christians, to assemble in their own local groups, especially since they had no place, no church buildings where **such large numbers** could meet together for the performance of all the acts of worship and government. That they continued steadfastly in all these, and that the apostles, who were the first elders of the church, continued steadfastly in the ministry of the word, the sacraments, and prayer is proven by Acts 2:41,42; 6:2-4.

The diversity of languages spoken in Jerusalem had occasioned the formation of synagogues for different language and social groups (Acts 6:9). To all these the gospel was preached in their own languages (Acts 2:5-11). Naturally, and in accord with the Great Commission, these people, as Christians, would form their own local congregations.

That the number of believers continued to multiply in Jerusalem after persecution had driven most of them out (Acts 8:1), is proven by Acts 9:31; 12:24; 21:20.

Ordinary "elders" of the church in Jerusalem are now mentioned in addition to the apostles, who themselves were "elders" (1 Pet.5:1; 2 John 1). Then the developing form of the church further appears in the following facts:

1. Almost immediately we read of "**the whole church**" (Acts 5:11); "**the church which is in Jerusalem**" (Acts 8:1). Cf. Acts 12:5; 15:4. All those local churches were recognized and spoken of as **collectively one church**.

2. The elders met together with the apostles **for acts of government**. Proven by Acts 11:30; 15:4,6,22; 21:17, 18ff.

These two facts taken together prove that the several congregations in Jerusalem were under one government in the hands of presbyters, that is, **one presbyterial government**.

3. The whole number of Christians within the national boundaries of Israel were **one church**. For, textual criticism has conclusively established the Revised Version reading of Acts 9:31 as the true reading: "**So the church throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria . . . was multiplied**".

As in Jerusalem, so in Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, and elsewhere, and in the surrounding areas. The Lord Himself added together those being saved (Acts 2:47). Under His sovereign care the church grew by increase in numbers and in territorial extension. Indeed He made it sufficiently extensible to include all men dwelling in the whole

world. Its commission extends "to the uttermost parts of the earth". It developed in a **series of graded groups**, graded as to number of members (individual, congregational, provincial, national) and respective territory, yet **ONE CHURCH**, with its government in the hands of **presbyters**.

III. By the Command of Christ

"If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But, if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, . . ." (Matt. 8:15-20).

Clearly, here is an issue between brethren in the church involving sin, and therefore demanding settlement.

Notice, that while certainly this teaching of Jesus is for all His disciples, even for us today, He is here speaking immediately to the men whom He had already chosen and ordained to be **apostles** (verse 1. Cf. Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:14,15; Luke 6:12, 13). Here then are "two or three", any one or other of whom may be apostle, elder or non-official member of the church. They are all "brethren" (Matt. 23:8). They have been seeking to rescue a brother who seemed in danger of being lost. Apparently they have failed. Can anything more be done? Christ says, "**Tell it to the church**".

The "two or three" of verse 16, therefore, are **not a church**. They are all members of the church. Each one might even be an elder. All are now witnesses. But that is not enough. They do not have judicial authority.

Howbeit the church is at hand, the church in which there is an authority, a competence, which the "two or three" do not possess, a competence to receive an appeal, review the case, and render a decision; in a word, the competence of a judicial court.

"And if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican", i.e., as one to whom the gospel of salvation from sin is to be preached to the end that he may be saved; that he may be brought into the church with true faith and new obedience.

What Jesus continues to say in verses 18-20 must be understood in the light of what He has just said in verses 15-17; verse 20 is not a contradiction, but a consequence. What He says to His disciples is, in effect, that as members they share in the authority given to the church (verse 18), but the exercise of that authority depends on their seeking, by prayer, to know the will of "my Father who is in heaven" (verse 19), and on their proceeding together "**in my name**" (verse 20). "**In my name**" means, in accord with all that I have revealed of myself, my power and my will. The "two or

three" of verse 20, therefore, are not the "witnesses" of verse 16, but the constituted court of the local church, which may be small, having only two or three elders. But, if it be constituted according to the will of Christ, not merely in form, He himself is present "in the midst of them". Cf. 1 Cor. 5:4.

"It must needs be that offences come", false teachings will find entrance, controversies will arise, but, here is the church which Christ is building. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

This command of Christ requires subordination, "in the Lord", of all members, official and non-official alike, to the properly constituted court of the church.

IV. By Its Actual Operation in the Apostolic Church

(Acts 15:1-41; 16:4)

The command of Christ was obeyed. The main facts are:

1. A dispute arose in the church of Antioch.
2. The church of Antioch was not able to settle the matter, even with the help of Paul and Barnabas.
3. With the command of Christ, the precedents of the Jewish church, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they knew exactly what to do.
4. Appeal was made to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem whose jurisdiction they acknowledged.
5. These apostles and elders gathered together and considered the matter.
6. "Having come to one accord" by the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of John 16:13, they embodied their decision in certain "decrees".
7. These decrees were accepted as authoritative by the church of Antioch and the other churches of Syria and Cilicia, and eventually by all the churches. The matter was settled.

In connection with the above 4, 5 and 6, it is to be noted that many attended this important meeting who are called "brethren", church members not sitting officially, yet deeply concerned in the question. The appeal, however, was addressed, not to the "brethren", but to "the apostles and elders" (verse 2); only the apostles and elders gathered together to deliberate (verse 6); "all the multitude kept silence", but listened (verse 12); only the apostles and elders ordained the decrees (Act 16:4); yet "the whole church" (verse 22) did consent and concur in the decision, and the decrees were returned (verse 23) in the name of "the apostles and elders and brethren". This is important as showing that the decision was the unanimous decision of the church. Also that the church is not a court ignoring the private members, any more than it is a group of members without a court. Every member has the right of appeal; the church has the duty of rendering a decision.

Whether there was more than one local church in Antioch at this time is not entirely clear. We know that there were "a great number who believed" and were being taught (Acts 11:21, 24, 26). So a presbytery of Antioch would seem probable. But, whether the appeal was from a local church to a presbytery, or from a presbytery to a synod, meeting in Jerusalem, we have an unquestionable example of **graded courts in action in the apostolic Church**. Here is subordination of a smaller court to a larger court having a larger number of judges and a wider jurisdiction inclusive of the smaller territory.

The command of Christ has not been fully obeyed until settlement is reached, the whole series of the church courts being available to this end.

There is no question here as to **kind of authority**. The gradation of the courts is strictly according to the number of judges and the extent of their jurisdiction, under the same authority. **BUT**, there is **SAFETY FOR THE CHURCH** in the multitude of judges and the full extent of their jurisdiction.

The relationship between the members of the series of courts is purely numerical and geometrical; hence, it may be expressed by a geometrical proportion. E.g., 1 is to 7 as 7 is to 49 as 49 is to 343, and so on. These ratios are all equal. Making the numbers concrete, we have, The individual member is to his session as the session is to its presbytery as the presbytery is to its synod, and so on.

On the one hand, then, the local church is protected from being dominated by a bureau, bishop or pope. On the other hand, there is excluded a situation such as we face today, where one local church is preaching and teaching the Gospel of the Grace of God, while another, of the same denomination, a few blocks away, is preaching and teaching Modernism, denying every fundamental truth the church was instituted to uphold. And the orthodox church, having thrown away its right and court of appeal, finds itself helpless to protect even its own name.

Yet, the theory of graded courts is not enough. The courts must function according to the blueprints of God. If members of the church elect and presbyteries ordain, without due regard to the Scriptural qualifications of elders; if the elders violate their ordination vows; if the laws of God be set aside, and the courts allow this, the name and form of Presbyterianism will not save the church. If the teaching elders do not teach Presbyterianism from their pulpits, and the ruling elders do not put it into effect in the courts, this God-given bulwark of the church will be taken away.

V. By Necessary Limitations to Local Church Authority

Space permits but a few examples.

1. The church is a **living organism** (1 Cor. 12:12-30; Eph. 4:1-16), i.e., a body created to carry out the purpose of its life by means of members, parts, organs, more or less separate in function, but mutually dependent, and all wholly dependent on the Head of the body. No individual cell, no group of cells, no organ can be entirely independent. **If independent, it is not of the body.** No individual member, session, presbytery, or synod can be wholly independent; otherwise it is **not of the body.** It follows that no individual member, session, presbytery or synod has authority over another individual member, session, presbytery or synod. The right of appeal to a larger and inclusive authority rests on a mutual dependence.

No degree of independence, or of subordination in the church is absolute, but only **"in the Lord"**; subject to Christ, to the written laws of God, to the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The command of Christ proves that particular churches have power of jurisdiction in their own field, but does **not** prove that they alone have it. The fact that they are parts of a larger whole proves that they alone do **not** have it. The particular church has, of course, authority to decide matters that properly belong to it alone, but it may not alone decide matters that are common to other particular churches. Matters of faith, worship and government are of equal concern to all, therefore, may not be decided by any part independently of the whole.

It is a matter of common concern who are

admitted to the office of teaching and preaching in the church. Therefore, **Ordination is the act of presbytery** (1 Tim. 4:14; Acts 13:1-3; 6:6). This is most important since the church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). If false teachers are authorized and allowed to continue, the destruction of the church is only a matter of time. It is also of common concern who are disciplined, suspended, or excluded from the church. Censures must be subject to the whole church.

2. Some congregations have a competent, well-qualified session; other small congregations have but few elders, and these, perhaps, not sufficiently able for all issues that may demand church decision. All "saints" are indeed set apart for ministry in the church, but all do not have the same gifts of the Spirit; are not able to distinguish clearly the true from the false, or to judge accurately of the right and wrong in a case.

3. It is a matter of sad experience that a court of elders, failing to avail itself of its resources in the Word, in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, renders an untrue and unjust decision. If such be allowed to stand, it will destroy the life of the church. The church's safeguard is in the right of appeal. And the right of appeal is provided for in its **graded courts.**

Note: In preparing the above answer, use was freely made of the classic "**Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland**", by George Gillespie, together with his "**Notes on the Debates of Westminster Assembly on Church Government**", published from the original manuscripts, Edinburgh, 1846; also of "**The Apostolic Church**", by Professor Thomas Witherow, Belfast, 1869.

Wrong Tendencies in the Use of the Psalms

By J. G. Vos

"God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem" — Gen. 9:27.

The German scholar Delitzsch remarked that we are all Japhethites dwelling in the tents of Shem. The prophecy uttered by Noah was that God would enlarge Japheth, and Japheth would dwell in the tents of Shem. In the Hebrew idiom, to dwell in the tents of someone means to be the inheritor of that person's wealth and estate.

Noah's prophecy concerns the broad lines of the future development of the various branches of the human race. God would enlarge Japheth. Japheth was the ancestor of the Indo-European peoples, to which we ourselves belong. It is a fact of history that for the last 2500 years the Indo-

European peoples have been dominant in world affairs, not only in material and scientific progress, but in political control of the major part of the civilized world. This dominance is today challenged by other peoples of the world, but it has not yet been completely overthrown. However, it is not this aspect of Noah's prophecy which particularly concerns us in the present article. We are now concerned especially with the prediction that Japheth should dwell in the tents of Shem.

It is particularly in the matter of religion that the Christian people of Europe and America dwell in the tents of Shem. Our religion is an inheritance from the descendants of Shem. It has come down to us, in the providence of God, from Semitic sources.

Some people do not like this idea. In Nazi Germany before World War II there was a violent revolt against it. The so-called "German Christians" attempted to purge Christianity and the Church from Jewish influences and traditions. Some Germans went even farther than this, and brazenly returned to the idolatrous nature-worship of their pagan ancestors — the old German gods of storm and forest and mountain. But the old gods did not help them, and pagan Nazi Germany went down to dismal defeat.

It is still true that Christians of Europe and America dwell in the tents of Shem. Our religious heritage has come to us from the children of Israel, the children of Shem. Our very Christ was a Jew. Our Bible was written almost entirely by Israelites. Our religious thought-forms, vocabulary, sacraments, worship, church-government, all have come to us, humanly speaking, from Israel.

It is important to realize that this is not an accident; it is the intended purpose of God. God intended that the true, saving religion of Christianity should be given to the world through a Semitic, Israelitish channel. He purposed that Japheth should dwell in the tents of Shem. Our religion is not indigenous in our race. We Christians of the Indo-European race have a religion which came from a different source. We can never go back to the old gods of our ancestors. We have known the truth; the true light has dawned upon us. It is the light from God, but it has come to us through the channel of Israel.

Since this has been the plan and purpose of God, we should not despise it nor should we rebel against it. We might prefer that the Saviour of the world had been a Greek or a Roman, of the same race as ourselves. But God did not purpose it so. The proverb says that beggars cannot be choosers, and our position before God is that of beggars. We are thankful to have Christ as our Saviour, and since it pleased the sovereign God to bring His Son into the world through the seed of Abraham, we can only thank and praise Him for it.

What does all this imply? It certainly implies, at any rate, that we should not seek to escape or evade those features of our religion which bear the label of Shem. We should not object to what bears the stamp of Israelitish origin. To do so is to rebel against the wisdom and goodness of God. God chose that the sons of Japheth, in the matter of religion, should dwell in the tents of Shem. We should respond: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight".

There are many today who are tired of singing the Bible Psalms in the worship of God. This has various reasons, no doubt. Some are tired of singing the Psalms because they are not willing to bear the cross of being different from the big, popular churches. The other churches sing popular

hymns, and the Psalms seem to be not only different, but peculiar and old-fashioned.

Some object to the Psalms because they do not like the theology of the Psalms, with its emphasis on the righteousness and justice of God, and His destruction of His enemies.

Some object to the Psalms because they do not like the Jewish flavor and coloring of the Psalms — the names of people and places, the references to the history of the children of Israel, the Hebrew flavor of the language.

These objections to the Psalms all have one thing in common. No matter what the objection, it arises from a lack of real sympathy with and appreciation of the religion of the Bible. Those who object to the Psalms do not want to dwell in the tents of Shem. They do not like the form and pattern and structure of the religion which God has given to the world; they prefer something new and different, made by themselves. So they "heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" and "turn away their ears from the truth . . . unto fables" 2 Tim. 4:3,4).

We shall now consider some common wrong tendencies in the use of the Psalms.

I. Avoidance of the Proper Names in the Psalms

Zion occurs 38 times in the Psalter; Israel 62 times; Ephraim 5 times; Melchizedek once. There are numerous others: Oreb and Zeeb, Zeba and Zalmunna, Jacob, Lebanon, Kadesh, Jordan, Hermon, Mizar, Tyre, Shechem, Succoth, Gilead, Moab, Edom, Egypt, Ethiopia, Tarshish, Sheba, Seba, and so forth.

The objection is raised that these ancient persons and places have no connection with us today. They are just a lot of dusty history from two or three thousand years ago. Why should we sing about Zeba and Zalmunna? It sounds as if we were to sing about Hokus and Pokus, or Dasher and Prancer, Donder and Blitzen. So runs the objection. But wait. After all, do Zeba and Zalmunna have nothing to do with us today? If we are attached to the Biblical religion we will realize that they have a lot to do with us today. Our religion did not drop to us out of the sky directly from God. He gave it to us through history, and that the history of Israel. The history of Israel was a history of redemption by the almighty power of God; it was a history of overcoming powerful enemies by the almighty power of God. The enemies were real; they were contemporary manifestation of Satan's kingdom. They were terribly real. But they were crushed by the wonder-working power of almighty God, the covenant God, Jehovah, the God of Israel. This was the importance of Zeba and Zalmunna.

Our religion today, if it is Biblical Christian-

ity, is a religion of overcoming powerful enemies by the supernatural, almighty power of God. We should always think, when we read or sing about Zeba and Zalmunna, of how salvation is not by our might, nor by our power, but by the almighty power, the supernatural grace, of God.

Evil is not abstract, but concrete; it is identified with particular persons. To destroy the evil, the persons must be dealt with by God's mighty power and righteous judgment. Isaac Watts said he would make David talk like a Christian. He denatured the Psalms, and he sophisticated them. Watts quite failed to appreciate the real beauty and glory of the Psalter. Since Watts' time, some Psalm-singing denominations have shied away from the proper names in the Psalter, and have tried to screen many of them out of it. Zion is changed to "the church", and Jerusalem likewise; many of the others are omitted or smoothed over in some way. This yields us a denatured Psalter. No wonder the next step is to give up the Psalms in worship. They have already given up the real vigor and beauty and power of the Psalms by omitting the proper names.

Zion and Jerusalem are the tents of Shem, and it is God's plan for us to dwell in them. Shall we object to that? Those who try to eliminate the proper names of the Psalter show a lack of vital consciousness of the organic connection of the Gospel with the Old Testament. They fail to realize that the real meaning of these proper names, as Zion, is intimately connected with the Biblical doctrine of salvation by free grace. These proper names, and the Psalms with them in, are to be used in the worship of God to the end of the world. They are God's record, God's monument, to the great work of redemption wrought out in history of old. These proper names are not the shame and weakness of the Psalms; they are the honor and the glory of the Psalms.

II. Avoidance of the "Imprecatory" Psalms

Of the 150 Psalms in the Psalter, some six are commonly classified as "imprecatory" Psalms — the 55th, 59th, 69th, 79th, 109th and 137th. Many other Psalms contain "imprecatory" elements, namely, divinely inspired prayers for the destruction of certain wicked men, enemies of God.

The Psalter is constantly being reproached because of the "imprecatory" Psalms. It is said that these Psalms breathe a savage spirit, that they are alien to the "spirit of Jesus", that they are not suited to Christian devotion, and so forth.

These objections spring partly from a misunderstanding of the Psalms themselves. The objectors often regard them as mere human compositions. They see in them simply David's private wrath against his personal enemies. But such is not the character of these Psalms. They are divinely inspired and they are directed against

implacable enemies of God and of God's kingdom. They are so cited in the New Testament (Psalm 69:25 and 109:8 quoted in Acts 1:20). Nor are the "imprecatory" Psalms really contrary to the "spirit of Jesus" or the "spirit" of the New Testament. All that is found in them can be matched by statements of the New Testament, and none is more terrible than the words of Jesus Christ against those permanently identified with Satan's kingdom.

The objections also arise partly from a false idealism in religion, which regards Christianity as merely a matter of ideals. Christianity is not merely a matter of ideals; it is not even merely salvation; Christianity is **divine redemption from an objective realm of evil** — from the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, from Satan's kingdom.

Christianity involves divine judgment on sin and sinners as truly as it involves divine redemption for God's people. The false notion that God is nothing but love is responsible for much of the opposition to these Psalms. The present writer recalls hearing a young woman, a member of a Psalm-singing church, say of Psalm 137: "I just HATE that Psalm!" The most charitable explanation of this attitude toward a part of God's holy Word is that this young woman really understood neither Psalm 137, nor the real character of Biblical religion as divine redemption from an objective realm of evil. She had no doubt been fed on a false religious idealism which thought of God as nothing but love, and left His justice entirely out of the picture.

Such is a very one-sided view of God. "Behold the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22) — not only the goodness of God, but also the severity of God. The Psalms give the whole picture, not just one side. They portray not only God's love and salvation, but His justice and retribution meted out to wicked men. Christ's kingdom is not advanced without Satan's kingdom being destroyed.

III. Emphasis on the Subjective Element Only

There is observable a constant tendency to use only those portions of the Psalms which deal with subjective salvation — a Christian's religious experience — such as the consciousness of God's love, of forgiveness, of God's care. The tendency is to regard these experiences of the Christian life as divorced from the foundation on which God has built them, namely, historical redemption from an objective realm of evil. Take, for example, Psalm 118, that incomparable song of gracious, supernatural redemption, a song which will stir the very heart and soul of any Christian who loves the Biblical religion. This 118th Psalm formed the climax of the great Hallel which our Saviour and His disciples sang after the institution of the Lord's Supper, before they left the upper room to go to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Here is the Christian's subjective experience of salvation, the wonder of salvation by divine grace:

O praise the Lord for he is good;
His grace is ever sure.
Now let the tribes of Isr'el say,
His mercy doth endure.

In my distress I sought the Lord,
Jehovah answered me;
He set me in a spacious place,
A place of liberty.

The mighty Lord is on my side,
I will not be afraid;
For anything that man can do
I shall not be dismayed.

Salvation's joyful song is heard
Where'er the righteous dwell;
The right hand of the mighty Lord
In valor doth excel.

I shall not die, but live and tell
Jehovah's power to save;
The Lord hath sorely chastened me,
But spared me from the grave.

But this exultation in personal salvation is based on the objective foundation of historical divine redemption from evil. The same Psalm which exults in subjective salvation also glories in the foundation of objective, historical redemption:

That stone is made head corner stone
Which builders did despise;
This is the doing of the Lord,
And wondrous in our eyes.

The Lord is God, and he to us
Hath made the light arise;
O bind ye to the altar's horns
With cords the sacrifice.

There you have it. Salvation's joyful song is heard where'er the righteous dwell, true; but only because there was One who was despised and rejected of men, who yet was made the head stone of the corner by God, and bound as a sacrifice to the horns of the altar. Every time we sing those solemn, sacred words we should think of how our blessed Lord was nailed to the cross of Calvary for our redemption.

Back of our personal experience of God's love, God's forgiveness, God's care, God's answer to prayer; back of our joy, our peace of mind, our hope — back of all these lies a historical work of redemption, without which our Christian experience today could not exist. This historical work of redemption is wrought out by the almighty power of God in human history, from Genesis to Revelation, from creation to consummation, but

especially in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the solid granite rock on which our personal experience of salvation rests. Such is the structure of real, Biblical Christianity. It is solid, hard and strong as granite, the true rock of ages, the foundation of God's almighty work of historical redemption from evil. In the Bible the present subjective experience of the Christian is joined organically with this historical work of redemption. What God has joined together let not man put asunder. To sever these two is basically wrong, and the tendency to do so, which is observable on every hand even in Psalm-singing churches, is an indication of how far we are being influenced, unconsciously, by modern religious liberal idealism.

The trend of modern hymnbooks is largely toward the over-emphasis of the subjective experience at the expense of the objective foundation. Even those churches which do not use the hymns, often show the same tendency by people's manner of picking and choosing among the Psalms. A Psalm will be announced for singing, and two or three stanzas dealing with the objective foundation will be omitted, while the remaining stanzas, dealing with subjective experience, will be sung. Thus we put asunder what God has joined together. And in doing so we reveal a deadly weakness, a serious failure to grasp the real character and structure of Biblical religion.

Those very features of the Psalms which are objectionable to the modern spirit are the real strength and glory of the Psalter. They are essential to its truly Biblical character and emphasis.

Those who love one aspect of the Psalms only, while finding other aspects alien to their religious life, or even unpleasant and objectionable, are already involved in a process which, if not reversed, will in the course of time lead to the complete rejection of the Psalter as the manual of praise. But that is not all. This same process, if not checked, will in the course of time lead to a complete departure from the Biblical religion of divine redemption from an objective realm of evil, to an alien type of religion, a type of religion which is merely subjective and idealistic.

The Psalms are balanced, they are free from all one-sided emphases. They have stood the test of time. Let us hold on to them, love them, glory in them, sing them with all our heart and soul, and never, never apologize for them or be ashamed of them. They are our heritage, a part of the tents of Shem that God has planned and pitched for us to dwell in.

"This world's problems can never be solved by those who make this world the object of their desires. This world cannot ultimately be bettered if you think that this world is all. To move the world you must have a place to stand."

— J. Gresham Machen

Sketches from Our History

Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER VI

THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION

8. Luther at the Wartburg

The Reformer Martin Luther left the city of Worms on April 26, 1521. His safe-conduct would expire on May 7. While enroute home to Wittenberg, Luther mysteriously disappeared. None seemed to know what had happened to him. A report was circulated that his dead body, pierced by a dagger, had been found in a mine. Many jumped to the conclusion that Luther had been murdered by the pope's servants. They were mistaken, however, though it was not until long afterwards that the truth about what had happened to Luther became publicly known.

As he journeyed homeward to Wittenberg, Luther was passing through a forest in Thuringia. Suddenly he was seized by a group of armed knights of the Elector Frederick, and hurried off to the castle called the Wartburg. This was a large and grim fortress on a hill in the region of the town of Eisenach. For many miles it was surrounded by forests. Here Luther found protection and a safe retreat. He was disguised as a knight—Junker George—wearing, according to a picture painted in Luther's time, a moustache, a feathered cap, a green slashed doublet and a sword. Hardly anyone knew that "Squire George" was the excommunicated monk Martin Luther.

For ten months Luther remained in hiding in the Wartburg, protected by the power of the Elector Frederick. This period of retirement was really a great benefit to the cause of the Reformation, for it gave Luther an opportunity for study and constructive work. Luther now took up the study of Hebrew and Greek more thoroughly than he had before done. He wrote many letters and treatises. And most important of all, it was here that Luther worked on the translation of the Bible into the German language. There had been German versions of the Bible before Luther's time but they were not in a form of the language suited for the use of the common people. Luther produced a German version of the Bible which spoke straight to the hearts of the people of Germany. He also had a deep influence on the German language by his Bible translation.

The translation of the New Testament was completed and published in 1522. It became popular almost immediately, to the great dismay of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. This putting the Word of God in the hands of the people gave new power to the Reformation. The people were intensely

eager to obtain and read Luther's translation of the Scriptures. When the people had a first-hand knowledge of the contents of God's Word, the Romish priests could no longer take advantage of their ignorance to impose on them. Many of the Roman Catholic clergy and monks were themselves very ignorant of the Scriptures, as, indeed, Luther himself had once been. The free circulation of the Word of God in the language of the people proved a bulwark of the Reformation that Rome could not overthrow.

We have not space to relate all the later events of Luther's life. We must, however, say something about Luther's marriage. On June 13, 1525, Luther married Catherine von Bora, an ex-nun. She was one of nine nuns whom Luther had helped to flee from their convent in 1523. Luther rightly held that monastic vows of perpetual celibacy are contrary to the Word of God and therefore not binding on anyone. It was therefore entirely right and proper for Luther to marry Catherine. But from that day to this Rome has not ceased to reproach Luther for his marriage. Some extremely hard things have been said about him.

Luther's marriage was a happy one and his home life was an object lesson in what a Christian family ought to be. The family was blessed with six children. Luther was deeply devoted to his wife and children. The change in Luther's personal life from his early days as a deeply sin-burdened monk to the spiritual and temporal happiness of his later years may be regarded as symbolic of the great change that was passing over Germany and the Christian world. Luther died peacefully in Christ on February 18, 1546.

(To be continued)

"We shall also . . . assist and defend all those that enter into this League and Covenant, in the maintaining and pursuing thereof; and shall not suffer ourselves, directly or indirectly, by whatsoever combination, persuasion, or terror, to be divided and withdrawn from this blessed union and conjunction, whether to make defection to the contrary part, or to give ourselves to a detestable indifferency or neutrality. . . ."

—The Solemn League and Covenant (1643), Article VI

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"What we win by prayer, we must wear with praise"

—Matthew Henry

"This doctrine (of brotherly love) is not understood by the world, because the greater part are dazzled by all sorts of masks or disguises. Thus, fictitious sanctity dazzles the eyes of almost all men, while love is neglected, or, at least, driven into the farthest corner."

—John Calvin

"Let the preacher take care to keep to the text and attend to what is before him and make the people understand that. Those preachers who say whatever comes into their mouths remind me of a maid going to market. When she meets another maid she stops and chats a while, then she meets another and talks with her too, and then a third and a fourth, and so gets to market very slowly. So with preachers who wander off the text; they would like to say everything at one time, but they can't."

— Martin Luther

"The whole life of man, until he is converted to Christ, is a ruinous labyrinth of wanderings."

—John Calvin

"Blush, sinner, blush! Ah, that thou hadst grace to blush."

— John Bunyan

"The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving false evidence; suborning false witnesses; wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause; out-facing and overbearing the truth; passing unjust sentence; calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wick-

ed according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked; forgery; concealing the truth; undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, tale-bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions; flattering, vain-glorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others; denying the gifts and graces of God; aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessary discovering of infirmities; raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defence; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any, endeavoring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt; fond admiration; breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are of good report; and practicing or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name."

— The Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. 145

"There is nothing that Satan more desires than to get good men in his sieve to sift them as wheat, that if possible he may leave them nothing but bran; no grace, but the very husk and shell of religion."

— John Bunyan

"Four sorts of zeal are to be condemned: blind zeal, Rom. 10:2; bitter zeal, James 3:14; proud zeal, 2 Kings 10; partial zeal, Matt. 23:23."

— Philip Henry

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.

MYSTERY. A truth which could never be discovered by human reason, but can be known only by special divine revelation (such as the truth stated in 1 Cor. 15:51).

NATURE. The orderly, uniform system of the universe, operating according to the law of cause and effect as ordained by God, against the background of which God's miraculous acts stand

out in sharp contrast to the ordinary course of events.

NESTORIANISM. The ancient heresy which taught that in Christ there are not merely two natures (divine and human), but two persons, one divine, the other human.

NICOLAITANS. A sect of heretics mention-

ed in Rev. 2:6, 15, who taught that Christians are free to indulge in the lusts of the flesh.

OATH. "A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth, or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth". (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, XXII.1)

ORDINANCES OF GOD. Those institutions or practices which are of divine authority in human society, such as the family, the church and the state; baptism; the Lord's Supper; church government and discipline; etc.

ORDINATION. The act of setting a person apart to office in the church by prayer and the

laying on of hands. (The ordained officers of the New Testament Church are ministers (pastors, bishops or teaching elders), ruling elders, and deacons). According to the Presbyterian form of church government, ordination is the act of a "presbytery" or plurality of presbyters (teaching and ruling elders).

ORTHODOXY. Literally, "straight teaching"; that religious doctrine which conforms to a fixed and recognized standard. The true standard of orthodoxy is the Word of God, by which all teachings are to be tested and measured. Subordinate standards of orthodoxy, such as Confessions of Faith and catechisms, are valid and proper in so far as they are in accord with God's revelation, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Studies in the Epistle to the Romans

LESSON 66

THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES AND THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS. 9:1 to 11:36, Cont.

F. God's rejection of the Jews was not Final for there is to be a Conversion of Many of them to Christ. 11:11-36, Cont.

Man cannot place God under any obligation, because God Himself is the Source, the Cause and the End of all things. "It is for the display of His character everything exists, and is directed, as the highest and noblest of all possible objects. Creatures are as nothing, less than vanity and nothing in comparison with God. Human knowledge, power, and virtue, are mere glimmering reflections from the brightness of the divine glory. That system of religion, therefore, is best in accordance with the character of God, the nature of man, and the end of the universe, in which all things are of, through, and to God; and which most effectually leads men to say, NOT UNTO US, BUT UNTO THY NAME BE ALL THE GLORY!" (Charles Hodge).

This brings us to the conclusion of what is commonly called the doctrinal part of the Epistle to the Romans. In these twelve chapters God's plan of salvation has been presented and defended more clearly and completely than in any other part of the Bible. "The leading principle of all is, that God is the source of all good; that in fallen man there is neither merit nor ability; that salvation, consequently, is all of grace, as well sanctification as pardon, as well election as eternal glory. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Charles Hodge).

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

A. The Duty of Cultivating Practical Personal Holiness. 12:1-21

Christian devotion to God

In this and the following chapters we have a message, not to the unsaved, but to Christian people. An unsaved person cannot even begin to live the kind of life here described. It is his duty to live that kind of life, but he cannot, until he is saved and given the desire and the power to do so by divine grace. How wrong and foolish, then, is that type of contemporary evangelism which addresses the unsaved sinner with an invitation to adopt "the Christian way of life" or "Christ's way of life". Such "evangelism" contains no evangel — no Gospel — but consists merely of good advice in the form of ethical teachings.

The apostle Paul here presents many practical duties of the Christian life. This chapter covers just about every kind of Christian duty. Yet these are not just a list of unrelated items. They are related as the features of Christian character and conduct.

These features of Christian character are all to be taken together, not singly or separately. We may not single out and stress some, while omitting or neglecting the rest. For example, 12:16a, "Be of the same mind one toward another" must not be allowed to eliminate 12:9b, "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good".

These two obligations must be taken together and always kept in balance with each other.

Holiness is not adequate if it is lop-sided. It is not adequate if it is not complete and well-balanced. Suppose someone is a wonderful church officer, but at home he is so mean that his family is always unhappy and miserable. That is not true Christian holiness. Or suppose some person is an ideal husband or wife or parent in the home, but is never willing to make any efforts or sacrifices for the work of the Church. Such is not true Christian holiness because it is one-sided, it is out of balance.

We know that an airplane propeller which rotates at tremendous speed must be carefully balanced. If not, it cannot function properly. A pilot once made a forced landing and one tip of his propeller hit the ground and several inches were broken off. What could he do? He cut the same amount off from the opposite tip, thus balancing the propeller again, and so was able to reach home safely. Even an ordinary four-blade electric fan will not work right if one blade is removed, leaving three. An ordinary flywheel is useless unless it is balanced. So it is with Christian character.

There are many one-sided Christians, whose character is incomplete and lacks balance. What should they do? Certainly they should not use the method adopted by the airplane pilot for emergency repairs. We must gain balance not by cutting down where we are long, but by building up where we are short.

Holiness, or Consecration to God. 12:1.

Holiness really includes all the other features of character and life which are to follow. Holiness is not an abstraction in itself, it is not something that can be isolated. Holiness is not really co-ordinate with meekness, kindness, earnestness, etc. Rather, holiness includes all these, and they are the fruits of holiness in a Christian's life.

Holiness is consecration to God and His service. This, we are informed, is our "reasonable service". It is what God can reasonably expect of us.

We find holiness summarized in 12:21, in the words: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good". Evil in this universe is no figment of the imagination; it is real; it is powerful; it must be faced and reckoned with. Either we will be overcome of evil, or we will overcome evil with good. We cannot be neutral or non-combatant in the conflict with evil. If we do not wage war against evil, evil will conquer us. But by God's grace we are enabled to wage war against evil and overcome evil with good.

Holiness is not an abstraction which we can have by itself. Holiness always takes the form of concrete Christian virtues which we find taught in this chapter. Holiness in itself is complete consecration to God; holiness in its effects is overcoming evil with good; holiness in its manifestations is helpfulness, earnestness, meekness, kindness, and so forth. If we lack these specific Christian virtues, we do not have practical Christian holiness.

Questions:

1. Why cannot man place God under any obligation?
2. What is the leading principle of God's plan of salvation as revealed in the first eleven chapters of Romans?
3. To what class of people is the message of Romans 12-15 addressed?
4. What is wrong with the type of "evangelism" which addresses the unsaved sinner with an invitation to adopt "Jesus' way of life"?
5. What is meant by saying that the features of Christian character must be balanced?
6. How is balance to be gained in cultivating Christian character?
7. What is the relation between holiness and the various features of Christian character?
8. What is the meaning of holiness?
9. How is holiness summarized in 12:21?
10. Why can we not be neutral in the conflict between good and evil?

LESSON 67

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

A. The Duty of Cultivating Practical Personal Holiness. 12:1-21, Cont.

The secret of the source of holiness. 12:2

12:2 tells us the secret of the source of holiness. First of all, we do not get it by copying the ways of this world. "And be not conformed to this world". As a matter of fact, the character of this world, and of worldly people, that is, people

who are not saved Christians, is just the opposite of the Christian character described in this chapter. The worldly character is unholy, selfish, proud, unkind, and so forth.

What the Christian knows to be wrong and sinful, the world regards as legitimate. Take such a simple matter as Sabbath desecration, for example. We can easily think of many illustrations. And what the Christian knows to be right and his

duty, the world often regards with contempt and even ridicule. For example, to love our enemies is a Christian duty, yet the world regards it with ridicule and contempt. We cannot get holiness by copying the world or by acquiescing in the world's standards. If we accept the world's standards of right and wrong, we will sin against God and injure ourselves. In matters of conduct and conscience the world is seriously in error. If we follow the world we run the risk of God's displeasure and righteous judgments. It is neither right nor safe to follow the will of the majority in matters of religion and morals.

Verse 2 goes on to tell how we do get holiness. Not by being conformed to this world, but by being transformed by the renewing of our mind. But what does this mean? We might perhaps paraphrase it thus: "Do not let your life be a copy of the ways of the world, but have a changed character by receiving a new heart, so that it will be possible for you to live your life according to the will of God".

"The renewing of your mind"—getting a new mind—is the same thing as regeneration, or being born again, except that we should understand that "the renewing of our mind" is not a once-for-all transaction, but something often repeated, and indeed a continuous process in the Christian's life. This process begins with regeneration, or the new birth, and it continues throughout the Christian's life. It is the continuous working out of the new birth. Being born again is the beginning of the renewing of a person's mind. Sanctification is the continuation of the renewing of a person's mind. As in the case of the natural life, so in the Christian life, first there is birth and then there follows growth.

"Transformed by the renewing of your mind"—changed by receiving a new heart and a new way of thinking. The unsaved person thinks wrongly about everything connected with God, his soul and his duty. But when a person is transformed by the renewing of his mind, God puts that person's mind on the right track and he begins to think aright about these matters. He repents of his old sins. He begins to hate what he once loved. He begins to love and enjoy what he once hated. He is renewed in the spirit of his mind.

But how do we become transformed by the renewing of our mind? This is not something that we can do for ourselves. A railway locomotive can run when everything is all right, but if it is off the track, there is one thing it cannot do: it cannot get itself back on the track again by its own power or efforts. First it must be set back on the rails, and then after that it can run as it was designed to run. We cannot transform ourselves. We cannot renew our own heart or mind. We cannot of ourselves begin to love what we naturally hate, nor begin to hate what we naturally love. The Bible emphasizes this truth by the famous ques-

tion: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23).

We cannot accomplish this for ourselves. But there is a way. This change comes into a person's life by the miraculous, almighty power of God. It is the work of God the Holy Spirit. It is mysterious; it cannot be analyzed or explained; the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit (John 3:8). It is mysterious, yet it is real, it is powerful, it brings obvious results. It changed Saul the persecutor into Paul the Christian. It changed the cannibals of the South Sea Islands into law-abiding, industrious, useful Christian people who saved the lives and ministered to the needs of allied fliers who were forced to bail out over the jungles during World War II. It changed our own ancestors from furious, fierce, lawless, wild savages and barbarians, as they were two thousand years ago, to civilized Christian peoples — imperfect, it is true, often inconsistent, but still very different from what they were before Christianity reached them in the forests and wilderness of northern Europe and the British Isles. The renewing of the mind by the Holy Spirit is a reality. It brings results.

Since this change is the work of God the Holy Spirit, we should always seek this change from Him, and always give Him the honor and glory of it. Do not dare to take any credit to yourself because you are different from the world. If you are not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of your mind, remember that the credit for this does not belong to you. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, and none of us can change his own character or heart. It is God who has made us to differ from the unsaved world. To God alone belongs the credit and the praise and the honor and the glory. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).

Questions:

1. Why can we not gain holiness by being conformed to this world?
2. What is the difference between the Christian's standard of right and duty, and the world's standard?
3. What is the meaning of the clause: "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"?
4. What is the relation of regeneration to the renewing of our mind?
5. What is the relation of sanctification to the renewing of our mind?

