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## BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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VOLUME 8

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NUMBER 1

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**"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,  
because his compassions fail not. They are new every  
morning: great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my por-  
tion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him."**

**Lamentations 3:22-24**

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## *The Cup*

(Matthew 26:39)

By M .W. Dougherty

"Lord, let this cup from my lips pass",  
 I cry from out the depths of grief and pain,  
 "Let it be gone and only let me know  
 The peace and quiet of relief again."

I would not drink it, could I have  
 My way. Its taste is bitter, 'tis the dregs of woe.  
 I am so weak I shrink ev'n from its sight,  
 And long for only life serene to know.

Then from the shadows of the olive trees  
 I hear a voice; it speaks direct to me.  
 "Behold, I too", the Master says,  
 "Have drunk its dregs, yea more than thee.

"Come thou, my child, and take the cup  
 I hold up to thy lips, and see  
 It is not full, no, not a dreg.  
 For, for thy sake they were consumed by me."

He takes my hand, and I the cup;  
 And while I drink, I see His brow  
 Transformed, all wet with agony,  
 As drops of blood and sweat do freely flow.

As He sustained me, thus I drank.  
 I prayed, "Thy will be done,  
 And grant that by my drinking of Thy cup  
 There may be drawn to Thee some other one."

O man of woe! who in thy wilful way  
 Contendest thou canst drink it all alone,  
 'Tis folly that thou thinkest that God will  
 Spare thee that which He would not  
 spare His own.

Submit to Him! His will desire to do,  
 And then amid the moan and tears and sigh  
 You'll find Him standing near you, and His hand  
 Will succor you, His arm will hold you nigh.

Take thou His hand, the cup He holds  
 For you, no longer sour, but sweet,  
 Becomes a draught of strength for thee  
 When thy will and thy Father's in it meet.

## *I Feel that I am One*

By Horatius Bonar

I see the crowd in Pilate's hall,  
 I mark their wrathful mien;  
 Their shouts of "Crucify!" appall,  
 With blasphemy between.

And of that shouting multitude  
 I feel that I am one;  
 And in the din of voices rude  
 I recognize my own.

I see the scourges tear His back,  
 I see the piercing crown;  
 And of that crowd who smite and mock,  
 I feel that I am one.

Around yon cross a throng I see,  
 Mocking the Sufferer's groan;  
 Yet still my voice it seems to me  
 As if I mocked alone.

'Twas I that shed the sacred blood;  
 I nailed Him to the tree;  
 I crucified the Christ of God;  
 I joined the mockery!

Yet not the less that blood avails  
 To cleanse away my sin;  
 And not the less that cross prevails  
 To give me peace within.

## *Are all the Children In?*

(Author unknown)

I think oftentimes as the night draws nigh,  
 Of an old house on the hill,  
 Of a yard all wide, and blossom-starred,  
 Where the children played at will.  
 And when the night at last came down,  
 Hushing the merry din,  
 Mother would look around and ask,  
 "Are all the children in?"

"Tis many and many a year since then,  
 And the old house on the hill,  
 No longer echoes to childish feet,  
 And the yard is still, so still.

But I see it all as the shadows creep,  
 And though many years have been  
 Since then, I can hear our mother ask,  
 "Are all the children in?"

I wonder if, when the shadows fall,  
 On the last short earthly day,  
 When we say good-bye to the world outside  
 All tired with our childish play,  
 When we meet the Lover of boys and girls  
 Who died to save them from sin,  
 Will we hear Him ask as our mother did,  
 "Are all the children in?"

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## *The Trend of Modern Evangelism*

The call to aggressive evangelism is recognised on every hand as the peculiar call of the present hour, and most, if not all, our denominations give it prominence in their planning. Much of it is directed at regaining ground lost in the last half-century when the Churches concentrated on the social aspects of the Gospel to the almost complete neglect of its redemptive message. And it would seem as if many Churches have taken up this call to aggressive evangelism without accepting the first principles of true evangelism, man's utter ruin by sin and God's glorious redemption through the Cross of His Son. In such cases we need not be surprised that it takes the form of a recall to the Church rather than to Christ.

There is, however, among the Churches that yield homage to the Word of God and accept the fundamentals of the faith, a trend in evangelism that is disturbing inasmuch as it is calculated to produce results that lack reality and stability. It is not easy to join issue on this matter with brethren in Christ whose diligence and zeal put many of us to shame, but we have become convinced that there is a recognisable trend in modern evangelism that has in it the seeds of that instability and impermanence in the spiritual life which we all deplore. It is to these features that we are directing attention here.

There is, first of all, a tendency to be **man-centred rather than God-centred** in our evangelism. Man's need of God is the keynote of the present-day evangelistic message and the invitation to "take God into the heart" would seem to sum up the whole duty of man. This, we think, is not the New Testament emphasis. Here the primacy in all that concerns man's salvation rests with God: God's purpose, God's mercy, God's calling, based on the sovereign pleasure of His will, is the keynote of the message. And man is commanded to approach a Throne of Grace where a sovereign God dispenses mercy and grace as and how He will. This approach, so humbling to man's pride, was never acceptable to the natural heart of man, and we read that when our Lord declared to the Jews, and illustrated from their history, the sovereignty of God, "from that hour many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Yet that is undoubtedly man's true position both as a creature and as a sinner in his relation to the Most High. To make man the centre of the message, man's need, man's prayer, man's faith, man's duty, is surely to miss the vision of the Throne that is 'high and

lifted up' and to belittle the glory and grace of redemption.

There is a further characteristic of present-day evangelism that is ominous: it is its tendency to ignore or bypass sin. Sin is undoubtedly an unpleasant thing to talk about, and the effort to press home on heart and conscience the utter criminality and guilt of sin is often met with irritation and rebellion. A virtual silence about the sinfulness of sin is, therefore, understandable, even in the case of those who have themselves no illusions about the sinfulness of human nature. It is true that enquirers are encouraged to confess certain sins as the condition of forgiveness, but sin itself as the thing which God hates, as the source of the soul's guilt and depravity, is seldom brought to view. And every Christian knows from personal experience that the pruning of certain evils in the life is no fit substitute for the sin-consciousness that brings conviction and contrition. It may indeed be claimed that Christ as Saviour becomes precious only in the measure in which sin has become sinful, that the joy of salvation goes only as deep as the plough-share of conviction has gone. Be that as it may, we are convinced that slight acquaintance with sin can produce only a very superficial and unstable Christian, and that this is behind much of the shallowness and fickleness of our Christian life to-day.

It falls to be remarked, also, that modern evangelism is **more faith-centred than Christ-centred**. While it has sedulously eschewed legalism and turned its back on salvation by human merit, it has tended to bring in faith as a meritorious and decisive act of the believing sinner in response to which God imparts to him the blessings of salvation. There is undoubtedly here a confusion between belief or mental assent on the ordinary levels of life and the faith that is the exercise of a quickened soul, as there is also a failure to recognise that the faith which is the action of the soul by virtue of its regeneration is God-imparted. When faith is presented to the sinner as an act of his own volition that brings to him quickening and salvation, there is the tendency to direct his attention to the act of faith rather than to the Object of faith. Christian faith apart from its Object, Jesus Christ, is meaningless. We believe that this misapprehension of the nature of saving faith has led to more spurious "conversions" than any other single factor in the technique of evangelism so prevalent to-day.

There is a further characteristic of modern

evangelism that bodes no good to the spiritual life: it is the tendency to sit lightly by the law of God. The fact that Christ, in His obedience unto death, has met all the demands of the law and fulfilled all its terms is taken to mean that the believer has nothing further to do with the Law of God. A moment's reflection should let us see that the Law that is a transcript of God's holy character cannot be thus lightly set aside. It must not be forgotten that though Christ fulfilled the Law as a covenant obligation and bore its penalty on behalf of His people, He kept the Law as a rule of life for Himself and for Himself only. It is indeed not too much to say that Christ fulfilled the Law for our sakes in order that we might fulfil it for His sake. It is, therefore, the rule of life for every Christian, and if we measured our character and conduct against the touchstone of God's holy Law there might be less talk of "full surrender" and "complete sanctification." It is this lack of sensitiveness to the requirements of God's law that has fostered spiritual pride and the sense of attainment in those who are still babes in Christ.

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We bring forward these cautions not because we desire to damp the ardour of our evangelism, much less to perplex and occasion stumbling to weak brethren in Christ, but because we would like to save ourselves and others the heart-burning that comes from "results" that prove abortive and professions of faith that do not withstand the first blast of temptation. We have heard it said that the Parable of the Sower entitles us to expect that only one profession of faith in four will come to fruition. We cannot recognize this conclusion as valid, nor do we regard the parable as providing any excuse for laying down flimsy and insecure foundations in dealing with the souls of men. Rather should we strive to obey the injunction of the Prince of Evangelists: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Note: For the foregoing timely and discerning article, we are indebted to **The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland**, Edinburgh. The article is reprinted here from the August, 1952, issue of that publication. Ed.

## *Sketches of the Covenanters*

By J. C. McFeeeters

### Chapter V

#### **Foundation Stones — A.D. 1550**

During the first half of the sixteenth century the Church struggled strenuously for a more complete organization. The Word of God was quietly circulated and believers in Jesus Christ were growing numerous. But hitherto they had to worship God at their own fireside or burn at the stake. In the humble cottage, while the raging storm kept spies away, the father read from the Book of God to his children as they huddled around the turf fire, and the mother sang Psalms to the little ones as she knit their stockings or baked the oaten bread. Thus pious parents instilled into their sons and daughters the truth of Christ which stirred their blood, and prepared a generation to emerge from the bondage of Papacy. .

#### **The First Covenant — 1557**

During these times the Church was found chiefly in groups of Christians who met secretly for prayer. A company of devout believers came together to spend the evening hours, or the Sabbath day, in the worship of God. The meeting was called a Society. In these places prayer was offered in faith, the Psalms were sung with grave melody, and the Bible was read with reverence. These hungry souls fed upon the Word. Sometimes the meetings were held in caves for fear of the enemy. Once a minister, being pursued, entered one of these caves for safety. As he sat down in its shelter, he was surprised at hearing

soft melody farther back in that dark retreat. Following the sound of the voices he found a company of devout worshippers.

In those troublous times the Holy Spirit, in His own mysterious way, electrified the hearts of these hidden ones with the thought of Covenanting with each other and with God, to stand for life, liberty, and religion. A day was set and a place appointed for entering into the holy bond. Notwithstanding the danger incurred, a large concourse of people assembled and solemnly entered into the Covenant. This occurred in the city of Edinburgh, December 3, 1557. This Covenant embodied their purpose, thus, "We by His grace, shall, with all diligence, continually apply our whole power, substance, and our very lives, to maintain, set forward, and establish the most blessed Word of God and His Church." This is known as The First Covenant of Scotland. Two years later, another bond of agreement was subscribed, on behalf of the Church, by her most prominent leaders, which was called The Second Covenant.

#### **The First General Assembly — 1560**

The First Covenant was a formidable bulwark of defence against Papacy, The young Protestant Church found in it a strong tower. Many of the nobles joined the Covenanted ranks. Two years later this Covenant was renewed and the cause gained great strength. Among other leaders, Lord James Stuart, the queen's brother,

subscribed. He was a daring defender of the Reformed faith. He stood as a wall of adamant between the Reformation and his sister, Mary, Queen of Scots, who employed the government and army to destroy it. After her overthrow he became regent, ruling the nation with kingly power and extraordinary ability, having the fear of God and the welfare of the people at heart. His home was like a sanctuary; the fire burned on the family altar, the Bible was read at the table, the beauty of holiness graced the household. In history he is known as Lord Murray, the "Good Regent". He was assassinated by an ingrate, whom he had pardoned and saved from execution. Much credit for the First Reformation must be given to Murray in the State and Knox in the Church, each peerless in his place. In their day the Church became an organized power and assumed the appearance of "an army with banners". The First General Assembly met in Edinburgh, December 20, 1560. The purpose was, "To consult upon those things which are to forward God's glory and the well-being of His Kirk". The glory of God! the honor of Christ! the exaltation of the supreme Name! that is the purpose that sends fire through the veins and sweeps the soul with holy flames. Give this its true place, and the best work of life will be done. Then did the Church arise and shine in the glory of the Lord. Then did she develop in size, strength, and courage, as in the days of the apostles. Seven years later when the General Assembly met, the members numbered 773, with a prosperous Church of proportionate size. The Reformers entered into the work of the Lord with heartiness and reaped a plentiful harvest.

#### **The First Book of Discipline — 1561**

The high principles governing the First General Assembly are seen in the effort to preserve the purity of the young Church, springing up under the care of these "valiant men of Israel". One of the first steps taken was the appointment of a committee to prepare a Book of Discipline. These devout men copied from no existing form of Church government. They did not draw even upon Holland or Geneva for resources. They went directly to the Word of God, as the fountain of all knowledge for the task on hand. They took counsel and instruction from God in prayer, placed mind and heart under the guiding power of the Holy Spirit. The book that came forth was such as we would expect at the hands of such men, working with such spirit and purpose. Its statements were truth; its rules were wisdom; its censures were a sword; its authority was Christ. The General Assembly adopted it. However, it was not in favor with all. Its standard of doctrine and discipline was too high to please some. Knox gives the reason: "Everything that impugned their corrupt affections was mockingly termed 'devout imaginations'. The cause was, Some were licentious, some had greedily gripped the possessions of the Church, and others thought they would not lack their part of Christ's coat."

Discipline was applied to the Church according to the book. The unworthy were suspended, and those who failed to measure up to the standard of knowledge, character, and spiritual life, were refused. Could there be a clearer demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit and the presence of Jesus Christ, than the discipline that removed the unworthy and refused the unfit, when the Church was so weak in number and assailed by hordes of enemies? Yet during the first seven years of this Book of Discipline, the General Assembly grew from 6 to 252 ministers, and the Church in the same marvelous proportion. Behold God's seal placed on strict discipline. There is power in purity; vitality depends much on sanitation.

#### **The First Schools — 1561**

The Public School system is the offspring of Protestantism. The human mind, when liberated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, aspires after education, as the eagle soars into the upper air when set free from its cage. Freedom in Christ Jesus awakens consciousness of rights, powers, privileges, obligations, and the immeasurable boundaries of mind and spirit. With such breathings and aspirations these Presbyterian fathers planted free schools over their country and set the example for the world. The General Assembly authorized a school for every "parish", and made attendance imperative. The children of the poor were instructed free, the rich contributed support. The studies covered "religion, grammar, and Latin". Also in every "notable town, a college was to be erected for instruction in logic, rhetoric, and the learned languages." Such was the work of the General Assembly in the year of our Lord 1561. Our system of Public Schools is but the extension of the orchard these fathers planted, in their far-reaching plans and great-hearted purposes.

Such were some of the steps taken by the fathers, in the Church of Scotland, at the dawn of the First Reformation. They were master builders in laying foundation stones. They were preparing for the onward movement, which gave to the world the most brilliant example of Church and State in Covenant with God. The like has not been witnessed since the days of Jesus of Nazareth. These beginnings were the stately steppings of God within His sanctuary. The Lord raised up men after His own heart, and empowered them by the Holy Spirit to perform this stupendous task. They were men of like passions with others, yet possessing the rare quality of an inviolate conscience. They were governed by principle, not expediency; were guided by truthfulness, not diplomacy; consulted God's law, not convenience; accepted duty at God's command, not at man's dictate. Not all who were enrolled in the Church stood the test; some grew faint and fell back from the firing line. But enough were ever there to glorify God and do

His service at any cost. Scotland's First Reformation reached its climax in 1567.

The diligence and success of the fathers in the Lord's work should inspire us to do the best within our power for the enlargement of the Church. Are we building, as they built, upon the true foundation, which is Jesus Christ? Is our building material like theirs—gold, silver, and precious stones? Are we zealous in making the Church of Christ appear the glorious temple of truth, the sanctuary of the living God, the habitation of the Holy Spirit? Are we so consumed with the holy passion of love, that we cannot rest till we bring others into the house of God? Are we worthy of our relation to the Covenanted fathers?

#### POINTS FOR THE CLASS

1. Give an account of the First Covenant.
2. Describe the First General Assembly.
3. What was the value of the First Book of Discipline?
4. Describe the founding of Public Schools in Scotland.
5. When was the First Reformation at its climax?
6. How should the success of the fathers inspire us?

(To be continued)

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#### THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH

By J. G. Vos

**Note:** This article is reproduced by permission from **The Westminster Theological Journal**, Vol. X, No. 2 (May, 1948).

##### 1. The Church Has a Social and Economic Responsibility

That the visible Church has a responsibility in the social and economic spheres is and always has been quite generally accepted by Calvinists. Doubtless there has been, and still is, disagreement, and also vagueness, concerning the question of precisely what that responsibility is, but that it exists has been generally accepted by adherents of the Reformed Faith. The purpose of the present article is to attempt to define and clarify the basic principles involved in the matter of the social and economic duty of the visible Church. It is not proposed to consider in any detail matters which ought to be included in the content of the Church's testimony concerning social and economic matters, but rather to discuss the relation of social and economic matters as such to the visible Church. Thus, for example, this article will not undertake to discuss either capitalism or socialism from the Christian point of view, but will rather seek to show what is involved in the Church's responsibility concerning whatever economic principles it believes to be sanctioned by the Word of God. The present article does not purport to be a discussion of either sociology or economics from the Christian point of view, but only a study of the relation of the visible Church, as an institution, to these realms.

The method employed will be to present, first of all, a brief grounding of the Reformed position that the visible Church has a responsibility in the social and economic spheres; then to state and criticize certain widely prevalent views concerning the social and economic duty of the Church; and finally to discuss in a positive way the witness of the visible Church in the

social and economic spheres: its derivation from the Scriptures, its formulation in creedal doctrine, its proclamation in the pulpit, its relation to the acts of ecclesiastical judicatories, and its necessary limits.

That the visible Church has a responsibility in the social and economic spheres is denied, in general, by mysticism, pietism, certain types of eschatologism, and to some extent by Barthianism or the theology of crisis. Over against all these tendencies, that responsibility is emphatically affirmed by the Reformed Faith. Wher- ever Calvinism has been professed in a really pure and consistent form, it has always manifested a genuine concern that the truth of special revelation be brought to bear on all realms and aspects of human life. For Calvinism is the antithesis of the anabaptistic position which would virtually limit the relationships of Christianity to the realm of special grace and would isolate that realm from all significant connection with "the world". Not world-flight but world-conquest has ever been the watchword of real Calvinism.

We shall consider, then, the grounds of the Calvinistic view on this question. It cannot be denied that the Scripture deals with social and economic matters. By this it is meant that the Scripture deals with social and economic matters not merely incidentally, or for purposes of illustration or metaphor (as in some of our Lord's parables, such as those of the Pounds, Talents, Laborers in the Vineyard and the Lost Son), but that the Scripture deals with social and economic matters directly—not, of course, as though the Bible were a textbook of economics or sociology, presenting a general or formal scientific treatment of these subjects, but, rather, as presenting, expressly or by necessary implication, data which must be incorporated in any truly Christian formulation of these sciences.

The Scriptures which bear upon social and economic matters are so numerous that nothing beyond a very general and incomplete survey of such can be attempted in this article. First of all, we find, at the very beginning of the Old Testament, truth concerning marriage and the constitution of the family (Gen. 1:18-24). In the decalogue, the entire second table of the law bears on social and economic life. The fifth commandment sets forth the sanctity of authority, the sixth the sanctity of life, the seventh the sanctity of sex and marriage, the eighth the sanctity of private property, the ninth the sanctity of truth between man and man, and the tenth the sanctity of God's providential dispensations in the social and economic spheres.

As affirmed by the Westminster Confession of Faith (XIX.4), that portion of the Mosaic Law which constituted the civil laws of the nation of Israel "expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other now, farther than the general equity thereof may require". This statement of the Confession of course embraces a considerable portion of the Mosaic legislation, and precisely that portion which deals most directly with social and economic matters. The Confession's statement, however, should not be taken as implying that these "judicial laws" of Israel have no relation whatever to the subject of Christian social ethics, but only as implying that they have no direct and formal application, *per se*, as positive laws, to Christian social ethics, although the principles of "general equity" which can rightly be discerned as underlying them are of a moral nature and therefore perpetually valid.

In the Psalter the many references to "the poor" and "the needy" (e.g. Psalm 9:18) have no doubt frequently been regarded as referring to the economically underprivileged, but this interpretation is quite unwarranted. In practically every case the context indicates that these expressions do not refer primarily or directly to the economic status of the persons described, but are to be understood in a religious sense, being in fact almost technical terms used to describe the true people of God who must suffer persecution and reproach for His name. This is shown by the fact that "the poor" and "the needy" are regularly contrasted, not with "the rich" but with "the proud" and "the wicked" (e. g., Psalm 10:2; 12:3-5; cf. 147:6 where "the meek" are contrasted with "the wicked").

Those Psalms which picture the glories of the messianic Kingdom and the final eschatological state, as Psalms 46 and 72, in doing so of course present a picture of an ideal state of social justice. This may be regarded as having an indirect bearing on the subject of social ethics, for the ideal which will be actualized in the eschatological Kingdom is precisely the state of affairs which, if it were not for sin and the curse, would exist here and now, and therefore, from the standpoint of the moral law, it is the state

of affairs which **ought** to exist here and now, even though it **cannot** exist here and now except in a partial and preliminary manner.

The Book of Proverbs contains a great deal of teaching which bears on the ethical aspects of social and economic matters, so much, indeed, that it would be superfluous to cite particular passages of the book.

It is in the Old Testament prophets especially that the advocates of the liberal "social gospel" profess to find teaching on "social justice". It is of course correct to say that the prophets proclaimed the necessity of justice in the social sphere. Yet the emphasis of the Old Testament prophets is not that of the "social gospel", for the latter usually has a humanistic or man-centered tendency, whereas the messages of the prophets are theistic and God-centered to the core. It is never social justice for its own sake, nor social justice for man's benefit and welfare, that the prophets insist upon, but social justice for God's sake—social justice as an implication of a covenant relationship to Jehovah, the God of grace and salvation, to serve and glorify whom must be the total aim of His people. Thus understood, the Old Testament prophets provide many instances of ethical teaching which bears on social and economic questions. Such passages as Isaiah 10:1, 2; 29:20, 21; 58:6, 7; Amos 2:6-8; 5:11, 12; 8:5, 6 may be cited as examples.

Turning to the New Testament, we may note that the preaching of John the Baptist contained a strong note of social ethical obligation and of insistence upon repentance for sins of social and economic injustice (Luke 2:1-14.)

Contrary to claims frequently made, the Sermon on the Mount contains comparatively little teaching that has a direct bearing on social and economic questions. Its message is primarily religious, and its ethical teaching moves primarily in the personal rather than the social sphere. Mention may be made, however, of its teachings concerning marriage and divorce (Matt. 5:31, 32), concerning non-resistance to evil (Matt. 5:38-42) and concerning love of enemies (Matt. 5:43-48).

Turning from the Sermon on the Mount to other parts of our Lord's teaching, we find Him dealing with support of needy parents (Matt. 15:3-6), obligations to the State (Matt. 22:15-21), marriage and divorce (Matt. 19:3-9), the wickedness of those who "devour widows' houses" (Matt. 23:14), the duty of conserving food (John 6:12), the obligation of rendering help to our neighbor in his time of need (Luke 10:25-37), and the duty of faithfulness in handling "the unrighteous mammon" (Luke 16:9-12).

In the New Testament Epistles we find, among other matters, teaching concerning civil government in Romans 13; concerning marriage in I Corinthians 7; concerning various reciprocal duties of husbands and wives, parents and chil-

dren, masters and servants, in Eph. 5:22-6:9 and Col. 3:18-4:1. Warnings against social parasitism and the love of money are found in II Thess. 3:10-12 and I Tim. 6:9, 10; the right use of wealth is inculcated in I Tim. 6:17-19; the Epistle to Philemon has a bearing on slavery. James 5:1-6 warns against the misuse of wealth and oppression of the poor. James 2:15, 16 and I John 3:17, 18 speak of the duty of providing relief for needy Christians. All these passages contain social or economic teaching in the broad sense.

Finally, mention may be made of social and economic teaching in the Apocalypse. Though obviously the primary purpose of the book is not to teach social ethics, yet it contains elements which have a real bearing on social and economic matters. In chapter 6 we see the unfolding of divine judgments upon a world which rejects the gospel of Christ. Among these judgments are the slaughter of war and the curse of famine, accompanied by soaring prices for the commonest of staple foods. Here it may properly be inferred that war and its sequel of famine are not to be regarded as mere mechanical problems in human relations and in the production and distribution of foodstuffs, but that we are to realize that their ultimate origin is spiritual, namely the sin and unbelief of mankind.

Again in chapter 13 we have the description of the tyrannical reign of the wild beast from the sea. Among the features of his reign are universal dominion, world-wide peace, bitter persecution of Christianity, all-but-universal man-worship, and ruthless enforcement of submission to

this dictatorial regime by means of an absolute economic boycott (verses 16, 17). Surely this chapter bears on a Christian view of society and of economic life. Among other things it teaches a lesson—much needed today—that world peace on the wrong basis would be a curse rather than a blessing, and that the pooling of all national sovereignties in a single world-state, so far from being a step toward “building the Kingdom of God”, might turn out to be the kingdom of the beast, with its utter suppression of all human liberty and its ruthless trampling upon all that is holy.

It has been shown that the Scripture deals with social and economic matters. As Calvinists we hold that the sovereignty of God is absolute and that the scope of the authority of the Scripture which reveals the will of God is unlimited. Where the Bible speaks, what it says is authoritative in every sphere of life to which it is properly applicable. Therefore the relevant teachings of the Scripture must have their proper application to the social and economic spheres. The authority of the Scripture is not to be confined to “faith and life” in the narrow or strictly religious sense; all the concerns and relationships of human life are included in its scope.

From the foregoing it follows that the visible Church has a responsibility to bear testimony to the teachings of the Scriptures as they bear on social and economic matters. For the Church as the pillar and ground of the truth must bear witness to the whole counsel of God.

(To be continued)

## The Observance of Days

By J. G. Vos

**Note:** In response to the request of a subscriber in England, this article is reprinted from the January-March, 1947, issue of “Blue Banner Faith and Life”.—Ed.

“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.”—Gal. 4:10,11.

The day called “Easter” is observed as a holy day by many churches and also by multitudes of people who are not members of any church and who ordinarily show little or no interest in religion. Multitudes of people will attend religious services on Easter who rarely darken a church door on any other day of the year. Multitudes of people believe that it is a special sin to miss church attendance on Easter, even if they habitually absent themselves the other fifty-one weeks of the year. It is easy to see that Easter is generally regarded as of great importance.

It will not take long to discuss the question of Easter in the Bible. The King James Version of

the Bible uses the word “Easter” just once, in Acts 12:4, “Now at that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church . . . and he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread). And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.”

That is the one and only occurrence of the word “Easter” in the Bible, and it is an incorrect translation of the original Greek. The American Revised Version gives the correct meaning of the word: Passover. So we see that the Bible, correctly translated, never even mentions Easter.

Practically all Christian denominations throughout the world make a great occasion of Easter. Reformed Presbyterians or Covenanters are in a very small minority of Christian bodies

in opposing the observance of Easter for reasons of principle. Because of this opposition we are regarded as peculiar, and this makes us more or less unpopular. Nobody likes to be different and nobody likes to be considered "queer". However we need not be afraid to be different, provided we can give a good, substantial reason for the difference. So I propose to discuss the subject of "The Observance of Days", and in particular to set forth some reasons for not observing Easter and other special religious festival days.

I once heard of a minister, many years ago, who was so strongly opposed to the observance of Christmas and Easter that he made a point of preaching a Christmas sermon on Easter and an Easter sermon on Christmas! Certainly we need not go that far, but at the same time we should understand the principles involved in this question. In former times the Reformed Presbyterian Church was solidly opposed to the religious observance of Christmas, Easter and other special days of the same kind. But in recent years this opposition has begun to weaken and here and there a Covenanter congregation is beginning to copy the big denominations and do more or less as others do in this matter of observing days.

Three hundred years ago the Westminster Assembly of Divines met in England to compile the Confession of Faith, Catechisms and other standards that have become the heritage of all churches of the Presbyterian family throughout the world. Let me quote what the Westminster Assembly said about the observance of holy days. It is found in the Appendix to the Directory for Worship which they prepared. This is what they said: "There is no day commanded in Scripture to be kept holy under the gospel but the Lord's Day, which is the Christian Sabbath. Festival-days, vulgarly called 'holy-days', having no warrant in the Word of God, are not to be continued." 300 years ago that was the accepted belief of all Presbyterians. Since then, the majority have gradually adopted the customs of the Episcopalians and Catholics, and today they observe a variety of special days in their religious services. But we should realize that we Covenanters, in opposing the observance of Easter and other "holy" days, are only holding to the original principle which was once held by all Presbyterians everywhere. It is not the Covenanters that have changed.

#### **The Apostle Paul on Observing Days**

The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, reprobating them for observing days: "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

The error of the Galatian Christians was that they confused law and grace. They thought that they could be saved by faith in Christ plus human works. And among the human works that they stressed was the scrupulous observance of special

days. The days, and months, and times, and years that they insisted on observing were, of course, those appointed by God in the ceremonial law for observance during the Old Testament dispensation. The Galatians as New Testament Christians were seeking to revert to the ceremonial worship of the Old Testament, so they observed these days as if that were necessary for salvation.

Note that the apostle Paul regards this observance of days as a bad tendency: "I am afraid of (for) you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." Further on, in verse 20 of the same chapter, he adds: "I stand in doubt of you." Paul wondered what was wrong with their religious knowledge and experience, that they should have become so zealous for the observance of days.

#### **The General Principle Regulating Divine Worship**

The general principle taught in the Bible as regulative of the worship of God is that every element of worship must be appointed in Scripture, and that any element which is not appointed in Scripture is to be regarded as forbidden in the worship of God. It is not necessary to prove that the Bible positively forbids the use of musical instruments in New Testament worship, nor is it necessary to prove that the Bible positively forbids the use of ordinary, uninspired, man-made hymns in singing praises to God. The mere fact that the Bible does not command these practices, that they are not appointed in Scripture, is sufficient to show that they are not to be introduced into the worship of God. This same general principle also applies to the question of the observance of days. These special days, and in particular Christmas and Easter, are not commanded in the Bible. Therefore they are forbidden as elements of religious worship and not to be observed as such.

When the average church member or even minister in the large, popular denominations is asked to give a text of Scripture that warrants the religious observance of Christmas or Easter, he is of course unable to do so. But in most cases he will reply: "Well, of course the Bible does not command us to observe Christmas and Easter; but, you see, the Bible does not forbid it either." And that is the prevalent attitude on this question. But we should note well that on that basis all kinds of new and strange things could be introduced into the worship of God, such as holy water, bells, incense, pageants, theatricals—for the Bible does not actually forbid any of them. In fact there would be almost no limit to the changes that could be made on such a basis.

As over against the attitude described above, we hold that the question of the observance of days is a matter of principle and not a mere matter of expediency. And we believe that the principle involved is revealed in the Bible with unmistakeable clarity.

### **Men's Holy Days and God's Holy Day**

There is one day that God has really set apart as a holy day: the Lord's Day or the Christian Sabbath. It comes once a week, 52 times a year. And it is peculiarly a commemoration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead on that early morning, the first day of the week, nearly nineteen centuries ago.

I shall now speak of a prevalent tendency in the religious life of our times. A parallel development is taking place; two things are going on side by side.

On the one hand, we observe the multiplication of special holy or religious days, not only Christmas and Easter, but a great many others as well. And as the years pass, the tendency is to add more and more of these special days.

On the other hand, there is an increasing carelessness and disregard for God's holy day, the Sabbath. Who would venture to maintain that the Sabbath is observed as conscientiously today as it was 25 years ago? Oh, no! It is just the other way around. A quarter of a century ago most Christian people were conscientious and strict about observing God's day, but at present there is a prevalent carelessness about God's day, while a great deal of attention is paid to all these other holy days that have been invented by man.

These tendencies are parallel: more and more emphasis on special days, and less and less stress on conscientious Sabbath observance. People are substituting human ideas for God's appointed plan and way.

Some people are astonished at Covenanters, and exclaim in their surprise: "What! Do you mean to say that you don't believe in celebrating the resurrection of Christ? How could any Christian be opposed to that?"

Oh, yes, we believe in celebrating the resurrection of Christ, and we do it 52 times a year, for we commemorate our Lord's resurrection every Sabbath day, not just once a year. That is a Scriptural commemoration of our Lord's rising from the dead. We believe firmly in Christ's resurrection, but we also believe in celebrating it only in God's appointed way, by a faithful observance of the Christian Sabbath each week.

### **Men's Holy Days and the Gospel of Christ**

I have shown how the increase in the observance of special days is paralleled by a decrease in the observance of the Sabbath. Now let me mention two other tendencies that also run together in parallel fashion. One is defection from the truth of the Gospel, and the other is a tremendous increase in ritualism. These two tendencies go hand in hand just as surely as night follows day.

During the past 150 years there has been a

general breakdown of belief in the truth of Christianity. Men everywhere have been coming to doubt the doctrines of the Christian religion and to question the truthfulness of the Bible. Such fundamental doctrines as the inspiration of the Bible, the Deity of Christ and His substitutionary atonement for sinners are frequently doubted or denied outright. This is true not only of worldly people, but even of church members, ministers, and professors of theology in large and prominent institutions.

You would think that when people come to the conclusion that the Bible is not true, and that an intelligent, educated person can no longer accept it at face value, they would just say "Christianity is a fraud" and then give up all profession of the Christian religion. But that is very far from what most of them do. On the contrary, they stay right on in their churches and go right on preaching and attending church, but they neither believe nor preach the "old fashioned" Gospel any more. They sometimes use the old words and phrases, but they employ them with new and strange meanings.

At the same time such people feel the need of something to satisfy the hunger of their souls, so they take refuge in ritualism. They multiply forms and ceremonies. This is the result of a desperate attempt to find reality and soul-satisfaction in religion, on the part of those who have come to believe that modern science has made it impossible to retain the supernatural Christianity of the Bible. So, many churches are going in for vested choirs; some are burning incense in worship, and some are doing even stranger things. And one part of this tendency is the multiplication of special religious days.

We should realize, too, that no churches are plunging into ritualism so fast as those that have departed from the old Gospel of the Word of God. As men lose their faith in the truth of God's Word, and in Christ as truly God, they seem to try to make up for their spiritual loss by putting on a great deal of religious ritual and pageantry. The vacuum has to be filled in some way, and ritualism fills it in a pleasing, attractive manner. This tendency can be observed in churches large and small across our country.

"Doran's Minister's Manual" enumerates over 30 special or holy days that are regularly observed by Catholics, Episcopalians and some Lutherans. In addition to listing these the book provides materials for sermons or addresses for twenty special days, which are the following: New Year's Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Every Member Canvass Day, Washington's Birthday, Palm Sunday, Easter, Memorial Day, Ascension Day, Children's Day, Whitsunday, School Commencement, Missionary Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Reformation Sunday, International Temperance Sunday, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, Old Year's Day, Armistice Day.

To these we might add others that are coming to be commonly observed, such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Red Cross Day, Go-to-Church Day, etc. One organization after another comes forward calling for a special day or week to be devoted to its interests. When we once begin to add other special days to God's Holy Sabbath Day, we start on a long, long trail, and no one can tell where the end will be.

Of course there is no objection to observing a day like Thanksgiving Day, to which we are duly called by the civil authorities, nor to observing such days as the preparatory days before the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, these being appointed for a special purpose by the officers of the church. That is quite different from the tendency to set apart certain days as special or holy in themselves, thereby adding elements not appointed in Scripture to the worship of God.

#### **The Real Origin of Easter Observance**

"Easter" is defined in my dictionary as "A Christian festival commemorating the resurrection of Christ." But the interesting thing is the derivation, rather than the definition, of the word "Easter". According to Funk and Wagnalls, it is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word spelled "Eastre", the name of the old heathen goddess of spring whom our ancestors worshipped before Christianity came to the British Isles.

Philip Schaff's "History of the Christian Church", a standard work on church history, states that "the transfer of the celebration of . . . the old German divinity of the rising, health-bringing light, was easy and natural . . .". Have you ever wondered why fresh flowers, newly hatched chicks, and so forth, are regarded as connected with Easter? It is from the old heathen nature worship of ancient times. These things were symbols of returning life and vitality in the spring season of the year. So our heathen ancestors in pre-Christian times observed "Easter" as a religious celebration, before they ever heard of Jesus Christ. And after their conversion to Christianity, they went right on observing Easter, only they gave it a Christian dress and a Christian explanation. Instead of worshipping the goddess of springtime, they worshipped the true God; and instead of just celebrating the general awakening of nature to new life in the springtime, they began to celebrate Christ's resurrection from the dead. But it was still called "Easter" after the name of the old heathen goddess.

It is not easy to be different from the majority. It is not easy to hold unpopular convictions. It costs to stand with a minority and bear witness for an unpopular truth or principle. But it is worth-while, and, what is far more important, it is right. Let us not be afraid to be different, so long as we can give a valid reason, based on the Word of God, for our conscientious convictions.

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## ***Psalm Eighty-Six***

### ***The Christian's Constant Prayer***

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

The title of this Psalm is, "A Prayer of David", or rather, "A Prayer (given) to David", that is, by the Spirit of God, who, as David said, "spake in me, and his word was on my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2) —"the Spirit who helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought."

Some have classed it as merely liturgical, lacking spontaneity: they have missed the beating heart of it. It has been disparaged because so much of its phrasing occurs in other Psalms or Prophets. But prayer is built on what God has said and done in the past. To be heard it must proceed along the lines of God's revelation of Himself and His will. Observing this, and knowing that "He is faithful who promised", the suppliant comes bodily,

#### **I. PLEADING TO BE HEARD AND ANSWERED (VERSES 1-5).**

"Bow thine ear, O Jehovah; answer me: For I am poor and needy. Keep my soul, for I am godly; Save thy servant, O THOU, my God; (save thy

servant) who trusts in thee. Be merciful to me, O Lord, For to thee I call all the day. Gladden the soul of thy servant, For to thee, O Lord, I do lift up my soul. For THOU, Lord, art kind and ready to forgive, And abounding in lovingkindness to all who call on thee."

#### **1. Because He is a Pauper and in Want (verse 1)**

"I am poor and needy" is a confession, not of economic but of spiritual poverty; a confession by one conscious that he has no righteousness of his own. He is spiritually bankrupt, with no resource but by the grace of God. He is humbled, sorrowful, and in distress, and is not hiding it. He is one of those Laodiceans whom Christ has loved and rebuked and chastened. He has repented, and acknowledges that he is "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked". Coming with nothing in hand, he knocks at the door to receive what Christ promised to give to all such as he. The love of Christ has constrained him. He comes boldly

## 2. Because He stands on Covenant Ground (verses 2-4)

"For I am godly", or as in our 1611 version, "I am holy". This is not a claim of personal perfection or worthiness, as all the rest of the Psalm stands to prove. The word here translated "godly" or "holy", is often translated "saint", the New Testament name for believers in Christ.

A Pharisee might use this word boastfully in justifying himself. Or, an ignorant Christian might say, "I am not holy; I cannot use such argument in prayer; I will not sing that Psalm." Both would be wrong.

Let us look for this word's real meaning where it occurs in other places. Everyone does not have a Hebrew dictionary, but everyone may have a Bible and an ample concordance. The Bible makes its own meaning clear, if only we give attention to it.

We find the word in Psalm 4:3, "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." Hence, a "godly" person is one that God has set apart to receive His mercy and to be His servant. This one, therefore, calls himself "Thy servant" (verses 2, 4 and 16), and appropriately addresses God as "Lord", i.e., "Master", seven times in this Psalm.

A noun, cognate with this adjective, when used of God is translated "lovingkindness". When God separates a man for Himself, He bestows on him His love and kindness, His wonderful grace, to restore to that man the Godlikeness in which he was created, but which he lost by sin—to make him "godly".

Since all men have sinned, there are none but sinners to be thus set apart. They are, however, set apart, not as sinners, but as sinners justified, and to be made meet for the Master's use. Their sanctification is begun, but not perfected at once. David who here says, "I am godly", also repeatedly says, "I have sinned." But the mercy of God has provided forgiveness of sin and the holiness without which no one shall see the Lord.

Turn now to Psalm 43:6, "For this (the forgiveness of sins) shall every one that is godly pray unto thee at a time when thou mayest be found." Hence, a "godly" man is a sinner, but one who prays today for the forgiveness of his sins. No sinner need hesitate to apply this term to himself, if, in genuine repentance, he has humbly and thankfully received God's grace to make him such.

Once more, turn to Psalm 50:5, where God calls to the whole earth, "Gather my saints (godly ones) together unto me, those who have made a covenant with me on the ground of the sacrifice." Hence, a "godly" person is a covenanter; one who has entered into the everlasting covenant with God; one who holds as security God's

promises of never-failing mercy and of eternal inheritance in the riches of His grace. "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us." For us today, therefore, "I am godly" means "I am a Christian." I belong to Christ. He is my Lord and Master. I am His servant.

Thus the one who is "godly" has a weighty argument in his prayer; an argument that God will surely honor. A prayer that honestly uses this argument is a Christian's prayer. It is based, not on what he is of himself, or has ever done, or can do, but solely on what God has done for him.

He is saved, not for himself, but for God. I am "thy servant who trusts in thee." Trust implies submission and willingness to serve. "I call to thee all the day long." He prays "always with all prayer and supplication;" "without ceasing." His constant attitude is that of a beggar begging at the throne of grace. "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." What wilt Thou have me to do? Prayer is the lifting up of the soul to God to learn His will. "Not my will but thine be done." Then to do it. But man's effort would be in vain were it not that the covenant God "keepeth mercy and truth forever," and His mercy is over ALL.

## 3. Because of the Abundance and Wideness of God's Mercy (verse 5)

"For THOU, Lord, art kind and ready to forgive". Here is a word very dear to the heart of every Christian. The Lord is ready to forgive since He has provided that sin may be taken from every one who wants to be rid of it. No one is excluded from a share in that provision.

"And abounding in lovingkindness to ALL who call upon thee." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

## II. ASKING IN FAITH (VERSES 6, 7)

"Give ear, O Jehovah, to my prayer; And listen to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I call on thee. For thou wilt answer me."

He has asked according to the will of God. (Compare, e.g., Psalm 72:13; Psalm 97:10; Isaiah 55:6, 7). He, therefore, asks with an assured confidence. If the Lord is ready to forgive ALL men, He is ready to forgive **me**. Since He graciously hears ALL who call on Him, I will call on Him now. Hear **my** prayer, **my** supplications, O Jehovah. In the day of my trouble I call on Thee, for Thou wilt answer **me**, even **me**. This is unwavering faith resting on the assurance that the answer is certain, not in the measure of the asking, but in the measure of the limitless love and goodness of God.

In the swelling joy and gratitude of that assurance, the soul is lifted higher and nearer in approach to God. Self and its troubles sink into nothingness and are forgotten while he is

### III. ADORING THE INCOMPARABLE ONE (VERSES 8-10)

"There is none like thee among the gods, O Lord, And there is nothing to compare with thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; And they shall glorify thy name. For THOU art great, and doest wondrous things; THOU THYSELF art God alone."

These verses blend perfectly with Rev. 15:3,4; with "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb," in the harmony of the harps of God played by all "them that have gotten the victory" on the earth throughout the whole period of Redemption. The words belong to the song of the ages, the hymn of praise to "Him that loveth us"; under whose leadership, by whose sacrifice and eternal strength the victory over evil and sin is won. We find them again in Jer. 10:6-10, where they are written to teach the people of God.

Here they are for us to learn to sing. You and I can begin to learn today in the sorrow of repentance, the importunity of prayer, and the joy of the victory of the King of Nations for you and for me.

It is not said, All nations whom thou hast created, brought into existence, but "All nations whom thou hast MADE", "made ready", "prepared" for thy gracious purposes, to show the glory of thy greatest work. They "shall come and worship before thee, O Lord." This one and that shall come

### IV. BEGGING INSTRUCTION AND SINCERENESS OF HEART FOR NEW OBEDIENCE (VERSES 11-13).

"Teach me thy way, O Jehovah; I will walk in thy truth: Unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord, my God, with my whole heart; And I will glorify thy name forever. For great is thy lovingkindness toward me; Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest Sheol."

A realization of God's sovereignty and covenant mercy awakens latent aspirations in a man's soul to that which is higher and better. He is humbled, and, as a child, asks to be taught; as a child, is willing to do what he is told by one he trusts.

Since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, he prays, "Unite my heart", set my heart with single aim; concentrate all the powers, affections and ambitions of my heart to fear thy name. Then my whole heart shall praise thee, O my God. In unison with all the nations I will be one to glorify thy name forever. For great—great enough to accomplish even this—is thy lovingkindness to me. Yes, thou hast delivered my soul from Sheol, the lowest of all depths.

When the people led by false prophets and priests were determined to put Jeremiah, the Lord's prophet, to death, because they did not like his message, God sent Ahikam to take care of him; and again sent Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian, to rescue Jeremiah from the pit where the

princes had left him. Out of the depths where his enemies left him, the Christian saint cries to his Lord and Saviour,

### V. PRAYING FOR SUCH DELIVERANCE AS WILL HUMBLE HIS ENEMIES (VERSES 14-17).

"O God, the proud rose up against me, A company of malicious men sought my life, And did not set thee before them. But THOU, even THOU, O Lord, art 'God, merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness and truth.' Turn to me and have mercy on me; Give thy strength to thy servant, And save the son of thy handmaid. Bestow on me a token of thy favor, That they who hate me may see and be put to shame, Because THOU, O Jehovah, hast helped me and comforted me."

No Christian's prayer is complete without the petition, "Deliver us from the evil." The evil is multitudinous in its agents and agencies, which are a constant menace to the righteous. He needs to beware of false security, of supposing there is peace when there is no peace. He must realize the nearness and cunning of enemies, who may appear to be his friends. They are proud and give no place to God. They will give no place to the godly man. They are angered by his witness to the truth and godliness, and seek to do away with it. By every possible means they seek to drag him into the way of death, by diverting attractions, deceipts, false ideas and teachings; by ridicule, misunderstanding, malice, by pressure, persecution, or bestial cruelty. This is a world of realities; there's no sense in forgetting that.