6. Why can we not accomplish the renewing of our mind for ourselves?

7. Give some examples from Christian history of people who were transformed by the renewing of their mind.

8. Who is the source and agent of this change called "the renewing of our mind"?

9. Why are we not entitled to any credit for the renewing of our mind?

LESSON 68

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

A. The Duty of Cultivating Practical Personal Holiness. 12:1-21, Cont..

Helpfulness, or Practical Concern for our Fellow Christians. 12:4-8

We shall omit discussion of verse 3 for the time being. This verse deals with humility or meekness, which we shall consider later in connection with some other verses of the chapter. Verses 4-8 deal with our relation to our fellow Christians. We cannot have real holiness without having helpfulness too. Centuries ago many people had a very false idea of holiness. They thought that they could run away from the world and shut themselves up in a monastery or convent, or even all alone in a hermit's cell out in the forest somewhere, and there cultivate holiness by prayer and meditation, isolated from the society of their fellow men. There are people in the world who still think that way — not only the monks and nuns in Roman Catholic institutions, but there are also some Protestants who seem to have a somewhat similar idea of holiness. But Biblical holiness is not like that. It is really a very practical matter. It expresses itself, not in running away from our fellow men, but in helpfulness to them. If we are truly holy, we will be concerned about the welfare and progress of our fellow Christians. We will realize that we cannot live the Christian life all alone. We will understand that we are all members of a body, and that our individual Christian life is connected with the lives of a great many other Christian people.

Each one of us has a part to perform as a member of that body, the Church, the body of Christ. We are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Each and every one of us has a function to perform. Our function is unique no one else can replace us; God has called each Christian to that particular place and function in the body of Christ.

At this point we ought to guard against two common mistakes. First of all, in saying that each of us has a function to perform as a member of the body of Christian people, we do not mean that each person must have an official function to perform in the church as an organization. This portion of Scripture is dealing with something broader than merely official service in the organized church, such as the service of ministers, elders, deacons, teachers, and so forth. These official

functions are only a part; they are not the whole matter, by any means. The service of Christian helpfulness which Paul is discussing is broader and more inclusive than official service in the church. For example, note verse 8, "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity (or liberality)" — this does not necessarily mean some official function of church officers, though that may be included, but the act of any Christian in giving something to the poor and needy or in contributing something to the support of the Gospel. Again, "he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness" (12:8). Clearly what is spoken of is something broader than official functions in the organized church. We can serve God faithfully and well and be a real help to our fellow Christians, without holding office in the organized church. Every private Christian is a king and priest unto God.

It is important to emphasize this because there exists a tendency to think that every church member must have some sort of official function or duty in the church. This is not only an unbiblical idea, but it leads to great evils in practice. Not only are people assigned to positions or tasks for which they are not qualified, but they are thereby led to have a wrong idea of Christian service and to neglect, it may be, the real service that God would have them do. Moreover this tendency leads to the multiplication of offices, committees, and organizations for the mere purpose of providing functions for so many people. Church organization should be kept simple and workable. The tendency to multiply and complicate organization is a bad tendency. Ships are not built so that somebody can be captain of them; they are built because they are needed to transport people and goods. Organizations should not be set up just to keep more people busy about "church work", but only to meet a real and definite need.

In the second place, we should not make the mistake of supposing that every Christian can be helpful in exactly the same way as other Christians. Many people make this mistake. They measure all pastors and their work by some one pastor whom they have admired; all elders by some one elder, and so on. But actually each Christian's capacity for service is special and unique. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us . . ." (12:6). Each of us has his own gift, bestowed on him by the Holy Spirit. We should not seek or desire, then, to be

just like someone else; nor should we complain or be dissatisfied because our capacities are different from other people's. Rather, we should seek to discover what particular gift God has bestowed on us, and then use it for the glory of God and the benefit of our fellow Christians. That is the pathway to true helpfulness.

Questions:

1. What is the general subject of 12:4-8?
2. What false idea of holiness was common hundreds of years ago?

3. Why can we not live the Christian life all alone?

4. Why is it not correct to say that every Christian must have some **official** function to perform in the organized church?

5. What harm is done by multiplying organizations so that more people can be kept busy with "church work"?

6. What verse shows that it is a mistake to suppose that all Christians can be helpful in the same way?

7. What should be our attitude toward our own gift bestowed on us by the Holy Spirit?

LESSON 69

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

A. The Duty of Cultivating Practical Personal Holiness. 12:1-21, Cont.

Helpfulness, or Practical Concern for our Fellow Christians. 12:4-8, Cont.

God is glorified not only by Christian ministers, but also by Christian farmers, Christian business men and Christian school teachers, by Christian people in every lawful occupation and walk of life — people who will take their Christianity seriously and will seek both holiness and helpfulness in their daily life.

In China missionaries often had to try to discourage people from trying to become preachers. Many were converted so wonderfully that they immediately wanted to go to a school and learn to be a preacher. It was necessary to impress on such people's minds that their conversion to Christ did not imply that they were called to official service, and that there were many other ways to serve God besides the official preaching function of the Church. God is glorified by Christian business men, Christian farmers, Christian soldiers, Christian policemen, Christian carpenters, Christian factory workers, Christian mothers and housewives, just as truly as by Christian preachers.

Paul is stressing Christian helpfulness as an expression of Christian holiness. He mentions various Christian activities and duties: prophecy, ministry, exhorting, giving, ruling, showing mercy. Prophecy here means what we would ordinarily call preaching today, the giving of a sermon or discourse in the assembly of the Church. Ministry refers to any kind of service or duty in the Church. Teaching and exhortation are not necessarily distinct from prophecy; they may describe the same work from a different point of view.

What we should note here is that Paul commands us each to "wait on" his own particular work. The Christian who ministers is to "wait on"

his ministering, the one who exhorts is to "wait on" his exhorting, the one who teaches is to "wait on" his teaching, etc. Note that in the English Bible the words "let us wait" are in italics, indicating that they are not found in the Greek text, but have been added in the English translation because the idiom of our language requires them to make the grammar and sense complete. In the Greek it is just, "Or ministry, on ministering", etc. That is to say, each of us is to concentrate on what God has committed to us to do. Each of us is to pay particular attention to his own particular task and his own special opportunity to be helpful to others.

There is hardly anything that glorifies God and helps the Church more than each person strictly minding his or her own business, as God has committed it to him or her. Remember the saying of Jesus to Peter when Peter asked about John, "Lord, and what shall this man do?". Jesus replied, ". . . what is that to thee? Follow thou me" (John 21:21,22).

Never mind if someone else makes a mistake sometimes, or if someone else fails in his task sometimes, or if someone else does not perform his task as well as we think we ourselves could perform it. Let each one of us concentrate on our own service to God, in the sphere and circumstances in which God has placed us. If we have been called to special office in the Church, let us concentrate on fulfilling the duties of our office faithfully. If we are private Christians, let us concentrate on helpfulness to our fellow Christians in the ways that God places before us.

Any amount of trouble can be caused in a church by a meddling spirit on the part of a few people. To be "a busybody in other men's matters" (Greek, literally, a supervisor of other people's affairs) is forbidden in God's Word, and is classed with such sins as murder and theft (1 Peter 4:15). Yet this is hardly an uncommon sin, and it is a sin that has enabled the devil to do great

harm to the Church. Sometimes one member of a church, or a little group, will carry on such a continuous fault-finding and criticism of the work of the pastor, the elders or the deacons, that their work is greatly undermined and the Church as a whole greatly disheartened and discouraged. Yet the fault-finders and self-appointed critics may themselves be doing nothing or very little in the way of Christian service. Their meddling destroys the Church. If there are legitimate complaints or criticisms they should be presented, in a friendly and loving way, to the persons directly concerned, and if that fails, complaint should be made in an orderly, lawful way to the courts of the Church. But continuous under-cover fault-finding and criticism of others, whom God has not placed under our jurisdiction, is very sinful.

We might think of any piece of machinery — an automobile, for example. Each and every part has its function to perform. A spark plug cannot do the work of a carburetor, nor can a gear-shift take the place of a steering-wheel. Each part has its specific function to perform, and when all are working harmoniously according to their proper functions, then true progress is possible. The maker of such an automobile will receive credit for having built an excellent machine, and the owner will derive satisfaction from the harmony and helpfulness of all the parts.

But it takes very little, sometimes, to stop an

automobile entirely. A single broken wire will stop the most powerful car, if it is the right wire. Two or three drops of water inside the distributor will bring a speeding machine to a stop. Think how much trouble two or three Christians can make if they cease to be helpful and become a stumbling-block to their fellow Christians. How important it is that we all live and work together in helpfulness and harmony.

Questions:

1. What other callings besides preaching can glorify God?
2. Why do not missionaries in foreign fields encourage every convert to try to become a preacher?
3. What is meant by "prophecy" in this chapter?
4. What is meant by "ministry"?
5. Why are the words "let us wait" in 12:7 printed in italics?
6. On what is every Christian to concentrate?
7. What does God's Word say about being a busybody in other people's matters?
8. What troubles are caused by meddling and fault-finding with the Christian service of others?

LESSON 70

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

A. The Duty of Cultivating Practical Personal Holiness. 12:1-21, Cont.

The Obligation of Christian Love. 12:9,10

"Let love be without dissimulation". Dissimulation means pretence, hypocrisy. Presumably "love" in verse 9 means love to all men, since love for our fellow Christians is specially mentioned as "brotherly love" in verse 10. So in our love for our fellow men, we are to be sincere, without pretence or hypocrisy. There is a kind of love which consists merely in words, without deeds. It is a mere pretence or sham. We may talk about how much we love our neighbor, yet shut our eyes to his need and pass by as did the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan. There is no room in the Christian life for shams or deceptions. Our love for our fellow men is to be sincere and genuine.

"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good". "The words **evil** and **good**, in this passage, may be understood of moral good and evil; and the exhortation be considered as a general direction to hate the one and love the other. But the great majority of commentators, out of regard to the context, take the terms in a restrict-

ed sense, making the former mean **injurious**, and the latter **kind**. The sense of the whole verse would then be, 'Let love be sincere; strive to avoid what is injurious to others, and earnestly endeavor to do what is kind and useful'. As the words themselves admit of either of these interpretations, the choice between them depends upon the context. The latter is, on this ground, perhaps to be preferred" (Charles Hodge).

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another". Here we have a command which specifically requires love for our fellow Christians. The Greek word here used for "kindly affectioned" is a word which is used to express the strong natural affection between parents and children. It may also be used of any tender affection. "Here, no doubt, the idea is, that Christians should love each other with the same sincerity and tenderness as if they were the nearest relatives (Charles Hodge). But how far short we fall in the practice of this! Some churches might almost be described as hotbeds of hatred and enmity, with member set against member and group against group. Sometimes persons who might be considering becoming members get an inside view of such feuding

and enmity, and immediately decide against joining such a church.

"In honor preferring one another". This sentence, as translated in the King James Version, must be understood as an exhortation to humility. But the Greek word translated "preferring" means to lead, to go before, to set an example. And the Greek word translated "honor" may mean respect or kindness. Charles Hodge gives the following as a possible paraphrase of the clause: "as to respect and kindness going before each other, or setting an example one to another". The Revised Standard Version translates it: "outdo one another in showing honor". "It is not only an injunction of politeness, but that in all acts of respect and kindness we should take the lead. Instead of waiting for others to honor us, we should be beforehand with them in the manifestation of respect" (Charles Hodge).

The Obligation of Christian Earnestness. 12:11-13

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality." Here we have presented some eight Christian duties all of which may be summed up under the term "earnestness".

First of all, the Christian should be a busy person, not slothful in business. He should be active about his daily occupation of earning a living. This applies, of course, to everybody except those who by reason of youth, age, sickness or infirmity are unable to work. A man may have a fortune in stocks and bonds, but if he is a Christian he will not spend his days in idleness nor will he squander them in selfish pleasures; he will occupy himself with useful work, not because he has to work in order to eat, but because God requires a busy, active life of every Christian. Even those who do not have to work to earn a living, must work to serve and please God. It is a sin not to work. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work" is a divine commandment just as truly as "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy". The person who wastes his time during the week in idleness or foolishness is breaking the moral law of God just as truly as the person who does unnecessary work on the sabbath day.

Next, the Christian is to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. We might paraphrase "fervent in spirit" as "enthusiastic". We are to be enthusiastic about our religion, enthusiastic in serving the Lord. Are we enthusiastic about our religion, or do we regard it as more or less of an unpleasant duty? Would we be willing to die for our faith, as the martyrs did?

Communism has gained half the world and everyone knows that real Communists are enthusiastic for their Communist faith. We can call it

fanaticism if we wish, but the fact remains that they are willing to make sacrifices and even to die for their faith. Is Christianity losing the battle because Christians do not take their faith as seriously as Communists take theirs?

Someone has said that it is really much harder to live for one's religion than to die for it. No doubt there is much truth in this statement. Perhaps we in America are not likely to be called to suffer a martyr's death, though it is certainly possible. But at any rate we are called upon to live for our religion — to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. We are called to Christian earnestness. If we really have salvation, if the Spirit of God is really working in our hearts and lives we will be dead in earnest about our religion, and we will be dead in earnest about life itself.

This earnestness will be manifested not only in our daily tasks, not only in our enthusiasm about our religion, but also as we see in verse 12, by "rejoicing in hope", by being "patient in tribulation", and by "continuing instant in prayer". We will always have a deep happiness because of our Christian hope, the hope of eternal glory, of which God has told us that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him". This happiness will be deeper than all our frequent troubles. If we are called upon, in God's providence, to suffer tribulation, as all of us are at some time and in some way, we will not become sour or bitter by this experience. We will show our Christian earnestness by being patient in tribulation.

And we will make prayer the habit and practice of our lives. We will not only pray in special emergencies — not just when we happen to find ourselves faced with death from starvation and thirst on a rubber raft out in the ocean somewhere — but we will pray daily, continuing instant in prayer. It sounds easy, of course, but it is perhaps the hardest of all Christian duties to perform. Satan has so many ways of diverting us from it and making us discouraged.

A story is told to the effect that Satan decided to go out of business and offered to sell his tools to the highest bidder. He was preparing to auction them off and had each tool marked with a price tag stating the lowest bid he would accept on that tool. Most had ordinary prices marked on them, but at one side there lay a wedge-shaped tool with an extremely high price marked on the tag. Someone asked Satan why he placed such a high price on what appeared to be a common wedge. He replied: "That is a special tool; it succeeds when all others fail. It is called Discouragement, and I can nearly always depend on it to destroy the happiness and usefulness of Christians whom I cannot influence by any of my ordinary methods or temptations."

The great enemy of prayer is discouragement. But by faith and Christian earnestness it can be overcome. Remember the story of Giant Despair in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of "dissimulation"?
2. What two interpretations of 12:9b ("Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good") are possible, and which is probably the correct interpretation?
3. What is the meaning of the Greek word for "kindly affectioned" in 12:10?
4. What kind of love should we have toward our fellow Christians?
5. What is the true meaning and force of 12:10b ("in honor preferring one another")?

6. What Christian obligation is set forth in 12:11-13?

7. Why should every Christian lead a busy and industrious life?

8. What is the teaching of God's word on the subject of slothfulness?

9. What is said about the duty of working in the Ten Commandments?

10. Is it really harder to live for our religion than to die for it, and if so, why?

11. Do Christians equal Communists in enthusiasm for their faith, and if not, what may be the reasons for this?

12. What is the effect of discouragement in the Christian life, and how may discouragement be overcome?

LESSON 71

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

A. The Duty of Cultivating Practical Holiness. 12:1-21, Cont.

The Obligation of Christian Meekness. 12:3, 14-21

There is a great deal about Christian meekness in this chapter. But, first of all, what do we mean by meekness? Verse 3 almost provides a definition of meekness: "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith". Meekness is also called humility, humbleness, lowliness of mind, etc. Also such terms as gentleness, forbearance, condescension, are closely related in meaning to meekness.

Meekness is really a kind of courage, and that, the very highest kind of courage. We might think that meekness is the opposite of courage. But really meekness is the very highest and noblest kind of courage. Meekness is the calm courage that dares to face the realities of one's own life. Meekness is the courage that enables a person to admit a wrong; the courage that enables a person to say "I am sorry" and to ask for forgiveness. Meekness is the courage that enables a person to face suffering without panic. Meekness is the courage that enables a person to experience **serious injustice** without becoming cynical and bitter about it.

Meekness is the courage that dares to give up the ambition to be great and important, and is willing to take a lowly place and to do one's best for God in ordinary surroundings and circumstances. Meekness is the courage that dares to crucify human pride and vanity and selfishness, and dares to live a life of humble, unselfish helpfulness.

By nature we are all tremendous cowards. We are terribly afraid — afraid to take second place, afraid to crucify our worldly pride and ambition, afraid to confess that we have done wrong, afraid to ask for forgiveness, afraid to suffer pain, afraid to suffer injustice. We are moral cowards. But the Christian receives the grace of meekness. He receives the meek courage which enables him to face all these situations and to rise above them and conquer them by the power of God.

Now note the exhortation to meekness in Romans 12. First read verse 3. Ah, here is where we are all tempted to go astray! Think carefully, and we will realize that no one is immune to this subtle temptation, the temptation to have an exaggerated opinion of our own qualities, character, achievements and importance. But if we grow in Christian meekness, the grace of God will enable us more and more to overcome this selfish pride.

Now note verse 14, which refers to conduct under persecution. "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not". This text does not tell us to obey the wishes of the persecutors; it does not say that a Christian must agree with the demands or comply with the requirements of persecutors of Christianity. But it does say that, as to our personal attitude toward persecutors, we must not curse them, we must not hate them; we must "bless, and curse not". When they do us wrong, we must do them good, not wrong in return for wrong.

The great African bishop Cyprian, who was unjustly put to death by the Roman Government in the year 280 after Christ, was arrested, tried by a Roman court, and ordered to offer sacrifice to the

pagan gods of Rome. He refused. The judge advised him to consider his answer carefully, as his life was hanging in the balances. Cyprian replied, "Do your duty. This matter does not admit of consideration". Thereupon he was sentenced to be beheaded with the sword. His only answer as he heard the sentence of the court was to say, "Thanks be unto God". At the place of execution a great crowd had gathered, many of them friends and admirers of Cyprian. The executioner who was to wield the sword trembled at his task. Cyprian knelt and offered prayer, then expressed as his last wish that from his estate 25 gold pieces be given as a gift to the executioner who was to behead him. Thus Cyprian not only showed no bitterness or hatred, but also deeply impressed the public, both Christian and non-Christian, with the truth that for a Christian, "to die is gain."

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (12:15). Here Christian sympathy is enjoined upon us. The selfish Christian will be absorbed in his own affairs; he will not think of other people's joys and sorrows. But the meek, humble and unselfish Christian will share in other people's joys and sorrows, as well as his own.

"Be of the same mind one toward another" (12:16). This does not mean that unity and agreement are to be sought by the sacrifice of truth. If a member of the Church is teaching false doctrine, denying the truths of the Scriptures, we are not to agree with him for the sake of peace and harmony. Of course it would be wrong, and sinful in God's sight, to do that. There is a worship of outward peace and harmony in the churches today which is nothing but idolatry. It seeks external peace by the sacrifice of truth and righteousness. Some will not tolerate any serious discussion or debate on doctrinal or practical issues because they fear it will mar the "peace" of the Church. Objection is also raised against submitting matters in an orderly and lawful way to the courts of the Church, on the ground that this causes controversy and disturbs the "peace" of the Church. We should realize that there is no such ideal of peace at any price in the Bible. The Bible always puts truth and righteousness first, and never commands us to seek peace at the cost of truth or righteousness. If we were as zealous for the glory

of God as we are for the external peace and harmony of the Church, unexpected blessings might be poured out upon us.

But the text we are considering certainly does mean that we are to avoid a stubborn spirit that cannot brook opposition. We are not to become dissatisfied because we cannot have our own way about everything. In a magazine there appeared a letter seeking counsel. The writer of the letter said she wanted her own way all the time, and her husband wanted his own way all the time too, and it was a problem how they could have a happy home, and what should she do? There is no way to have the blessings of happiness and harmony and at the same time insist on having our own way all the time.

We are not to sacrifice our real principles for the sake of peace, but on the other hand we must be careful to make sure that what we call principles are not really just plain stubbornness and a selfish desire to have our own way.

Questions:

1. What verse of chapter 12 approaches a definition of meekness?
2. What terms are synonymous with meekness, or related to it?
3. Why is it true that meekness is the highest kind of courage?
4. What are some of the things that Christian meekness will enable a person to do?
5. To what subtle temptation are we all subject, as suggested in 12:3?
6. What does this chapter teach about conduct under persecution?
7. How did Cyprian exemplify Christian conduct in connection with his martyrdom?
8. What verse enjoins the duty of Christian sympathy?
9. How do we know that 12:16 does not mean that peace is to be sought at the cost of truth and righteousness?
10. Why is it wrong to have a stubborn spirit, and what harm will it do?

LESSON 72

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

A. The Duty of Cultivating Practical Holiness. 12:1-21, Cont.

The Obligation of Christian Meekness. 12:3, 14-21, Cont.

"Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate" (12:16). It takes a truly great person to translate these words into life and char-

acter. Abraham Lincoln, though he was President of the United States, could talk with people from the humblest walks of life, without the least arrogance because of his exalted position. It takes a truly great man to do that. Someone trying hard to maintain his own dignity could not do it. He would be too self-conscious.

As Christians we are to condescend to men of low estate. After all, in God's sight we are all men of low estate. There is no respect of persons with God. The Christian who receives the grace of meekness will not be trying to maintain his own dignity. He will not have a "complex" that will make him difficult for others to get along with.

"Be not wise in your own conceits" (12:16). "No species of pride is more insidious or more injurious than the pride of intellect, or a fancied superiority to those around us, which leads to a contempt of their opinions, and a confident reliance upon ourselves. The temper which the gospel requires is that of a little child, docile, diffident, and humble. . . ." (Charles Hodge).

"Recompense to no man evil for evil" (12:17). A missionary was once asked some questions about heaven by a man who had heard just a very little of the Gospel of Christ. One question asked was whether it will be possible for us in heaven to get even with those who treated us badly while we were on earth. The missionary replied by saying that those who have their heart set on revenge will not enter heaven at all.

It is a natural evil tendency of our sinful heart — the desire to get even with some person. But we should realize that this desire is wicked, and we should crucify it with the rest of our sinful lusts.

"Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (12:17). Charles Hodge comments that the translation of this clause in the King James Version is unfortunate and gives a wrong idea of the meaning. "Paul does not mean to direct us to make provision for ourselves or our families in an honest manner, which is probably the sense commonly attached to the passage by the English reader, but to act in such a manner as to command the confidence and good opinion of men" (Hodge). The clause may be an allusion to Proverbs 3:4, which in the Greek version of the Old Testament is similar in language to Rom. 12:17.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (12:18). This verse recognizes, by implication, that there may be times when it is not possible to maintain peace. There are times when we must fight for the defence of our country; there are times when we must contend for the truth of God (Jude 3); there are times when it would be a base betrayal not to fight against evil. We cannot always maintain peace. Sometimes it is our duty to fight. But war is always an evil. It may sometimes be a necessary evil, it may be an unavoidable evil, but we must remember that it is an evil. We do not believe in war for its own sake; and we should not believe in controversy for its own sake.

The ideal is peace, not peace at any price, but peace "if it be possible". If it be possible, this means, without the sacrifice of something more

precious and important than peace. Note well that the apostle speaks of living peaceably with all men; not just with our friends and neighbors, but with all men. This includes those who hate us, those who are attacking us and trying to work against us, those who are not beneath taking a mean, unfair advantage of us. If it is possible, we are to live at peace with them.

This is meekness, the meek courage that dares to keep the peace even at the risk of being misunderstood or regarded as cowardly. The Christian should be known as a peaceful and peace-loving person. He will never glorify war for its own sake; he will hate war and will resort to it only because of grim necessity; and in his personal relationships he will always seek for peace and good-will when it is possible to do so without acting against conscience.

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (12:19). Here again we have a solemn admonition not to seek vengeance. The world talks continually about vengeance. As Christians we should not think in such terms. Even a nation at war should not seek vengeance. Revenge is far from the Christian ideal and spirit. Rather, we are commanded to give place unto wrath, and leave vengeance to the Lord.

God, who is absolutely just, as well as merciful, will render retribution to evildoers. He will pay them according to absolute justice. No sin will be overlooked. God will render to all according to their deeds, unless they repent and seek His mercy in Christ.

"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; and if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (12:20). This verse is taken from Proverbs 25:21,22. It must not be misunderstood. This verse does not mean that war is not to be prosecuted against public enemies, foreign or domestic. But when the conflict is over, we are to seek the real welfare of those whom it was our duty to fight and oppose.

The early Christians lived out these precepts in their daily lives. In a world in which meekness was all but unknown, they not only preached meek courage — they also lived it. In a world which had lost its conviction of the seriousness of life in a cynical pessimism and despair, the early Christians lived a life of moral purity, deep earnestness and courageous meekness. They dared to be different, they dared to challenge the world's ideas of nobility and greatness, and they amazed the world with the character — Christian character — which they manifested. May we, by God's grace, follow in their train.

Questions:

1. Why does it take a truly great man to condescend to men of low estate?

2. What kind of pride is specially insidious, and what harm does it do?

3. How should we treat the natural tendency of our hearts to desire to get even with those who have wronged us?

4. What is the correct meaning of "Provide things honest in the sight of all men"?

5. Why does Paul say "if it be possible" in 12:18?

6. Why it is not always our duty to maintain peace?

7. With what classes of people are we to try to live at peace?

8. Who reserves the right to take vengeance?

9. What is the true teaching of 12:20?

10. What traits of character did the early Christians exemplify?

LESSON 73

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

B. The Christian's Civil Obligations. 13:1-7

Subjection unto the Higher Powers. 13:1-2

Verses 1-2 are inadequately translated in the King James Version, because of the use of the ambiguous word "powers" for the Greek *exousiai*, which properly means *authorities*. Power and authority are not identical. Recently an American general was kidnapped by Communist prisoners of war on an island off the coast of Korea. While he was in the hands of the Communists, the general possessed authority but no power. The Communist prisoners who perpetrated this deed, on the other hand, had power but no authority. A bandit pointing a gun at a bank teller has power but no authority. The policeman who attempts to arrest the bandit has both power and authority. The Greek word *exousia* (plural, *exousiai*), like the English word "authority", implies something more than mere power. These terms imply power that is in some sense or within some sphere of existence, recognized or sanctioned.

It has sometimes been attempted to hold that "authority" (*exousia*) always means legitimate authority in the highest sense, that is, that which God approves of, that which is in accord with the moral law of God. This attempt breaks down, however, when we examine the usage of the word *exousia* in the New Testament. For we find that this word *exousia* is used time and again of Satan and Satan's kingdom. Some instances may be cited here. In each case the English word "power" is used to translate the Greek word *exousia* which properly means "authority". Luke 22:53, ". . . this is your hour, and the power of darkness". Acts 26:18, ". . . to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. . .". Eph. 2:2, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience". Eph. 6:12, "For we wrestle . . . against powers. . . against spiritual wickedness in high places". Col. 1:13, "the power of darkness". Col. 2:15, "having spoiled principalities and powers". Rev. 13:4, "the dragon which gave power unto the beast". Rev. 13:5, "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great

things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months". Rev. 13:7, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given unto him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations". Rev. 13:12, "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him . . .". It is clear, then, that the Greek word for *authority* is not limited to authority that is in accord with the moral law of God, but is also used of evil and Satanic authority.

Rom. 13:1 is translated thus in the Revised Standard Version: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God". Williams' version translates as follows: "Everybody must obey the civil authorities that are over him, for no authority exists except by God's permission; the existing authorities have been established by him, . . .".

So much for the word "powers". The Christian is commanded to be subject unto the higher powers. The apostle adds that "there is no power but of God" and that "the powers that be are ordained of God". We must now consider the meaning of these statements.

God is the ultimate source of all authority. Parents would have no authority over their children, magistrates would have no authority over citizens, except for authority derived from God. This is true not only of moral and legitimate authority, but even of the authority of Satan. We learn from the Book of Job that Satan cannot go a hair's breadth beyond what is permitted him by God. He has no power or authority whatsoever but what is derived from God. In a certain sense God has given power or authority to Satan. We have already seen that the New Testament speaks of the authority of Satan and Satan's kingdom. Whatever authority Satan may have come from no other source but God. This does not imply, of course, that what Satan does is pleasing to God or in harmony with God's law.

After His resurrection Jesus said to His disciples, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). This is legitimate

authority in the highest moral sense; it is the authority which is pleasing to God, of which God approves, and which is in harmony with God's moral law. On the other hand, Rev. 13:5 speaks of authority given unto the wild beast from the sea. This authority, though coming ultimately from God, is wicked, immoral and contrary to God's law.

Between the authority given to God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the authority given to the beast, there exists an intermediate zone of authority which proceeds from God and is "ordained of God" in a certain sense, yet is not legitimate or pleasing to God in the highest sense. This is the authority of civil governments which exist in the world but which do not recognize and obey the Lord Jesus Christ. The secular or non-Christian civil governments of the world are certainly not "ordained of God" in the highest sense; they are not pleasing to God in the highest sense, for they do not recognize and obey God's Son as they are commanded to do in Psalm 2:10-12. On the other hand, there is obviously a vast difference between, say, the United States Government as it exists today, and the kingdom of the Beast as it is pictured in Revelation 13. The United States Government fails to honor Jesus Christ, yet in general it fulfils the God-ordained functions of civil government, maintaining law and order, punishing crime, etc. In so far as it fulfils the proper functions of civil government, it is "ordained of God" and it is our duty to obey its laws. In the providence of God, it is the government which exists over us.

Some have held that in Rom. 13:1-7 Paul was not speaking of the non-Christian governments of world history, but of an ideal Christian State which would be realized at a future time. This interpretation, however, is quite untenable. Paul is talking about "the powers that be". In the Greek it is "the existing powers" (*hai ousai exousiai*). This phrase, "the existing powers" cannot possibly mean "the powers which do not exist now but will come into existence at a future

time". The only interpretation which does not do violence to the Greek words is that Paul was writing of the powers which were in existence at the time he wrote the Epistle. He uses the present tense throughout. He commands his readers to obey the existing powers, to pay taxes to them, etc. The only powers they could obey or pay taxes to were those in existence in their time.

Questions:

1. Why is Rom. 13:1-2 inadequately translated in the King James Version?
2. What is the difference between power and authority?
3. How can it be shown that in the New Testament the word "authority" is not limited to authority which is pleasing to God?
4. What is the ultimate source of all authority?
5. How can it be shown that the authority of Satan is derived from God?
6. What kind of authority is spoken of in Matt. 28:18?
7. What kind of authority is spoken of in Rev. 13:5?
8. What kind of authority exists which is intermediate between that of Matt. 28:18 and that of Rev. 13:5?
9. In what respect is the United States Government of the present day displeasing to God?
10. What Scripture passage clearly commands civil magistrates to honor the Son of God?
11. In what sense is the present United States Government ordained of God?
12. How do we know that Paul's expression, "the powers that be", means the governments of Paul's day and of our own day, not an ideal Christian State to be realized in the future?

LESSON 74

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

B. The Christian's Civil Obligations. 13:1-7, Cont. Subjection unto the Higher Powers. 13:1-2, Cont.

We have seen that the apostle Paul in 13:1 teaches that "the existing powers (authorities)" are ordained of God. That is, in a certain sense they exist in accordance with the will of God. They exist by His permission and providence. Even though displeasing to God by reason of their failure to honor and serve His Son, still He permits them to exist and to function in human society. "It is clear that this passage (vers. 1,2) is applicable to men living under every form of

government, monarchical, aristocratical, or democratical, in all their various modifications. Those who are in authority are to be obeyed within their sphere, no matter how or by whom appointed. It is the *ousai exousiai*, the powers that be, the *de facto* government, that is to be regarded as, for the time being, ordained of God. It was to Paul a matter of little importance whether the Roman emperor was appointed by the senate, the army, or the people; whether the assumption of the imperial authority by Caesar was just or unjust, or whether his successors had a legitimate claim to the throne or not. It was his object to

lay down the simple principle, that magistrates are to be obeyed. The extent of this obedience is to be determined from the nature of the case. They are to be obeyed as magistrates, in the exercise of their lawful authority. When Paul commands wives to obey their husbands, they are required to obey them as husbands, not as masters, nor as kings; children are to obey their parents as parents, not as sovereigns; and so in every other case. This passage, therefore, affords a very slight foundation for the doctrine of passive obedience" (Charles Hodge). "We are to obey magistrates, because they derive their authority from God. Not only is human government a divine institution, but the form in which that government exists, and the persons by whom its functions are exercised, are determined by his providence. All magistrates of whatever grade are to be regarded as acting by divine appointment; not that God designates the individuals, but it being his will that there should be magistrates, every person, who is in point of fact clothed with authority, is to be regarded as having a claim to obedience, founded on the will of God. . . There is no limitation to the injunction in this verse, so far as the objects of obedience are concerned, although there is as to the extent of the obedience itself. That is, we are bound to obey all that is in actual authority over us, whether their authority to be legitimate or usurped, whether they are just or unjust. The actual reigning emperor was to be obeyed by the Roman Christians, whatever they might think as to his title to the sceptre. But if he transcended his authority, and required of them to worship idols, they were to obey God rather than man. This is the limitation to all human authority. Whenever obedience to man is inconsistent with obedience to God, then disobedience becomes a duty" (Charles Hodge).

"Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (13:2). The Revised Standard Version translates this: "Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment". The Greek word *krima*, translated "damnation" in the King James Version, properly means simply "judgment". It does not necessarily mean eternal damnation. If obedience to magistrates is a duty, then disobedience to magistrates is a sin, and those who commit the sin will receive punishment for it. The reference of verse 2 is

evidently not to a punishment which will be inflicted by the civil magistrates, but to a judgment of God. For he is discussing obedience as a duty required by God, and disobedience as a sin against God.

We should clearly discern that what Paul is discussing here is not the right of magistrates to rule, but the duty of Christians to obey magistrates. Whether the magistrate has a right to rule is one question; whether Christian people ought to obey whatever magistrates exist in the providence of God, is another question. What are the proper limits of Christian people's obedience to wicked magistrates, is still a third question. If these different questions are not clearly distinguished, only confusion and error can result. In Rom. 13:1-7 Paul is not discussing the right of magistrates to rule, nor is he discussing the proper limits of obedience to wicked magistrates. He is teaching only the simple principle that it is the duty of Christian people to obey the existing magistrates. That the magistrates may be wicked men, and that it may be God's plan to overthrow the existing government and set up a better one in its place, is perfectly true. That there are well-defined limits to the obedience which Christian people ought to render to magistrates, is also perfectly true. But what the apostle is teaching is that it is the Christian's duty to obey the existing authorities as long as, in God's providence, they continue to exist as authorities.

Questions:

1. What principle is Paul laying down in Rom. 13:1,2?
2. How can it be shown that Rom. 13:1-7 does not teach the doctrine of "passive obedience", that the commands of magistrates are to be obeyed without any limits?
3. When is disobedience to magistrates a Christian duty?
4. What is the true meaning of the word translated "damnation" in 13:2?
5. What kind of judgment is referred to in 13:2?
6. What three questions must be clearly distinguished if we are to understand Rom. 13:1,2 aright?

LESSON 75

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

B. The Christian's Civil Obligations. 13:1-7, Cont.

The Functions and Powers of Civil Government. 13:3,4

"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of

the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (13:3,4).

Here Paul states an additional reason for obedience to magistrates: not only is obedience our Christian duty, but magistrates are for the purpose of restraining evil and promoting good. In these verses we find the Biblical teaching on the functions of civil government. Briefly stated, the function of the civil government as established by God is to **administer justice in human society**.

Civil government is necessary by reason of the existence of sin. Whether there would have been such an institution as the State in human society if the human race had never fallen into sin is a debated question. It may be granted that something analogous to the State would have existed. But it would have been very different from civil government as it exists in a sinful world. For in a sinless world the use of force would have been unnecessary, and there would have been no crime or injustice to punish. In a sinless world, the State would be merely an expression of the organic unity of the human race and would exist purely for co-operative purposes, not for the restraint of evil. But in the world of sinful, fallen humanity the State exists to restrain evil. It is one of God's ways of restraining and limiting the effects of sin in human society.

The first clear revelation in the Bible of the institution of civil government is in Gen. 9:6, "Who-so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man". This divine command that murder shall be punished by the death penalty, implies the existence of a constituted government of some kind which can execute the penalty.

Throughout the Bible we find a great deal of teaching on the subject of civil government and its functions and duties. And it is unmistakably clear that the primary function of civil government is the maintaining of justice in human society.

The State is, of course, only one of the divine institutions existing in human society. There are also the Family and the Church. Each of these has its own proper sphere and its own proper functions to perform. None of them may trespass on the territory of another. For the United States Government to enact a law specifying requirements for ordination to the office of the Gospel ministry, would be to trespass on the sphere of the Church. For the State to make a law forbidding parents to teach their children religion, would be to trespass on the sphere of the family. According to the Bible, there are limits to the functions of the State. It may not take over the functions of the church and the family.

In the totalitarian states of yesterday and of today we see the full development of the evil tendency of the State, or civil government, to take over everything. The totalitarian state crowds the family and the church into narrower and nar-

rower bounds, while the State assumes control of more and more areas of human life. It demands that all human organizations and activities be directed toward enhancing the greatness and glory of the State. Those which do not do this may be regarded as unnecessary and therefore forbidden. Parents are compelled more and more to surrender their children to the control of the State. The Church finds its very existence made contingent upon the will of the State. Human freedom vanishes as everything passes under the control of a totalitarian, unlimited State.

In democratic countries such as the United States of America the same tendency of the State to expand its areas of activity and control exists, though to a much smaller degree than in the totalitarian countries. In democratic nations this tendency is sometimes called "Statism". It is seen in the civil government assuming control over more and more of the people's life and activities. Business, agriculture, education, and many other lines of activity, are more and more brought under government regulation or control. There is also the tendency of the State to carry on business enterprises in competition with its own citizens.

State regulation and control of industry, business, etc., are not necessarily wrong. They are legitimate just to the extent that they are truly necessary for the maintaining of justice. And justice, of course, must not be taken in the narrow sense of mere punishment of individual lawbreakers. Justice in human society means equity between man and man, between group and group. The State is the arbiter between a man and his neighbor, between one group of people and another group of people, to see that justice is maintained. If justice requires that some particular line of activity, such as the postal service, be a government monopoly, then the State is warranted in acting accordingly.

But the tendency for the State to overstep all bounds and take over more and more of human life is certainly wrong and contrary to God's plan revealed in the Bible. This is clear from the fact that the family and the church, as well as the individual, also have rights and functions which God has ordained, which the State may not take over. Certainly totalitarianism and statism are contrary to the Bible teaching of the functions and purpose of the State. God did not ordain civil government to be an all-inclusive provider for all the needs of human beings, nor is the chief end of man to enhance the greatness and power of the State. The State was instituted to restrain the consequences of sin by maintaining justice in human society — justice in the truest and broadest sense.

Questions:

1. What additional reason does Paul state why Christians should obey magistrates?

2. How may the divinely intended function of civil government be briefly stated?

3. Why is civil government necessary in human society?

4. Would the State as we know it have existed in a sinless world?

5. Where in the Bible is the institution of civil government first revealed?

6. What three divine institutions exist in human society?

7. Why may no one of these institutions trespass on the territory of the others?

8. What tendency reaches its fullest development in totalitarian states?

9. What is the effect of totalitarianism on the family and on the Church?

10. What becomes of human freedom under a totalitarian government?

11. What is meant by Statism?

12. To what extent is government regulation or control of business, industry, etc., legitimate?

13. What is the meaning of justice in human society?

14. What does the Bible imply concerning the tendency of the State to take over more and more of human life?

LESSON 76

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

B. The Christian's Civil Obligations. 13:1-7, Cont.

The Functions and Powers of Civil Government. 13:3,4, Cont.

In Rom. 13:3,4, Paul teaches that the State is to praise them that do good and to punish them that do evil. "Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same" (12:3b). Some have wondered how Paul could make such a statement about the civil government when the Roman Empire persecuted Christians unto death. The explanation is simple. Paul is speaking of the ordinary course of government, not of exceptional circumstances and conditions. The Roman Empire did not *always* persecute Christians. We easily tend to forget the time element which was involved. In the early period of the Christian Church, as pictured in the Book of Acts, it was the Jews who persecuted Christianity while the Roman Government protected the Christians. There were occasional outrages on the part of Gentiles against Christians, as at Ephesus (Acts 19). But it should be noted that this riot at Ephesus was not instigated by government officials but by private parties, and it was subdued and order restored by the town clerk, a local official subordinate to the Roman Empire. He reminded the rioters that they might be held responsible by higher authorities (of the Roman Empire) for their disorderly conduct on that day. Thus we see the Roman Empire maintaining justice, law and order in the face of an angry mob stirred up by the silversmiths of Ephesus. Paul's Roman citizenship protected him time and again from the violence of the Jews. At this early period, the Roman Empire, with all its faults, maintained justice, law and order.

Later, of course, there was a change. The Jews passed out of the picture with the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, and Rome embarked

on a program of bitter persecution of Christians. When Paul wrote "Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same" he did not of course mean that no government would ever persecute Christians. Paul himself did good, yet he was beheaded by the Roman Empire. But persecution is after all the exception. As a general principle it is true that those who are orderly and law-abiding, who do good, are praised and protected by the State.

Paul teaches, also, that the civil magistrate is authorized to use force for the restraint of evil and the punishment of evildoers. "He beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (13:4b). The use of the sword implies the death penalty. This in turn implies the power of lesser penalties in the administration of justice. If the State has the God-given authority to punish murder with death, it also has the God-given authority to punish theft, arson or perjury with fine or imprisonment.

There is a great deal of sentiment arrayed against the death penalty today. Many oppose it, strange to say, on religious grounds. Yet it must be insisted that the death penalty for murder has the sanction of both the Old Testament and the New. Scripture not only authorizes the punishment of death for murder, but it requires this. No human government is at liberty to change this requirement of God's Word. Those who oppose the death penalty on religious grounds invariably have a sentimental view of religion which does not take account of the awful reality of sin nor of the holiness and righteousness of God.

The passage of Scripture we are studying also has a bearing on the question of Pacifism. Those who say that the use of force is always wrong in dealings between nations do not take account of the whole teaching of Scripture on this subject.

If the civil magistrate "beareth not the sword in vain", he is empowered to use force against evil when necessary. But there is no difference in principle between the use of force to restrain evil within a nation, and the use of force to restrain evil between nations. If it is right for a policeman to shoot a murderer or robber who is resisting arrest, it is also right for a nation to use armed force to protect itself or others against an aggressor nation. Those who hold that all international evil can be dealt with adequately without force do not understand the real wickedness of the human heart nor the nature of evil as it is revealed in the Bible.

Questions:

1. How could Paul say that those who do good will be praised by civil rulers, when the Roman Government persecuted Christians unto death?
2. Who were the chief persecutors of Chris-

tianity in the early period of the Church, as pictured in the Book of Acts?

3. What was the nature of the riot of Ephesus, and what was the connection of the Roman Government with it?

4. What change in the persecution of Christianity came with the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70?

5. What does Romans 13 teach about the use of force to restrain evildoers?

6. What is the teaching of Scripture on the penalty for the crime of murder? Where is this taught in the Bible?

7. What is the bearing of Rom. 13:3,4, on the question of Pacifism?

8. What truths of the Bible do pacifists fail to grasp?

LESSON 77

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

B. The Christian's Civil Obligations. 13:1-7, Cont.

The Christian's Proper Attitude toward the Civil Government. 13:5-7

"Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing" (13:5,6). The apostle here teaches that obedience to magistrates is not only a civil duty which will be enforced by the State, but that it is a religious duty, a part of our conscientious obedience to God. We are to obey the lawful commands of magistrates, not only because we have to, but also because we ought to. We are not to obey merely because of "wrath", that is, not merely because of the fear of suffering penalties, but also as a matter of conscientious devotion to God. This implies that we are to be law-abiding citizens, not only when there is some probability or danger of our being caught and punished for transgression, but also when there is no probability or danger of our being caught or punished. We are to obey the law even when we could easily break it without fear of consequences. This is the high ideal of Christian duty toward civil government which is taught in the Word of God. Where this is taken seriously, Christians will be models of law-abiding conduct. For example, a Christian should be scrupulously exact and honest in making out his income tax return, not only because the law provides penalties for dishonesty, but much more because to cheat on one's income tax is to sin against God.

God's Word requires of us that we obey not

merely those laws of the State which we believe to be fair and just, but also those laws which we may believe to be unfair and unjust, as long as they are the law of the State. The individual Christian is not empowered to pick and choose among the laws of his country and decide which he should obey and which he may disobey. The Christian is to obey all the laws, even those which he regards as unfair to him. Unfortunately in the United States there have been some laws which were obviously designed to benefit one class of the population at the expense of another class; for instance the discriminatory laws of a few years ago which placed a heavy tax on the sale of oleomargarine. These laws were not designed to benefit all the people, but to protect the interests of some over against others. Many Christian people objected to these laws and felt that they were unjust and unfair. But no one had a right to disregard or disobey them on that account. Those who objected had a right to work for the repeal of the laws, but as long as they were on the statute books, they must be obeyed as a matter of Christian duty.

There is really only one exception to the principle that a Christian must always obey the laws of the State, and that is that when obedience to the laws of the State would involve disobedience to the law of God, it is the Christian's duty to obey God rather than men. For example, a law (such as has existed in some countries) requiring a government license or permit to preach the Gospel is null and void in the sight of God, and should be disregarded by Christian people. To comply with such a law by applying for a license to preach the Gospel is to render the things of God to Caesar.

We are commanded by Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel, and we have no right to make His command contingent upon the permission of the State. Similarly, a law requiring people to engage in idolatrous worship should be disobeyed, as was done by Daniel's three friends. Again, a law forbidding people to change their religion is contrary to the commands of God and should be disobeyed. God commands every person in the world to become a Christian, and no civil law forbidding this can be regarded as valid.

Questions:

1. What does the apostle Paul teach in 13:5?
2. What does Paul mean by the phrase "not only for wrath"?

3. When must the Christian obey the laws of his country?

4. How should a Christian make out his income tax return?

5. Why should a Christian obey even those laws which he considers unjust?

6. Under what circumstances is it our Christian duty to break the laws of the State?

7. Give some examples of possible laws which a Christian ought not to obey?

8. Show from the history of Moses' parents, of Moses, of Daniel, and of the apostles, that it may be our duty to break human laws.

LESSON 78

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

B. The Christian's Civil Obligations. 13:1-7, Cont.

The Christian's Proper Attitude toward the Civil Government. 13:5-7, Cont.

"For they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing" (13:6b). The State and its officials are properly regarded as God's servants. They serve God in fulfilling the proper functions of civil government faithfully. The country does not exist for the government, but the government for the country, and both for God. In some totalitarian countries, officials have become extremely proud and arrogant, so that even petty officials have a haughty and overbearing attitude, as if they were doing the common people a great favor just to let them exist. In totalitarian states, officials easily come to think that the country exists for them. Instead of trying to serve the public, they think the public exists to support and serve them. This is of course a completely upside-down view of the relation between officials and people. The government and its officials exist for the benefit of the people. They are God's servants to men for good. This is not only true in a democracy such as the U.S.A., but it is true under any form of government, rightly considered. The Roman Empire at the time of Paul's writing this Epistle was certainly not a free democracy. Yet even at that time, Paul wrote that civil rulers are God's servants for people's benefit.

Even though the civil rulers may be ungodly men who have no idea of serving God, still in God's reckoning of things they serve as His servants to accomplish some of His purposes in human society. Even in dealing with non-Christian officials in a non-Christian government, the Christian is to look at matters from God's viewpoint. He is to remember that civil government exists in human society for the restraint of evil, and that even these non-Christian officials, in spite of their infidelity, are used by God for the accom-

plishment of this purpose. The Christian is to regard the government not merely as the government regards itself, but as the Bible regards human government, from the standpoint of God's purpose in human society.

"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor" (13:7). Since civil government is an institution of God for the benefit of human society, it follows that we must do our duty toward it. This involves not merely obeying its laws, but also positive support, both financial and by our influence. Here "tribute" means ordinary taxes, as on land or property; "custom" means duty levied on merchandise. "Fear" (*phobos*) and "honor" (*time*) are essentially the same, differing only in degree. "Fear" means proper respect for superiors; "honor" means a proper esteem for our equals in human society.

In the next lesson of this series, to be published, D.V., in the October-December, 1952, issue of this magazine, we shall consider the bearing of Paul's teaching in Rom. 13:1-7 on the Covenanter principle of political dissent.

Questions:

1. What is the place of the State and its officials in relation to God?
2. Does the country exist for the government, or the government for the country?
3. For whom do both the country and the government exist?
4. What attitude on the part of public officials is common in totalitarian countries?
5. Why should the Christian regard even non-Christian rulers as servants of God?
6. Besides obeying the laws, what duties do we owe to the government?
7. What is meant by "tribute" and "custom"?
8. What is the difference between "fear" and "honor"?

(To be continued)

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:

The World's Day of Prayer, as sponsored by women's groups throughout the world, is observed on the first Friday of Lent. Is it right for Covenanters to participate in this Lenten service?

Answer:

This question is a particular example of the more general question answered in the preceding issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" (Vol. 7 No. 2, p. 84f), to which the reader is referred.

It is not the case of a day falling undesignedly on a day of Lent, but of a religious ordinance, a World's Day of Prayer, purposely set to fall annually on the first Friday of Lent. So that, if anyone observes it publicly, in company with those who regard it as a "Lenten" service, he cannot help being counted with those who vainly attempt to worship God according to the commandments of men. See Matt. 7-9.

Covenanters have bound themselves in a covenant, saying in the presence of God: "We abjure and condemn . . . Formalism . . ."; "We abjure and condemn Popery"; "we reject all systems of . . . will worship"; "we will tenderly and charitably, but plainly and decidedly, oppose and discountenance all and every known error" (Covenant of 1871).

The observance of Lent is a public error of Formalism, and of Popery. Therefore, it is the duty of every Covenanter to "abjure and condemn", to "oppose and discountenance" it. The observance of Lent belongs to a system of **will-worship**, i.e., worship not appointed by God, but invented by man, and, in this case, imposed by the usurped authority of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Therefore it is the duty of every Covenanter to "reject" it.

Covenanters have promised also, "we will bear true testimony in word and deed for every known part of divine truth"; "we will pray and labor for the visible oneness of the Church of God . . . on the basis of truth and Scriptural order". For Covenanters, therefore, to associate in make-believe unity on a different basis would be not only to violate their covenant, but to labor against the attainment of their goal.

— F. D. Frazer

Question:

How can children of Christian parents be regarded as members of the church from birth, when the Bible clearly teaches that all men are "by nature the children of wrath"?

Answer:

This question gives expression to a problem which has been discussed by various writers on Reformed theology. That the Bible teaches that all men are by nature children of wrath is certainly true. But the Bible also teaches that God's covenant is with believers **and their children** (Gen. 17:7; Isa. 59:21; Acts 2:39) from generation to generation. This is just as certainly a truth of the Bible as the truth of total depravity and original sin which is taught in such texts as Psalm 51:5, Rom. 7:18 and Eph. 2:1.

The Bible also teaches that regeneration can take place in infancy, for John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth (Luke 1:15). Moreover, if even one of the parents is a Christian, the children are counted as "holy" (1 Cor. 7:14); this text does not specify children old enough to exercise personal faith; it just says "your children", and the reason why the children are holy is that one of their parents is a Christian. This implies that the "holy" status of the children is due to the covenant relationship between God and the parent or parents.

When two teachings of the Bible seem contradictory, our proper course is not to choose one of them and reject the other, but to adhere to both and to try to find a key to the problem in the Bible itself. To reject the birthright church membership of children would be as unscriptural as it would be to reject the Bible teaching of original sin and total depravity. Both of these doctrines are based on Scripture, though we cannot perhaps fully solve the problem of how they are to be harmonized.

Under the Old Testament dispensation infants were recognized as members of the covenant people of God, by the sacramental rite of circumcision (Gen. 17:9-14). Yet infants in Old Testament times were born with a sinful nature just as truly as infants today are. In recognizing the birthright church membership of children of Christian parents, those churches which believe in infant baptism are not inventing something new, but only following the clear analogy of God's dealing with His people in the Old Testament. We find the New Testament fully in harmony with this.

The birthright church membership of children of course does not necessarily imply that all children of Christian parents are regenerated in infancy as John the Baptist was. Even in the case of adults who become members of the church on

personal profession of faith, there are some who are not truly born again. Church membership (we are speaking of the Visible Church, which has congregations and membership rolls) is not based on **proof of regeneration** but on a **credible profession of faith and obedience**. Such a credible profession involves a **presumption of regeneration**, but in the nature of the case there can be no proof of regeneration, for the simple reason that church officers cannot see people's hearts. It is presumed that those who make a credible profession are regenerate. All attempts to have a perfectly pure church by admitting only the regenerate to membership have always failed and are bound to fail for the reason stated above.

Just as the church membership of adults involves a presumption (but not proof) of regeneration, so the birthright church membership of the children of believers involves a presumption (but not proof) of their regeneration — either that they are already regenerate, or that God will at some time in their life bestow this life-giving grace upon them.

We should be on guard against confusing the fact of regeneration with its fruits — a mistake very often made by those who speak positively concerning the exact day and hour when they were born again. Regeneration is always instantaneous, and it takes place deep in the personality far below the level of the person's consciousness. The effects or fruits of it may come suddenly, or they may come more gradually. The person may only slowly become conscious that the great change from spiritual death to spiritual life has taken place in his own soul. The inscrutable nature of the new birth is taught by our Lord in John chapter 3. It is not subject to laboratory analysis.

Some writers on theology have drawn a dis-

inction between "covenant conversions" and "crisis conversions". When a person is converted in adult life from wickedness and unbelief to Jesus Christ this usually takes the form of a clear-cut spiritual crisis. Such people sometimes tend to question the reality of the conversion of those born and reared in Christian homes, whose conversion to Christ was not so sudden and dramatic. Yet in the case of the children of Christian parents "covenant conversions" should be regarded as the normal thing. Our children should be taught from the dawn of their consciousness that they belong to the people of God. They should never remember a time when they did not believe on Jesus Christ as their Saviour. In such cases a sudden crisis of conversion may never be needed. Yet there will often be a definite spiritual awakening and conscious appropriation of covenant blessings and obligations at some time during adolescence. This does not imply that the previous regeneration was unreal; it only implies that in childhood the fruits of it were not yet fully manifest.

Not every child of believing parents will be certainly saved, as witness the case of Esau (Rom. 9:13). But the fact that there are some exceptions does not cancel the general principle or teaching revealed in the Word. The Covenant of Grace has two phases, an external phase of opportunities and privileges, and a vital phase of spiritual life. All children of Christian parents are in the external phase, and therefore recognized as church members from birth, and given the seal of baptism, which is the badge of membership in the Visible Church. It should be the prayer and aim of Christian parents that all their children may also be included in the inner circle, the vital phase of the Covenant, which corresponds to membership in the **invisible church**.

— J. G. Vos

Help Still Needed

In the April-June issue there was published an appeal for financial help to meet the expenses of publishing "Blue Banner Faith and Life". It was stated that about \$955.00 would be needed to pay the cost of printing and mailing that issue and the remaining two 1952 issues.

The response to this appeal has been very encouraging. Since April 1, 1952, the following amounts have been received:

Contributions -----	\$383.35
Subscriptions -----	12.00
Sale of Back Issues -----	5.00
Sale of Binders -----	7.50
Miscellaneous -----	.04
Total -----	\$407.89

I wish to express my sincere and hearty ap-

preciation of the generosity of all who responded to my appeal with contributions. Some of these gifts touched me deeply. A Chinese Christian in Hong Kong sent \$5.00, American money, in a registered letter. A Chinese student in New York City sent \$4.00. A Chinese student in Philadelphia sent \$5.00. \$42.00 was received from missionaries of two denominations in Japan. \$10.00 was received from a missionary in the Near East. \$80.00 was received from two ladies in Canada who live far from a congregation of their own faith, and seldom enjoy the privileges of fellowship and worship with those of like convictions. Those who contributed the \$383.35 are members of at least six different denominations. For all these contributions, both large and small, I praise God and express thanks to the donors.

The April-June issue was an unusually large

one (68 pages) and cost \$588.70 for printing and mailing. This account is now entirely paid, and there is in the treasury on this date (May 23) \$220.90 toward the cost of the present issue. It is estimated that about \$530.00 more will be needed to pay all necessary expenses and finish the year 1952 without incurring debts. If God has prospered you, will you not prayerfully consider contri-

buting toward the meeting of this need? The accounts of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** are always open to the inspection of contributors. Please do not send cash through the mails; loss can be prevented by using check, bank draft or money order. Receipts are promptly sent to all contributors.

J. G. Vos, Publisher

Route 1
Clay Center, Kansas

Reviews of Religious Books

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

PRESENT-DAY EVANGELISM, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1951, pp. 17, paper cover. 10c per copy, \$1 per dozen, plus 10% postage.

In this booklet Mr. Pink presents a searching critique of the popular Arminian type of evangelism of the present day. He asserts that this superficial evangelism lacks Bible warrant, dishonors God, and fills the churches with unsaved "converts". The root cause of the deterioration in evangelism is the adoption of a wrong aim. The true aim, according to the Bible, is the glorifying of God. But modern evangelism has made "soul winning" its great aim. "Though the glory of God was not actually denied, yet it was lost sight of, crowded out, made secondary. . . **The feverish urge of modern evangelism is not how to promote the glory of the throne of Jehovah, but how to multiply conversions** Bent on attaining a certain desired object, the energy of the flesh has been given free rein; and supposing that the object was right, evangelists have concluded that nothing could be wrong which contributed unto the securing of that end; and since their efforts appear to be eminently successful, only too many churches silently acquiesced, telling themselves 'the end justified the means'".

Modern evangelism, says Mr. Pink, is not only wrong in trying to provide an entertainment value for the sinner, but even more in its "studied omission of the dark background upon which alone the Gospel can effectually shine forth". In short, there is in modern evangelism a grievous lack of emphasis upon the holiness of God, the awfulness of sin, and the depravity and helplessness of the sinner. "And do you imagine that the Gospel is magnified or God glorified by going to worldlings and telling them that they 'may be saved at this moment by simply accept-

ing Christ as their personal Saviour' **while they are wedded to their idols and their hearts are still in love with sin? If I do so, I tell them a lie, pervert the Gospel, insult Christ, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.**"

Mr. Pink ably shows how different the case of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16) was from that of the light-hearted, unrepentant "converts" of today. His self-complacency was thoroughly shattered; he was deeply convicted and concerned for his soul. Paul and Silas did not need to teach him that he was a lost sinner desperately needing salvation; he knew that; they only had to tell him the way, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). But to take this verse out of its Bible context and apply it to any modern sinner who has no proper knowledge of what sin is and is not in the least humbled or broken-hearted over his sin, is seriously to misuse and distort the Word of God.

Modern evangelism places all its emphasis on believing or "accepting Christ". It forgets that the Gospel is a message addressed, not just to people, but to people as **sinners**, who know themselves to be lost sinners. No one can really accept the Gospel without a hearty repentance for sin. For this, there must be a knowledge of the law of God. "A heart that is steeled in rebellion against God cannot savingly believe: it must first be broken". But this teaching of the law of God, and call for deep repentance, is lacking in modern evangelism. The evangelist tells people that they need do nothing but believe. In emphasizing the truth that salvation is by grace not by works, modern evangelism gives a wrong idea of God's terms of salvation. "It is . . . true that salvation is a free gift, but an **empty** hand must receive it, and not a hand which still tightly grasps the world." Nor can any sinner really accept Christ

as his personal Saviour without at the same time accepting Christ as the Lord of his life.

Mr. Pink concludes by stating that in his judgment modern evangelism, far from being an encouraging sign, is rather "the most solemn of all the 'signs of the times' ". "Those preachers who tell sinners that they may be saved without forsaking their idols, without repenting, without surrendering to the Lordship of Christ, are as erroneous and dangerous as others who insist that salvation is by works, and that Heaven must be earned by our own efforts." This is a sound and timely booklet, which should be widely read and circulated. Why not order a dozen and give them to ministers in your community?

—J. G. Vos

REPENTANCE, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1952, pp. 34, paper cover. 30c plus 10% postage.

This booklet is directed against dispensational teachers who say that repentance is "Jewish" and not required by God in this age, and also against the prevalent tendency to minimize repentance and to hold false and superficial views of its nature. Mr. Pink carefully expounds the necessity of repentance, the evil of sin, and the nature of true repentance. There are many religious experiences which may be merely natural, and are not true evangelical repentance. The Greek verb *metanoeo* (wrongly spelled as "matanoeo", presumably a printer's error) is correctly said to mean a change of mind which leads to action. This change of mind is brought about by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. Mr. Pink defines repentance thus: "Repentance is a supernatural and inward revelation from God, giving a deep consciousness of what I am in His sight, which causes me to loathe and condemn myself, resulting in a bitter sorrow for sin, a holy horror and hatred for sin, a turning away from or forsaking sin." This is a good definition but in my judgment it would be improved by the inclusion of the truth that true repentance proceeds not only from a deep sense of sin, but also at the same time from an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. For comparison, we may note the definition in the Westminster Shorter Catechism (Q. 87): "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience." The Westminster Larger Catechism defines it thus: "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God, whereby, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, he so grieves for and hates his sins, as that he turns from them all to God, purposing and en-

deavoring constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience" (Q. 76). I feel sure that Mr. Pink would agree that "apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ" is essential to true repentance, even though he has not included this element in his formal definition.

The author well brings out the fact that true repentance involves a sincere purpose to forsake sin, and a frank justifying of God, His holiness and His law, over against the sinner. It presupposes "a hearty approval of God's law and a full consent to its righteous requirements." Mr. Pink presents substantial Scriptural proof that God's law has never been repealed, but is in effect today, over against the antinomian claims of some dispensationalist teachers. True Christianity never makes void the law of God; rather, it establishes the law in its proper place and functions.

The design of repentance is not to atone or make satisfaction for sin, or make amends for past bad conduct; it is to take sides with God against one's self, to make the heart loathe sin, dread sin and thus become ready to receive Christ as Saviour from sin. The author distinguishes between false and true repentance, giving Bible examples. To some length he quotes Charles H. Spurgeon on the subject of repentance to show what it is and is not.

Near the end of the booklet Mr. Pink speaks of "three Greek words used in N. T. which present different phases of repentance". These are (1) *metanoeo*, "which means a change of mind"; (2) *metamelomai* (printed as "metanolomai" by a printer's error) "which means a change of heart"; (3) *metanoia*, "which means a change of course or life". "These three must go together for a genuine repentance". It is certainly true that these three, a change of mind, a change of heart, and a change of life, must go together for genuine repentance. But I believe Mr. Pink's distinction of meaning between *metanoeo* and *metanoia* is doubtful; these are just the verb and noun forms of the same word; the former means "to repent", the latter means "repentance". There can hardly be an essential difference of meaning between them. It may also be regarded as doubtful that *metamelomai* means specifically a "change of heart" as distinguished from a "change of mind".

Mr. Pink emphasizes that true repentance involves not only confessing, but also forsaking sin, accompanied by restitution where necessary and possible. Repentance is never perfect in this life. It is a lifelong act. "We need to pray daily for a deeper repentance." It is to be sought as a gift from Christ.

This is a very good booklet and its message is greatly needed at the present day. There cannot be true revival until there is real repentance. Unquestionably this is the missing note in current evangelism. May this booklet, by the bless-

ing of God, be the means of leading many to an understanding of the nature and necessity of repentance.

—J. G. Vos

THE GOLDEN BOOKLET OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE, by John Calvin. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S. E. Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 98. \$1.50.

This book has been translated from the French and Latin by Dr. Henry J. Van Andel. It was not written originally as a separate volume, but as a part of Calvin's *Institutes*. In the present edition of the *Institutes* this material is found in Book 3, chapters 6 through 10.

It is not surprising, however, that these chapters have been reprinted separately in Dutch, and are now being published in modern English, under the above title. This little book is a devotional classic. It sets forth both the foundation and the rules for Christian living in a style that is clear and straightforward. For example, in discussing holiness as the key principle of the Christian life, Calvin says this:

"Holiness is not a merit by which we can attain communion with God, but a gift of Christ, which enables us to cling to him, and to follow him. It is God's own glory that he cannot have anything to do with iniquity and uncleanness; therefore, we must keep this in mind, if we desire to pay attention to his invitation.

"For why were we delivered from the quagmire of iniquity and pollution of this world, if we want to wallow in it as long as we live?"

The book contains helpful and practical discussions of such themes as Self-denial, Patience in Cross-bearing, Hopefulness in the Next World, and the Right Use of the Present Life. The author makes very effective use of parallel statements, each sentence in a series beginning with the same word or phrase. There are a great many pithy statements that are worth remembering and quoting. Calvin says, "The most effective poison to lead men to ruin is to boast in themselves, in their own wisdom and will power; the only escape to safety is simply to follow the guidance of the Lord".

This little volume is very attractively printed, with good type and a great many paragraphs. The translator has given each section a suitable heading. It is interesting to compare the contents of this volume with the same material in the *Institutes*, and notice how much easier and more enjoyable it is to read the *Golden Booklet*.

It is the personal feeling of this reviewer that one drawback to keep this book from having a large circulation may be its price. This is not to discourage anyone from buying it as its present price. What we have in mind is that the contents, title, and binding all make the book very well

suited to be used as a gift, especially for those who are becoming communicant members of the church, or for young people graduating from high school or college. If the book could be published to sell for a dollar or less without detracting too much from its appearance it would probably be in much more demand for this purpose.

—John McMillan

Editorial Note:

Since the above review was written, an announcement has been received from the publisher, Baker Book House, stating as follows:

"The regular price of the **GOLDEN BOOKLET OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE** is \$1.50. When used for presentation to (1) servicemen, or (2) those making profession of faith we offer them at a special price of \$1.00 per copy. The purpose for which the **BOOKLET** is to be used should be stated on the order, since the edition used for those making profession has a special presentation page." —Ed.

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, by Benjamin B. Warfield, edited by Samuel G. Craig. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1952, pp. 580. \$4.50.

Dr. J. Gresham Machen once remarked that "a theological seminary is a school for specialists". He spoke of the fact that there are specialists in almost every field, in medicine, dentistry, literature, mechanics, and others too numerous to mention; and that amid all these specialties the study of the Bible is itself a specialty. He might have made it even more definitive by saying that within the field of theology there are limited areas of special study on which one might focus all his attention and confine the labors of an entire lifetime. To be an eminent scholar in any one of these areas — in Old Testament exegesis, in New Testament exegesis, in apologetics, or in dogmatics — the average theologian must necessarily restrict himself to his specialty. Benjamin B. Warfield was not an average theologian: he was a genius. He was not a specialist: he was a master of the entire field of theology. He made the whole field of theology — exegetical, historical, dogmatic, polemical and apologetical — the object of thoroughgoing study. His massive mind was fitted to give monumental expression to the full-orbed compass of divine truth.

"Caspar Wistar Hodge", writes Samuel G. Craig in his excellent biographical sketch of Dr. Warfield, "his immediate successor at Princeton Seminary and long his associate, in his Inaugural address after referring to the illustrious men who had given the institution fame throughout the world for sound learning and true piety, such as Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge and Archibald Alexander Hodge, spoke of Warfield as 'excelling them all in erudition' ". He goes on to say

that John DeWitt, long the professor of Church History in that seminary, once told him (Dr. Craig) that he had known intimately the three great Reformed theologians of America of the preceding generation — Charles Hodge, W. G. T. Shedd and Henry B. Smith — and that “he was certain that Warfield knew a great deal more than any one of them but that he was disposed to think that he knew more than all of them put together”.

No one who reads this volume of Warfield’s “little masterpieces” can but concur in these tributes. And if this present volume, one of three recent collections of his works and only a fraction of his entire literary bequest, is indicative of the scope of his labors, surely he must have been endowed with a gigantic mind. Dr. Warfield was a voluminous writer, but he was not given to prolixity. He was thorough, but he was not verbose. He had a remarkable facility for accurate, concise and telling expression that was combined with a deeply religious heart. “What most impresses the student of Warfield’s writings”, writes Dr. Craig, “— apart from his deeply religious spirit, his sense of complete dependence on God for all things including especially his sense of indebtedness as a lost sinner to His free grace — is the breadth of his learning and the exactness of his scholarship”. And one might add to this with equal appropriateness that what also impresses the student of Warfield’s works is the vigor of his thinking and the originality with which he wrote. His writings are not a compilation of other men’s writings, nor a reiteration of their ideas. He had a searching mind of his own, out of whose treasures he brought forth things new and old.

Herman Bavinck’s assertion that while “the religious supernaturalistic world-view has universally prevailed among all people and in all ages”, the empirico-scientific viewpoint with its thorough-going naturalism has crashed the gates of theological thinking, was a reality in Warfield’s day. Warfield was eminently a supernaturalistic theist. He faced the threat of naturalism and the resoluteness with which it turns its back on the **super-natural**. Supernaturalism formed the fiber of his thinking and stood as the rubric of every chapter of the Book which his mind systematized. The first chapter of this volume is appropriately his treatise on “Christian Supernaturalism”. He emphatically declares that the *sine qua non* of the Christian faith is “the confession of a supernatural God, who may and does act in a supernatural mode, and who acting in a supernatural mode has wrought out for us a supernatural redemption, interpreted in a supernatural revelation, and applied by the supernatural operations of His Spirit.”

Chapters on “The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity”, “Imputation” and “Predestination” are typical examples of the thoroughness with which he had mastered his subject and of his faithfulness

to the Scriptures as the inspired Divine Revelation. The article entitled, “God Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” is mostly philological in its method and demonstrates that in the closely knit conjunction of these two Divine names we have “part of the established phraseology of primitive Christian religious speech” — a “fixed formula”, as Warfield calls it. The suggestions of this formula, he believed, carry us into the midst of Paul’s Christology and his conception of God.

The long article on “The Divine Messiah in the Old Testament” serves to refute those higher-critical suppositions which aim at expunging the supernatural from the “hope of Israel”. Dr. Warfield confounds the higher critics by cleverly setting one school over against the other in such a way as mutually to exclude them.

Three articles dealing with Jesus — “The Supernatural Birth of Jesus”, “The Foresight of Jesus” and “Misconception of Jesus and Blasphemy” help to round out the commonly-incomplete portrait of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The article entitled, “Are They Few That Be Saved?” is a fitting companion-piece to the lengthy article on “Predestination”. Two thorough treatises on the subject of faith supplement each other in supplying views of its many aspects — its psychological aspects, the fine distinctions between belief and knowledge, the development of the faith-consciousness through history, the Biblical notion of faith and the philological expression of faith, with all its rich connotations as it appears on the pages of Scripture.

One of the most appealing and implicative excursions of the volume is the one entitled “Mysticism and Christianity”. Here Warfield apprises his readers of the dangers inherent in mysticism even whose content is distinctively Christian. He declares that when Christians look within themselves, that is, to their religious feelings, in search of God, there is always the tendency to subordinate the “external authority” of the Scriptures to that which seems to be more immediate and “first-hand”, namely, the “Christian consciousness” or religious experience.

There are other chapters of notable interest, not the least of which are a supplement of four of Warfield’s sermons, which Dr. Samuel G. Craig, who edited the volume, has wisely chosen as representative of the profoundly many-sided scholarship of this giant.

The publishers of this work are to be commended on their choice of a large, clear and readable type. A book that is difficult reading from the intellectual point of view is made easy reading from the typographical point of view. There are, however, typographical errors too numerous to mention, ranging from mistakes in citations in the Greek language, which are in preponderance, to the error of an incomplete sentence on page 2.

— Joseph A. Hill

AFTER THIS MANNER, by J. C. Macaulay. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 86. \$1.50.

J. C. Macaulay is a member of the teaching staff of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Prior to taking his position there, he was doing pastoral work in Wheaton College.

"Prayer is perplexingly paradoxical. It is both native to the human heart and alien to it. All men pray". With these opening words the author takes hold of the reader and holds him through this fine study of *The Lord's Prayer*.

He points out the fact that Christ taught this prayer to His disciples on two occasions. It is the heart of the Sermon on the Mount where he set forth the plan for the citizens of the Kingdom, and then again when His Disciples came and asked Him to teach them to pray. The prayer is divided into four parts: The Address, The Adoration, The Petition and The Doxology.

The opening statement reminds us that prayer is an exercise of God's children. This intimacy and boldness of faith is one of reverence as our thoughts are directed heavenward. Humility is kept alive by our remembrance that the right to call God "Father" is bestowed upon us by divine grace. "Our Father" does not exclude the right to call God "My Father", but it reminds us of the divine brotherhood. This great Redemption-founded relationship gives rise to Adoration. This too is in the form of petition, not personal nor intercessory but of such a nature that it is "The very soul of worship". Keeping the Third Commandment is prerequisite to this section of the prayer.

The author discusses the reverent care exercised by the ancient Jew in the use of the word "God". This hallowing also makes demands upon us in the whole realm of conduct and the exercise of peaceful trust instead of anxiety.

Praying for the Kingdom comes naturally to the child of God. "What the kingdoms of this world have failed to do, the Kingdom of God will accomplish, — it will establish Righteousness."

It is in connection with this section that the author introduces the Premillennial trend of thought; however, he reminds us that "Thy Kingdom come" is a prayer for the present as well as for the future. Praying this petition with understanding lays a threefold necessity on us personally. I must seek to bring every segment of my life into conformity to the Kingdom of God; and I must endeavor by every means available to promote the work of the Gospel; and finally I must look for and hasten the great day of our Lord's appearing, when every knee shall bow and own Him King of kings and Lord of lords. This reminds us that "God can be no other than absolute monarch". The will of God is done in heaven, and

this heavenly obedience becomes the pattern for that which is sought on earth. "If only the will of man would give way to the will of God the world's groanings will give place to the great Hallelujah chorus". Our own wills are strengthened by constant submission to God's will.

The Petition of the prayer falls into three parts. 1. Present needs. 2. Past failures. 3. Future dangers. This embraces the whole range of our lives. "Bread", he says, includes the whole range of our material needs, and is intended for daily use as a petition. The honest praying for forgiveness lays two demands on us, a willingness to be led, and an effort to avoid situations that are temptation-producing.

He maintains that the Doxology is in accord with the rest of the prayer whether it be regarded as a part of the original or an addition as inferred by the omission of it from Luke.

In truly praying this prayer, a law of the Kingdom goes into operation. When we abdicate in His favor He makes us kings; when we ascribe power to Him He makes us strong; when we refuse to touch glory, He glorifies us.

In an appendix the author takes up the prayer in the light of Christ. He points out that being joined to Christ and using the plan of prayer which He gave is equivalent to coming to God in Christ's name.

The book is truly devotional and thought provoking. Small, it can be read quickly; clear, it can be understood; and rich in thought, it can be re-read with profit.

— M. W. Dougherty

ISAIAH FIFTY-THREE: A DEVOTIONAL AND EXPOSITORY STUDY, by Edward J. Young. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 91. \$1.50.

The author of this little book has fulfilled the purpose signified on the title page. It is a devotional and expository study of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. The author is professor of Old Testament in Westminster Theological Seminary, and does not hesitate to refer to the meaning of the original language.

The study is undertaken with the assumption that the words are those of the true prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz and that The Servant spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ. In the last twenty pages of the book the author discusses the controversy over the book of Isaiah and defends his own interpretation in a noble manner, which is that the book is all by one author and not two.

The study begins with the thirteenth verse of chapter 52, which is the introduction to the Suffering Servant chapter. The first two verses of chapter 53 he includes under the heading "Golgotha". Here the prophet includes with himself,

others serving in the same capacity as messengers of God, confronted with the problem of a message not heard. The message is a report that the saving arm of the Lord has been revealed to them, "The Arm" being a synonym for "Strength". Reference is made to the Hebrew use of parallelism, and the use of the prophetic perfect, which is a treating of a thing yet future as though it were past. Also the reader is reminded that certain words used are most graphic. The effect of the Suffering is the thing stressed rather than a detailed picture of the suffering. This suffering included His humiliation, being despised and rejected of men. The deliverance of the report places man in a responsible position. He cannot remain neutral in his attitude toward the Sufferer. Man cannot be indifferent to Christ. We reject Him when "We hide our faces (close our eyes) from Him". This is willful. The grief and sickness endured were not His own. They were ours. It was not as a mere burden that our sins bruised or crushed Him. He was smitten of God because of the sins, not by them. He took the disease of sin, and by His substitutionary suffering, we are healed. The chastisement secures reconciliation for us, which is peace in our heart, and peace with God. This suffering for us satisfies God's justice.

A forgiving spirit is what we need, and we are told that it is such a forgiving spirit which God has also. This view of God's justice is taken by those to whom the Scriptural doctrine is generally abhorrent. Men are very ready to judge God by themselves, and in rejecting the Scriptural doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ they think that they are doing a worthy thing.

The opposition to God's justice is considered and in it this apt statement: "We, therefore, are in no position to state what is, or what is not worthy of God". We are in this position because we ourselves are sinners. The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction needs to be revived today.

As sheep we turned to our own way and away from the Shepherd. The sheep does not seek, but must be sought. Hence, for us to be delivered, God Himself must intervene. Here is the doctrine of total depravity. Also God's sovereignty, for God is the ultimate cause of the Servant's suffering. Satisfaction and expiation are found in that the Servant by His death offers a sacrifice to put away sin. This suffering was not against the will of the Servant, but He voluntarily submitted to it, patiently, as set forth in verse 7.

His arrest and trial are found in verse 8. The suffering, though it is laid upon Him by the Lord, yet He suffered also at the hands of men. He is condemned because men are themselves wicked. "That which caused Him to die was the sin of those He purposed to save, His elect. It was for those who are actually saved that He died, and it was their sin which brought Him to the grave." He was taken away from judgment by death. "It is

not the death itself to which men should give their thought. It is the death and the interpretation of that death.' While in this death He was with criminals, He was given an honorable burial because of His perfect innocency.

The reason for "The Bruising" lies in the fact that He made of Himself a trespass offering, the primary purpose of which was satisfaction. Thus we see Him as a righteous Priest, offering a righteous sacrifice — Himself a sacrifice which rises far above animal sacrifice.

The second division of the chapter begins with verse 11 under the heading "Sit Thou on My right hand". The Servant was not to be holden of death. He is to see His seed — a large and satisfying posterity. His exaltation is mentioned and followed by His saving work. "By His knowledge" or "By the knowledge of Him" gives us one of the most pointed statements of the Gospel in the entire Bible. He removes the iniquities of many and gives them His righteousness, thus justifying them. He is perfectly victorious. We know not what the spoils are.

The prophecy closes with a review of His sufferings that we may never forget why God has highly exalted Him.

This volume is not one merely to scan. It takes the reader and slows him down to a meditating pace and finally releases him with a clearer vision of his Saviour and a revitalized appreciation of the writer's efforts according to truth.

— M. W. Dougherty

A PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, by Edward J. Carnell. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 523. \$6.00.