The Christian, even though somewhat shaken in faith and more or less involved in sin, recalls the established facts. He does set God before him. "THOU, even THOU, O Lord, art 'God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness and truth'." This is, word for word, God's own description of Himself, Ex. 34:6; when, after Israel's apostasy, He graciously promised again to go with them. It is a repentant servant who prays for the strength of God to overcome. His own strength has proved insufficient. He who knows he cannot save himself, prays for God's salvation.

At the same time he prays for his enemies, that by God's interposition on his behalf they may be put to shame. Their pride must be broken. This is the only way they can be saved; by being humbled, made to realize that it is useless to fight against God. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." "He shall cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease."

"Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for Jehovah hath comforted his people, and will have compassion on his afflicted" (Isa. 49:13).

(Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued, D.V., in future issues of this publication.—Ed.)

## The Unbreakable Scripture

By J. G. Vos

"And the Scripture cannot be broken" — John 10:35b.

In this tenth chapter of the Gospel of John we have the record of a dispute between Jesus and the leaders of the Jews. He made the statement, "I and my Father are one" (verse 30). This was rightly understood by the Jews as a claim to Deity. Thereupon they accused Him of blasphemy, and were on the point of stoning Him to death.

In replying to them, and defending Himself against their charge, Jesus appeals to Scripture. He cites an expression from Psalm 82:6, "I said, ye are gods." This was spoken to the judges of the people of Israel in Old Testament times. Because as judges they were servants of God, representatives of God in administering justice, and to that extent clothed with authority from God, they could, in that sense, be called "gods" (small "g").

Jesus' argument is as follows: It cannot be blasphemy to apply the term "God" to anyone to whom it can properly be applied. If it was proper to apply the term "god" or "gods" to the judges of Old Testament times—which Jesus' opponents could not and did not deny—then how much more proper it must be to apply the term "God" or "Son of God" to the One whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world!

If the Jews did not object to the ancient judges being called "gods", and they did not, then how could they claim that it was blasphemy for Jesus to say "I am the Son of God"?

This argument Jesus enforces by the statement: "And the Scripture cannot be broken." This is stated as an axiomatic truth, something concerning which both Jesus and His accusers were completely in agreement. Both they and He agreed without dispute that "the Scripture cannot be broken."

Jesus disputed and argued with the Jews about many things. There were various points of disagreement between Him and them. They differed about the observance of the Sabbath, they differed about giving tribute to Caesar; He accused them of formalism and hypocrisy in their service of God. But there was one matter about which Jesus and the Pharisees were completely in agreement, namely the full truth and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. On this subject Jesus was the most orthodox of the orthodox, from the standpoint of the Pharisees themselves.

We can see this from the fact that in all their efforts to find something to accuse Jesus

of, it never occurred to any of them to accuse Him of a wrong attitude toward the Scriptures. On that, there was no dispute between them and Him.

Note that Jesus cites the words of the Old Testament by saying: "Is it not written in your law. . . ?" In the LAW. But the verse he cited was not from the books of the Old Testament commonly called "the law". It was a verse from the Psalms. Yet Jesus refers to it as "the law". Then a moment later He speaks of it as "the Scripture."

It is clear that to Jesus the Old Testament was a unity. It was all Scripture, it was all the Word of God; it was all law, of divine truth and authority.

When Jesus says that "the Scripture cannot be broken", stating this as a truth about which there could be no argument, He refers, obviously, to the Old Testament as a whole, in its completeness, and in all of its details. For the statement which He quotes is of such a nature that it might almost be regarded as an "incidental" remark of the Psalmist. Yet Jesus says it is "law", He calls it "Scripture", and He affirms that it "cannot be broken."

The word for "broken" here means dissolved, cancelled, annulled, reduced to nothing. The Scripture would be broken if it could be proved to contain false statements; it would be broken if its prophecies were to fail; it would be broken if its promises were not reliable. But "the Scripture cannot be broken."

When accused of blasphemy, Jesus answers by an appeal to a statement of Scripture, on the ground that "the Scripture cannot be broken." This is characteristic of Jesus' attitude toward the Scripture throughout His whole life on earth. Never did he indicate any other attitude toward the Scriptures. For Jesus, the verdict of the Scriptures was FINAL. It settled the point. There could be no more arguing after the Scripture had spoken.

What has this to do with us today?

Faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior is linked with faith in the whole Bible, in its completeness and in all its details, as the unbreakable Word of God.

Many people today want to keep Christ while at the same time they deny or disbelieve or tone down the statements of the Scripture. They say that the Bible contains errors, or that it is inspired in its ideas only, not in its actual words; or that it is inspired in matters of religion only, not in matters of science or history.

A few months ago I read a book entitled "The Work and Words of Jesus", by Archibald M. Hunter, Professor of Biblical Criticism in Aberdeen University, Scotland. (See review in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", October-December, 1951, pages 202-203). This book of some 200 pages was published in the United States by the Westminster Press, official publishing agency of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This book on "The Work and Words of Jesus" abounds with insinuations that large portions of the Scripture are not trustworthy. The author still wants to believe in Jesus Christ as his Saviour, but at the same time he feels free to reject considerable sections of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John where the life of Jesus is recorded, claiming that these sections are not reliable. Again and again and again he casts doubt upon the reliability of portions of the Gospels. He also speaks of the last part of the book of Isaiah as having been written by "the second Isaiah." This learned author tries to retain Christ as Saviour after he has rejected the Bible as the infallible Word of God. This cannot be done. Jesus Himself held that the Scripture cannot be broken. If we reject the infallibility of the Bible, then we will have to say that the Scripture CAN be broken, and that Jesus was WRONG about the matter. But a Jesus who was mistaken on this crucial question cannot be the Son of God, He cannot be the Saviour of the world, He cannot be your Saviour nor mine. Either "the Scripture cannot be broken", or we have no divine Saviour to save us from our sins. That is the alternative and it cannot be evaded.

#### **The Scripture Cannot be Broken by Attacks on its Truth**

Down through the centuries men have been attacking the truth of the Scripture. Thomas Paine, who died in 1809, wrote his "Age of Reason". Robert Ingersoll, who died in 1899, wrote his book called "Some Mistakes of Moses". These and many others attacked the truth of the Scriptures.

These men's words and works have long ago been discarded and forgotten. No one buys them and no one reads them any more. You would have to go to a large library to find a dusty copy of the works of Paine or Ingersoll. But the Bible continues the same — always old, yet ever new.

The attacks on the truth of the Bible have been shown to be wrong, one after another. At one time it was claimed that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible because the art of writing was not known in Moses' day. But today we know that the art of writing was already hoary with age in Moses' day. The Egyptians and Babylonians had been writing for centuries.

The attack on the truth of the Bible has been concentrated on the **supernatural** features of the Bible, especially its miracles. And among the miracles, the attack has been concentrated particularly upon those great central miracles connected

with Jesus Christ—His virgin birth, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to heaven. These events, we are told, could never have really happened.

But we know better. Every real Christian in the world today is evidence that these events DID happen as the Bible says they did. A merely human Christ, a dead Christ, could not do what the Christ of the Scriptures has done.

We are reminded of the emblem of the British and Foreign Bible Society — a blacksmith's anvil, massive and rugged, surrounded by a large number of broken hammers, with the legend: "Hammer away, ye hostile bands; the hammers break, the anvil stands." Human science and philosophy and criticism change; the Scripture stands.

#### **The Scripture Cannot be Broken by Careless Neglect of its Message**

Today the attitude of most people toward the Bible is not an attitude of downright opposition, but of careless neglect. A few scientists and critics are opposing the Bible actively, while millions of ordinary folks are living out their lives without paying any attention to the Bible at all.

This easy indifference is all around us. People do not read the Bible; they have only the vaguest ideas as to what is in it. It may be that they have a Bible in their homes, but they neither read it nor pay any attention to its teachings. It is related that a party of American tourists in Egypt were shown by an Egyptian guide the spot where the bones of the seven lean cows of Genesis 41:19-21 were buried! The tourists were duly impressed, none of them realizing that these seven cows existed only in a dream of Pharaoh. Such ignorance of the contents of the Bible is nothing unusual today. Even among church members ignorance of the simple historical contents of the Bible is abysmal. Many a church member cannot tell whether David lived before or after John the Baptist. Many a church member cannot find a particular book of the Bible without consulting the table of contents or index. As for the teachings of the Bible, people's ignorance is even more abysmal.

The Bible is addressed to everyone. The Scripture cannot be broken. Its binding character cannot be cancelled or nullified by people's careless indifference. When the Judgment Day comes millions of these people will go to hell, and they will say "We never knew." But they had the Bible. They could have known; they should have known; if they did not know, it was their own fault.

The word of the Scripture will stand, in the Judgment Day, over against the claim of millions of selfish, easy-going, pleasure-loving, God-ignoring people who will try to claim, "We never knew."

### **The Scripture Cannot be Broken by Stubborn Contempt for its Authority**

A man is quoted as having said, "I don't care what the Bible teaches; I am going to do as I please." That is stubborn contempt for the authority of the Bible. It was that attitude which caused God to call the Jews of old "stiffnecked" and "rebellious". If a man were to speak like that about civil laws to a judge in an earthly court, he would immediately be punished for contempt of court. Many people, however, dare to say it, in deeds if not in spoken words, concerning the Scriptures of God. It is stubborn contempt, the attitude of a stiffnecked and rebellious people.

I was once told by a theological student, after a long discussion on the basis of the Greek New Testament, that he had to admit that according to the Bible we should sing only the Psalms in the worship of God. But he immediately added: "I like the hymns, and I am going to sing them." That was a theological student's word versus the Word of God. It was not a question of interpretation; he frankly admitted that the Bible requires the exclusive use of the Psalms in divine worship; but he did not intend to bow his neck to the authority of Scripture in this matter. No one will put him in jail for such an attitude. He can be a member of a church in good standing in spite of such an attitude. But what will he say to God at the Judgment Day?

I heard of a church officer who said he did not care what the Bible teaches about it, he absolutely would NOT believe in the doctrine of predestination. That is stubborn contempt for the authority of the Bible. What will he say to God at the Judgment Day?

God's Word will stand. Men cannot cancel its authority or its binding character by their haughty contempt for its teachings and commands. At the Judgment Day everyone will freely admit that the Scripture cannot be broken.

### **The Scripture Cannot be Broken by a "Pick and Choose" Attitude Toward its Contents**

Some who admit that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, yet really deny its authority by their attitude to its contents. Their real authority is their own feelings, not the statements of the Scripture. They pick and choose among the teachings of the Bible, taking what appeals to them and by-passing everything else.

Such people really accept and consider important only such portions of the Bible as "find" or "grip" them. But ALL of Scripture is the infallible Word of God, not merely those parts that happen to please the reader. Such people in singing the Psalms will carefully pick and choose Psalms and verses so as to leave out all parts that speak of enemies, conflicts, the destruction of wicked men, and so forth, while they empha-

size those parts that speak of the love, kindness and mercy of God.

This "pick and choose" attitude toward the Bible is very sinful. It amounts to trying to cancel the authority of a large part of the Bible. But, we may rest assured, the Scripture cannot be broken. It will stand.

When people try to cancel the authority of the Bible in such a way, they only break themselves. The Bible will stand. They cannot break the Bible, but they commit a sin against God, the Giver and Author of the whole Bible.

### **The Scripture Cannot be Broken by Deceitful Interpretation**

Dishonest interpretation, consciously or subconsciously perpetrated, is by no means dead. It thrives today in multitudes of people who have diverged from the beaten pathway of truth. Satan blinds their eyes and then they begin to twist the Bible to make it mean what they want it to mean.

In Lewis Carroll's book "Alice in Wonderland", the character Humpty Dumpty said in a scornful tone, "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less." There are lots of people like Humpty Dumpty today. They use words to mean, not what they really mean, but what they choose to have them mean. And sometimes they use words to mean exactly the opposite of what they really mean.

A man says "I believe in the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement", and it soon becomes perfectly clear that he does NOT believe in the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement, but only in one of the miserable false theories of the atonement, such as the well-known "moral influence" theory.

Words are the currency of thought as money is the currency of commerce. The words of the Bible have a meaning, which can be ascertained by careful study. They mean what they mean, not what the reader of the Bible would like to have them mean.

When the Bible says that Jesus Christ is God, this does not mean that He is "the first man that ever dared to be divine", nor that He is "divine because He is perfectly human." Nor does it mean that Jesus Christ is a great and good teacher. It means that Jesus Christ is the Being who created the heavens and the earth.

We will live in an era of dishonest interpretation. But it cannot break the Scripture. It cannot cancel the real truth and binding character of the written Word or God. The Scripture will stand and at the Judgment Day it will bear witness against the men who dared to trifle with its sacred words.

What is our personal attitude toward the Bible? It should be an attitude, first, of attention; secondly, of seriousness; thirdly, it should be an attitude of absolute faith; and finally, it should be an attitude of humble obedience.

## ***People and Places in the Psalms***

### **Introductory Note**

With this issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" we are beginning a new feature in the magazine, namely a dictionary of names of people and places in the Book of Psalms. Exclusive of names of God, there are 332 occurrences of proper names in the text of the Psalms (not including the titles of the Psalms). Some names occur many times; for example, Zion occurs 38 times in the Book of Psalms, and Israel occurs 62 times. Others occur only a few times or only once; Abiram, for example, is mentioned only once.

The purpose of this department is to help readers of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" to sing the Psalms more intelligently in their worship of God. The names of people and places in the Psalms are closely connected with the redemptive character of the Biblical religion. Yet how easy it is to sing the inspired Psalms without having any definite idea of the historical or geographical meaning of these proper names! We are commanded not only to sing with the spirit, but also to "sing with the understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15).

In cases where a name occurs only once or a few times in the Book of Psalms, all the occurrences will be listed. Where a name occurs many times, only the first occurrence will be listed, but the total number of occurrences will be given.

**AARON.** 77:20; 99:6; 105:26; 106:16; 115:10,12; 118:3; 133:2; 135:19. The meaning of the name is uncertain, but it is thought that it may mean "bright" or "shining". Aaron was the elder brother of Moses, and the first High Priest of Israel. In the Psalms, the name of Aaron is connected with the mighty redemptive power of God exerted on behalf of His people (77:20); also, by reason of his office of High Priest, Aaron was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true High Priest. Christ is not a priest of the order of Aaron, but of Melchizedek's (Psalm 110:4; Heb. 7); yet Aaron as High Priest typified Christ's priestly office.

**ABIRAM.** 106:17. A member of the tribe of Reuben, who with his brother Dathan and a man named Korah conspired against the God-given authority of Moses and Aaron, as recorded in Numbers 16. Psalm 106 commemorates in song the extraordinary judgment of God by which these rebels perished. This rebellion was just one incident in the long history of apostasies of the people of Israel which Psalm 106 calls to mind. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). For God "remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies" (Psalm 106:45), so that in spite of Israel's dismal record, He can still be called "the Lord God of Israel" (verse 48).

**ABRAHAM.** 47:9. 105:6,9,42. The ancestor of

the chosen people; his name was originally Abram ("exalted father"); the form "Abraham" gives added emphasis to his exalted position. In the Psalms, as elsewhere in Scripture, Abraham is spoken of as an historical person. While his date cannot be determined absolutely, it was approximately 2,000 B.C. The references to Abraham in the Psalms strongly emphasize the covenant relation which God established with Abraham (Gen. 17), the covenant relation in which every believing Israelite of old and every believing Christian of today participates. In Christ, we have become "the people of the God of Abraham"—the God who will never break His covenant with His people, but will to all eternity remember "his holy promise, and Abraham his servant" (Psalm 105:42).

**AMALEK.** 83:7. A collective name for the tribe of people called the Amalekites, who were descendants of Esau (Gen. 36:12). Mean and cowardly, they were inveterate enemies of the people of Israel, and were finally liquidated by King Saul at the command of God. In Psalm 83 Amalek is listed, with several other powers, as allied against the true God, and plotting the utter obliteration of name of Israel (verse 4). Amalek and these other powers are specimens of the long catalogue of earthly nations which have set themselves against God and His Kingdom; the conditions described in Psalm 83 prevail in a large portion of the world today, where the power of deified mass man, under the banner of communism, defies the Kingdom of God and persecutes His people.

**AMMON.** 83:7. A collective name for the Ammonites, a tribe of people descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew (Gen. 19:36-38). Like Amalek, Ammon is mentioned only once in the Psalter, in Psalm 83:7. See the preceding note on Amalek. Like the Amalekites, the Ammonites had a long history of enmity and opposition to the people of Israel; this enmity was in reality, as Psalm 83 tells us, an enmity against God, to whom Israel belonged.

**AMORITES.** 135:11; 136:19. Some have thought that the name "Amorites" means "mountain people", but the meaning is uncertain. The Amorites were one of the tribes living in the land of Canaan at the time of the conquest of the land by Israel under Joshua. They were a powerful and wicked people. Psalms 135 and 136 mention Sihon, king of the Amorites, as one of the "mighty kings" slain by the power of God (135:10,11; 136:18,19). In the deepest and truest sense it was not Israel but God who defeated the Amorites and killed their king. For the entire conquest and occupation of Canaan was part of the redemptive work of God on behalf of His covenant people. The initiative and the power were of God; Israel was the instrument in God's hand.

(To be continued)

## Some Noteworthy Quotations

"Praise is an educator. The effect of music is to soften and make pliable; and upon the heart thus affected the divine truth in the inspired songs comes with wondrous power."

—R. J. George

"There are many who think that religion consists in setting about duties, and so they have their duties for their Saviour. But I will tell you what your duties may do: they may gain you the testimony of ministers and professors, but they will never take you to heaven."

—Richard Cameron

"It is very hard to convince men of sin. Many come to hear preaching and read the Bible, but those that are not convinced of sin have never come to Christ. They cannot hear them that are free in telling them their faults. It is true they will hear of sin in general, but how hard it is to get folk to particularize their sins! There is not a man amongst a thousand that will take freely and fully with sin; and to all such our Lord is saying, 'Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.' "

—Richard Cameron

"Take, then, this one rule of life along with you, founded on these blessed words: 'He is not a Jew which is one outwardly'—that if your outward religion is helping on your inward religion, if your hearing of Christ on the Sabbath-day makes you grow more like Christ through all the week; if the words of grace and joy which you drink in at the house of God lead your heart to love more, and your hand to do more—then, and then only, are you using the ordinances of God aright."

—Robert Murray McCheyne

The redeemed of the Lord should be careful to carry out the Redeemer's holy purpose, by departing from all iniquity. God is holy, and they should be holy too. Christ came not to be the minister of sin. His name was called JESUS, because He saves His people from their sins. Until we are delivered from our sins, we are not saved. Vain, therefore, is the dream of the antinomian, that Christ has purchased for him a liberty of sinning; or that he can be saved in his sins. For without holiness none shall see the Lord. 'And the great God, the Saviour, gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

—Archibald Alexander

"It is a great and awful fact, that the Holy Spirit inhabits believers. 'What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?'

If this internal work be neglected, poverty will come upon all their Christian life. The noise and bustling vanity of the age tend directly toward such disregard. It must be opposed by renewed diligence in cultivating deep, inward, spiritual religion. We must not measure our attainments in piety, by palpable usefulness, or the stir of beneficent action, however much this is our duty. The grand affair of life is the building up of the spiritual temple."

—James W. Alexander

"Mercy and the revelation thereof is the only antidote against sin. It is of a thawing nature: it will loose the heart that is frozen up in sin; yea, it will make the unwilling willing to come to Christ for life."

—John Bunyan

"God hath set a Saviour against sin, a heaven against hell, light against darkness, good against evil, and the breadth and length and depth and height of the grace that is in Himself for my good, against all the power and strength and subtlety of every enemy."

—John Bunyan

"Joy must not always be judged of by the outward expressions, for a man will laugh more at a jest than he will at news of a pardon."

—Philip Henry

"What the soul is to the body that the saints are to the world, the balsam and life of it; yet, as the body abuses the soul, so doth this world the saints."

—Philip Henry

"We must not judge of God's work by the beginning; God seemeth an adversary for a while to them that indeed enjoy His eternal love. Let patience have its perfect work, and when providence comes to a period, you will know more."

—Thomas Manton

"The afflicted see more in the Scriptures than others do; the secure and fortunate read them as they do Ovid's verses."

—Martin Luther

"If you are opening your heart to the Holy Spirit's searching, you will have little thought of applying the sermon to the man in the next pew."

—The S. S. Times

"Stoop, stoop; it is a low, low door by which we enter into the kingdom of God."

—Samuel Rutherford

## ***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.

**PLENARY INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.** The doctrine that the Scripture is fully inspired of God, so that not only the ideas but the very words of the genuine text in the original Hebrew and Greek are the Word of God, completely free from errors of whatever kind.

**POLYGAMY.** The state of having more wives than one at the same time. This is contrary to the original institution of marriage (Gen. 2:24). During the old Testament period polygamy was temporarily tolerated but not actually sanctioned by God; its worst features were restricted by God's law, pending its complete elimination.

**POLYTHEISM.** Belief in many gods.

**POPE.** The title claimed by the Bishop of Rome as supreme earthly head of the Roman Catholic Church. ("Pope" originally meant "father"). (There is no other head of the Church, but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof. . . ."—Westminster Confession, XXV.6).

**POPERY.** The system of doctrines and practices maintained by the Roman Catholic Church. This system is chiefly summarized in the Decrees of the Council of Trent, A. D. 1545-1563. It is a mixture of truth and error; giving false answers to the crucial questions about the way of salvation, it must be adjudged, as a system, to be false.

**PRAYER.** "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies" (S.C. 98).

**PREACHING.** The public proclamation and application of the Word of God, by one who has been duly approved and called to the office of the ministry of the Word. (See The Larger Catechism, Q. 158, 159. Strictly speaking, preaching is a function of ordained ministers and licentiates, in distinction from exhorting which may properly be done by other Christians).

**PREDESTINATION.** "The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass" (S.C. 7).

**PRESBYTER.** Literally, an elder. Presbyters are officers of the New Testament Church, of two classes: (1) those who only rule (today called "elders" or "ruling elders"); (2) those who in addition to ruling also teach or preach (today called "ministers"). All ministers and all ruling elders are presbyters.

**PRE-EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.** The doctrine that Jesus Christ, before his birth of the Virgin Mary, existed from all eternity as the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity. (See Shorter Catechism, Q. 21,22).

**PRESBYTERIANISM.** That form of church government in which the church is governed by a plurality of presbyters (ministers and ruling elders) in a series of graded courts of which the highest is a synod or general assembly. (See article "Bible Authority for Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods", by the Rev. Frank D. Frazer, in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", July-September 1952, pages 119-123).

**PROFESSOR.** "Any person who makes an open acknowledgment of the religion of Christ, or who outwardly manifests his attachments to Christianity. All real Christians are professors, but all professors are not real Christians" (Buck's Theological Dictionary).

**PROTESTANTS.** Those who adhere to the evangelical religion of the Bible over against the doctrines and claims of the Roman Catholic Church. The name "Protestants" was first given in Germany in 1529 to the adherents of the Reformer Martin Luther because they protested against a decree of the emperor Charles V and the Diet of Spires, and appealed to a general council of the church.

**PROVIDENCE.** "God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions" (S.C. 11).

**PURGATORY.** According to Roman Catholic theology, purgatory is the state in which persons who die guilty of venial (slight) sins, or have not fully satisfied for the punishment due on account of their sins, suffer for a period of time. According to this doctrine, all souls in purgatory will eventually enter heaven. (The doctrine of purgatory is wholly without Scriptural support, and is contrary to the Bible truth that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. See the Westminster Confession of Faith, XXXII.1, which, after speaking of heaven and hell, adds: "Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.")

**PURITANS.** That party in the Church of England in the 17th Century that sought a greater degree of reformation and purity of the Church than had yet been attained. (After the passing of the Act of Uniformity, 1662, the Puritans were commonly called Nonconformists, and later Dissenters).

# *Sketches from Our History*

## *Contending for the Faith Through the Ages*

### CHAPTER VIII

#### JOHN CALVIN, THE REFORMER OF GENEVA

##### 1. Calvin's home and early life

John Calvin the Reformer was by birth a Frenchman. He was born at Noyon, in Picardy, in northern France, some 67 miles from Paris, on the tenth day of July 1509. At the time of Calvin's birth, Martin Luther was 26 years old, and Zwingli about 25. Protestantism had not yet appeared on the scene; several years would pass before Luther would nail his famous 95 Theses to the church door at Wittenberg. Europe was slumbering uneasily in the age-old priestly system of Romanism, namely, salvation by sacraments and human merit.

John Calvin was the second child in a large family; he had four brothers and two half-sisters. His father was a lawyer who held several legal or administrative offices in both church and state. His mother was known as a devout Christian. Calvin's father wished his son to enter the service of the church, and John's early education was directed toward that goal.

In 1521, at the age of 12 years, John Calvin was appointed a chaplain of the cathedral of Noyon, and received the income pertaining to this position, though the actual duties of the position would be carried out by an older man, an ordained priest, who would receive only a fraction of the salary. The fact that Calvin could be appointed to ecclesiastical office at the age of twelve, by a legal fiction, receiving most of the salary while another man performed the duties, gives an interesting sidelight on the corruptions of the church of that day. This arrangement was of course considered perfectly honest and respectable, and was, indeed, an example of a common practice. Yet this kind of corruption was one of the lesser evils of the church which called for reform. The doctrinal errors were far more serious.

Meantime, Calvin was getting his elementary education in the household of a local nobleman named Montmor, along with the sons of the family. Because of an outbreak of the plague at Noyon, they moved to Paris in 1523, and at the age of 14 Calvin first saw that great city. In Paris, Calvin continued his studies, taking up, among other things, logic and philosophy. His great ability as a scholar soon became evident to all. During this period Calvin also made many friends among well-known people in Paris. The notion that he was an unsociable bookworm or recluse is entirely unfounded; Calvin had numerous friends and he knew how to be friendly himself.

The authorities of the cathedral at Noyon were quite pleased with Calvin's success as a student, and twice promoted him to "better" positions in the church. Calvin was not ordained as a priest, but he preached a number of sermons to the people. But Calvin was not to become a priest of the church. Calvin's father began to feel that the profession of law offered a more promising career than the service of the church. It seems, too, that about this time John took up the study of the Scriptures and began to be critical of some features of Roman Catholic worship. At all events, when his father suggested a change to the study of law, Calvin readily complied, going from Paris to Orleans in 1528 to study law under Pierre Taisan de l'Etoile, the outstanding jurist of the day. At Orleans Calvin made rapid progress in the study of law, and also took up classical studies. He worked so hard at his studies that he probably injured his health.

In 1529 Calvin moved from Orleans to Bourges, where he continued his study of law, this time under a famous Italian scholar. Here he learned Greek and began the study of the New Testament in its original language. It was now twelve years since Luther had nailed his 95 Theses to the Wittenberg church door. The doctrines of Protestantism were now being widely spread through France as well as other countries of Europe. But Calvin was not yet a Protestant, and we may add that he was probably not yet a Christian, for at this time he showed much more interest in classical studies than in the Christian religion.

In 1531 Calvin's father died, which made it necessary for him to leave Bourges and return to Paris. Here he continued his study of Greek and began with Hebrew—at that time a new and rare subject for anyone except Jews. The next year Calvin published his first book, a commentary in Latin on one of the writings of the Roman author Seneca. From this it will be noted that his chief interest was still in classical studies rather than in Christianity.

##### 2. Calvin's Conversion

Although Calvin seemed to stand at the open door of a great career as a humanist or classical scholar, God had a different purpose for his life. Calvin was converted to Christ and became an earnest and faithful Christian. Later he wrote of his "sudden conversion", which he attributed directly and entirely to the special grace of God.

His life was completely revolutionized; from this time on, Christianity was everything to him.

Although Calvin was himself only a novice as a Christian, his gift of leadership soon became evident, and he became a teacher and counsellor of many. Very soon he became publicly prominent, and an attempt was made by the authorities to arrest him. Though he was able to escape, his room was raided and his books and papers taken. He went to Noyon, then later returned to Paris. Being now nearly 25 years of age, he would, except for his conversion, probably have

been ordained to the priesthood. Facing the question of whether to try to reform the Church of Rome from within or to break wholly with it, he decided in favor of the latter course, and resigned his positions in the church.

About 1534 Calvin was at the city of Poitiers, where he was able to counsel and influence a number of men. It was near Poitiers that Calvin for the first time celebrated the Lord's Supper as a Protestant. This communion service was held in the security of a cave, with a slab of rock as the communion table.

(To be continued)

## *Studies in the Epistle to the Romans*

### LESSON 92

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

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

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

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

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

Yet it must be remembered here, as all through this section of the epistle that the weak brother is mistaken and his ideas are wrong. They are

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

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

There may be circumstances, of course, when the true edification of our brethren will be promoted by opposing their mistaken ideas rather than by yielding to their scruples. We find an example of this kind in Paul's own conduct with reference to his fellow-apostle, Peter. It is recorded

in Galatians 2:11-16, and it is interesting to note that it concerns a matter closely related to the question of clean and unclean foods discussed in Romans 14. Peter first ate freely with Gentile Christians; then later "he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision". Under these circumstances Paul did not say: "Peter is a weak brother on this question of eating with Gentiles; to avoid offending him, I will refrain from eating with Gentiles during this visit to Antioch; I will not even mention the embarrassing subject." Paul did not say anything like that. On the contrary, he tells us that he "withstood him (Peter) to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Gal. 2:11). But certainly we are to understand that Paul's conduct on this occasion was motivated not by selfishness but by Christian love and a sincere desire to be spiritually helpful to Peter and the others who were of the same opinion. In this particular case, not only the interests of truth but the spiritual welfare of Peter himself required open opposition and rebuke. In other cases, Paul was willing unselfishly to deny himself for the spiritual benefit of others. Our action must always be unselfish, our motive must always be love, for our brother's edification. But the particular course of conduct to be used in seeking his edification must be decided according to circumstances.

#### Questions:

1. What is the general subject of 15:1-13?
2. Of what argument is 15:1 the conclusion?
3. What kind of conduct, on the part of the strong Christian, would amount to a selfish disregard of the obligation of Christian love?
4. What is the relative importance of the strong Christian's liberty to eat foods and the weak Christian's spiritual welfare?
5. What tragedy is often involved in the attitude of weak Christians toward the kind of problems Paul has been discussing?
6. Why may not the special ideas of the weak brethren be made into a creed or rule for the whole church?
7. What is the meaning of the word "edification"?
8. What is the difference between pleasing our neighbor, and pleasing our neighbor for his good to edification?
9. Will the edification of weak brethren always be promoted by refraining from conduct concerning which they have scruples?
10. What lesson is taught by Paul's rebuking Peter as recorded in Galatians 2:11-16?

#### LESSON 93

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

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

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

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

Just as Jesus Christ was supremely unselfish in surrendering Himself to the will of God, so

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

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

We should note well what this implies concerning the Scriptures. First of all, it implies their historical truthfulness. We cannot receive patience, comfort and hope from the Scriptures unless they are true. The record of God's mighty

works and His dealings with His people of old cannot help us unless it is a true record. If a large part of the Old Testament is unreliable and even historically false, as the liberal critics claim, then its religious value is destroyed.

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

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

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

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

#### Questions:

1. What Psalm is quoted in 15:3?
2. What class of Psalms does this Psalm belong to?
3. What is the meaning of the statement quoted from the Psalm: "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me"?
4. Of what does Paul hold Christ up as an example?
5. How can the Christian follow Christ's example?
6. What does the apostle mean by the expression "whatsoever things were written aforetime"?
7. What does Paul's statement imply concerning the character of the Scriptures?
8. What absurd claim do the Neo-orthodox theologians make concerning Scripture?
9. What does Paul's statement imply concerning the relation of the various parts of Scripture to each other?
10. What promises of God are for those who are in Christ?
11. What does Paul's statement in 15:4 imply concerning the Christian's habits of Bible study?
12. What is the meaning of "hope" in 15:4? What does it include?

#### LESSON 94

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

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

"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus" (15:5). In this verse,

the expression "to be likeminded one toward another" does not mean that there must be no differences of opinion among the members of the church, but rather that the members are to have a harmonious feeling and attitude toward each

*members to have a harmonious  
feeling and attitude toward*

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Questions:

1. Is it wrong for differences of opinion on minor matters to exist among the members of a church?
2. What is the real meaning of the expression "to be likeminded one toward another"?
3. In spite of their differences about questions of foods, what were the "strong" and the "weak" brethren all to seek for?
4. How does an attitude of harmony and unity come to a church?
5. Why can real harmony not come by human planning or effort?
6. What is the meaning of the word "receive" in 15:7?
7. What conditions in a church are forbidden by 15:7?
8. What two reasons does Paul give why Christians should receive one another?
9. How is the fact that Christ has received us a motive for us to receive one another?
10. Why can a church torn by party strife not glorify God properly?

#### LESSON 95

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

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

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (15:8). "The apostle intends to show how it was that Christ had received those to whom he wrote. He had come to minister to the Jews, verse 8, and also to cause

the Gentiles to glorify God, verse 9 (Charles Hodge). These two classes made up the membership of the church at Rome: Paul undertakes to show that Christ has received both.

The expression "a minister of the circumcision" means "a minister sent to the Jews". The word "minister", of course, means "servant". For the truth of God" — that is, to maintain God's

truthfulness in fulfilling His promises, as the apostle presently explains.

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

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

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

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

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

"And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust" (15:12). This verse is quoted from Isaiah 11:1,10. This passage of Isaiah very clearly and definitely predicts that the coming Messiah would reign, not only over the Jews, but also over the Gentiles. Paul's quotation is again taken from the Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament, though the meaning is identical with that of the original Hebrew. "The promise of the prophet is, that from the decayed and fallen house of David, one should arise, whose dominion should embrace all nations, and in whom Gentiles as well as Jews should trust. In

the fulfilment of this prophecy Christ came, and preached salvation to those who were near and to those who were far off. As both classes had been thus kindly received by the condescending Saviour, and united into one community, they should recognize and love each other as brethren, laying aside all censoriousness and contempt, neither judging nor despising one another" (Charles Hodge).

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

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

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

#### Questions:

1. What two classes of Christians made up the membership of the Church of Rome?
2. What is the meaning of the word "minister" in 15:8?
3. What was the purpose of Christ's coming as a "minister" to the Jews?
4. What is meant by the "truth" of God?
5. What is the mercy for which the Gentiles were to glorify God?
6. How many Old Testament passages does Paul quote in 15:9-12?
7. What is implied concerning the Gentiles in Psalm 18:49?

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

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

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

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

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

## LESSON 96

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

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

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

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

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

"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God,

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

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

of the minister as a sacrificing priest and of the sacrament as a sacrifice.

**Questions:**

1. As Paul approaches the end of his Epistle, of what fact does he assure the Roman Christians?
2. What is the source and nature of the goodness of which the Romans are said to be full in 15:14?
3. How do we know that this does not mean that they were in themselves good by nature?
4. Did Paul's writing this Epistle to the Roman Christians imply that they were ignorant of the truths taught in the Epistle?
5. Why was it not presumptuous on Paul's part for him to write an Epistle to the Romans instructing them in the truth?
6. What is the common meaning of the word translated "minister" in 15:16?
7. What religious office does this word often describe in Scripture?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**LESSON 97**

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

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

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

"For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (15:18, 19). In verse 18 Paul carefully explains that he had no intention of

claiming any credit for himself; he would not even dare to speak of anything except what Christ had done through him. "He would not glory in the flesh, or in anything pertaining to himself, but only in Christ, and in what he had accomplished. The conversion of the Gentiles was Christ's work, not Paul's; and therefore Paul could glory in it without self-exaltation. It is to be remarked that the apostle represents himself as a mere instrument in the hands of Christ for the conversion of men; the real efficiency he ascribes to the Redeemer. This passage, therefore, exhibits evidence that Paul regarded Christ as still exercising a controlling agency over the souls of men, and rendering effectual the labors of his faithful ministers. Such power the sacred writers never attribute to any being but God" (Charles Hodge).

"To make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed" (15:18b). To make the Gentiles obedient, of course, means to make them obedient to the requirements of the Gospel of Christ. They were made obedient, not merely "by word", but also "by deed". That is, not merely was the truth of the Gospel preached to them, but this preaching was accompanied by the inward operation of the Holy Spirit which alone could make it truly effectual for their salvation. The outward preaching of the Gospel, though necessary, is not of itself sufficient to bring men to salvation. There must be in addition the effective operation of the Holy Spirit. Compare Acts 16:14, where it is said of Lydia that the Lord opened her heart, so that she attended unto the things which were

spoken by Paul. The fact that the outward preaching of the message is powerless by itself should remind us of our dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit for real results. Mere campaigns and programs of evangelism or missionary work will not bring a single soul to salvation unless the power of the Holy Spirit gives new life. Therefore we should always pray that this life-giving operation of the Spirit may accompany the preaching of the Word.

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

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

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

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

Besides the power of miracles, Paul mentions the power of the Holy Spirit. In addition to the miracles (which themselves were works of the Holy Spirit), there was the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit in human hearts, by which the conversion of the elect was accomplished. Compare 1 Corinthians 2:4, where Paul says, "And my

speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power". Paul did not place any reliance in his own ability as an orator or preacher, but only in the power of the Holy Spirit with accompanied and followed the preached message.

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

#### Questions:

1. What God-given right did Paul have as an apostle and missionary to the Gentiles?
2. Why was Paul's glorying not a sinful boasting?
3. What kind of things did Paul boast of?
4. Why did Paul not claim any credit for himself?
5. What truth concerning Jesus Christ is implied by Paul's words in 15:18?
6. To what were the Gentiles made obedient?
7. What did Paul mean by saying that the Gentiles were made obedient "by word and deed"?
8. Why is the outward preaching of the Gospel not sufficient to bring men to salvation?
9. What truth concerning Lydia is taught in Acts 16:14?
10. Of what should we be reminded by the fact that the outward preaching of the Gospel is powerless by itself?
11. What should we pray for to accompany the preaching of the Word?
12. How may the first part of 15:19 be literally translated?
13. What two forms of power made Paul's preaching effective?
14. Why are miracles called "signs" in the Bible?
15. What is the difference between a miracle and an event which is not a miracle?

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

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

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

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

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

## LESSON 98

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

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

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

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

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

There can of course be no objection to Christian people changing their church membership on the basis of sincere conviction of truth. It is every Christian's duty to join that church which he believes to be closest to the Scripture pattern. If ministers who cultivate members of other churches would make their appeal upon this high plane of conviction of truth, no one could rightly complain. Such competition between churches would be ethical and honest. But it is to be feared that the attempt to proselyte members of other churches is seldom conducted on such a high plane at the present day. Lower and more worldly motives are appealed to, or bait of some sort is offer-

ed as an inducement to people to leave a strict and faithful church for one that is larger and of a more popular type. This is a form of building on another man's foundation that should be regarded with contempt by all right-minded people. Small denominations that struggle hard to maintain Biblical standards of faith and life are constantly up against this unethical competition.

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

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

"For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you" (15:22). The meaning of this verse is, that Paul's intention of visiting Rome has been delayed by his desire to engage in pioneer missionary work, preaching the Gospel where Christ had not been named. In Rome, of course, there was already a church; the Gospel had been preached there. For Paul to preach in Rome could not be called pioneer missionary work, for the foundation there had already been laid by others.

"But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you" (15:23). What does Paul mean by "having no more place in these parts"? Some scholars understand the word "place" as opportunity, as in Hebrews 12:17 ("no place of repentance"). The meaning then would be that Paul no longer had any opportunity for preaching the Gospel at Corinth, where he was at the time of writing Romans; or, that he had no more opportunity for preaching in that region. The more probable meaning is, however, that he had already covered the ground, so that there remained no more unevangelized territory; "having no longer a place in these parts where Christ is not known" (Charles Hodge). This does not mean, of course, that Paul in his missionary work covered every town and village of a region. From the book of Acts we know that Paul selected the strate-

gically important centers for his preaching — such cities as Ephesus, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth. In these cities he would be heard by people from the entire surrounding area, and the Gospel of Christ would soon be known throughout the region. Paul did not stay on indefinitely in any one center of work; having established a church with its officers and members, he left it to carry on the local work, while he pressed on to new territory.

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

#### Questions:

1. What is the literal meaning of the word "strive" in 15:20?
2. What did Paul regard as a matter of honor?
3. What does Paul mean by building on another man's foundation?
4. Is it always wrong for a preacher of the Gospel to build on another man's foundation?
5. What warning does Paul give in 1 Cor. 3:10?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### LESSON 99

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

##### B. Paul's Hope to visit Rome on the Way to Spain. 15:22-33, Cont.

"Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you" (15:24a). "Whether Paul ever accomplished his purpose of visiting Spain, is a matter of doubt. There is no historical record of his having done so, either in the New Testament, or in the early ecclesiastical writers; though most of these writers seem to have taken it for granted. His whole plan was probably deranged by the occurrences at Jerusalem, which led to his long imprisonment at Caesarea, and his being sent in bonds to Rome" (Charles Hodge). Clement of Rome, who wrote from Italy about the year 96, states that Paul "reached the bounds of the west". Spain was the western limit of the Roman world. The "Tarshish" spoken of in the Old Testament was probably a part of southern Spain. Rome had held power in Spain since about 200 B.C., and in Paul's day the civilization and culture of the southern part of Spain was thoroughly Romanized, and had been so for nearly a century.

The fact that Paul purposed to visit Spain, the western limit of the Roman world, shows how seriously he took his commission as the apostle

of the Gentiles. He was not satisfied with the great accomplishments already achieved, but longed to press on to the regions beyond. Even so the church of the present day should not be willing to settle down complacently in its existing limits, but should eagerly press on to the regions beyond, as God gives opportunity and ability to do so.

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

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

to Jerusalem was a part of his service to the Christians there.

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

*Matters going to Mission*

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

Christians cooperated wholeheartedly in this enterprise.

#### Questions:

1. What do we know about whether Paul ever visited Spain?
2. What event may have interferred with his plan to visit Spain?
3. What statement of Clement of Rome may imply that Paul did reach Spain?
4. What name is given in the Old Testament to a part of Spain?
5. When did Rome begin to hold power in Spain?
6. What was the position of Spain in the Roman world?
7. What does Paul's intention to visit Spain show about his attitude toward his missionary task?
8. What should the church of the present day learn from Paul's attitude toward the missionary task?
9. What was Paul's two-fold purpose in his plan to visit Rome?
10. What is implied in the expression "to be brought on my way" in 15:24?
11. What is the meaning of the word "minister" in 15:25?
12. What is meant by "them of Macedonia and Achaia" in 15:26?
13. How may the expression "to make a certain contribution" be literally translated?
14. What was the condition of the Christians in Palestine at this time?
15. What request was made of Paul by the apostolic council of Acts 15?
16. How would goodwill between Jewish and Gentile elements in the church be promoted, and prejudice eliminated?
17. Was the contribution to the needy Christians of Palestine merely a freewill offering?
18. Why were the Gentile Christians the "debtors" of the Jewish Christians of Palestine?
19. How did the Gentile Christians cooperate in contributing money for the saints in Palestine?

#### LESSON 100

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

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

"When therefore I have performed this, and

have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain" (15:28). Here Paul speaks of the money contributed by the Gentile Christians

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

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

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

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

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

#### Questions:

1. What word does Paul use, in 15:28, to describe the money contributed by the Gentile Christians?
2. Why could contributions of money be spoken of as "fruit"?
3. What is meant by saying that money is the acid test of a person's Christianity?
4. Of what was the money Paul was taking to Jerusalem an evidence?
5. If a professing Christian is selfish and stingy about contributing to Christ's church and kingdom, what should he seriously consider?
6. What does Paul mean by the word "sealed" in 15:28?
7. How would Paul probably feel when the money was safely delivered to the proper officers of the church in Jerusalem?
8. Besides the preaching of the Gospel, what matter did Paul take very seriously?
9. Why is there no room for careless or slipshod methods in the financial affairs and business transactions of the church?
10. What wish did Paul express at the beginning of this Epistle?
11. What confidence does Paul express in 15:29?
12. On what ground did Paul's confidence rest?

## LESSON 101

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jews. All through his career as an apostle they persecuted him and tried to kill him.

"And that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints" (15:31b). This is the second thing that Paul asks the Roman Christians to pray for—the successful completion of his business on his trip to Jerusalem. There was need to pray for this, too. For it was not only the non-Christian Jews that were opposed to Paul; there were also those among the Christian Jews who regarded him with suspicion and bitterness. The fact that he was engaged in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles would lead the more narrow-minded of the Jewish Christians to be prejudiced against him. "Paul desired that the work of love on which he was to go to Jerusalem might be favorably received by the Christians of that city. Paul labored for those whom he knew regarded him with little favor; he calls them saints, recognises their Christian character, notwithstanding their unkindness, and urges his brethren to pray that they might be willing to accept of kindness at his hands" (Charles Hodge).

*Prejudice  
Jewish Christians*

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

"Now the peace of God be with you all. Amen" (15:33). This is Paul's prayer for the Roman Christians—a brief prayer, but a very inclusive one. "The peace of God, that peace which God gives, includes all the mercies necessary for the perfect blessedness of the soul" (Charles Hodge). Christianity is the one and only religion which brings men the peace of God. It does this by first of all bringing men peace with

*fathers of Jew*

**God** (Rom. 5:1). Through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, the awful enmity between man and God is canceled and removed, and the sinner is reconciled to God. Thereupon the peace of God comes into the person's life. He is at war with sin—in bitter conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil—but through it all he has the peace of God. The Gospel does not promise us freedom from conflict but it does promise us the peace of God in our lives.

**Questions:**

1. What is the efficacy of prayer, apart from its influence on the mind of the person who prays?
2. Why did Paul feel the need of the prayers of the Roman Christians?
3. What is the first reason which Paul urges why the Roman Christians should pray for him?
4. What is the second reason which Paul urges why the Roman Christians should pray for him?
5. What is meant by urging them to pray "for the love of the Spirit"?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LESSON 102

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

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

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea" (16:1). Cenchrea was one of the two harbors or seaports of Corinth, in Greece, located about nine miles from the city of Corinth. Paul had visited this place, we learn from Acts 18:18. Phebe was "a servant" of the Christian Church in this town. The word "servant" may also be translated "deacon" or "deaconess". Whether Phebe was a deacon in the technical sense, that is, an ordained officer of the church, has been debated by New Testament scholars. Some have held that both men and women were ordained as deacons, while others consider it more probable that "deaconesses" such as Phebe held a different position; in other words, that a "deaconess" is not the same thing as "a woman deacon". Charles Hodge states: "It appears that in the apostolic church, elderly females were selected to attend upon the poor and sick of their own sex." 1 Timothy 3:11 is a possible reference to women deacons (note that in this text the word "their" is in italics, not being in the Greek; and the word "wives" may equally well be translated "women").