Religion begins whenever a person commits his life to some value. If he does not find satisfaction in his choice of value, either he finds himself in a dark impasse or he is driven on to a higher commitment. "No value commitment is competely satisfying until the complete man is satisfied." In all of life's commitments we are wise to "balance all options by the rule of the whole perspective coherence" so as to satisfy the whole man (p.446).

A Philosophy of the Christian Religion is an axiological examination of typical value-options. It is a critique of unilateral philosophies, commitment to which cannot produce integrality in life. The plan of the book is similar to that followed in the Biblical Book of Ecclesiastes where the philosophies of the world are laid seriatim on the roundtable of experience for a candid examination. Like Coheleth Dr. Carnell demonstrates that a completely satisfying life commitment is not to be found "under the sun", that is, in commitment to this-worldly ideals. The life that we now live in the flesh is not "the whole of man"

(Eccles. 12:13). Man is a creature of a double environment. He lives both in time and eternity and therefore he has a free self and an involved self integrated within one person. He has contact with the phenomenological world of extension and the noumenal world of non-extension.

Following the dialectical relation between time and eternity which the Crisis Theology posits, Dr. Carnell states that the transcendental self (free self) sets a standard of values (eternal ought) to which the empirical self is morally responsible. Freedom defines our moral possibilities, and love is the medium through which those possibilities are attained. But "the law of love offers a latitude within which freedom can never be exhausted" (p. 513). Freedom can always find new and richer ways to love. Freedom will keep setting the ideal of *agape* higher than the level of fulfilment which has hitherto been reached. Thus the involved self can never measure up to the demands of the free self. "At this point transcendent powers perceive that there is a discrepancy between the ideal assented to, and the fulfilment of the ideal through day-by-day living. This discrepancy issues in guilt" (p. 70).

In the light of this tension between freedom and necessity, Carnell evaluates the worth of commitment to such values as seem to be offered in the pursuit of pleasures, economic-social-security (the classless society ideal of communism), intellectual pursuits (such as Spinoza's life-commitment), devotion to man, and others. He demonstrates how each of these commitments fails to satisfy the whole man. He points out the fallacy of Existentialism, as founded by Soren Kierkegaard and modified by Barth, Brunner and Niebuhr, namely, the fallacy of regarding the free self as the sole locus of truth, thus sweeping the sky of all objective points of reference and isolating the individual self to its own realm of reality.

After clearing away the rubbish of inadequate life-values, Dr. Carnell urges Biblical Christianity as the system of truth which presents the fewest difficulties. It is not only rationally coherent, but it fulfills the inner craving of the human heart for fellowship. Only in fellowship with the person of Christ can we obtain a true knowledge of God.

Dr. Carnell's epistemology, however, rests upon the foundation of an irrelevant, or at least inappropriate antithesis, namely, that of the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*. His metaphysic is built around a synthesis of these two methods. But the basic problem of Christian epistemology is not simply that of sustaining a proper balance between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*. For this method is not distinctively Christian; it is situated on a ground of neutrality upon which any non-Christian thinker may also stand. It is not sufficient to say that our method must have an *a priori* as well as a *a posteriori* aspect. That contention is the very heart of the idealist logic of

recent times. F. H. Bradley and B. Bosanquet are both in agreement with Carnell on this point. They say that the *a priori* of method is involved in the notion of eternity. Bosanquet affirms that, unless there is an eternal aspect to reality, we cannot know anything at all. Carnell has gone no farther than this. He ought to have made his distinction between **Christian-theism** and **non-theism**. That is the basic point of departure. The Christian presupposes God as the absolute, self-conscious Being who is the source of all finite being and knowledge. The *a priori* and a *a posteriori*, however carefully balanced, are not ultimates. Only the mind of God is an ultimate. This is what Bavinck called, in his *De Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* ("Reformed Dogmatics"), the **Principium essendi**. By this he meant that without the concept of God as self-existent, self-conscious, we could not know anything. Thus Carnell himself is left "suffering for a method", just as truly as the stuffy rationalist and the hard-headed empiricist.

Consistent with his presuppositions, Carnell posits the law of contradiction as the ultimate criterion of certainty. He uncritically follows the Aristotelian assumption that *a priori* principles rest upon nothing but themselves. For Aristotle the law of contradiction was itself an ultimate relation, a self-existing, eternal, impersonal law (p. 186). The implication of this is that it was not created by God and does not rest upon the Creator God. Carnell admits that "capping the pyramid is the sagacity of God" but then forgets about the primacy of God's self-conscious Being in the course of his argumentation and makes certainty to exist merely in adherence to the law of contradiction, regardless of the foundation of that law. This makes God and man correlative, i.e., working under a system of logic that is higher than them both. But the law of contradiction does not work somehow independently of God. It is grounded (like all *a priori* principles) in the nature of God. It is the expression in time of the eternal inner coherence of God's nature. It is one of those laws (like the law of gravitation) which God has declared relevant in the universe which He created. Therefore it cannot be thought of as operating anywhere except against the background of the veracity and integrity of the mind of God. If God is not bound by a law of justice or a law of love that is higher than Himself (as Carnell himself points out elsewhere), then neither is He bound by a law of logic that is higher than Himself.

In spite of this inadequacy, Dr. Carnell nevertheless does justice to the Scriptures as a coherent, rationally consistent body of revealed truth. The Bible will stand up under the acid test of logical consistency. This is because "a single genus of knowledge envelops both time and eternity" (p. 507). But the Scriptures, he tells us, lead us to

a knowledge of God which is not only rational but experiential. Through the Scriptures we know not only about God: we come to know God. Thus Biblical Christianity satisfies the whole man, living as he does in two environments, by teach-

ing man the objective facts about God, on the one hand, and on the other hand by drawing man into that knowledge of acquaintance through fellowship with the living Christ.

— Joseph A. Hill

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.

GOD-CENTERED LIVING: A SYMPOSIUM PREPARED UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE CALVINISTIC ACTION COMMITTEE. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1951, pp. 271. \$3.50.

GOD SPAKE BY MOSES, by Oswald T. Allis. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust Street, Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1951, pp. 159. \$1.50.

THINKING AND SMILING, by Ralph Stob. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 73, paper cover. \$1.00.

THE CASE AGAINST MODERNISM IN EVANGELISM, by Chester E. Tulga. Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 2561 North Clark Street, Chicago 14, Ill. 1952, pp. 60, paper cover. 25 cents.

YOUTH SPEAKS ON CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION (Symposium). Piet Hein Publishers, 1300 West Butler, S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952, pp. 39, paper cover. 50 cents.

FAITH AND SANCTIFICATION, by G. C. Berkouwer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 193, \$3.00.

THE BLUEPRINT OF SALVATION, OR THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS, by Howard A. Hanke. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 38, paper cover. 50 cents.

THE PAULINE ESCHATOLOGY, by Geerhardus Vos. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 365. \$5.00.

THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE IRRELIGIOUS, by George Hedley. The Macmillan Co., 60 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N.Y. 1951, pp. 140. \$2.50.

THE MOMENTOUS EVENT: A DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE TEACHING ON THE SECOND ADVENT AND QUESTIONS RELATED THERETO, by W. J. Grier. The Evangelical Book Shop, 15 College Square East, Belfast, N. Ireland. 1952, pp. 98. 4s.6d.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD, by G. C. Berkouwer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 294. \$3.50.

INTRODUCTORY HEBREW GRAMMAR, by R. Laird Harris. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 90. \$2.50.

THE MINISTRY OF MERCY FOR TODAY, by Peter Y. De Jong. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 261. \$3.50.

THE SILENCE OF GOD, by Robert Anderson. Kregel Publications, 525 Eastern Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 232. \$2.00.

THE PROGRESS OF DOGMA, by James Orr. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 365. \$3.50.

THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE, translated by E. B. Pusey. Pocket Books, Inc., International Bldg., Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 1952, pp. 301, paper cover. 35 cents.

The Law of God

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under the sin"—Rom. 7:14.

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin"—Rom. 3:20.

By "the Law of God" we mean the moral law of God, which is summarized in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), but expanded and expounded in other parts of the Bible, such as the Sermon on the Mount and the New Testament Epistles.

The Law is Spiritual

God's law concerns not merely outward actions, but the thoughts, motives and intents of our hearts, and even our feelings, our likes and dislikes. Civil or human law concerns only actions. Treason, for example, must involve an "overt act"; mere sympathy with the enemies of our country is not treason, if not expressed in some action. Murder must be committed, or at least attempted, to be punishable by human law. But by God's law, the hatred which is the root of murder is sinful.

Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. The Jews of Jesus' day did not realize that the law is spiritual. Therefore they supposed, in their vain conceit, that they could really keep the law. They thought of external actions only.

God's word says: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his THOUGHTS" (Isa. 55:7). God's law concerns even our thoughts. In Noah's day, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). To Simon the Sorcerer the apostle Peter said: "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:21,22). God's law is spiritual; it concerns our inward thoughts, motives, feelings, attitudes, desires and ambitions, as well as our actions.

The Law Crowds us to Christ

To the sinner, God's law is not good advice, but an indictment. It is a mirror that shows us ourselves as we really are in God's sight. It strips away our self-conceit and tells us the humiliating truth about ourselves. It convinces us that we are not really lawkeepers but lawbreakers. "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Thus the law of God convinces us that we are lost sinners, that we cannot save ourselves, and that we

need a Saviour. The Holy Spirit uses the law of God to bring about this conviction of sin in the sinner's heart.

Have we learned the lesson of the law of God? How do we plead to the Ten Commandments—guilty or not guilty? Do we think we cannot be as wicked as pictured in God's Word? Then it is our feelings and ideas against God's Word; we are fighting against God the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit works His work of special grace in us we will plead guilty. All inclination to argue the matter will leave us completely. We will throw ourselves unreservedly upon the mercy of the court—that is, on the mercy of God.

The Law is the Christian's Standard of Right and Wrong

God's Word commands us: "Depart from evil, and do good" (Psalm 37:27). But what is evil, and what is good? Some go by public opinion, some by their feelings, and some claim mystical "guidance" as their standard. But they are all wrong. God's law revealed in the Bible is the standard of right and wrong. It is the Christian's measuring rod to measure his life day by day. It shows where improvement is needed, where he falls short, what direction he ought to move in. "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97).

— J. G. Vos

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“They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally, nor finally, fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.”

The Westminster Confession of Faith, XVII.1

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Clay Center, Kansas

Selections from the Poems of Christina G. Rossetti

"The Love of Christ which Passeth Knowledge"

I bore with thee long weary days and nights,
Through many pangs of heart, through many tears;
I bore with thee, thy hardness, coldness, slights,
For three and thirty years.

Who else had dared for thee what I have dared?
I plunged the depth most deep from bliss above;
I not My flesh, I not My spirit spared:
Give thou Me love for love.

For thee I thirsted in the daily drouth,
For thee I trembled in the nightly frost:
Much sweeter thou than honey to My mouth:
Why wilt thou still be lost?

I bore thee on My shoulders and rejoiced:
Men only marked upon My shoulders borne

The branding cross; and shouted hungry-voiced,
Or wagged their heads in scorn.

Thee did nails grave upon My hands, thy name
Did thorns for frontlets stamp between Mine eyes:
I, Holy One, put on thy guilt and shame;
I, God, Priest, Sacrifice.

A thief upon My right hand and My left;
Six hours alone, athirst, in misery:
At length in death one smote My heart and cleft
A hiding-place for thee.

Nailed to the racking cross, than bed of down
More dear, whereon to stretch Myself and sleep:
So did I win a kingdom,—share My crown;
A harvest,—come and reap.

A Better Resurrection

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
My heart within me like a stone
Is numbed too much for hopes or fears;
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimmed with grief
No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf:
O Jesus, quicken me.

My life is like a faded leaf,
My harvest dwindled to a husk;
Truly my life is void and brief
And tedious in the barren dusk;

My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud or greenness can I see:
Yet rise it shall — the sap of Spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul
Or cordial in the searching cold;
Cast in the fire the perished thing,
Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for Him my King:
O Jesus, drink of me.

From House to Home

(Closing stanzas)

Therefore, O friend, I would not if I might
Rebuild my house of lies, wherein I joyed
One time to dwell: my soul shall walk in white
Cast down but not destroyed.

Therefore in patience I possess my soul;
Yea, therefore as a flint I set my face,
To pluck down, to build up again the whole,
But in a distant place.

These thorns are sharp, yet I can tread on them;
This cup is loathsome, yet He makes it sweet:
My face is steadfast toward Jerusalem,
My heart remembers it.

I lift the hanging hands, the feeble knees,
I, precious more than seven times molten gold,

Until the day when from His storehouses
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,
Yet doth His blood nourish and warm my root:
Tomorrow I shall put forth buds again,
And clothe myself with fruit.

Although today I walk in tedious ways,
Today His staff is turned into a rod,
Yet will I wait for Him the appointed days
And stay upon my God.

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Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter IV

Knox in the Field of Conflict — A. D. 1547

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church" This crimson adage is a striking truth. "If ye burn any more," quaintly said one who had observed the effects of the martyrdom of Wishart on the public mind, "burn them in your cellar, for the smoke infects all upon whom it is blown."

John Knox was then a young man preparing for service in the priesthood of Rome. He had met Wishart and felt the glow of his warm heart and the power of his inspiring fellowship. He was a man of eminent natural abilities to which was added a liberal education. He was recognized as one who would be a mighty champion on whatever side he took his stand. God was rich in mercy to Scotland when He caused the Gospel to shine into the heart of Knox, giving him "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." His towering intellect, through the study of the Word of God, caught the morning glory of the Reformation, like a mountain that catches the first rays of the rising sun. He broke all the bonds that bound him to Papacy, and entered into the liberty of the children of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

When Knox received his first call to become a pastor, he was overwhelmed with anxiety at the awful responsibility of preaching the Gospel. He stood in amazement, but dared not refuse. His humility and self-abasement prepared him, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, for heights of power and honor seldom reached by ministers. From that crucial day he devoted all the energies of body and soul to the preaching of the Word of God. His public services covered a quarter of a century.

This mighty man of valor threw himself immediately into the thickest of the fight against Romanism. He struck at the root of the evil. Instead of skirmishing along the borders about rituals, ceremonies, and perversion of doctrines, he boldly challenged the Papal system as Antichrist, and the Pope as "The man of sin." In his estimation the Romish Church was a fallen Church and had become "The Synagogue of Satan." He entered the field of conflict clad in the armor of God and wielded the sword of the Spirit with precision and terrible effect. In prayer lay the secret of

his power. He knew how to take hold upon God, and prevail like a prince. The Queen Regent, who in those times mustered the forces of the government at her pleasure, said, "I am more afraid of the prayers of John Knox than of any army of ten thousand men."

The very name of Knox was enough to strike terror into the hearts of his enemies. On one occasion, having been in Geneva for a time, he returned unexpectedly. Just then a number of the Reformed ministers, who had been arrested for preaching against Popery, were approaching their trial. The court had assembled and were attending to the preliminaries. Suddenly a messenger rushed into the hall of justice, breathless with haste, exclaiming, "John Knox! John Knox is come! he slept last night in Edinburgh!" The court was stunned and immediately adjourned.

The life of Knox was often in danger. Once as he sat in his room reading by candle light a shot was fired at him from the street through the window. It went harmlessly past him and struck his candle.

He received a request on a certain occasion to preach in a city that was a stronghold of Romanism. He accepted, glad of the opportunity, knowing also the peril. The archbishop of the city, having an army at his bidding, sent Knox a warning, saying, that if he preached, the soldiers would receive orders to fire upon him. His friends urged him not to go. He replied, "As for the fear of danger that may come to me let no man be solicitous, for my life is in the custody of Him whose glory I seek. I desire the hand and weapon of no man to defend me. I only crave audience, which, if it be denied here unto me at this time, I must seek farther where I may have it." He went and preached and returned unharmed. His great courage infused itself into other hearts, and a multitude of invincible men stood forth with him in the struggle for liberty and conscience, which he so fearlessly advocated. Every sublime life is a mighty power for the uplifting of others into the same region of healthy action.

The throne of Scotland, with its machinery of government, was against Knox all his days. Queen Mary was determined to keep the people in subjection to her own arbitrary will, and the Church subject to her authority. Knox had sev-

eral personal interviews with her, taking occasion at the risk of his life to speak candidly and solemnly, applying the Word of God to her life and conscience. At one time, remonstrating against her persecuting rage, he said to her, "Even so, Madam, if those who are in authority, being stricken with a frenzy will murder the children of God, who are their own subjects, the sword may be taken from them, and they may be imprisoned till they be brought to a sober mind." The queen was much amazed and her face changed color, but she was powerless to do him harm.

During the lifetime of Knox, the Church of the Reformation grew rapidly and became mighty in numbers and influence. The first General Assembly was held in 1560, having 6 ministers and 32 other members, 38 in all. In 1567, just seven years later, the Assembly numbered 252 ministers, 467 readers, and 154 exhorters. This, too, was in time of distress; the conditions were unfavorable, the opposition was very strong. How account for the success? "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

The Church contended for the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, even unto death.

The Church pursued unswervingly the course marked out for her in the Word of God, in doctrine, worship, and discipline, not troubled at the cost nor fearing results.

The Church refused to be guided by human wisdom or temporizing methods, either to win numbers or gain favor, depending for success upon the wisdom that cometh from above.

The Church sought to glorify God with simplicity of faith, holiness of life, purity of worship, and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence the invincible energy, the wonderful achievements, the magnificent victories, and the amazing in-

crease. Would not the Church of Christ take on like activities, proportions, and strength, by following the same course of fidelity in our own times?

John Knox died in 1572, at the age of 67. His last words were, "Come, Lord Jesus, sweet Jesus; receive my spirit." His latter end was peace.

Will we strive to emulate Knox in prayer, courage, self-denial, and pure-heartedness? Will not his example be to us an inspiration to work with faith and might, to build up the Church and enlarge the Kingdom of Christ? He was great because he was humble and trusted in the Lord. The same way is still open to all who would do great things for God. Humility, prayer, faith, activity, courage, honor, glory—these are the successive steps upward. There is yet room in the high places. Knox's place seems to be vacant. Who will fill it? What an opportunity for young men to bring their noblest powers into action!

POINTS FOR THE CLASS

1. What great reformer appeared at this stage of the conflict?
2. What was the attitude of Knox toward Romanism?
3. How was his power dreaded by his enemies?
4. What was his demeanor in danger?
5. Describe his interviews with the rulers.
6. Tell how the Church prospered during his ministry; explain the cause.
7. What effect should such a life have on us as we study it?

(To be continued)

The Visible Church: Its Nature, Unity and Witness

By J. G. Vos

(Concluded from last issue)

Note: This article is reproduced by permission from *The Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 2 (May, 1947).

The question of the form of subscription to the doctrinal standards of a denomination which should be required of ministers is an important one but too large to be taken up in any detail in this article. Among Churches of the Presbyterian family in America the prevalent form of subscription has been one to the Confession of Faith, or to the Confession and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as containing the system of doctrine

taught in the Scriptures. The question as to the meaning of the expression "the system of doctrine"—whether it means every proposition in the Confession, or the "substance" of doctrine, or the Calvinistic system of doctrine—has been thoroughly discussed in the past. (Charles Hodge: *The Church and its Polity* (London, 1879), pp 317-342.) The first of the views listed cannot be defended, for it would amount to claiming infallibility for the Confession. The second, which would define "system" as "substance", distorts the meaning of words, and would open the door to

serious errors; a candidate for ordination could reject doctrines which are essential to the system of Calvinism, and yet claim to hold the "substance" of doctrine taught in the Scriptures. The third view, namely, that which defines "the system of doctrine" as consistent Calvinism as set forth in the Confession of Faith, is undoubtedly correct and should be insisted on.

Something should be said about preaching and teaching on the part of ministers in relation to the corporate witness of the Church. It is not necessary to state that a minister should faithfully teach and preach the body truth set forth in the Standards of his Church. But what about the portion of Scriptural ground which lies beyond the area of confessionally defined dogma? Is a minister limited to preaching truth embodied in his Church's corporate witness? Must he refrain from handling matters on which his Church's standards are non-committal? For example, may a minister in preaching advocate the "Restitution theory" of the meaning of Genesis 1:1, 2? The traducian view of the origin of the soul? The Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews? The view that the earth is to be destroyed as to form only, and not as to matter, or the contrary view that it is to be destroyed as to both form and matter?

With respect to this problem it may be said, first of all, that a minister is ordained to proclaim the **whole** counsel of God, and therefore is not limited to that portion which has already been defined as dogma by his Church; indeed no doctrine would historically have been defined as dogma unless it had previously been preached by ministers and thus had come to be recognized as Scriptural by the Church. Yet a minister in his preaching and teaching must never **contradict** anything which he has professed to accept in his subscription to the Standards of his Church at his ordination.

It has been generally recognized historically that there are certain minor points in the Westminster Confession, not in any sense pertaining to the integrity of the system of doctrine, the acceptance of which is not necessarily implied in subscription to the Confession. The statement of the Confession (XXV, 6) that the Pope of Rome is the fulfilment of the prophecy of II Thess. 2:3, 4, is of the nature of an **obiter dictum**, as it is obviously based not merely upon exegesis of the Scriptures, but upon ordinary fallible human records of mediaeval history, and thus departs from the Confession's own principle that "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men" (I, 6).

Obviously the content of the phrase "the Pope of Rome" is derived not from Scripture but from human tradition. To contradict such a point should not be regarded as inconsistent with subscription to the Confession.

In the second place, he may never represent any doctrine as an element of the corporate witness of his Church unless it really is set forth in the Standards. Common honesty would seem to involve this, yet it is not infrequently violated in practice; ministers who hold some extra-confessional doctrinal specialty with great zeal sometimes preach it so fervently and so persistently that the public gets the impression that it is a chief point of the denomination's testimony. When a minister preaches an extra-confessional doctrine he owes his hearers a statement that what he is about to preach is not a part of the public testimony of their Church, that it is not in conflict with that testimony, and that he believes it to be a doctrine of God's Word. In the third place, preaching of extra-confessional doctrines should be kept in strict subordination, as to time and emphasis, to the task of preaching the doctrines of the Church's corporate testimony. The main burden of every minister's pulpit work should always be the doctrines which his Church holds as a body. The practice of some denominations of requiring ministers to devote one service each sabbath to doctrinal preaching following the order of the Church's catechism has much to commend it. There could hardly be a better safeguard against the exploitation of extra-confessional doctrinal specialties in the pulpit.

The principles just outlined cannot of course be applied to expository preaching in exactly the same way as to doctrinal preaching. In the nature of the case, much expository preaching will deal with the historical and biographical portions of the Bible. It would be absurd to expect a minister who preaches on the life of Joseph, for example, to explain to his hearers that what he is about to say is taught in the Bible, but is not mentioned in the Standards of the Church. Church members of ordinary intelligence understand that their Church's Standards present a **formulation of doctrine**, not a condensed summary of everything in the Bible. Still it must be remembered that expository preaching, while not **formally** doctrinal, cannot be divorced from doctrine. The doctrines which a minister holds will inevitably come to the surface even of expository preaching. And surely if in the course of expository preaching a minister wishes to emphasize some extra-confessional doctrine, he should take care to make its status clear to his hearers. The minister is not merely an individual proclaimer of the Gospel; he is also an organ of the visible Church, and this fact involves an obligation to maintain a distinction between that which he holds and proclaims merely as a matter of personal conviction concerning the meaning of the Scriptures, and

that which he holds and proclaims as also the corporate witness of the Church of which he is a member, and in which he is a servant.

Finally, something may be said about the question of whether the corporate witness of the visible Church is to be regarded as static or progressive. There sometimes appears a spirit of blind and complacent conservatism which would regard that witness as static, as if the Holy Spirit's work of leading the Church into all truth had come to a conclusion in the seventeenth century and no further development could be expected. This excessively conservative spirit tends to look with suspicion on anything new. While conservatism is enjoined in the Scriptural command to "hold fast that which is good", (I Thess. 5.21.) the same text also requires us to "prove all things". Certainly the promise that the Holy Spirit would lead the Church into all truth is rightly understood as referring to a process which must continue until the consummation of the age. Clearly, too, the Church's grasp of the doctrines of special revelation hitherto has come through such a process. There has been a progressive development, not indeed without its ups and downs, but still a line of progress from the age of the apostles to the present. One area of doctrine after another has been clarified and has become a matter of corporate testimony, especially on the part of those branches of the visible Church which have been located nearest to the "line of orthodoxy", which can be traced from the apostles, through Augustine, the Reformers and, later, the Puritan divines, down to the Reformed theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This has been a wonderful fulfilment of our Lord's promise, but we show scant appreciation of it if we regard it as already complete. Clearly there remain some areas of Christian doctrine in which further clarification and development are needed. The areas of eschatology, the Church, and the civil magistrate may be regarded as such. There are also some particular parts of doctrines which need further clarification. For example, the manner of the transmission of the corruption

of original sin has remained rather obscure, and the statements of the Reformed confessions on this subject perhaps leave something to be desired. The same is true of the matter of marriage and divorce, in several particulars.

But progress in developing a Scriptural corporate witness must always be kept in balance with a true conservatism. True progress means building on what has come to us from the past. This does not imply that **nothing** which has come from the past as a matter of corporate witness may ever be torn down. "All synods or councils, since the Apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err; and many have erred", (The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXXI,4.) and therefore we must recognize that there has always been an element of error in the visible Church's witness to the truth. Therefore no creed or confession is to be regarded as sacrosanct; it may really need to be amended, even by the striking out of some item. But it should be realized that such changes will affect only minor details, and also that future additions to the Church's witness must necessarily be comparatively minor ones. The great work of building up a corporate witness to the truth has already been done; it stands today in the historic Reformed creeds, not indeed as infallible, nor as complete in every element nor in detail, but as substantially complete. In its main outlines and in all its principal features, this work has been done for all time, and can never be improved upon. We should remember, too, that the anti-doctrinal temper of our age, which has to some extent infected even the best Churches, will make real progress in further development of the Church's witness very difficult, at least for a time. The Church has to struggle desperately today to maintain her grip upon the confessions which followed the Reformation. We should hope and pray for the dawn of a better day when the development of the Church's witness can go forward with new confidence and vigor.

The End

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 III

THE DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES OF THE COVENANTERS

CHAPTER III

THE COVENANTERS' DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN CIVIL GOVERNMENT

2. Scripture the Rule for the Regulation of Civil Affairs

The Covenanters throughout the entire history

of their movement have taken a very high view of Holy Scripture. They have held and hold today the plenary inspiration, entire sufficiency and supreme authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as set forth in the first chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith. They regard the Bible not merely as the standard for

religion and ecclesiastical matters in the strict sense, but as the supreme standard for all relationships and activities of life. Since the State is regarded as a divine institution, and the authority of the civil magistrate is derived from the kingly office of Jesus Christ, it follows that the Word of God must be the standard for civil as well as for all other affairs. The civil magistrate must not be regarded as primarily the servant of society but as the minister of God to men for good. All legislation and administration should seek first the glory of God and second the benefit of society. Nations as such are bound to regulate their civil affairs by the moral law of God. No sphere or department of human life can claim exemption from the authority of Scripture, and therefore in the sphere of civil government, rulers ought not merely to rule according to this standard, but ought publicly to profess to do so. The Bible should not only be the guide, but the officially recognized guide, in civil affairs. This does not mean that the Bible is a text-book of political science or government, but that the principles revealed in Scripture must be applied to civil affairs as to all other affairs.

This principle finds its expression, first of all, in the requirement that the nation as such recognize the mediatorial kingship of Christ and enter into covenant with Him. Second, it finds its expression in the requirement that holders of public office be possessed of Scriptural qualifications. The modern American idea that no religious test should be prescribed for public office is utterly contrary to the Covenanter position on civil government from the Second Reformation to the present day. The doctrine that public officials must be possessed of Scriptural qualifications is the basis of the Act of Classes which was passed in 1649. The same requirement found expression in the coronation oath which Charles II was required to take at Scone in 1651. The Queensferry Paper, Sanquhar Declaration and various later declarations, protests and testimonies set forth the same principle with more and more clearness and insistence. It was, however, no novelty, for it was the publicly approved and recognized position of the nation in 1649. The modern Reformed Presbyterian Testimonies do not approve of ecclesiastical or denominational tests for public office, but they do insist on the necessity of religious tests. For example the Irish Reformed Presbyterian Testimony rejects as an error the proposition "That atheists, agnostics, idolaters, deists, Arians, papists, pagans, political secularists, or any others who do not receive the Word of God as the supreme law for all relations of life, who do not profess the Christian faith, or whose lives are openly in conflict with Christian morality, may lawfully be civil rulers in a Christian nation". This of course may be held to be an infringement on the rights of men, but it must be remembered that the whole emphasis of the Covenanter movement is on the rights of God, and

that according to this viewpoint, men do not have any rights that conflict with the rights of God. Man cannot have any inalienable rights except those given by God himself; God gives to no man the right to be an unbeliever or to break the commandments; therefore no man has the right to these things; and the unbeliever, being in rebellion against God and Christ, has no right to hold office in a Christian nation which recognizes Christ as King and Scripture as its supreme standard. The Covenanter position is, in effect, a challenge of the modern secular state's **right to exist** in God's world. This position is held today by a very small number of people, but it is a position which can be traced back to the Scottish Church and nation of the Second Reformation.

3. The Uniqueness of the Reformed Presbyterian Doctrine of Christian Civil Government.

The distinctive doctrines of the Covenanters have been enumerated as (1) the perpetual obligation of the Scottish Covenantants; (2) the sole headship of Christ over the Church; and (3) Christian civil government. The first two of these are not really distinctive doctrines of Reformed Presbyterians today in the strict sense, for the first is also held by the United Original Secession Church, and the second has found general acceptance in many parts of the world, especially in countries where the Church and State are completely separated. There was a period, however (1661-1733) when these two doctrines were distinctive doctrines of the Covenanters, in the sense that they were the only body to give a public testimony for these doctrines during that period.

The third doctrine, the Reformed Presbyterian doctrine of Christian civil government, however, has been a distinctive doctrine of the Covenanters or Reformed Presbyterians ever since the overthrow of the Second Reformation, in the strict sense that no other Church or organization whatever has maintained a public profession of and witness for this doctrine. The various secessions from the Revolution Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were all protests against Erastianism in the relation between Church and State and against corruptions or abuses in the Church; none of them was a protest against the constitution of the State itself. This the Reformed Presbyterian position was and is, and it is this fact that sets the Reformed Presbyterian Church over against all other branches of the Presbyterian family in Scotland and in other countries. For this reason the Covenanter doctrine of Christian civil government, or of the mediatorial kingship of Christ over the nations, in the civil sphere, may justly be regarded as the material principle of the Covenanter movement from the Second Reformation to the present day.

A number of other principles are commonly spoken of as distinctive principles of the Reform-

ed Presbyterian Church, but incorrectly so, for none of them is really distinctive, since all of them are held, to a greater or less extent, by other denominations at the present time. Historically speaking, the formal principle of the Covenanter movement is the perpetual obligation of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, and the material principle is the mediatorial

kingship of Christ over the nations. And as already stated, both of these principles and also the principle of the sole headship of Christ over the Church can be reduced to a single fundamental principle: **Ius Divinum**—divine right or **the rights of God**, which are to be recognized in the Church, the State and every sphere of life.

The End

“Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs”

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

(Note: The following article is reproduced from “Blue Banner Faith and Life”, April-June, 1948. Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 are constantly being confidently quoted as a complete refutation of the principle that only the Psalms of the Bible are authorized for singing in the worship of God. Those who adhere to that principle ought to have a clear and accurate understanding of these two texts. And those who confidently cite these texts as a justification of the use of non-inspired hymns in divine worship, ought to be willing to study a scholarly and exact exegesis of the texts, such as that which Mr. Frazer presents in this article. Because of the importance of this article, and its permanent reference value, reprints of it on separate sheets are being made and will be available at 5 cents each or 25 for \$1.00 postpaid. Ed.)

Question:

Will a strict exegesis of Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 apply to the 150 Psalms only, thus excluding all human compositions?

Answer:

The texts referred to are as follows: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18,19); “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

A strict exegesis of these passages requires, of course, that the words in them be taken in the sense obviously intended by the writer, and reasonably to be understood by those to whom the epistles were addressed, not in some other sense they might acquire at a future time.

Controversies within the Church have produced, for us, a sharp differentiation between “Psalms” and “Hymns”, “Psalms” being the accepted name for the God-inspired songs of praise collected in one book of Scripture, while “Hymns” has become the common designation of human

compositions for singing in worship. But, so far as the records show, no such difference was attached to these words in the original apostolic Church, and this for the simple reason that, at that time, there were no uninspired songs used, or to be used, in the worship of the true God. Repeated assumptions and assertions to the contrary have never been substantiated.

The Christian Church had but recently emerged from the confines of the Jewish Synagogue, where only the Scripture Psalms were used in the praise service. No others were available for the praise service of the Church. Note that Paul does not tell his readers to **make** Psalms, Hymns or Songs, but to **sing** them to God, and **talk** of them to men, thus taking it for granted that these things were already at hand; things, indeed, which he regarded as of the greatest importance for Christians. And, while special gifts of the Spirit were promised to meet the needs of the Church (e. g., Eph. 4:7-16), none were promised for the making of songs of praise to God, nor for “singing the gospel” to men.

We know well that the preaching, teaching, and writing of Paul, preserved for us, is based on the Old Testament Scriptures; his constant appeal is to their very words.

In the providence of God, these Scriptures, originally written in Hebrew, were translated into Greek before the coming of Christ. This Greek version, called the Septuagint (often denoted by the abbreviation “LXX”) was available wherever there were Greek-speaking Jews, and they were in all the important centers of the Mediterranean world. It was the only version available in the days of Christ and the apostles. Christ put the stamp of His approval on it by quoting from it. The original Hebrew, of course, remained as the standard, but, outside of Palestine, there were few who could understand it.

Paul wrote to the Greek-speaking Ephesians and Colossians in Greek. He assumed that they had this LXX version at hand, for he quotes frequently from it, and makes many references to it without taking the trouble to state his source. He assumed that his readers would recognize the

words he used. In particular, without mentioning his quotations from other books, there are at least twelve quotations from, and direct references to, the Book of Psalms in Ephesians; at least three in Colossians. How do we know this? By the words he used. For instance, in Eph. 4:26, his Greek for "Be ye angry, and sin not" is found word for word in the LXX version of Psalm 4:4, a comparatively unusual, but very striking, rendering of the Hebrew.

Now when we examine the LXX, still used by the Greek Orthodox Church, we find these three words, "psalms", "hymns", "songs". We find them, generally, in place of three Hebrew words, **mizmor** (a psalm), **t'hillah** (a praise), **shir** (a song), without any hard and fast distinctions being observed.

The Greek "psalm", while it usually stands for "mizmor", also stands for "shir" and for "t'hillah". Indeed, the Hebrew title for the whole book is "T'hillim" (Praises), but the Greek title is "Psalms".

The Greek "hymn" is used for "t'hillah" and also for "shir". "Psalm" and "hymn" are both Greek words which we have taken bodily into our language. Yet "hymn" is nowhere used in our English version of the Old Testament, although it is used in the LXX at least 16 times, and the verb "hymneo" (meaning "to sing hymns") at least 13 times; in every instance obviously meaning the songs given of God, synonymous with "psalm" and "sing psalms". The plural "hymns" is frequently used to designate these songs in general, without discriminating. For example, at the end of Psalm 72 we read, "The hymns of David, the son of Jesse, are ended". In Psalm 100:4 we find "Enter . . . into his courts with hymns". The Hebrew reading of 1 Chron. 16:8 is identical with that of Psalm 105:2; but the LXX translates the first, "Sing to him, sing hymns to him"; the second, "Sing to him, sing psalms to him". In 2 Chron. 29:30 we read that the Levites were commanded "to sing hymns to the Lord in the words of David and Asaph, the prophet; and they sang hymns with gladness".

Many individual Psalms have headings of their own. Some are marked "Psalm"; some "Song". Some have both titles, "A Psalm, a Song"; "A Psalm of a Song"; "A Song of a Psalm". Psalm 65 has both "Psalm" and "Song" in its title, and its first line is, "To thee, O God in Zion, a hymn is befitting". The heading of Psalm 76 reads, "For the Precentor in hymns, a Psalm of Asaph, a Song with reference to the Assyrian".

The Greek word for "song" (ode), occurs, for the most part, in place of "shir", but also for "mizmor". In Psalm 137:3 we read, "There those who took us captive demanded of us words of songs; And those who carried us away (demanded of us) a hymn, saying, Sing for us from the Song of Zion. How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Here the "songs of Zion"

meant, to a Hebrew, "the song of the Lord", i.e., "the song of Jehovah" as written in the book of Psalms. But note that either a "song" or a "hymn" was to be selected at random from these Psalms.

These examples, a few among many, are sufficient to show that each of the three words in question was applied to the 150 Psalms. They were applied to the 150 Psalms collectively. They were applied to the 150 Psalms individually, without discriminating between them. Yet, as anyone can see, these three words, "psalms, hymns, songs" are distinctly, etymologically different. Such free interchange of different names for the same thing is permissible only if it does not affect the writer's meaning and the reader's understanding. Therefore, such usage in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures is conclusive proof that there was, at the time of writing, no doubt in anyone's mind as to the exact reference of these words.

That they were applied to the 150 Psalms **only** follows from the fact that no others are mentioned in the entire record as having been used in the temple, synagogue or apostolic Church worship of God. If there were any others, what became of them? Where is any proof that others existed, or were so used?

But, what is the use of so many names for the same thing? Why pile up words? Well, it usually takes more than one word even to begin to define a thing of such dimensions and importance as the praise of the infinite, eternal and gracious God. Why is the law of God so often described by a group of three terms, such as "testimonies, statutes and judgments" (Deut. 4:45)? Why are prayers called "supplications, intercessions, thanksgivings" (1 Tim. 2:1)? "Psalms, hymns, songs" reveal the different aspects which our praise to God should have, according to the mind of His Spirit.

The word "psalm" refers to the instrumental accompaniment, as does "mizmor", for there were musical "instruments of the songs of God" (1 Chron. 16:42), as long as the sacrifice was physical and symbolic. Now, however, THE SACRIFICE has been offered; Jesus Christ "offered Himself", "laid down His life", "yielded up His spirit" on the cross, quoting, as He did so, the precise words of the LXX version of Psalm 31:5, "into thy hands I commit my spirit", changing only the tense of the verb to "commit" instead of "shall commit" (Luke 23:46). Now, the Holy Spirit has come to be "in you", believers, that you may "be filled with the Spirit". He has come to teach you, that you may understand and use His songs "in all wisdom". He has come to put "grace" in your hearts for singing to God. So when we sing a "psalm", we are to do so with our **spiritual instruments**, that is, our heart and understanding.

The word "hymn", as also "t'hillah", has to do exclusively with praise offered up to God.

When we sing a "hymn" from the Psalm Book, we are to do so to God, not to men.

The Greek word for "song" indicates, as does "shir", the **manner** in which praise is to be offered to God, namely, by singing. But it was a word used for all kinds of song. The Asians were notably fond of drinking and singing. They had songs for their idol feasts which so often ended in drunken carousals. Hence it was necessary, especially for those just turning from heathenism, to limit "songs" by defining the category to which they, as well as the "psalms" and "hymns" here spoken of, belong, that is, that they are "of the Spirit of God" (2 Sam. 23:1; Matt. 22:43).