At any rate, Phebe was a servant of the church at Cenchrea, whether or not "servant" be understood in the official sense as "deacon". Apparently Phebe was about to journey to Rome, and would arrive there soon, before Paul himself could expect to be there. Hence he takes

advantage of the opportunity afforded by writing the Epistle, to "commend" her to the church at Rome. The word translated "commend" means literally "to place together", hence it means "to introduce", implying, of course, to introduce someone with approval.

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

We do not know the occasion of Phebe's visit to Rome, nor the nature of her business there. But there evidently was business, for Paul mentions it, and asks that the Roman Christians assist her in it according to need. It would be interesting if we could know what Phebe's business at Rome was. But the Bible does not satisfy our curiosity on this point. However, we may be sure that a foreigner arriving at Rome would need considerable assistance from someone before becoming able to find her way around in the capital and largest city of the Roman Empire. Phebe

may have been sent by the church on special business of some kind, which would involve need for local assistance. Those who have served as foreign missionaries know how much a little timely help by local residents can mean.

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

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

but the rank and file of "lay" Christians who, when they see a need, set themselves to do something about it.

#### Questions:

1. Where was Cenchrea, and what was its importance?
2. How may the word "servant" in 16:1 also be translated?
3. What question exists as to the office and work of "deaconesses"?
4. What journey was Phebe apparently about to undertake?
5. What does the word "commend" in 16:1 mean?
6. How were the Roman Christians asked to receive Phebe?
7. Why would Phebe need help while at Rome?
8. What may possibly have been the special work of Phebe at Cenchrea?
9. Why can we not know definitely about the nature of her work?
10. What is needed besides ministers and missionaries to make Christianity successful?

#### LESSON 103

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

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

In verses 3 to 16 Paul sends greetings to no less than 26 persons whom he mentions by name, besides others included in their households. From this we gain a view of the breadth of Paul's friendship. Though the apostle himself had never been in Rome, he nevertheless knows by name more than two dozen Christians then at Rome. Presumably Paul was personally acquainted with these people, having met them elsewhere than at Rome. Or is it possible that in the case of some of these people he knew them indirectly, through others, or by correspondence. But it is more likely that he knew them personally, as he gives details about a number of them. If Paul knew this many people in the one city of Rome, how many Christian friends he must have had in various other parts of the Empire! This warmth of personal friendship shows how false is that idea of Paul held by some people, according to which he was a scholar who was interested only in academic arguments or "theological hair-splitting". "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Prov. 18:24), and the large number of Paul's friends proves him to have been a very friendly person.

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

This passage of the Epistle also shows us how much women helped in the cause of the Gospel. "From the beginning females have taken an active and important part in the promotion of the gospel. They seem, more than others, to have contributed to Christ of their substance. They were his most faithful attendants, 'last at the cross, and first at the sepulchre' " (Charles Hodge). Besides Phebe, several women are mentioned in this list of Paul's friends: Priscilla, Mary, Junia, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, the mother of Rufus, Julia, and the sister of Nereus. Of some of these Paul says that they "labored in the Lord", or "labored much in the Lord". Priscilla with her husband Aquila was one of Paul's "helpers in Christ Jesus". The present writer has

heard Paul called "a woman hater" because of his instructions concerning women in connection with public ministry and ruling office in the church (1 Cor. 14:34, 35; 1 Tim. 2:11-15). But Paul was far from being a "woman hater", and it is clear that he welcomed, appreciated and highly valued the services of women in the promotion of the Gospel. As in Paul's day, so in the churches of the present day, there is a wide field for Christian service open to women apart from the offices of minister and ruling elder which it is clearly not Scriptural for women to hold. We may be sure that the Christian women mentioned in Romans 16 did not seek to hold those positions in the church which God has limited to men, but devoted themselves whole-heartedly to those forms of Christian service which were appropriate for women. There are indeed forms of Christian service in which women can far excel men, and some forms of service which must be performed almost exclusively by women.

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

in tones of icy formality, they are breaking the God-given precept of Romans 16:16, and committing a sin against God.

#### Questions:

1. To how many people does Paul send greetings by name?
2. What is shown by the fact that Paul, who had never himself been in Rome, knew by name more than two dozen Christians in that city?
3. How do we know that Paul was a friendly person?
4. What kind of friendship existed between Paul and the people mentioned in 16:3-16?
5. Why should we not choose worldly people as our special friends?
6. How many women are mentioned by name in 16:3-16?
7. What was Paul's attitude toward women as Christian workers?
8. Why is it unfair to Paul to speak of him as a "woman hater"?
9. In what respect is the precept of 16:6 binding on us today?
10. Why are we not required to greet our fellow Christians by actually kissing them today?
11. How can the obligation of 16:16 be fulfilled today?
12. How do church members sometimes violate the God-given precept of 16:16?

#### LESSON 104

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

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

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

person's life. But right living comes from truth, not from falsehood, and false doctrine will result in evil living in the end.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### E. Concluding Doxology. 16:24-27

Verses 25-27 form a long and complicated sentence in the Greek. The teaching, however, is clear. It is the power of God that establishes the Christian, and this power of God is exerted according to (through) the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is referred to as "the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest. . ." (16:25, 26). Thus the Gospel "is not a system of human philosophy, or

the result of human investigation, but it is a revelation of the purpose of God. Paul often presents the idea that the plan of redemption was formed from eternity, and is such as no eye could discover, and no heart conceive" (Charles Hodge). From eternity the Gospel was in the mind of God, until finally it was revealed to men, partly in the Old Testament, and fully in the New.

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

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

#### Questions:

1. What does Paul warn the Roman Christians against in 16:17?
2. What is the relation between true doctrine and right living?
3. What is to be done about teachers of false doctrine?
4. Why is it wrong to say that Christian love requires us to tolerate false doctrines?
5. What must we know if we are to "mark" those who promote false doctrine?
6. What is the meaning of the word "simple" in 16:18?
7. Why is the "simple" person liable to be deceived in matters of religion?
8. What does Proverbs 14:15 say about the "simple" person?
9. What was the character of the false teachers of Paul's day, as described in 16:18?
10. Concerning what did Paul wish the Romans to be wise, and concerning what did he wish them to be "simple"?
11. What victory does every true Christian and every true Christian church gain?

12. By what power is this victory gained?
  13. What position did Erastus hold in the city of Corinth?
  14. What is the meaning of "chamberlain" in 16:23?
  15. What is the meaning of the statement that Tertius wrote the Epistle, 16:22?
  16. What does Paul mean by saying that the Gospel was a mystery kept secret since the world began?
  17. What is the connection of the Old Testament Scriptures with the Gospel, according to 16:26?
  18. Why is God called "God only wise" in 16:27?
  19. To whom is the entire work of salvation ascribed in this Epistle?
  20. In what work of God is His infinite wisdom particularly displayed?
- The End
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## ***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:**

Being a Calvinist I believe as we read in the Old Testament, what the Lord does, it is for ever. This is confirmed many times throughout the Word of God. Many passages could be given, but I will only give one, Romans 8:38,39, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life. . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." When we come to Revelation 22:19, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." What is the teaching of this verse?

**Answer:**

Rev. 22:19 is a solemn warning against the sin of taking something away from the inspired Word of God. Though the expression "the book of this prophecy" must be taken as referring specifically to the Book of Revelation, the principle that is involved applies to the entirety of inspired Scripture, both the Old Testament and the New. To add to or take away from the Word of God is a terrible sin. It is not surprising that a terrible curse or judgment is pronounced on all who may dare to add to or subtract from the Word of God.

The problem of this text concerns how the language used can be reconciled with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (eternal security of the believer in Christ) which is so plainly taught in Rom. 8:38,39 and numerous other passages of the Bible.

We should realize, first of all, that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints rests upon its own solid foundation in Scripture and cannot be overthrown by citing other texts which involve

difficulties. The doctrine of perseverance is proved by overwhelming Scriptural evidence; in comparison with the Scripture proofs of this doctrine, the texts which present difficulties are comparatively few, and none of them disproves the doctrine.

The following statement on this subject is quoted from Dr. Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* (page 548):

"There are warnings against apostasy which would seem to be quite uncalled for, if the believer could not fall away, Matt. 24:12; Col. 1:23; Heb. 2:1; 3:14; 6:11; 1 John 2:6. But these warnings regard the whole matter from the side of man and are seriously meant. They prompt self-examination, and are instrumental in keeping believers in the way of perseverance. They do not prove that any of those addressed will apostatize, but simply that the use of means is necessary to prevent them from committing this sin. Compare Acts 27:22-25 with verse 31 for an illustration of this principle."

Dr. Berkhof's statement about the Bible warnings against apostasy is also applicable to the warning of Rev. 22:19 against taking something away from the text of Scripture. The warning of Rev. 22:19 does not prove that true believers will ever commit this sin, nor that God will ever take away a true believer's part from the book of life, the holy city, etc. On the contrary, the warning of Rev. 22:19 is itself one of the means used by the Holy Spirit to prevent true believers from committing such sin and suffering such consequences.

The question might then be raised, does not Rev. 22:19 seem to imply that someone who already has a part in the book of life may, by committing the sin spoken of, forfeit that part? In other words, does not this text seem to imply

that a person who already has eternal life may lose it? In answer to this, we may quote from A. A. Hodge, **Outlines of Theology** (1949 edition, pages 544, 545):

"The outward word necessarily comes to all men alike, addressing them in the classes in which they regard themselves as standing; and as professors, or 'those who think they stand', are many of them self-deceived, this outward word truly implies the uncertainty of their position (as far as man's knowledge goes), and their liability to fall.

"... God secures the perseverance in holiness of all his true people by the use of means adapted to their nature as rational, moral, and free agents. Viewed in themselves they are always, as God warns them, unstable, and therefore, as he exhorts them, they must diligently cleave to his grace. It is always true, also, that if they apostatize they shall be lost; but by means of these very threatenings his Spirit graciously secures them from apostasy."

Applying Dr. Hodge's statements to the problem of Rev. 22:19, we may say that (1) Those who commit the sin of taking away from the text of Scripture thereby forfeit the part of the book of life, etc., which they may have confidently expected to inherit; (2) The text does not teach or imply that true believers will commit this sin, but solemnly warns them against doing so; (3) The text does not teach or imply that an elect person can become non-elect, nor that any name will ever actually be erased from "the book of life". The Bible teaches plainly that God's election is from eternity (Eph. 1:4; Rev. 17:8) and unto eternal life (John 17:2; Acts 13:48; Titus 1:2). This being true, God's election cannot be an election to a mere temporary standing in the state of grace, which the believer may possess today but lose tomorrow.

In reality the sin warned against in Rev. 22:18,19 was committed by some of the heretics in the early centuries of the church, and it is committed by the modernists of the present day, who deny the truth of parts of the Scriptures, and explain away the meaning of other parts. It is a fearful thing to trifle with the Word of the living God. The reader is referred to the article on **The Unbreakable Scripture** in this issue of **Blue Banner Faith and Life**.

— J. G. Vos

#### **Question:**

Is it right and proper to use the Apostles' Creed in a church service? A good many churches use it and some do not. When did it first come into use?

#### **Answer:**

The so-called Apostles' Creed is ancient, but it certainly was not written by the apostles. The

following statement is from George P. Fisher's **History of the Christian Church**, page 67:

"The simple confession of faith in Christ, made at baptism, gradually expanded itself, until, in process of time, it grew, in the Western Church, into what was known as the Apostles' Creed. This, however, differed somewhat in form in the different churches, as Rufinus found to be the case when, late in the fourth century, he entered into the study of the subject. The name of Apostles' Creed may have been first given to it because it was made up of the teachings of the apostles, either recorded in the gospels or transmitted by tradition. As a written symbol, repeated by the candidate for baptism, a confession of this sort, the precursor of the Apostles' Creed, was probably in use in the church at Rome after the middle of the third century. Afterwards the legend arose that the apostles had together composed it, each contributing a portion."

The Westminster Assembly of Divines, which formulated the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, appended the Apostles' Creed, along with the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, to the Shorter Catechism, adding the following explanatory note:

"And albeit the substance of the doctrine comprised in that abridgement, commonly called **The Apostles' Creed**, be fully set forth in each of the Catechisms, so as there is no necessity of inserting the Creed itself; yet it is here annexed, not as though it were composed by the Apostles, or ought to be esteemed canonical Scripture, as the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, (much less a prayer, as ignorant people have been apt to make both it and the Decalogue,) but because it is a brief sum of the Christian faith, agreeable to the word of God, and anciently received in the churches of Christ."

As to the propriety of using the Apostles' Creed in a church service, the present writer would not venture to assert that this practice is wrong, provided that it is intelligently used and not merely repeated in a formal or mechanical manner. The Apostles' Creed, as far as it goes, is indeed "agreeable to the Word of God", as the Westminster Assembly declared. The trouble with the Apostles' Creed is that it does not go far enough. It does not even mention such important doctrines as the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, justification by faith, regeneration or the new birth, adoption, sanctification, the substitutionary atonement of Christ. None of the truths that were attained by Protestant Reformation is even mentioned in the Apostles' Creed. The danger in the common use of this creed in church services is that people are likely to get the idea that the Apostles' Creed is a fairly complete and adequate summary of the most important doctrines of Christianity. That this is a real danger, and not merely an imaginary one, is shown by the fact that in various attempts

at church union the Apostles' Creed has been proposed as a sufficient doctrinal standard for a united church. The Apostles' Creed is true and Scriptural as far as it goes, but people should not be encouraged in the idea that it goes far enough. In view of this danger, the present writer feels that while the use of the Apostles' Creed in church services cannot be pronounced wrong, it must be regarded as unwise. A much better practice would be to take up a truly adequate creed such as the Westminster Confession of Faith, a section or two at a time, and for the minister to expound its meaning to the people.

— J. G. Vos

**Question:**

Give an exposition of Psalm 37:4. Can we have anything we really want if it is proper and right?

**Answer:**

The verse cited reads as follows: "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Like all the promises of answer to prayer in the Bible, this promise must be understood as coming under the general limitation of **God's glory and our own true welfare**. If we are really delighting ourselves in the Lord, we will say as our Saviour said, "Not my will, but thine, be done," and we will not want God to give us anything but what is truly for His glory and our own good. We must always remember, too, we ourselves are not competent judges of what is really for God's glory and our own good. We may think something would be for God's glory and our own good, when God in His infinite wisdom knows better. The apostle Paul prayed three times that his thorn in the flesh might depart from him. Paul was certainly a man who delighted himself in the Lord. Yet the Lord did not take away Paul's bodily affliction. Instead, He gave him grace to bear it, saying to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee", and He enabled Paul to see that this painful affliction was sent to accomplish a purpose in his life—it was to keep the apostle from becoming proud and self-confident. See the account of this in 2 Cor. 12:7-10.

Consider also Psalm 84:11b, "The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." If I am praying for some particular thing, and do not receive it, there are three possible explanations: (1) It is possible that I am not walking uprightly, and therefore God will not give me what I desire of Him; (2) It is possible that what I desire is not really a good thing, as God sees in His perfect wisdom; it may seem good to me, but not to God; (3) It may be God's purpose that I should pray longer before receiving what I desire, that I may grow in the exercise of faith and Christian patience.

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

Please explain 1 Peter 3:20,21. Is the translation of verse 21 correct in the King James Version ("the answer of a good conscience toward God"), or should it be translated as in the American Revised Version (1901), "the interrogation of a good conscience toward God"? What exactly is meant by these words? Is it something that should precede water baptism, or is it the product of baptism as the Spirit of God works throughout the Christian life?

**Answer:**

In the first place, the King James Version is certainly wrong in translating "the answer of a good conscience toward God." The Greek word translated "answer" is **eperotema**, a word which occurs only in this one place in the New Testament. Thayer's **Lexicon** gives its meaning as: 1. an inquiry, a question. 2. a demand. 3. earnest seeking, i.e., a craving, an intense desire. The American Revised Version (1901) uses the word "interrogation", which means "question", and offers two possible alternative translations in the margin, namely "inquiry" and "appeal". Thayer suggests the following translation of verse 21: "which (baptism) now saves us (you) not because in receiving it we (ye) have put away the filth of the flesh, but because we (ye) have earnestly sought a conscience reconciled to God." Alford translates it: "but inquiry of a good conscience after God", and explains this as meaning "the seeking after God in a good and pure conscience, which is the aim and end of the Christian baptismal life"; he adds that all explanations are unsatisfactory, and he has adopted the one which "strictly keeps to the Scripture usage of the words", and which suits the context as well as any of the suggested explanations.

As to the meaning of the expression ("the interrogation of a good conscience toward God"), we have already noted Alford's statement of its difficulty. The clearest explanation of the meaning that the present writer has found is in John Gill's **Body of Divinity**, page 914, as follows: "A salutary or saving use and effect is ascribed unto it; **The like figure whereunto, baptism, doth also now save us**; should it be asked how, and by what means? the answer follows, **By the resurrection of Jesus Christ**, 1 Pet. 3:21, that is, by leading the faith of the person baptized to Christ, as delivered for his offences, and as risen again for his justification. In the same passage it is said to be of this use, and to serve this purpose, **The answer of a good conscience towards God**; a man who believes baptism to be an ordinance of God, and submits to it as such, discharges a good conscience, the consequence of which is joy and peace; for though **for keeping the commands of God** there is no reward, yet there is **in keeping them**; and this is their reward, the testimony of a good conscience: for great peace have they which love God and keep his commandments."

With regard to the question of whether "the interrogation of a good conscience" is something that precedes baptism, or something which continues throughout the Christian life, if we accept Gill's interpretation of the verse as correct, it would seem that "the interrogation of a good conscience" is something which accompanies and follows baptism, continuing throughout the subsequent life of the person.

Opponents of infant baptism have cited 1 Peter 3:21 as contrary to the practice, on the ground that infants cannot experience "the interrogation (or answer) of a good conscience toward God". This argument, however, is quite without weight. It is very well answered by Calvin in his *Institutes*, Book IV, Chapter XVI, Section 21. We shall quote from Beveridge's translation, Volume II, page 544:

"... Paul says to the Galatians, 'As many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ' (Gal. 3:27). Why so? That they might thereafter live to Christ, to whom previously they had not lived. And though, in adults, the receiving of the sign ought to follow the understanding of its meaning, yet, as will shortly be explained, a different rule must be followed with children.

No other conclusion can be drawn from a passage in Peter, on which they strongly found. He says, that baptism is 'not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. 3:21). From this they contend that nothing is left for paedobaptism, which becomes mere empty smoke, as being altogether at variance with the meaning of baptism. But the delusion which misleads them is, that they would always have the thing to precede the sign in the order of time. For the truth of circumcision consisted in the same answer of a good conscience; but if the truth must necessarily have preceded, infants would never have been circumcised by the command of God. But he himself, showing that the answer of a good conscience forms the truth of circumcision, and, at the same time, commanding infants to be circumcised, plainly intimates that, in their case, circumcision had reference to the future. Wherefore, nothing more of present effect is to be required in paedobaptism, than to confirm and sanction the covenant which the Lord has made with them. The other part of the meaning of the sacrament will follow at the time which God himself has provided."

— J. G. Vos

## Questions Received

The following questions have been received from readers. Answers to them will be published, D.V., in future issues of this magazine.

1. Just what is the difference between the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Free Church (of Scotland)?
2. What should we believe about freedom of religion? If it is not permissible to steal and murder, why should it be permissible to propagate atheism? Has not the so-called freedom of religion gotten us into the condition we are in today?

3. What should we believe about attempts to convert men? Is it proper to select an individual for conversion with the expectation that if we are earnest and patient enough, this person will eventually be converted to Christ?

4. Is it correct to say that if you are saved you are bound to know it?

5. Please publish a review of *Letters to Young Churches*, by J. B. Phillips.

6. Please publish something on the question of the limited atonement, which was discussed in the "Blue Banner Question Box" in 1946.

## 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".

SERMONS FROM JOB, by John Calvin. Selected and translated from the French by Leroy Nixon. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 300. \$4.50.

The publishing firm of W. B. Eerdmans has added another fine volume to its long list of excellent works for lovers of the Reformed Theology. This is a translation, by Pastor Leroy

Nixon, of 20 sermons on Job, preached by John Calvin at Geneva in 1554-55.

In his own estimation, Calvin was a preacher first and then a theologian. We know him principally by his **Institutes of the Christian Religion** and his Commentaries on Scripture, but now it is to be hoped that the enterprise of bringing his sermons before us in an attractive way may prove highly successful and we may know much more of him as a preacher. For he preached in Geneva every day for many years, and in doing so, preached consecutive expository sermons on most of the books of the Bible. The volume under review is a selection of 20 sermons out of the 159 he preached on the Book of Job alone.

The selection has been made carefully by Mr. Nixon, who has given an interesting title to each sermon. They have not been chosen at random, but are specially selected to illustrate as far as possible the genius of Calvin as a teacher, as a man of God, as a theologian and as a man of humble piety. It can be said that Mr. Nixon has achieved his intention.

The style of the sermons is simple and their message direct and forceful. Their object has been well summed up in the excellent introduction by Harold Dekker. "The preaching at Geneva was the direct product of a devoted pastor dealing with an open book and a needy people. It was always clearly relevant to life." He uses everyday words and there is a remarkable absence in the sermons of technical and theological language. The sermons are practical and evangelical in the truest sense. Calvin's theology appears in them simply and indirectly. We are made aware of the Majesty of God, His wrath upon sin, the depravity of human nature, the inability of the natural man and the efficacy of the Grace of God in the salvation of the sinner. The problem of suffering is considered humbly with an eye to the glory of God. It might be said that the keynote of Calvin's approach to Job's distressing problem and to a proper exposition of God's Word is to be found in the brief yet significant phrase with which he draws each sermon to a close: "Now we shall bow in humble reverence before the face of our God."

It is Calvin's aim to expound and apply the Scriptures to the needs of his hearers. He interprets the words of Job as Job actually meant them. There is no spiritualisation of texts. His sermon on "I know that my Redeemer liveth" is not a sermon on Eschatology, for, as Calvin says, this could not be understood as fully then as now. His sermon on "How should a man be just with God?" is not, as might be supposed, a treatise on Justification by Faith, but a practical exposition of Job's problem. It is only in the closing sentences that he comes to Justification by faith in Christ. "For in Him we find full and perfect justice and virtue by which we shall be acceptable to God."

Throughout the book, we have expository preaching at its best, for interwoven with the simple and practical explanation of the Word we have the evangelical application. The sermon on the first nine verses of chapter sixteen is typical of this and I quote the closing sentences. "Let us pray to God that it may please Him to support us, and to spare us, knowing that we are not capable of sustaining such a burden unless He gives us shoulders to do it. We pray that we may not experience Him as a lion; but rather that He may always show us that He is our Father, and that He may not punish us as we have deserved; but that He may always cause us to experience His mercy by means of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that, after we have been led by His Holy Spirit in this life, He may raise us to the eternal glory of His angels, which He bought for us at such a price."

The book has been well translated by Mr. Nixon and he has succeeded in conveying the French idiom by making his translation fairly free. The introductory essay to the book by Harold Dekker deserves a special word of comment. It is a most valuable appreciation of John Calvin as a man and as a preacher. He claims that in Calvin the preacher we have the real Calvin, and gives a studied comment on Calvin's pulpit method, sermonic structure, expository style and theological emphasis. This essay might indeed be issued as a small booklet to give profitable instruction to preachers and students for the ministry on the much neglected but most important art of expository preaching.

—Adam Loughridge

HAPPINESS CAN BE YOURS, by Wm. A. Kramer. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis 18, Mo. 1952, pp. 118. \$1.25.

The **Earnest Worker** recently carried the story of the famous Italian poet, Torquato Tasso. One time he was asked, "Who is the happiest one in the world?" After a few minutes' thought he replied, "God". His questioner had not expected this reply, and he pursued the inquiry further. "Next to God, who is happiest?" And the poet replied, "He who is nearest to God."

Since 1922, Mr. Kramer has been connected with the Elementary School movement of the Lutheran Church. In this little book he has set down some of his observations in contacts with young and old. His assurance that "Happiness can be Yours" is not based on the wishful thinking so often encountered. He is realistically Christian when he points out that happiness is ultimately experienced in right relationship with God. But he does not leave the reader with a purely theoretical statement. He goes on to show how to find contentment and purpose in life, in your home, in your work, in trouble and sorrow, in your social contacts, and in your church.

"I have seen over and over that adherence to the simple teachings of the Bible makes for

happiness and contentment; I mean adherence, not just professed adherence." If you need a spiritual "lift", and a reminder of some of those common factors of our Christian faith which are all too often overlooked, this book will be worth more than casual reading.

— S. Bruce Willson

**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.

This work from the pen of the Professor of Philosophy at Butler University is an extended form of the Payton Lectures delivered at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1951. The author contrasts the Christian theistic view of the universe with the various philosophies which are now contending for the attention and loyalty of students. His title might suggest, at first sight, the monumental work of Dr. James Orr written in the 1890's, "The Christian View of God and the World". It might be inferred that Dr. Clark has lowered his sights and is merely taking a broadside at humanism. But a careful examination of the method and treatment of the subject-matter involved shows a frank recognition of the modern limitation placed on intellectual investigation. The systems of the modern philosophers are examined in the light of Christian theism.

The table of contents lists the following areas of investigation: "The Philosophy of History"; "The Philosophy of Politics"; "Ethics"; "Science"; "Religion"; and "Epistemology". Under each of these topics representative spokesman of modern thought are analyzed and the suggested theistic point of view presented in answer. The author summarizes the task that he has set for himself. "In the first place, although a theistic philosophy of systematic proportions has not been developed to meet contemporary needs, and in fact awaits a modern Augustine, some elements and implications of theism are available in several fields. . . In the second place, for the mass of naturalistic literature a picture may be drawn that will clarify theism by contrast. . . In the third place, nothing will be lost if the whole can be phrased in the elementary form of an introduction to philosophy" (p. 17).

It seems to this reviewer that the book would have been improved by adding an index. The style is interestingly readable, the print good.

— S. Bruce Willson

**THE MOMENTOUS EVENT**, by W. J. Grier. The Evangelical Book Shop, 15 College Square East, Belfast, N. Ireland. 1952, pp. 98, 4½ shillings.

The full title of this volume is **The Momentous Event, A Discussion of Scripture Teaching On The Second Advent And Questions Related Thereto**. In this splendid little book, the author

sets forth in simple style and the language of the layman "a sane and balanced statement (of the Lord's second advent) in accord with the time honoured views expressed in the great creeds of the church in all ages" (Introduction). The author is to be congratulated on the brief, concise, yet full and clear treatment of the subject on which so many have written so voluminously. He has done so by sticking closely to the Scripture texts and to their meaning, refraining strictly from speculation.

The book is now in its third edition; each has brought revision and some additions, so that in purchasing it one would do well to be sure of getting the 1952 printing.

In fourteen chapters, an epilogue and appendix, the author presents the main Scripture passages dealing with the Second Advent of the Lord, the three main millennial views held by saintly men today, traces the development of millennial doctrine from the time of the early church fathers down to the present, and carefully studies Old and New Testament prophecy relating to the return of the Lord and the events related thereto.

The author writes in defence of the non-millennial or a-millennial view. In chapter 2, pp. 12 and 13, he admits that not all pre-millennialists hold to the secret rapture of the saints followed by a seven and one-half year tribulation of the Jews by the Gentile nations before the Lord again appears to reign with the saints at Jerusalem, but his discussion thereafter deals only with this Dispensational Pre-millennialism. This seems to be hardly fair, and as the author is concerned with answering the claims of the Pre-millennialists, he fails to meet the problems raised by thoroughly Calvinistic Pre-millennialists such as the late Professor Kromminga.

In his definition of the Non-millennial position, the author is somewhat of an extremist, it seems, from his statement on page 14 that "the non-millenarian agrees with the 'pre' view that the word will not be converted before the Lord's coming by the preaching of the Gospel", and on p. 15, "The second coming will be preceded by widespread apostacy from the true faith, which will come to a climax in the appearance of Antichrist." How far the world will be converted is a debatable question among non-millenarians, and how widespread the apostacy will be is also debatable. At the Second Advent the Lord is to deliver saints from persecution, indeed; but if the prophecies which describe all the earth as praising Jehovah mean anything, we should expect a more widespread adherence to the true faith and a less widespread apostacy than has here been anticipated. We think the author would have better expressed the non-millennial view of many had he said, ". . . the world will not be wholly converted. . .", and ". . . the second coming will be preceded by apostacy of such an extent that it will come to a climax in the appearance of Antichrist." Scripture indicates

an increase in the momentum of righteousness. The lines are more definitely drawn on both sides: the wicked are more obviously wicked and filthy, and probably less restrained in their filthiness; the apostate can no longer seem to be orthodox. Likewise the righteous are more evidently holy.

The author's treatment of the historical development of millennial doctrine is most enlightening.

Old Testament prophecy concerning eschatology is viewed and interpreted by the New Testament, thus clarifying the correct meanings of important words, expressions and concepts. The following facts are to be noted from this study:

The 1000 year reign of Christ on earth so often spoken of with such certainty is shown to rest on Revelation 20, a highly figurative chapter. The 1000 year period is mentioned nowhere else in Scripture.

There is but one return of the Lord. At that time both the righteous and the wicked will be resurrected, and the eternal state will be set up.

There are but two ages — the gospel age and the eternal state — not three, the gospel age, the millennial kingdom, and the eternal state.

There is but one method of conversion and sanctification — the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Word — not two — the operation of the Spirit in the age of grace, and the visible presence of Christ in the millennial kingdom.

The reign of Christ is not awaited in the future; it is specifically stated to have been in operation since the ascension.

The return of Christ is not to a wholly regenerate world, for upon it he will deliver the persecuted people of God. Nor is it for the conversion of the Jews and the remaining unconverted Gentile world. It is for judgment and for the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth to be the eternal abode of righteousness.

—E. Clark Copeland

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.

This is a new course of 20 lessons for the beginning student of Hebrew, with appropriate vocabularies, paradigms, and index. It makes use of historical developments in the knowledge of the language and of improved methods of presentation.

The book is printed by the photo-offset process from vari-typed manuscript that had been developed by the author over his eleven years of teaching. The type is large and clear for easy reading.

The choice of vocabulary largely follows Harper's frequency charts with certain additions of useful and interesting words for quick reading and

sentence structure, of which the author makes great use.

Some variations, which seem to this reviewer to be advantageous, from the standard Harper's Hebrew Manual are:

1. Rules for accent come after the presentation of verbs and rules governing some important vowel changes. Thus the student is beginning to do some reading, and the rules have meaning.

2. Verb conjugations are learned by grammatical rule rather than by rote. The student is advised not to memorize the paradigms by rote but by form and meaning.

3. Attention is called to irregularities as a few irregular verbs are given along with the regular ones, so that the student is aware of the irregularities and may even have learned the forms in anticipation of the irregular paradigms.

4. In the paradigms the order is changed to the common order of conjugation in modern languages — first, second and third persons, rather than beginning with third.

5. Though the usual "qatal" is used throughout the lessons in teaching the conjugations, in the paradigm on page 75 "katab" is used to illustrate the "dagesh lene".

6. Notes are given in lesson vocabularies to help the student remember the words by their appearance in certain proper names.

The book comes highly recommended by such experts as Dr. E. A. Speiser of the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. E. J. Young of Westminster Seminary, and others using the text.

It would not only be a good addition to the available textbooks for seminaries, but it should be useful to the minister who needs a simple grammar to sharpen his use of the original language of the Old Testament.

—E. Clark Copeland

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY: SHORT DEVOTIONAL STUDIES ON THE DYING LETTER OF ST. PAUL, by H. C. G. Moule. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 180. \$2.25.

This volume is a photolithoprinted reproduction of a work by a godly and scholarly bishop of the Church of England. In a prefatory note the author states that his purpose in writing the book was not literary criticism or enquiry, but a quest of divine messages for heart and life. He adds: "Personal attention to the very words of Holy Scripture, in the spirit of obedience and prayer, was never more needed in the Christian Church than now. Happy will be writer be if by producing a modest specimen of such study he may promote its exercise by others." The author's standpoint is that of absolute faith in the divine author-

ity and inerrancy of the very words of Holy Scripture.

The author's method is to take up brief sections of Paul's second letter to Timothy, following a short chapter on "Timothy and His Position", one on "The Crisis of the Church" and one on "The Witness of the Epistle to Itself". The chapters are short, averaging three or four pages, and very readable. The reader is given a new insight into the faith, witness and sufferings of the apostle Paul as he faced martyrdom in Rome, and wrote his last epistle from prison to his beloved Timothy.

The reader will find this book truly edifying. It is filled with devotion to Christ and loyalty to His Word. To show how relevant it is to conditions existing at the present day, a paragraph may be quoted here. The author is commenting on 2 Tim. 3:6-9:

"The opposition to apostolic Christianity is never avowed. The terms of faith are freely employed; God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Redemption, Liberty. The rod of the magician of old, of the *Iannes* or *Iambres* — traditional names, perhaps preserved in documents now long lost; they are said by Egyptian experts to represent true Egyptian designations — looked just like the rod of Aaron, and seemed to live and to move under the sorcerer's spell in the same way, and in the same form. Just so the whispered message of these their successors in St. Paul's time sounded strangely like the Gospel, and therefore it beguiled a host of restless and anchorless souls, called Christian, and, using for its ends woman's deep emotional influence, it moved and attracted a whole section of the Church. But all the while it was in diametrical antagonism to the cause of the Redeemer and the truth. Its 'sin' was not what the Lord meant by sin, nor was its 'salvation' His holy deliverance from the slavery of self-will into the blissful liberty of a full surrender to a Crucified and Risen King. At best all was of the earth, earthly, the creature of man's dreams, not the gift of God. And through this avenue it gave access to the very forces of hell, for it led the soul, along a subtle curve, to reach even the antipodes of repentance, grace, and glory" (pp. 110,111).

— J. G. Vos

**WHY WE BAPTIZE INFANTS**, by Albertus Pieters. Board of Publication of the Reformed Church in America, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. No date, pp. 29, paper cover. 50 cents.

This is a clearly written and readable defence of infant baptism from the Calvinistic point of view. It will be easily understood by any layman who will take the trouble to read it. The author expounds three reasons for infant baptism, namely: (1) it is a historic Christian practice; (2) it is a Scriptural practice; and (3) it is an edifying practice.

In the judgment of this reviewer the author was rather unwise in saying that "The Bible is

entirely silent about infant baptism, either pro or con. We admit it. We do not profess to get infant baptism from its pages. We do profess to justify infant baptism from its pages. That is a very different thing" (p. 8). On the same page he says that a visitor from the planet Mars "would not find infant baptism in the Bible, because it is not there, and cannot be gotten out of the Bible." The author makes it clear that what he means is merely that the Bible does not contain "any direct exhortation or command to baptize infants". His meaning, therefore, is that infant baptism, while it is implied by the teachings of the Bible, is not expressly commanded; the Bible nowhere says "Infants shall be baptized" nor does it present any record which definitely proves that infants were baptized. While agreeing with what the author means, this reviewer considers the statement that "The Bible is entirely silent about infant baptism", etc., unfortunate. It seems too much of a concession to the prevalent wrong tendency to regard only the express statements of Scripture as having authority for faith and life. Once we admit that the teachings of the Bible include not only its express statements but what is derived from the Bible by valid logical inference, we must also admit that to say "Infant baptism is a Scriptural practice" is precisely the same thing as to say "Infant baptism is in the Bible." The doctrine of the Trinity is not found in any express statement of the Bible. It is derived from Biblical data by a process of logical inference. Yet we do not hesitate to say, not merely that the doctrine of the Trinity is Scriptural, but definitely that it is taught in the Bible.

Apart from our objections to the author's statements about whether infant baptism is in the Bible, we consider this an excellent booklet. It is simple, clear, convincing. This would be a good booklet for pastors to keep on hand to give to those of their members who may have doubts or scruples about infant baptism, or those who are being influenced by the Baptist teaching on this subject. The author writes in a temperate and kindly spirit, with no offensive language of any kind.

The reviewer noted with satisfaction that the author emphasizes the birthright church membership of covenant children. The following may be quoted:

"The baptized infant is therefore an attested and certified member of the church. In view of this fact, it's a pity that the expression, 'joining the church', should be so often heard among us, with reference to making confession of faith. It is in flat contradiction to the official teaching of the church... Children are baptized, not as non-members, to make them members, but because they are members. Why, then, do we speak of even baptized children as joining the church?" (p. 27). To these statements the reviewer would add a hearty Amen. It is not only in the Reformed Church of America, of which Dr. Pieters is a min-

ister and veteran foreign missionary, that baptized children on making public profession of faith are spoken of as "joining the church". This manner of speaking, as Dr. Pieters points out, is in flat contradiction to the official teaching of the Reformed (and Presbyterian) churches. Yet it has become so deeply rooted and customary that nothing short of a new reformation, with a new appreciation of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, is likely to change it. The use of this expression, "joining the church" (when used of covenant children) shows how much the Presbyterian and Reformed churches in America have been influenced by Baptist views and modes of thought.

— J. G. Vos

**THE PURITAN DOCTRINE OF CONVERSION**, by E. F. Kevan. The Evangelical Library, 78A, Chiltern Street, London, W.1, England. 1952, pp. 23, paper cover. Price for U.S.A. and Canada, 20 cents.

This booklet presents the annual lecture of the Evangelical Library for the year 1952. The author is the Principal of the London Bible College. In discussing the doctrine of Conversion as held by the Puritan divines, he takes up: I. Their Basic Assumptions. II. Their Intellectual Presentation of the Truth. III. Their Belief in the Power of God. IV. Their Demand for Human Activity. V. Their Purpose in Formulating the Doctrine.

The author starts by emphasizing the fact that the Puritan movement was essentially a Biblical movement. "Puritanism emphasized the fundamental religious principle of Protestantism, that the Bible is the chief medium of divine authority and grace . . . The Puritans laid stress upon practical exegesis, or the application of the Scriptures to the Christian life" (quoted from C. A. Briggs).

Under "Their Basic Assumptions" the author shows that although the Puritans held the utter spiritual destitution of fallen man and his utter inability to save himself, yet they did not hold that there is no "point of contact" between God and the sinner. They understood that fallen man is still human, with a moral nature or sense of good and evil which God can use in preparation for their conversion.

Next the author takes up the Puritans' intellectual presentation of the truth, and shows how strongly their preaching and writing appealed to the sinner's understanding. Richard Sibbes said: "All grace comes unto the soul by the **understanding**". Their emphasis on reason does not, of course, imply that they regarded the human reason as the authority in religion, nor that they were unaware of the fact that man's mind has been corrupted and darkened by his fall into sin. They only meant that God deals with man as a thinking being, a rational creature, in accordance with his nature. Man is not a stick or a stone. He is a thinking being. This emphasis is most necessary in our own day when multitudes of Christian

people — not to mention non-Christians — have an anti-intellectual bias which would almost seem to imply that it is an advantage to be religiously ignorant. Many today dismiss even the simplest doctrinal preaching as "too deep" or "theology". The Puritans did not have this modern objection to the use of people's brains.

Next the author shows how strongly the Puritans believed in the almighty power of God. "The Puritans gave all the glory for a sinner's conversion to that effectual grace by which it was brought about". They held that apart from regeneration there could be no conversion. "Regeneration . . . is that act of God by which the power to turn and come to Christ is imparted." The Puritans did not hold the notion which is so common today, that the sinner must first of his own free will decide to accept Christ, and then as a result of this decision, he will be born again of the Holy Spirit. They recognized that man is dead in sin, and God's act of regeneration, in which man is wholly passive, must come first.

The Puritans also demanded human activity, however. The sinner is to be commanded to repent and believe on Christ. "They hold that conjointly with the reasonings and exhortations contained in the preaching the Holy Spirit brings His newly-implanted life to expression."

"The purpose of the Doctrine was CONVERSION. It was not for the love of word-spinning or for the delight of speculation. The Puritans were men of action, and theirs was practical divinity. The reason for a right doctrine of conversion was that the preacher might know how to labour for conversion."

In this day of loose and superficial views on the subject of conversion, this study of the treatment of this subject by the great Puritan divines is timely and worthy of careful attention. It is to be feared that many "converts" of today are not truly converted to Christ. And much more is involved in real conversion than simply a "decision". The Puritans were not infallible; they perhaps had some one-sided emphases; but it would be well if the church of today could regain their solid, Scriptural convictions on the subject of the conversion of sinners to Christ.

— J. G. Vos

**GOD'S PLAN AND MAN'S DESTINY**, by Viola M. Cameron. Published by the author, P.O. Box 332, Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada. 1952, pp. 165, paper cover. \$1.95.

On looking through this book the reviewer rejoiced as one that has found great spoil. This is a truly excellent piece of work. The sub-title is: "A digest of the Bible from Paradise lost to Paradise regained." This gives a good idea of the contents of the book.

A brief preface by Dr. Cornelius Van Til commends the book as follows:

"There is great need for literature presenting the truth of the Christian religion in plain and challenging fashion. In this book the author has provided a simple and comprehensive statement of the Christian Faith. She takes her basic instruction from the Scriptures as the final and infallible word of God. She traces the plan of God for man and the universe step by step through its various stages as revealed in Scripture. In doing so, she seeks to build up believers, young or old, in a knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and challenges those that are without to own that God has made foolish the wisdom of the world.

"Miss Cameron's book will commend itself especially as a help for teachers of the Christian religion. It will serve admirably for a basis of group discussion. And the general reader will feel richly rewarded for his perusal of it."

This reviewer would record his own complete agreement with Dr. Van Til's estimate of this book. It is clearly written, readable and easy to understand. Moreover, this book is truly sound. In saying this, we mean not merely that it is "evangelical" or "Bible-believing", but that it is sound from the standpoint of orthodox Calvinism. It rings true to the Biblical system of truth as summarized in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Like the Westminster Confession, Miss Cameron's book follows the scheme of the Covenant theology — the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. It is free from the erroneous and distorted views which are so common in much of the evangelical literature of our day. It is not necessary, in reading this book, to be constantly on guard against Arminian, Dispensational, Antinomian and other unsound tendencies. This book is a strong positive presentation of the historic faith of the Presbyterian and Reformed churches, and the author writes from the standpoint of a thorough sympathy with and hearty acceptance of that faith.

To give the reader a clear idea of the scope of the book, we shall give a summary of the contents. An Introduction of 7 pages deals with (1) man's need for a systematic knowledge of God's revealed truth; (2) the Bible as the revelation of God and the rule of faith and life; (3) Pauline theology; (4) Covenant theology; (5) The plan of Scripture. This is followed by Part I, dealing with (1) God's eternal plan; (2) Natural revelation; (3) Supernatural revelation; (4) Revelation in Scripture. Then comes Part II, entitled The System of Truth in Scripture: The Covenant of Grace Unfolded in Two Dispensations. This is divided into (A) The Old Testament or Old Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, with the usual periods; and (B) The New Testament or New Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, including the following subjects: Redemption accomplished, Pentecost, The Covenant of Grace, the Seal of the Covenant, Election, Application of Redemption, The Just shall Live by Faith, The Church, The Kingdom of God,

Kingdom Building (Good Works), The Final Apostasy, The Eternal State, The Judgment Day, After Death What? and The Sabbath.

To give our readers a sample of the style and quality of this work, we shall quote one paragraph (pp. 89, 90):

**"CHRIST'S REIGN OVER THE UNIVERSE:**

Since all things have been delivered into the hands of Christ, the God-man who is now head of all angels, devils, and world governments, as a reward for his redemptive work, believers may be sure that he guides the destiny of the world in the interests of his people. This special exaltation of the God-man, however, did not give him, who was the eternal Son of God, any authority which he did not already possess as a member of the Godhead, before his incarnation. But it was as the Mediator of the New Covenant, as the Saviour of his people, as the last Adam, that he was exalted to this position. As Adam was to have exercised his kingship on the earth as the positive requirement of the covenant of works, so in fulfilling the first covenant and exalted as King over the universe, Christ instituted the initial restoration of the kingship of man. His exalted position was necessary also in order that he might fulfil his plans for his people, for he must govern the world so that all things might work together for good for them (Rom. 8:28). This reign guarantees the 'overcoming of all our enemies by his Almighty power and wisdom in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation' (West. Conf. of Faith. Chap. 8:8. Also Col. 2:15)."

In dealing with matters of eschatology (the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, etc.), the author takes the position that Scripture predicts a great apostasy in the church and a worldwide opposition to God which will come to a climax under a personal antichrist. Though this is of course a difficult and mysterious subject, and there will be many who hold a different view of Scripture prophecy from that presented by Miss Cameron, the present reviewer believes that her view of a future apostasy and personal antichrist is substantially correct. The reviewer is unable, however, to accept the opinion expressed on page 152 that true believers will be removed from the world before the "great tribulation" under the antichrist.

The author does not deal with the question of a millennium except incidentally. In a parenthesis on pp. 138-9 she indicates her own adherence to the premillennial view, but states that liberty for the varying views — amillennial, premillennial and postmillennial — exists within the framework of the Reformed system of truth. The present reviewer does not agree with the author in her acceptance of the premillennial view. It should be pointed out, however, that this view is barely mentioned in the book and is not at all emphasized or pressed. Also it should be realized

that Miss Cameron's type of premillennialism is something quite different from the very objectionable type represented, for example, by the Scofield Reference Bible. Miss Cameron is not a Dispensationalist, nor does she hold the errors which are inherent in the common type of Premillennialism. For instance, she fully believes in the present kingship of Christ and the present existence of the Kingdom of God. This reviewer is convinced that it is unfair to lump all Premillennialists together and condemn them as a class, as if all were equally involved in errors contrary to the Biblical system of truth. Some do indeed hold errors which are incompatible with the Reformed Faith. But there are others whose Premillennialism is simply a matter of interpretation of details of Bible prophecy and of chronology; they fully accept the Reformed system in its integrity, but they hold that Christ's second coming will be followed by a further stage of the Kingdom within the confines of history, before the end of the world. This reviewer does not hold that view, but considers it unfair to class such thoroughly Calvinistic Premillennialists as Miss Cameron and the late Professor Kromminga of Calvin Seminary in the same category with the Scofield Reference Bible and its adherents.

Finally, mention may be made of a splendid discussion of the Sabbath (pp. 161-4). There is so much unsound teaching on the Sabbath today, and so much indifference and practical neglect of the Sabbath, that it is refreshing to see such a sound, clear and enthusiastic exposition and defense of the Christian Sabbath as that given here. Miss Cameron treats the Sabbath under three heads: (1) In Paradise. (2) In Moses' Day. (3) In New Testament Times. She rightly points out that "the Sabbath signifies the essence of all law-keeping, which is resignation to God's Will". The Sabbath reminds man of his chief end, to glorify God. "He does this by resigning his will to God's will". "The Sabbath's message, then is, 'My son, give me thine heart and let thine eyes behold my ways' (Prov. 23:26). And the believer should make haste to reply, '**Cor meum offero tibi Domine, prompte et sincere**' (Latin for 'My heart I offer unto thee, O Lord, without delay and in sincerity' — this is the Calvinistic profession)" (p. 164).

The author gives a Bibliography listing 54 works by number, to which reference is made in the body of the book. These include such standard writers as Augustine, Louis Berkhof, Loraine Boettner, John Calvin, Franz Delitzsch, Charles Hodge, Abraham Kuyper, J. Gresham Machen, James Orr, B. B. Warfield and numerous others. Eleven different writers on archaeology are cited; four on church history.

It is a pleasure to commend this book heartily. May it be used of the Lord to lead many to

a clear, consistent and practical knowledge of the truth revealed in His Holy Word.

— J. G. Vos

**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.

This is a photolithic reprint of the first edition, published in 1930. It supplies a very valuable appendix, especially for Psalm singers, a 42 page article by the same author, **Eschatology of the Psalter**, reprinted from **The Princeton Theological Review**, January, 1920. It is a fine edition on good quality matte paper in clear, large type for good appearance and easy reading. The late author was the father of the editor of **Blue Banner Faith and Life**.

This is a very comprehensive, scholarly work written for the theological student. The frequent use of Greek expressions printed into the text, many references to Scripture, and a high theological vocabulary in a very involved style make it a book few will read in a parlor chair before the fireplace. However, it is extremely interesting, and most valuable as it forcibly presents the practical value of eschatology, for few recognize that eschatology has much, if any, practical application.

A glance at the bibliography indicates that very little source material was available in the English language. Dr. Wilbur Smith says that this is the only scholarly work on Pauline eschatology in the English language in the 20th century. We therefore owe a great debt to the author and the present publishers for making this work available in a day when this subject is so much ignored by Reformed theologians, but when a vast amount of very mediocre material is being produced on one or two phases of the whole subject, without apparently being related to the whole, and based on an unsound system of Scripture interpretation. We wish that the contents of this work were made available in the layman's language and style.

Eschatology is "the doctrine of the last things". It has to do with God's purpose in the history of the world. The eschatological study of the Scripture reveals that all things are directed of God towards a definite, final goal, beyond which a new order of affairs will be set up which will not be subject to any further change, but will remain to all eternity. The eschatological process is inclusive of both time and space; there is not anything in the universe which is not always within it. Eschatology is, in brief, the Biblical view and interpretation of history.

This work, though not ignoring other Scriptural sources, is concerned with unfolding the

eschatological content of Paul's writings. Paul interweaves eschatology with his entire theology. We think of Paul as setting forth in their clearest form the doctrines of salvation by grace, justification by faith, sanctification by the Spirit, etc. To unfold his eschatology is to set forth his theology as a whole (p. 11). God's purpose in the movement of world history is set in motion, maintained, and climaxed by Christ. Jesus Christ, the last Adam, is set forth in contrast to the first, in Paul's writings. The purpose of the eschatological process is not only to put man back at the point where he was before the fall, but to carry him higher than he was before his probation, to a plane not, as far as we can see, attainable without it (p. 72). More comprehensively, it is the visible realization of the fact that all things are put under Christ, not only in this age, but in that which is to come (Eph. 1:21).

Eschatology, then, is not a subject for dreamers concerning a future age or ages, but one replete with the drama of the salvation of the world today. It touches our lives in a most practical religious way, and it opens our vision to the purposes of God in history, thus unfolding the true structure of the Christian faith and life. It confirms the reality of the presence of Christ, the chief actor in the world drama, dominating all. It stirs up Christian hope in the culmination of our salvation. Thus eschatology deals not with quiescent, non-productive capital, but with "energy and actual no less than potential force" (p. 30). No thinking person can study Paul's eschatology and remain an antinomian insisting on the autonomy of man in ethics and religion.

The first three chapters of the book introduce the subject, define its scope, and expound its practical application. The remaining nine chapters take up the main features of the climax of eschatology and trace the revelation concerning them through Paul's writings, interpreting them in the light of other Scripture passages and exegetical materials. These subjects are (1) the Coming of the Lord and its Precursors; (2) the Man of Sin; (3) The Resurrection and the Resurrection-change; (4) Chiliasm or Premillennarianism; (5) the Judgment; (6) the Eternal State.

Dr. Vos' work is a thoroughly exegetical one requiring the reader to follow with the Greek text and the lexicon and an English Bible in order to get the most from the discussion. Throughout the interpretation is the result of a systematic setting forth of Paul's utterances on these subjects and a careful synthesis of them. Suffice it to give a brief summary of conclusions:

The return ("becoming present") of the Lord is the climax of all things and the initiation of

the Eternal State or the Kingdom of Glory. Of that Kingdom there shall be no end. That coming is a catastrophic event, not a series of successive events. The Man of Sin, who has no small kingdom on the Day of the Lord's return, will be destroyed and the people of God freed from all oppression (indicative of the fact that a perfect state of affairs has not been reached prior to that Day). "The making of all things right and new in the world depends not on a gradual amelioration, but on the final interposition of God" (p. 135). There will be one resurrection of the just and the unjust and a corresponding change in those living on that Day. Thus the last enemy, death, will have been destroyed; the earth renewed, and liberated from the bondage of sin unto the glorious liberty of the sons of God (Rom. 8:18-23). All, both the righteous and the wicked, shall appear before the judgement seat of Christ in one great judgment scene. Though salvation be by grace apart from merit, there is abundant evidence that there will be rewards for the righteous on the judgment day. Any attempt to read Chiliasm into the Pauline Epistles is contrary to the often expressed fact that Christ now rules over all temporal and spiritual powers both in this age and in that to come; Christ's Kingdom began at His own resurrection, and the "last trump" is to be blown for the resurrection of men; so there can be no later crisis in that Kingdom. Immediately following the judgment and the confinement of Satan, his angels and all who have been subject to him in the world to hell forever, Christ will give over the Kingdom to His Father, and the Eternal State or the Kingdom of Glory will be set up. The characteristics of that Kingdom are: It never ends; the fulness of life in Christ is achieved; "The inherent excellence (glory) of God is reproduced and brought to revelation in His beatified creatures" (pp. 313-4).

The Covenanter Church is suffering today from the lack of any concrete conception of eschatology being preached from our pulpits and thereby coming to bear on our church program, especially at the level of execution in the congregations. Since we do not have a clear conception of the climax of all things, we fail to apply ourselves effectively to its achievement. If as ministers we crystallized our own views and presented some concrete ideas to our people, their hope should be established firm unto the end; a proper fear of God would be instilled; and a zeal to give the Gospel to those who sit in darkness would be kindled such as would make us advance as effective instruments of God's grace. A careful study of this work might help us to do the task.

—E. Clark Copeland

## 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.

**EATING AND DRINKING CHRIST**, by Herman Hoeksema. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 189. \$2.50.

**MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS**, by Edward J. Young. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 231. \$3.00.

**CRUCIAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, by George E. Ladd. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 193. \$3.00.

**COMFORT FOR CHRISTIANS**, by Arthur W. Pink, Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1952, pp. 121. \$1.75.

**TOWARD A REFORMED PHILOSOPHY**, by William Young. Piet Hein Publishers, 1300 West Butler, S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. No price stated. 1952, pp. 157.

**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 SILENCE OF GOD**, by Robert Ander-

son. 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.

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“And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.”

1 Kings 22:13, 14

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## *Who Shall Deliver Me?*

By Christina G. Rossetti

God strengthen me to bear myself;  
That heaviest weight of all to bear,  
Inalienable weight of care.

All others are outside myself;  
I lock my door and bar them out,  
The turmoil, tedium, gad-about.

I lock my door upon myself,  
And bar them out; but who shall wall  
Self from myself, most loathed of all?

If I could once lay down myself,  
And start self-purged upon the race  
That all must run! Death runs apace.

If I could set aside myself,  
And start with lightened heart upon  
The road by all men overgone!

God harden me against myself,  
This coward with pathetic voice  
Who craves for ease, and rest, and joys:

Myself, arch-traitor to myself;  
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,  
My clog whatever road I go.

Yet One there is can curb myself,  
Can roll the strangling load from me,  
Break off the yoke and set me free.

---

## *Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau*

By William Blake

Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau;  
Mock on, mock on; 'tis all in vain!  
You throw the sand against the wind,  
And the wind blows it back again.

And every sand becomes a gem  
Reflected in the beams divine;  
Blown back they blind the mocking eye,  
But still in Israel's paths they shine.

The Atoms of Democritus  
And Newton's Particles of Light  
Are sands upon the Red Sea shore,  
Where Israel's tents do shine so bright.

---

## *Ye Golden Lamps of Heaven*

By Philip Doddridge

Ye golden lamps of Heaven, farewell,  
With all your feeble light;  
Farewell, thou ever-changing moon,  
Pale empress of the night.

And thou, resplendent orb of day,  
In brighter flames array'd;  
My soul, that springs beyond thy sphere,  
No more demands thine aid.

Ye stars are but the shining dust  
Of my Divine abode,  
The pavement of those heavenly courts  
Where I shall reign with God.

The Father of eternal light  
Shall there His beams display;  
Nor shall one moment's darkness mix  
With that unvaried day.

No more the drops of piercing grief  
Shall swell into mine eyes;  
Nor the meridian sun decline  
Amidst those brighter skies.

# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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## *John Calvin on Church Music*

"To sing the praises of God upon the harp and psaltery unquestionably formed a part of the training of the law and of the service of God under that dispensation of shadows and figures; but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving." (Calvin on Psalm 71:22).

"With respect to the tabret, harp, and psaltery, we have formerly observed, and will find it necessary afterwards to repeat the same remark, that the Levites, under the law, were justified in making use of instrumental music in the worship of God; it having been his will to train his people, while they were yet tender and like children, by such rudiments until the coming of Christ. But now, when the clear light of the gospel has dissipated the shadows of the law and taught us that God is to be served in a simpler form, it would be to act a foolish and mistaken part to imitate that which the prophet enjoined only upon those of his own time." (Calvin on Psalm 81:3).

"We are to remember that the worship of God was never understood to consist in such outward services, which were only necessary to help forward a people as yet weak and rude in knowledge in the spiritual worship of God. A difference is to be observed in this respect between his people under the Old and under the New Testament; for now that Christ has appeared, and the church has reached full age, it were only to bury the light of the gospel should we introduce the shadows of a departed dispensation." (Calvin on Psalm 92:1).

"I have no doubt that playing upon cymbals, touching the harp and viol, and all that kind of music, which is so frequently mentioned in the Psalms, was a part of the education—that is to say, the puerile instruction of the law. I speak of the stated service of the temple. For even now, if believers choose to cheer themselves with musical instruments, they should, I think, make it their object not to dissever their cheerfulness from the praises of God. But when they frequent their sacred assemblies, musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows

of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints, only in a known tongue (1 Cor. 14:16). The voice of man, although not understood by the generality, assuredly excels all inanimate instruments of music; and yet we see what Paul determines concerning speaking in an unknown tongue. What shall we then say of chanting, which fills the ears with nothing but an empty sound? Does any one object that music is very useful for awakening the minds of men and moving their hearts? I own it; but we should always take care that no corruption creep in, which might both defile the pure worship of God, and involve men in superstition. Moreover, since the Holy Spirit expressly warns us of this danger by the mouth of Paul, to proceed beyond what we are there warranted by him is not only, I must say, unadvised zeal, but wicked and perverse obstinacy." (Calvin on Psalm 33).

"I do not insist upon the words in the Hebrew signifying the musical instruments; only let the reader remember that sundry different kinds are here mentioned, which were in use under the legal economy . . ." (Calvin on Psalm 150:3-5).

"What, therefore, was in use under the law is by no means entitled to our practice under the gospel; and these things being not only superfluous, but useless, are to be abstained from, because pure and simple modulation is sufficient for the praise of God, if it is sung with the heart and with the mouth. We know that our Lord Jesus Christ has appeared, and by his advent has abolished these legal shadows. Instrumental music, we therefore maintain, was only tolerated on account of the times and the people, because they were as boys, as the sacred Scripture speaketh, whose condition required these puerile rudiments. But in gospel times we must not have recourse to these unless we wish to destroy the evangelical perfection, and to obscure the meridian light which we enjoy in Christ our Lord." (Calvin's Sermon on 1 Samuel 18:1-9).

## *Sketches of the Covenanters*

By J. C. McFeeters

### Chapter VI

#### **Scotland's National Covenant -- A.D. 1581**

During the sixties of the Sixteenth century, the Presbyterian Church had her beautiful summer. The winter seemed to be past and the storms over and gone; the time of the singing of birds had come.

Hitherto, the Church had been as a lily among thorns: now instead of thorns were fir trees, and instead of briers, myrtle trees, to the glory of the Lord, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.

Among the matchless sayings of Jesus, one specific word resounds through all the ages and falls upon listening ears like thunder from heaven: "WATCH". Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, the price of purity, the price of honor, the price of everything worth having. The young Church, vigorous, victorious, and enthusiastic, seems to have been off her guard at a critical moment and while she slept the enemy sowed tares among the wheat.

The regent, the person who was acting as king while the coming king was a child, called a convention of ministers and others who favored the king's supremacy over the Church. The convention at his dictation introduced Prelacy. This occurred on January 12, 1572, a dark day for Scotland.

Prelacy is little else than Popery modified; Popery in another dress, trained and taught to speak a softer dialect. The power of Popery had been broken, but the residuum still remained, and now there appeared "the strange heterogeneous compound of Popery, Prelacy, and Presbyterianism" in the Church.

The Church awoke to find herself in the grasp of a horrible octopus, from which she did not escape for three generations, and only then at the loss of much precious blood.

The first effort of the Church, when awakened to her real condition, was to control the bishops that had come into her ministry, and whom she was powerless to remove. The next step was to attempt their removal, on the ground that the office of the bishop was unscriptural. Difficulties rapidly increased; opposing forces were daily growing stronger; the Civil government was against the Church; the regent, Scotland's chief ruler, bent all his energies in the defence of the bishops. From whence shall light and deliverance now come? Listen to the words that seem to be on ten thousand lips; "The Covenants; the Coven-

nants shall be Scotland's reviving!" "The Covenants" now became the watchword of the faithful. A wave of hopefulness and enthusiasm spread over the Church; gladness wreathed the faces that had gathered blackness, and strength throbbed in hearts that were faint.

The General Assembly, given strength from the Lord for the occasion, adopted a form of Covenant for the nation. The Covenant, as written by Rev. John Craig, was the product of a cultured brain and pious heart. It is unsurpassed in clear diction, high purpose, majestic spirit, heroic decision, and solemn appeal to God. It became the ground-work of all Scotland's subsequent Covenants.

But Craig had to meet the test of faith required by his own Covenant. King James VI, who was now on the throne, after subscribing the bond, repudiated it, and commanded its author to do the same. Craig replied that he would never repudiate anything approved by the Word of God. The Court, in which he was on trial, ordered his head to be shaved, and other indignities to be done to his person.

Again when on trial he was treated with utmost contempt by his judge, to whom he said, "There have been as great men set up higher than thou, that have been brought low." The judge, mockingly, sat down at his feet, saying, "Now I am humbled." "Nay," said Craig, "mock God's servants as thou wilt, God will not be mocked, but shall make thee find it in earnest, when thou shalt be cast down from the high horse of thy pride." A few years later he was thrown from his horse and killed.

The fervor aroused by the Covenant swept the Church like a Pentecostal fire, and spread over all the kingdom as a storm of holy excitement. The Covenant bond, being signed by the king, the nobles, and a great multitude of people, was called, The First National Covenant of Scotland.

No greater event had ever stirred the kingdom, no deeper joy had lighted up her coasts, no higher honor had exalted her people, no brighter glory had overspread her mountains and moors. That holy Covenant had lifted her into relationship with God; the kingdom had become Hephzibah, and the land, Beulah; the nation was married to the Lord.

The Covenant bound the Covenanter, the Church, the nation, and posterity, under a solemn oath:

To adhere to the Reformed religion with all the heart through all time to come;

To labor with all lawful means to recover the purity and liberty of the Gospel, by removing all human innovations from the Church;

To abhor and detest the corrupt doctrines and practices of Romanism;

To resist under the oath of God all the evils and corruptions contrary to the Reformed religion;

To defend the country and support the government, while country and government defend and preserve true religion;

To stand in mutual defence of one another in maintaining the Gospel and the Reformed Church;

To permit nothing to divide the Covenanted ranks, or diminish their power, or swerve them from their high purpose;

To become good examples of Godliness, soberness, and righteousness in the performance of every duty due to God and man;

To fear none of the foul aspersions that may be cast upon this Covenant, seeing it is warranted by the Word of God, and is for the maintenance of His Church;

To recognize the LIVING GOD as the Searcher of hearts, and Jesus Christ as the Judge, before whom all shall stand in judgment.

Such was the high range of thought, motive, purpose, and action reached by this Covenant of the fathers, who called upon God in the day of trouble, and were heard in that they feared. The men who led in this solemn transaction were distinguished for learning, piety, high-souled purpose, devotion to their country, and zeal for the glory of Christ. They were among the excellent of the earth. But the mighty current of religious enthusiasm that had set in drew to itself, and carried on its bosom, multitudes who were superficial and vacillating. These quickly fell away when the counter current set forward; some of them even became violent persecutors of the Covenanters.

The king was among the first to vitiate his oath, and break the Covenant. His weakness was pitiful; he seemed to turn with every gale that struck him. The next year he mustered the strength of his government to overthrow the Presbyterian Church, and reverse the workings of the Covenant. The Church was aroused and resolute, Andrew Melville being her recognized leader. A delegation was sent to the king to remonstrate; Melville was the spokesman. The king was confronted like a lion in his den. He listened to the following message:

"Your Majesty, by device of some counselors,

is caused to take upon you a spiritual power and authority, which properly belongs unto Christ, as the only King and Head of the Church. Through Your Highness, some men are trying to erect a new Popedom, as though Your Majesty could not be king and head of this commonwealth, unless the spiritual world, as well as the temporal, be put into your hands; unless Christ be bereft of His authority, and the two jurisdictions which God separated be confounded. All this tends to the wreck of true religion."

Melville sent the truth, like a lancet, into the inflated ambition of the young king. He winced in the agony of the keen surgery. But Melville had to meet the consequences of his faithfulness. He was taken to the Tower of London, where he lay in a dismal cell four years. He was afterward banished and died in a strange land.

This Covenant of 1581 placed posterity, equally with the Covenanters of that day, in oath-bound relation to God. A Public Covenant with God continues in its moral obligation until its terms are fulfilled. Are we lifting up our lives into relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ through our inherited Covenant? Are we fulfilling our sworn duties to our country, our Church, and our Lord? Are we using all lawful means to cause true religion to prevail? Are we employing our strength against all opposing evils? Are we keeping step in the Covenanted ranks that are marching on, assured that the principles of the Reformation will yet prevail in every land?

#### POINTS FOR THE CLASS

1. What was the condition of the Presbyterian Church during 1560-1570?
2. How did the Church thereafter decline?
3. To what did the Church resort for her reviving?
4. What effect had the Covenant on the Church?
5. Mention some of the main points in the Covenant.
6. How did the king regard the Covenant?
7. How was his opposition resisted by the Covenanters?
8. In what way do the former Covenants bind the present generation?

(To be continued)

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None other Lamb, none other Name,  
None other Hope in heaven or earth or sea,  
None other Hiding-place from guilt and shame,  
None beside Thee.

—C. G. Rosetti

## *The Social and Economic Responsibility of the Visible Church*

By J. G. Vos

**Note:** This article is reproduced by permission from **The Westminster Theological Journal**, Vol. X, No. 2 (May, 1948). To those readers who may find this article difficult to understand, the editor would suggest that instead of laying the magazine aside as "too deep", they turn to other parts of its contents, where they will find material simple enough for any serious Christian of common school education.

As previously explained in our statement of Editorial Policy (July-September 1951 issue, pages 109, 110), "our aim in publishing the paper is to provide something for all readers. To provide material all of which will be equally suitable for all readers is manifestly impossible. No paper can be equally suitable for all readers; and any paper which contains nothing 'too deep' for ANY of its readers is suitable only for beginners in Christian truth—babes in Christ."

Those readers who find the present article "too deep" will, we believe, find the articles on Church history and the Bible lessons which appear in every issue simple enough for ready understanding if they will only take the time and trouble to read them. — Ed.

(Continued from last issue)

### **II. COMMON VIEWS CONCERNING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DUTY OF THE CHURCH**

#### **1. That the Visible Church is the Agent of World Redemption**

A fairly common view among those who reject the supernatural soteriology of Christianity regards the visible Church as the agent of world redemption. This conception regards the visible Church itself, as such, as the hope of humanity; it sees in the Church a nucleus of men of good will which is to remake human society and mold and fashion it as it ought to be. The slogans of this point of view are such expressions as "building a better world" and "building the Kingdom".

Certainly there is an element of truth in this idea. For the visible Church is the sphere in which the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, is chiefly operative. As such, it is normally the nucleus of regenerate life in the world, and must therefore produce an impact upon society in general. Christians are affirmed in the Scripture to be both "the light of the world" and also "the salt of the earth". Where there are no regenerate Christians, there exists no real "salt", and therefore no genuine impact

of regenerate life upon society in general. Where there are regenerate Christians, such an impact, in greater or less degree, will exist. Thus in God's appointed scheme of things the growth, in numbers and in grace, of the visible Church, will be accompanied by an increasing beneficial effect upon society in general (or in case of the negative reaction of extreme "hardening" on the part of the world, by increasing divine judgments).

The view under consideration, though it contains an element of truth, is none the less essentially false. It tends to regard the visible Church, in its corporate capacity as an institution, not so much as a witness as as an expert engineer who is to take human society apart and put it together again as it ought to be. This view thus regards the social impact of the Church not as an organic development of the regenerate life of the Church, but as a deliberately planned and executed program—not the growth and functioning of an organism, but the promotion of a campaign. That is to say, its naturalistic view of salvation inevitably causes it to regard world redemption as a matter of human planning and reconstruction. If the human race must climb the heights of destiny according to its own wisdom and under its own power, then the visible Church as the one organization that regards that task with real seriousness, must take the responsibility for determining the pattern to be sought and the means to be employed in seeking it.

To regard the visible Church as the agent of world redemption is not only wrong in principle, but must always lead to manifold evils in practice. For one thing, it must tend toward a totalitarian notion of the Church which regards the Church as a sort of over-all steering committee for the human race, an organization to the functions of which there can hardly be assigned any definite limits. Such a Church will always tend to become totalitarian; it will always tend to eclipse the individual, the family, and the State. Such tendencies are seen when the Church in its corporate capacity as an institution steps outside its proper sphere and engages actively in politics, in business, in general education, and so forth. That Christian people—the Church's members—should exert an impact on the political life around them, that they should do their best to bring Christian ethical principles to bear upon the business world, that there should be adequate general education conducted upon a Christian basis, no consistent Calvinist will deny. But for the Church as an institution to enter the political arena favoring and supporting this or that candidate or party, to

sponsor a cooperative grocery store, to own and operate an agricultural college, is quite another matter. If the Reformed interpretation of the Scripture teaching about the visible Church is correct, these activities lie outside the limits of the proper functions of the Church as an institution. The Church does indeed have a supremely important task to perform, but that task is **not** the reconstruction of human society in general.

## 2. That the Social and Economic Message is the Church's Primary Message

There exists in some quarters today a tendency to falsify the gospel by "interpreting" or re-thinking it in terms of sociological or economic theories. Thus the fruit is confused with the tree, and the cart placed before the horse. In some cases, indeed, a false and poisonous fruit is confused with the good tree, and a broken and dangerous cart is placed before the reliable horse. For the social and economic theories in terms of which Christianity is "interpreted" are themselves sometimes of a highly doubtful and even harmful nature.

This tendency to re-think Christianity in terms of this or that social or economic conception is of course a thoroughly humanistic tendency, a product of the perverse man-centered view of life that is characteristic of our time. Religion is regarded as a means to an end, and cultivated because of its "values" for the human race. For this tendency consists in regarding this or that (real or imaginary) product of Christianity as the main thing in Christianity. It may assume various forms, from a reactionary insistence upon the **status quo** which virtually identifies Christianity with extreme capitalism, *laissez faire* and the supremacy of the white race, to a downright advocacy of communism as the real substance of the Kingdom of God on earth. Perhaps its most common form consists of an identification of Christianity with either socialism or democracy, regarding one or the other of these as equivalent to "the essence of Christianity". In each case Christianity is regarded primarily or wholly from the standpoint of human benefit, in each case its real essence is missed, and in each case a social by-product (which may be legitimate or spurious) is wrongly regarded as the essence.

The true conception is rather that of the application of Christian ethics to the social and economic spheres. This application, being a **product** of the gospel, is therefore not the gospel itself. The term "social gospel" is, consequently, a misnomer, for duty is not good news; the application of Christianity to the social and economics spheres is a matter of ethics, not of evangelism. Instead of speaking of a "social gospel" we should speak of a social application of the ethical implications of the gospel. For in Biblical Christianity the primary message must always be the soteriological message; the ethical implications must always be regarded as secondary. This does not, of course,

mean that the ethical implications are unimportant, nor that they may be neglected. Neither in social nor in individual matters can true Christianity tolerate antinomianism.

The question now arises, In what sense can we speak of "social redemption"? This phrase is frequently used by orthodox Christians, quite apart from the ideology of the "social gospel", to describe the far-reaching effects of Christianity upon human social institutions. Undoubtedly there is a sense in which we may rightly speak of social redemption. Christ is the Redeemer of the human race as an organism, and this must include human society and its institutions. The phrase, however, is often used in a vague and loose manner, and needs to be carefully guarded.

Obviously we cannot speak of social redemption in a sense exactly analogous to that in which we can speak of the redemption of an individual, or more precisely the salvation of an individual. If society or a social institution, such as, for example, a nation, can experience "salvation", this is not to be thought of as parallel to the subjective salvation of an individual human being. We cannot rightly apply the whole *ordo salutis*—regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, glorification—to society. It is true that it is common enough to speak of the "regeneration" or "rebirth" of a nation, but this is a figure of speech; it does not mean that a nation as such can experience that instantaneous, supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit by which, as a nation, it would cease to be dead in trespasses and sins and become a new creature in Christ Jesus. Moreover if society, or a nation, can experience "salvation", it can also at a later time lose it again, but an individual who really experiences it possesses it forever.

To speak of the "redemption" or "salvation" of society or of any social institution is, therefore, really to employ a figurative mode of expression. Strictly speaking, what is meant is that enough of the individuals making up that society have experienced personal subjective salvation, and have engaged in the practical application of its ethical implications, to alter the dominant character or trend or official position or status of that society or institution from non-Christian to Christian, from unbelief and rebellion against God and His Word to faith and submission to God and His Word. When such a change takes place that society is "redeemed" or "saved" in the only way that a collective organism can possibly be saved—by the salvation of the dominant portion of its component parts, not only in their inner character but in their social relationships. In this sense "social redemption" or "social salvation" may properly be affirmed, but it must always be borne in mind that this comes through and is contingent upon the personal salvation of the individuals who impart to the social organism in question its specifically Christian character. We may

not posit a realistic **ordo salutis** for social organisms as such.

Does this imply the non-reality of collective persons? Brunner in his book **Justice and the Social Order** (P. 120; p. 244, note 47.) entirely rejects the concept of collective personality, even asserting that to speak seriously of such paves the way for totalitarianism. There is good reason for holding that the Scripture teaches the reality of collective persons, however. The elders of Israel made a league with the Gibeonites without inquiring of the Lord (Joshua 9:3-27). Even though this treaty was obtained by fraud on the part of the Gibeonites, it was binding and could not be broken (verses 19, 20). Long afterwards in the time of King David there occurred a famine of three years' duration, which David learned, upon inquiring of the Lord, had been inflicted upon the nation because King Saul had slain the Gibeonites (II. Sam 21:1). Joshua, the elders of Israel and the Gibeonites who negotiated the original treaty had all been dead for a long period of time; Saul who violated the treaty had been dead for years, and his family was entirely out of authority in Israel; yet after all that, the nation of Israel as such is held responsible by God for maintaining the sanctity of the treaty entered into in the days of Joshua. How can these clear facts be explained except by affirming that the treaty was the deed of the nation **as such**, and that the nation as such was responsible for maintaining it, and guilty of violating it? The same conception of collective personality and collective responsibility also permeates modern life. A treaty is binding even though all the individuals who negotiated and ratified it may be dead or out of office. A war bond or currency note is an obligation of the nation as such, even though the administration that issued it may be out of office and the signatures on it may be those of dead men. We may rest assured, then, that corporate or collective personality and responsibility has a real, and not merely a fictitious, existence, and that Christian social ethics must therefore take account of this in the application of Christian ethical principles to the realm of society.

Against the application of Christian religious and ethical principles to collective persons such as families and nations it has sometimes been urged that these collective persons exist in the sphere of common grace and therefore it is wrong to apply to them principles derived from the realm of special grace. But the fact that such collective persons exist in the realm of common grace does not imply that they may not have certain responsibilities or relationships in the realm of special grace. It is an over-simplification to assert that the family and the State exist in the sphere of common grace and therefore they need not, or must not, be Christianized. The individual also exists in the sphere of common grace, yet it is his duty to become a Christian. The family and the State are corporate persons, having moral respon-

sibility collectively, and not **merely** in their individual members. Though neither the family nor the State is peculiar to Christianity, and therefore both must be regarded as pertaining essentially to the realm of common grace, yet in certain cases they may have specific relationships to the realm of special grace. Thus there is such a thing as a **Christian family**; not merely a family whose members are Christians, but a **Christian family**. And there is (or at least ought to be) such a thing as a **Christian State**; not merely a State most of whose citizens are Christians, but a **Christian State**.

Admittedly the problems of the interrelations of the realms of common and special grace in connection with the family, and especially with the State, are complex, and have never yet been thoroughly and satisfactorily worked out. A great deal more study of this problem, in the light of the Reformed doctrines of common and special grace, needs to be done. But at all events we should avoid that facile over-simplification by which an organism existing primarily in the realm of common grace is assumed, **ipso facto**, to have no obligations or relationships in the realm of special grace. Whether the State, for example, in its corporate capacity, ought to have a specifically Christian profession and character, is of course a question on which Reformed theologians have differed. A. A. Hodge answered this question in the affirmative:

"It is our duty, as far as lies in our power, immediately to organize human society and all its institutions and organs upon a distinctively Christian basis." (Popular Lectures on Theological Themes, p. 327.)

So far as the character of the State is concerned, Abraham Kuyper's position is similar to this:

"... the magistrates are and remain—'God's servants'. They have to recognize God as Supreme Ruler, from Whom they derive their power. They have to serve God, by ruling the people according to His ordinances. They have to restrain blasphemy, where it directly assumes the character of an affront to the Divine Majesty. And God's supremacy is to be recognized by confessing His name in the Constitution as the Source of all political power, by maintaining the Sabbath, by proclaiming days of prayer and thanksgiving, and by invoking His Divine blessing.

"Therefore in order that they may govern, according to His holy ordinances, every magistrate is in duty bound to investigate the rights of God, both in the natural life and in His Word. Not to subject himself to the decision of any Church, but in order that he himself may catch the light which he needs for the knowledge of the Divine will....

"The sphere of State stands itself under the majesty of the Lord. In that sphere therefore an

independent responsibility to God is to be maintained. The sphere of the State is not profane. . . . The first thing of course is, and remains, that all nations shall be governed in a Christian way; that is to say, in accordance with the principle which, for all statecraft, flows from the Christ. But this can never be realized except through the subjective convictions of those in authority, according to their personal views of the demands of that Christian principle as regards the public service." (Calvinism (1943 ed.), pp. 103-4. (Page numbers different in older editions.)

It might indeed be alleged that Dr. Kuyper here teaches the obligation of a theistic rather than a Christian State, but such a distinction would be alien to his entire viewpoint. As a Trinitarian Dr. Kuyper of course believed that the Triune God is the only God that really exists. The God who, according to his teaching, is to be recognized in the constitution of the State, is not an abstraction having no real existence—not an imaginary God of theism apart from Christianity—but the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That such was indeed Dr. Kuyper's view is evident from his very positive statement concerning the obligation "that all nations shall be governed in a **Christian way**" and his reference to "the principle which, for all statecraft, flows from the **Christ**". Clearly Dr. Kuyper believed in a relationship between the State and the Christian religion; that is to say, he believed that the State, though existing in the realm of common grace, must have a certain relationship to the realm of special grace.

The contrary view of this question is set forth by Dr. W. Stanford Reid in an article entitled "Should We Try to Christianize the Realm of Common Grace?" Dr. Reid writes as follows:

"We hear people today talking about a Christian state, Christian education, Christian art, etc., as though there were such things. Can we say for instance that there is such a thing as a Christian form of government? The reply may be made that theocracy is such a government; but are we to try to bring one into existence in this day? Again is there a Christian form of economy? Is capitalism—or socialism—or anarchy a Christian form of economic organization? We could keep on asking questions such as these concerning every sphere of human life. Ultimately we must ask does God, in His Word, tell us directly or by implication what a Christian state, Christian art, Christian education should be? Or does he simply lay down certain principles for society, art, science, etc., which should be followed to attain the highest ends for those particular spheres of human activity?

"Let us look at some of these questions more closely. If we take, for instance, the question of social relationships, we may find a partial answer. Concerning this matter, the Scriptures have considerable to say. They state that every power

is ordained of God, and that the civil ruler bears the sword in order to punish wrong-doers. In the economic field also we are told that the laborer is worthy of his hire, that he should not be kept waiting for his wages nor defrauded of them. We are also told that men should give to the poor and help those less fortunate than themselves. On the other hand, the Scriptures do not say that there is one certain form of government or political economy which is divinely ordained and for which the Church must continually strive. The form of government and the form of economic organization comes in the providence of God. It may partially fulfill the requirements laid down in the Scriptures, or it may not. But until Christ's kingship is finally acknowledged by all men at the end of days it does not seem that we should expect to see any such thing as a Christian state, or any other specifically Christian form of social organization, except the Church."

"We must realize then that we cannot confuse these two spheres in any way. We cannot talk about a Christian political or economic program, Christian art or music. Christians may be involved in these matters, and they should be, but they must realize that right at this point they are Christians working in the sphere of Common Grace. Thus while they remain Christians with their own distinctive point of view and sense of responsibility, they should not try to make the realm of Common Grace part of that of Special Grace. The Kingdom of God is righteousness and truth and peace, not political parties, tariff reforms, views on perspective or dissonances of chords." (The Calvin Forum, XI, 6 (January 1946), pp. 112-114.)

Here it is obvious, at any rate, that Dr. Reid's view is contrary to those of Kuyper and A. A. Hodge. Dr. Reid holds that "it does not seem that we should expect to see any such thing as a Christian state, or any other specifically Christian form of social organization, except the Church", until the dawn of the eschatological Kingdom "at the end of days". The present writer is in agreement with the statements of Kuyper and Hodge, and would raise the question whether Dr. Reid has not confused two essentially different questions, namely, (a) the question of whether there **ought** to be such a thing as a Christian State, and (b) the question of whether there **can** be such a thing as a Christian State, that is, whether "we should expect to see" such a thing as a Christian State this side of the eschatological Kingdom. With this latter question, the ethical obligation in the social sphere has no concern. Ethics deals with what **ought** to be, not with what can be or will be. We will never see a morally perfect individual in the present life, either, but it is every individual's duty to be absolutely perfect immediately.

Further, in criticism of Dr. Reid's position, it may be inquired whether the Kingdom of God is

righteousness and truth and peace only in the abstract, or only in principle. Do political parties and tariff reforms have nothing to do with righteousness and truth and peace? Might it not be that righteousness would require the rejection of a particular political party, the favoring of a tariff reform? Doubtless Dr. Reid would admit this much, yet he rejects the idea of a Christian State, a Christian political or economic program, as confusing the realms of common and special grace. But is not this an over-simplification of the question? Surely the realm of special grace is not secularized when the Church owns real estate, builds buildings, receives bequests—all matters within the realm of common grace. Why then should the concept of a Christian State be rejected as "Christianizing the realm of common grace"? The problem is much more complex than appears on the surface. The same issue of **The Calvin Forum** in which Dr. Reid's article was published also contained an article advocating Christian labor unions. ("Labor and the Christian", by Richard Postma, in **The Calvin Forum**, XI, 6 (January 1946), pp. 116-118.) Similarly there are those who advocate Christian veterans' organizations. The Christian school is also a case in point: the school, teaching general knowledge, such as reading, writing and arithmetic, clearly exists primarily in the

realm of common grace. Yet Christian parents provide Christian schools for their children, and it is clear that a Christian school is not simply a school with Christian pupils and Christian teachers, but a school which is established and which is to function according to the teachings of Christianity. This constitutes an instance of the complexity of the interrelations of the realms of common and special grace; the school which exists and functions primarily in the realm of common grace, yet recognizes certain obligations and relationships in the realm of special grace, and if it were not for the realm of special grace there would not even be any reason for the existence of such a school.

Even though we may yield a cordial assent to Dr. Hodge's statement that "it is our duty, as far as lies in our power, immediately to organize human society and all its institutions and organs upon a distinctively Christian basis", we must always remember that this obligation of Christian social ethics is not and never can be the Church's primary message. The primary message must always be the gospel, which is addressed to individuals; the ethical implications, individual and social, though both real and important, must remain secondary.

(To be continued)

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## *Psalm Seventy-Nine*

### *The Judgments and Mercies of Our Covenant God*

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

Every Psalm is essentially and vitally a part of Holy Scripture. As such it is to be read and sung, otherwise it cannot be understood aright. Ignorance of the Bible admits the deceiver's insinuation that this Psalm is the resentful complaint of pharisaic pride seeking revenge for its own hurt. It has been labeled "Imprecatory", "Unchristian", "No place for it in modern religion". But, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God", of God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Truth, "and is profitable. . . ". Leaving this Psalm where it belongs, and with God's promised help searching out its connections its present usefulness for doctrine, for conduct, and for singing praise to God appears.

Its center of thought is the glory of God, while it surveys God's comprehensive world-plan, and the workings of His judgments and mercies whereby the goal of Redemption is ultimately reached in everlasting praises to God by all His redeemed out of all the nations of the earth.

#### I. A LAMENTATION: Judgment is Begun at the House of God (Verses 1-4).

"O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; They have defiled the temple of thy holiness; They have laid Jerusalem in ruins. They have given the dead bodies of thy servants as food to the birds of heaven, The flesh of thy saints to the beasts of the earth. They have poured out their blood like water round about Jerusalem; And there is none to bury them. We are become a reproach to our neighbors, A scoffing and derision to them about us."

"A time to weep" had come, "a time to mourn". Jerusalem lies in ruins, trodden under foot of the unclean; God's temple is defiled; and round about there is left only prey for scavengers, only abomination in the sight of heaven and earth. Israel had often been warned that unless they would repent the very details of judgment here mentioned would bring them down in utter dejection and grief. But they would not hear. The Lord, the Judge Himself, when He came near to Jerusalem and looked upon it, knowing the day of its visitation, "wept over it".

Disaster has befallen Jerusalem many times;

yet never at any time except by the shameful unfaithfulness of the people within. They betray their own city to the enemies of truth and righteousness. God's holy temple has never been defiled by heathen enemies until a way has been opened for them to come in by double-tongued worshippers. In Pergamos false teachers were busy at their traitorous work even while Antipas was sealing, with his blood, his testimony for the truth. In Sardis there were only "a few" who had not defiled their garments.

Thus the division of men as "righteous" and "wicked", as "believers" and "unbelievers" extends more or less deeply into the visible church, which, if not purified by discipline and repentance must sooner or later be visited by the judgments of God. For, with God there is no respect of persons. "Death is passed upon all men, for that all have sinned". Judgment often falls on both "righteous" and "wicked", the difference appearing in the effect. In case of those who depend only on the grace of God, the effect is to humble their hearts and turn them to God in penitent prayer—as here. This is the prayer of faithful men.

Their plea is based entirely on the covenant grace of God, not on anything of themselves. We are "thy people", that is, "thy covenant people", "thine inheritance", "thy servants", "thy saints", that is, those upon whom Thou hast bestowed thy mercy. Thou didst put thy name on Jerusalem. The temple is the temple of thy holiness. If enemies have reproached us, they have reproached Thee, for we are thine.

## **II. A PRAYER: "O Jehovah, in Wrath Remember Mercy" (Verses 5-12).**

5. "**How long, O Jehovah? Wilt thou be angry forever?**"—that is, angry forever with us? That cannot be, for Thou hast promised us "the sure mercies of David". "**Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?**" and consume us? It cannot be so, for Thou hast promised to be our God and we thy people, and that means Thou wilt forgive our sins. "**Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**" "**How long?**" is a question as to measurable time. It is a question of faith, not of disbelief, a question of hope, not of despair. And that it is not an improper question appears in the answer given (Compare Rev. 6:10,11). But judgment must begin at the House of God because the people of God have less excuse for their sin than others.

It is true that the city and temple of Jerusalem are laid waste in the anger of Jehovah's jealousy, but that is not the end; for back of that anger is His everlasting covenant love, without which there would have been no jealousy. His love shall prevail. The church in the darkest hour of her desolation remembers her God, and cries to Him out of the depths. Then the Great Intercessor, the Mediator of the Covenant, the **Angel of Jehovah**, takes up their cry for them and presents it in these words: "O Jehovah of

Hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem against which thou hast had indignation? . . . And Jehovah answers with good words, comforting words" (Zech. 1:12,13). "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Jehovah thy Redeemer" (Isa. 54: 7, 8).

6. "**Pour out thy wrath on the heathen that have not known thee, And on the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. 7. For they have devoured Jacob, And laid waste his habitation.**" "How long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name forever?" (Psalm 74:10).

The "heathen" had not intended to carry out the will of God; they had merely given rein to their own selfishness and pride. They devoured Jacob for their own lust and laid waste his habitation for their own enrichment. Now they vaunt themselves against God; they defy the God of Jacob. "Righteous art thou, O Jehovah". "Pour out thy wrath on them". "Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them" (Psalm 89:9).

To John on Patmos it was shown that God has always His messengers ready for such a time as this. He will vindicate the honor of His name. These messengers, seven of them, pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God on all parts and on all inhabitants of the earth (Rev. 15 and 16). Read of the judgments that fell on all the enemy nations round about Jerusalem, on Edom, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Philistia, Egypt, Assyria and Babylon. "By terrible things thou dost answer us in righteousness." In particular, "O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian, though he smite thee with the rod, and lift up his staff against thee after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation against thee shall be accomplished, and mine anger shall be directed to his destruction" (Isa 10:24,25). "And Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" (Isa. 13:19)

8. "**Remember not against us former iniquities: Let thy tender mercies speedily come to meet us, For we are brought very low.**"

The answer: "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jer. 31:34). "Before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isa. 65:24). "Thus saith Jehovah, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it; . . . Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem" (Zech. 1:16,17).

9. "**Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; And deliver us; and make atonement for our sins, for thy name's sake.**"

The acknowledgment of being "brought very low" was sincere, not a mere gesture. The first concern now is for the glory of God. There is no complaint. For we have sinned; we have deserved Thy wrath. There is no vindictive spirit against enemies, but a desire to see the judgments and mercies of God bring glory to His name. Jehovah forgetteth not the cry of the humble. He answers with grace already provided.

"The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls" (Levit. 17:11). "And he took a cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant poured out for many unto remission of sins." "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name, which ye have profaned among the nations" (Ezek. 36:22; compare verse 32).

**10. "Why should the heathen say, Where is their God? Let there be known among the heathen before our eyes, The avenging of the blood of thy servants which was poured out."** The answer was ready in the Song of Moses, "Rejoice ye nations, his people; For he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will make atonement for his land, his people" (Deut. 32:43). "Jehovah hath stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes, because his purpose is against Babylon, to destroy it: for it is the vengeance of Jehovah, the vengeance of his temple. . . And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith Jehovah" (Jer. 51:11,24).

**11. "Let the groaning of the prisoner come before thee: According to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those appointed to die."** The answer is at hand, "From heaven did Jehovah behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; that men may declare the name of Jehovah in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem. When the peoples are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve Jehovah" (Psalm 102: 19-22).

Thus we pray for Mrs. Li, Miss Soong, Pastor Soong, and we know not how many others who suffer for their faith; but, they are doing so while multitudes who call themselves "Christian" are compromising with false religions, and trying to appease the devil-driven hordes of Communism. So let us not mistake the present time of day. Is it time for judgment upon the enemies of God within, or outside of the church? This much we know, NOW is the time for repentance; and the Kingdom of God shall keep on advancing to final victory.

**12. "And render to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom, Their reproaches wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord."** The answer is terse and comprehensive: "Judgment will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet" (Isa. 28:17).

To "render sevenfold" does not mean to punish again and again for the same crime. It means to punish with full and complete justice, with perfect equity; to reward righteously. "Render sevenfold" not what they have done to us, but "their reproaches wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord." Reproach of the faithful servant of God is reproach cast upon God, and conversely. "As it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me". The chief priests and scribes and elders of Jerusalem, with the thoughtless crowd, scoffed and derided Christ on the cross. Even then God remembers mercy! The Gentile standing by "glorified God and said, Truly this man was Son of God". Christ suffered "that he might confirm the promises given to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, Therefore will I give praise unto thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people. And again, Praise the Lord all ye Gentiles; and let all the peoples praise him" (Rom. 15:3-11).

Thus Christ leads His people to the conclusion of this Psalm, the glorious goal set by His love and power. With new knowledge of His covenant, and relying solely on His grace, they renew their interest in it by

### **III. A PROMISE: Unceasing Praise to the God of Judgment and Mercy (Verse 13).**

**"So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture Will give thee thanks forever: To all generations we will declare thy praises."**

Begun in the depths of the desolation of God's judgment, this Psalm ends on the heights of the triumph of God's mercy. We have seen that the petitions of its prayer are all in accord with the will of God and the word of Christ, whether revealed beforehand as the basis for prayer, or shown afterward in specific answers. True it is that "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought", especially when we come to God concerning His "strange" work, when He uses judgment as the goodness necessary to lead us to repentance.