The Greek name (**pneuma**) for wind, air, breath, ethereal substance, was used in the LXX for the Spirit of God and the spirit of man. Accordingly, under the continued control of the Spirit, Paul had already adapted a cognate Greek adjective, **pneumatikos**, to his use. This word we translate "spiritual" It is a word almost peculiar to Paul, for of its 26 occurrences in the New Testament, 24 are in his epistles. He applies it (a) to persons, as regenerated by the Spirit; (b) In at least 18 places he applies it to things (gifts, blessings, etc.).

Excluding one doubtful case and the two verses now before us, there are 15 places in which he uses this word as indicating, not merely the

spiritual nature of the thing (as distinct from the physical or carnal), but, clearly and emphatically, that it exists in **dynamic connection with the Holy Spirit of God** as author or source; therefore as derived from, or given by, the Spirit.

The one doubtful case is in Eph. 6:12, where he speaks of "the spiritual things of wickedness". In our Revised Version this is interpreted as of "hosts" of wicked persons, of course in their fallen condition. It may rather refer to their power and activities. This is a perfectly proper use of the Greek word, and if it applies to things with which, as everyone knows, the Holy Spirit has no connection except to overrule them, it can occasion no confusion in the reader's mind. Therefore this exceptional case may be set aside.

The remaining 15 places are sufficient to establish Paul's uniform usage of the word, and to fix that meaning here. Therefore, the "songs" here specified are "spiritual", not because they express spiritual thoughts and aspirations, but because they are inspired and given by the Holy Spirit. It goes without saying that the same defining word is to be understood with "psalms" and with "hymns", for "songs" includes them both.

Thus all mere human compositions are excluded.

(For reprints of this article address Rev. J. G. Vos, Route 1, Clay Center, Kansas, U. S. A.)

Altering the Word

By the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon

Every motive that could move men to alter the Word of God has been fully delineated in various portions of the Bible. It shows that God was aware from the first of the reception that would be given to His truth; and it is as instructive to the humble believer as it is humiliating to the modern lover of penknife criticism.

1. The tendency to alter the Word of God is human. It is manifested in the first religious conversation on record. The Divine voice had asserted, "Thou shalt not eat of it;" the human voice added, "neither shall ye touch it." The addition was the precursor of the fall.

2. The desire to alter the Word of God is dangerous. In the wilderness God himself points this out. "Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it" (Deut. 4:2. The nations they were advancing to conquer had long cast aside their allegiance to their Maker and the least tendency to question or alter God's Word might result in the same downfall for Israel. Deut. 12:31, 32 distinctly refers to this danger, and reasserts the warning. "Thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish

from it." That idolatry does result from such daring rebellion is proved by the state of the Roman Catholic community to-day.

3. The act of altering the Word of God is sinful. "Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee and thou be a found a liar" (Prov. 30:5, 6). Every word of God is pure; and he who essays to improve upon it imputes error to the All-wise. Only unholy minds could attempt it.

4. The desire to alter the Word of God is weakness. Jeremiah's was a terrible message, and even he might yield to feelings of pity for his race; God saw this, and in words that could not be misunderstood, He said to the prophet: "Diminish not a word" (Jer. 24:2). If God's message is diminished, its power is lessened, and its results are consequently less certain. The authority, the power, the meaning, the terror of God's truth must be preserved in all their fulness if God's purposes are to be carried out.

5. The ambition to alter the Word of God is Pharisaic. To break the perfection of the law and teach our own alterations or additions as if

they were of God is vile indeed (Matt. 5:19,20). Our Lord reproved this spirit in scathing and unmistakable language. Why is it His Words are forgotten? "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." He says "They teach for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:6-9). The Pharisaic spirit thus renders impossible obedience and loyalty to God as the Supreme Teacher.

6. The craving to alter the Word of God is accursed. Rev. 22:18, 19, should be read with fear and trembling. Is there not a reference to this tendency revealed in Paradise? What else is

meant by the threatening, "God shall take away his part from the tree of life" (see Revised Version)? Is not the offender's name to be taken away as Adam's was? Thus all down the ages God has warned men against this crime. He is a jealous God, and has determined to visit with the direst punishment all who dare to alter His completed and full revelation.

This is the crime of the present day; the Lord preserve us from it!

(From *THE SWORD AND TROWEL*, for September, 1883.)

How the Old Testament is Misunderstood Today

By J. G. Vos

The Old Testament is more difficult to understand aright than the New Testament. It is much more often misunderstood.

By this is meant not misinterpretation in minor details, but gross misunderstanding — missing the main point of the Old Testament, failure to grasp its leading ideas. In other words, there is today great confusion and error as to what the Old Testament is all about, why it was written, and what is its real message for us today.

This confusion takes a number of different forms among different religious groups. In some cases it involves thorough unbelief in the Old Testament as the Word of God. In other cases the misunderstanding accompanies faith in the Old Testament as God's Word, but involves missing the real point and purpose of the Old Testament. In the present article we shall consider some of the prevalent misunderstandings of the Old Testament.

Failure to Recognize the Divine Character of the Old Testament

Failure to recognize the divine character of the Old Testament is characteristic of liberals and modernists, who almost always rate the New Testament much higher than the Old. They say, for example, that the God of the Old Testament was a God of wrath, whereas the God of the New Testament is a God of love. Also it is stated that the God of the Old Testament was a tribal divinity, whereas the God of the New Testament is a universal Father.

This attitude toward the Old Testament proceeds from the philosophy of evolution which regards the Old Testament as the record of the gradual development of man's religious ideas from primitive animism (worship of spirits) to monotheism (belief in one God only). This philosophy of evolution calls the Old Testament the record

of man's search for God, whereas it really is the record of God's dealings with man.

The tool of this evolutionary philosophy, in dealing with the Old Testament, is called "the higher criticism". This means an attempt to take the Old Testament books apart and find their ultimate sources. For instance, it is held that Moses did not write the five books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy) but only a small fraction of them. The books were written by different men at various times for various reasons, and hundreds of years after the time of Moses were finally put together as we find them in our Bible today. Thus, according to these critics, the five books of Moses are really a composite or patchwork, and the idea that they are the work of Moses is just a delusion. According to evolutionary higher criticism, it was not until about 100 years ago that the real truth about the Old Testament was discovered, namely that the Old Testament is a crazy-quilt patchwork of contradictory documents.

This critical theory of course completely cancels the divine character of the Old Testament and its truthfulness. The book is represented as the work of fallible men, and as self-contradictory. One part contradicts another part. According to this view, there is no such thing as **the teaching of the Old Testament**. There is only a collection of contradictory teachings. The law is set against the prophets, the prophets against the priests, one part of the prophets against another part of the prophets, one part of the historical sections against another part of the historical sections. No part can be quoted with a confident "Thus saith the Lord", for all is merely human.

The Old Testament is thus set quite on a par with the sacred books of the pagan religions. All are merely the work of men. Some may be better than others, and the Old Testament may be among

the best, but still it is regarded as merely the work of fallible men.

No Bible-believing Christian can accept this "higher critical" view of the Old Testament. But we should realize the extent to which it dominates the Protestant world of today. In most of the large theological seminaries and universities it is accepted as assured fact. In several of the major Protestant denominations of America it dominates the life of the church with its official publications and activities. In these major denominations only sporadic, feeble and ineffective resistance is offered against the "higher critical" view. In theological circles the "higher critical" view is regarded as unquestionable fact by the majority today.

But if the "higher criticism" is valid, then the Old Testament is not the Word of God. In that case, it is merely a collection of the words of men.

Failure to Recognize the Organic Character of the Old Testament

The Bible is an organism, as a plant or a tree, or the human body, is a organism. It is not a mere assortment or collection of records, stories and miscellaneous religious facts and ideas. It is an organism; it has a plan and a structure; every part has a specific purpose and a definite relation to the other parts and to the organism as a whole.

From this it follows that no part of the Old Testament can be truly understood until its place in the organism is understood. You could never understand a leaf or a flower except as a part of a living plant. An organ of the human body such as the heart could never be understood by itself; it can only be understood in its relation to the body as a whole. A heart by itself has no meaning; its meaning consists in its function, to pump blood to all parts of the body.

Many people who believe in the Old Testament as the Word of God have what might be called an "atomistic" approach to the Old Testament. They fail to realize its organic character. They look upon it as a mere assortment or collection of texts, among which some especially precious or useful ones can be discovered by searching; like a gold mine, where some nuggets of gold can be discovered among great heaps of rocks and sand. But a gold mine is not an organism. A tree or the human body is an organism. A nugget of gold is a nugget of gold. Its meaning does not depend on the place where it was found; it has no organic relation to the rocks or sand where it was discovered. But a leaf of a tree or an organ of the human body is different. Its meaning depends on its function, on its place and purpose in the organism.

The person with the atomistic approach to the Old Testament will pick verses and texts here and there like a person picking flowers from a garden, without any regard to the context or the historical

setting. He regards the Bible merely as a great pile of ore from which some texts can be mined. He fails to appreciate its character as an organism; he is blind to its plan and structure.

Consequently what he gets from the Old Testament is only **details** or **fragments** of truth. These are precious in themselves, but they cannot be rightly understood by themselves. To understand them aright we must view them as parts of the organism.

Failure to Recognize the Relation of the Old Testament to the New

The Scofield Reference Bible and the Pilgrim Bible have popularized today a scheme of Bible interpretation known as Modern Dispensationalism. This was largely originated by an Englishman of the Plymouth Brethren named John Nelson Darby, about 100 years ago. Scofield took this system over from Darby's writings and carried it along. The tremendous sale of the Scofield and Pilgrim Bibles has given this system wide popularity in America and in all English-speaking countries of the world.

It would take too much space to give a detailed explanation of Modern Dispensationalism. The interested reader is referred to **Prophecy and the Church**, by Dr. O. T. Allis, a 339 page book published at \$3.00 by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. But briefly, Modern Dispensationalism is a system which divides the history of mankind (past, present and future) into seven distinct "dispensations" or periods of time, during each of which, it is claimed, God deals with mankind on the basis of a different principle. The period from Abraham to Moses, for example, is called "The Dispensation of Promise"; the period from Moses to Christ, "The Dispensation of Law"; that from Calvary to the Second Coming, "The Dispensation of Grace", to be followed by the Millennium or the "Dispensation of the Kingdom of Heaven".

Dispensationalism regards these "dispensations" not as stages in one single organic development, but as distinct from and even opposed to each other. They are regarded as specific and even as mutually contrary. This sets one part of the Bible over against other parts. It sets the "Dispensation of Grace" against the "Dispensation of Law", and so forth. Large portions of the Old Testament, as well as some parts of the New, are then said to be "Jewish", and declared to have no direct relation to the Christian.

Dispensationalism regards the subject of the Bible as a whole as **the history of the nation of Israel**. The Christian Church becomes, in this system, a mere temporary parenthesis in the history of Israel. The Church is sandwiched in, while God holds prophecy in abeyance. When the end of the

Church age comes, the clock of prophecy will start ticking again, it is said.

It is held that there were different ethical standards under the Old Testament from those under the New; in other words, that things were right in Old Testament times which are wrong today.

Dispensationalism gives many people the idea that the Jews were saved by their own good works in obeying the Law of God. The Scofield Bible does not teach this, but its obscure, misleading and mutually inconsistent statements on the subject of law and grace have led many people to the idea that while Christians are saved by grace, the Jews were (or at least could have been) saved by their own works. (Because of the apparently contradictory character of the Scofield Bible's teaching on this subject, it is extremely difficult to say precisely what is the Scofield Bible's teaching on the relation between law and grace in the salvation of the Jews under the Old Testament).

In its more extreme form Dispensationalism teaches that the Old Testament was for the Jews and the New Testament is for Christians. The Scofield and Pilgrim Bibles do not go to this length, but some Dispensationalist teachers do. The most extreme form of Dispensationalism is called Bullingerism. This teaches that only the prison epistles of Paul are directly addressed to the Christian Church of today. Bullingerism rejects the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount, claiming that these belong to the Dispensation of Law or the Dispensation of the Kingdom, not to the Dispensation of Grace in which we are now living.

The Dispensationalist system destroys the organic unity of the Bible, and takes most of the Old Testament away from the Christian of today by telling him that from Moses to Christ God dealt with man on the basis of a radically different principle from that which prevails today.

Failure to Recognize the Redemptive Character of the Old Testament

The Old Testament deals with divine redemption from an objective realm of evil — Satan's kingdom — appearing in such forms as Egypt, the Philistines, Babylon, Assyria, and others. All the contents of the Old Testament must be viewed in this light to understand the book aright.

At the very beginning of the Old Testament the key was given in the first prophecy of divine redemption, Genesis 3:15. God promised to put enmity between the woman and the serpent, between the woman's seed and the serpent's seed. This enmity is God-ordained. God also promised that eventually the Seed of the woman would come and crush the serpent's head. All the rest of the Old Testament, as well as the New, is an

unfolding, a development, of this divine plan and purpose.

This plan took shape in a historical process. God called Abraham, and from his children formed a special nation to be in covenant with God, among whom the promised Redeemer could live and work. Finally Jesus Christ appeared and lived a perfectly righteous life and then offered his life as a perfect sacrifice to atone for the sins of men, and rose again from the dead. These objective facts accomplished our redemption from Satan's kingdom, the realm of evil. Christ offered a perfect, acceptable sacrifice to God, thus redeeming His people from the kingdom of evil.

Everything in the Old Testament is organically connected with this great historical plan. Nothing in the Old Testament can be rightly understood apart from this age-long purpose of God.

But this is constantly being disregarded even by earnest Christian people who accept the Bible as the Word of God.

It is extremely common to regard the subordinate moral lessons of the Old Testament as the main thing, while leaving the redemptive character of the Old Testament entirely out of consideration. This tendency can be noted time and again in common Sabbath School lesson materials from various sources — not only liberal or modernistic sources, but also conservative and supposedly orthodox sources.

Abraham is studied as an example of faith; the history of Abraham and Lot is studied as a lesson in selfishness and unselfishness. Jacob and Esau are studied as examples of high and low ideals; Moses is studied as a model legislator; Joshua as a model leader of men; and so forth.

In all this kind of Bible study, minor points of truth are picked out and emphasized while the main point is entirely neglected and omitted — it is not even so much as mentioned. The important truth about Abraham is not just his faith or his unselfishness, but his place in the divine organism of the Bible. The important truth about Moses is his place in the divine organism of redemption — what is known as the Covenant of Grace — how Moses performed a special function in preparing the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The kind of Bible interpretation we are here criticizing fails to realize the **covenantal** and **preparatory** character of the nation of Israel. It quite ignores this character. Israel is taken simply as a specimen or sample of a nation; then moral lessons are drawn from the history of Israel and applied to the life of America as if Israel and America were exactly parallel. For example, a recent series of Sabbath School lessons on Old Testament history was entitled "God in the Life of a Nation". But the history of Israel is **not** a history of God in the life of "a" nation. It is the history of

God in the life of the one and only nation that God brought into covenant with Himself before Christ appeared. Israel is unique; it is not parallel to America or any other nation, ancient or modern.

If we take Israel as merely "a" nation, we miss the whole point of the Old Testament. Israel is not on a par with other nations of ancient or modern times. Israel was the one and only nation in which God specially revealed Himself, with which He established His covenant, and through which He sent His Son into the World. "He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord" (Psalm 147:19, 20). "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places" (Deut. 33:29).

The person who fails to realize the character of the Old Testament as divine redemption from an objective realm of evil misses the main message of the Old Testament. He looks around for promises concerning salvation, and he appropriates and emphasizes these, while the whole foundation which God wrought in human history is ignored or minimized — is regarded as mere historical lumber or scaffolding, no longer important today.

There was a typical example of this in the memory text of a recent Sabbath School lesson (Dec. 9, 1951): "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms". That is just half of the text. Why was the other half omitted in the quarterlies? Doubtless because of the tendency we have been considering, the ten-

dency to ignore the unique, redemptive character of the Old Testament. The other half of this text is: "and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them" (Deut. 33:27). That is divine redemption from Satan's kingdom. The enemy that the people of Israel had to deal with at that time was the form that Satan's kingdom took at that particular time.

Salvation is not a mere matter of the eternal God being our refuge, with His everlasting arms underneath us. It is also a matter of God working out His redemptive purpose by almighty power in human history — God saying "Destroy them" and thrusting out the enemy from before His people. The person who separates subjective religion from objective redemption is separating what God has joined together, which no man ought to put asunder.

If this tendency continues to its logical conclusion, the end product will be a type of religion which consists of nothing more than the vaporous, hazy vagueness of "ideals" and "spiritual values"; a religion, in short, divorced from history. And that means a religion that is entirely up in the air, a religion that is not anchored to the solid rock at a place called Calvary where the Son of God accomplished the redemption of His people from sin and Satan's kingdom.

The true meaning of the Old Testament is that it is the preparatory stage of the Covenant of Grace. All in the Old Testament must be viewed in that light or it is not viewed truly. The history in the Old Testament is not mere lumber or scaffolding; it is vital; the very essence of the meaning of the Old Testament depends upon it. Where this is not taken seriously, the Old Testament will inevitably be misunderstood.

Sketches from Our History

Contending for the Faith Through the Ages

CHAPTER VII

ZWINGLI AND THE SWISS REFORMATION

1. The early life of Zwingli

Huldreich Zwingli, the first leader of the Reformation in Switzerland, was born on New Year's Day, 1484. At that time Martin Luther was about seven weeks old. Almost ten years would pass before Christopher Columbus would discover the new world of America. As a boy, Zwingli was fond of books and of music, and was sent to school that he might get a good education. After studying in his native country, he was sent, in 1500, to the University of Vienna, in Austria. Af-

ter two years there he returned to Switzerland, and after some further preparation became a school teacher in the city of Basel.

When he was twenty-two years old Zwingli was ordained to the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church, and soon after was made the parish priest of Glarus, though the pope had appointed another candidate to this position and Zwingli had to buy this rival off by a substantial money payment. As the pope depended on the Swiss for

soldiers for his military needs, nothing was done about Zwingli's act. At this time Zwingli was still a loyal supporter of the pope, and even received a papal pension in recognition of his services to the pope's cause in Switzerland.

Zwingli continued as priest at Glarus for ten years, and this period was really the formative period of his life. That he might read the Word of God in its original form, he began the study of Greek and even started studying Hebrew. Later he became an eager student of the Greek New Testament, which had recently been published by the scholar Erasmus. Zwingli copied out the epistles of Paul in Greek with his own hand, that he might carry them with him conveniently and commit them to memory. He also studied the writings of the early Church Fathers, which he found helpful.

About 1516 Zwingli began to preach the Gospel as he found it in the Word of God, though he did not yet venture to draw a pointed antithesis between the truths of the Bible and the corrupt teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. He tried to preach what is today called a "positive" message, without making an issue of the errors of Romanism. Of course, such a policy could not be permanently successful. In the end Zwingli, like Luther, had to come out openly and denounce the errors of the Roman Catholic system.

The Swiss were a democratic people and they were accustomed to manage their own church affairs just as they did their own civil affairs. Consequently, the papacy did not have such a firm grip on Switzerland as it did on many other countries of Europe. Moreover, the papal desire to recruit mercenary soldiers among the Swiss led the authorities at Rome to be careful to avoid any open breach between Rome and the Swiss.

Zwingli's religious history and experience were in some ways quite different from Luther's. Zwingli had little or none of Luther's desperate struggle for peace of conscience and assurance of salvation. The antithesis between faith and works which was crucial in Luther's experience did not seem to make a deep impression on Zwingli. The Augustinian theology of salvation by grace did not influence Zwingli as deeply as it did Luther. Yet, in the providence of God, Zwingli led many of his countrymen from error to truth.

After his term at Glarus, Zwingli became priest at Einsiedeln, where he spent the year 1516-1519. It was while Zwingli was at Einsiedeln that Luther posted his famous Ninety-five Theses on the church door at Wittenberg. Like Luther, Zwingli was opposed to the traffic in indulgences. In August, 1518, a Franciscan monk named Bernardin Samson arrived in Switzerland as a seller of indulgences, with official authorization from the

pope. Zwingli opposed this man, and was able to persuade the city council of Zurich to forbid his entrance to that city. Even this did not arouse the authorities at Rome. They felt that as Zwingli was on the list of those receiving papal pensions, he could not be an important opponent.

2. The Reformation Dawns in Switzerland

After his three years at Einsiedeln, Zwingli became priest of a large church in Zurich, accepting the position on condition that he should remain free to preach the truth of the Gospel. Here in 1519 he began preaching on the Gospel of Matthew, the Acts of the Apostles, and the epistles of Paul. On the basis of Scripture, Zwingli attacked sin and error in both church and society. The influence of Luther was beginning to be felt in Switzerland, as well as other countries, but Zwingli claimed to be independent of Luther's leading. He even said that he had independently discovered the Gospel from the Scriptures, before Luther was heard of in Switzerland. Though this was quite probably true at this early stage of the Reformation, it was inevitable that as the years passed the several centers of Protestantism should mutually influence each other.

As a result of Zwingli's preaching against the errors of Romanism, many of his hearers began to eat meat during Lent. This aroused the monks and higher clergy of the Roman Catholic Church to opposition, and formal charges were filed before a council. Zwingli, however, appeared to defend the accused persons, and the accusation was withdrawn. In 1522 Zwingli published his first Protestant writing, entitled *Von Erkiesen und Freyheit der Speisen* ("Concerning the Choosing and Freedom of Foods"), defending the truth that no human authority has the right to bind the conscience of Christian people by rules and requirements not imposed by God in the Scriptures.

Zwingli next took up the matter of celibacy of the clergy. As in all his reforms, he appealed to the civil authorities of his country. The true distinction between church and state was not yet clearly understood. Zwingli with others appealed to the Roman Catholic bishop of Constance to allow the priests to marry. The pope tried to intervene in this affair, but without success. In 1523 Zwingli publicly debated the question before a council, with 67 theses against the Catholic requirement of celibacy of the clergy. The council voted in Zwingli's favor and also decided to separate their canton from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Constance. This may be said to be the first legal sanction given to the Protestant Reformation at Zurich.

The Forest Cantons of Switzerland were strongly opposed to the Reformation, and in 1523 a public disputation on the subject was held in the city of Bern, as a result of Zwingli having challenged the Romanists to meet him in public debate.

The meetings continued for 19 days. Zwingli and his party defended the following propositions:

1. That the Holy Christian Church, of which Christ is the only Head, is born of the Word of God, abides therein, and does not listen to the voice of a stranger.

2. That this Church imposes no laws on the conscience of people without the sanction of the Word of God, and that the laws of the Church are binding only in so far as they agree with the Word.

3. That Christ alone is our righteousness and our salvation, and that to trust to any other merit or satisfaction is to deny Him.

4. That it cannot be proved from the Holy Scripture that the body and blood of Christ are corporeally present in the bread and in the wine of the Lord's Supper.

5. That the mass, in which Christ is offered to God the Father for the sins of the living and of the dead, is contrary to Scripture and a gross affront to the sacrifice and death of the Saviour.

6. That we should not pray to dead mediators and intercessors, but to Jesus Christ alone.

7. That there is no trace of purgatory in Scripture.

8. That to set up pictures and to adore them is also contrary to Scripture, and that images and pictures ought to be destroyed where there is danger of giving them adoration.

9. That marriage is lawful to all, to the clergy as well as to the laity.

10. That shameful living is more disgraceful among the clergy than among the laity.

As a result of this disputation, Bern was won over to the side of the Reformation.

In 1525 Zwingli published his principal theological writing, entitled **Commentary on the True and False Religion**. This book sets forth the ordinary Protestant doctrines on most subjects, though Zwingli had a peculiar doctrine of the Lord's Supper. He taught clearly the doctrine of justification by faith and the truth that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and man. Zwingli had learned these truths from the Scriptures, though without the intense struggles of soul through which Luther had passed.

On the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, Zwingli agreed with Luther that the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation was unscriptural and therefore false. But in his positive view of the sacrament, Zwingli refused to accept Luther's

doctrine that the body and blood of Christ are truly present in and with the elements of bread and wine. In objecting to Luther's doctrine, Zwingli went to the opposite extreme and held that the Lord's Supper is merely a memorial service and that it is merely symbolic in character. The truth, as later defined by the Reformed Church under Calvin's leadership, is that the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Lord's Supper, but only in a spiritual, not in a corporeal manner; and only to true believers. "As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper; and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses; so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal or carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified and all the benefits of his death" (Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. 170). Accepting this doctrine set forth in the Westminster Standards as Scripturally true, we must regard Zwingli's symbolic view of the Lord's Supper as something less than the truth. We agree with Zwingli in rejecting the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, and we also agree with him in rejecting the Lutheran doctrine concerning the "real presence" of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament. But we dissent from Zwingli's teaching that the Lord's Supper is merely a symbolic memorial service. We believe it to be a true means of grace, and that the believing communicant truly receives Christ's body and blood "in a spiritual manner".

A conference was arranged between Zwingli and Luther in 1529, but the effort for unity failed because of disagreement about the Lord's Supper. The Protestant movement was thereafter divided into two camps.

In 1531 Zwingli urged the Protestant Swiss to attack the five Forest Cantons, which held to Romanism. On October 10 of that year the crucial battle was fought at a place called Kappel. This battle was a disaster to the cause of the Reformation in Switzerland, and it cost Zwingli his life. He had accompanied the troops as their chaplain, and was killed by the enemy. His dead body was treated with outrageous indignities, quartered by the hangman and then burnt by the Catholic soldiers. The place where Zwingli fell is marked by a great boulder, with the inscription: "They may kill the body but not the soul": so spoke on this spot Huldreich Zwingli, who for truth and the freedom of the Christian Church died a hero's death, Oct. 11, 1531."

(To be continued)

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"The true Church has never sounded out public expectations before launching her crusades. Her leaders heard from God and went ahead wholly independent of popular support or the lack of it. They knew their Lord's will and did it and their people followed them—sometimes to triumph, oftener to insults and public persecution—and their sufficient reward was the satisfaction of being right in a wrong world."

—Christian Beacon

"The Jesus of the New Testament has at least one advantage over the Jesus of modern reconstruction — He is real. He is not a manufactured figure suitable as a point of support for ethical maxims, but a genuine Person whom a man can love. Men have loved Him through all the Christian centuries. And the strange thing is that despite all the efforts to remove Him from pages of history, there are those who love Him still."

—J. Gresham Machen

"Oh, that God would open men's eyes that they might see, that they might detect the grand sweep and power of His testimony to Himself in His Word: Oh, that He would take away the terrible blindness of men's minds! Has He taken away the blindness of **your** minds, my friends? Do you know the risen Christ today as your Saviour and your Lord? If you do not yet know Him, will you not bow before Him at this hour and say, 'My Lord and my God?'"

—J. Gresham Machen

"May God send us ministers who come forth into their pulpits from a secret place of meditation and prayer, who are servants of Christ and not servants of men, who be they ever so humble

are ambassadors of the King, who, as they stand behind the open Bible and expound its blessed words, can truly and honestly say, with Micaiah the son of Imlah: 'As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.'"

—J. Gresham Machen

"The worse others are, the better we should be; when vice is daring, let not virtue be sneaking."

—Matthew Henry

"A life spent in the service of God and in communion with Him is the most comfortable life any one can live in the world."

—Matthew Henry

"The estimate which God makes of the value of the soul is shown in the provision which He has made for its salvation."

—Charles Hodge

"Therefore, as children of light and truth, flee from division and wrong doctrine. Wherever the shepherd is, there follow the sheep. For many 'trustworthy' wolves are with evil pleasures taking as prisoners the runners in God's race; but in your unity they are not allowed a place."

—Ignatius of Antioch

"The habit of the congregation sitting during prayer is growing, even in our own church. This is due to the growing spirit of irreverence. It is utterly destitute of warrant from the Scriptures . . . It is dishonoring to Christ even at the throne of grace. Who ever saw an advocate addressing an earthly court without rising to his feet?"

—R. J. George

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.

PAGANISM. The religious belief and practice of those who worship false gods.

PANTHEISM. The false system which holds that everything is divine, or that God is the soul of the universe, and that God attains personality and self-consciousness only in man.

PARABLE. A story told for the purpose of teaching or emphasizing a point of religious truth.

PARADISE. The garden of Eden, which was

the home of the human race before the Fall. Also used to mean heaven (Luke 23:44).

PARDON. That act of God, included in justification, by which the guilt of the sinner is remitted, that the corresponding penalty be not inflicted.

PASSION OF CHRIST. Our Saviour's sufferings culminating in His death upon the cross.

PATIENCE. "That calm and unruffled temp-

er with which a good man bears the evils of life" (Buck's Theological Dictionary).

PATIENCE OF GOD. God's longsuffering or forbearance, by reason of which He waits long before visiting His judgments on men, that they may have opportunity to repent, or be left without excuse.

PATRIARCHS. Heads of families, especially those who lived before the time of Moses, as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

PATRONAGE. The practice, which caused long controversy and great evil in Scotland, by which a Christian congregation is deprived of the right of choosing its own pastor, the minister instead being appointed by some person holding the right of patronage pertaining to that congregation.

PELAGIANS. A heretical sect which arose late in the fourth century after Christ, which denied the doctrines of original sin, total depravity, and salvation by free grace alone. (Founded by Pelagius, a British monk; opposed by Augustine, bishop of Hippo in North Africa).

PENTATEUCH. The five books of Moses,

namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

PENTECOST. A feast of the Jews, celebrated fifty days after the Passover (Levit. 23:15).

PERJURY. The taking of an oath in order to tell or confirm a falsehood.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS. The doctrine that "They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally, nor finally, fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved" (Westminster Confession of Faith, XVII.1).

PHARISEES. A sect of the Jews in the time of Christ which held with zeal to "the traditions of the elders", regarding these as of equal authority with the Scripture itself. They were characterized by religious earnestness and zeal, accompanied by legalism, formalism and hypocrisy.

PIOUS FRAUDS. "Those artifices and falsehoods made use of in propagating the truth, and endeavoring to promote the spiritual interests of mankind" (Buck's Theological Dictionary). (Pious frauds are forbidden by Scripture: Rom. 3:8).

Studies in the Epistle to the Romans

LESSON 79

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

B. The Christian's Civil Obligations. 13:1-7, Cont.

The Christian's Proper attitude toward the Civil Government. 13:5-7, Cont.

Before leaving the discussion of Romans 13:1-7, the bearing of this passage on the Covenanter principle of political dissent should be considered. That principle is set forth in the Covenant of 1871 in the following sentence:

"We will pray and labor for the peace and welfare of our country, and for its reformation by a constitutional recognition of God as the source of all power, of Jesus Christ as the Ruler of Nations, of the Holy Scriptures as the supreme rule, and of the true Christian religion; and we will continue to refuse to incorporate by any act, with the political body, until this blessed reformation has been secured" (Sec.3).

In compliance with this pledge of the Covenant of 1871, members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America consider themselves bound to refrain from such political acts as voting and holding office, where an unqualified oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States is involved. (For the use of

the "Explanatory Declaration", see Minutes of Synod, 1939, page 105, and subsequent years; 1951, pages 138-9; 1952, pages 139-44).

This Covenanter position of political dissent, which we believe to be Scriptural, came to be held as a matter of church principle as a result of the experiences and conflicts of the Covenanters of Scotland in the 17th century. The student is referred to *The Scottish Covenanters, Part III, Chapter III, The Covenanters' Doctrine of Christian of Civil Government*, in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 7 No. 3 (July-September, 1952), pages 116-119.

This principle is based on the Mediatorial Kingship of Jesus Christ over the nations. By this we mean that Christ is not only King of our own personal lives, and Head of the Church, but also Lord of heaven and earth, and that everything, including the government of every country in the world, ought to be in obedience to Christ. The nations of the world should recognize and honor Him as King of kings and Lord of lords (Matt.28:18. Eph. 1:20,21. Phil. 2:9-11).

Our country the United States of America, ought to recognize Christ, but as a matter of fact

It does not recognize Him. The highest source of authority recognized by the United States Constitution is "the people". This amounts to putting the people in the place of God as the source of political authority, by representing the people as the highest power. As the Constitution recognizes no authority higher than "the people", it ignores both God and His Son Jesus Christ.

We cannot conscientiously swear an oath to "support and defend" the Constitution in its present form, because we cannot conscientiously swear to support and defend what we believe to be wrong. We hold that it is a sin for the Constitution to ignore the Lord Jesus Christ. If we were to swear to support and defend the Constitution, we would then become guilty of complicity in that sin. The only way we can keep clear of the guilt of this sin is to dissent from the Constitution as it stands today. (A modified form of oath may properly be used).

We believe that Christians should not hold political office under the present Constitution of the United States, because the person who takes the oath of office must swear to support and defend the Constitution in its existing form, which leaves God and Christ out.

We also believe that Christians should not vote in political elections under the Constitution in its present form, because everyone who votes accepts the Constitution under which the election is held. The men who are elected must also take the oath of office, pledging themselves to support the Constitution, as the voter's representatives. It is not right to ask another person to do something which we will not do ourselves because we believe it to be wrong.

This principle of political dissent makes the Reformed Presbyterian Church very unpopular. But our aim is not to seek popularity. We are only seeking to serve God and follow Christ faithfully and consistently. We want our Saviour to say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant." If we are reproached and called unpatriotic because we do not vote or hold political office, we should reply that we are seeking our country's true welfare, and also that our religious duty to God cannot be subordinated to patriotic loyalty to our country (Acts 5:29).

Coming now to the bearing of Romans 13:1-7 on this subject of political dissent, two errors must be avoided. In the first place, there are some who say that Romans 13:1-7 contradicts our position of political dissent, and requires us to vote, and hold office if elected, under the present Constitution of the United States. Since we are commanded to be subject to the powers that be, it is argued it must be our duty to vote and to hold office if elected.

This argument sounds plausible, but it is not valid, for it is based on confused thinking. It confuses the duty of citizens with the functions

of rulers. To obey the laws, to pay taxes, to "be subject unto the higher powers" — these are the duty of citizens. These matters pertain to the civil realm. They are civil matters.

To hold office, or to vote for others to hold office, on the other hand, is not a civil matter. It is a political matter. The man who holds office is not being "subject unto the higher powers" — he himself is one of the higher powers. The man who votes for another to hold political office is not being "subject unto the higher powers" — he himself is one of the higher powers. The voter and office-holder are not subject to the government — they ARE the government. In a democracy, such as the United States of America, every person who votes is a ruler; every voter is part of the government. It is the voters who determine the character, policies and acts of the government. Voting is a political function — a function of rulers.

God's Word commends that "every soul be subject unto the higher powers", but this by no means implies that it is the duty of the Christian to become one of the higher powers by voting or holding office. If there are substantial reasons why the Christians should not vote or hold office, then it is the Christian's duty to refrain from these political acts.

The second error that must be avoided, in considering the bearing of Roman's 13:1-7 on the Covenanter position of political dissent, is the view that this passage of Scripture does not apply to Christians of the present day, but only to those living under an ideal Christian state to be realized at some future time. The argument of those holding this view is that Paul could not command Christians to be subject to an immoral government which fails to give due recognition to God and His Christ. Since Romans 13:1-7 clearly commands subjection to government, it is held that the apostle's meaning must be that Christians are to be subject to such Christian governments as may come to exist. We have already noted the impossibility of this interpretation (see Lesson 74 of this series, in the July-September, 1952, issue, pages 140-141.) Paul is speaking of the existing powers (*hai ousai exousiai*, present participle), which can only mean the powers in existence at the time he wrote the epistle. We may repeat part of the last paragraph of Lesson 74 here: Paul is not discussing the right of magistrates to rule, nor is he discussing the proper limits of obedience to wicked magistrates. He is teaching only the simple principle that it is the duty of Christian people to obey the existing magistrates. That the magistrates may be wicked men, and that it may be God's plan to overthrow the existing government and set up a better one in its place, is perfectly true. That there are well-defined limits to the obedience which Christian people ought to render to magistrates, is also perfectly true. But what the apostle is teaching is

that it the Christian's duty to obey the existing authorities as long as, in God's providence, they continue to exist as authorities.

For a further study of this subject, the reader is referred to a booklet entitled **The Responsibility of the Christian in Government**, by Professor John Murray, of Westminster Theological Seminary. This booklet can be obtained on request to The Christian Amendment Movement, 804 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh 21, Pa.

Questions:

1. What principle is set forth in Section 3 of the Reformed Presbyterian Covenant of 1871?
2. How did position come to be held as a matter of church principle?
3. On what truth of the Bible is the principle of political dissent based?
4. What duty do the nations of the world owe to Jesus Christ?
5. What is the highest source of authority recognized by the Constitution of the United States?
6. Why can we not conscientiously swear an oath to support and defend the Constitution in its present form?

7. Why can we not conscientiously vote or hold office under the Constitution in its present form?

8. What should we reply when we are charged with lack of patriotism because of our position of political dissent?

9. How can we answer those who claim that Rom. 13:1-7 implies that it is our duty to vote and to hold office if elected?

10. Explain the distinction between civil matters and political matters.

11. Why are voting and holding office not civil duties?

12. Who are the real "higher powers" in a democracy?

13. What is the literal meaning of the phrase "the powers that be"?

14. How can it be shown that Paul in Rom. 13:1-7 is not referring to subjection to a future ideal Christian state, but to the government existing when he wrote the epistle?

15. What booklet published by the Christian Amendment Movement provides a further study of this subject?

LESSON 80

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

C. The Christian's Social Obligations. 13:8-10
Obligations in human society to be discharged 13:8

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law". The apostle here teaches that it is the Christian's duty to discharge all his social obligations, with the exception of love, a debt that can never be paid off.

Some have regarded this verse as forbidding the Christian to incur debts, or borrow anything. This idea, however, is not contained in the text. It only commands that debts must be duly paid; we must not continue to owe them. It is true, of course, that this implies that we are not to incur debts when we have no certain prospect of repaying them. But the ordinary use of credit in business or personal affairs is not here forbidden, and it is sanctioned in other parts of the Bible. "The command, however, is 'Acquit yourselves of all obligations, tribute, custom, fear, honor, or whatever else you may owe, but remember that the debt of love is still unpaid, and must remain so'" (Charles Hodge). Even when all debts of money and service have been discharged, there remains a continuing debt of love to our neighbor.

The Obligation of Love to our Neighbor. 13:9, 10

"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (13:9). This verse confirms the truth stated in verse 8, and at the same time reminds us that love for our neighbor is not to be a mere emotion or feeling of good-will toward him, but is to be expressed in our actual conduct toward our neighbor. Of course these commandments are not to be understood only in the negative sense of "Thou shalt not". Rightly understood, they also imply a divine command to practice the contrary virtues. We are not only to refrain from doing harm to our neighbor; we are to do him positive good.

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (13:10). "That is, as love delights in the happiness of its object, it effectually prevents us from injuring those we love, and, consequently, leads us to fulfill all the law requires, because the law requires nothing which is not conducive to the best interests of our fellow-men. He, therefore, who loves his neighbor with the same sincerity that he loves himself, and consequently treats him as he would wish, under similar circumstances, to be

*Pp. 36+37
Lesson 80.*

treated by him, will fulfil all that the law enjoins; hence the whole law is comprehended in this one command, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Charles Hodge). The whole law, that is, in so far as it concerns our duty to our neighbor, which is the subject under discussion here. There is also the first table of the law, concerning our duty directly to God, but that is not the subject here being discussed.

**D. The Christian Duty to Live a Holy Life.
13:11-14**

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. . ." (13:11, 12a). We are here taught that it is high time to awake out of sleep. Here "sleep" is a figure for a condition of spiritual indifference or sluggishness. Those who are absorbed in worldly pleasures and business and have little or no concern about God, their souls and eternity, are living in a state of spiritual sleep. Even true Christians may often for a period of time, fall into such a condition of spiritual slumber, so that they are not active and alert concerning the things of God.