If now such petitions are according to the will of God; if they were granted, and are being granted as His people still use them, then they are NOT "unchristian". They are genuinely Christian, and to be used by all true Christians in the time of their own and the church's need, especially when enemies within are undermining the walls and bulwarks of the church, preparing for its downfall.

And it further appears that if we were to delete this Psalm to get rid of its spirit and truth, we would find it necessary to cut out many other parts of Scripture. But our God abideth faithful; so shall we.

(Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued, D.V., in future issues of this publication.—Ed.)

# *Sketches from Our History*

## *Contending for the Faith Through the Ages*

### CHAPTER VIII

#### JOHN CALVIN, THE REFORMER OF GENEVA

(Continued from last issue)

##### 3. Calvin's "Institutes of the Christian Religion"

The Protestant religion was spreading in France, and the king, Francis I, decided to take steps to check the new movement. John Calvin and his friend William Cop found it necessary to flee from their native country. Calvin found a refuge at Basel, Switzerland, where the Protestant faith was secure. On the journey to Basel Calvin was robbed, and it was only by borrowing the sum of ten crowns from his servant that he was able to reach Basel. The distinguished scholars and theologians who had gathered there gave Calvin a hearty welcome, and soon he was hard at work improving his knowledge of the Hebrew language.

King Francis tried to justify his persecution of the French Protestants on the ground that they were revolutionary fanatics of an extreme type. In February 1535 the king issued a pronouncement in which he made this charge against them. Realizing the terrible pressure on his fellow-Protestants in France, Calvin decided to try to do something to help them. He therefore prepared a book stating their faith, which was published in March 1536 under the title of **Institutes of the Christian Religion**. As an introduction to the book, Calvin wrote a letter to King Francis. This introduction contains some 20 pages in the English translations, and it respectfully urges the king to cast aside all prejudices and investigate for himself the faith of his Protestant subjects. We shall give here a few sentences of Calvin's plea to King Francis, as they appear in Beveridge's translation:

"Justice, then, most invincible Sovereign, entitles me to demand that you will undertake a thorough investigation of this cause, which has hitherto been tossed about in any kind of way, and handled in the most irregular manner, without any order of law, and with passionate heat rather than judicial gravity.

"Let it not be imagined that I am here framing my own private defence, with the view of obtaining a safe return to my native land. Though I cherish towards it the feelings which become me as a man, still, as matters now are, I can be absent from it without regret. The cause which I plead is the common cause of all the godly, and therefore the very cause of Christ—a cause which, throughout your realm, now lies, as it were, in despair, torn and trampled upon in all kinds of ways, and that more through the tyranny of certain Pharisees than any sanction

from yourself. But it matters not to inquire how the thing is done; the fact that it is done cannot be denied. For so far have the wicked prevailed, that the truth of Christ, if not utterly routed and dispersed, lurks as if it were ignobly buried; while the poor Church, either wasted by cruel slaughter or driven into exile, or intimidated and terror-struck, scarcely ventures to breathe. Still her enemies press on with their wonted rage and fury over the ruins which they have made, strenuously assaulting the wall, which is already giving way. Meanwhile, no man comes forth to offer his protection against such furies. Any who would be thought most favorable to the truth, merely talk of pardoning the error and imprudence of ignorant men. For so those modest personages speak; giving the name of **error and imprudence** to that which they know to be the infallible truth of God, and of **ignorant men** to those whose intellect they see that Christ has not despised, seeing he has deigned to intrust them with the mysteries of his heavenly wisdom. Thus all are ashamed of the Gospel.

"Your duty, most serene Prince, is, not to shut either your ears or mind against a cause involving such mighty interests as these: how the glory of God is to be maintained on the earth inviolate, how the truth of God is to preserve its dignity, how the kingdom of Christ is to continue amongst us compact and secure. The cause is worthy of your ear, worthy of your investigation, worthy of your throne.

"The characteristic of a true sovereign is, to acknowledge that, in the administration of his kingdom, he is a minister of God. He who does not make his reign subservient to the divine glory, acts the part not of a king, but a robber. He, moreover, deceives himself who anticipates long prosperity to any kingdom which is not ruled by the sceptre of God, that is, by his divine word. For the heavenly oracle is infallible which has declared, that 'where there is no vision the people perish' (Prov. 29:18).

"Let not a contemptuous idea of our insignificance dissuade you from the investigation of this cause. We, indeed, are perfectly conscious how poor and abject we are: in the presence of God we are miserable sinners, and in the sight of men most despised—we are (if you will) the mere dregs and off-scourings of the world, or worse, if worse can be named: so that before God there remains nothing of which we can glory

save only his mercy, by which, without any merit of our own, we are admitted to the hope of eternal salvation: and before men not even this much remains, since we can glory in our infirmity, a thing which, is the estimation of men, it is the greatest ignominy even tacitly to confess. But our doctrine must stand sublime above all the glory of the world, and invincible by all its power, because it is not ours, but that of the living God and his Anointed, whom the Father has appointed King, that he may rule from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth; and so rule as to smite the whole earth and its strength of iron and brass, its splendor of gold and silver, with the mere rod of his mouth, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel; according to the magnificent predictions of the prophets respecting his kingdom (Dan. 2:34; Isa. 11:4; Psalm 2:9)."

Calvin's entire address to the French king was in harmony with the paragraphs quoted above. The reader will note the deep conviction, the intense earnestness, and the calm, meek courage of Calvin's words. At this time Calvin was only twenty-six years of age, but he had, by the grace of God, struck a mighty blow for freedom for the Reformed religion in France, and indeed throughout Europe. The great value and importance of his **Institutes** was soon recognized, and Calvin became the recognized leader and voice of French Protestantism.

This book, which was first presented to the king of France in 1536 as a defence of the French Protestants, was destined to be one of the very greatest books of all Christian history. It became the principal theological textbook of a large part of Protestant Europe. Calvin revised and expanded it again and again for twenty-three years, until it reached its final form in 1559. The work was originally written in Latin, and later translated into French by Calvin himself for the benefit of his countrymen. It was soon translated into most of the languages of Europe, such as Italian (1557), Dutch (1560), English (1561), German (1572), Spanish (1597), Bohemian or Czech (translated about 1598, published 1617), Hungarian (1624),

Polish (in part only; 1626). Six editions of the English version appeared between 1561 and 1600. This will give an idea of the tremendous demand for the book. At the present day it is still being printed, sold and read throughout a large part of the world. And it will remain a standard work on Christian theology to the end of time.

It was on Calvin's **Institutes** that our Scottish Covenanter forefathers were nourished up in the words of sound doctrine. From this book they gained a systematic knowledge of the truth of God's Word, and from its cool courage and profound conviction they learned to stand their ground for Christ before kings and parliaments without cowardly fear and without retreat or compromise. In the deep providence of God, Calvin's **Institutes** proved the key to a grasp of Scripture, and those who fed on the **Institutes** became, like Apollos of old, "mighty in the Scriptures". For the very basis of the **Institutes** is the supreme and sole authority of Holy Scripture as the rule for faith and life.

It is a great pity that so many present-day Christians, and even ministers, have never read Calvin's **Institutes**. Perhaps it is no wonder that the modern church is weak and ineffective, when so many of its members and even of its leaders prefer shallow "inspirational" literature to the solid writings of the Reformation. A return to the study of Calvin's writings would put iron in our blood, and granite in our souls. These are no dry-as-dust volumes of musty, mouldy, out-dated theology. They are full of pulsing, vibrating life, produced from the anguish of Protestantism's early struggles for its very life. If we want the church of the twentieth century to regain the life, vigor and conviction of the church of the Reformation period, we will have to consider whether it is getting the spiritual vitamins and minerals which the church of that day received. When the church gets over its rejection of doctrine as "too deep", there will be a new zeal and eagerness to know the Truth of God, and a new power and conviction in confessing that Truth before the world. God grant it may soon be so.

(To be continued)

## *People and Places in the Psalms*

ASSUR. 83:8. The King James Version of the Old Testament gives this name in the form Assur twice, in the form Asshur 8 times, and in the form Assyria about 117 times. In the Hebrew all these are identical, and the pronunciation is Ash-ur, with the stress on the first syllable. The name means a level plain. In Psalm 83:8 Assyria is mentioned as included in a conspiracy of heathen nations against Israel and Israel's God (note verse 5 of the Psalm). Assyria was the mighty kingdom, and later empire, of which Nineveh was the capital. From 885 B.C. for

nearly three centuries Assyria was a world power. The Assyrians were cruel and ruthless in their wars of conquest, and their merciless aggression made them the terror of their age. A wicked, proud and powerful people, they were enemies of God's people Israel, yet were used by God to execute His righteous judgments.

BAAL-PEOR. 106:28. This is the name of a heathen god, meaning Lord of Peor. Peor was a mountain in the land of Moab, east of the Dead Sea. On this mountain the Moabites worshipped

their false god with indecent ceremonies. Psalm 106:28 recalls that the people of Israel "joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead". The story is found in Numbers 25:1-9. Because of this lapse into idolatry and fornication, "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel", and a terrible plague resulted, which took the lives of 24,000 of the people, and was not checked until the leaders in the transgression had been put to death. The reference to Baal-peor in Psalm 106 is a solemn reminder to God's people of the danger of sinking to the level of the world's false religion and immoral conduct. God is a holy God and demands that His people maintain a holy separation from the world and its sins.

**BABYLON.** 87:4; 137:1,8. In the Hebrew Babylon is always Babel; the form Babylon resulted from translating the Old Testament into Greek. The meaning is Gate of God. One of the oldest cities of the world, Babylon was founded in the dim dawn of antiquity on the lower Euphrates River (see Genesis 10:10; 11:1-9). Babylon became the capital city of the Babylonian empire, which was at the peak of its power and glory under Nebuchadnezzar nearly 600 years before the birth of Christ. Some of the most moving and awe-inspiring prophecies of the Old Testament concern the destruction of Babylon in retribution for violence done to God's people.

In Scripture Babylon is more than merely a city and an empire: it is also a sample and symbol of the concentrated power of the world-system that is against God. In this sense Babylon is pictured in the New Testament (Revelation 18).

In Psalm 87:4 Babylon is mentioned as one of the great and famous cities of the world, a city that people would commonly regard it as an honor to have been born in, along with Egypt, Tyre, etc. Albert Barnes states the meaning as follows: "I will refer to these as places well-known and distinguished; I will refer to the honor of having been born there; but great as is such an honor, the honor of having been born in Zion is far above that; it conveys the idea of a much higher distinction; it should be more sacredly cherished as among those things on which men value themselves." Do we prize our citizenship in Zion, God's kingdom, higher than the people of the world value their earthly citizenship or nationality?

In Psalm 137:1,8 Babylon is spoken of as

the power that had carried God's people captive to a foreign land, and is due for destruction by divine judgment. The sentiment expressed in verses 8 and 9 has occasioned the heaping of untold abuse on the Psalter; it is called "savage", "vengeful", "unchristian", and so forth. All this is entirely out of order. We should realize: (1) the words of Psalm 137 are inspired of the Holy Spirit, and those who denounce them are denouncing the Word of God; therefore they are rebelling against the God of the Word. (2) The total destruction of Babylon had been clearly and repeatedly prophesied by Isaiah and Jeremiah, therefore the sentiment of the Jewish exiles in Psalm 137 was based upon and in accord with the express statements of inspired prophecy. Since this total destruction of Babylon was planned, predicted and finally executed by God, it cannot have been wrong for the Jewish captives in Babylonia to pray for and expect the fulfilment of the prophecies. See for example Jeremiah 51:22-24, 47, 49; Isaiah 13:15-18. (3) In the providence of God it was not the Jews but the Medes that executed the divine sentence of judgment upon Babylon; see Jeremiah 51:11,28. Psalm 137 does not express a human passion for revenge, but a plea that God's righteous judgment will be executed, as prophesied, against a terribly wicked nation. Those who piously denounce Psalm 137 as "savage" or "unchristian" often have nothing to say about the mass bombing of modern warfare with its terrible toll, even of the lives of little children. War and destruction are indeed terrible; what we should never forget is that they are the results of terrible sin.

**BACA.** 84:6. This name means weeping, and also the balsam tree, perhaps because of the form of the tree. The valley of Baca may mean the valley of Balsam trees; but more probably, the valley of weeping. This may refer to some particular valley which by reason of lack of water was known as a valley of weeping; or the meaning may be figurative only, referring to any sorrowful experience of God's people. Those who know and worship Jehovah, the covenant God of grace and salvation, will find their valley of weeping turned into a valley of peace and comfort; there will be showers of spiritual blessings, with fountains and pools of divine grace greater than all their need.

(To be continued)

## Some Noteworthy Quotations

"All of the co-called modern theories of the Atonement are but efforts to take away from the Cross its offense. The offense of the Cross has never ceased, and the cause of its offense has

always been the same. The Greeks among modern men are still seeking human wisdom and the Jews among modern men are still seeking a legal righteousness, no matter how subtle or refined

its form. But unto those who are effectually called, the preaching of Christ crucified for sin is still the power of God unto salvation."

—Caspar Wistar Hodge

"The modern subjective theology goes back to Kant and not to Luther and Calvin as it claims to do."

—Caspar Wistar Hodge

"Peace is such a precious jewel that I would give anything for it but truth."

—Matthew Henry

"True peace is not absence of war but the presence of God."

—Gereformeerd Weekbald

"Give me the plenary verbal theory with all its difficulties, rather than the doubt. I accept the difficulties, and humbly wait for their solution; but while I wait I am standing on a rock."

—J. C. Ryle

"Little faith will bring your soul to heaven; great faith will bring heaven to your soul."

—Charles H. Spurgeon

"A backsliding state is manifested by indifference to prayer and self-examination; trifling or unprofitable conversation; neglect of public ordinances; shunning the people of God; associating with the world; thinking lightly of sin; neglect of the Bible; and often by gross immorality."

—Charles Buck

"The church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christians but a school for the education of imperfect ones, a nursery for the care of weak ones, a hospital for the healing of those who need special care."

—Henry Ward Beecher

"Character is what you are in the dark."

—Dwight L. Moody

"Cling to the whole Bible, not a part of it.

A man is not going to do much with a broken sword."

—Dwight L. Moody

"Home becomes a palace when the daughters are maids of honor, and the sons are nobles in spirit; then the father is a king, and the mother a queen, and royal residences are more than outdone. A city built up of such dwellings is a city of palaces, and a state composed of such cities is a republic of princes."

—Charles H. Spurgeon

"There is an old story which tells of an Italian duke who went on board a galley ship. As he passed the crew of slaves he asked several of them what their offences were. Every one laid the blame to someone else, saying his brother was to blame or the judge was bribed. One sturdy young fellow said: 'My lord, I am justly in here. I wanted money and I stole it. No one is to blame but myself.' The duke on hearing this seized him by the shoulder, saying, 'You rogue! What are you doing here among so many honest men? Get you out of their company!' The young fellow was then set at liberty, while the rest were left to tug at the oars."

—Charles H. Spurgeon

"A man's nose is a prominent feature in his face, but it is possible to make it so large that eyes and mouth and everything else are thrown into insignificance, and the drawing becomes a caricature and not a portrait. So certain important doctrines of the gospel can be so proclaimed in excess as to throw the rest of the truth into the shade, and the preaching is no longer the gospel in its natural beauty, but a caricature of the truth; of which caricature, however, let me say, some people seem to be mightily fond."

—Charles H. Spurgeon

"He that will go as near the ditch as he can, will at some time or other fall in; so he that will take all liberty that possibly he may lawfully, cannot but fall into many unlawful things."

—Augustine of Hippo

## *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.

**QUAKERS.** A religious sect, properly called the Society of Friends, which arose in England in the 17th century and soon spread to various countries of Europe and to America. The chief distinguishing characteristics of the Friends are (1) their Mysticism, by which their highest authority is the "inner light" rather than the

written Word; (2) their rejection of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as unnecessary; and (3) their Pacifism, or conscientious refusal to participate in war. There are now in America four associations of Friends, with a total of 639 local societies and 88,383 members.

**REFORMATION.** The great religious move-

ment of the 16th century, beginning with the work of Martin Luther, by which the original truth and purity of Christianity, which had become corrupted by grievous error during the Middle Ages, were in large measure restored. The Protestant churches which arose out of the Reformation are not new churches, as maintained by Roman Catholics, but a return to the true Christianity set forth in the Word of God. The fact that the Protestant bodies do not have a formal history before Luther's time does not prove that they are new and therefore false. What counts is not mere continuity of organization, but identity of teaching with that of the apostles.

**REGENERATION.** That supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which a sinner is instantaneously changed from being dead in trespasses and sins to being a new creature in Christ Jesus. In regeneration the dominant bent or tendency of the soul is, by the almighty power of God, re-created holy and good. In Scripture this is also called being "born again", "the washing of regeneration", the "new creation" 2 Cor. 5:17), being "begotten of God", etc.

**REPENTANCE.** "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" (S.C. 87).

**REPROBATION.** That element in the eternal decree of God by which those whom He has chosen to pass by and not elect unto eternal life, are foreordained to eternal dishonor and wrath to be inflicted on them as the just punishment of their own sin. (See Westminster Confession of Faith, III.7).

**RESTITUTION.** That act of justice by which we restore to our neighbor whatever we have unjustly deprived him of (Buck's Theological Dictionary). Our repentance will not be accepted by God unless we make proper restitution where it is possible to do so.

**RESURRECTION.** The supernatural event

which will immediately follow the second coming of Christ, in which the bodies of all the dead shall be raised to life and re-united with their souls for ever.

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

**RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.** Christ's rising from the tomb on the third day following His death, according to the Scriptures, in the identical body in which He suffered, but glorified.

**REVELATION.** An activity of God by which He communicates truth to men.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS.** Moral perfection, uprightness or virtue.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.** The infinite moral perfection of God's being and of all His relations to His creatures. Also called the justice of God.

**SABBATH.** The day appointed by God to be kept holy unto Himself, which is, since the resurrection of Christ, the first day of the week, to continue unto the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath.

**SACRILEGE.** The sin of treating something sacred or pertaining to God as if it were common or profane.

**SADDUCEES.** A sect of the Jews in the time of Christ, who had control of the priesthood and temple worship, and opposed the principles of the Pharisees. They denied the resurrection of the body, the existence of angels and spirits, and the doctrine of foreordination or predestination. They were materialistic, worldly and self-satisfied.

**SAINT.** The name applied by the New Testament to all Christians, meaning "holy person".

## Studies in the Epistle to the Philippians

### LESSON 1

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

##### Authorship of the Epistle

The Epistle to the Philippians names the apostle Paul as its author, 1:1. Paul associates Timothy with himself in sending the Epistle. Practically all scholars, even unbelieving ones who do not accept the Bible as God's Word, agree

that this epistle is genuine, that is, that the apostle Paul was its author as the epistle itself claims.

Between 110 and 115 A.D. Polycarp of Smyrna wrote a letter to the Philippian Christians, and in it he mentioned the fact that Paul had written a letter or letters to that church.

### Place of Composition

In 1:7, 13, 17 Paul speaks of his bonds, so we know that he was in prison at the time of writing. But where? In answer to this question, there are two opinions, namely, Rome and Caesarea. From the contents of the epistle, however, we conclude that it was written at Rome. Note 1:13, which speaks of "the palace", and 4:22 which refers to "Caesar's household".

### Time of Composition

During Paul's first imprisonment at Rome he wrote four epistles, namely, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. These are called the "prison epistles". Philippians was probably written toward the end of Paul's imprisonment. From Acts 28:30 we learn the fact that Paul spent two full years in Rome at this time. This was probably during A.D. 61 and 62, but possibly included a part of 63. How do we know that Philippians was probably written during the latter part of this period of time? From Paul's own statements in the epistle. From 1:12 we gather that at the time of writing he had already been at Rome for some time. From 1:25 we see that at the time of writing he was expecting to be released; we get this same impression from 2:23,24. The Christians of Philippi had sent him a gift by the hand of Epaphroditus, as we see from 2:25 and 4:10. Epaphroditus, while in Rome, had become sick. The Christians in far-away Philippi had heard of Epaphroditus' sickness, and Epaphroditus, in Rome, had learned of their sorrow and anxiety about his condition. Thus we see that at the time of writing the epistle Paul had been in Rome long enough for Epaphroditus to travel from Philippi to Rome, for news of his sickness to travel back to Philippi, and for news of their anxiety to travel to Rome. We must remember that in those days travel, whether of people or of news, was slow. Therefore a long period of time had elapsed since Paul reached Rome, when he wrote the epistle.

### Recipients of the Epistle

The original recipients of this epistle were the Christians of Philippi, as we see from 1:1. Philippi was a great city in Macedonia, and a Roman colony. It was the first city in Europe where Paul preached after leaving Asia. See Acts 16:12-40, which describes Paul's visit there during his second missionary journey. Philippi was where the Lord opened Lydia's heart, and where the jailer and his household were converted to Christ following the earthquake.

### Occasion for Writing the Epistle

The primary occasion for writing this epistle was to acknowledge a gift which the Philippian Christians had sent to Paul. The apostle, contrary to his usual custom, had on more than one occasion received gifts from the Christians of Philippi (see 4:15,16). Taking advantage of this

opportunity, Paul undertakes also to warn the Philippians about the danger of doctrinal errors. This epistle was not occasioned by any special crisis in the life of the church, as was the case of the Epistles to the Ephesians and Galatians. Philippians is an epistle which abounds in counsel for the Christian life. It was sent to Philippi by the hand of Epaphroditus, as we learn from 2:25,28.

### An Outline of the Epistle to the Philippians

#### I. Introduction to the Epistle. 1:1-11

1. Greetings. 1:1,2
2. Thanksgiving for the faith and Christian life of the Philippians. 1:3-8.
3. Paul's prayer for their continued growth as Christians. 1:9-11

#### II. God's Special Care of His Servant Paul. 1:12-30

1. God in His providence has turned evil circumstances to good. 1:12
2. Through Paul's imprisonment in Rome, the proclamation of the Gospel has actually been helped. 1:13-18
3. Paul is willing either to live or to die, according to the will of God. 1:19-26
4. Paul exhorts the Philippians to live in a manner worthy of the Gospel. 1:27-30

#### III. Paul Appeals for Spiritual Unity. 2:1-30

1. He stresses the importance of cultivating brotherly love. 2:1-4
2. The Christian should follow the example of humility set by his Saviour, Jesus Christ. 2:5-11
3. Paul stresses the importance of holiness and of spiritual earnestness. 2:12-18
4. The apostle hopes to send Timothy back to Philippi. 2:19-24
5. In the meantime, Paul sends Epaphroditus to Philippi. 2:25-30

#### IV. The Danger of False Doctrine. 3:1-21

1. The grievous error of those who teach ceremonialism instead of the true Gospel of divine grace. 3:1-3
2. Paul's own experience with God's law and God's grace. 3:4-16
3. Paul urges the Philippian Christians to imitate his life. 3:17-21

#### V. Conclusion of the Epistle. 4:1-23

1. Paul exhorts the women of the church to live at peace with one another. 4:1-3
2. All the Christians should cultivate joy, prayer, gratitude, purity and other Christian graces. 4:4-9
3. Paul again thanks the Philippians for their gift and their kindness to him. 4:10-20
4. Salutations and final benediction. 4:21-23

#### Questions:

1. How do we know that Paul was the author of the Epistle to the Philippians?
2. Who was associated with Paul in writing and sending the epistle?
3. What statement of Polycarp confirms our

conviction that Paul was the author of the epistle to the Philippians?

4. Where was the Epistle to the Philippians written? What verses in the epistle show this?

5. Where was Paul at the time he wrote Philippians?

6. Which of Paul's epistles are called the "prison epistles"?

7. What was the approximate date of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome?

8. Was Philippians written early or late during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome?

9. What can we learn about the time of writing the epistle from 1:12, 1:25 and 2:23, 24?

10. What is the bearing of the journey and sickness of Epaphroditus on the time of Paul's writing the epistle?

11. What verse shows that the Philippians were the original recipients of this epistle?

12. Where is Philippi located, and what special distinction did the city have in Paul's day?

13. On which of Paul's missionary journeys did he first visit Philippi? What chapter in Acts tells about this journey?

14. Who was the first person converted to Christ as a result of Paul's preaching at Philippi?

15. What remarkable event led to the conversion of an official of the Roman government to Christ at Philippi?

16. What was the primary occasion for Paul's writing this epistle?

17. What special danger does the apostle warn the readers of?

18. What messenger carried this epistle from Rome to Philippi?

19. In what respect does Philippians differ greatly from Paul's epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians?

20. Into how many main sections may Philippians be divided, and what is the general subject of each of these sections?

## LESSON 2

### I. Introduction to the Epistle. 1:1-11

#### Greetings. 1:1,2

Timothy was with Paul at the time of writing, so Paul includes him in the words of address and greeting at the beginning of the epistle. This does not imply that Timothy actually took any part in the composition of the epistle. Note that in 1:3 Paul says "I", not "we", and so on throughout the entire epistle.

The "bishops" mentioned in 1:1 were the same as elders or presbyters in the churches of the present day. They were not bishops having jurisdiction over more than one congregation as in the episcopal and Roman Catholic forms of church government. In the New Testament there is no such thing as a "bishop" with higher authority than that of pastors and elders.

From this opening verse of the epistle we see that it was written to the church at Philippi, not just to the Christians there as individuals. It is addressed to the Christians there as a body of people, a church under their lawful officers. A church consists of Christian people ("saints") united in the service and worship of God under lawful church government and officers ("bishops and deacons"). The modern attitude which regards the visible church with its officers and government as rather unimportant, is foreign to the New Testament. Throughout the New Testament the importance of the visible church is recognized.

To the church at Philippi, Paul and Timothy

wish grace and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only peace, but the grace without which peace cannot be real and deep. Sometimes at the present day ministers pray that God will give people peace, when those people cannot possibly receive peace because they are without the grace of God, they are in their sins. There is no peace apart from grace. The church has no message of peace to those who reject or ignore her message of grace. Grace comes first, and then peace follows. This needs to be realized and emphasized at the present day. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked" (Isa. 48:22). "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). "They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come unto you" (Jer. 23:17). There can be no real spiritual peace except on the basis of reception of God's grace.

Grace and peace come to people, not just from God the Father, but from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ (1:2). This truth is often forgotten. God's salvation, His saving grace, and the peace that accompanies it, come to men not by a mere decree of God, but by a work of redemption wrought out by the Son of God in human history. In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem us so that we could become children of God (Gal. 4:4) This work of redemption

was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ, in the land of Palestine, more than 1900 years ago. Through this work of redemption, and only through it, can grace and peace come to sinful human beings such as ourselves.

Today many people speak about God, in connection with religious matters, but leave the Lord Jesus Christ out. This tendency may arise from a desire to avoid offending those who do not believe in Jesus Christ, or it may arise from a lack of understanding of the Bible plan of redemption. But there can no grace or peace come to any of us except through the Lord Jesus Christ and His great work of redemption. Christianity without Christ is not Christianity at all. Religion without Christ is not Christianity. Prayer without Christ is not Christian prayer. Salvation, grace and peace do not just drop down out of the sky to us from God in heaven; they were accomplished and purchased for us by the work of Jesus Christ on this earth — His perfect righteousness, His shed blood.

So we see at the very beginning of this epistle that it stands upon the right platform or foundation. It is not just addressed to individuals; it is addressed to a church. It does not speak just of peace, but of grace first and peace after that. It does not speak of blessings just coming from God, but of blessings coming from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. How different this all is from much of the spirit of modern religion! How careful Paul was at the very beginning of his epistle to show what kind of religion his was, what kind of message he had for the church at Philippi!

#### **Thanksgiving for their Faith and Lives. 1:3-8**

In verses 3 and 4 Paul tells how he thanks God every time he remembers the Philippians, and how in every prayer of his he joyfully prays for them. Verse 5 speaks of their "fellowship in the gospel", probably referring to their financial contributions toward Paul's support and his activities as an apostle and missionary; compare 4:10,15.

Verse 6 states a very precious truth. God who begins a good work (of salvation) in any person will surely bring that work to completion. This is the Bible doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. It depends, not on human effort or will power, but on the will of God — His grace, His power, His faithfulness. Compare Romans 8:29,30.

In verses 7 and 8 Paul tells of his affection for the Philippians. He has them in his heart. He longed greatly for them. They like Paul himself were partakers of God's grace.

#### **Prayer for the Philippians' Continued Growth. 1:9-11**

This prayer is somewhat similar to Paul's

prayer for the Ephesian Christians in Eph. 3:14-19. Paul seeks for the Philippians love, and that it may abound in knowledge and discernment, so that they may approve the things that are excellent, and correspondingly disapprove the things that are worthy of disapproval. We should note the strong emphasis on the intellectual element in all Paul's writings, and even in his prayers. How different this is from the sickly anti-intellectual spirit which so largely dominates the modern church. Paul did not regard thinking as superfluous, nor mental effort as useless in religion. On the contrary, he stressed these as of the greatest importance. Many people today are impatient of solid instruction in the truths of the Scriptures, and demand instead "inspiration" that will tickle their "itching ears". But Paul emphasized truth and its apprehension by the mind, or the intellect.

Note that justification (or righteousness) itself does not result from love, but the fruits of righteousness do; or rather, the believer being filled with these fruits results from love.

Note, too, that the great aim of Paul's prayer is not merely the benefit of the believer, but the glory of God, as shown by 1:11b. Paul taught and preached a God-centered, not a man-centered religion. Man-centered religion is the common variety at the present day, but it is not Biblical. Today many people approach religion primarily, even entirely, from the standpoint of its benefits or "values" to man. But in the Bible religion is God-centered. The benefits to man are real but the glory of God is the one great aim.

We should also note that the terminal point of the Christian's salvation is the second coming of Christ ("the day of Christ"), 1:10. When Christ comes again on the clouds of heaven, the dead bodies of the saints shall rise in glory, incorruptible and immortal. This will be the completion of the work of redemption.

#### **Questions:**

1. Does the mention of Timothy in 1:1 mean that Timothy had a part in the writing of the epistle? How do we know?
2. What were the "bishops" mentioned in 1:1? How did they differ from present-day bishops?
3. Was this epistle written to the Philippian Christians as individuals or as a church? How do we know?
4. Why does the apostle, in his prayer for the Philippians, mention grace before peace?
5. Why is it wrong to wish or pray that people who are not true Christians will receive peace?
6. What texts in Isaiah and Jeremiah bear on the relation between grace and peace?

7. From whom do grace and peace come to mankind?
8. Why is it wrong to leave Jesus Christ out, and mention only God the Father, in speaking of the benefits of religion?
9. Why do some people in speaking of religious matters tend to omit the Lord Jesus Christ?
10. How did redemption come from God to sinners?
11. What is meant by "fellowship in the gospel" in 1:5?
12. What precious truth is stated in 1:6?

## **II. An Account of God's Care of Paul. 1:12-30**

### **God had turned bad circumstances to good results. 1:12**

To be chained as a prisoner would seem a difficult burden of suffering for anyone to bear. But such is the power and wisdom of God's providence that it turns evil into good. See also Romans 8:28. So Paul tells that the things that had happened to him—his arrest, his imprisonment in various places, the long journey to Rome, including the shipwreck, and finally his imprisonment in Rome itself—have turned out "unto the furtherance of the gospel". No doubt in Paul's sufferings there was a malign purpose of Satan, but there was also a deeper purpose of God. Satan intended to interfere with and if possible to destroy Christianity, but God made it turn out just the opposite of what Satan intended. In the same way Satan led Judas, the scribes, Pilate, etc., to crucify Jesus, intending to destroy God's plan of salvation; but Satan defeats himself, and God turns the evil to good in the end. We should always remember this truth when we have to go through sufferings, disappointments, opposition, reproaches, which seem to us to interfere with God's work. Under all this evil there is a deeper purpose of God being worked out by His mysterious providence, as promised in Romans 8:28. It was true in Paul's life and it is true in the lives of God's true children and servants at the present day.

### **Through Paul's Imprisonment in Rome the Gospel was Widely Proclaimed. 1:13-18**

The "palace" mentioned in 1:13 is rightly translated "pretorian guard". This was the guard attached to the Emperor's palace, in the city of Rome. The King James Version of 1:13 is faulty in saying "my bonds in Christ are manifest". The ARV (1901) is more accurate: "my bonds became manifest in Christ". The meaning is, that people had come to know and understand

What is the name of this doctrine in our church standards?

13. What does Paul emphasize in his prayer for the Philippians that is often neglected or rejected in modern religion?
14. Is the religion of the Bible man-centered or God-centered?
15. Which is more common today, man-centered religion or God-centered religion?
16. What is meant by "man-centered religion"? Why is it wrong?
17. What is the terminal point of the Christian's salvation, according to 1:10? What great event will take place at that time?

## **LESSON 3**

that Paul was no common criminal; people had come to understand that he was in prison because of his religion, the Gospel of Christ. They had come to realize that this man was a prisoner awaiting trial because he preached concerning Jesus Christ. Paul kept up a constant witness for Christ, so that even the Roman soldiers knew why he was in chains. As the guards would be changed from time to time, it would not be long until the facts about Paul would be known through the whole pretorian guard.

In 1:14 we see that Paul's witnessing for Christ, even while he was a prisoner in chains, emboldened many of his fellow-Christians in Rome "to speak the word without fear". If Paul could witness for Christ while a prisoner, how much more should free men dare to witness for Christ throughout the city of Rome!

In 1:15,16 Paul speaks of two classes of persons preaching the Gospel of Christ, the one out of love, the other out of selfishness and insincerity; that is, apparently, taking advantage of the fact that Paul was in prison to slander him and depreciate his preaching, to talk him down, and turn the church against him if possible. Our Saviour faced the same kind of opposition: people said that His being nailed to the cross proved that He was not the Son of God; His sufferings were made His reproach. It has often happened since that day. "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (John 15:20). No true servant of Jesus Christ can expect to live his life and do his work without being opposed, slandered and reproached by those who know not God (John 15:21). We should not expect to fare better than Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul did.

We should note carefully that it was not the message, but the motive and the method of these people that were wrong. What they preached was

"Christ", not some other gospel or some other Saviour, but they did it in such a manner and with such a motive as to cause grief to Paul, and if possible to injure him. This was not a case of preaching false doctrine, or a false gospel, but of preaching the true gospel in a wrong manner and with a wrong motive.

In verse 18 we read that Paul rejoiced in this preaching of the Gospel, in spite of the wrong method and the wrong motive that lay back of it. "Whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (1:18). This verse proves that the message preached, in the case of both classes of preachers, was "Christ"; it was the true Gospel, not a mere false gospel or substitute for the Gospel. Paul never rejoiced over the preaching of a false or substitute gospel; on the contrary, he fervently said that anyone who preached a false gospel, even if it were an angel from heaven, should be accursed (Gal. 1:8).

It is important that we realize the force of this distinction, because there are many at the present day who would urge "tolerance" for the false gospel of modern liberalism, which is called by various names such as "the brotherhood of man and Fatherhood of God", "the Jesus way of life", "spiritual values". Paul never urged tolerance for a false message. But he could unselfishly rejoice when the true message was preached, even though it were done with malice against himself.

#### Questions:

1. Who has the power and wisdom to turn evil to good?
2. What sufferings and hardships in the life of Paul were turned to good?
3. What verse in Romans teaches that the

sufferings and hardships of the Christian will be turned to his good?

4. Were Paul's sufferings and hardships caused by the will of Satan, or by the will of God?
5. What was the "palace" mentioned in 1:13?
6. What is the real meaning of the expression "my bonds in Christ are manifest" in 1:13?
7. How did the Roman soldiers of the praetorian guard come to know why Paul was in chains?
8. What effect did Paul's witnessing for Christ while he was a prisoner have on the other Christians in Rome?
9. What two classes of persons were preaching the Gospel of Christ, according to 1:15,16?
10. What is meant by Paul's statement in 1:16 that some were preaching Christ "of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds"?
11. In what way did Paul's experience mentioned in 1:16 parallel that of Jesus Christ?
12. Why should no true servant of Christ expect to escape opposition, slander and reproach?
13. Was the message of those mentioned in 1:16 wrong, or was it their motive and method that were wrong?
14. Why did Paul rejoice in the preaching mentioned in 1:16?
15. What was Paul's attitude toward those who preached a false message, as shown by Gal. 1:8?
16. Why is it wrong to be tolerant toward the false gospel of modern religious liberalism?

#### LESSON 4

##### **II. An Account of God's Care of Paul. 1:12-30, Continued**

##### **Paul is Satisfied to Live or Die, according to God's Will. 1:19-26**

In 1:19 the expression "my salvation" may possibly mean Paul's release from prison, but more probably it means Paul's spiritual welfare, by furthering the coming of Christ's Kingdom through the wider proclamation of the Gospel, thus hastening Paul's complete redemption at the "day of the Lord" or the "day of Christ" (1:10b).

In 1:20 we see the great objective which Paul aimed at in his life as a Christian and an apostle. This was his "earnest expectation" and his "hope",

namely that he would never be ashamed of his Saviour, but that "with all boldness" Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by Paul's life or by his death. This should, indeed, be the aim and objective of every Christian. But how far short we fall of this objective in our daily lives! How self-centered we tend to be! How much we seek our own things rather than the things of Jesus Christ! How much we have to learn from such a Christian as Paul!

In 1:21 Paul states that for him "to live is Christ, and to die is gain". None but a Christian can call death a "gain". To all others death is a terrible evil. Remember that Paul was in prison awaiting a final decision on his case. Would he be acquitted of the charges against him, and set at liberty? Or would he be adjudged guilty and

led to the Roman executioner's block? He faced the alternatives of continued life, or death by execution. Considering these two alternatives, Paul weighs them in the balances. He regards death as preferable for himself, but his continued life as a potential benefit to the church (1:24), and concludes with confidence that he shall continue to live for a period (1:25), and hopes to see the Philippian Christians again in this world (1:26).

**Paul Exhorts the Philippians to Live Worthily of the Gospel. 1:27-30**

We are not saved by living a worthy life; we are saved by the grace of God in Christ. But being saved by grace, it is our duty to live a good life. Paul exhorts the Philippian Christians to unity in striving for the faith of the Gospel (1:27). They are not to be afraid of adversaries or opponents (1:28). Their freedom from fear would be a token of perdition to the adversaries, and of salvation to the Christians. This truth was proved in practice time and again through the long period of Roman persecution of Christianity. The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church. The Christians' boldness and freedom from fear, even in the face of torture and death, proved to be a prophecy of "the wave of the future", when Christ would win the victory over Caesar and persecution would come to an end. Moreover, the Christians' freedom from fear in the face of persecution was a token or evidence of their spiritual and eternal salvation, and of the perdition or doom of their persecutors. Those who could face such sufferings without fear must indeed have the saving grace and power of God in their lives, they must be on the way to heaven; and those who could persecute, torture and kill such inoffensive people must indeed be in "the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity", deeply dyed with the stain of sin, and hence on the road to hell.

In 1:29,30 Paul tells his readers that it is the privilege of the Christian, not merely to believe on Christ as his Saviour, but also to suffer for Christ's sake. Suffering that comes to us for Christ's sake is to be borne with patience, but not to be sought or courted, as some in the early church wrongly did.

**Questions:**

1. What is the most probable meaning of the expression "my salvation" in 1:19?
2. How could the malicious preaching of Christ mentioned in 1:16 turn to Paul's salvation?
3. What was the great objective at which Paul aimed in his life as a Christian?
4. Who can call death a gain?
5. What alternative was Paul facing at this time?
6. From what point of view did Paul prefer death to life?
7. From what point of view did he regard continued life as preferable death?
8. How does the apostle conclude his weighing of these two alternatives in the balance?
9. What hope does Paul express in 1:26?
10. Are we saved by living a worthy life, or how are we saved?
11. Why should the Philippian Christians not be afraid of their adversaries?
12. What would the Philippians' freedom from fear be a token of?
13. What is meant by the saying "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church"?
14. Of what victory was the early Christians' boldness and fearlessness a prophecy?
15. How could the early Christians' fearlessness be a "token of perdition" to their persecutors?
16. Besides believing on Christ as their Saviour, what privilege is granted to Christian people?
17. How is suffering for Christ's sake to be endured?
18. Why is it wrong to seek martyrdom as some did in the early church?

**LESSON 5**

**Paul's Appeal for Spiritual Unity. 2:1-30**

**The Importance of Cultivating Brotherly Love. 2:1-4**

Christ is the source of consolation, comfort of love, etc. These and all other graces come from Him. Those who profess faith in Christ should be filled with these fruits.

Paul urges the Philippian Christians to have the same love (2:2), that is, that they should all

be actuated by the same love. They should be "of one accord, of one mind". This does not, of course, mean that truth and principles are to be sacrificed or disregarded for the sake of external peace and harmony. Neither the apostle Paul, nor the Bible as a whole, ever advocated peace at the sacrifice of truth, nor peace at the sacrifice of righteousness. But in matters of personal preference, Christians should aim at unanimity, at being "of one accord, of one mind". This is often neglected at the present day. We should

be willing to make many sacrifices, when truth and righteousness are not at stake, for the sake of harmony with our Christian brethren.

Faction and pride ("strife or vainglory") are to be avoided, 2:3. Sometimes controversy is unavoidable; sometimes it is our solemn duty to engage in controversy, however much we might prefer to avoid it and the slanders and reproaches which come on us because of it. From the life of the apostle Paul we learn that he never shrank from that kind of controversy. He even reproved Peter to his face, because Peter was to be blamed (Gal. 2:11). There is a milk-and-water spirit abroad in the modern church that says: "All controversy is bad; avoid controversy at any cost". Such is not the attitude of the true servant of Christ. He is always ready to defend the faith and to oppose error and perversion of the truth of God.

But divisions, parties, factions and cliques in the church are often of another character entirely. Instead of originating in loyalty to truth, they may originate in the "works of the flesh", the "strife and vainglory" which Paul warns against. Such divisions are a shame and disgrace to any church.

Paul not only warns against this kind of danger; he also prescribes the remedy for it, in 2:3,4: "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Where this is taken to heart and practiced, the spirit of strife, faction and pride will vanish away.

#### **The Christian Should Follow Christ's Example of Humility. 2:5-11**

Christ is first of all our Saviour, and only after that our Example; but He is our Example, and therefore He is to be imitated by the Christian. The present passage presents the lesson that the Christian should imitate Christ in humility. And interwoven with this lesson in humility is one of the great lessons of the Bible on the Person and work of Christ.

In 2:5 Paul lays down the principle that the Christian should imitate Christ's attitude of humility. From this he proceeds to show how this humility worked out in the life and history of Jesus Christ.

Verse 6 sets forth Christ's Deity before He became man, from all eternity. Compare John 1:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." From eternity Christ existed "in the form of God". This meant that He was **equal with God**. Equality with God the Father was His by nature, by right; therefore this equality was not something which

He could attain only by "robbery", that is, by grasping or snatching it. If He claimed equality with the Father, He was not claiming something that did not rightfully belong to Him; He was simply claiming what was actually His by right.

Verse 7 sets forth Christ's incarnation, the first step in His humiliation. Though really equal with the Father, He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. The result of this step is stated in 2:8, He was "found in fashion as a man."

We should note very carefully the precise terms that are used. "In the form of God", and "equal with God"; but "in the likeness of men" and "in fashion as a man". Christ was and remained a divine Person, but he assumed a human nature, and by reason of His assuming this human nature, consisting of body and soul, He was found "in fashion" as a man. Christ therefore was and is God in the "fashion" and "likeness" of a man. As to His Person, He remained God.

Christ's human nature consisted of a human body and a human soul, like our own except for the fact that He was born without original sin. Beginning with the time of His incarnation and continuing until today, and forever, Christ had and has two natures, human and divine, mysteriously united together with His divine Person.

By reason of His taking a human nature, even though equal with the Father, He stepped down to a **position** lower than that of the Father. In nature He remained equal with the Father, but in position He became lower than the Father. By becoming man He stepped down from the position of divine glory to the position of a servant.

But taking a human nature to Himself did not end Christ's humiliation or stepping down. Verse 8 continues, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This was the depth of Christ's humility or humiliation. We know, of course, that death by crucifixion was a particularly shameful, disgraceful mode of death, reserved for the worst criminals and outlaws, in the time when our Lord was on earth.

This, then, is the example of humility which Christ has set for us, an example beyond any other that could be set before us. No one has ever given up so much for others as Jesus Christ did. No missionary, no martyr, no hero of the faith, has ever climbed down from such heights to such abysmal depths of self-denial and suffering for the good of others and the glory of God.

Truly, when we think of Christ's act of self-humiliation, it makes us ashamed of our poor, petty pride and vainglory and empty boasting over little things, and of our complaining about slight sufferings for Christ's sake.

Before we leave this subject of Christ's humiliation, we should pay attention to the statement of 2:7 that Christ "made himself of no reputation". The Greek may be literally translated "emptied himself", and it is so translated in the ARV (1901). The question concerning this phrase is, Of what did Christ empty Himself?

Orthodox Bible scholars have always answered this question by saying that what Christ emptied Himself of was the **enjoyment and manifestation of His divine glory**. Compare John 17:5, where Jesus in His prayer to the Father speaks of "the glory which I had with thee before the world was". In this prayer of John 17 He prays that the Father will glorify Him with that glory which He had had with the Father before the world was. In other words, He prays that the glory which he had given up when he became man, shall be restored to Him.

The reason it is so important for us to understand the true meaning of this verse (Phil. 2:7) is that this verse has been used in an attempt to rob Christ of His true and proper Deity. Certain scholars have claimed that what Christ "emptied himself" of was not merely His divine glory, but **His Deity**. In other words, they assert that when Christ became man He gave up His Deity and was no longer God, but only man. This theory is called the "kenotic theory", from the Greek word for "emptied". It has been held by many scholars who have tried to bridge the gap between orthodox Christianity on the one hand, and modern rationalism on the other. They have tried to find a middle ground between holding that Christ is truly God, and holding that He was and is merely a man.

But this "kenotic theory" is wrong. It does not fit in with the Scriptures which speak on this subject, for the Bible speaks of Christ **during His sojourn on earth** as truly God. The "kenotic theory" gives us only a human Saviour. According to this theory Jesus Christ during His life on earth was only human, without any of the attributes of Deity such as omnipotence and omniscience. This theory not only robs us of our divine Saviour; it also runs counter to the statements of Scripture, and it fails miserably to explain the facts of the life of Jesus Christ when He was on earth. When we see the statement that Christ emptied Himself of His Deity, we should be on guard. The person who can make such a statement is either grossly ignorant of theology, or he is a denier of the true and proper Deity of Christ.

#### Questions:

1. In urging the Philippian Christians to be "of one accord, of one mind", was Paul commanding unity at the sacrifice of truth and righteousness?

ness? If not, what kind of unity was he commanding?

2. Is controversy necessarily wrong? Under what circumstances may it be our duty to engage in it?

3. What kind of divisions in the church are always sinful?

4. Which is more important, Christ as our Saviour or Christ as our Example?

5. What principle of Christian conduct is set forth in 2:5?

6. What great truth about Jesus Christ is taught in 2:6?

7. What passage in the Gospel of John is parallel to Phil. 2:6?

8. What is meant by saying that Christ was "in the form of God"?

9. What is meant by saying that Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God"?

10. What truth about Christ is set forth in 2:7?

11. What is meant by the statements that Christ was made "in the likeness of men" and "found in fashion as a man"?

12. What two elements composed the human nature which Christ took to Himself?

13. After He took upon Himself "the form of a servant", in what respect was Christ still equal with the Father, and in what respect was He lower than the Father?

14. What was the lowest depth of Christ's self-humiliation?

15. What effect should Christ's self-humiliation have on us?

16. How may the expression "made himself of no reputation" in 2:7 be literally translated?

17. Of what did Christ empty Himself when He became man?

18. Why is it specially important for us to understand the true meaning of 2:7?

19. How have unsound scholars tried to explain the statement of 2:7 that Christ "emptied himself"?

20. Why is the "kenotic theory" of Christ's incarnation wrong?

## LESSON 6

**Paul's Appeal for Spiritual Unity. 2:1-30, Continued**

**The Christian Should Follow Christ's Example of Humility. 2:5-11, Continued**

**Christ's Exaltation**

Christ's humiliation was followed by His exaltation, as we learn in 2:9-11. The cross prepared the way for the crown, the suffering for the glory which was to follow.

The portion of Christ's exaltation described in 2:9 is already an accomplished fact: "God hath highly exalted him", as a reward for His obedience and sufferings. The final fulfilment of it throughout the universe is still future, and will take place at the Judgment Day, when all, even the lost, will confess that Christ is Lord; even those things "under the earth" (2:10), that is, demons and evil spirits, will openly and publicly acknowledge Christ's power and lordship.

We might think of Christ's humiliation and exaltation as His descending a mountain side, down to the bottom of a very deep valley. At the top of the mountain is the glory of heaven. It was there that Christ existed "in the form of God", from all eternity. But step by step He descended the mountain, making Himself of no reputation, taking upon Himself the form of a servant, being found in fashion as a man, humbling Himself, becoming obedient unto death. At the very bottom, in the depth of the valley there is a cross, the cross of Calvary on which our Lord was crucified. Yes, He became obedient unto death — not only obedient unto death, but unto the death of the cross. That was the depth of His valley of humiliation. He had reached the very bottom.

But across the valley, on the opposite side, is another mountain, and Christ having descended to the depths, presently begins the ascent of the opposite side. Step by step He is exalted, higher and higher, given the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father. And the final height is that universal confession and acknowledgment of Him as LORD — a height equal to that from which His humiliation began ("in the form of God", "equal with God").

There is a lesson for the Christian life in this, too. For us, too, the cross comes before the crown; suffering and trial come before victory and glory. The lesson is not merely that we should cultivate humility as disciples of Christ, but that we are to look forward patiently to the glory and victory reserved for the eternal future. For He has gone to prepare a place for us, that where He is, there we may be also.

**The Importance of Holiness and Spiritual Earnestness. 2:12-18**

2:12 exhorts the readers to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. This verse has often been misunderstood and misused. It by no means implies that salvation can be attained by human works or merit. Working out one's salvation is not the same thing as working for one's salvation. We might paraphrase the statement of the verse thus: "Develop in your life the implications of the salvation which you have received." Lest anyone suppose that salvation by works is meant, the apostle goes on in the next verse to add: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Here we see a profound truth. In the matter of salvation, considered in the widest sense, every work of man rests upon a previous work of God. Man can only receive salvation because of God's previous work FOR him; man can only work out his salvation because of God's work IN him.

Not only the work or "doing of his good pleasure", but also the desire or inclination, "to will", comes solely from God's gracious work in the soul. This begins in regeneration or the new birth, and continues in the supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit which produce sanctification, or holiness. Note the great aim of both willing and doing: the good pleasure of God. Scripture always places God's glory first and foremost; and only as God is glorified is man truly benefited. Man is not independent, but a creature of God, hence he can attain the real end of his existence only by living unto God, that is, by fulfilling God's good pleasure.

The remaining verses in this section are of a practical nature. Verse 14 teaches us that "murmurings and disputings" are to be avoided by Christians. Some people undertake to do their duty, but they do it with so much murmuring, complaining or quarreling, that God is not glorified. The murmuring, complaining spirit among Christians is a grievous sin against God. Some Christians complain constantly about their fellow Christians, their church, their minister, etc. If they would only open their eyes and look hard at themselves they would see where most of the real trouble lies.

2:15 teaches us that Christians should be examples of a blameless life in the midst of a sinful world. This does not imply that absolute sinlessness or total moral perfection can be attained in this life, but that it is our duty to avoid all occasions for blame and rebuke by others, and all conduct that is harmful to others. We are not perfect in this life, but it is our duty to be blameless and harmless. When Christian people live as they ought to live, they are in strong contrast to the environment around them. They "shine as lights" in this sinful and God-forgetting

world. If Christian people cannot be distinguished by their life and conduct from the unsaved people around them, there is something terribly wrong with their Christian life.

In 2:16 Paul instructs us that Christians are to "hold forth" or live out the Gospel; that is, they are to exhibit its fruits as well as profess its doctrines. The truth must be professed and defended, to be sure; but it must also be adorned by a faithful and consistent life.

2:17. If Paul is called to lay down his life as a martyr for the cause of the Gospel, even in this he is able to rejoice with his converts and fellow Christians. His death would not be in vain; it would not be a defeat; it would be a sacrifice in a great and worthy cause — a sacrifice made at the end of a life that had accomplished its true, God-intended purpose.

2:18. Paul invites the Philippian Christians to rejoice with him. That a man in prison, far from home and friends, could speak like this, is certainly a strong evidence of the truth of Christianity. Let those who think that Christianity is just a superstition of ignorant people explain Paul's rejoicing, if they can.

#### **Questions:**

1. What followed after Christ's humiliation?
2. When did Christ's exaltation, as far as it is described in 2:9, take place?
3. When will the final fulfilment of Christ's exaltation take place?
4. At that time, who will confess that Christ is Lord?
5. How may Christ's humiliation and exaltation be illustrated by a valley between two high mountains?

6. What lesson for the Christian life may be gained from the consideration of Christ's humiliation and exaltation?

7. What is meant by working out our own salvation with fear and trembling?

8. How can it be shown that 2:12 does not teach salvation by works or human merit?

9. What great truth about salvation is set forth in 2:13?

10. What two elements of Christian activity depend on God's gracious work in the soul?

11. What is to be the great aim of our "willing" and "doing"?

12. How alone can man attain the real purpose of his existence?

13. What is meant by "murmurings and disputings"? What harm do they do?

14. Instead of complaining against our fellow Christians, what should we do?

15. How are Christian people commanded to live in the midst of this sinful world?

16. Does 2:15 imply that total sanctification or sinless perfection can be attained in this present life? If not, just what is the meaning of the verse?

17. When Christian people live as they ought to live, how will they appear in relation to the world?

18. What is meant by "holding forth" the Gospel, in 2:16?

19. In 2:17, why would Paul's death as a martyr not be a defeat?

20. What evidence for the truth of Christianity can be derived from 2:17,18?

#### **LESSON 7**

##### **Paul's Appeal for Spiritual Unity. 2:1-30, Continued**

##### **Paul Hopes to send Timothy back to Philippi. 2:19-24**

Here we see the loneliness of Paul. Only Timothy could truly care for the Philippians' state, in any adequate way; all others sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. However this must not be taken in too absolute a sense, as verse 25, speaking of Epaphroditus, shows. But Epaphroditus was a Christian who had come from Philippi, not an evangelist working with Paul. In contrast to others who selfishly sought their own benefit, Timothy served with Paul, as a child with his father, in the furtherance of the Gospel (2:22).

As soon as Paul knows the issue of his im-

prisonment and trial, he hopes to send Timothy to Philippi (2:23), but he also hopes to return there in person (2:24).

##### **Meantime Paul sends Epaphroditus to them. 2:25-30**

The description of Epaphroditus in 2:25 shows that he was not one of those who sought their own rather than the things of Christ. From this verse we learn that it was Epaphroditus who had brought the Philippians' gift to Paul at Rome. While at Rome, Epaphroditus became sick; the Philippians heard of this sickness, and were sorrowful on account of it; consequently Epaphroditus in turn was sorrowful, knowing that his home church had been anxious about him.

But we learn that Epaphroditus, though sick

unto death, recovered from his sickness. The sparing of Epaphroditus was an act of divine mercy not merely to Epaphroditus, but also to Paul. From this we gather that the two, Epaphroditus and Paul, were together for some time at Rome, and that Epaphroditus had helped Paul in some way, perhaps in preaching the Gospel to the unsaved.

2:30 contains what at first sight appears to be a strange statement: "to supply your lack of service toward me". When we compare this with 4:10, however, the difficulty disappears. The Philippians had sent a gift to Paul. Not being able to help Paul in person, because of distance, they sent a gift by the hand of Epaphroditus. But they did "take thought" — if possible, they would have helped Paul in person. But they "lacked opportunity"; hence, in this respect, their service and help to Paul was not what they themselves wished it might be. But Epaphroditus was with Paul in person. So in this respect he made up for, or supplied, that which it was impossible, under the circumstances, for the whole body of the Philippian church to do. They could not minister to Paul in person, so they did it by proxy, through Epaphroditus who was one of their number. We gather that Epaphroditus was taken sick while enroute to Rome or else in some way in connection with the work of Christ, while he was at Rome.

#### **IV. Paul Warns Against the Danger of False Doctrine. 3:1-21**

##### **The Error of those who teach Ceremonialism instead of the True Gospel. 3:1-3**

We have seen that chapter 2 of the epistle contains Paul's appeal for spiritual unity among Christian people. Now we come to chapter 3, in which the apostle sets forth the danger of false teachings which may imperil people's souls and destroy the church. This section is a warning against Judaizing teachers of error. By "Judaizing teachers" we mean those who regarded Christianity as essentially a mere sect or branch of the Jewish religion, and held that observance of the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament is necessary for salvation. They held, in short, that the work of Christ alone does not save; we must add certain works of our own as a part of the ground or basis of salvation. They held, that is to say, that we are saved partly by what Christ has done for us and partly by what we do for ourselves.

In 3:1 Paul states that to write the same things over again to them is not a burden to him, and for them it insures spiritual safety. Probably Paul means that he had already written to the Philippians on this subject, or had instructed them on it while present with them in Philippi, but here he proposes to repeat the lesson, for their greater benefit. It is clear that both Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul in their teaching often repeated the same things over again in the same

or almost the same form. Those in the modern church who object to a minister ever saying something that he has said before should realize that there are always some in the congregation who have not yet grasped the A-B-C's of Christianity. There are children growing up, there are strangers coming in, there are even church members of long standing who may not yet have really grasped the simple truths of the Gospel. So the faithful minister must necessarily repeat himself a good deal. As long as he is bound to preach and teach a fixed body of truth—the Gospel of Christ — he cannot always be preaching something new. We must remember that the purpose of preaching and teaching in the church is not entertainment or amusement, but to build people up spiritually. And nothing but the old truths of the Gospel will really do it.

In 3:2 we find a warning against three classes of people: (1) "dogs"; (2) "evil workers"; (3) "the circumcision". Concerning "dogs", note the following Scriptures; Psalm 59:6, "They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city". Psalm 22:16, "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet". Isaiah 56:10,11, "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." 2 Peter 2:22, "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again: and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." In these Scriptures, the term "dog" is applied to human beings. It refers to filthiness, unchastity and enmity to the cross of Jesus Christ. We should realize that in ancient Palestine dogs were not household pets as they are in America today. They were ferocious animals, running about practically wild, and feeding on refuse which had been thrown outside the city walls. The noble characteristics of the domesticated dog are not mentioned in Scripture.

3:3 gives the contrast: the true Christian is the spiritual circumcision, who worships God by the Holy Spirit, and glories in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in the flesh — no confidence in anything that is simply the product of human nature or effort or will power. Each of these points is in direct opposition to the system taught by the Judaizers. They knew nothing of the spiritual meaning of circumcision; they knew only the external rite. In place of worshipping God by the Holy Spirit, they were given to will-worship, worshipping according to human whims and fancies. Instead of glorying in Christ Jesus and His cross, their confidence was in the flesh; they gloried in human works, not in Christ's atonement and righteousness. When the time came for them to die, they would count on what they had

done, not on what Christ had done, to save them unto eternal life.

We should realize that the warning of Phil. 3:1-3 is very applicable to religious conditions at the present day. Throughout the whole Christian world we are witnessing a tremendous plunge into ritualism. Under the attacks of modern science, philosophy and secularism, faith in the real truth of the Gospel has waned and become weak. As this process of weakening has been taking place, there has been a corresponding trend toward ritualism. As evangelical faith in Christ has gone down, ritualism has gone up. People try to fill the spiritual vacuum and satisfy their souls some way, and the pageantry of ritualism pleases them well. So Scriptural worship gives way to man-pleasing will-worship. The great question becomes, not "Is it Scriptural?" but "Will it be popular?" or "Will it attract people to the church?" Hardly anyone even bothers to ask whether particular practices or forms of worship are Scriptural, any more. That question is seldom even raised. The great question today is not whether God approves of something, but whether the public will be pleased and attracted by it. All this trend toward ceremonialism and will-worship is similar to the teaching of the Judaizers of old. It is just the opposite of pure Bible Christianity which worships God by the Holy Spirit, glories only in Christ Jesus, and puts no confidence in the flesh. We should hope and pray for a new Reformation, for the dawn of a new and brighter day, when the authority of Scripture will again be taken in dead earnest and the pure Gospel of divine grace will again be believed and honored.

#### Questions:

1. What verse in chapter 2 shows Paul's loneliness?
2. What was Timothy's character and faithfulness, in contrast to others?
3. What event was Paul waiting for, before sending Timothy to Philippi?

4. How does Paul describe Epaphroditus in 2:25?

5. How was Epaphroditus' recovery from sickness a mercy to Paul?

6. What is the meaning of Paul's statement that Epaphroditus had risked his own life "to supply your lack of service to me", 2:30?

7. What is meant by "Judaizing teachers", and what did they teach?

8. How did the teaching of the Judaizers contradict the central truth of the Gospel of Christ?

9. Why did Paul repeat teaching which he had previously given to the Philippians?

10. Why can faithful ministers not continually preach something new?

11. How is the term "dog" used in Scripture? What was the character of the people whom Paul calls "dogs"?

12. What was the difference between the dogs of ancient Palestine and those of modern America?

13. What contrast is implied in the statements of 3:3?

14. What is "will-worship" and why is it wrong?

15. Why is the warning of Phil. 3:1-3 applicable at the present day?

16. How can the tendency of the modern church toward ritualism be explained?

17. What is the most important question to ask concerning any matter connected with the worship of God?

18. Why should we hope and pray for a new Reformation, and what kind of Reformation do the churches urgently need?

#### LESSON 8

#### IV. Paul Warns Against the Danger of False Doctrine. 3:1-21, Continued

##### Paul's own Experience with God's Law and God's Grace. 3:4-16

3:4-6 sets forth Paul's legal standing and attainments. If it were possible to be saved by works, Paul would attain a better rating than other men. Paul is not, of course, claiming that he could really have confidence in the flesh, but only that if others could, he had more reason than they.

Note 3:6b, "as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless". This cannot be taken to mean really blameless in the

sight of God, in the full spiritual meaning of God's moral law; rather, it means that, as compared with other men, so far as his conduct was concerned, Paul could not be reproached. Taking legal righteousness as the Pharisees understood and believed in it, judged by the standard which they professed, Paul was found blameless. Their standard was indeed a false one, for they did not understand the spiritual character and full breadth and depth of the moral law. But waiving this point temporarily for the sake of argument, and accepting their standard for the time being, Paul asserts that when measured by that standard, he was found blameless. This is a very different matter from asserting that he possessed that perfect legal righteousness which God requires of

man—that perfect legal righteousness which Christ Himself possessed in the days of His flesh.

Jesus Christ was a perfect man judged by God's standard—the moral law in its true, spiritual character. Paul was not perfect in that sense, but he was a perfect man judged by the Pharisees' standard — their faulty conception of what the law of God required.

Paul's standing under the law would be considered great "gain" by any Pharisee. It would be considered very precious, something not to be parted with or cast away.

We must not hold a wrong conception of the Pharisees. These men, as Paul himself tells us, had "a zeal for God". They were pre-eminently concerned about religion; their relation to God was intensely important to them. Their doctrine of salvation was wrong, but some of them, at least, were very earnest and sincere in their way of life, though, sad to say, they were sincerely wrong.

But Paul in 3:7 states that he counted his gain but loss for Christ. To come to Christ and become a Christian involved a renunciation of all personal legal righteousness. It meant confessing himself a poor lost sinner, like the publican in the parable, who prayed, "God, be merciful to me a sinner". It meant that all those years of earnest law-observance in order to obtain salvation were a tremendous, tragic mistake, wasted indeed. That was why so many of the Jews refused to accept Christ, and that is why so many of them refuse to accept Christ at the present day.

3:8 places the alternative before us: it is either (1) "all things", or (2) Christ. We have to choose between the two. It is not a case of "both . . . and" but of "either . . . or". No man can really come to Christ without renouncing all claims to personal righteousness, and confessing himself a lost, guilty, hell-deserving sinner.

By the grace of God, Paul was enabled to renounce his own claim to legal righteousness, and to accept Christ as his righteousness. 3:9 emphasizes the difference: personal righteousness is (supposed to be) obtained through the observance of the law; true righteousness is through faith in Jesus Christ. We see here two radically different kinds of religion. One tries to approach God saying "Something in my hand I bring"; the other is content to come confessing "Nothing in my hand I bring". We can choose one, but not both.

3:10 states the aim or object of true righteousness: to know Christ. A true saving knowledge of Christ is meant, of course. "The power of his resurrection" — compare Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:17. Christ's resurrection assures believers of their justification. If Christ had not risen from the dead, that would have meant that He had not wholly canceled the debt of sin, so that death

could still claim Him and hold Him under its power; but arising from the tomb with the power of an endless life, He showed that the atonement was a perfect work, accepted by God, who had raised Him from the dead.

"The fellowship of his sufferings" (3:10) may be understood in two ways: either it means Christ's sufferings imputed to us for our salvation; or it means our own personal sufferings considered as a part of Christ's sufferings — the Head suffering in the members. The believer's sufferings of course form no part of the atonement, and have nothing to do with the forgiveness of sin or justification; they are a part of the Christian's union or identification with Christ. Compare Phil. 1:29, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." This verse suggests the probably true meaning of 3:10.

"Being made conformable unto his death" (3:10) recalls Paul's words in 1 Cor. 15:31, "I die daily", and also Gal. 2:20, where he says that he has been "crucified with Christ". The believer must be conformed to Christ's death in this spiritual sense, if his sinful nature is to be mortified and himself sanctified. "Being made conformable unto his death" is not associated with justification but with sanctification, with the cultivation of a holy and Christ-like character.

3:11, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead", has seemed a difficult verse to some people, because they feel it seems to imply that Paul was uncertain as to his rising from the dead at the resurrection. But the verse does not really imply any such doubt in Paul's mind. The words of 3:11 do not imply any uncertainty as to the issue, but only assert the earnestness of the struggle of Paul's Christian life. Compare 1 Cor. 10:12, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall". Such Scriptures as these are not contrary to the doctrine of Perseverance or eternal security. If we take the doctrine of Perseverance as something which renders all effort in the Christian life unnecessary, then we greatly err. The doctrine of Perseverance was revealed to comfort us, not to make us spiritually slothful and indifferent. We may note by way of comparison Paul's words before King Agrippa in Acts 26:6-8: "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" It was the hope of the resurrection that Paul spoke of, not implying that the issue was in doubt, but emphasizing the earnestness of the struggle of the Christian life. Paul had just disclaimed all human legal righteousness; therefore 3:11 cannot possibly be interpreted as teaching anything contrary to the doctrines of salvation by free grace.

In 3:12-14 Paul disclaims having already attained perfection, but states that he must still press onward. Note that these words were not written immediately after Paul's conversion to Christ, but near the end of his life, when he could say "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith", etc. Even at that late period of his life Paul did not claim for himself entire sanctification or sinless perfection, but stated that he still needed to press on. Those modern Christians who claim to have attained sinless perfection are claiming something that the apostle Paul after years of faithful Christian life and service did not venture to claim for himself.

In 3:15,16 we read the expression "as many as be perfect". This "perfect" must obviously be taken in a different sense from the "perfect" in verses 12 to 14. In verse 15 it does not imply entire sanctification, but completeness in Christian growth, as we see also in Eph. 4:12,13, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

#### Questions:

1. If it were possible to be saved by works, how would Paul have compared with other men as to his attainments?
2. What is the meaning of "found blameless" in 3:6b?
3. What was wrong with the Pharisees' standard of righteousness?

#### LESSON 9

##### **IV. Paul Warns Against the Danger of False Doctrine. 3:1-21, Continued**

###### **Paul Exhorts the Philippian Christians to Imitate Him. 3:17-21**

The believer ought to imitate Paul, simply because Paul followed Christ, and for no other reason.

In 3:18, the expression "the enemies of the cross of Christ" refers to those who claimed to be justified, in whole or in part, by the works of the law. Concerning these people, Paul tells us in verse 19 that their end is destruction, that what they consider their glory is really their shame, and that their attention was fixed on earthly things rather than on heavenly.

In 3:20,21 Paul speaks of the Christian's hope. Two things are mentioned: (1) the Lord's return; (2) the transformation of the believer's body. This will be attained at Christ's second advent.

The expression "our vile body" in 3:21, is a

misleading translation. The ARV (1901) correctly translates it as "the body of our humiliation". Paul could not call the body "vile" in the modern sense of "filthy". The word "vile" has changed its meaning in 300 years since the King James Version was made. In Phil. 3:21 "vile" simply means "humble", "lowly", not "unclean" or "filthy".

Whether the believer has already fallen asleep, or is still alive on earth when Christ returns, makes no difference. The transformation of the believer's body to a glorious and immortal one will take place at the time of the Lord's second coming at the Last Day. The time is unknown to us, but the fact is certain.

**V. Conclusion of the Epistle. 4:1-23**

###### **Paul Exhorts the Women of the Church to Live at Peace with One Another. 4:1-3**

4:1 serves as a connecting link with the thought of chapter 3, referring especially, perhaps, to verses 17-21, that is, to the Christian's blessed hope as a reason for standing fast in the

5. Who was the only perfect man when judged by God's standard of righteousness?

5. In what respects were the Pharisees commendable?

6. Why was the sincerity of the Pharisees not sufficient to save them?

7. What did Paul give up when he became a Christian?

8. What choice do we have to make if we really come to Christ?

9. What two kinds of religion are contrasted in 3:9?

10. What is the connection between Christ's resurrection and the justification of believers?

11. In what two senses may the expression "the fellowship of his sufferings" be understood?

12. What is the bearing of 1:29 on the probable meaning of "the fellowship of his sufferings" in 3:10?

13. What difficulty have some found in 3:11?

14. Does 3:11 imply that Paul's resurrection was in doubt? If not, what is the true meaning of the verse?

15. What does Paul disclaim in 3:12-14?

16. What is the bearing of 3:12-14 on the teaching of "entire sanctification" held by some Christians?

17. What is the meaning of the word "perfect" in 3:15?

Lord. The "crown" mentioned refers to the reward to be given to Paul at the Lord's second coming. The Philippian Christians were his "joy and crown". It was Paul who had first preached the Gospel in Philippi, and it was he who had instructed the church in the things of God. The Philippian Christians were converted through Paul's ministry. In eternity, their souls would be Paul's crown of rejoicing.

Next Paul exhorts two women, whom he names (Euodias and Syntyche) to live at peace with each other. They are exhorted to "be of the same mind in the Lord". We do not know what may have been the occasion for this admonition, but no doubt there had been some more or less serious disagreement or dispute between the two. Paul states that these two women had been of assistance to him in the work of evangelism at Philippi. At Philippi the Gospel was first received by women (remember Lydia and the place of prayer by the river side, Acts 16:12-15), and the two women mentioned in Phil. 4:2 may have been among those first converted, and later engaged in spreading the Gospel among others.

Note that Euodias and Syntyche are urged to be at peace "in the Lord", implying that the quarrel, whatever it was about, was **not** in the Lord. They were both faithful Christians, and had not quarreled over a matter of religious principle, but presumably over some personal matter.

The "true yokefellow" mentioned in 4:3 was perhaps the pastor of the Philippian church at the time when Paul wrote the epistle. He is urged to help the women who had labored with Paul in making the Gospel known, with Clement and other helpers "whose names are in the book of life". Concerning this Clement, nothing is certainly known beyond what is stated in this verse. There is a theory that he may have been the same individual as Clement of Rome, one of the early "apostolic fathers".

**All the Christians should Cultivate Joy, Prayer, Gratitude, Purity and other Christian Graces.**  
4:4-9

The Christian should always rejoice, not merely when in happy circumstances, but also when surrounded by trouble and affliction. In 4:4 Paul strongly emphasizes that rejoicing is a Christian duty. How far we fall short of this ideal! How hard it is for us to rejoice when the outlook is dim or we are troubled or afraid! How different we are from Paul and Silas who could sing praises to God at midnight in the prison of Philippi!

The statement that "the Lord is at hand" (4:5), must not be understood as meaning that Christ's second coming was then about to take place. Note, by way of comparison, 2 Thess. 2:2,3. The reference is to the second coming of Christ, which is said to be "at hand" but not "just at hand". No matter when the Lord returns, the

coming of the Lord is always "at hand" in the sense in which the Bible uses this expression: it is certain to occur at a time which has not been revealed to us. The expression is not used in a chronological sense, but implies the **certainty and the sudden, unexpected character** of the Lord's second advent. Because Christ's coming is sure, and the Christian's expectation of that coming is not in vain, we can realize that His coming is always "at hand". Compare Hebrews 10:37. If the believer always abides in Christ, then it does not matter when the second coming of Christ takes place; the believer can always be confident, because he is always ready to meet the Lord.

"Your moderation" (4:5) means "your forbearance", that is, reasonableness of dealing, consideration for others, as a rule of practice.

Following this, the apostle urges upon the Philippian Christians the practice of prayer (4:6,7). Prayer is to be "with thanksgiving", implying that some aspect of everything can be an occasion of thanksgiving.

"Be careful for nothing" (4:6) does not mean that we are not to be careful how we live, or what we do. The true meaning of the Greek word here is not "careful" but "anxious": "In nothing be anxious" (ARV). Thus the Christian is forbidden to worry. Instead of wasting energy in useless worrying, the Christian is to have recourse to the throne of grace in prayer, and make his requests known unto God. Worry is not only sinful, it is also foolish, for it accomplishes no constructive result. When we worry, we are not changing anything for the better, but only ruining our own nerves. Worry is a sin because it is inconsistent with faith in the goodness, power and providence of God. The person who worries does not really trust God to take care of him and make things work out right. He does not really believe the promise of Romans 8:28. At bottom, worry is unbelief. We are to cast our burdens on the Lord, to commit our way unto the Lord, and to trust Him to help us in our needs and troubles.

#### Questions:

1. Why should the Christian believer imitate Paul?
2. What does Paul say about those who are enemies of the cross of Christ?
3. What two elements of the Christian's hope are mentioned in 3:20,21?
4. How may the expression "our vile body" in 3:21 be more correctly translated? What is wrong with the way this is translated by the King James Version?
5. What was Paul's crown, mentioned in 4:1?
6. What do we know about the disagreement between Euodias and Syntyche?

7. What is probably meant by the expression "true yokefellow" in 4:3?
8. What theory exists concerning the Clement mentioned in 4:3?
9. When is it the Christian's duty to rejoice?
10. What is the meaning of the statement of 4:5 that "the Lord is at hand"?
11. How can the Christian always be ready for Christ's second coming?
12. What is the meaning of the word "moderation" in 4:5?
13. How can the word "careful" in 4:6 be more accurately translated?
14. What common sin is forbidden in 4:6?
15. Why is worrying both foolish and sinful?

## LESSON 10

### Conclusion of the Epistle. 4:1-23, Continued

#### All the Christians should Cultivate Joy, Prayer, Gratitude, Purity and other Christian Graces. 4:4-9, Continued

God's peace is the opposite of anxiety and worry. In 4:7 Paul tells us of the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding". This peace of God "shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" — "shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (ARV).

The world has nearly always been at war, yet always longing for peace. From the day that Cain killed Abel this has been true. There has not only been a quest for external peace, but also a hunger for internal peace — for peace of heart and mind.

The Roman world into which Jesus was born was a world externally at peace, but a world in which men found no real peace for their souls. It was a world in which a deep weariness of living had taken hold upon men, and they despaired of finding real peace of heart. This was the environment in which the Gospel of Christ was launched upon the world. But the Gospel of Christ came with a message of peace, first peace with God, through the atonement of Christ, and then the peace of God, or true peace of heart and mind for the Christian.

The peace of God which passeth all understanding is not based on ignoring evil but on the conquest of evil. It is not a spiritual anaesthesia but a spiritual victory over evil. If a person has toothache, an anaesthetic may deaden the pain for a time, but the true remedy is to remove the cause of the pain.

The foundation of the peace of God which passeth all understanding is peace with God. By nature we are at enmity with God, at war with God. But when the foundation of peace with God has been laid, then the way is open for the peace of God to come into the person's life. Hence Christ offers no spiritual peace except to those who first of all make their peace with God by receiving Jesus Christ as their Saviour. "Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). It is one of the greatest and most prevalent religious blunders of our day to offer the subsidiary benefits of the

Gospel to people who have not received, do not want and will not accept the main benefit of the Gospel. Those who do not want peace with God cannot have the peace of God. In fact, until a person has accepted and received Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour from sin, the Bible has absolutely no message for that person except a message of wrath and judgment, and the offer of Christ's salvation.

Where the person has been reconciled to God, a deep spiritual repose enters in. Compare Heb. 4:3a, "We who have believed do enter into rest. . . ". The conscience which was troubled and filled with fears and oppressed by a sense of guilt, is placed at rest. A profound spiritual peace follows. As the Christian grows in experience he comes to have the peace of God which passes all understanding, in all the affairs and concerns of life.

God's peace is a peace which is stronger than trouble or fear. Here is a peace which is like a mighty ship which can outride the most furious storms and tempests of life. This peace of God satisfies because it is based on the reality of Christ's conquest of the world. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Therefore the Christian's troubles at worst are only temporary and will soon pass away and be followed by an eternity of perfect joy and rest. Also, the Christian's troubles are all under control. They are like a fire which is not burning beyond all bounds, but has been brought under control — not under the Christian's own control, but under the control of God. They are in God's hands, limited and controlled by His providence. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). The Christian can believe that promise, not only when he is sitting peacefully in a church service, but out in the world when the waves and billows of woe are crashing over his head. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Millions of Christian people have found that this peace of God is real and that it satisfies as the world's shallow substitutes never can. It is the true cure for sinful worry—to rest in the peace of God. The ocean depths are at rest even when

the surface of the water is troubled by furious storms and tempests. So the Christian may be troubled by the surface troubles of life, but in the depths of his soul there is an area where the Christian really lives, and there it is always calm and peaceful, there trouble cannot come to disturb the serenity of his soul.

Do we have a right to the peace of God which passeth all understanding? If not, why not? If not, by all means let us repent of our sins and believe on Christ, seek salvation, receive Him as our Saviour, and gain peace with God, to open the way for the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

If we are already at peace with God, are we enjoying the peace of God? Should we not enter more fully upon the possession of our inheritance in Christ? Should we not seek, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, a fuller and stronger faith, that we may enjoy a deeper and more untroubled serenity of soul for service which we can render to our Lord and our fellow men in this earthly journey of life?

#### Questions:

1. What is the opposite of anxiety and worry?

2. Besides external peace, for what kind of peace do people long?
3. What was the prevailing state of mind in the Roman world when Jesus was born?
4. What is the foundation of the peace of God which passeth all understanding?
5. Why do we need to be reconciled to God?
6. What great religious blunder is common at the present day?
7. What is the Bible's only message for the person who has not accepted Christ as his Saviour?
8. What experience follows when a person has been reconciled to God?
9. Why does the peace of God really satisfy?
10. What has Christ done with regard to the Christian's troubles?
11. Under what circumstances of life can the Christian believe and rest in the promise of Romans 8:28?
12. How can we strengthen and increase our enjoyment of the peace of God which passeth all understanding?

#### LESSON 11

##### **Conclusion of the Epistle. 4:1-23, Continued**

**All the Christians should Cultivate Joy, Prayer, Gratitude, Purity and other Christian Graces. 4:4-9, Continued**

Note the beautiful thoughts in 4:8,9. It is true that as a person thinketh in his heart, so is he. If a person's thoughts are wrong or impure or selfish, the words and deeds which proceed from them will be defiled by sin too. The Holy Spirit changes not merely the person's outward conduct, but the depths of his personality, including his very thoughts and desires.

Some people say that they cannot control their thoughts. This statement is made as an excuse for having sinful, impure, God-dishonoring thoughts. But it is a mere excuse and it is one of those half-truths that are as bad as an outright falsehood. Of course we cannot control our own thoughts absolutely by merely using our human decision or will power. But by divine grace we can and should yield ourselves to God's control of our thoughts, and by God's grace we can cultivate control of our thoughts. According to the Bible, thoughts can be sinful as well as actions. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his THOUGHTS. . ." (Isa. 55:7). A heart cleansed and purified by the Holy Spirit will more and more have clean and pure thoughts.

Note that Paul does not command the Christians to avoid thinking on what is untrue, dis-

honest, unjust, impure, unlovely, of bad report, etc. Instead, he emphasizes the positive side of the matter, the things that are true, honest, just, etc. There is a reason for this. Merely to clear the mind of what is evil, and leave it so, would be useless. It would merely leave the mind open to other and greater evil. The true remedy is to fill the mind with what is good, so that there will not be any room for the evil thoughts. Christian ethics is not merely negative, telling us what to avoid and abstain from, but strongly positive, telling us what to think and practice.

In 4:9 Paul again exhorts the Philippian Christians to imitate him: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." This does not mean, of course, that the Philippians are to imitate everything that Paul ever did in his life. The meaning is that they are to imitate him in the practice of the Christian graces, especially those mentioned in verses 4-8 of this chapter. Paul does not merely give them abstract teaching on how to live and what to do; he also embodies the teaching in his own personal life; he was a living example of the practice of these Christian graces.

**Paul Thanks the Philippians for their Gift and their Kindness to Him. 4:10-20.**

Here, in verses 10-12, we see the extent of Paul's spiritual freedom. No matter what his outward circumstances, he was able to be con-

tent, even when in prison in Rome. Paul was not in bondage to environment and circumstances; by grace he was able to rise above them.

We have already discussed the meaning of verse 10 in connection with 2:30. Paul is thanking the Philippians for the gift they had sent him by the hand of Epaphroditus. They had no opportunity to help Paul until they took advantage of Epaphroditus' journey to Rome to send Paul a gift by him. It was not a lack of concern, but a lack of opportunity, that had prevented them from helping him before.

We may well believe that Paul was gladdened by the gift which Epaphroditus brought, not only because of the gift itself but because of the love and fellowship which lay back of the actual gift. What a comfort this would be to the apostle chained as a prisoner of the Roman Empire! He was not forgotten by his friends; they took the first available opportunity to show their love and esteem in a practical way.

Paul had learned the lesson of Christian contentment. He knew how to suffer need to the glory of God, and he knew how to enjoy abundance to the glory of God. This is indeed a hard lesson to learn. Paul learned this lesson in the school of Christian experience. Until we have learned this lesson, we all tend to abuse God's providence. If we are in need, and do not have the things we want, we tend to feel that God is not treating us right, that we deserve better care from Him. On the other hand, if we have abundance, we tend to forget God and become proud, self-confident and hard-hearted. It is only a truly experienced Christian that can speak as Paul speaks in 4:11-13.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (4:13). This does not mean, of course, that Paul could do absolutely anything he might think of. It does not mean that Paul could shake off his chains and walk out of prison a free man. It means that through Christ who strengthened him, he could do anything that God wanted and expected him to do. God does not give us strength to do as we please, but to glorify, serve, honor and obey Him. By the strength we get from Christ, we can do all that it is our duty as Christians to do. Nor does the verse mean that by the strength received from Christ, Paul could do "all things" perfectly, that is, without any element of sin; nor does it mean that the Christian, by the strength received from Christ, can do his Christian duty perfectly, without any

element of sin. There is no sinless perfection of Christians this side of heaven. Rather, the verse means that every burden that the Lord lays upon us can be successfully borne through the strength which Christ gives; every task to which the Lord calls us can be successfully performed through the strength which Christ gives, etc. Paul had learned the lesson of trusting in Christ, not in himself. How different from the common modern religion of faith in man was the religion of Paul!

#### Questions:

1. What is the relation between a person's thoughts and that person's character?
2. Why do some people claim that they cannot control their thoughts?
3. What verse of the Bible teaches us that thoughts may be sinful as well as actions?
4. How can a Christian gain control over his thoughts?
5. Why does Paul emphasize the positive side of controlling our thoughts rather than the negative side?
6. Besides teaching the Philippians about right Christian living, what help did Paul give them toward living as they should?
7. In what respect were the Philippians to copy the life of Paul?
8. What verses in this chapter show Paul's victory over his environment and circumstances?
9. Why had the Philippians not helped Paul before this time?
10. What was Paul's reaction to the gift brought from Philippi by Epaphroditus?
11. What great lesson had Paul learned in the school of Christian experience?
12. How do those who have not learned this lesson abuse God's providence?
13. What is the meaning of Paul's statement in 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"?
14. How do we know that this verse does not mean that Paul could do all his duty perfectly, without any element of sin?
15. How did Paul's religion differ from the common modern religion of faith in man?

#### LESSON 12

##### Conclusion of the Epistle. 4:1-23, Continued

**Paul Thanks the Philippians for their Gift and their Kindness to Him. 4:10-20, Continued**

"Notwithstanding, ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction" (4:14).

Even though Paul had learned the lesson of Christian contentment, so that he could get along without the help afforded by the Philippians without complaint, still he recognizes that it was a good deed on their part to help him in his affliction.

In 4:15 Paul reminds the Philippians that "in the beginning of the gospel", when he departed from Macedonia, no church except the church of the Philippians had communicated with him as concerning giving and receiving. The Greek here means "an account of giving and receiving"; it is a technical expression, used for an account such as that between a bank and one of its depositors, or a merchant and one of his customers. No church had opened "an account of giving and receiving" with Paul except the Church of the Philippians. This account was a rather one-sided account, for all the giving was on the side of the Philippians, and all the receiving was on the side of Paul. We might of course say that while Paul received material benefits from the Philippian Christians, they received spiritual benefits from him. But this does not seem to be the meaning of the verse. For Paul was not present in Philippi ministering to them; he was travelling as a missionary, and later he was a prisoner in Rome. As far as spiritual benefits were concerned, the Philippians had no monopoly on spiritual benefits received through Paul; numerous other churches received the same. So it seems clear that this "giving and receiving account" concerned material things; in particular, the support of Paul and of the missionary work he carried on. The Philippians had the unique distinction of maintaining a "giving and receiving account" with Paul—they did the giving, and he did the receiving.

So he thanks the Philippians for their contributions repeatedly sent to him. And he adds that it is not that he desires their gifts, but he desires that fruit may abound to their account (4:17). Christian giving not only accomplishes a purpose by the gift, but it does something for the giver. It causes fruit to abound to the account of the giver. Not only is the giver confirmed and increased in such Christian graces as love, unselfishness and zeal for God's church and kingdom, but the giver will also receive a reward from the Lord in eternity.

"But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were

sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" (4:18). It would be interesting to know just what it was that the Philippians sent to Paul by the hand of Epaphroditus. Presumably the gift was not merely money, for Paul speaks of "the things". Perhaps there were articles of clothing he needed, perhaps books, perhaps writing materials. The Scripture does not satisfy our curiosity on these points. What is more important is that we should grasp the teaching that contributions to and support of faithful servants of God in their work for His Kingdom are really, in God's sight, sacrifices offered to God. The language used, "an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God", recalls the sacrifices offered to God under the Old Testament dispensation. God will accept such sacrifices as offered to Himself and will bless the giver as well as the receiver of the gift.

#### Questions:

- 1. Did the fact that Paul had learned the lesson of contentment mean that he did not want the gift sent by the Philippians?
- 2. What is the meaning of the expression "communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving" in 4:15?
- 3. Why was the "giving and receiving account" between Paul and the Philippians a one-sided account?
- 4. Did this "giving and receiving account" concern spiritual things or material things?
- 5. What benefit does Christian giving bring to the giver?
- 6. What may have been the nature of the gift brought to Paul from Philippi by Epaphroditus?
- 7. How does God regard support of His faithful servants?
- 8. How many times had the Philippians contributed toward Paul's support and his missionary work?

#### LESSON 13

##### **Conclusion of the Epistle. 4:1-23, Continued**

##### **Paul Thanks the Philippians for their Gift and their Kindness to Him. 4:10-20, Continued**

4:19 is one of the great and precious promises of the Bible. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

God will supply every need of His people who trust in Him. Compare Psalm 23:1, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want"; Psalm

34:9, "O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him"; Psalm 84:11, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

We should realize, however, that this and similar promises of the Bible do not belong to everybody. They belong only to those who have been reconciled to God through Christ, and adopted as God's children in His family. It is a terrible mistake to teach any person who is not a Christian to say "The Lord is my shepherd; I

shall not want". If he is not a believer in Jesus Christ, the Lord is NOT his shepherd, and the promise is not for him. It is a terrible mistake to tell a person who is not a Christian that God shall supply all his need. The writer of these notes has seen Bibles with a marker or fly-leaf telling the reader what passage to read if he is lonely, what passage if he is discouraged, what passage if he faces temptation, and so forth. All of this is in order **provided the person reading the Bible is a Christian.** But it is to be feared that such "helps" to the Bible give many unconverted readers the impression that they can claim for themselves the promises of God to give help in time of need. God's promises are made to His adopted children, not to the children of the world. God offers no help in discouragement, no comfort in sorrow, no strength in weakness, no safety in peril, to the person who is not a Christian. Anything which encourages such people to claim these and similar blessings from God before they repent of their sins and accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, is misleading and amounts to encouraging them in their sins. The Bible has only one message to the person who is not a Christian, and that message is to flee from the wrath to come by accepting Christ as his Saviour.

To teach a person who is not a Christian to say "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want", amounts to encouraging his natural sinful tendency to think that God can be approached directly, without a crucified Mediator to bridge the gap. While the Bible is for all people of the world to read, the promises of the Bible do not belong to all the people of the world. They belong to Christians and only to Christians.

Note precisely what Paul says in 4:19. It is "by Christ Jesus" that God will supply all the Philippians' need. Obviously, no one who has not personally accepted Christ has any right to claim such a promise.

But what a wonderful promise this verse is to Christian people! How many Christians have tried it and found it to work in practice! How often the weak faith of God's children has been encouraged and strengthened by God supplying their need in ways they could not even have imagined! God is faithful. They shall not be ashamed that wait for Him.

"Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (4:20). This brings us to the close of the body of the epistle. What follows is only greetings and the benediction. Note how strongly this verse (4:20) brings out the great aim of Paul's religion: the glory of God. As we have already seen in this epistle, Paul's religion, unlike the common, popular religion of the present day, was God-centered. Its aim was the glory of God, not simply to provide "values" to people. Religion is for the glory of God; man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

### Salutations and Final Benediction. 4:21-23

"Salute every saint in Christ Jesus" (4:21). The word "salute" here means "greet". In fact, the word "salute" and the word "greet" in this verse are the very same verb in the Greek. "Every saint", of course, means "every Christian". In the New Testament every Christian is called a saint. The later usage of the word "saint", meaning an exceptional or eminent Christian, is foreign to the New Testament.

"They of Caesar's household" (4:22) probably does not mean the members of the emperor's family, but rather his slaves or servants, or possibly some of the soldiers of the pretorian guard. The verse shows that at this early date in the history of Christianity there were Christians in the emperor's household. This verse forms one part of the evidence that the epistle was written at Rome. The fact of conversions to Christianity in such a quarter as Caesar's household would naturally cause the Philippians to rejoice, so Paul mentions it in writing to them.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (4:23). With this simple but very meaningful and precious benediction, we come to the end of our study of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. He wishes them all "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ". What more or what better could he wish for them? For this includes all that is good, the sum total of all that is good, both for this life and for the life eternal, the life that is life indeed.

### Questions:

1. What verse of chapter 4 contains a great and precious promise?
2. What verses containing similar promises can be quoted from the Psalms?
3. To what class of persons do such promises belong?
4. Why is it a mistake to tell a person who is not a Christian that the Lord is his shepherd and he shall not want?
5. What is the one and only message of the Bible to the person who is not a Christian?
6. What was the great aim of Paul's religion? What verse of chapter 4 brings this out clearly?
7. How did Paul's religion differ from the religion of the present day which aims primarily at providing "values" for people?
8. What is the meaning of the word "salute" in 4:21?
9. What is the meaning of "saint" in the New Testament?
10. What wrong use of the word "saint" became common in later times?
11. What is probably meant by "they of Caesar's household"?
12. Why should Paul mention "they of Caesar's household" in writing to the Philippians?
13. What is included in the meaning of the benediction of 4:23?

The End

## The Covenant-Idea in Scripture

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

### The Sovereignty of God

The written Word of God has as its formative principle what is commonly called "the covenant-idea". This unifies all parts of Holy Scripture and gives it a name. For, the word "**testament**" is necessary to complement "**covenant**" in describing the idea, which would better be defined as the **testament-covenant-idea**, since it comes initially to expression in God's disposition of His own property.