The person who is spiritually asleep should wake up. Paul says that it is high time to wake up. As a reason, he adds that now our salvation is nearer than when we first became Christians. Here "salvation" may be taken as meaning our complete deliverance from sin at the time of our death, or it may be taken as referring to our complete deliverance from sin and all its consequences at the resurrection day. Or it may include both of these ideas under the general meaning of "complete deliverance from sin." Whether we think of the day of our own going to be with the Lord, or of the day of His coming to earth again, it is true that the great deliverance is nearer to each of us than it was when we first believed on Jesus Christ. We have already covered some ground, we have already passed some time, once for all, and are that much nearer to our complete deliverance from sin. This thought should be an encouragement to every Christian to keep wide awake in the Christian life.

There are in the churches today many members who are spiritually asleep in the sense spoken of by Paul in this passage. Whether these members have been born again of the Spirit, only God knows with certainty. But church members who cannot find a reference in the Bible, who cannot pray except to repeat a formal little prayer from memory, who attend divine worship only occasionally and sit day-dreaming and gazing around the room when they do attend, and who cannot tell whether David lived before or after John the Baptist — such church members are spiritually asleep, and it is high time for them to wake up. Probably many such nominal church members are not saved; some may be born again, but in a state of long-arrested spiritual development. It is high time for them to awake out of their sleep. The existence of such members is one of the causes of the present powerlessness and ineffectiveness of the churches.

Questions:

1. What is meant by the command to "Owe no man anything"?
2. How do we know that this verse does not forbid the ordinary use of credit in business or personal affairs?
3. What kind of debts should a Christian not incur?
4. What debt of the Christians can never be fully discharged?
5. How can our duty to our neighbor be summarized?
6. Why is love the fulfilling of the law concerning our neighbor?
7. Besides our duty to our neighbor, what duty do we have?
8. What is meant by "sleep" in 13:11?
9. Why is it high time to awake out of sleep?
10. What is meant by "salvation" in 13:11?
11. What is the effect of sleeping members on the churches today?

LESSON 81

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

**D. The Christian Duty to Live a Holy Life.
13:11-14, Cont.**

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand. . . ." (13:12a). Here we must consider what is meant by "the night" and "the day". One suggested meaning is that "the night" means the period of time when it was possible for the Jews to persecute Christianity, while "the day" means the new era that would dawn after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But this is too narrow a

meaning to suit the context. Moreover, the cessation of Jewish persecution did not bring real relief to the early Christians, rather, it was followed by the much longer and more severe persecution by the Roman Empire. Another suggested meaning is that "the night" means the present life of every Christian, while "the day" means the life eternal which will soon dawn upon each one. This interpretation is more plausible, and may be the correct one, or it may be part of the correct one. The third possible meaning is that

"the night" means the history of this world since man's fall into sin, while "the day" means the new world of eternity which will be absolutely free from sin. In view of the usage of the terms "the day", "the day of the Lord", "that day", in Paul's epistles and elsewhere in the Bible, this third interpretation would seem to be the correct one. The statement, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand", would then mean: "The age-long history of this sinful world is nearing its conclusion, and the new age of eternity is about to dawn". This of course does not imply anything concerning the actual time of the Lord's second coming. Of that day and hour knoweth no man; Paul did not know it any more than we do today; it has not been revealed to men. What is meant is not the "nearness" of the second coming in terms of calendar time, but its "nearness" in terms of the Bible philosophy of history.

According to the Bible view of history, when Jesus Christ was crucified and rose from the dead, **the end of the world began**. Everything before that was preparatory for Calvary; everything after that is part of the final winding up and conclusion of this world's affairs in preparation for eternity. Compare 1 Pet. 1:19,20; Heb. 1:1,2; Heb. 9:26; 1 Cor. 10:11; all these texts teach that the apostles and early Christians were living in the last days as God counts the days. In our common life of today, we go by calendar time. But if we would understand the Scriptures, we must try to grasp their philosophy of history and see how God reckons time. According to the Bible's view of history, "the end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet. 4:7), the second coming of Christ is "near"; He is coming "quickly", because His coming is the next great redemptive event in God's program; and, moreover, it is the **final** redemptive event in God's program of the ages. It looms above and ahead of every one of us as the tremendous miracle which God will surely bring to pass, which will bring the history of this world to a sudden stop.

It is the evening of history. The long, weary day of the world's sin, suffering and struggle is almost over. We do not know how many years, whether many or few, remain before the Lord shall come on the clouds of heaven, nor does it matter. The world will not continue indefinitely on its present course; it is hastening on to its consummation. Time will issue into eternity, labor into rest, faith into sight, struggle into victory. But it is even later than the evening of history; the evening and the long night have almost passed and a new day is about to break — the morning of eternity. This world and its concerns are "passing away" (1 Cor. 7:31. 1 John 2:17); the world of eternity, in which all things shall be made new, is "at hand". The serious Christian should live daily in the sobering consciousness of this truth. He should live as one who knows that "the day is at hand".

Our reluctance to think of the dawn of eternity as "at hand" is one sign of our failure to grasp the Bible's philosophy of history. Many Christians, instead of eagerly anticipating the Lord's second coming, rather tend to hope that it will be deferred until some of their own plans and programs can be carried to completion. Of all things, we hope that the end of human history will not come now, when we have important undertakings in process. But such an attitude is really contrary to the Bible view of history. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and His ways than our ways. When we let our plans, projects and programs — even those that concern the Kingdom of God — steal the spotlight of our hope away from God's great redemptive event, the dawn of "the day", we no longer have a truly religious attitude, we are no longer truly walking by faith. God's next great redemptive act takes precedence over all our activities. We must always do all our planning and working in the light of eternity. Eternity is **absolutely** important; time is only **relatively** important. When we regard time as more important than eternity we are no longer on Biblical ground.

Questions:

1. What possible meanings have been suggested for "the night" and "the day" in 13:12?
2. How do we know that "the night" does not mean the period of Jewish persecution of Christianity?
3. What meaning of "the night" and "the day" is the most probable one, and why?
4. Does the statement "The day is at hand" imply that the second coming of Christ is near in terms of calendar years?
5. According to the Bible, when did the end of the world begin?
6. Why is it true that "the end of all things is at hand"?
7. What do 1 Cor. 7:31 and 1 John 2:17 teach concerning the present world?
8. What should be daily in the mind of every Christian?
9. Is it right to hope that the second coming of Christ will be deferred until our own plans and activities can be completed?
10. What can be said about the importance of time and the importance of eternity?
11. Where should our ultimate Christian hope be fixed?
12. How should we always do our planning and working?

LESSON 82

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

D. The Christian Duty to Live a Holy Life. 13:11-14, Cont.

"Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." The Christian's belief that the dawn of eternity is "at hand" is not merely a theoretical matter. It is to be a practical matter. If "the night is far spent" and "the day is at hand", think what a godly, earnest, sober life every one of us ought to live! Think what a desperately serious matter life is! If we really believe that "the day is at hand", how can we drift through life with our main thinking and attention riveted to our own ambitions and pleasures?

Paul here urges the truth that "the day is at hand" as a strong reason why the Christian should live a serious, earnest, and holy life. "Night" and "darkness" are associated with sin and sorrow; "day" and "light" with righteousness and joy. The evils of this present life will soon be past, and the morning of eternal joy will soon dawn. Since this is true, we should cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light. We should renounce everything we need to be ashamed of, everything that has to be concealed and kept secret. At the same time we should clothe ourselves with what is suitable to the light of day. The idea of taking off and putting on clothing is suggested by the Greek words used. "We are to cast off one set of garments and put on another. The clothes which belong to the night are to be cast aside, and we are to array ourselves in those suited to the day" (Charles Hodge).

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. . . ." (13:13). This continues the thought of the preceding verse, specifying what kinds of works are to be put off by the Christian, as the next verse states what is to be put on in place thereof. The word here translated "honestly" does not mean exactly what we mean today by "honestly"; in modern English the word "honest" has come to mean "truthful" or "upright in dealings concerning property". But as used here the word "honestly" means rather "becomingly", "properly", "legitimately".

Next, Paul specifies three kinds of sins to be cast aside, and he uses two words for each kind: (1) rioting and drunkenness; (2) chambering and wantonness; (3) strife and envying. The first of these classes is sins of **intemperance**; the second, sins of **impurity**; and the third, sins of **discord**. It will be observed what a wide range of sins is spoken of here. Some people's sins are of one kind, and some of another. Some who would never be involved in rioting and drunkenness, may be guilty

of sins of impurity which the apostle calls "chambering and wantonness"; others, who would not commit sins of either of these classes, may be keeping the Church of God in constant problems and troubles by their sins of discord — their sins of strife and envying. What is the real profit, in God's sight, of being clear of sins of intemperance and impurity, if we are constantly provoking God and disheartening His people by our endless sins of discord?

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (13:14). Here we come to the positive side of the matter. The Christian is not merely to put off the works of darkness; he must also put on the armor of light. He is not only to cast off intemperance, impurity and discord; he is also to put on, in their place, the Lord Jesus Christ.

To "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" means to have such an intimate union with Christ that people will see Christ living in us. It means to be so filled with His Spirit and so controlled by His will that our lives will manifest Him to the world around us.

"And make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof". In this sentence, some have understood "the flesh" to mean "the body". But it is unlikely that that is true meaning. This expression, "the flesh", must include not only the sins of intemperance and impurity which the apostle has just mentioned, but also those of strife and envying. But strife and envying are sins of the mind, not of the body. And elsewhere in Paul's epistles he uses the term "the flesh" to mean everything that is corrupt in the human personality, that is, to mean our sinful nature. See Galatians 5:19-21, where Paul lists 17 "works of the flesh", of which ten are sins of the mind rather than of the body, namely: idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings. If these sins of the mind are included in "the works of the flesh", then "the flesh", as Paul uses the term, cannot mean simply the human body; it must mean our whole corrupt or sinful nature. The true meaning of Paul's admonition, then, is "Do not indulge the desires of your corrupt nature" (Charles Hodge). The Christian has these desires; he has not yet been wholly freed of them; they constitute a burden and a temptation to him; but he is not to yield to them; he is not to allow them to dictate the course of his life. They are to be subdued, kept under control, crucified.

Questions:

1. What practical lessons are to be drawn from the truth that "the day is at hand"?
2. What are associated with "night" and

darkness", and what with "day" and "light"?

3. What idea is suggested by the words "cast off" and "put on"?

4. What is the meaning of "honestly" in 13:13, and how does this differ from the common meaning of the word today?

5. What three classes of sins are we commanded to cast off?

6. Which of these classes of sins constitutes

the greatest temptation to Christian people at the present day?

7. What does it mean to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"?

8. What is meant by "the flesh" in 13:14?

9. How can it be shown that "the flesh" does not mean simply the human body?

10. How is the Christian to deal with his sinful desires?

LESSON 83

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

E. The Christian's Duty toward Weak Brethren. 14:1-13

In this section of the epistle, Paul sets forth the treatment to be accorded weak brethren, who have doubts and scruples about various matters which are not really, in themselves, moral questions at all. We cannot tell with certainty just who the weak brethren were whom Paul discusses in this chapter. Various theories have been proposed. But it seems very probable that some of these weak brethren, at least, were Jewish Christians who not only continued to observe the precepts of the ceremonial law about foods, but who even went far beyond the requirements of the law, in their effort to avoid possible violations of that law. Many of the early Christians had a Jewish background. Even after becoming Christians, some of them continued to feel that they ought to obey various precepts of the Old Testament ceremonial law, such as the regulations about clean and unclean foods, and the ordinances about special festival days. This apparently created a problem in the churches, and specifically in the church at Rome. If this problem were not carefully handled, serious consequences might result.

In order to understand this section of the epistle, we must realize that those who felt they must obey the precepts of the ceremonial law were wrong. Paul does not treat this as a matter about which both sides were right, nor even as a matter about which both sides were partly right. He treats it as a matter about which one side was right and the other side was wrong, and he is concerned that those who were right should be considerate in their treatment of those who were wrong.

The Apostolic Council of Acts Chapter 15 settled for all time the question of whether the ceremonial law is binding on Christians, by decreeing that it is not. Paul in Romans 14 regards those who felt they ought to obey the ceremonial regulations as the exception in the Church. He is concerned that these weak brethren be treated with love, sympathy and forbearance. But at the

same time he makes it clear that these brethren's special ideas are wrong, they are the result of being "weak in the faith". Since the weak brother's ideas are wrong, they must not be made into a creed or rule to be imposed upon the church as a whole.

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations" (14:1). This verse is not very clear in the King James Version. The American Revision (1901) is clearer: "But him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not for decision of scruples". The Revised Standard Version (1946) reads: "As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions". Williams' translation reads: "Make it your practice to receive into full Christian fellowship people who are over-scrupulous, but not to criticise their views". Here Paul states that weak and scrupulous brethren are to be received into Christian fellowship in spite of their weak faith. "Faith here means, persuasion of the truth; a man may have a strong persuasion as to certain truths, and a very weak one as to others. Some of the early Christians were, no doubt, fully convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and yet felt great doubts whether the distinction between clean and unclean meats was entirely done away. This was certainly a great defect of Christian character, and rose from the want of an intelligent and firm conviction of the gratuitous nature of justification, and of the spirituality of the gospel. Since, however, this weakness was not inconsistent with sincere devotion to Christ, such persons were to be received" (Charles Hodge).

"But not to doubtful disputations" ("not for decision of scruples", ARV). Two Greek words are involved here. The first (*diakrisis*) means the faculty of discrimination, judgment or decision. The other Greek word (*dialogismoi*) means scruples, worries or doubts in a person's thinking. In view of the context (verse 2), Hodge gives the meaning of verse 1 as: "Him that is weak in faith, take to yourselves as a Christian brother, treat him kindly, not presuming to sit in judgment on the opinions of your brethren."

"For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs" (14:2). One man has confidence, as far as religious principle is concerned, to eat anything; another man, who is weak in his faith, limits himself to a vegetarian diet. This does not mean, of course, that all foods are equally wholesome, nor that the normal Christian eats just anything, regardless of considerations of health and hygiene. Paul is not discussing the wholesomeness or harmfulness of foods; he is only discussing the matter of **religious scruples** about foods. As far as religious principle is concerned, the normal Christian is convinced that he may eat anything; no kind of food is to be refused on religious grounds, as religiously defiling or unclean.

The Old Testament ceremonial law did not require a vegetarian diet; it did not forbid the eating of all kinds of flesh. Certain kinds were permitted, while other kinds were forbidden. But the scrupulous Jews, especially when living in a pagan environment, sometimes became afraid to eat any kind of flesh, or indeed any prepared food, lest they defile themselves by eating something forbidden in the law. They would eat only that which they could personally trace from its natural condition to its entrance into their own mouth, and so restricted themselves to a diet of "herbs", that is, to a vegetarian diet. To make sure of avoiding all unclean meats, and all foods that might have been offered to idols, they limited themselves to vegetables.

Questions:

1. What new subject does Paul take up in this section of the epistle?
2. What was the religious background of many of the early Christians?

3. How did many Jewish Christians feel about the precepts of the ceremonial law?

4. Were these Jewish Christians right or wrong in their attitude toward the precepts of the ceremonial law?

5. What great question was settled for all time at the Apostolic Council in Acts chapter 15?

6. How does Paul in Romans 14 regard those who felt that they should obey the ceremonial law?

7. Why are the weak brother's ideas not to be made into a creed or rule to be imposed on the church as a whole?

8. How is 14:1 translated in the American Revised Version?

9. What duty is taught in 14:1?

10. What is the meaning of the second part of verse 1?

11. Does 14:2 mean that a Christian can eat anything he feels like eating regardless of considerations of health?

12. What is the true meaning of the statement, "One believeth that he may eat all things"?

13. What is meant by "eateth herbs" in 14:2?

14. Did the Old Testament ceremonial law require a vegetarian diet?

15. Why did some scrupulous Jews limit themselves to a vegetarian diet?

LESSON 84

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

E. The Christian's Duty toward Weak Brethren. 14:1-13. Cont.

"Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him" (14:3). "There is mutual forbearance to be exercised in relation to this subject. The strong are not to despise the weak as superstitious and imbecile; nor the weak to condemn those who disregard their scruples. Points of indifference are not to be allowed to disturb the harmony of Christian fellowship" (Charles Hodge). There were these two classes of people in the churches; one was strong and correct in faith, the other was weak and erroneous in faith. Yet both classes existed, and Paul commands mutual forbearance. "For God hath received him" — that is, God has received the weak brother to His Kingdom, in spite of the weak brother's errors. The exhorta-

tion to forbearance applies to both classes, the strong and the weak. "The Jewish converts were perhaps quite as much disposed to condemn the Gentile Christians, as the latter were to despise the Christian Jews; Paul therefore frames his admonition so as to reach both classes. It appears, however, from the first verse, and from the whole context, that the Gentiles were principally intended" (Charles Hodge).

While the particular question of eating meats, which Paul is discussing, is not an important issue in most Christian circles today, still the principle which the apostle enunciates remains valid for all time. Divergent views about things which are indifferent in themselves — things which are not required nor forbidden by Scripture — are not to be allowed to disrupt Christian fellowship. It is easy to think of modern examples. The use of communion tokens is indifferent in itself. So is the question of whether the Sabbath morning service

is to be held at 11 o'clock or at some other hour. So is the particular method or system of Bible reading to be used in the practice of family worship. So, also, is the frequency of observance of the Lord's Supper, and the number and time and place of the preparatory services. We could easily think of many more examples. Matters of this kind, which do not involve a clear-cut issue of right and wrong, are not to be allowed to destroy Christian unity and fellowship. The strong are not to despise the weak and scrupulous, nor are the weak and scrupulous to sit in judgment on the strong and condemn them.

"Who are thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth" (14:4a). God has not appointed the strong Christian, who is correct in his faith, to pronounce judgment on the weak Christian, who is erroneous and over-scrupulous in his faith. After all, the weak brother is a Christian; therefore he belongs to Christ; he is Christ's servant; Christ is the one who has the right to pronounce judgment on him.

As in Paul's day, so at the present day, there are many self-appointed judges in the churches, who do not hesitate to pronounce a condemning judgment on some of the opinions, scruples or practices of their Christian brethren. And in our day, we have not only the strong judging the weak, but also the opposite situation, where the weak pronounce judgment on the strong. Those who have scruples about some particular matter, often are not satisfied with having their scruples sympathetically tolerated by the majority; they demand that the whole church conform to their scruples, and constantly disturb the peace of the church by carrying on a propaganda along that line. All such, whether "strong" or "weak", should pay heed to the apostle's question: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?"

"To his own master he standeth or falleth" (14:4b). It is the Lord Jesus Christ who has jurisdiction over him, not some self-appointed critic in the church. "Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (14:4c). God is able to save this weak Christian to the uttermost,

in spite of his weak and erroneous faith. Here is an added reason for forbearance toward our Christian brethren. No matter how weak a man may be in his Christian faith, still if he is a Christian, we may not disregard this and treat him as if he were a non-Christian, an outsider. "The brethren are not responsible to each other, or the church, or their scruples. God is the Lord of the conscience. To him they must answer. Before him they stand or fall" (Charles Hodge).

Questions:

1. What is meant by "mutual forbearance"?
2. What wrong attitude toward the weak Christian must the strong Christian avoid?
3. What wrong attitude or action toward the strong Christian must the weak Christian avoid?
4. On what ground does Paul command mutual forbearance in 14:3?
5. Is the question of eating meats an important question in most Christian circles today?
6. What permanent principle can be discerned in 14:3?
7. What is meant by "things which are indifferent in themselves"?
8. Give some present-day examples of practices which are indifferent in themselves.
9. Whose servant is the weak Christian?
10. Who has the right to pronounce judgment on Christian people?
11. Is the warning of 14:4 still necessary at the present day?
12. How do weak Christians sometimes pronounce judgment on strong Christians?
13. Why may we never treat a Christian as a non-Christian or outsider?
14. Who is the Lord of the conscience?
15. What is the meaning of the statement: "God is able to make him stand"?

LESSON 85

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

E. The Christian's Duty toward Weak Brethren. 14:1-13, Cont.

"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (14:5). The reference here is apparently to the various festival days of the Old Testament ceremonial law. Just as that law distinguished between clean and unclean meats, so it distinguished between days. Evidently some Jewish Christians felt that they

should continue to observe these days in a special manner. This belief was wrong; it was a weakness. But as it was not a vital matter, it was not to be allowed to disrupt the unity of the church.

This verse has been used by some people as a proof that the observance of the Sabbath day is not a Christian duty, but an optional matter to be left to every individual's preference. This is however a very strained interpretation of the verse. "It is obvious from the context, and from such para-

lled passages as Gal. 4:10. . . and Col. 2:16. . . that Paul has reference to the Jewish festivals, and therefore his language cannot properly be applied to the Christian Sabbath. The sentiment of the passage is this: 'One man observes the Jewish festivals, another man does not.' Such we know was the fact in the apostolic church, even among those who agreed in the observance of the first day of the week" (Charles Hodge).

"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (14:5b). Here Paul states the principle that one man's conscience cannot control another man's actions. Each one must act according to his own conscience, and avoid doing what he believes to be wrong. It is strange, but true, that even at the present day there are people in the churches who seem to think that God has made **their** conscientious convictions the standard for **other people's** conduct. By their attitude, if not in spoken words, they say, "You must do this because I believe it is your duty", or, "You must abstain from this practice because I feel it is wrong". It is evident that this same spirit existed in the church at Rome in Paul's day, and that to oppose this wrong tendency, the apostle wrote, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind". Of course, a person's conscience may err, and need correction. But it is to be corrected by the Word of God, not by the conscience of some fellow-Christian. We cannot solve our moral problems by making some other person's convictions our guide; we must be convinced in our own conscience of what God requires of us. This idea which some church members have, that God has somehow appointed them as keeper of their brethren's conscience, is a great evil, and also (if they could only realize it!) a great presumption and sign of egotism.

"He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" (14:6). This does not mean that the person who observes the Jewish festival days and the person who does not observe them are equally right, nor that the person who eats flesh and the person who eats only vegetables are equally right; on the contrary, the one class is right and the other wrong; the one class is "strong" and the other "weak". In this verse Paul merely states that both classes of Christians are acting conscientiously, from motives of devotion to God. It is not a case of the one class faithfully serving God, while the other class wantonly commits sin. Both classes are acting as they conscientiously believe they ought to act, from motives of devotion and thankfulness to God. The strong Christian, who disregards the observance of the Jewish festival days and who eats common food without religious scruples, shows by the fact that he gives God thanks, that he is acting conscientiously. Clearly,

a person could not give God thanks for something which he believed to be sinful or forbidden to use. And in the same way, the brother who observes days and abstains from meats, weak and mistaken though he be, still believes that he is acting according to the will of God, for he, too, gives God thanks.

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (14:7). That is, no real Christian will regard himself as his own master, nor hold that he is free to do as he pleases. He will realize that both in his life and death, his chief end is to glorify God. He will acknowledge that he is not his own, but has been bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ; therefore he is Christ's servant, to live according to the will of God and for God's glory. Paul clearly means to imply that all who accept this principle are to be treated as true Christians, whatever errors or weaknesses they may have about interpretation of the will of God concerning particular matters. Those who recognize and admit that they belong wholly to Christ, having no authority over their own life or death, are to be received as our Christian brethren.

Questions:

1. What kind of "days" does Paul mean in 14:5?
2. What was the attitude of some Jewish Christians toward these special days?
3. Why were differences about observance of days not to be allowed to disrupt Christian fellowship?
4. How can it be shown that 14:5 does not refer to the Christian Sabbath?
5. What principle is involved in Paul's statement: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind"?
6. How is this principle violated by some people today?
7. How is an erring conscience to be corrected?
8. Has God appointed some people as keepers of other people's conscience?
9. How do we know that 14:6 does not mean that both the classes mentioned were equally right?
10. What is the real meaning of 14:6?
11. In 14:6, what is shown by the fact that both classes of Christians give God thanks?
12. What truth is taught by 14:7?
13. Why is a Christian not free to do as he pleases?
14. Who are to be received as our Christian brethren?

LESSON 86

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

E. The Christian's Duty toward Weak Brethren. 14:1-13, Cont.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (14:8). This verse repeats the thought of verse 7, in a more explicit form. The word "Lord" in this verse clearly means Jesus Christ, as is evident from the context, verse 9.

The devotion specified in verse 8 is that which the creature owes to the Creator; and since this devotion is to be rendered to the Lord (Jesus Christ), this proves the deity of Christ—it proves that Christ is God. Note how the terms "God" and "Lord" are used interchangeably in verses 6-9. This forms a strong evidence for the deity of Jesus Christ.

"For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (14:9). In this verse the word "revived" is a poor translation of the Greek, because in our common English speech the word "revive" is used of the recovery of someone who was only in danger of death, but not actually dead. The Greek verb here translated "revived" really means simply "lived"; the word "again" which is added in some versions is not found in the Greek text.

By His death, Christ purchased His people for His own. By His resurrection, He attained to His present glory as King and Lord of all. His present exaltation and glory and dominion are represented in the Bible as the reward of His sufferings and death. (Compare Phil. 2:8,9). Here in Romans 14:9 Paul teaches that Christ's authority as Saviour and King is not limited to this present world; it extends to the life after death, for He is the Lord both of the dead and the living.

We should realize how different this idea of Christ is from the common view of Jesus in liberal Protestant circles today. The common liberal view denies that Jesus is truly God, but holds that He was a great and good man. He is regarded as a teacher and example rather than as Redeemer and Lord. But the Christ that Paul believed in was and is Lord both of the dead and the living. He is truly God.

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (14:10). (In this verse, the most reliable Greek manuscripts read "the judgment seat of God" instead of "the judgment seat of Christ", and for this reason the American Standard Version (1901), the Revised Standard Version (1946), and most other modern versions read "God" instead

of "Christ". As Christ is God, and Paul has been using the terms "God" and "Lord" (Christ) interchangeably in this chapter, this difference in the Greek manuscripts is not important).

"If a man is our brother, if God has received him, if he acts from a sincere desire to do the divine will, he should not be condemned, though he may think certain things right, which we think wrong; nor should he be despised if he trammels his conscience with unnecessary scruples. The former of these clauses relates to scrupulous Jewish Christians; the latter to the Gentile converts. The last member of the verse applies to both classes. As we are all to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, as he is our sole and final judge, we should not usurp his prerogative, or presume to condemn those whom he has received" (Charles Hodge).

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (14:11). This is a quotation from Isaiah 45:23. It will be noted that Paul does not quote the exact words of Isaiah; he varies them somewhat, while giving the same sense. This is to be explained by the fact that the Holy Spirit is the real Author of both Isaiah and Romans. When an author is quoting from his own writings, he is at liberty to make any changes he may see fit, which would not be proper in quoting the writings of another. Romans 14:11 is just as truly inspired as Isaiah 45:23, the Holy Spirit being the real source of both. "As I live" gives the correct meaning of the phrase "I have sworn by myself" which occurs in Isaiah 45:23. "The apostle evidently considers the recognition of the authority of Christ as being tantamount to submission to God, and he applies without hesitation the declaration of the Old Testament in relation to the universal dominion of Jehovah, in proof of the Redeemer's sovereignty. In Paul's estimation, therefore, Jesus Christ was God" (Charles Hodge).

Verse 11 confirms the truth stated in the last part of verse 10, "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ". The Old Testament prediction, "To me every knee shall bow", confirms this. Here as so often in his epistles, Paul takes pains to show the harmony of his doctrine with that of the Old Testament Scriptures. What the apostle was teaching was not some strange novelty, but truth fully in harmony with and indeed revealed in the Old Testament.

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (14:12). This verse summarizes the truth of individual personal responsibility to God which Paul has been teaching. Every one of us shall give account OF HIMSELF to God. We are not to give account of our brother,

but of ourself. As each Christian is to render his own account to God, we can see how presumptuous and improper it is for some to undertake to pass judgment on others.

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (14:13). "Let us not judge one another any more" is an admonition that Christian people of the present day, as of Paul's day, would do well to heed. Almost every church has some people who are living in constant violation of this divine precept. They may be the strictest of the strict about many other matters, but about this precept of Romans 14:13 they are completely neglectful. With sharp tongues they pass censorious judgment on other Christians whom God has not placed under their jurisdiction. This is one of the great sins which mar the peace, holiness and edification of the Church.

Questions:

1. Who is meant by the word "Lord" in 14:8?
2. What kind of devotion is specified in 14:8?
3. What does 14:8 show concerning Jesus Christ?
4. What inference can be drawn from Paul's interchangeable usage of the terms "God" and "Lord" in 14:6-9?

5. Why is the word "revived" in 14:9 a poor translation?

6. What is the literal meaning of the word translated "revived" in 14:9?

7. What is the relation between Christ's sufferings and His exaltation?

8. Besides this present world, what does Christ's authority include according to 14:9?

9. How does the Christ of Paul differ from the Jesus of liberal Protestantism?

10. What variation exists among Greek manuscripts in the wording of 14:10?

11. From what Old Testament book is 14:11 quoted?

12. How can we explain the fact that Paul did not quote the exact words of the Old Testament?

13. What is shown by Paul's frequent quoting of the Old Testament?

14. Of what shall every Christian give account to God?

15. Why is the admonition of 14:13, "Let us not judge one another any more", suited to the churches of the present day?

LESSON 87

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

F. How the Strong in Faith should use their Christian Liberty. 14:13-23

"But judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (14:13b). The apostle now proceeds to a new topic, though it is one related to that which he has just been discussing. This new topic is, How the strong in faith ought to use their Christian liberty. It is not enough that a Christian be "fully persuaded in his own mind" that certain conduct is right. Something more needs to be considered, namely, the effect of one's conduct on others. A Christian must not only be fully persuaded that what he proposes to do is right, but he must also take care that he does not injure some brother by what he does. So Paul now takes up the question of Christian liberty and how it is to be exercised.

We take verse 13b as addressed to the strong Christian, who is admonished not to put a "stumblingblock" in the way of the weak Christian. We must therefore consider, what is the "stumblingblock" to which Paul refers. "Stumblingblock" and "occasion to fall" clearly mean practically the same thing: some object or obstacle in one's path which occasions stumbling and falling. But to

what in the Christian's conduct do these terms refer? -

In order to understand Paul's meaning, we must realize what kind of weakness it was that characterized the weak brethren about whom he is speaking in this chapter. This particular point has often been missed in discussions of this chapter and applications of it to modern problems. It has often been alleged that the "weakness" of the weak brethren was a readiness to indulge in sinful practices, such as intemperance. According to this idea, the weak brethren were "weak" because they were ready victims of temptation, and found it very difficult to let certain things alone; in other words, their weakness was a weakness of **indulgence** or **excess**.

But this idea will not fit Paul's statements in this chapter at all. The weak brethren he is describing were not people who were ready at the slightest suggestion to fall into intemperance. They were not guilty of any intemperance whatever. On the contrary, they were total abstainers from certain things. They would not eat flesh at all, but confined themselves to a diet of herbs. The weakness of the weak brethren, therefore, was not the weakness of a tendency to

indulgence or intemperance; on the contrary, it was the weakness of religious scruples about the use of certain things. It was their NOT eating flesh that was their weakness. Those who were strong were able to eat it without any scruples; the weak had scruples about it.

What, then, is the "stumblingblock" which the strong are not to place in the way of the weak? In view of what follows (verses 14-23) it is evident that the "stumblingblock" to which the apostle refers is some action on the part of the strong Christian which encourages or prompts the weak Christian to do what he, the weak Christian, believes to be wrong. The "falling" on the part of the weak Christian is not the sin of falling into intemperance of any kind; it is the sin of daring to do something about which he is not "fully persuaded in his own mind", something about which he still has doubts or scruples. (Note verse 23, "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin". Here it is clear that the sin by which the weak brother falls is not the sin of eating, but the sin of eating in spite of his doubts, the sin of eating without faith that it was right for him to do so).

We shall study verses 14-23 in more detail in the following lessons. We have only glanced at them to learn the true meaning of the "stumblingblock" and the "fall" mentioned in verse 13. It has been shown that the "fall" of the weak Christian was not a fall into intemperance or sinful indulgence of any kind, but a daring to do something about which he had doubts — something which was not wrong in itself, and about which the strong Christian did not have any scruples.

And the "stumblingblock" was an action on the part of the strong Christian which would encourage the weak Christian to do something about which he had scruples.

Questions:

1. What new topic does Paul take up at this point in the epistle?
2. Why is it not enough that a Christian be "fully persuaded in his own mind" that something he intends to do is right?
3. Is the second part of verse 13 addressed to the strong Christian or to the weak Christian?
4. Was the weakness of the "weak brethren" in this chapter a tendency to intemperance?
5. What was the real nature of the weakness of the "weak brethren"? What verses in the chapter show this?
6. What is the "stumblingblock" to which Paul refers?
7. What was the "falling" that the weak brother was in danger of?
8. What does verse 23 show about the nature of the sin the weak brother was in danger of committing?
9. Why should Christians avoid putting stumblingblocks in the way of weak brethren?
10. Does the strong Christian have a right to act as he pleases regardless of spiritual danger to the weak brother?

LESSON 88

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

F. How the Strong in Faith should use their Christian Liberty. 14:13-23, Cont.

"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (14:14). "The distinction between clean and unclean meats is no longer valid. So far the Gentile converts are right. But they should remember that those who consider the law of the Old Testament on this subject as still binding, cannot, with a good conscience, disregard it. The strong should not, therefore, do anything which would be likely to lead such persons to violate their own sense of duty" (Charles Hodge).

"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus". The means that what Paul is about to say is not a conclusion which he has arrived at by his own reasonings, but something which he knows by divine revelation. There is a possible allusion here to the words of Christ in Mark

7:14-23. "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him. . .". Our Lord is speaking here, of course, of religious defilement. And Paul in Romans 14:14 is speaking of religious uncleanness. The old distinctions and prohibitions of unclean foods, in the ceremonial law of the Old Testament, have been abrogated; they are no longer binding. Nothing is therefore to be regarded as "unclean of itself". Compare Acts 10:9-15, where the same teaching is given. Although the truth is that nothing is "unclean of itself", still there were members in the Church of Rome in Paul's day who did not grasp this simple truth; in their thinking, there were many things that were "unclean of themselves". And so the apostle adds: "To him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (14:14b). That is, the Christian who still believes that something is "unclean" cannot safely partake of it; to him it is still unclean, because in eating of it, he would be doing something which he believes to be sinful;

thus he would violate his own conscience. It is a sin to act against one's conscience, even when that conscience is ignorant and misguided. It is not a sin to eat "unclean" meats, but it is a sin to do anything which a person believes to be forbidden by God. The sin is not the sin of eating meats, but the sin of disregarding one's conscience.

"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably" (14:15a). The phrase "now walkest thou not charitably", is better translated "thou walkest no longer in love", as in the American Standard Version (1901). If the strong Christian insists on his freedom to eat any kind of meat under all circumstances and in any company, then he is in danger of having a bad effect on the weak brother. And to insist on one's own rights and freedom, while disregarding the spiritual condition of others, is contrary to the duty of Christian love. The strong Christian must therefore take care, that he does not by his use of meats injure the weak brother, who is burdened by scruples about meats.

"Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (14:15b). Here we see the soul-destroying nature of any disregard of conscience. How could the strong Christian's eating meats destroy the weak Christian? Meats themselves are of course not harmful, nor are they religiously defiling. But the strong Christian must be on his guard lest by his eating of meats he **destroy** the weak Christian. Destroy is, clearly, a very strong word; it is much stronger than merely to injure, offend or grieve the weak brother. The word "destroy" involves the destructive nature and tendency of sin, its tendency to destroy the soul and alienate it from God. Of course it is perfectly true that God is able to make the weak Christian stand (14:4) and that those whom God has fore-known and predestinated shall certainly be glorified (8:30) — these things are true, certainly, but Paul is not speaking of the keeping power of God; he is speaking of the destructive tendency of sin. When he uses the word "destroy" in 14:15, he refers to what sin will do if it is not restrained or removed by the grace of God.

Sin, apart from God's grace, will certainly destroy the sinner eternally. And the weak Christian commits a sin when he acts contrary to his own (misguided) conscience. The strong Christian should therefore stop and think; he should realize what a terribly dangerous, destructive thing sin is, before he uses his own freedom in any way that might lead the weak Christian to commit a sin.

While the question of clean and unclean meats is no longer a debated question in most Christian circles at the present day, the principle which is embodied in verse 15 remains permanently valid. The strong Christian must never use his freedom in such a way as to destroy the weak Christian; he must never use his freedom in such

a way as to lead the weak Christian to do something which the weak Christian believes to be wrong. There are many applications of this principle at the present day. Many people today, as in Paul's day, have conscientious scruples about various matters which are not really forbidden by God. For example, there are sincere Christians who believe that life insurance is sinful. The great majority of Christian people hold that life insurance is morally legitimate. They have a right to take out life insurance, but they must not try to persuade or encourage those who have scruples about it to do so, lest these "weak brethren" act against their conscience and so fall victim to the destructive power of sin.

Questions:

1. What does Paul mean by saying "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus"?
2. What passage in the Gospels may be alluded to in 14:14? What is the teaching of Christ in that Gospel passage?
3. What kind of uncleanness was Christ speaking about in Mark 7?
4. What kind of uncleanness was Paul speaking of in Romans 14:14?
5. What incident in the book of Acts teaches that nothing is unclean of itself? Where it is found?
6. What truth did some members of the Church at Rome fail to grasp?
7. What is the meaning of the statement: "To him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean"?
8. Why is it a sin to act against one's conscience, even when that conscience is misguided?
9. What is the true meaning of "not charitably" in 14:15?
10. Why may not the strong Christian insist on his freedom to eat any kind of meat at any time and place?
11. What is the effect of any disregard of conscience?
12. How could the strong Christian's eating of meats "destroy" the weak Christian?
13. Does 14:15 imply that a saved Christian can fall away from God and perish in his sins? If not, how can we explain the use of the word "destroy" in this verse?
14. What will sin certainly do apart from God's grace?
15. What should the strong Christian realize before exercising his own freedom?
16. What permanently valid principle is embodied in 14:15?
17. What applications does this principle have today?

LESSON 89

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

F. How the Strong in Faith should use their Christian Liberty. 14:13-23, Cont.

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of" (14:16). This is presumably addressed to the strong Christian, and the "good" is the strong Christian's freedom to eat meats. The meaning then is, "Do not use your liberty, which is good, in such a way that it will occasion evil, and bring censure upon you".

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (14:17). "This is a new reason for forbearance. No principle of duty is sacrificed; nothing essential to religion is disregarded, for religion does not consist in external observances, but in the inward graces of the Spirit. . . . There is no sin in abstaining from certain meats, and therefore, if the good of others requires this abstinence, we are bound to exercise it" (Charles Hodge).

While in the Old Testament, under the ceremonial law, there was an emphasis on external things, Christianity is different. The Kingdom of God — the reign of God over His people — does not consist in such external matters as "meat and drink", but in the spiritual things: righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit. "These words are to be taken in their Scriptural sense. Paul does not mean to say, that Christianity consists in morality; that the man who is just, peaceful and cheerful, is a true Christian. This would be to contradict the whole argument of this epistle. The righteousness, peace, and joy intended, are those of which the Holy Spirit is the author. Righteousness is that which enables us to stand before God, because it satisfies the demands of the law. It is the righteousness of faith, both objective and subjective; peace is the concord between God and the soul, between reason and conscience, between the heart and our fellow-men. And the joy is the joy of salvation; that joy which only those who are in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost can ever experience" (Charles Hodge).