The word **covenant** literally signifies a **come-together**, and in Scripture is primarily applied to such relationship as results when God brings a creature into existence to be with and for Himself. The heavens and the earth and all that they contain came into being and were disposed by the **word of His power**, according to His own will, for His own purposes.

Hence, as to its origin, purpose and content, the covenant is all of God; it belongs to Him; He calls it "**my covenant**"; it is a unilateral arrangement, a sovereign order, or disposition of things. This is to be emphasized at the outset, and never for a moment left out of sight; it is basic to the covenant-idea in Scripture.

God's covenant with inanimate things, matter and physical forces, and with irrational creatures, plants and animals, is His will for them, expressed by His word in the form of **laws**, which we, when we discover them, call **laws of nature**, or rather, **laws of nature's God**. By His covenant with these things, God secures instant and invariable obedience. They have no choice in a moral sense. They are not properly parties. There is no condition but the will of God. Yet He speaks, for example, of "my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night"; "a covenant between me and the earth"; He says, "I will make a covenant with the beasts of the field, and with the birds of the heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground."

The covenant is God's way of dealing with His creation. This is a very general statement, but God's **covenant-word** is different in detail for every kind of creature; it controls every individual of every kind. God's sovereignty appears in the infinitesimal as well as in the infinite.

### Preliminary to God's Covenant with Man

God finished His work of creation by creating man in His own image, after the likeness of God; He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul". God is Spirit. Likeness to God, therefore, is in spiritual characteristics: in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Man was made a creature capable of know-

ing God, of understanding the will of God, as revealed to him; capable of intelligent, voluntary action in obedience to that will; capable of growth and development in harmony with the perfections of God; and consequently fitted, as a free agent, for fellowship with God in His worship and service.

Man found himself in the midst of an established order, not independent of it, but part of it; and in common with it, wholly dependent on the will of God. He could learn something of that will by observation and reasoning, but God spoke to him, as a father speaks to his child, making known His will by His word. God crowned him with glory and honor and gave him dominion over the earth and all the lower living creatures of the earth.

While Adam, the first man, was an individual, he possessed the potentiality of the race. He was not only a man, he was **mankind**, even as a "tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself". He was created male and female. Then God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply." In other words, Adam was to have a **posterity**, as would be necessary in order that he might carry out his assignment, namely, to "fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over it".

### The Institution of the Sabbath

"In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed", not because He was weary, but because His work of creation was finished according to His will, and "Behold, it was very good!" He rested in the joy and satisfaction of perfect accomplishment. "Then God blessed the seventh day and **sanctified it**", that is, set it apart for the worship and service of God, to the end that God might be glorified in all His works. Long afterwards Jesus Christ, when He announced Himself to be "Lord of the Sabbath", said, "The Sabbath was made for man", and the word He used for "man" denotes **mankind**.

A little consideration of the record reveals the fact that all the arrangements and ordinances which God made with and for Adam, originally, were made with regard not only to himself but also to his posterity; also that these have been reaffirmed and confirmed repeatedly through the ages; in these last times by the Lord Jesus Christ.

There was no evening, and there was no morning for the day of the Sabbath because, for God, there never was a beginning and there never shall be an upper limit to the glory of His accomplishments. And, for man, there needed to be no end to his sharing in God's glory and joy, if

only he would keep the Sabbath holy, set apart for obedient worship and service to God. The Sabbath provided time and opportunity for man to learn to know God as his God, and himself as God's servant; to get true bearings for his course of life, which the covenant when announced would confirm for him; and, by obedient action to win for himself joy and glory in worthwhile accomplishment. His keeping Sabbath would be a sign and seal of right relationship with God. Herman Witsius, in his classical **Economy of the Covenants**, regards the Sabbath as one of the sacraments of the original covenant with man.

"And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; . . . and out of the ground made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; . . . And the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" — an earthly paradise, fitted to be the most favorable environment for man's realization of God's purpose in his life.

As Adam in the fulness of his powers of insight and reason contemplated the works of God and the arrangements of His providence, he could not fail to be impressed by the declaration of the glory of God by all these things, and the evidence that they had been made with a gracious regard to the welfare and happiness of man. He would thus be prepared with confidence and goodwill to accept whatever God might propose to him.

#### **Institution of the Covenant with Man**

Greater glory would redound to God from an intelligent, voluntary obedience to His will than from the irrational, involuntary obedience of the lower creatures. Therefore, in accord with man's moral and spiritual nature and endowments, God now further reveals His will, with a view to man's participation and co-operation with God toward the attainment of God's purpose. He does this by His word in the form of commandments, or law, and in the form of promise. For man's instruction, the law states the order of things in which the promise shall be fulfilled; the promise declares the purpose and result for which the order has been established.

Man was not on an equality with God. He was a creature, made a little lower than the angels. But God loved him, yearned to be a Father to him, to have him for His son. Man's knowledge was not complete; God would put him in the best position for increasing in knowledge. Man's righteousness and holiness were not yet confirmed, but having been created a free agent he was to be so confirmed, through proper test, by his own free choice of obedient action. He had ample knowledge for such a test. Accordingly God showed Adam His guarantee of the stability of His word by attaching a condition to the promise and a penalty to the commandment. At the same time Adam was supported for obedience

by the inducement of the promise and by the warning of the penalty for disobedience.

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16,17). Here two parties, God and man, are about to come together; a command of God with penalty attached has been laid down.

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, . . .". The clause first following, though a preliminary part, is certainly a positive part of what God commanded. It is, therefore, not merely permissive, "thou mayest eat", as our English version suggests, but an emphatic command, as the Hebrew abbreviated ("Jussive") form of the Imperfect tense of the verb emphasized by the Infinitive Absolute of the same verb, indicates: "thou shalt surely eat."

The significance of this is apparent. Adam was intelligent, and had undoubtedly learned, in more than one way, that eating of the material food God had so abundantly provided was the condition for continuance of physical life. He was now living, actually realizing the joy of life in the thrilling experience of being alive in the gracious and inspiring presence of God. Sufficient grace had already been given. He knew he was a living soul with the breath of life within his body made of the dust of the ground. He knew that eating was a matter of the body, and that obedience to the word of God was a matter of the will, that is, of the spirit. He would thus be fully informed that the issue now being set before him, by the Giver of life, was the issue of continuance of life. Since no time limit was put on that continuance, he would clearly understand that here was God's promise of life, life physical, spiritual and eternal. Also, since death was the penalty for disobedience, life was the promise for obedience. And death, without limitation, was physical, spiritual and eternal. Obedience was the condition for continuance of life. Here was God's Covenant of Life.

The apparent smallness of the detail of obedience required in the test made unmistakable God's requirement of perfect obedience from man as well as from all other creatures. Since God had richly provided for man's every need, the prohibition laid down did not involve any real loss for man. But it would, in due time, open the doors for boundless gain in receiving the promise. The tremendous importance of the detail lies in the supreme authority and perfect justice of the will of God who commanded it. And this is confirmed both by the high honor and privilege offered to man, and the awful seriousness of the penalty for disobedience.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism (12) puts it this way: "When God had created man

He entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil upon pain of death."

The covenant was given in the form, "**Do this, and thou shalt live**", which is the form God always uses when He gives commandment to men. (E.g., Levit. 18:5; Deut. 30:19; Luke 10:28; Gal. 3:12). The original form of the covenant, therefore, is properly called the **Covenant of Works**, because it lays down, once for all, the law that man shall **do what God commands**.

This arrangement was set before Adam in its completeness and in full accord with his nature, and "Adam at once perceived the significance of its perfect balance, the advantage it offered for himself and posterity, and freely agreed to the terms it contained."

Though the record is brief, there is enough to show plainly that God dealt with man in all fairness, most graciously and generously. And Adam, well informed, able to perform his part of the covenant, and already having experience of the blessedness of obeying God, was without excuse for any failure on his own part.

#### **By Disobedience Adam Transgressed the Covenant.**

In spite of knowledge and experience, in spite of every necessary endowment, alluring inducement and faithful warning, to keep covenant with God, Adam dared to act on his own account, contrary to the revealed will of God. He dared to act selfishly without regard to God. With every reason to keep faith in God, he flouted it. Faith departed. Sin entered. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

"Adam was not deceived." He knew what he was doing. "But his wife being deceived, became (involved) in transgression", that is in transgression of the covenant (1 Tim. 2:14). She, being deceived by the devil's lie, ate of the forbidden fruit, "and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6). Without the semblance of an excuse, he chose to disregard the command of his faithful Creator and living Provider, who had given him everything he needed, and to follow the example and accept the offer of one who was deceived. All he could say was to acknowledge the fact, and try to shift the blame. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12). But "they twain were one flesh"; there was no evading the blame for either.

In rebellion against the command of God, Adam had gone beyond the limit of the Covenant of Jehovah. He was now outside, where fellowship with God was no longer possible, that is, where life was no longer possible. Guilty and ashamed, "the man and his wife hid themselves

from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden", thus testifying that the curse of death, exclusion from God, was already upon them. They were far away, "having no hope and without God in the world."

But God had not changed. It was not His way of dealing with man that had changed. "As for God, his way is perfect." His word, both His law and His promise, stand fast. The penalty of sin is being executed. His purpose shall not be defeated; not even for one moment delayed.

#### **Review of Essential Features of the Covenant Institution**

At this point let us stop a minute or two in order to get the essential, the permanent features of the covenant fixed in mind by Scripture light.

Whenever God gives a promise to man, He binds Himself therewith for man. His whole being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth are pledged to its fulfillment. In other words, God's promise, being made in His own name, implies His **oath**. For example, "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself" (Heb. 6:13).

Wherever a promise of God is recorded in Scripture, His **oath**, if not expressly mentioned, is to be taken for granted. E.g., in the original record of His promise to Noah, no mention is made of an oath, yet long afterwards, God Himself testified that both it and a more recent promise had been **sworn**. "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee" (Isa. 54:9).

Further, whenever God gives a law of conduct to man, He **binds man** therewith to Himself for obedience. Since God is sovereign, His law shall be obeyed. Hence, with God's law there is implied, even if not in every case mentioned, His **curse** for disobedience, that is, the **curse of death**.

God's promise and law come as the offer of His grace to man. The law, because it is the law of God, and therefore "holy and just and good", obligates man to **obey**. The promise of God, being absolutely sure, obligates man to **believe**. Man's appropriate response, then, is by **faith** in the promise and **obedience** to the law. God offers by His **word**; man accepts by his **confession of faith** and by his **promise of obedience**. He does this not as an independent party, but as a creature entirely dependent on the grace of God; therefore, not in his own name but in the name of God, that is, with an oath. Hence, a man bound by the law of God, is **additionally bound**, in fact **binds himself**, following God's example, by his reciprocal promise and oath. Thus the transaction appears as a "covenant", in our common usage of the term; a bi-lateral arrange-

ment, a mutual agreement. Yet there is no such thing as a round-table discussion, or compromise of terms with God. God is the sovereign party of the first part; man is a voluntary, but not independent party of the second part. On God's part it is a **Covenant of Grace**; on man's part a **Covenant of Duty**. Within its holy bond there is provided for man his highest privilege, communion with God, to the end that he may know God, which is **life eternal**, which, in turn, is to the end that man may glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

This is the **Covenant Institution**; the **Covenant of Jehovah**, or **Bond of Jehovah** put into effect with Adam as head and representative of every individual of the race; and therefore at the basis of every other ordinance of God in human society — the home, the church, and the state. . It was put into effect by the **Word of God** consisting

of His **Promise and Law** under the sanctions of His **Oath and Curse**, namely, Life and Death, "given" to man, "put between" God and man, binding each for the other.

These four things, **Promise-Oath, Law-Curse**, make up the essential structure of God's covenant with man, being related as parts to the whole. Any one of them presupposes the other three, and is a synonym of "covenant" in Scripture.

Let no one be deceived by the teaching of a false evangelism that offers an uncertain covenant without the sanctions of life and death; or of a false Dispensationalism that God ever offered to man a covenant of law without the promise of His grace, as He is said to have done at Sinai, or a covenant of promise without His law, as He is said to have done to Abraham.

(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:**

What do you think of the new Revised Standard Version of the Bible? Is it Modernistic?

**Answer:**

A review of the New Testament portion of the Revised Standard Version was published in the January-March, 1952, issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" (pages 16-18), to which the reader is referred. We hope to publish a thorough review of the Revised Standard Version as a whole in an early issue of this magazine.

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

Why does the Covenanter Church not grow in numbers, when we have the truth?

**Answer:**

In the first place, the statement that "we have the truth" is ambiguous and ought to be clarified. What do we mean by saying that the Covenanter Church "has the truth"? Does this mean that we have it in our official church standards, or does it mean that this truth is actually known, loved and confessed by the rank and file of our membership? These are two different things.

Our confessional standards, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, are not infallible, but they

constitute an honest, faithful, tried and true statement of the system of truth revealed in the Word of God. In this sense we readily agree that the Covenanter Church has the truth. If the present writer did not believe that the Covenanter Church approaches closer to the truth revealed in Scripture than any other denomination, he would leave the Covenanter Church and join whatever denomination he believed to be more Scriptural.

But if we raise the question of whether this body of truth is actually known, loved and confessed by the rank and file of our membership, no such confident answer can be given. The real situation at the present time seems to be that a considerable number of our members have no adequate knowledge of the system of truth stated in our official standards, others have a knowledge of it but little or no love or zeal for it, and still others hold errors and distorted views which are contrary to our official standards. The writer could give actual instances of each of these tendencies.

Merely having the truth in our official creed amounts to little, unless it is also in our minds, hearts, lives and on our lips. It is to be feared that very much ground has been lost and must be recovered. A previous generation knew their Bibles and their Shorter Catechisms, but it is different today. Today there are some adult communicant members who cannot even find a reference in the Bible without consulting the index. And the real tragedy is that some of these people are complacent and have not the slightest

inclination or desire to gain a knowledge of the truths of the Bible or the faith of their Church. Where ignorance and indifference to truth exist, there is always deadly weakness. God will not honor and bless neglect of His truth.

During the past ten years, as shown by the Minutes of Synod for 1943-1952, 826 communicant members left the Covenanter Church to join other denominations, a very large number for such a small denomination. Evidently these people had but little love and zeal for the truths held by the Covenanter Church, or they would not have left it. Every pastor knows that people leave the Covenanter Church for a variety of reasons other than conviction of truth.

In the second place, God does not always bless loyalty to His truth with increase in numbers. Elijah held the truth in his day, but he was in a small minority. The majority went over to the worship of Baal. Jeremiah held the truth in his day, but the majority rejected it and went on in idolatry and apostasy until they were carried captive to Babylon and Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Jesus Christ our Lord held and preached the truth in His day, but many even of his disciples were offended by His plain statement of Gospel truth (John 6:60,61), and "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). In times of revival multitudes may rally to the truth of God's Word, but in seasons of declension and lukewarmness large numbers forsake a sound, pure and faithful church for one that is more "popular" in its message and program.

We would certainly like to see our church grow in numbers. But there is no program or method by which this can be infallibly accomplished. Our responsibility before God is to be faithful to His truth and do our duty without wearying. The results are God's business — they depend on His sovereign grace which is not subject to our control (see John 6:65).

—J. G. Vos

#### **Question:**

How can we explain the presence of slavery, polygamy and divorce in the Old Testament?

#### **Answer:**

, We believe slavery and polygamy to be wrong without qualification, and divorce to be wrong unless the divorce be granted on grounds specified as legitimate in the New Testament.

All three of these evils, of course, existed in the Old Testament period. This does not imply that they were not evils, nor that God gave His sanction to any of them. Jesus said that it was because of the hardness of people's hearts that the law of Moses permitted divorce. This saying of our Lord gives us the key to a right understanding of the problem of these three evils in the Old Testament. Because of the hardness of

people's hearts: that is to say, the people of Israel in the Old Testament were so far from what they ought to have been, so held down by some kinds of sin, and so lacking in inward spiritual grace, that an absolute prohibition of divorce would have been futile. God's law had not yet been written on their hearts as it is on God's people's hearts in the New Testament dispensation (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:8-10). Because of this hardness of heart, this low spiritual state, God chose to tolerate the evil of divorce temporarily, until the time would come when the evil could be eliminated (as it is in the New Testament). We have to remember that God's revelation, both of truth and of duty, is a progressive revelation. Just as there is truth revealed in the New Testament which was not revealed in the Old, so there is duty revealed in the New Testament which was not revealed in the Old. We should not expect to find the full and complete revelation in the Old Testament.

Those who say that the Old Testament laws regulating slavery, polygamy and divorce imply a divine sanction of these practices, are greatly in error. The evils existed; the regulatory laws of the Old Testament were directed toward keeping them within limits and mitigating their worst features, pending the arrival of the day when they could be eliminated completely. We must always bear in mind the purpose to which the laws were directed. It is a false view of law which holds that a law calculated to restrict and limit certain evils, which for the time being cannot be entirely abolished, involves the law-giver in moral responsibility for the evils. It is very unrealistic and unhistorical to hold that God's placing some limitations and restrictions on polygamy in the Old Testament law, for example, implies that God sanctioned polygamy and is responsible for its evil. Why God works by a historical process when He has almighty power and could work instantaneously is a problem that has puzzled many minds. We cannot answer it. Yet the fact remains that God works by historical process in many matters. In the Old Testament period the people of Israel were like children, under age, spiritually childish and immature. God bore with them and led them onward for nearly two thousand years, from the time of Abraham, until in the fulness of time Christ came, and the promise of Jeremiah 31:33 was fulfilled in the Christian Church.

The above explanation of this problem is the only one known to the present writer which is consistent with the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament as God's Word. Of course the "higher critics", who deny the divine authority of the Old Testament laws, can easily say that the Old Testament laws "sanctioning" these various evils were simply products of human custom and experience.

There sometimes exists a very crude mis-

understanding of Scripture which assumes that everything in the Bible carries the approval of God as a pattern for us to copy. Needless to say, not everything which is recorded in the Bible as a matter of history was pleasing to God, nor are all the characters portrayed in Scripture presented as patterns for us to imitate. The Bible is realistic; it tells about people and conditions as they really were. There is no "whitewashing" of the sins, even of good men. Noah's drunkenness, Abraham's untruthfulness and David's adultery are all recorded, but not as patterns for us to copy.

Those who are scandalized by some of the evils they read about in the Old Testament should bear in mind that God was patiently dealing with a "stiffnecked and rebellious" people, and the fact that dreadful evils and horrible crimes are recorded does not in the least imply any divine sanction or approval of these things.

The New Testament is always our best commentary on the Old, and our Lord's statement about the reason why divorce was tolerated in the Mosaic legislation (Matt. 19:8; Mark 10:5) is full of meaning for a right understanding of the problem of these various evils in the Old Testament.

—J. G. Vos

#### Question:

Is the "Voice of Prophecy" broadcast a sound guide in the understanding of the prophecies of the Bible?

#### Answer:

The "Voice of Prophecy" is the official radio mouthpiece of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, and as such is not to be trusted by Christian people. Of course, these broadcasts may often contain much truth, but Seventh Day Adventism as a system is extremely unsound and spiritually dangerous. See J. K. Van Baalen, *The Chaos of Cults* (Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1952, \$3.00), pages 190-216.

—J. G. Vos

#### Question:

A tract entitled "Love's Timeless Code" seems to show a great devotion to the law of God. What is your opinion of this tract?

#### Answer:

This tract, while containing much truth and speaking very highly of God's law, nevertheless gives the impression that Christianity is essentially a matter of obeying the commandments. The note of salvation by grace through the blood and righteousness of Christ is strangely missing. This tract was published by one of the publishing houses of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. An inquiry sent to the publishers brought by return mail a large catalog of Seventh Day Ad-

ventist literature. On the character of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, see the answer to the preceding question.

—J. G. Vos

#### Question:

What is the Restitution Theory of Genesis 1? Is this theory sound?

#### Answer:

This theory, which is advocated confidently by the **Scofield Reference Bible** (page 3), and by the **Pilgrim Edition of the Holy Bible** (pp.1,2), is to the effect that there is a vast interval of time between the first and second verses of Genesis 1. The theory is that God originally created this earth to be the habitation of angels, and these angels, under the leadership of Satan or "Lucifer" fell into sin, in consequence of which the earth was visited with a terrible divine judgment, and so became "without form and void". (The "was" of the first clause of Gen. 1:2 should be translated "became" according to the advocates of this theory). Then it is held that starting with Gen. 1:3 we have the record of the re-creation of the earth, that is, the restoration of the devastated earth and its preparation to be the abode of mankind.

In support of this strange theory, appeal is made to Ezek. 28:12-15 and Isa. 14:9-14, as well as Jeremiah 4:23-26. None of these passages when interpreted in accordance with sound principles of exegesis supports the theory that the original creation (in a "dateless past") was for Satan and the angels, and when they sinned God in judgment wrecked the earth. On the true meaning of these passages, see **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, April-June 1952, pages 88-9.

Concerning this theory, Dr. Oswald T. Allis says: "There is no convincing reason for changing the first 'was' of Gen. 1:2 into 'became'. The most natural interpretation of this verse is, we believe, that it describes the state of created and unorganized matter, when God began to fashion the cosmos by the eight creative fiats of vss. 3-27. None of the passages appealed to by Scofield, if correctly interpreted, lend any real support to the 'catastrophe' theory (Isa. xiv. 9-14, xxiv.1, xlvi.18, Ezek. xxviii.12-15)" (**Prophecy and the Church**, p. 269).

We conclude that while this special theory of Genesis 1 may appeal to some people's imagination, and their wish to speculate concerning such high mysteries as the fall of Satan, about which the Bible says very little that could satisfy our curiosity, nevertheless this theory is without any substantial foundation in Scripture.

—J. G. Vos

#### Question:

What should we think of the doctrine of

trichotomy, that man is a three-fold being composed of body, soul and spirit?

**Answer:**

This doctrine is a very common one in some Christian circles of the present day. Apparently it has been held by a minority of Christians from ancient times, but it has never been accepted by the Church in its official creeds or confessions. Briefly, the doctrine is that body, soul and spirit are three separate elements of the human personality. Concerning the body, there is no question. But with regard to "soul" and "spirit", the question is, Are soul and spirit two separate parts of the human personality, or are they two aspects of one and the same thing? Trichotomy (which means "division into three") holds that soul and spirit are separate parts of man; dichotomy ("division into two") holds that soul and spirit are two aspects of one thing, the non-material part of man.

The doctrine of trichotomy is older than Christianity, for it was held by Pythagoras, Plato and many other ancient philosophers. This, of course, does not prove it either true or untrue. The advocates of the theory in Christian circles base it especially on two passages of the New Testament, namely 1 Thess. 5:23 ("I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless. . . ") and Heb. 4:12 ("piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit"). Many people cite these texts as if a mere reading of their words from the Bible were sufficient to prove conclusively that trichotomy is true, and that those who hold to the other view do not believe the Bible.

It is not so simple as that, however. Any standard work on systematic theology will give a summary of the arguments involved. See A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (one volume edition), pp. 483-488; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 191-195; A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (1949 ed.), pp. 299, 300; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 47-51.

It would require too much space even to outline the arguments for rejecting trichotomy here. But we may briefly state: Scripture commonly speaks of man as composed of body and soul; over against two passages which seem to imply trichotomy, there are hundreds which seem to imply the division into two parts only. In the New Testament the words "soul" and "spirit" are used interchangeably. A. A. Hodge points out that deceased persons are indifferently referred to as "souls" (Acts 2:27-31; Rev. 6:9; 20:4) and as "spirits" (Luke 24: 37, 39; Heb. 12:23).

Why, then, are "soul" and "spirit" apparently distinguished in 1 Thess. 5:23 and Heb. 4:12? We shall give A. A. Hodge's explanation, as it is brief:

"The use made of these terms ('soul' and 'spirit') by the apostles proves nothing more than that they used words in their current popular sense to express divine ideas. The word **pneuma** ('spirit') designates the one soul emphasizing its quality as rational. The word **psyche** ('soul') designates the same soul emphasizing its quality as the vital and animating principle of the body. The two are used together to express popularly the entire man" (*Outlines of Theology*, 1949 ed., p. 300).

Is this question of trichotomy versus dichotomy a merely academic question, or what some people would call "theological hair-splitting"? By no means. Those who hold the theory of trichotomy often (but not always) associate with it special and unsound views on the subject of sanctification. This is quite common in some Christian circles in China. The idea is that the "soul" is something base and unworthy, while the "spirit" is something good and noble. Sanctification, then, becomes a process in which the human spirit gains control over and dominates the human body and the human soul. According to this theory, the "spiritual" man is a man in whom the human spirit controls the whole personality. Sanctification is thought of as a conflict of one part of the human personality against others parts of the human personality.

According to the plain teaching of the Bible, however, man's whole nature (including his spirit) is defiled and corrupted by sin. The Bible speaks of **filthiness of flesh and spirit**. There is no such thing as a "better self" or "higher nature" in man which is more holy and pure than the rest; all is spoiled by sin. Moreover, according to the Bible, the "spiritual" man is the **man who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God**, not the man whose human spirit controls his soul and body. According to the Bible sanctification is not a conflict of the human spirit against the soul and body, but a conflict of God the Holy Spirit and the new nature received in regeneration, on the one hand, against the whole sinful nature ("the flesh") on the other hand.

It is particularly because of its affinity for unsound views of sanctification that the theory of trichotomy is to be rejected. We realize that many faithful Christians hold this theory to be truth. Nevertheless, we believe that the verdict of Scripture is against it.

—J. G. Vos

## Questions Received

The following questions have been received from readers. Answers to them will be published, D.V., in future issues of this magazine.

- Just what is the difference between the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Free Church (of Scotland)?

2. What should we believe about freedom of religion? If it is not permissible to steal and murder, why should it be permissible to propagate atheism? Has not the so-called freedom of religion gotten us into the condition we are in today?

3. What should we believe about attempts to convert men? Is it proper to select an individual for conversion with the expectation that if we are earnest and patient enough, this person will eventually be converted to Christ?

4. Is it correct to say that if you are saved you are bound to know it?

5. Please publish a review of **Letters to Young Churches**, by J. B. Phillips.

6. Please publish something on the question of the limited atonement, which was discussed in the "Blue Banner Question Box" in 1946.

Note: The editor regrets that answers to the above questions are not yet ready for publication, and hopes to publish answers to most if not all of them in the July-September 1953 issue).

## *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."

**CRUCIAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, by George E. Ladd. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 193. \$3.00.

This work was delivered as the sixth annual Mid-Year Lectures (1952) at Western Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, Portland, Oregon. It is the first work by this young professor at Fuller Theological Seminary and gives sound proof of his ability as a critical scholar. Throughout college and seminary days, Dr. Ladd tells us in his Foreword, he was an adherent of dispensational premillennialism, but being disturbed by a feeling of uncertainty as to the soundness of some of its positions and a growing dissatisfaction with the quality of much of the literature which espoused this position, he determined to go as deeply as possible into the backgrounds of Biblical eschatology. The Kingdom of God has been his particular study, especially as it is presented in the Gospels. His work is a thoroughly scholarly one, carefully annotated, revealing a broad wealth of source materials. It presents a non-dispensational premillennial interpretation of the Kingdom fully in accord with Reformed theology, and is to be commended to everyone genuinely interested in the nature, object, and means of realization of the Kingdom. It is preliminary to a fuller critical work covering the whole field of eschatology.

The work consists of eight chapters. The first two give an historical survey of eschatological thought from the earliest post-apostolic writings covering both the liberal and conservative views. This review will trace the development of the author throughout and then present some observations and criticisms. Dr. Ladd says that

the Kingdom of God in the first two centuries was universally held to be fully realized in the future, and often millennially. Origen gave it a spiritual interpretation, and Augustine identified the Kingdom with the present reign of Christ through the Church; thus both Origen and Augustine eliminated the millenarian interpretation. Medieval theologians identified the Kingdom with the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church (Greek Orthodox theologians identify it with their own system) and the Reformers identified it with the invisible church as is still done by such scholars as G. Vos and O. T. Allis. (The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV.2, identifies it with the visible church which consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion regardless of denominational divisions). Modern liberal theologians have viewed the Kingdom, as did Ritschl, as a present "spiritual" reality consonant with the evolutionary philosophy (p. 58), that is, that the world is gradually getting better and better until a golden age is reached by natural human forces; or as Schweitzer and Weiss, have represented Jesus as teaching that the Kingdom was only eschatological and apocalyptic (following the return of Christ) and that it was to come within a generation, Jesus Himself having been mistaken as to the time. Recent conservative students have concerned themselves particularly with the pros and cons of the millennial interpretation, turning aside from the critical study of eschatology and neglecting the field of eschatology as a whole, a sad fact indeed.

Premillennialism in America has been largely identified with the dispensational view which distinguishes between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, and denies the purpose

of Jesus to establish a present spiritual kingdom. The author seems to view amillennialism as a reaction to this type of premillennialism (e.g., p. 59), rather than as a positive interpretation of the Word of God as it relates to eschatology. Postmillennialism as represented by B. B. Warfield is hardly more than mentioned throughout the work. The author laments the fact that "there does not exist an up-to-date conservative critical treatment of the Kingdom of God from any point of view" (p. 59). He takes into account G. Vos' **The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church** but states that it lacks documentation which "impairs it for critical study" (p. 56).

In chapters three and four the author demonstrates that the Kingdom is both present and future, and that the future eschatological aspect is the primary point of focus in the Gospels. The Kingdom is the "reign" of God which manifests itself progressively until at the Parousia it is made to encompass the whole of creation (Rom. 8:20-22). It is not an abstract principle, but "God's saving will in action . . . It can never be divorced from the direct, personal activity of God" (p. 97). Christ invaded the kingdom of Satan, binding him (not to be confused with the binding of Revelation 20, however, says the author) and setting up the Kingdom of God in His earthly ministry. "Because of Christ's life and death men may enter the realm of God's reign, salvation, the realm of messianic blessing and know release from Satan's power as God's reign becomes an effective power within them (p. 97). Yet the fulness of these blessings of salvation is to be realized only during the millennial age in which Christ will complete the subjugation of every enemy, and having done so, He will give over the Kingdom to His Father, and His will shall be done perfectly forever.

In chapters five and six Dr. Ladd is a very convincing fashion demonstrates from the linguistic, exegetical and theological points of view that the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are one and the same thing, that they could not be the Davidic Kingdom which dispensationalists say Christ offered to the Jews and they rejected, so that He then offered the Kingdom in "mystery form" — the church — an entirely new thing not anticipated in the Old Testament prophets. The Kingdom involves two phases: the present realm of righteousness or salvation in which men accept or reject the Kingdom, and the future realm when the powers of the Kingdom shall be manifested in visible glory.

In chapter seven the following principle of interpretation is developed: "Unless there is some reason intrinsic within the text itself which requires a symbolic interpretation, or unless there are other Scriptures which interpret a parallel prophecy in a symbolic sense, we are required to employ a natural, literal interpretation" (p. 141).

This is preliminary to the author's interpretation of Revelation 20. Dr. Ladd finds the "key of the passage" in the word "live" in verses 4 and 5: "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again" — my observation: "again" is not in the Greek — "until the thousand years were finished." The author goes to great length to prove that he is following the principle quoted above in concluding that the language makes perfectly good sense without taking either "lived" in the spiritual sense of regeneration. He therefore interprets this to mean that at the beginning of the millennium, at the Parousia of Christ, there is to be a resurrection of the faithful martyrs and confessors of Christ, that they will then reign with Him throughout the 1000 years, and at the end of the millennium the rest of the dead will be raised for the judgment of condemnation. (See discussion below).

The final chapter is devoted to meeting two main objections to the premillennial view. Biblical and Patristic evidence is presented to show that premillennialism arises as a positive Scriptural interpretation and does not come from "Jewish" sources. In reply to the objection that the millennium is explicitly stated in Revelation 20 only, the fact is admitted. The prophets, Ladd says, usually look forward to the eschatological consummation on the earth, but some speak of a new heaven and earth in an age to come (Isa. 65:17; 66:22), and there is scarcely more distinction in the Gospels. Paul in 1 Cor. 15 seems to indicate that he had an interregnum of undefined duration in mind, but his interests are primarily soteriological. However, he contends, and rightly so, that revelation is progressive, and if something new is explicitly revealed in the last book of the Bible it should not be discredited. The basic question, then, is: What does the exegesis of Revelation 20 require? To the reviewer Dr. Ladd's interpretation of a visible millennial reign of Christ on the earth is unconvincing.

In examination of this interpretation the reviewer would humbly submit: Those who participate in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6) are said to be out of reach of the second death. The second death is clearly the final separation of the wicked from God when in their resurrected bodies they are cast into hell forever. It is obvious that those who have been resurrected from the dead and in the resurrected body have shared the throne of Christ will not have any fear of being cast into hell, so it seems to make no sense to say that they shall not be under the power of the second death. The point of the statement in verse 6 seems to be to give assurance to those who have been regenerated and are still living in this world, that through faithfulness in their resistance of the Devil and adherence to the testimony of Christ they shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:12),

and shall have no fear of eternal condemnation on the Judgment Day.

A theological objection is also raised to this millennial interpretation. Scripture repeatedly describes the eschatological Kingdom as an eternal Kingdom having no end (Dan. 7:14; 2 Pet. 1:12, etc.), whereas in Dr. Ladd's "millennial kingdom" there is an interlude during which Satan is permitted to escape the binding of Christ and all but destroys Zion (verses 7-9) before God finally casts him and all his host into the lake of fire forever. Dr. Ladd probably has a reply to this objection, but to this reviewer it seems an impossibility that an interruption of this kind should come in the eschatological Kingdom, especially after the millennium has run the course described on pages 94-97.

The more natural and reasonable interpretation would seem to be that Rev. 20 describes the reign of the saints with Christ during the period between the two Advents, that the first resurrection is regeneration and the second resurrection the bodily resurrection of all the dead at the second Advent, when the Devil and all his hosts are cast into the lake of fire, death is swallowed up in life, and the eternal Kingdom of Christ becomes a reality. Only after the resurrection can man perfectly keep the commandments of God and human society do the will of God as the angels do it in heaven.

In the historical section, it is stated that the millennial interpretation of the Kingdom was common in the early church and some of the Fathers are quoted as evidence. This is all readily and appreciatively admitted. Yet it seems that the Creeds express the mind of the Church as a whole, and they are not mentioned. The Apostles' Creed does not recognize a millennium unless it is identical with the Judgment. The Nicene Creed precludes a millennium by stating that at Christ's return He will set up His Kingdom of which there will be no end. The Athanasian Creed explicitly opposes premillennialism.

On pages 69, 71 and 79 the Parable of the Nobleman (Luke 19:11-27) is declared to teach that Jesus has gone away to obtain His kingly authority and then to return so that the coming of the Kingdom must await His return at His second Advent. We would ask what there is to indicate that He has not already left and returned in His death and resurrection, so that He now has His kingly authority (Eph. 1:19-32; Col. 1:16-20) and is now personally ruling over all things for the sake of His Church. The Great Commission not only states that the authority has been given to Christ, but He in turn delegates it to His disciples.

If we combine the statements on pages 68, 71, 94 and 95 concerning the nature of the millennial Kingdom we find, so it seems, an impossible situation. It is first stated that Matt. 8:11,12 apparently teaches that in the future Kingdom

there will be Gentiles from the east and the west and the Old Testament saints now resurrected. It is later stated that "after His Parousia, Christ is to reign in person over human society **as it is now constituted**"—emphasis mine, E.C.C.—"The earth and human history will then become the realm within which God's reign will be realized to a degree beyond anything experienced before." This is most unnatural: the presence of resurrected Old Testament saints in the world is not "human society as it is now constituted." And even if it be claimed that the saints are in the air with Christ, still they are ruling the earth and must have some communication with men; it is still not human society as it is now constituted.

Dr. Ladd recognizes two phases of the Kingdom—the present spiritual period of preparation for the final visible realization of perfect obedience to the will of God. He identifies this second phase with the millennial Kingdom on earth, after which the eternal state is set up (p. 85). He rightly recognizes a similarity in the problem of the millennium from both the amillenarian and premillenarian viewpoints (p. 74), but he fails to see that his system involves three stages in final realization rather than two as he describes throughout. The number, of course, is not important if God determines to do it that way. But from the standpoint of interpretation consistency is important. To describe the Kingdom as being accomplished in two phases and then to add the eternal state after the two phases have ended is in effect to separate the eternal state from the Kingdom. This, however, I do not believe Dr. Ladd intends to do, since he states on page 64 that "more accurately it"—the Kingdom—"will not come until at the end of the millennium Christ turns over the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24,25)."

The reviewer is not satisfied with the presentation of the millennial Kingdom as mediatorial (e.g., pp. 83, 85). Surely all the work of Christ in relation to the world is mediatorial. But it is stated that after the first resurrection and judgment the work of subduing every foe and of bringing human society to obey the will of God as the angels do in heaven is to continue. What is the Scriptural basis for the continuation in the eschatological Kingdom of the ordinary means of grace by which alone men can be saved and sanctified? Is the visible presence of Christ to be a stronger influence in producing conversion than the Holy Spirit? If so, does this not necessitate a new salvation with new means, rather than a full fruition of that which is already begun in this phase of the Kingdom of God.

As regards the book in general, the reviewer is most grateful for its sane, thought-provoking presentation on the level of the average Christian reader, and he hastens to recommend it to all as a discerning study of one of the most important subjects of Christian thought. How can we be

effective laborers together with Christ if we do not know what He is purposing to do and how He wills His objective to be accomplished? The reviewer is particularly impressed by the clear, yet sympathetic, distinction between the author's premillennialism and the dispensational interpretation, and his demonstration of the unsoundness of the latter. In his discussion of the Parables of the Kingdom the author correctly emphasizes that they were given principally to show the facts of the growth of the Kingdom from an insignificant beginning to a world-encompassing state, not to describe the process of growth. The appearance of the fuller work by the author on the whole field of eschatology is most anxiously awaited.

—E. Clark Copeland

**NEW TESTAMENT LIFE AND LITERATURE AS REFLECTED IN THE PAPRYI**, by E. D. Head. The Broadman Press, 127 Ninth Ave., North, Nashville 3, Tenn. 1952, pp. 148. \$2.00.

Since 1942 Dr. E. D. Head has been president of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. The material presented in this book was originally assembled for use toward a doctor's degree. In its present form it has been popularized, and is presented in a readable non-technical style that will appeal to the person who would like to learn more about the language used in the New Testament.

Just as colloquial use of words often lends new shades of meaning in our present day, so the Greek of the philosophers and the poets had been modified by everyday use in the home and in the market place. The papyri records of the period from 325 B.C. to 640 A.D. furnish valuable insight into the common use of language. For that period which parallels the time when the New Testament was being written, much valuable information has been brought to light through the study of the papyri. These records include legal documents, tax receipts, personal letters, schoolboy exercise books, diaries, and charms.

The following chapter headings indicate the specific divisions that have been considered by Dr. Head: "Domestic Relations"; "System of Taxation"; "Legal Transactions"; "Trades and Professions"; and "Religious and Moral Conditions". Full reference notes have been added in an Addenda, rather than as footnotes on each page. A bibliography of source materials has been included and should be of value to anyone who wants to study the subject more intensively. The addition of an index would have made the book even more valuable to the student.

—S. Bruce Willson

**BUILDING A MINISTER'S LIBRARY**, by Elgin S. Moyer. Moody Press, 820 N. La Salle St., Chicago 10, Ill. 1944, pp. 47, paper cover. 65 cents.

Books are the minister's tools. Dr. Moyer, Librarian and Instructor in Church History in

the Moody Bible Institute, has put down in brief compass some of the essentials in the building of a functional library. Whether a library be large or small, its effectiveness depends on its usability. The author describes the "Dewey Decimal Classification" used by many public and school libraries. For the modest price this handbook is well worth the reading and keeping for reference, especially in laying foundations for either a minister's or a church library.

—S. Bruce Willson

**EVANGELISTIC PREACHING AND THE OLD TESTAMENT**, by Faris D. Whitesell. Moody Press, 820 N. La Salle St., Chicago 10, Ill. 1947, pp. 206. \$2.25.

"The evangelistic sermon is an all-out effort to bring the lost to Christ" (p. 28). The author goes on to amplify this definition with such statements as: ". . . it proclaims God's holiness, justice, righteousness, wrath, and judgments" (p. 29); ". . . it measures men by God's standards" (p. 30); "(it) will appeal to the whole personality —intellect, emotions, conscience, and will" (p. 35); "(it) should be as thought-provoking as any other sermon" (p. 35.)

Obviously, all that goes under the title "evangelistic preaching" does not qualify under the foregoing definition. The author has sounded a warning against some of the pitfalls of a shallow emotionalism, and emphasizes the need for Scripturally grounded content in all our effort "to bring the lost to Christ."

A neglected area of Scripture study and preaching has been the Old Testament. Yet, as Dr. Andrew W. Blackwood writes in the introduction to this study, "New Testament preaching means evangelism. In such preaching the Apostles used the Old Testament" (p. 12).

As head of the department of Practical Theology of the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, Professor Whitesell has drawn from his own experience as a Bible teacher in suggesting the rich material in the Old Testament often overlooked in contemporary preaching. This book contains a wealth of suggestions for "seed thoughts" that will prove stimulating to any pastor, and should broaden the scope of Scriptural preaching.

—S. Bruce Willson

**CHATS FROM A MINISTER'S LIBRARY**, by Wilbur M. Smith. W. A. Wilde Co., 131 Clarendon St., Boston 16, Mass. 1951, pp. 283. \$2.50.

Some people collect books to satisfy the "collector's urge". Dr. Smith has become well known in evangelical circles as a lover of books as tools in the minister's workshop. The value of a book, not in a monetary sense, but in its usefulness to the student, is recognized today as just as necessary as the precision tools of modern industry.

The chapters of this book grew out of a series of half-hour radio broadcasts on the general subject of interesting books—old books, new books, current articles, and the general effect of books on contemporary life.

The subjects are varied. "The latest attack upon the resurrection of Christ", being a thought-provoking critique of Shirley Jackson Case's **The Origin of Christian Supernaturalism**. There is a chapter on "Notes from the margin of my Bible"; and one on "William Lyon Phelps", an interesting account of the place the Bible played in the teaching of Yale's most beloved professor. In the chapter "Two notable testimonies to the Christian faith in the halls of Congress one hundred years ago" there is an account of an early attempt to get a Christian amendment to the United States Constitution. John Quincy Adams on February 19, 1844, presented a resolution from citizens of western Pennsylvania and Ohio petitioning constitutional recognition of "the Lord Jesus Christ" (pp. 241 ff.)

A reading of this book may indicate how much may be gained by a systematic plan of reading and study over a period of years.

—S. Bruce Willson

**COMFORT FOR CHRISTIANS**, Vol. 1, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Pa. 1952, pp. 121. \$1.75.

This is a book of seventeen sermons. To review it fairly and at length is impossible for this very reason. It is comparable to a lovely bouquet skilfully arranged by an expert florist.

The book serves the purpose declared in the title. The sermons bring comfort and encouragement to the Christian in his various fields of need. It is also suggestive for one who ministers to those in need of comfort.

Such subjects as "No Condemnation", "The Christian's Assurance" and "Sufferings Compensated", arouse the interest of the reader.

There are four sermons on the beatitudes of Christ. Here are a few of the flowers picked here and there from the bouquet:

"One second of glory will outweigh a lifetime of suffering." "He spared not Christ, that He might spare us." "God's people can never by any possibility be punished for their sins, for God has already punished them at the Cross." "Chastisement evidences our Divine sonship." "We must interpret the mysterious providence of God, not by reason or observation, but by the Word." "When God truly 'finds' one of His own, He reveals Himself." "No circumstances can ever place the believer beyond the reach of Divine Preservation."

The purchaser and reader of this book will not be disappointed.

—M. W. Dougherty

**ROAD TO VICTORY**, by Raymond R. Van Heukelom. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952, pp. 32, paper cover. 25 cents.

This is another booklet designed as a brief and pointed word of counsel for the young Christian in the armed service of his country. The author gives evidence of his experience as a chaplain. He knows the temptations encountered in the armed service, the very "feel" of those who face them. Such directness as he employs is absolutely essential to the effectiveness of such a booklet, for the temptations themselves are direct, with little of the civilian veneer to which we are accustomed.

But the quality of directness is forgotten when it comes to warning of false doctrine that one is bound to encounter in the name of Christianity. Possibly in this area the idea that "one must be positive" has ruled out this warning, which is also absolutely essential if the soldier is to be thoroughly armed against the devil.

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

**THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SUNDAY NEWSPAPER**, by M. Eugene Osterhaven. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 East Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1951, 4-page leaflet. 30c per dozen; \$2.00 per 100.

This tract, dealing with a common sin of Christian people, should have a wide circulation. It would be an excellent idea for pastors or church sessions to present every family of their congregations with one of these leaflets. The author cites circulation figures to show the immense popularity of Sunday newspapers. The aggregate national circulation of such is over 35,000,000 copies per week. Then the author shows how trashy and harmful much of the contents of the big city Sunday newspapers are, and how even the less objectionable ones are not suited to reading on the Lord's Day. He issues an earnest appeal to Christian people to keep the Sabbath Day holy, and to refrain from spending any part of it on Sunday newspapers.

—J. G. Vos

**1,001 SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS AND QUOTATIONS: A MINISTER'S HANDBOOK**, by Geike, Cowper, and Others. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St. S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 116. \$1.75.

This volume contains many apt illustrations and quotations from eminent writers. Rightly used, it will prove helpful to ministers in preparing sermons. Books of this kind should be cautiously used, however. To lean on them is to become a homiletical cripple, dependent upon crutches, and lacking in freshness of approach.

The reviewer ventures to offer three suggestions to compilers of such books as this. First, all Scripture texts should be omitted. Any minister

who uses a book of this kind to find out what the Bible says on various subjects such as Grace, Heaven, Hell, Prayer, etc., is incompetent and should not be allowed to preach the Word to others until he has learned it better himself.

Secondly, it would be a great improvement if compilers would always give the full name, or at least the initials along with the surname, of the authors they quote. It is frustrating to find a quotation attributed to "Watson", without any indication of what Watson is meant—there have been many Watsons. There is even in the present volume a quotation attributed to "Jones" (page 24), followed by the cryptic word "adopted" in parenthesis—possibly a misprint for "adapted". Other inadequately identified authors are Fuller, Hall, Dodd, Hopkins, Guthrie, Holmes, and even Adam (p. 69). It would hardly be any trouble for the compilers to give a definite identification of such authors.