"For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men" (14:18). This verse confirms the preceding one. By "these things", the apostle clearly means "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost". Where these exist, differences about meats and drinks should not be permitted to disrupt the bonds of Christian fellowship. The person who has the genuine "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" is not only acceptable to God (who is the Author and Giver of these spiritual graces), but is also "approved of men". This does not mean that the faithful, spiritual Christian will always be "approved of men", nor that he will ever

be approved of all men. Sometimes the faithful, spiritual Christian will find himself in a small and despised minority, while the majority applauds more popular and man-pleasing teachings. And the faithful Christian will always find some people opposed to him and his principles. Moreover he will nearly always find some within the visible church who are opposed to him and his principles. But eventually the faithful Christian will be "approved of men". His testimony for truth and right may be ignored and it may be despised, but the day will come when God will bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noonday. It has happened many a time in the history of the Christian Church that those who faithfully witnessed to the truth of God were reproached and persecuted for a long time, but eventually recognized as having stood for truth and righteousness.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (14:19). Here Paul places before the Christians at Rome the obligation to seek peace and mutual edification. Clearly this was much more important than the right of the strong Christians to exercise their liberty on any and all occasions. "Since Christian love, the example of Christ, the comparative insignificance of the matters in dispute, the honor of the truth, the nature of real religion, all conspire to urge us to mutual forbearance, let us endeavor to promote peace and mutual edification" (Charles Hodge).

Questions:

1. Is 14:16 addressed to the strong Christian or to the weak Christian?
2. What is the "good" mentioned in 14:16?
3. What is the meaning of 14:16?
4. What does Paul mean by saying, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink"?
5. What kind of righteousness is meant in 14:17?
6. What kind of peace is meant in 14:17?
7. What kind of joy is meant in 14:17?
8. What does the apostle mean by "these things" in 14:18?
9. Why is the person who has genuine righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit acceptable to God?
10. Will the faithful Christian always be "approved of men"?
11. Can the faithful Christian expect that all in the visible church will approve of him?

12. What experience have many in the history of the Church had?

13. What obligation is placed before Christians in 14:19?

14. Why should Christians seek for peace and mutual edification?

15. What is more important than the exercise of the strong Christian's liberty?

LESSON 90

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

F. How the Strong in Faith should use their Christian Liberty. 14:13-23, Cont.

"For meat destroy not the work of God" (14:20a). This clause is somewhat similar to 14:15b. There is some question as to the precise meaning of the phrase "the work of God". Some take this as meaning "a Christian brother", or "the Christian status of a brother". But perhaps the most probable meaning is the edification mentioned at the close of the preceding verse. "Thus it will mean, thy fellow-Christian, as a plant of God's planting, a building of God's raising" (Henry Alford). Obviously there is no comparison of importance between this "work of God", and the strong Christian's right to eat certain kinds of foods. The one so far transcends the other in importance, that no truly spiritual Christian should have any hesitation whatever as to how to act when the weak brother's edification is at stake.

"All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense" (14:20b). Here "all things" evidently means "all kinds of food", "all articles of diet". The Greek word for "pure" may also be translated "clean" (*kathara*). The statement that "all things are pure" means, of course, pure from the religious point of view; that is, not involving spiritual or religious contamination or defilement. We must remember that Paul is not discussing the wholesomeness of foods, but the matter of religious scruples about certain foods. Obviously not all kinds of food are pure from the hygienic standpoint. A loaf of bread may have arsenic in it, and be not only injurious but lethal. Paul, however, is not discussing such matters. He is discussing how the strong Christian should exercise his Christian liberty, or refrain from exercising it, in view of the religious scruples of the weak Christian concerning the use of certain articles of diet. We are not interpreting the apostle aright if we introduce into his statements modern hygienic considerations about the wholesomeness or harmfulness of particular kinds of food or drink.

"But it is evil for that man who eateth with offense" (14:20c). The Greek word here translated "evil" is *kakon*, which means not merely harmful or injurious, but sinful, that is, morally evil. The question about this clause is, does "that man who eateth with offense" mean the strong Christian who eats in such a way as to lead the weak brother to offend; or does it mean the weak

brother, who eats when his conscience does not approve? Both of these interpretations have been advocated, but the former is the one that has commonly been held and is probably the correct one. According to this view, the clause is a warning to the strong Christian to avoid eating in such a way as to cause his weak brother to offend, that is, to do what his conscience disapproves. In favor of this interpretation is the fact that the sentence stands between two others, both of which are addressed to the strong Christian who is in danger of offending the weak brother (Henry Alford).

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (14:21). "That is, abstaining from flesh, wine, or anything else which is injurious to our brethren, is right, i.e., morally obligatory; . . . The words stumbleth, offended, made weak, do not, in this connection, differ much from each other. Calvin supposes they differ in force, the first being stronger than the second, and the second than the third. The sense then is, 'We should abstain from every thing whereby our brother is cast down, or even offended, or in the slightest degree injured.' This, however, is urging the terms beyond their natural import. It is very common with the apostle to use several nearly synonymous words for the sake of expressing one idea strongly" (Charles Hodge).

It will be noted that in our English Bible, the words *any thing* in this verse are printed in italics, showing that they are not found in the Greek text, but have been added by the translators for the sake of making the meaning clear in English. The Greek text may be literally translated: "Good (it is) not to eat flesh nor to drink wine nor in which thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak". (The most important Greek manuscripts omit the words "or is offended, or is made weak"). As will be seen from the above literal translation, something must be supplied to complete the meaning of this verse. Various suggestions have been made. Alford supplies the words "to do any thing", making the verse read: "It is good not to eat meats nor to drink wine, nor (to do any thing) in which thy brother stumbles, or is offended, or is weak". Another suggested form is: "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine nor (to drink anything) in which thy brother stumbleth", etc. Charles Hodge prefers

the form suggested by Alford. So understood, the verse asserts that we should do nothing which injures others.

We have already noted that the weakness of the "weak brethren" in this chapter is not the weakness of a tendency to indulgence or intemperance, but the weakness of religious scruple which induced the "weak brethren" to refrain absolutely from the use of certain things which the strong Christians knew they were free to use. Inasmuch as 14:21 occurs in this context and is a part of this discussion of a specific subject (How the strong in faith should use their Christian liberty), this verse must be understood as dealing with matters concerning which the "weak brethren" had religious scruples. Out of consideration for the "weak brethren", the strong ought to be willing to forgo the exercise of their liberty insofar as the spiritual interests of the "weak brethren" require this. It is not of the essence of Christian liberty that it must be exercised in the sight of men. Scripture teaches, rather, that it is to be exercised in the sight of God and that God holds the Christian responsible for his use or abuse of this freedom.

Questions:

1. What is the probable meaning of the phrase "the work of God" in 14:20a?
2. What is the relative importance of "the work of God" and the Christian's right to eat certain foods?
3. What is meant by "all things" in 14:20b?
4. What does Paul mean by saying that "all things are pure"?
5. In 14:20 is Paul speaking of the harmfulness or wholesomeness of foods from the hygienic standpoint?
6. What is the meaning of the word translated "evil" in 14:20?
7. What problem exists as to the interpretation of the phrase "that man who eateth with offense" in 14:20?
8. What is the probable reference of the phrase "that man who eateth with offense" in 14:20? What argument can be given to support this view?
9. Why are the words "any thing" printed in italics in 14:21?
10. What suggestions have been offered as to the words to be supplied to complete the grammar of 14:21?
11. What form probably sets forth most correctly the complete thought of the verse (14:21)?
12. What was Calvin's opinion as to the meaning of the expression: ". . . stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak"?
13. What was Charles Hodge's opinion of the same matter?
14. What is the teaching of the verse according to Charles Hodge?
15. What personal sacrifice ought strong Christians to be willing to make for the sake of the spiritual interests of their weaker brethren?
16. Who will hold the Christian responsible for his use or abuse of his freedom?

LESSON 91

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

F. How the Strong in Faith should use their Christian Liberty. 14:13-23, Cont.

"Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God" (14:22). "Paul presents in this verse, more distinctly than he had before done, the idea that he required no concession of principle or renunciation of truth. He did not wish them to believe a thing to be sinful which was not sinful, or to trammel their own consciences with the scruples of their weaker brethren. He simply required them to use their liberty in a considerate and charitable manner. He, therefore, here says, 'Hast thou faith? (i.e., a firm persuasion, e.g., of the lawfulness of all kinds of meat) it is well, do not renounce it, but retain it and use it piously, as in the sight of God' (Charles Hodge).

"Have it to thyself" (14:22) This clause involves, first of all, an admonition to retain our faith, that is, our conviction of the lawfulness of

those matters concerning which the weak brethren had scruples. The strong Christian is to "have" his faith — he is not to renounce it and accept in exchange the scruples of the weak. Secondly, this clause, "Have it to thyself", teaches that the strong Christian is not to insist on exercising his conviction publicly; he is not to make an issue of it before weak brethren who cannot imitate his conduct without committing the sin of disregarding their own conscientious scruples. The strong Christian can "have" his faith, his convictions, as a matter of principle, without insisting on exercising them to the spiritual harm of the weak brethren.

"Before God" (14:22). This means "in God's presence" or "in God's sight". "As God sees and recognizes it, it need not be exhibited before men. It is to be cherished in our hearts, and used in a manner acceptable to God. Being right in itself, it is to be (used) piously, and not ostentatiously or

injuriously paraded and employed" (Charles Hodge).

"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (14:22b). A clear conscience is a great blessing, and the man who has a clear conscience is a happy man. And the man who does not allow himself to do something of which he secretly disapproves, will have a clear conscience. Since a clear conscience is a source of happiness, the "faith" spoken of in the first part of verse 22, to which the strong Christians at Rome had attained, was a valuable possession and not to be surrendered or renounced. "It is a blessed thing to have no scruples (the strong in faith is in a situation to be envied) about things in which we allow ourselves" (Henry Alford).

"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (14:23). "That is, however sure a man may be that what he does is right, he cannot expect others to act on his faith. If a man thinks a thing to be wrong, to him it is wrong. He, therefore, who is uncertain whether God has commanded him to abstain from certain meats, and who notwithstanding indulges in them, evidently sins; he brings himself under condemnation. Because whatsoever is not of faith is sin; i.e., whatever we do which we are not certain is right, to us is wrong" (Charles Hodge). Note the similarity of the teaching here with that of 14:14.

The word "damned" should be translated "condemned" as in the American Standard Version (1901). It does not necessarily imply eternal damnation, but "convicted" or "found guilty of sin" in that particular matter. Obviously a weak Christian might eat meats concerning which he had scruples, thus committing the sin of violating his conscience, and still he might repent of this sin and be forgiven. Paul by no means implies that

the person who, doubting, partakes of meats, is beyond the hope of salvation.

"For whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (14:23b). Henry Alford interprets this: "all that is not from (grounded in, and therefore consonant with) faith (the great element in which the Christian lives and moves and desires and hopes), is sin". Whatever a Christian does that does not proceed from the principle of faith, is sin.

Questions:

1. What idea does the apostle present in the first part of verse 22?
2. What is meant by "faith" in 14:22?
3. What is included in the admonition "Have it to thyself", verse 22?
4. What is involved in the phrase "before God", 14:22?
5. What is the meaning of the statement: "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth"?
6. What great source of happiness is referred to in 14:22?
7. What is meant by the statement: "He that doubteth is damned if he eat"?
8. How should the word "damned" in 14:23 be translated? What does it involve in this verse?
9. What is meant by the statement: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin"?
10. How can a Christian be sure that what he is doing is right?

(To be continued)

Psalm Eighty-One

The Feast and the Unknown Speaker

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

I. A Call to Keep the Feast of the God of Jacob (verses 1-5)

"Sing aloud to God our strength: Make a joyous sound to the God of Jacob. Take up a psalm, and strike the timbrel, The melodious harp with the psaltery. Blow the trumpet at new moon; At full moon, for the day of our feast. Because it is a statute for Israel, An ordinance of the God of Jacob. He appointed it for a testimony in Joseph When he went out over the land of Egypt:—

"The speech of one I did not know I hear:—"

The prophets used "Jacob" and "Israel" as parallel names for the same man and for his descendants collectively, the people of God, the church. "Jacob" stands for the more unlovely character, but the name "God of Jacob" declares and magnifies the marvellous grace of Him who said, "I have loved Jacob"; who entered into a covenant with Jacob and gave him a new heart, enabling him to overcome and so to receive a more noble name, a name to be shared, in their over-

coming, by all God's covenant people to all generations.

The speaker here, in the name of Jacob, is calling all the people to join him in observing the ordinance of the God of Jacob. "This day shall be unto you for a **memorial**; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; **ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.**" "It is the sacrifice of **the Lord's passover**, who passed over the houses of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses."

The great love of God for unworthy Jacob was signally shown "When He went out over the land of Egypt", especially on that night in which Jehovah took away the strength of Egypt, even all the firstborn. That night in which the lamb was slain; its blood sprinkled on the doorways of the houses of them that believed and obeyed, so that the destroyer did **pass over** them. And there also the flesh of the lamb was eaten for strength to escape and enter upon the new life of a people redeemed from bondage and given inheritance in all the promises.

It was a deliverance to be held in everlasting remembrance and celebrated to the praise of the grace of God. It had begun with a feast of the exceeding bounty of that grace. And, lest they forget, lest they fall by the way, God set times for its repetition by a statute and an ordinance and a testimony to all the world that many more might be gathered in and added to the people of God.

The Lord's Passover is to be kept with joy and gladness, with thanksgiving and praise. "Bless Jehovah, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name." "Sing praises to God, sing praises" with all the powers of understanding and heart and soul, here symbolized by the three kinds of orchestral instruments, the percussives, such as the timbrel; the strings, such as harp and psaltery; the winds, such as the trumpet. Sing with the understanding. Make melody with your hearts to the Lord. Proclaim the glad tidings. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.

The call has gone forth; the day of the feast is come. Perhaps because it is the thing to do, Jacob comes to the feast. Yet, as so often, Jacob has forgotten his Saviour; he does not recognize the voice of his God, for he has been following after other gods and listening to their praises. At Bethel he said, "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not." At Peniel, to the man who wrestled with him, he said, "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name." When Moses brought Jehovah's message to Jacob in Egypt, they said, "What is his name?" for they did not know Him. Yet Jacob is loved with an everlasting love. God in mercy comes to him, and speaks in such a way that he is led to say, as here, "The speech of one I did not know I hear:—"

This last line is abrupt, but in keeping with

the dramatic style of many of the Psalms. It will be noted in our English versions, that the word "**where**" is inserted, in italics, in verse 5, giving a different turn to the thing said. It is not in the original, and, since Egyptian was the language of commerce in that part of the world for centuries, even before Jacob went down to Egypt to sojourn, there seems to be no point to a statement that he and his sons did not understand Egyptian. What of it? They would quickly learn.

Further, it is to be noted that the second part of this Psalm, verses 6-16, is the speech of God, in Person, directly to His people. There can be no doubt for He tells us who He is, "I am Jehovah thy God, who brings thee up out of the land of Egypt" (verse 10.) He says not that He did this once, but that He is always doing it for those who cry to Him in their distress.

We hear the call to the feast of the God of Jacob, then, suddenly, we hear the God of Jacob, the Master of the Feast, talking with the guests. If we listen we can hear what He says. He turns their attention away from the materials and temporal forms of the feast. He gives strong reasons why His people should have their hearts set on Him only, who has done so much for them. He Himself is the sum and substance of this feast. He is the Bread of Life. He is the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world. His is the blood that saves and cleanses. He pleads with them to repent and come to Him with a love that acknowledges His love for them. It is a "**memorial**" feast. "This do in remembrance of ME".

II. The God of Jacob Speaks to His People (verses 6-16)

1. Of the Great Things He Has Done for Them (verses 6, 7)

"I removed his shoulder from the burden: His hands were freed from the basket. In trouble thou didst cry, and I delivered thee. I answered thee in the thunder-cloud: I put thee to the test at the Waters of Strife."

He reminds them that, when they served other masters, their backs were bowed under heavy burdens, under baskets made to carry away huge quantities of rubbish and to bring back loads of brick or stone and other materials for the building. He speaks of His faithfulness and mercy and strength. He took their burdens upon Himself and let them go free. He proved Himself to be their God, Mighty to save.

"I answered thee in the thunder-cloud," (literally, "in the veil, or hiding-place, of thunder"). This He did in the plague of the hail; again when their enemies pursued them into the midst of the Red Sea; and again at Mount Sinai when the Law was given.

Yet they were not getting the full blessings of the covenant. "I put thee to the test at the

Waters of Strife." By withholding water, for a little while, at Rephidim (Ex. 17:2-7), and again at Kadesh (Num. 20:2-13), and then giving them an abundant supply gushing from the solid rock, God exposed their fickleness and unbelief. While wanting water they complained and clamored, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. They longed for the Nile, "the first of the gods of Egypt", "the Father of the fathers of the gods", who gave a never-failing supply of water to Egypt without clouds of rain; but here in the desert they were about to die of thirst. Yet the God of Jacob keepeth mercy and truth forever.

2. Of Their Heedlessness and Waywardness (verses 8-11)

"Hear, O my people, and I will testify against thee: O Israel, if thou wouldst hearken unto me, There would be no strange god in thee; And thou wouldst not bow thyself to the god of a foreigner. I, even I am Jehovah thy God, Who brings thee up out of the land of Egypt: Open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it. But my people hearkened not to my voice; And Israel would none of me."

When people will not hear the word of God, it is not long till they cannot hear, cannot recognize God when He speaks to them. When you called I heard and answered, but you will not hear Me when I call. If you would hearken to Me you would not be calling on other gods to help you; you would not be serving them in vain efforts to get from them what they have no power to give. Remember, I have power both to withhold and to give.

"I, even I am Jehovah thy God, who brings thee up out of the land of Egypt." This is the preface, not only to the Ten Commandments, but to every word of God, the complete, three-fold, all-sufficient, unanswerable reason why the people should hearken to the words of God, and to none other. "I am Jehovah", the one and only God, before all things, the self-existent, unchangeable Creator, and therefore the Disposer and Ruler of all things in heaven and earth. "I am thy God", thy covenant God bound to keep my word to you, and you bound to believe my word and obey my law. "Who brings thee up out of Egypt." Who is always bringing you up out of the darkness and bondage of this world; who never fails you when you cry to Him. If He does the greatest things for you, surely you can trust Him for the lesser. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32).

You do not need to serve the gods of the world to make a living. "Open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it." How utterly foolish to depend on a thing that cannot hear and cannot act for that which God has already provided and promised and is waiting to give to those who put their trust in Him.

"But my people hearkened not to my voice; and Israel would none of me." Ingratitude dulled their senses, and the deceitfulness of sin lured them on. They turned to other gods, Self, Pride, Pleasure, Lust, Wealth, Position, Power. "Jehovah is with you, while you are with him; if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (2 Chron. 15:2).

3. Of His Judicial Abandonment of them (verse 12)

"Then I gave them over to their stubbornness of heart, That they might walk in their own counsels."

The inevitable result followed. God said, "I will save you no more. Go and cry to the gods you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress" (Judges 10:10-14). Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; wherefore God gave them up to the lusts of their hearts. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie; wherefore God gave them up to their own vile passions. They refused to have God in their knowledge; wherefore God gave them up to a reprobate mind. See Romans 1:18-32.

How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou hide thyself forever?" "Fear not thou, O Jacob, my servant, saith Jehovah; for I am with thee; . . . I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished" (Jer. 46:28).

4. Of His Yearning Love Unchanged (verses 13-16)

"Oh that my people would hearken unto me! That Israel would walk in my ways! Quickly would I subdue their enemies. And against their adversaries I would turn my hand. The haters of Jehovah would feign submission unto him. And their (my people's) time would be forever. He would feed them with the fatness of the wheat; Yes, with honey out of the rock I would satisfy thee."

He speaks not now of former love, but of present love moving Him to fresh entreaty. "The Lord is longsuffering toward us, unwilling that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Here is our Lord's direct, personal appeal to His people to repent and come to Him with whole heart and mind and will. He would send His Spirit in fulness for a revival of the true spiritual religion with priceless blessings for all mankind. The time is opportune, the day of our feast. "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us." "Let us keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

Are we willing for a revival of the true religion in our own lives? Or, have we forgotten His voice, so that when He speaks we do not know Him? He always speaks at this feast when

it is kept according to His ordinance. The only question is, Are we willing to hear what He says to us?

We are surrounded today by many enemies working not only outside but inside our walls of home and church and state. We talk confusedly of building new defences, but neglect the one necessary and sufficient defence which is in God alone. Our worst enemies are those who deny what God has done and said in the past, and so lead us to discredit His promises, and to worry over other defences that have no strength.

We cannot read or hear the words of this Psalm without being warned of what refusal to obey must mean, nor without being confronted with the facts of history and revelation, nor without being either softened or hardened by the pleadings of infinite love and mercy. Let us give heed, and accept with thanksgiving the goodness of God that leadeth us to repentance.

(Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued, D. V., in future issues of this publication.—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:

What attitude should we take toward the teaching of "British-Israelism"? What literature dealing with this subject can be obtained?

Answer:

In reply we reprint a question and answer from the June, 1946, issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". In addition, the following can be recommended:

HERESIES EXPOSED, by William C. Irvine (pages 34-43). Published by Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 19 West 21st St., New York 10, N. Y. 75 cents.

THE SEED OF ABRAHAM, by Albertus Pieters (pages 156-161). Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. \$2.50.

THE CHAOS OF CULTS, by J. K. Van Baalen. Published by Eerdmans (see address above). \$3.00.

The **Encyclopaedia Britannica** (11th ed., 1910, vol. 2, p. 31) defines "Anglo-Israelite Theory" as "the contention that the British people in the United Kingdom, its colonies, and the United States, are the racial descendants of the 'ten tribes' forming the kingdom of Israel, large numbers of whom were deported by Sargon king of Assyria on the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C." The **Encyclopaedia** adds that the theory "rests on premises which are deemed by scholars—both theological and anthropological—to be utterly unsound." The question from the June, 1946, issue follows immediately below.

Question:

Is the doctrine of British-Israelism true to the Bible?

Answer:

British-Israelism is a false and harmful system of interpreting the Bible which seems to be gaining popularity at the present time. Briefly, it holds that the Bible contains a double message, a double set of promises, and describes two distinct bodies of people on earth who may be called "the people of God". According to this system, the Christian Church is the spiritual people of God, to whom belong the spiritual message of the Bible, that is, the gospel of salvation through Christ, and the spiritual promises of forgiveness, eternal life, etc. Besides this spiritual people of God, British-Israelism holds that there is an earthly people of God, namely those who are descendants of Abraham according to flesh, to whom belong the earthly message of the Bible and the earthly promises of the Bible.

To this is added the peculiar idea that the Anglo-Saxon peoples are the descendants of the ten "lost tribes" of Israel and therefore are heirs of many Old Testament promises because of their (supposed) racial connection with Abraham. Some go so far as to maintain that it is the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon peoples, because of their race, to rule the world.

The promise of Jeremiah 33:17 ("For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel") certainly refers to the kingly office of Jesus Christ, as shown by Luke 1:32,33 ("And . . . the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end"); but British-Israelism claims that Jeremiah 33:17 and related promises are fulfilled in the kings of Britain who reign in London. This is one of the most harmful features of this false system, for it takes these glorious promises of Christ's kingly reign and reduces them to the

level of promises concerning an earthly, national kingship.

The notion that the Anglo-Saxon peoples are entitled to special standing or privileges because of a supposed racial connection with Abraham is certainly contrary to the Bible which teaches that in this New Testament age it is not physical descent but faith that makes a person a real child of Abraham (Galatians 3:7; Romans 9:6-8).

As for the claim that the Anglo-Saxon peoples are descended from the "lost tribes" of Israel, there is not any real historical evidence that such is the fact, nor is there a qualified historian in the world who accepts the claim as fact. The kind of evidence which is offered in British-Israel literature is wholly unconvincing.

Question:

What should be thought of the idea that the Great Pyramid of Egypt contains, in its measurements or other features, a cryptic revelation of the true God?

Answer:

According to all orthodox Christian theology, God is revealed in nature, and by His special revelation which today exists only in the form of Holy Scripture. The notion that the Great Pyramid of Egypt contains a mysterious revelation of the true God is not only without foundation in fact, but it is contrary to recognized Christian truth. Scripture teaches us that the Word (special revelation) of God was given exclusively to Israel. Israel, as the recipient of special divine revelation and supernatural redemption, is represented in the Bible as unique and without parallel among the nations of the ancient world (Deut. 32:31-33; 33:28,29. Psalms 147: 19,20). Until the advent of Jesus Christ, the nations outside of Israel were in a state of ignorance which God "winked at" but did not dispel (Acts 17:30). Paul in Romans chapter 1 represents the nations of the ancient world, outside of Israel, as having deliberately suppressed the knowledge of the true God which they had from nature, and consequently having been given up by God to "a reprobate mind".

In the Bible Egypt, far from being represented as a recipient of special revelations and favor from God, is portrayed as a type of sin and evil (Ex. 20:2 Rev. 11:8).

The "Pyramid Theory", like the "British-Israel Theory", is utterly without foundation and is contrary to Scripture.

Question:

In a religious journal of wide circulation there appeared an article on "Full-Time Christian Service". The author seemed to have the idea that some Christians are called to "Full-Time Christian Service" while others are not. Is this a Biblical view of Christian service?

Answer:

According to the Bible, every Christian is called to "Full-Time Christian Service". If we are not serving the Lord Jesus Christ full-time, then we must be serving self, the world or the devil part of the time, which is certainly contrary to our Christian duty. We are to serve the Lord Jesus Christ exactly all of the time, and anything that cannot be done as a service to our Lord is not proper for us to do at all.

Whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do ALL to the glory of God. We are to do all things in the name of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:31. Col. 3:17). According to the Bible, even the labor of a slave in the service of his earthly master is to be regarded as really a service done to the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 6:5-8. Col. 3:22-24). The Christian who has a right understanding of Biblical teaching on this subject will regard his daily tasks, and even his pleasures and recreations, as service to Christ.

The article referred to in the above query presents a far too narrow concept of Christian service. It is evident that the author of the article thinks of Christian service as limited to evangelism, missionary work, and other activities which contribute, directly or indirectly, to the salvation of souls. He would regard washing dishes or driving a truck as "Christian service" only if a Christian supported himself by these activities in order to devote his free time to evangelism or other forms of directly religious effort.

This author has no philosophy of life which shows how the creation and human use of it glorifies God. He thinks of "secular pursuits" as glorifying God only in so far as they contribute, in some way, to the salvation of souls. This is not the philosophy of the Bible. Its affinities are with the Anabaptist sects of the Reformation period, not with the Reformed Faith or Calvinism.

According to the Bible, the creation, the human race, human activity, all existed before man fell into sin, and were created to glorify God in and of themselves. In the Bible, the salvation of souls is one of the ways of glorifying God, but not the only way. The philosophy of the article we are discussing has no place for society, science, art, literature, as themselves directly glorifying God; they are considered legitimate only as adjuncts to the salvation of souls.

According to this defective philosophy of life, an artist might paint pictures so as to earn money to promote foreign missions, or so as to support himself with a view to engaging in evangelistic work in the evenings. But according to the Bible philosophy of life, an artist who paints pictures is to aim at glorifying God directly by his art. A truly beautiful painting glorifies God by its reflection and appreciation of His works in the

realm of nature, regardless of whether the painting is sold or not.

The prevalent use of the expression "Full-Time Christian Service" is doing real harm to the thinking of Christian people today. Especially in the case of young people whose theological conceptions may not be fully formed, this expression leads to incorrect thinking. As commonly used, "Full-Time Christian Service" means specifically religious work as a person's occupation; for example, to be a minister, minister's wife, missionary, colporteur, Bible translator, writer of religious literature, teacher in a Bible school, nurse in a Christian hospital, clerk in a Christian bookstore. Doubtless the person who devotes his life to such activities is engaging in full-time Christian service. But the error arises from the assumption that "Full-Time Christian Service" is limited to such specifically religious occupations. This will not harmonize with the Scriptures cited in this answer, such as Col. 3:22-24.

This idea of specifically religious occupations being pre-eminently "Full-Time Christian Service" involves an implication that the "ordinary" tasks of life — such as farming, teaching school, repairing engines, building houses, washing dishes, cooking meals — are not definitely Christian service. But according to the Bible every lawful activity of a Christian is to be regarded as a service to Christ.

The division of life into "secular" and "religious" compartments, and regarding only the "religious" part as directly a service to Christ, is wrong and unbiblical. God commanded man to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28): and that divine mandate, with all it implies, still stands. God calls some people to specifically religious work as an occupation (missions, the ministry, evangelism, etc.). Others are to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in all the lawful walks and callings of life. Each can manifest the glory of God in some special way. We should realize that all of life is to be sacred and consecrated to God. The Christian minister or missionary is not necessarily more pleasing to God than the Christian farmer, scientist, business man or housewife.

Question:

In "The Sword of the Lord" (Feb. 8, 1952, p. 6) Dr. John R. Rice, in discussing the question "Are Christian Films Wrong?", states that "old-time Scottish Presbyterians once thought that the use of any hymns or songs in the church, except paraphrased Psalms, was a sin. Again, there are people who believe that any musical instrument used in the service of God is out of place. . . . But a method is not necessarily wrong because it is comparatively new." What should be thought of this line of argument?

Answer:

Dr. Rice completely misunderstands the rea-

sons why some Christians sing only the inspired Psalms, without instrumental accompaniment, in the worship of God. He represents this position as sheer conservatism, as simple adherence to the old and opposition to the new. Covenanters and others who hold the same position concerning Scriptural purity of worship do not sing the Psalms because they are old and customary; they sing them because God has commanded that the Psalms be sung in His worship. They are not opposed to man-made "hymns" because the hymns are new, but because God has not commanded their use in His worship, and Scripture teaches that, in the worship of God, what is not commanded is forbidden. Similarly with respect to musical instruments; we do not oppose these because they are new (as a matter of fact they are not!) but because God has not appointed them for New Testament worship.

Man-made hymns had been used in the Church for a thousand years (through the entire period of the Middle Ages), but at the Reformation the churches of the Calvinistic branch of Protestantism rejected the hymns and started singing the Psalms of the Bible. Soon the Psalms were published in metrical versions in French, Dutch, English and other languages. At that time the use of Psalms was something new, while the use of man-made hymns was hoary with age. The Reformed Churches of the Reformation era did not keep on using the hymns because these were old and customary, nor did they reject the Psalms because they were new and strange. These Reformation churches were moved by other considerations entirely. They searched the Scriptures diligently to see what God had said about His own worship. The principle they formulated was that God is to be worshipped only as appointed in His Word (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 51, 52.)

Dr. Rice is correct, of course, in saying that a method is not necessarily wrong because it is comparatively new. But he fails to discern the deeper issue concerning the use of the Psalms, hymns and instrumental music. That deeper issue is the question of divine appointment in Scripture.

Question:

How can Exodus 24:11 be reconciled with John 1:18?

Answer:

The texts referred to are as follows:

"And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink" (Ex. 24:11).

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).

The statement of John 1:18 ("No man hath seen God at any time") refers to seeing God in

His fulness, which is impossible for created beings. It does not imply that there is no sense in which it could be said that men have "seen" God. In the 14th chapter of this same Gospel of John, verse 9, our Lord said to Philip: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

The statement of Ex. 24:11, that the nobles of Israel "saw God", must be taken in the light of other passages which speak on the subject. Exodus 33:18-23 is illuminating and gives a key to the meaning of Ex. 24:11. Moses prayed to God, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory". In answer God said to Moses: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee . . . Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. . . Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen."

This passage (Ex. 33:18-23) implies that an absolute revelation of God in His fulness (God's "face") would be more than a creature could bear; it would destroy a man's life. Yet Moses was granted such a revelation of God as a creature could bear. This was called God's "back parts" in distinction from God's "face" (compare Ex. 24:10, God's "feet"). Of course the language used in these passages is anthropomorphic; that is, God is spoken of as if He existed in human form; similarly, Scripture speaks of God's "mighty hand", "outstretched arm", etc. The truth is that even such a holy man as Moses could not endure a full revelation of the glory of God, but only a limited or partial manifestation of it.

Those who are interested in a further discussion of this subject are referred to **Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments**, by Geerhardus Vos (Eerdmans, 1948), pp. 120-1.

Question:

Hebrews 8:7 seems to indicate that there were mistakes in the law. Verses 10 and 11 seem to indicate that under the law God did not do enough for the salvation of Israel and later decided to do that also. To what extent are these assumptions true? If true, why did God give a faulty covenant which could not save Israel?

Answer:

Hebrews 8:7 reads: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." This is followed by a quotation of Jeremiah's great prophecy of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). The statement of Heb. 8:7 implying that the first covenant was not "faultless", does not mean that there were "mistakes in the law", but that, in comparison with the new covenant, the old was religiously inferior. Jeremiah's great prophecy teaches

that the religious superiority of the new covenant over the old would consist in (1) a higher degree of spirituality ("I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts"); (2) greater universality ("all shall know me, from the least to the greatest"); (3) a greater freedom, in some respect, in the forgiveness of sins ("and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more").

These statements in the quotation from Jeremiah do not imply that the Old Testament system was devoid of saving grace, nor that God gave a faulty covenant that could not save Israel. The statements of the Westminster Confession of Faith, VII.5,6, are relevant here. We must remember that the Old Testament system as given through Moses contained the types, sacrifices and promises which pointed to Jesus Christ and His redemption.

The Old Testament system — the old covenant — was powerless in and of itself to save. If detached from the organism of redemption which was completed in the new covenant, the old could not save. Regarded as many of the Jews regarded it, as a unit, final, complete and absolute in itself, it could not save. But in its organic connection with the New Testament redemption, it did suffice to bring salvation to the believing Israelites of Old Testament times. In other words, regarded as God meant it to be regarded, it was not dead or useless, but a true connecting link with the coming Christ and His real work of redemption.

If the Old Testament system was what the Jews who stoned Stephen thought it was, it was indeed dead and useless. But if it was what the New Testament writers understood it to be, it was a channel of connection with the future redemption wrought by Christ "in the fulness of time". Thus the old covenant was "faulty", not in the sense of involving actual errors or untruths, but in the sense of being inferior to the new covenant to be established by Jesus Christ.

There is of course no idea of God changing His mind involved. The whole history of redemption was planned by God from eternity, including both the (inferior) old covenant and the (religiously greatly superior) new covenant. Each of these was just what God intended it to be in His plan.

Why God chooses to work by a historical process instead of instantaneously is a question which has baffled many minds. We know that in the realm of nature, as well as in redemption, God ordinarily works by process. God could produce a full-grown oak tree in three seconds or less time than that, but He does not do so. Conceivably, God could have sent His Son into the world to accomplish the redemption of mankind soon after Adam's fall, but He did not do so. It was God's plan to accomplish redemption

by an age-long process. God is sovereign; we can only say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11:26). While we do not know God's reasons for His acts, we know that God is not an arbitrary being; He must have had the wisest and best of reasons for doing whatever He has done. For reasons which He has not revealed to men, God chose to give a religiously inferior covenant through Moses, be-

fore making the final and superior covenant through Christ.

When we speak of "the old covenant" and "the new covenant" of course we do not mean the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. We mean the old and new **dispensations** of the Covenant of Grace. The Covenant of Grace has two dispensations, the old and the new. The old was given through Moses, the new through Jesus Christ.

Reviews of Religious Books

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

NIGHT CAME TO JAPAN, by Eric W. Gosden. Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 33 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. 4, England. In U.S.A., The Van Kampen Press, 222 E. Willow St., Wheaton, Ill. In Canada, Evangelical Publishers, 366 Bay St., Toronto, Ont. 1951, pp. 153, paper cover. Price in U.S.A. \$1.25. In Canada \$1.05.

This interestingly written book on the missionary task in Japan places special emphasis on the period since the beginning of World War II. The author gives a good idea of the country and people of Japan, and the problems and needs of missionary work there.

On the question of compliance with the ceremonies of State Shinto the book is sound. The author states: "This Shinto problem has never resolved itself, indeed it is incapable of solution. There is no possibility of fellowship between light and darkness". He adds that though State Shinto has been officially abolished, "the evil spiritual force that lies behind Shintoism still remains. It cannot be legislated out of existence."

In discussing the Religious Bodies Law of 1939 the author points out some of the evil features of this law which set up totalitarian government control over all churches in Japan. But his discussion of it is weak, in my judgment. While admitting that this law was "part of the totalitarian scheme" in Japan, the author treats compliance with the law's requirements as a burden rather than a sinful compromise with wrong. Nowhere does he state that absolute refusal to comply with the Religious Bodies Law would have been the course of consistent Christian ethics.

In discussing the Kyodan or United Church of Japan (formed under government pressure during the war) the author is again weak. He states

that the missionary "may find himself in association with one of its churches and some of its personnel. He may feel that the doctrinal position of some of the ministers of the Church is unsound, liberal or modernistic" (p. 136), but still "The missionary will be called to work in co-operation with the existing organization". This discussion of the Kyodan fails to point out the fact that this United Church of Japan, as a body, is deeply compromised by compliance with the system of State Shinto and with government control of the church — sins that have never been repented of. Nor does the author mention the Reformed Church of Japan and other bodies which are nobly struggling for existence and bearing an emphatic witness outside the Kyodan. The author should have told his readers of the existence of a small and struggling, but spiritually strong and determined, movement in Japan which is absolutely opposed to compromise and co-operation with the unsound, unfaithful and unrepentant Kyodan. The Japan Bible Christian Council is not mentioned in the book, but I think it will be heard from in the future.

—J. G. Vos

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD, by G. C. Berkouwer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 294. \$3.50.

This worthy book comes at a time when the Church would do well to ask herself seriously whether she still believes that the providence of God embraces **all things**. In a world where raw reality quenches every spark of hope, can men still cling to their faith in God as the sustainer and governor of all things according to His wisdom and power? The modern mind disavows this idea in favor of "the cultural phenomenon of dread",

and expresses itself in terms of "decline", "chaos", "crisis", "nihilism". God has been ruled out of His own world by modern secular thought. If God has been recognized at all, He has been the humanized God of Deism, or a God who is incapable of wrath, so-conceived by Ritschl. Such a God denatured of wrath could not be responsible for the great tragedies and cataclysms of history; and so, faith in the providence of God had to be given up when the reality of catastrophe made it evident that **this** could not be an expression of Divine love.

After posing the stern problem of our faith in providence in our tragic times, Professor Berkouwer discusses our **knowledge** of providence. He insists that we can never arrive at a **rational** basis for our belief in providence, but that it must always come by way of faith. But then the question arises: Is knowledge of providence limited to believers, or is it a general understanding about the order of nature and history? According to Roman Catholic theology a kind of general knowledge of God's providence is possible outside of faith, which knowledge needs only to be enriched and completed through reference to the contents of revelation. In opposition to this idea of natural theology, Professor Berkouwer, in accord with Barth and Brunner on this point, declares that outside of revelation God is unknowable. This is also in agreement with Bavinck, who maintains that the doctrine of providence is a "pure article" of faith, i.e., one of those articles of the Christian confession which cannot be known by means of natural reason, but only by faith in God as the revealer of divine truth. Providence, although it may have relevance outside the sphere of faith, in the decrees of common grace, is always soteriological in character and redemptive in impact.

Standing in the center of the discussion are the three aspects of providence, namely, sustenance, government and concurrence. In discussing providence as sustenance, Professor Berkouwer opposes the idea of a continuous creation, in which God moment by moment calls out of nothingness the material universe. Neither is sustenance to be regarded simply as conservation or preservation. Sustenance is directed toward an end, and can never be separated from divine government. Yet it is not related to divine government simply as that which preserves the stuff to be governed. Sustenance is also purposeful. "Sustenance means that God's hand is in all that is and grows and develops according to His purpose. Sustenance has to do with the entire process in which things move toward God's arranged end" (p.75).

The end toward which providence as government is directed is the Kingdom of God. In this redemptive plan there is a profound congruity between the royal rule of God over all things and the lordship and authority of Christ over all things (Matt. 28:18). Thus, according to the author, the kingship of Christ is directly involved

in the providence of God. In his treatment of the perennial problem of concurrence, Professor Berkouwer answers the question of whether total human dependence upon God leaves room for significant creaturely activity and full human responsibility. It is the question of the integrality of human freedom and divine sovereignty, of the relation between man's work and God's work. Although we may be unable to discern the relationship between divine activity and human activity, we do learn from the Scriptures that "the incomparable enterprise of God is in its Divine character so great and majestic that it can embrace human freedom and responsibility within itself without being thereby assaulted or even limited" (p. 163). Constant reference is made to the Scriptures as the only satisfying answer to the perplexing issues of life.

Accordingly the author warns against interpreting the events of history without the aid of revelation. History is not self-interpretative and should not be placed alongside of Scripture as an independent source of knowledge of God's purposes. There is a widespread tendency to pluck extraordinary events from the entire stream of history and interpret them according to subjective inclinations and human intuition. When men subjectively and arbitrarily interpret history in the light of the extraordinary, there is grave danger that they will seek only the special intervention of God instead of living in the confidence that God governs **all** things.

There is a profound relationship between providence and miracles, according to the author. "God and nature do not collide in miracles; the kingdom of guilt, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness clash." Miracles, like providence, have a redemptive significance.

Theodicy — the justification of God's providential rule — is discussed as a problem, not of reason, but of faith. Can the evils present in this world — human suffering, tragedy and misery, sin and death — be included in the whole of things sustained and governed by a righteous, good, wise and powerful God? Only **faith** has the answer to that question. Faith, never reason, brings us face to face with the greatest of all griefs, the sufferings of the cross. Reason cannot help us to see sin borne vicariously, evil vanquished, and death on the scaffold at Calvary. But faith can. Faith finds its only medium in revelation, which interprets and gives significance to the meaningless treadmill of history. And faith, rather than attempting to justify God, justifies sinners!

The Providence of God, part of Professor Berkouwer's nineteen-volume series of studies in dogmatics, deals with "one of the most currently pressing and urgent subjects." A great debt of thanks is owed to Mr. Lewis Smedes, whose labors in translating this volume from

Dutch into English are a worthwhile contribution to the progress of the Kingdom of God which is at hand.

—Joseph A. Hill

THINKING AND SMILING, by Ralph Stob. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 73, paper cover. \$1.00.

Ralph Stob, Professor in Calvin College, writes these five dialogues in the Socratic style. There is a two-fold value in this little booklet for the modern reader. First, it helps the average modern reader to appreciate Socrates' style of developing an investigation through question and answer, and thus may be an aid in appreciating some of the Greek classics. And again, it demonstrates how an ancient literary method may be adapted to the study of current problems. Though not entitled as such, these dialogues deal with such modern problems as honesty, amusements, statecraft, etc.

—S. Bruce Willson

THE CASE AGAINST MODERNISM IN EVANGELISM, by Chester E. Tulga. Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 2561 N. Clark St., Chicago 14, Ill. 1952, pp. 60, paper cover. 25 cents.

The appearance of another study of present-day evangelism is indicative of a growing concern about not only methods, but content of all attempts toward spiritual revival. Dr. Tulga adds another significant study to his series of "Case" books. The method followed is to show in brief compass the essential contrast between "Biblical" and "Liberal" evangelism. His indictment of "Liberalism's" attempt to win members is that too often it is a visitation campaign with little conviction of man's real need, and less assurance that there is any permanent solution.

The author closes with an appeal: "Earnest liberals, with a genuine concern for the souls of men, the sad state of the world, should study anew the great doctrines of the faith, examine anew the underlying principles of the great revivals of the past, and give themselves to the message, the methods and the spiritual dynamics that laid the foundations of the Christian faith in a pagan world. To strive for first century results while repudiating the first century message is a waste of time" (p. 60).

—S. Bruce Willson

YOUTH SPEAKS ON CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION (Symposium). Piet Hein Publishers, 1300 West Butler, S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952, pp. 39, paper cover. 50 cents.

This volume contains twenty-two brief essays written by students of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. In the preface the publishers confess that "they retain some of the immaturity, cockiness and over-simplification of youth;

but they also have some of the clarity, vision and courage of youth." However, the reading of any one of these essays, if it stimulates the reader to some reaction—whether it be violently for or against — will have satisfied the intention of the authors. For there is here evidenced a real awareness of a need for orthodox Christians in general to take the great doctrines of the Faith and demonstrate their vitality to cope with the demands of our times.

—S. Bruce Willson

THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE IRRELIGIOUS, by George Hedley. The Macmillan Co., 60 Fifth Ave., New York 11, N. Y. 1951, pp. 140. \$2.50.

In the light of the adamant facts of the statistical record that slightly less than one-half of the people of our culturally "enlightened" nation are not members of any church, the Christian cannot escape from the influence of the "irreligious". The assumptions of the non-believer have colored the life and thinking of the believer more than we are willing to admit. This book is addressed to the task of examining some of the pre-suppositions of those who have rejected religion in general, and Christianity in particular. "The hallmark of superstition is unwillingness to examine the facts in a given case." And although the irreligious have accused the Christian of being hopelessly "superstitious", Dr. Hedley, in this book, raises the question of whether or not the irreligious, in their very assumptions, have been guilty of the very thing of which they have accused the Christian believer.

Some of the assumptions and cliches with which the author deals are: "that we can understand our cultural heritage without knowledge of our religious traditions"; "that religion is necessarily at odds with fact and reason"; "that religion is an escape mechanism"; "that values can be achieved and maintained in isolation". The discussion of these and other common notions (unquestioned and unexamined) provides stimulating reading. The author writes from a thoroughly liberal theological viewpoint, and hence this reviewer cannot recommend the conclusions reached. There are occasions when the question intruded itself: "Can it be that there are some superstitions of the **religious** not yet examined?" For example, one of the unquestioned assumptions of the author's point of view is that "any competent scholar of today knows", or "all scholars are agreed" in the presupposition that the "higher critical" concept of the Scriptures is the **only** scholarly approach to Biblical interpretation.

Though much is left to be desired from a Reformed point of view, there is in this book a great deal of material which would be found of real help to anyone who has a real desire to meet the criticism of the secularist of our generation.

S. Bruce Willson

THE MINISTRY OF MERCY FOR TODAY, by Peter Y. DeJong. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 261. \$3.50.

A reapprehension of the real work of the diaconry is greatly needed throughout Christendom today. In many churches we still find the office of the deacons. But closer study of the actual situation will reveal vast differences with respect to the nature, position and functions delegated to this office. The importance and honor assigned to the office of the deacon by the New Testament has generally been lost sight of, and the merciful work to which the deacons were originally ordained has been forgotten and neglected. The sole functions of the office in many congregations are the administration of finances and the care of properties belonging to the church. These important tasks, however, are only incidental to the foremost engagement of the office, which is, according to the New Testament, the care of the poor and needy.

This neglect is due to the anabaptistic tendency to place diremption between the spiritual and physical aspects of life, and to make religion relevant only in the former. The Church has tended to address the message of the gospel almost exclusively to the eternal welfare of the soul, forgetting that the gospel has something to say concerning the problems of daily life as well. Believing as we do that the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ wrought the redemption of both soul and body, we are ambassadors for Christ both in the ministry of the Word and in the ministry of mercy.

In this volume Dr. De Jong has sought to re-establish this diaconal ideal as it is outlined in the Scriptures. The whole subject is dealt with realistically, taking account of the many factors in our modern world which affect the administration of the diaconal ministry. While we live in a complex society with its numerous social and governmental agencies for the alleviation of the woes of the needy, there is still a large place for the diaconate in the world today. While the State gives much aid — in quantities far exceeding anything the Church can hope to offer — it is of an altogether different kind from that which Christ extends through His Church. The motive which inspires the state agencies is humanitarianism; the inspiration of diaconal service is the constraining love of the Saviour.

The author establishes the Scriptural basis of the office, states the qualifications for it, outlines its duties and demonstrates how they may be carried out. He discusses at length the relation of the diaconate to state and social welfare agencies, diaconal cooperation with institutions of mercy and with other diaconates, and the place of women in the ministry of mercy. An integral part of the book is a detailed history of the diaconate, from

its earliest beginnings in the apostolic Church, through its deformation in the fourth century and subsequent reestablishment during the Protestant Reformation, to its present challenge in our modern world.

The scope of the book is somewhat limited to the Reformed Churches (Dutch). From cover to cover there is reference to the **Church Order**, which makes it narrow in its specific applicability. But its broad outline is universally applicable. And while the author urges a rather ambitious program for small congregations, vigorous efforts are certainly needed to fulfill the ideal at least in a limited way.

Every deacon in the Church should read this valuable book, with a view to a reappraisal of his office, and with the determination that, as he has opportunity, he shall practice good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

—Joseph A. Hill

GOD SPAKE BY MOSES, by Oswald T. Allis. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1952, pp. 159. \$2.00. Also obtainable from: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 33 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. 4, England, at 10s. In Canada: Evangelical Publishers, 366 Bay St., Toronto, Ontario, \$2.00.

This is a valuable book, by a genuine scholar, for a day when the authority of the Scriptures is often denied by those who profess leadership in Christian thought. The material first appeared in "The Life of Faith" as a series of lessons on the Pentateuch, in 1949. In this volume these lessons have been revised and enlarged. In his preface the author states his purpose: "It is the hope of the writer that this little book will help its readers to appreciate more fully the wonderful self-evidencing unity and authority of the Bible. For this the Pentateuch is especially adapted. . . Those who will hearken to Moses today will find that he is pointing them to One who said of the great Lawgiver of ancient Israel, 'He wrote of me'". For this reviewer, at least, the author's purpose was fulfilled.

The title might lead one to suspect that here is a series of attacks upon straw men. Not so. Dr. Allis writes with the conviction that if we hear what God the Lord has spoken, the remarks of unbelieving critics will be as straws attacking the cedars of Lebanon. References to the critics are incidental. Perhaps that enhances this devastating power.

In the appendix Dr. Allis does take up one theory to present and answer. That is that Genesis 1:2 may be translated: "And the earth **became** without form and void", admitting an expandable period of time to be inserted between verse one and verse two. This "interval theory" is popular

among some believers as an attempt to reconcile the Genesis record with the theories of modern science, which demand almost infinite ages for the development of the present earth. Dr. Allis discusses six serious objections to the interval theory, the last of which considers the exegetical arguments in its support. One conclusion is, "to take the **was** in the sense of **became** is at least a doubtful rendering." If you have had sympathy for the interval theory, withhold advocacy of it until you have read Dr. Allis' appraisal of it, and then you will likely abandon it.

There are five divisions to the volume, each a commentary on one of the five books of Moses. The treatment of the Pentateuch in 150 pages is necessarily selective, but a reader will be amazed at the quantity as well as the quality of discussion. Dr. Allis knows English as well as Hebrew, and you don't have to know Hebrew to profit from his book.

However, it is not a book to read as an introduction to the Old Testament. It requires familiarity with the Pentateuch to begin with, and frequent turning to the Bible for refreshing one's memory of the text. Chapters and verses are always cited, from the Pentateuch or from other Scriptures which bear upon the Pentateuch.

A rule the author follows is stated on page 70, in relation to Exodus 17:1-7 and 1 Cor. 10:4f, "We must be careful neither to read into a passage meanings which are not clearly there, nor to read out of it meanings that are clearly there. Equally important is it that we endeavor to interpret any given passage in the light of the teachings of the Bible as a whole."

The method used is to outline the contents of each book of Moses, and then discuss the divisions of the outline. Events are related to chronology and geography in a delightful manner. Sometimes only a resume of several chapters is given, but again an event is studied in detail. The unity is shown by the inter-relation of events, and the common purpose of it all.

Dr. Allis suggests that the "tree of life" may have been the one tree which fully satisfied man's every physical need. Adam and Eve may have been eating of the tree of life right along until their fall, after which they were kept from it. It is emphasized that man is a fallen being. He needs salvation. Environment, education, self-discipline cannot save him. Babel is seen as an attempt to establish a super-state and maintain the unity of man. "But only Christianity can prevent the super-state from becoming a tyranny such as the world has never known, with a concentration of power in the hands of the few which would reduce the many to utter slavery."

Obscure passages are related to more familiar ones, and the importance of the Pentateuch as a whole is made clear. The book is a con-

vincing treatise on the theme, "God Spake by Moses."

—T. R. Hutcheson

THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE.
Pocket Books, Inc., International Bldg., Rockefeller Center, New York, N. Y. 1952, pp. 301, paper cover. 35 cents.

Here is one of the truly great books of Christian history made available to the public in an inexpensive, convenient pocket edition. This is the well-known English translation by Edward B. Pusey, a famous scholar of the Church of England in the nineteenth century. There is an introduction by Harold C. Gardiner, a member of the Jesuit order of the Roman Catholic Church. This introduction, however, contains nothing that is distinctive of Romanism, though the present reviewer, if he were writing an introduction to Augustine's Confessions, would perhaps place the emphasis somewhat differently.

Augustine belongs to Protestantism even more truly than he belongs to Catholicism. And the story of his early life and his floundering in sin and error and finally finding salvation in Christ is a story that will never grow old. We do not need to endorse Augustine's attitude toward marriage, which was tinged with the asceticism which prevailed in the Church of his day, to appreciate what was truly wonderful in his experience. Here is the irresistible grace of God bringing an elect but deeply sinful soul to salvation. Every Christian who has had a battle with sin and unbelief and has finally come to faith in the Saviour will love Augustine's story.

The reviewer found this book offered for sale in a local drugstore, along with other literature of a very different character. May it have a large sale and be widely read! A recent publication of the United States Department of Commerce states that Americans of adult age spend, on the average, about one dollar per person per year for books. It is to be feared that many professing Christians are involved in this disgraceful situation. Let us resolve not to be religious and spiritual illiterates. Let us feed our minds and souls as well as our bodies. Why not get Augustine's Confessions and read it?

—J. G. Vos

THE TITHE: THE MINIMUM STANDARD FOR CHRISTIAN GIVING, by George A. E. Salstrand. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 56, paper cover. 85 cents.

This booklet on the subject of Christian Stewardship undertakes to prove that the Tithe is the minimum standard for Christian giving. There is much that is valuable and helpful in the booklet. However, in the judgment of this reviewer, the author greatly weakens his argument

by trying to prove too much — a mistake made by a good many writers on this same subject. For instance, on pages 19 and 20, the author suggests, somewhat guardedly and hesitantly it is true, that the reason why God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's was that Cain had failed to practice tithing. In support of this very doubtful idea, the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Old Testament is cited, with a reference to a comment of Tertullian, who died about A. D. 222. Even if we regard the Greek version as correct, over against the Hebrew original (which is extremely doubtful), still it says nothing about tithing; nor did Tertullian say that Cain's sin was failure to tithe; he only said that Cain "did not rightly divide" his offering.

The real crux of the question of the Tithe as a continuing binding obligation is whether the Tithe in the Old Testament was a part of the ceremonial law or a part of the moral law. If ceremonial, its binding obligation as a positive law passed away with the rest of the ceremonial system when the veil of the temple was rent in twain at the time of the crucifixion. If moral, it stands as a binding positive enactment of permanent obligation, just like the Ten Commandments. This reviewer has seen a great deal of Tithing literature but has never seen a discussion of the subject that really faced this crucial question.

This reviewer has practiced Tithing for many years, and considers it the best and most practical method of Christian stewardship. With many of the considerations put forth in this booklet he is in hearty agreement. In spite of the tendency cited above, to try to prove too much, this book is worthy of careful reading and study.

—J. G. Vos

THE BLUEPRINT OF SALVATION, OR THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS, by Howard A. Hanke. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 40, paper cover. 50 cents.

This booklet discusses the typology of the tabernacle. It is distinctly a "popular" rather than scholarly production, as will be seen by a glance at the Bibliography at the end of the booklet. Here are listed writings of Grace Saxe, A.B. Simpson and other "popular" writers, while the classic work of Patrick Fairbairn on the **Typology of Scripture** is omitted.

The booklet accepts and expounds the traditional view that the tabernacle portrayed Christ and His work of redemption. There is in it much that is true and precious, though the author sometimes suggests doubtful and fanciful interpretations. For example, on pages 22-3 we read: "The acacia wood out of which the ark was made is again suggestive of Christ's humanity, and the gold with which it was overlaid symbolized his deity." The reviewer considers this extremely

doubtful. On page 26 we are dogmatically told concerning the veil of the tabernacle: "The white in the curtain symbolized Christ's purity; the blue His heavenly character; the purple His royal nature and the scarlet His sacrifice for sin." How does the author know that these colors represented these truths? He gives no reasons or argument. Possibly he is correct, but the reader should be given reasons, not mere opinions.

It would have helped this book if the author had given some brief but clear definitions of type, symbol and allegory. The lack of these tends toward some confusion in places. However, the manifest aim of the author is to honor and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, for which we rejoice.

—J. G. Vos

TESTS OF ETERNAL LIFE, by Herbert W. Butt. Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Pa. 1952, pp. 19, pocket size, paper cover. 15 cents.

This booklet presents a series of studies from the First Epistle of John, on the subject of the Christian's assurance of personal salvation. The material was originally published in *HIS*, a magazine of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, in 1950-51, and is now reprinted in convenient booklet form.

American Fundamentalist Christianity has greatly over-simplified the subject of assurance, with sometimes very disastrous results. It is often represented as simply a matter of "believing" — if you really believe John 3:16 and really "take God at His Word", then you can be sure you have eternal life.

Anyone who has really studied the doctrine of assurance knows, however, that it is not so simple as that. To be saved is one thing, to be sure in one's own mind that he is saved, is quite another matter. A person may really believe John 3:16 and "take God at His Word", and yet not be fully assured, in his own mind, of his own eternal salvation. The excellent and carefully balanced statement of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XVIII, brings out the truth that assurance does not rest upon a single ground (the promises of God), but upon a three-fold ground: (1) "the divine truth of the promises of salvation"; (2) "the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made"; and (3) "the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God".

Mr. Butt's discussion of assurance is in line with the doctrine of the Westminster Confession, rather than with the crude over-simplification of current Fundamentalism. He shows from John's First Epistle that personal assurance of possessing eternal life is not a mere matter of "believing", but of applying certain tests which are specified in the Word. These tests are: (1) The

Test of Belief. (2) The Test of Freedom from (the dominion of) sin. (3) The Test of Obedience. (4) The Test of Righteousness. (5) The Life Tested by Love. (6) The Test of Overcoming the World. (7) The Test of Overcoming Satan. (8) The Test of Consciousness of Sin.

Over against the cheap and fallacious "believism" of the present day, the author presents truly Biblical criteria by which the believer can know that he is indeed saved unto eternal life. He emphasizes the Biblical teaching that the possession of salvation is to be tested by the fruits of salvation. The booklet is clear, simple, and easy to read. It should, by the blessing of God, be productive of much good.

—J. G. Vos

CALVIN AS A THEOLOGIAN AND CALVINISM TODAY, by Benjamin B. Warfield. Sovereign Grace Union, 34-40 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. 4, England. 1952, pp. 31, paper cover. 1 shilling. Also obtainable from Evangelical Book Shop, 15 College Square East, Belfast, N. Ireland, at 1s.2d., postpaid.

This booklet is a reprint of three of Dr. Warfield's memorable addresses. In an introduction the Rev. W. J. Grier gives a short account of Dr. Warfield's life and an appraisal of his importance as a theologian.

The three addresses are entitled respectively, (1) John Calvin the Theologian, (2) The Theology of Calvin, and (3) The Present Day Attitude Toward Calvinism — Its Causes and Significance.

Dr. Warfield was pre-eminently a clear thinker, and in this booklet, as in all his writings, both his thought and his style are crystal clear. Unlike some writers he never took refuge in vagueness, nor did he try to expound and defend the Faith in what Dr. J. Gresham Machen once called "an atmosphere of low visibility". Warfield was always clear, pointed and forceful. And he was always consistently loyal to the Holy Scriptures as the standard of faith and life.

After discussing some of Calvin's contributions to theological thought, Dr. Warfield says that Calvin "marks an epoch in the history of the doctrine of the Trinity. He also marks an epoch in the mode of presenting the work of Christ. . . It is probable however that Calvin's greatest contribution to theological science lies in the rich development which he gives — and which he was the first to give — to the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit."

Dr. Warfield warns against the all too common tendency to regard the famous "five points of Calvinism" as a condensed summary of the Calvinistic system of theology, when as a matter of fact they are only one aspect of Calvinism — its contradiction of Arminianism. Calvinism is much more than a negation or correction of the

errors of Arminianism. It is a self-consistent system which purports to set forth the whole range of divine truth. The formative principle of this system Warfield finds in the **majesty of God**: "It is the vision of God and His Majesty, in a word, which lies at the foundation of the entirety of Calvinistic thinking." Calvinism is not just one particular variety of the Christian religion; it is its most perfect and complete expression. "Calvinism comes forward simply as pure theism, religion, evangelicalism, as over against less pure theism, religion, evangelicalism. It does not take its position then by the side of the other types of these things, it takes its place over them."

In discussing the causes and significance of the present-day attitude toward Calvinism, Warfield first lays down and defends the propositions that (1) Calvinism is Theism come to its rights; (2) Calvinism is religion at the height of its conception; and (3) Calvinism is evangelicalism in its only pure and stable expression. He then asks the question: "Is it strange that in this world, in this particular age of this world, it should prove difficult to preserve not only active, but vivid and dominant, the perception of the everywhere determining hand of God, the sense of absolute dependence on Him, the conviction of utter inability to do even the least thing to rescue ourselves from sin — at the height of these conceptions?" Warfield answers by saying that the depression of Calvinism, in so far as it exists, only shows that our materialistic age has forgotten its dependence on God; men who are accustomed to lay forceful hands on whatever they wish may not see why they may not take heaven also by storm. He adds that the consistent supernaturalism of Calvinism is offensive to an age which is distinctly hostile to supernaturalism. We live in an anti-supernaturalistic atmosphere; it is no wonder that the pure supernaturalism of Calvinism is not popular today.

"Calvinism is just Christianity. The supernaturalism for which Calvinism stands is the very breath of the nostrils of Christianity; without it Christianity cannot exist." Warfield adds that we cannot be partly naturalistic and partly supernaturalistic in our thinking; if we admit naturalism at one point we lose supernatural Christianity. He closes by saying that "Calvinism thus emerges to our sight as nothing more or less than the hope of the world."

This booklet should be widely read, not only by ministers of the Gospel and theological students, but by the elders, Sabbath School teachers and intelligent laymen of the churches. It is very easy to order books from Britain or Ireland. Personal checks on American banks are accepted without difficulty. Simply figure 14 cents for each shilling and add a little extra for postage on the parcel. The postage rate on ordinary letters is 5 cents; by air mail, 15 cents. Why not order ten or a dozen copies of this booklet, and not only

read it, but give it to ministers and others of your acquaintance?

—J. G. Vos

THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES (Symposium). India Bible Christian Council, 27, Stephen Mansion, Darjeeling, West Bengal, India. 1952. pp. 28, paper cover. 4 annas; 5 for 1 rupee.

This booklet is a reprint of articles originally published in "Biblical Witness", organ of the India Bible Christian Council. It presents a strong appeal for orthodox Christians and organizations to make a clean separation from such corrupt and apostate organizations as the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council.

A glance at the titles of the articles will give a good idea of the contents of the booklet: "The Sound of the Trumpet", by W. A. Mahlow; "Does God Bless Liaisons between Fundamentalists and Modernists? A fitting answer from Old Testament days", by A. I. Garrison; "Discerning Love", by W. A. Mahlow; "The Real Enemy", by R. B. Strom; "Resisting Evil", by W. A. Mahlow; "Pharisees and Sadducees: Our Lord's Attitude and Ours", by A. I. Garrison; "Guarding the Deposit", by W. A. Mahlow.

Though published primarily for Christian leaders in India, this booklet proclaims a message that is needed all over the world. May it be blessed of the Lord to lead many to a clean, uncompromising stand for the truth and separation from unbelief.

—J. G. Vos

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST (Symposium). Sovereign Grace Union, 34 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. 4, England. 1951, pp. 10, paper cover. 3d each; 25 copies for 4s.6d.

This booklet presents two short articles on the human nature of our Lord. The first is entitled "The Humanity of Christ in its Medical Aspect", by Dr. M. G. Tallach; the second, "The Humanity of Christ in Theological Debate", by Mr. S. Leigh-Hunt, late Editor of the Sovereign Grace Union's magazine, "Peace and Truth". A foreword consists of two paragraphs quoted from John Owen's book "The Glory of Christ".

The article by Dr. Tallach will serve to remind Christian people of the reality of our Lord's human nature — His blood, His flesh and His bones, His truly human soul. Dr. Tallach quite correctly rejects the Trichotomist view of body, soul and spirit, and holds that in the words of our Lord "soul and spirit are interchangeable terms". The reality of the truly human physical, psychical and emotional life of our Lord is well brought out.

In the article on "The Humanity of Christ in Theological Debate", Mr. Leigh-Hunt stresses the

importance of maintaining the true doctrine of the Saviour's humanity over against the various heresies on this subject. While at the present day there is much more denial of the deity of Christ than of His humanity, still we need to be reminded of the reality of His humanity. The article concludes by the following quotation from the writings of Benjamin B. Warfield:

"We need not fear that we may emphasize too strongly the true, complete humanity of Christ. All that man is as man, that Christ is to eternity. The Reformed Faith has never hesitated to face the fact and to rejoice in it with all its implications. With regard to knowledge, e.g., it has not shrunk from recognizing that Christ as man had a finite knowledge and must continue to have a finite knowledge forever. Human nature is ever finite, so that it is certain that the knowledge of Christ's human nature is not and never can be the infinite wisdom of God itself. It is surely nothing but gain to realise in all its fulness that our Lord was man even as we are men, "in all things. . . made like unto his brethren." "

—J. G. Vos

ARTICLES OF FAITH AND RULES of the Strict Baptist Church (of England). No date, pp. 31, paper cover.

This booklet came to the editor of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" from a subscriber in England with a request that it be reviewed. Accordingly, we are glad to comment on it here. It is very evidently the standard of a body of faithful and conscientious Christians of Calvinistic persuasion on the great truths of redemption and salvation. Naturally we cannot accept those portions which set forth Baptist principles on the mode and subjects of Baptism, and the congregational form of church government, as we are convinced that the Presbyterian position on these matters is Scriptural.

In the doctrinal part of the booklet, we are for the most part in hearty agreement, and rejoice in such a clear testimony being raised for the truth of God. There are however one or two places where we cannot fully agree with the statements made, such as the following:

"We believe that the Believer's Rule of conduct is the gospel, and not the law, commonly called the Moral Law, issued on Mount Sinai, which hath no glory in it by reason of the glory that excelleth; that is to say, the gospel (Gal. 6:15,16; 2 Cor. 3:10; Rom. 7:2-4); the gospel containing the sum and substance and glory of all the laws which God ever promulgated from His throne, and the Jews, because of the hardness of their hearts, being permitted some things which the gospel forbids. (Deut. 24:1; Matt. 19:8,9)." In the judgment of this reviewer, the foregoing statement fails to do justice to the whole teaching of Scripture on the subject of the Moral Law,

and fails to recognize fully the organic connection existing between the Gospel and the Law, or between the New Testament and the Old.

On page 11 the booklet states "We reject the doctrine of progressive sanctification. . .", but this is then explained in such a way that by "progressive sanctification" is meant such progress in holiness as would render a Christian less dependent than formerly upon the gracious working of the Holy Spirit. If "progressive sanctification" be understood in this sense, it is indeed to be rejected as a serious error. However, in this reviewer's judgment, it is possible to believe in progressive sanctification without at all holding that the Christian is ever free from absolute dependence upon the gracious operations of the Spirit. We believe that the believer is always completely dependent on the gracious working of the Spirit, and that by that gracious working, he is "enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness."

At certain points the booklet impresses this reviewer as perilously near to hyper-Calvinism; that is, in its earnest effort to hold consistently that the redemptive work of Christ and the saving operations of the Spirit are confined to the elect, it denies that the Gospel invitation or offer is addressed to all mankind. According to accepted Reformed theology, Christ has redeemed only the elect, and the Holy Spirit regenerates, and enables savingly to believe, only the elect; yet the Gospel offer is addressed to all mankind, and this universal offer of salvation in Christ is a sincere offer, made in good faith on God's part. This admittedly involves a paradox, or apparent contradiction, which human reason cannot solve. Arminianism tries to solve this paradox by denying that redemption is particular; Arminians teach that Christ died for all mankind and for each and every individual. But Hyper-Calvinism approaches the paradox from the other side and denies that the Gospel offer of salvation is addressed to all men. We believe that both attempts to solve the paradox are wrong; that the paradox should be allowed to stand unsolved, as one of the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God. In other words, we should hold both (a) particular redemption and (b) the sincere universal offer of the Gospel, without being able to harmonize fully these two apparently contradictory truths.

We note with approval that the booklet sets forth the principle of close communion in its treatment of the Lord's Supper. It also specifies that members undertaking to preach the Gospel without proper church sanction shall be dealt with as walking disorderly. The reviewer believes that this is sound. Many of these "free lance" preachers and evangelists of the present day show a neglect or contempt of the Visible Church which is certainly not Biblical.

Though we cannot conscientiously agree with

all the principles set forth in this booklet, we rejoice in the testimony of these English Baptist brethren for divine Truth in this day when unbelief, apostasy, and loose and superficial views abound on every hand. It is good to see Christian people careful about what they believe and profess, and not afraid to draw a strict line and maintain it before the world.

—J. G. Vos

THE PROGRESS OF DOGMA, by James Orr. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 365. \$3.50.

This book contains Dr. Orr's lectures delivered at the Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny (now Pittsburgh), Pa., in 1897. The volume is a photographic reprint of the original edition published in Britain in 1901.

Dr. Orr was a renowned defender of the orthodox Christian faith in a day when it was being increasingly questioned and discounted. He was not ashamed of the old truths of the Gospel of Christ, which he expounded and defended with great ability. The present volume deals with the history of dogma in the Christian Church from the earliest times to the close of the nineteenth century. The contents are divided into ten lectures, the first of which furnishes an introduction to the subject of the history of dogma, discussing what dogma is, wrong attitudes to dogma, the true place of dogma in the Christian religion, and the historical and logical progress of dogma through the Christian centuries.

Dr. Orr takes the standpoint that there is a definite doctrinal content in Christianity, which it is the duty of the church to ascertain and witness for. This doctrinal content has been progressively defined and clarified by the Church's study of the Scriptures and by controversies in which errors were rejected and the truth defined.

In Lectures II-X Dr. Orr takes up the actual progress of Christian dogma from the second century to his own day. Lecture X deals with "Modern Restatement of the Problems of Theology — The Doctrine of the Last Things (Nineteenth Century)".

The reviewer found this book intensely interesting reading, and full of valuable information and skilful analysis. The book would make an excellent antidote for the crude "Biblicism" of the present day with its slogan of "No book but the Bible—no creed but Christ". For Dr. Orr makes it clear that the progress of dogma in the Christian Church through the centuries is precisely a progress in the Church's understanding of the true meaning of the Bible. The demand that the Church abandon the creeds and go "back to the Bible" is therefore a false demand, which arises from a misunderstanding both of the Bible and of the historical development of

the creeds. We should hold to the creeds precisely because of our loyalty to the Bible.

At certain points the reviewer placed a question-mark in the margin. In a footnote on p. 232 Dr. Orr rejects the idea of a limited atonement. In a footnote on p. 297 he says: "The limitation of atonement is not taught by Calvin". On pp. 298-9 he quotes with approval a statement of Dr. Philip Schaff to the effect that the difference between the Calvinistic and Arminian doctrines of the atonement "is of little practical moment." With respect to the limited atonement, the reviewer must express dissent from Dr. Orr's statements. Calvin in his comments on 1 John 2:2 says "Christ died sufficiently for all, but efficiently only for the elect". (Compare A. A. Hodge, *The Atonement*, pp. 388-390).

On p. 303 Dr. Orr states: "It is impossible . . . to justify by Scriptural proof the detailed elaboration of the idea of a covenant of works in Eden, with its parties, conditions, promises, threatenings, sacraments, etc." Again the reviewer must dissent, for he believes that the doctrine of the Covenant of Works as set forth in the great Reformed confessions is thoroughly Biblical; it is not an artificial framework imposed on the Scriptures, but is deeply imbedded in the Scriptures themselves, and is discerned there by a true insight into them. The truth is that God deals with man only on the basis of a covenant. This was true even before man fell into sin, and it is true today. Even today, those who are not under the Covenant of Grace are still under the penalty and curse of the broken Covenant of Works. And Romans 5 certainly teaches the very real relevance of the Covenant of Works for the Covenant of Grace, by its elaborate parallel between Adam and Christ. Christ redeems His people from the Covenant of Works by fulfilling its terms and conditions on their behalf. Romans 5 is part of the same organism of divine revelation as Genesis 2-3, and the later revelation gives a key to the true meaning of the earlier.

On p. 329 Dr. Orr's statements about the theory of organic evolution seem to be entirely too favorable. He lived in a day when evolution was riding the crest of the wave of men's thinking, and it seemed to many only a matter of time until all difficulties and objections would be removed and evolution would be universally accepted. Dr. Orr says: "Evolution is a theory which, within certain limits, is supported by an accumulation of evidences that, to the modern scientific mind, make its acceptance inevitable. But evolution has its limits; it does not explain everything." Note particularly the words "to the modern scientific mind". It has become clearer today than it was, perhaps, in Dr. Orr's day half a century and more ago, that "the modern scientific mind" is based on assumptions which are contrary to the mind of Christ. "The

modern mind" rules out creation out of nothing as absurd and inherently impossible. In other words, "the modern mind" is committed to a naturalistic philosophy which is utterly contrary to real Christianity. Christian thinkers must not bow down to "the modern scientific mind", but must view all truth and all facts in the light of the special revelation of God in Scripture.

On pp. 352-4 Dr. Orr looks toward the future. Among other things he says: "A doctrine of Scripture adapted to the needs of the hour in harmonising the demands at once of science and of faith, is perhaps the most clamant want at present in theology." We believe Dr. Orr was wrong in this opinion, and that it represents a wrong and perilous tendency. The doctrine of Scripture, like all other Christian doctrines, is to be developed from the Scripture itself, by progressive understanding of what Scripture teaches on the subject of Scripture. It is not to be developed with a view to adjustment to "the demands of science". Scripture is what it is, and "science" has no right to make "demands" that the Christian Church revise or adjust its doctrine of Scripture to fit the changing phases of scientific theories.

Again, on p. 353, Dr. Orr, looking toward the twentieth century, says that "the earnest temper of the age, and its desire to reach the truth in all departments of inquiry; the searching light cast on documents and institutions, . . . can only result in that which is of abiding value receiving suitable acknowledgment." Dr. Orr was far too optimistic. He failed to see that much of this "desire to reach the truth" was a desire to reach the truth on the basis of humanistic assumptions which are in reality utterly destructive of genuine Christianity. The twentieth century has shown that the tendency of science and philosophy and of a large section of Biblical criticism and research, has been away from the truth as it is in Jesus. The real divergence of philosophies has become much clearer today than it was in Dr. Orr's day. In his day the truly anti-Christian character of modern thought was not yet fully manifested, as it is today.

On the same page (353) Dr. Orr says: "I look to the twentieth century to be an era of Christian Ethic even more than of Christian Theology." He was profoundly mistaken in this optimistic forecast. For the twentieth century turned out to be the century of World Wars I and II, the century of Fascism, Nazism and Communism, the century of totalitarian ideologies and dictatorships enslaving men's bodies and minds — the century when the lights would go out over a large part of the world, and Christianity would become a persecuted movement again; and the century when even in the free world a great liberal pseudo-Christian "ecumenical" movement would put real Biblical Christianity on the defensive as a struggling minority move-

ment. Dr. Orr could not foresee these future developments, which in the providence of God have already come to pass. It was his weakness that he was too much influenced by the typical optim-

ism of the end of the nineteenth century. Yet his book, on the whole, is a valuable and very useful one.

—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.

FAITH AND SANCTIFICATION, by G. C. Berkouwer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 193. \$3.00.

THE PAULINE ESCHATOLOGY, by Geerhardus Vos. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 365. \$5.00.

THE MOMENTOUS EVENT: A DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE TEACHING ON THE SECOND ADVENT AND QUESTIONS RELATED THERETO, by W. J. Grier. The Evangelical Book Shop, 15 College Square East, Belfast, N. Ireland. 1952, pp. 98. 4s.6d.

INTRODUCTORY HEBREW GRAMMER, by R. Laird Harris. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 90. \$2.50.

THE SILENCE OF GOD, by Robert Anderson. Kregel Publications, 525 Eastern Avenue, S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 232. \$2.00.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, by John Murray. The Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Pa. 1952, pp. 93. \$1.75.

SERMONS AND OUTLINES FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS (Symposium). Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 100. \$1.75.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS, by F. B. Meyer. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 261. \$2.50.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CRUCIFIED: A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF SALVATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Erich Sauer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 207. \$3.00.

THE DAWN OF WORLD REDEMPTION: A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF SALVATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, by Erich Sauer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 206. \$3.00.

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF MEN AND THINGS, by Gordon H. Clark. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 325. \$4.00.

THE PURITAN DOCTRINE OF CONVERSION, by E. F. Kevan. The Evangelical Library, 78A, Chiltern St., London, W. 1, England. 1952, pp. 23, paper cover. (Price not stated).

Mine be the pomp and glory,
And Thine be Calvary!
Give me the ease of living—
The scourge, the thorns, for Thee!

Ah, how we prate of treading
The path the Master trod—
Laurel and gold our portion:
Thorns were the crown of God.

Say, can we call Him "Saviour",
We, with our place and pride?
Hast Thou dominion o'er us,
God of the spear-pierced side?

Prate not! Nor boast thou love Him
And if thou bear no wound-prints,
For Him thou hast not died,
Ere thou art crucified!

(Author unknown)

Christ's Commission

By J. G. Vos

"For the Son of Man Is Come to Seek and to Save That Which Was Lost." Luke 19:10

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

"The Son of Man"

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

"Is Come"

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

"To Seek That Which Was Lost"

To be "lost" implies not merely misery and woe, but that man is missing to God. He is lost to God. When man fell into sin, God lost man. In the state of sin, man could no longer have communion with God; he could no longer fulfil the purpose for which God created man. Man, God's creature, has become lost to God so that God no

longer benefits by His possession of man as He did before sin came in. Man is missing to God. Therefore man is completely deranged and broken. All the factors of man's spiritual life and health are broken and out of joint.

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

"Too Save That Which Was Lost"

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

Has Christ Sought and Saved You?

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

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