In the third place, more discrimination should be used in the choice of quotations. This book gives quotations from classical pagan authors, such as Cicero, Socrates, Seneca, Lucretius, Terence, thus tending to create the impression that human philosophy is in accord with Christian truth (see 1 Cor. 1:20). The book also quotes numerous modern writers who were either not Christians at all, or who were of extremely unsound faith, such as Goethe, Mazzini, Renan, Channing, Franklin, Emerson. Preachers who frequently quote such unsound men give their congregations the impression that orthodox Christianity and modern liberal thought are in agreement on the main things, and differ only about trifling matters of detail. There are plenty of truly sound writers to quote from — it is not necessary to resort to Unitarians such as Channing or radical critics such as Renan.

— J. G. Vos

**THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION IN THESE TIMES**, by Chester E. Tulga. Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 2561 N. Clark St., Chicago 14, Ill. 1952, pp. 64, paper cover. 25 cents.

This booklet opens with an Introduction by Dr. R. W. Clearwaters, a Baptist minister of Minneapolis, Minn. Dr. Clearwaters points out the prominence of the concept of separation in the Bible, and predicts that this booklet itself will become a norm of separation by the favorable and unfavorable reactions which it will provoke. In one section of the Introduction Dr. Clearwaters deals with "The separated position for the local church". We are unable fully to endorse this section because it seems to imply the congregational or independent form of church government, in which every "local church" is an independent unit with full and final authority to decide all matters of government, doctrine and discipline for itself, regardless of all other "local churches". We believe, on the contrary, that the final decision on

several of the matters listed by Dr. Clearwaters (such as rejecting "unbiblical pastors") rests with a presbytery or synod having jurisdiction over more than one "local church".

In particular, we take exception to Dr. Clearwaters' statement that the local church must refuse to receive "unregenerate" members. Only God knows with absolute certainty who is and who is not regenerate. The attempt to have a perfectly pure church by admitting only the regenerate has often been made, but it has always broken down in practice, just because only God sees the heart. Church officers who attempt to decide who is and who is not regenerate will inevitably err by admitting some who are unregenerate and excluding some who are truly born again. We believe, on the other hand, that the true criterion of membership in the visible church is not regeneration or "real saintship", but a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him (see Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, Chap. XXII, Section 2 and Error 3).

Turning to the body of the booklet, we note that Dr. Tulga presents a strong case for Scriptural separation of Christians from fellowship with sin and unbelief. "There can be neither peace nor compromise between truth and error; between right and wrong; between orthodoxy and apostasy as nineteen hundred years of church history bear witness, for when such a peace is made God disturbs and destroys it. In the periods when such a peace was enjoyed, there was corruption. Separation has always separated evangelicals and always will" (p. 10).

The author rightly stresses "the necessity for maintaining spiritual unity between true believers", adding that "The separatist must be patient with the true Christian brother who although ecclesiastically involved, is fighting the good fight for the faith and pressing for a decisive victory", but this means patience with those who are really struggling against unbelief in their denominations, not those who tolerate it without positive action against it.

In two very telling paragraphs on pages 61 and 62 Dr. Tulga criticizes the implications of the slogans "separation is separating evangelicals" and "cooperation without compromise". He states that if the former statement means that separation is separating between compromising and uncompromising evangelicals, then it amounts to a statement that separation is accomplishing what it ought to accomplish. With respect to "cooperation without compromise", he states that while in theory all evangelicals could cooperate under such a formula, as a matter of fact it is "an unworkable formula" when large numbers of evangelicals are "engaged in compromising activities in their denominational relationships." The reviewer is in agreement with this.

The present controversy over the question of

separation is extremely painful and distressing, but it cannot be settled by simply forgetting the whole matter and dismissing it from consideration. Two mutually irreconcilable views of the nature of the visible church are involved in this controversy. These views cannot both be right; if one is true, the other is false. According to what may be termed the "low" view of the visible church, a person may be a member or officer of a church in a denomination without being morally responsible for the faith and conduct of other members of that denomination, or for the character of the denomination as a whole. Such members and ministers do not consider themselves morally responsible for the corporate character of their denomination; they feel moral responsibility only for themselves and for that fraction of the denomination which is under their personal jurisdiction. One minister of a denomination, holding the "low" view of the visible church, may feel no more responsibility for the doctrinal soundness of another minister of the same denomination than he would feel for another minister of any denomination who might happen to be travelling on the same train or boat with him. According to the "low" view of the visible church, a minister may know that a minister of his own denomination in a neighboring city is preaching heresy, but he will feel no obligation to take any action to correct this situation, nor any need to separate from the denomination if the evil cannot be corrected.

According to the "high" view of the visible church, on the other hand, every member and officer of any local church in a denomination is morally responsible, not only for his own faith and conduct and that of his own local church, but for the faith and life of the denomination as a whole. This moral responsibility is implied in the nature of the church and the fact of fellowship. If one member knows that others are living in sin or preaching heresy, it is his duty to seek a remedy and not to lay the matter down until one of two things has taken place: either the evils have been corrected, or he himself has been cast out of the denomination. Those who hold the "high" view of the church cannot relax while serious evils exist in their denomination, lest God hold them responsible for the evils complacently tolerated. They cannot allow a sinful status quo to continue unchallenged and undisturbed; they must discharge their moral responsibility.

In the judgment of the present reviewer, much of the painful and distressing character of the conflict between evangelical Christians over the question of separation is due to a failure on the part of many evangelicals to realize how deep the difference is between the two views of the visible church. There is in American Protestantism a prevalent and grievous neglect of the sense of corporate responsibility. Many regard membership in a denomination as a matter of ex-

pediency involving no special moral responsibility for other members of the same denomination.

Those who deplore the fact that "separation is separating evangelicals" have not fully realized nor appreciated the deep convictions of those who advocate separation. To the latter, separation from unbelief-riddled and modernist-dominated denominations is not a mere matter of expediency but a moral issue, a moral obligation for which answer must be given to God at the Judgment Day. Those who hold the "high" view of the church do indeed find separation between evangelicals painful and distressing, but on the other hand they cannot but regard brethren who tolerate unbelief in their denominations without positive action against it, as unfaithful to their Lord and walking disorderly. And Scripture commands separation not only from unbelievers, but from brethren who walk disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6).

And those who maintain the principle of separation have perhaps not fully realized that those on the other side of the controversy are not simply stubbornly perverse and bent on compromise, but are trying to act conscientiously from their point of view — only they are off the track and in a false position because of holding, or taking for granted, an erroneous doctrine of the visible church. In a word, if they held the same view of the visible church as Dr. Tulga, they would hold the same position on separation. If they held the same concept of denominational corporate responsibility as Dr. Tulga, they would hold the same position on separation.

Which view of the visible church is correct and Biblical is the real question at issue. Until this is settled, there can be no real settlement of the external issues about separation. This must be faced, sooner or later. Loyalty to truth and the honor of Christ require that it be faced and determined. This reviewer has no doubts on the subject. But this issue must be faced by American evangelical Christianity as a whole.

— J. G. Vos

**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.

Speaking of baptism Tertullian (*De Bapt.* 1) says, "We little fishes, according to our Fish, Jesus Christ, are born in the water." In the same vein, these lines of Clement of Alexandria at the close of the *Pedagogus* come to mind:

"Fisher of mortals, whom thou dost save  
Out of the ocean's strife,  
Luring pure fish from the angry wave  
With the sweet bait of life."

From such allusions in the patristic writings some inferences may be drawn that might seem to give support to the immersionist view of

baptism on the basis of mere tradition. But no such support can be drawn from the Scriptures. No Baptist could study Professor Murray's book without being, if not convinced, at least impressed by the weight of Scriptural argument presented against the immersionist position.

The author's faithfulness to the Scriptures is inscribed upon every page of the book. He insists that "traditional sentiment can never be pleaded as the proper ground for any element in the worship of God. Divine institution is the only warrant" (p. 1). Accordingly, the book is thoroughly exegetical.

The intent of the author is (1) to offset the widespread loss of conviction in Protestant circles regarding the propriety and necessity of infant baptism, and (2) to impugn the immersionist and anti-paedobaptist contentions.

The treatment of the entire subject proceeds along lines similar to that of Charles Hodge (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, pp. 526 ff.). The import of baptism, according to Professor Murray, involves the notions of union with Christ and purification from the defilement and guilt of sin. He contends that the primary idea in baptism is the believer's relation to Christ. The element of purification is secondary; it accrues from the fact of this relationship.

In dealing with the mode of baptism the author builds up a strong case against the Baptist contention that the Greek verb *baptizo* always means in the Scriptures "to immerse". He examines numerous passages in both Old and New Testaments wherein *baptizo* or *bapto* appear, and he finds that the word "can refer to an action performed by immersion but it can also refer to an action that does not involve immersion at all." He further observes that "when it does refer to immersion our knowledge that this is the case is not derived from the word *bapto* but from other considerations" (p. 11). Thus he concludes, *bapto* (Hebrew, *tabhal*) does not mean immersion.

Another phase of the argument for immersion rests on the alleged analogy between submergence in water and emergence from water on the one hand, and union with Christ in His death and resurrection on the other hand. The standard texts which are supposed to give this support are Rom. 6:2-6 and Col. 2:11,12. The author shows this interpretation to be indefensible and proves that there is no necessary allusion to the mode of baptism in these passages.

Since baptism is the badge of membership in the visible church, any treatment of the subject of baptism necessarily involves a discussion of the church. And here the reader will find a most cogent exposition of the doctrine of the church. The author's contention is that the constitutive principle of the church is union with Christ (the very relation that is signified and sealed by baptism).

The case for infant baptism issues from an organic view of the redemptive revelation, which is covenantal. "The basic principle of the argument for infant baptism is that the New Testament economy is the unfolding and fulfilment of the covenant made with Abraham . . ." (p. 48). The baptism of infants is one of the finest expressions of the covenant theology. The covenantal action of God involves the principle that "the infant seed of believers are embraced with their parents in the covenant relation and provision."

Seven most frequent objections to infant baptism are answered thoroughly and convincingly. In answering the question, Whose children are to be baptized, Professor Murray states that there should be two requirements on the part of parents who present their children for baptism: their own baptism and a personal confession of faith.

The final chapter deals with the efficacy of baptism, which the author states to be this: "that it is God's testimony to and seal upon the reality and security of the grace which He bestows in accordance with the provisions of the covenant of grace" (p. 90). He reminds us that covenant privileges involve covenant responsibilities and that the covenant blessings come only through covenant keeping.

This is covenant theology at its best. If one could add anything to the force of the argument presented in this book, it would have to be in the nature of extra-Scriptural testimony. Indeed, a profitable supplement might be a chapter citing the Ante-Nicene Fathers, proving that infant baptism and sprinkling as a mode of baptism were in practice from the earliest of times. The writings of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen and Clement of Alexandria all prove that this is the case (see Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, pp. 258-262).

—Joseph A. Hill

SERMONS AND OUTLINES ON THE SEVEN WORDS, by F. W. Robertson et al. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1953, pp. 107. \$1.75.

This is the fifth volume in the *Minister's Handbook Series* published by the Baker Book House. It consists of eight sermons, the first being on all seven sayings of our Savior on the cross, followed by one sermon on each of the sayings. Such authors are included as Charles H. Spurgeon, James Stalker, David J. Burrell, and Charles Simeon. There are also various styles of outlines on each text, as well as poetry on each saying. It is rather strange that in such a collection of material on the seven sayings of Christ on the cross there are not included some of the Psalms which set forth His work on the cross so clearly. Such Psalms as Psalm 22, 69, 20 and 31 could have been included with great profit.

The seven sayings of our Saviour on the cross ever challenge the mind of the child of God. Every minister is somehow intrigued with the unfathomable depth of these last words of our Saviour. The authors of the Gospels simply record the history of the incident, but all Scripture is of value in understanding their meaning. Therefore any book coming from the pen or pens of men desiring to make the Gospel known should be of interest.

This book has much to commend it and there are also things that are still to be desired. It seems rather queer that a consistent doctrinal viewpoint has not been more closely exercised in the choosing of the sermons. The following quotation from James Stalker, opening his sermon on "The Third Word from the Cross", shows that

writer's genius: "In the life of our Lord from first to last there is a strange blending of the majestic and the lowly. When a beam of His divine dignity is allowed to shine out and dazzle us, it is never long before there ensues some incident which reminds us that He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; and contrariwise, when He does anything which impressively brings home to us His humanity, there always follows something to remind us that He was greater than the sons of men."

Some of the poetry is fine and gives many inspirational views of these terse statements. There is much of profit in this book for ministers and laymen alike, but like all man-made books it must be used with discretion.

— Philip W. Martin

## 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.

**AN EVENING IN ANCIENT ROME: A TALK ON JUSTIFICATION**, by Thomas Bradbury. Sovereign Grace Union, 34 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. 4, England. 1952, pp. 20, paper cover. Per copy, 6d.; per doz., 4s.6d., postpaid.

**THE SILENCE OF GOD**, by Robert Anderson. Kregel Publications, 525 Eastern Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 232. \$2.00.

**EDUCATION IN CYPRUS**, by Wilbur W. Weir. Published by the author, c/o American Academy, Larnaca, Cyprus. 1952, pp. 312. \$3.50 postpaid.

**TOWARD A REFORMED PHILOSOPHY**, by William Young. Piet Hein Publishers, 1300 West Butler St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952, pp. 157. No price stated.

**Publications of Moody Press**, 820 N. LaSalle St., Chicago 10, Ill.

**TECHNIQUES OF A WORKING CHURCH**, by Clarence H. Benson. 1946, pp. 266. \$3.00.

**GREAT LEADERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**, by Elgin S. Moyer. 1951, pp. 490. \$5.00.

**Publications of Baker Book House**, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich.

**SERMONS AND OUTLINES FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS** (Symposium). 1952, pp. 100. \$1.75.

**THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS**, by F. B. Meyer. 1952, pp. 261. \$2.50.

**Publications of the Society for Reformed Publications**, 1519 East Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich.

**REFORMED STANDARDS OF UNITY, WITH INTRODUCTION BY LEROY NIXON**. 1952, pp. 119. \$1.25.

**THE MEANING OF BAPTISM**, by Eugene Osterhaven. 1951, pp. 46, paper cover. 25 cents.

**THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**, by George C. Douma. 1951, pp. 32, paper cover. 25 cents.

**THE MEANING OF MY CONFESSION OF FAITH**, by Bastian Kruithof. 1952, pp. 30, paper cover. 25 cents.

**THE RELEVANCY OF THE PIVOT POINTS OF THE REFORMED FAITH**, by John E. Kuizenga. 1951, pp. 21, paper cover. 25 cents.

**THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE**, by Henry Bast. 1951, pp. 29, paper cover. 25 cents.

**Publications of Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.**, 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich.

**THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE**, by Charlotte Yonge (condensed reprint). 1952, pp. 309. \$3.00.

**THE SECRET OF PULPIT POWER THROUGH THEMATIC CHRISTIAN PREACHING**, by Simon Blocker. 1951, pp. 209. \$3.00.

**THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES**, by Louis Berkhof. 1949, pp. 293. \$5.00.

**FAITH AND SANCTIFICATION**, by G. C. Berkouwer. 1952, pp. 193. \$3.00.

**THE DAWN OF WORLD REDEMPTION: A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF SALVATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**, by Erich Sauer. 1952, pp. 206. \$3.00.

**THE TRIUMPH OF THE CRUCIFIED: A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF SALVATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**, by Erich Sauer. 1952, pp. 207. \$3.00.

**EATING AND DRINKING CHRIST**, by Herman Hoeksema. 1952, pp. 189. \$2.50.

**MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS**, by Edward J. Young. 1952, pp. 231. \$3.00.

## The Revised Standard Version of the Bible

By the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick

(Note: This is the second of a series of three articles by Mr. Kilpatrick on the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. The first article was published on pages 16-18 of the January-March 1952 issue of this magazine. The third and final article will be published, D. V., in an early issue.—Ed.)

The "RSV", whatever else it may be, is, at least for the moment, the most outstanding phenomenon in the history of the English Bible. Two months after its release demand was still far beyond the supply. Almost every newspaper, religious magazine and nationally distributed popular magazine has carried news dispatches and articles concerning it, or carried advertisements for it.

The revisions of 1881 and 1901, the only two of wide acceptance since the King James Version (KJV) of 1611, after half a century have largely dropped from the picture as far as the hope that either should displace the KJV is concerned. Will this be the fate of the RSV also?

On the one hand, no legitimate device in modern advertising's book (without judging as to the legitimacy of some) has been neglected in the effort to promote the sale of the RSV, and to accomplish the complete displacement of the KJV from leadership. On the other hand, criticism of the RSV has been severe, ranging all the way from sober, objective, scholarly discussion, to the sensational and bizarre.

The great majority of Christian people, it would appear, when they have opportunity to look into the new version for themselves, are apt to conclude, on the one hand, that the promotional claims have been far too extravagant, and on the other, that the new Bible's critics are making a mountain out of a molehill.

Unfortunately many have concluded, since the changes from the KJV do not appear radical—in fact, to the casual reader, do not appear to affect the meaning at all, other than to simplify it—that the disagreement concerns fine points of theology which must be left to the scholars. And in many quarters there is a growing feeling that controversy over the Bible is uncomely, and that anyone who engages in it is acting in an unchristian manner. Of course, this last mentioned development is highly gratifying to those promoting the RSV.

The importance of this question need not be argued. Since the Bible is God's Word, transmitted by human hands, any part we can have in it deserves the utmost in care and faithfulness. Certainly the half million dollars spent in promoting the sale of the RSV, with other

hundreds of thousands to follow, speak eloquently of the importance in the eyes of the copyright owners, the International Council of Religious Education, of having it widely accepted. (The ICRC is now a division of the National Council of Churches. The NCC is an organization which claims to speak for more than 30,000,000 Protestants, or more than two-thirds of all the Protestants in the United States. It is promoting the new version).

If we conclude that this is a question only for religious experts, and that ordinary Christians are not competent to challenge the leadership of the church, by appealing to the Scriptures, then we have retreated to the darkness and tyranny that preceded the Reformation. We have surrendered the very life-principle of Protestantism.

There are questions concerning the RSV which ordinary Christians are quite competent to answer. We should be unfaithful to our Lord who has "made us unto our God kings and priests", we should be unfair to ourselves and to our children, were we to neglect to concern ourselves seriously with this question. There is evidence that is plain and abundant on the basis of which we may make a considered and intelligent evaluation of the RSV.

The present article will be concerned with certain questions to which the ordinary Christian is both competent and duty-bound to give an answer. A later article, D.V., will be devoted to an examination of portions of the actual contents of the RSV in matters that are significant in forming an estimate of the work as a whole.

### 1. Is the RSV more readable and understandable to the ordinary reader than the KJV?

Certainly to this question, at least, the ordinary reader is far more competent to give an answer than is the scholar. This is a proper first question. The reason for the preparation of the RSV is stated to be, in part, because the "confusing, old-fashioned words and phrases make the King James Version difficult reading for most modern readers. "If it has not been made more readable and understandable, then we need go no further. There is fairly general agreement that it is more easily understood because of modernized form of expression and choice of English words. However, the slogan, "A Bible you'll turn to twice as often" seems exaggerated optimism.

Then it must be remembered that this is not the most important question. The great question is: Is the RSV an accurate version? Does it accurately render the original?

While this is a question which only the scholars are competent to answer, we cannot defer to them with regard to the question of accuracy and have no more responsibility. For the scholars differ. They do not give a united, unanimous answer to our question as to accuracy.

So comes the question, Which scholars shall we give heed to? We cannot, or should not, determine our decision in this matter on the basis of majorities, nor on the basis of the scholastic and honorary degrees possessed by the scholars. Nor can we accept or reject the RSV merely on the basis of the prestige, or lack of it, of the sponsors, the NCC.

But the ordinary Christian is not left without light and evidence that he is competent to perceive and judge. Most of us are not competent to judge of the technical excellence of a television set, merely by examining it. Yet we are not wholly at the mercy of the salesman. We consider such evidence as is available as to his and his sponsor's honesty and integrity. We also consider the stated specifications, among them the degree of conformity to the laws of our government—our sovereign—governing the use of the set, the channels available and the interference.

And so, on the question of the accuracy of the RSV, we are not wholly at the mercy of the scholars. We can consider the evidence as to their honesty and integrity, and we can consider their stated "specifications", the lines that govern their work; for we know the "specifications" in general outline at least of the Christian faith, as laid out by our Sovereign.

The two following questions are preliminary and contingent, it is true, yet proper and significant, and they are within the range of judgment of the ordinary Christian.

**2. Is the publicity program which introduced the RSV, and which promotes its sale, one marked by integrity and honesty?**

On September 30, 1952, rallies were held "to honor the new version" in some 2600 communities across our land, climaxing a well-planned and executed program, acquainting the public with the revision work which had extended over 23 years. These rallies were promoted by the NCC and were organized locally by ministerial alliances and local church councils. Copies of the new Bible were available for presentation to mayors and other selected individuals of prominence in each community, but were not available for sale or general distribution until that date. Yet ministers and churches were called upon to honor this version of the Bible publicly before there was opportunity to examine it. It was to be accepted, apparently, on the basis of the prestige of the NCC and of the scholarship of the revisers.

As early as April 1952 publicity was given through new agencies as to the date of release, and containing a few quotations comparing the RSV with the KJV. Later, leaflets advertising the RSV were distributed by book dealers to their customers, containing those same quotations among ten in the leaflets. There were two pages of "What people say about the RSV", quoting a sentence or two from each of 33 nationally known individuals and religious leaders. These 33 quotations were unanimous and unqualified in their praise of the RSV.

When the RSV New Testament was first published in 1946, the dust jacket stated—and again, this was before the work was released—"The results (of the RSV revisers' work) critics agree (emphasis mine, L.E.K.), 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."

It is remarkable how quickly the agreement of the critics disappeared after the books were released to the public. Such publicity bears a striking resemblance to certain commercial advertising programs, notably that of the cigarette industry.

Is it an honest use of words to speak of "critics" when they have been chosen and screened to be sure there will be only those who offer praise and no disparagement? Is it fair and honest to ask people to honor a new version of the Bible publicly before there is opportunity to examine it? This is exactly the sort of implicit, unquestioning attitude in matters religious, which Protestantism abhors.

Such a rigidly organized and officially sponsored, yet sadly misleading, publicity campaign should make us suspicious of the product. Certainly the setting of a "publication date" for the announcement of a new version is proper, but the policy of asking for what amounts to endorsement, sight unseen, is not.

There are features of a Bible, as of a TV set, which the ordinary man is not competent to judge. He must defer to the "experts". But he should have the most confidence possible in the "expert" whose judgment is accepted.

To this question, then, the answer must be: No, the publicity program is not marked by integrity and honesty. It should prompt caution, even distrust, rather than confidence.

**3. Are the translators men who may safely be depended on?**

Certainly one qualification that the revisers should have is scholarship. They should be skilled in the original and related languages, and learned, so that full use may be made of modern discovery and research. With regard to this qualification the committee of revisers measures

up. They had all achieved recognition in some line of learning vital to the task of bringing forth a revision of the Scriptures in the English of today. Many of the leading universities and theological schools of the country are represented in its personnel.

Then there is another qualification necessary for dependability. That is faith in the historic verities of the Christian religion. This is what determines the "specifications" of their product, to keep the metaphor of the TV set. It reveals the degree of conformity to the laws of our Sovereign.

There are those who insist that scholarship is the only qualification needed. They say that translation is determining what the text says and expressing it in simple, understandable English, and that personal ideas do not enter into the task. They say that it is not only unnecessary but improper to inquire into the beliefs of a translator. On the contrary, it is both proper and necessary. Scientific principles of procedure demand it.

Suppose that two men of equal scholarship and ability should each write a treatise on the subject, "Democracy and How it Works in a Small American Community". Both use the same small community as material, but one of the men is a Communist and the other a loyal, freedom-loving American. We should certainly have two widely different pictures of this American community. Without a knowledge of the differing points of view of the two authors, we might be at a loss to explain the divergence in the pictures presented.

Among Biblical scholars there are beliefs fully as divergent as those of the loyal American and the Communist. Translation is not a mere mechanical process of changing word for word from one language to another. Questions often arise as to which of two or perhaps several renderings is best. Suppose one translator believes that the Bible is a collection of the writings of men, merely "the record" (emphasis mine, L.K.) of God's dealing with men, of God's revelation of Himself and His will" (Preface to the RSV of the Bible, p. x), but with no supernatural direction and guidance to keep them from error and to give a consistent and unified message. And suppose another translator believes that the Bible is God's Word, that, while it was written by men, in words and manner bearing the marks of their individual personalities and occupations, yet it was given by God, and is kept by Him a unified and consistent revelation. Now suppose a phrase which, so far as the words are concerned, could be translated so as to contradict another passage of Scripture written by a different man, or it could, with equally good linguistic ground, be translated so as to agree with the other passage of Scripture. Will not the belief of the translator have an influence as to which of the two renderings to choose? The honesty of the translator

would demand of him that he favor the translation which was in accord with what he believed to be true of the Bible.

Or suppose that one translator believes that God often enabled the prophets to foretell events centuries future to their own time, another does not so believe. Again suppose an Old Testament passage that is subject, so far as the words go, to a translation involving no prophecy, or to a translation containing a prophecy which a New Testament writer states was fulfilled by Christ. Certainly the belief of the translator, if he is sincere in that belief, will influence him in his choice of a translation.

Such problems as these are not imaginary. They faced the revisers — and they speak of their work as, in part, translation (Introduction to the RSV New Testament, p. 65) — again and again. So it is necessary, if we are to make a balanced and fair evaluation of the RSV, that we inquire as to the faith of the revisers.

Of those who worked on the New Testament Committee throughout the task, there is not a single one who may be claimed as believing in the great cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. All are on record as denying one or more of these doctrines.

Of the Old Testament Committee, there were only three who could be classed as holding to the cardinal Christian truths, and two of these died before the work had progressed far, one in 1934, the other in 1938. The remaining one has stated under questioning concerning one much criticized passage in the RSV, Isa. 7:14: "I tried to keep the word 'virgin' in the passage in Isaiah."

This is not an irresponsible charge. The revisers are on record as to their faith.

While much has been written in criticism of the RSV, in no case have I found it prejudged before there was opportunity to examine it. While the liberal theology of the revisers is certainly significant, we cannot reject this version on this ground alone. We must not follow the unwarranted lead of the NCC. They asked that people and churches "honor the new version" sight unseen, apparently on the basis of the scholarship of the revisers and the prestige of the NCC. Let us not reject it on the basis of the theology of the revisers.

Promotion of the RSV is progressing. Most of the denominational S.S. material of the NCC member churches is to be based on the text of the new version. Thus, more than 30 million Protestants have had the decision made for them. Those opposed to the change to the RSV have no such organized program. They must depend on the facts. But those facts must be searched out, proclaimed. To do so is not unchristian. "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?"

## ***Instrumental Music in Public Worship***

**A Study of what is Right and Wrong in Worship, with Special Attention to the book entitled "Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church" by John L. Girardeau**

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

(Note: This is the second article by Mr. Rankin on the subject of worship. The first was entitled "The Scriptural Pattern of Worship", and appeared in our April-June 1952 issue, pages 56-60. The author is pastor of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at Worcester, New York. — Ed.)

Our new president, in connection with his inaugural address, prayed: "Give us, we pray, the power to discern clearly right from wrong." Certainly this, in itself, is an excellent petition, something supremely to be desired and well worth praying for. But there is the question, How may we look for such discernment to be given? If given, how is it communicated? How are right and wrong to be determined?

Two or three things, it may be said, are necessary for true success in the exercise of this kind of judgment. One of these is that we must have and know and inwardly possess the standard by which alone such judgment may be rendered. Another is that we must inwardly possess that wisdom, power and grace, which God, the Holy Spirit, alone can give, by which we shall be enabled to make right use of the standard; so that, indeed, with clear and true discernment we may render judgment that is right. But in addition to these there is yet a third requirement, and that is that we must clearly apprehend, properly evaluate and faithfully apply the Scripturally provided principle for the correct interpretation of the Bible as the rule of faith and life.

Christian thinkers and Bible interpreters have often forgotten one or more of these three indispensable prerequisites. The history of the Church for fifteen centuries, with its long, sad story of degradation and apostasy, plus the past two centuries of the Protestant story, provides a doleful commentary on the dire results of the neglect of these principles. We may survey the result in various spheres, such as the doctrine, government, discipline and worship of the church. Of course all spheres are mutually influential and closely joined together. Our particular interest here and now is in the sphere of worship, this only on the Protestant side, and still more particularly only on the Reformed side of Protestantism. Here we have the situation of churches possessed, at the outset, of the true, pure, Scriptural, and truly spiritual worship. But, at one time or another, sooner or later, by far the greater part fell away and departed from it.

It is the judgment of the writer at this juncture that the most profitable procedure would

be to give special study to a particular case in point. For this purpose nothing could be better than the study of a book published in 1888, entitled **Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church**, by Dr. John L. Girardeau. (Copies of this 208 page book are obtainable at 50 cents each, postpaid, from Mr. Chester R. Fox, Treasurer of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, 209 Ninth St., Pittsburgh 22, Pa.)

At the time of writing, Dr. Girardeau was teaching in the Columbia Theological Seminary, South Carolina. Popular opinion in his church, the Southern Presbyterian Church, at the time was running very strongly counter to the principle of the exclusion of instrumental music from public worship. At the request of some of his students, who were well acquainted with his views, the professor prepared and published a set of lectures setting forth the argument in full and masterful detail. It is not exactly the easiest book in the world to read, but it is a classic in its field. Solid learning and sound logic combine to produce a masterpiece.

Chapter I is entitled "The General Argument from Scripture". After a precise statement of the subject, the author, in this chapter, expounds the broad, Scriptural foundation of his argument in what he calls "the controlling principle", as taught in the Word. This is the regulative rule or principle laid down in the Word for the regulation, according to the Word, of all things inherently religious in our Christian faith and life. Included in its sphere of operation are all things in the life and work of the church. But of course the author's special interest in this principle at the time was in its application to the worship of the church, and still more particularly its application to the question concerning the use or non-use of instrumental music in such worship. Now this is the Scriptural principle which he proceeds at once to apply to this question: "What is not commanded, is forbidden."

The author's argument proceeds upon the plan of the application of this principle to the end of the determination of the Scriptural answer to the question: "Is the use of instrumental music in the public worship of the church justifiable?"

The major portion of the book is devoted to the study of the direct argument from the Bible, taking it up, first from the Old and then from the New Testament, in Chapters II and III. Following this the author sets forth "The Argument from the Presbyterian Standards" (Chapter IV),

and "The Historical Argument", with many a weighty quotation from the writings of the Reformers, in Chapter V. The discussion closes with the author's treatment of the opposing arguments advanced in favor of the use of instrumental music in the church (Chapter VI); and a final brief chapter entitled "Concluding Remarks".

Having satisfied ourselves with regard to the general contents of the book as a whole, let us now go back over it for a more detailed consideration of the argument.

As has been pointed out, Chapter I expounds the regulative principle, and its role in the discussion as a whole, as of first and decisive importance. Having stated the principle the author gives deductive proof and sets forth the extensive Scriptural evidence for the principle, after which he defends it from the opposing principle, namely, that "What is not forbidden, is permitted."

Before passing on to the author's presentation of the specific argument, let us pause for a moment's reflection upon the Scriptural regulative principle and its non-Scriptural adversary.

The latter is the principle employed by Romanists, Lutherans and Anglicans, and is embodied in the 20th Article of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. It will be noted from the very language of the principle that it is at best only partially restrictive and that, in its major import and intent, it is not restrictive but permissive. By the large area of permission provided in it the sea-gates are opened to a flood of evils. All of the corruptions and innovations of the worship of the aforesaid communions, plus their duplication far and wide throughout the remainder of the church world (or world-church), plus many more which the "Protestants" themselves have invented and introduced—all these are permissible under this rule. Not only the use of instruments of music in the public worship of the church, but also the use of songs of human composition and the whole year-round procession of special days and seasons, Christmas, Easter, Lent and all the rest, are to be counted among the many things which are not expressly forbidden in the Word for the worship of the new dispensation. So that, according to this principle—that is to say, by virtue of their not having been forbidden—they are quite admissible.

On the other hand we have that true, and truly Scriptural regulative rule that "What is not commanded, is forbidden". This is the Reformed principle of Scripture interpretation which Dr. Girardeau in his book has defined so clearly, established firmly from God's Word, and applied so effectively in his full-scale treatment of one particular matter.

The contrary principle is beloved of those who hold it because it both gives them what in their worship their evil hearts desire, but also

makes it appear that they have Scriptural support for whatever they wish for in their worship. The fact is that the principle is human on the face of it just because it is so permissive. On the other hand the Reformed principle is obviously divine, just because it is so definitely restrictive. It sets a distinct and definite boundary to our worship and informs us that we may include in its content only that which God in His wisdom, Himself, has chosen, appointed and prescribed. In the light of considerations such as these how important it must appear to be that we not only hold this principle but also give it the most thoroughgoing application.

The Bible itself is indeed the rule of faith and life, but this rule, found embedded in the Word, defines the manner in which the Bible functions as the rule, and so is only second in importance to that great Rule itself. To repeat, it teaches that express command is necessary for all things in all spheres in regard to which the Bible speaks expressly. Its proper scope is the entire realm of things which in themselves, in their own nature, are religious. In all these things, in all these spheres, the teaching is that explicit direction is necessary as our sole and sufficient warrant for our faith and practice.

Considering the situation from this viewpoint it is easy to see how difficult it would be to over-emphasize the worth of this principle for the determination of any question. It is the foundation of the argument in the matter before us; or it may be likened to the hinge on which the matter turns. It is the key which unlocks the door of the Bible teaching on the question. It is the crucial element and decisive factor. Like to a wheel within a wheel it is a rule within the general over-all rule of the Word. It is a rule of strict injunction concerning all which the Scripture prescribes in a given sphere, and of strict prohibition of all in regard to which the Scripture is silent in that sphere. It informs us that in respect to all those things of the same kind in the same sphere in regard to which the Bible is found to speak at all, it must be expected to say all.

Let us now return to our author's argument again. In Chapters II and III he marshals the direct argument from the Scriptures, first from the Old Testament and then from the New. Besides the regulative principle which is consistently to the fore and ever in view, two important distinctions are noted and put to use. One of these is the distinction of dispensations, old and new. The other is that of the special typical and temporary worship first of the tabernacle and later of the temple in distinction from the simple, generic and essential worship exemplified in the synagogue, first in Old Testament times and later in the New. The argument here, though rather extended and involved, is Scripturally grounded and logically connected and produced.

In regard to the author's use and application

of the regulative principle, his first words in the first of these two chapters begin with an allusion to it and with a general statement concerning its operation in the old dispensation. And the first sub-head is in these words: "Let us notice the operation of the principle with reference to the tabernacle worship." So it goes throughout the chapters.

The presence, by divine authorization, of instrumental music in the temple worship for a time (from David's time to the time of Christ) is explained as having been provided to serve as a type of the New Testament "joy in the Holy Ghost". On the other hand its total absence from the synagogue worship of the time is taken as an indication of its unfitness, in the sight of God, for the simple and non-typical worship of His people.

The argument from the New Testament proceeds as follows. The temple worship, being but for a time, and having served its purpose, was abolished. The worship of the new dispensation was patterned after the synagogue worship of the old. The martyr Stephen's argument before the Jewish council is cited in proof of a new worship following upon the abrogation and abolition of the old. Christ's teaching is set forth as condemnatory of the contemporary departures from the Scriptural rule and proclaiming the advent of a new day in worship under God. The specific teaching of the apostles under their exalted Lord demonstrates this to have been the case. And the point is made that, throughout the entire New Testament, there is a total absence of any specific teaching relative to the use of instrumental music in public worship.

Colossians 2 is especially referred to as denouncing "will-worship" of any kind, that is, worship which is according to human "ordinances"; that is to say, "doctrines and commandments of men." Surely here the church is clearly warned against the reproduction in any way in its worship of the defunct rites and usages of the past, and, by plain implication, of anything like them.

In this argument, of course, what we see is the regulative principle in full effect and operation. Here we see that when God ordained instrumental music for the old dispensation, then, and then only, was it in order for that dispensation. But in the absence of any authorization of such music for the new dispensation it has never been and never is in order there. As has been said, the author's position is that in God's own good time instrumental music was added to the temple worship to foreshadow the church's triumphant, Pentecostal joy. But, again in due time, this whole scheme of types and shadows was abolished; instrumental music along with everything else of like nature in that kind of worship and the temple itself was doomed to be destroyed. But when that worship fell, lo and behold, there amid the ruins, as it were, stood the

kind of worship God intended for His new day, already in use, and ready to serve as the model of the worship of His people from that day forward to the end of the world.

The remaining chapters, as we have seen, give the argument from the subordinate standards; in this case the Presbyterian standards; and from history. The standards are cited, as upholding both the regulative principle itself, as taught in the Scripture, and its application in the particular case in hand. Corroborative evidence is given from the contemporary faith and practice in this respect of the framers of the standards. And the lesson of history is that notwithstanding all the corruptions of human invention which entered in, the church remained pure and free of this particular corruption for a period of 1200 years. Then, only 300 years later, Protestantism, on the Reformed side, brought back this same purity and freedom again.

Dr. Girardeau, concluding his affirmative argument against instrumental music in public worship, says, "It is heresy in the sphere of worship". And in his "Concluding Remarks", speaking of the influx of instrumental music into the public worship of his day as a "widespread and astounding defection from the old, conservative position of the Presbyterian Church", he says that "the congregations which that church embraces are more and more succumbing to its baleful influence. The ministers who are opposed to the unscriptural movement are, many of them at least, indisposed to throw themselves into opposition to its onward rush. They are unwilling to make an issue with their people upon this question. They are reluctant to characterize the employment of instrumental music in public worship as a sin. But a sin it is, if there be any force in the argument which opposes it. The people ought to be taught that in using it they rebel against the law of Christ, their King" (pp. 206-7). Consider that it was sixty-five years ago when these words were penned. What would the good doctor think were he living today!

As we have seen, the matter of the use of instrumental music in public worship is not the only aspect of worship to which the regulative principle applies. As has been indicated, it applies with equal force to the inclusion of extra-biblical songs in worship and to the observance of unscriptural days and seasons, the effect of which is to modify or condition in any way the content of our worship. It operates to the inclusion of only those things which God's holy Word prescribes, and to the exclusion of a number of things which our modern "conservatives" generally regard as legitimate and allowable. The strict restrictions resulting from its operation are generally viewed as foolish, fanatical and even wrong. But if the exclusion of instrumental music from public worship is right, then whatever it may be that violates this teaching is wrong. And if the

exclusion of humanly devised and imposed days and seasons (whether dictated by ecclesiastical authority or by popular taste and preference, custom or tradition) is right, then whatever contravenes this requirement is wrong.

Before taking leave of our subject it may be in order to recall how Calvin stood on this matter of the use of instrumental music in public worship. (The reader is referred to several quotations from Calvin's writings which appear on page 53 of this issue. — Ed.).

Notwithstanding the facts, as often stated, there seems to be confusion in some quarters with regard to just how Calvin stood. Dr. Girardeau devotes three and one-half pages to quotations from Calvin alone, all to the effect of his uncompromising opposition to the use of instruments of music in public worship. Of course Calvin was also for exclusive Psalmody and against the observance of special days and seasons and the like which we have mentioned.

However anyone may disagree with Calvin's position in these matters, there should be only full and frank recognition of his position, and no obscuration of it, much less anything even remotely resembling misrepresentation.

Calvin's view with regard to music itself is well known. He heartily approved of the cultivation of the arts; music, both vocal and instrumental, included, although he was partial to the former. But his opposition to the use of instrumental music in public worship is equally apparent and stands forth plainly in his life and literary work. So that in writing on "Reformed Church Music" it would hardly do to imply in any way or to give any encouragement to the reader to suppose that as regards such music in such worship the opposite of what Calvin himself affirms as his position was the case. Calvin himself at least never allows his readers to gain the impression that he was in favor of instruments of music in public worship.

Yet this very thing appears to have been done in certain articles in which the Reformer is hailed as our great Reformation leader and teacher in general and in particular with respect to "Reformed Church Music" (articles in recent issues of "Torch and Trumpet" by Dr. Henry A. Bruinsma). The title of Professor Bruinsma's first article in the series is "The Desirability of a Truly Calvinistic Church Music". But of course, if Dr. Bruinsma includes instrumental music in his concept, Calvin's position is one of blanket disapproval of such music. In his second article he speaks of Calvin as having "restored church music" and as having established certain "principles for worship" which, he says, "we" (speaking, no doubt, for his own denomination, the Christian Reformed Church) "must bear in mind as we study our twentieth century problems of church music." The view of worship, however, for which the hon-

ored name of John Calvin is here invoked, is clearly contrary to the view held by Calvin, basically in its failure to apprehend and apply the regulative principle, but also, in several very important particulars, the use of instrumental music in public worship being one.

Serious attention cannot be given to these matters without urgent questions and possible objections pressing for attention. Numerous aspects of the subject as a whole wait to be explored. There is, for example, the question why so many great and good men, admirable in their devotion to the Scriptures, highly respected in their respective fields, seem to stand aside from these questions; and, if our own position be correct, err and go astray in respect to these matters.

Probably no simple answer can be given. In all likelihood there is a combination of causes in operation. Neglect of strict attention to the regulative principle may be one; intense preoccupation with their labors in their chosen fields another. Dr. Girardeau's explanation is that church people, officers and members, are swept along by the tides of "the degenerative tendency" which is ever at work; to which we may add, as he would and does, the floods of contrary opinion ever beating in upon us from the world.

It may be worth while to remark that there is no need of going to extremes in our view; as, that worship is not worship unless an organ is provided; or, that if an organ is used, the worship is thereby rendered wholly bad. After all, there is a valid and useful distinction to be made between complete and partial wrongness in worship. Modernist worship is wholly wrong, however conducted, and practically all "Fundamental" worship of today is partly bad. However, room remains for a people and their worship who are not to be classified as belonging to either group, but who are simply, wholly, purely and consistently Reformed. Whatever others think, we have a simple, dignified and beautiful worship service. And, over and above all else, we have the joy of knowing that, despite all personal imperfections and shortcomings, in our worship itself we are pleasing God.

## Announcement

Approximately \$600 is needed by October 1 to complete the publication of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" for 1953 without a deficit. Part of this will be obtained from subscriptions and sales of back issues, but for most of it the publisher will be dependent on contributions. If you believe that the faith we are seeking to promote is true and important, please try to help supply this need.

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# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

Isaiah 55:1-3

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## **For Me**

Under an Eastern sky,  
Amid a rabble cry,  
A man went forth to die,  
    For me!

Thorn-crowned His blessed head,  
Blood-stained His every tread,  
Cross-laden on He sped,  
    For me!

Pierced glow His hands and feet,  
Three hours o'er Him did beat  
Fierce rays of noontide heat,  
    For me!

Thus wert Thou made all mine;  
Lord, make me wholly Thine,  
Give grace and strength divine,  
    To me!

In thought and word and deed,  
Thy will to do; oh, lead  
My feet, e'en though they bleed,  
    To Thee!

(Author unknown)

## **The Anvil**

Last eve I paused beside  
A blacksmith's door,  
And heard the anvil  
Ring the vesper chime;  
Then, looking in, I saw, upon the floor,  
Old hammers worn with  
Beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had?"  
I asked,  
"To wear and batter all  
These hammers so?"  
"Just one," said he,  
And then, with twinkling eye,  
"The anvils wear the hammers  
Out, you know."

"And so," I thought,  
"The Anvil of God's Word  
For ages skeptic blows  
Have beat upon;  
Yet, though the noise of  
Falling blows is heard,  
The Anvil is unharmed,  
The hammers gone."

(Author unknown)

## **Not Yours But You**

By Christina G. Rossetti

He died for me: what can I offer Him?  
Toward Him swells incense of perpetual prayer;  
His court wear crowns and aureoles round their  
hair;  
His ministers are subtle Cherubim;  
Ring within ring, white intense Seraphim  
Leap like immortal lightnings through the air.  
What shall I offer Him? Defiled and bare  
My spirit broken and my brightness dim?  
"Give Me thy youth." "I yield it to Thy rod,  
As Thou didst yield Thy prime of youth for me."  
"Give Me thy life." "I give it breath by breath;  
As Thou didst give Thy life so give I Thee."  
"Give Me thy love." "So be it, my God, my God,  
As Thou hast loved me, even to bitter death."

## **Christ Can Give Thee Heart**

By Christina G. Rossetti

But Christ can give thee heart who loveth thee:  
Can set thee in the eternal ecstasy  
Of His great jubilee:  
Can give thee dancing heart and shining face,  
And lips filled full of grace,  
And pleasures of the rivers and the sea.  
Who knocketh at His door  
He welcomes evermore:  
Kneel down before  
That ever-open door  
(The time is short) and smite  
Thy breast, and pray with all thy might.

# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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## *The Fear of God*

It is perhaps true to say that no phrase has slipped out of the religious vocabulary of today more completely than **the fear of God**. Its omission is full of significance. It points, doubtlessly, to a religious attitude that is particularly characteristic of this present age, the attitude of light-hearted familiarity with God and Divine things that finds its most outspoken expression in our popular hymns and choruses, and in many of our evangelistic and revivalist meetings. In this absence of the fear of God, and the approach to Divine things that it expresses, religion has lost much of its weight and impressiveness and has considerably weakened its appeal to those who would make a serious business of the soul's dealings with God. In its place there has come a flippancy and light-heartedness that has made even hardened men of the world turn aside with distaste from many evangelistic services, and their stirring appeals to trust in God. If our religion is to regain the awe-inspiring quality that marks it off as supernatural and Divine, then the fear of God must be brought back not only into our religious vocabulary, but, what is more vital, into all our religious exercises and our entire attitude to Divine things. Only thus will God be given His rightful place in our worship and witness, and man shall be led to recognise that God is of a truth in our midst.

### I

Let us recall, first, that the fear of God is the foundation of all true religion, inasmuch as religion is, first and foremost, the reaction of the human soul in the presence of God. In Old Testament language and ideals "the fear of the Lord" is a synonym for religion, and God, the Covenant God of Israel, is designated "the Fear of Isaac," and "the Fear of Jacob." This designation clearly indicated the relationship that was thought proper and right between the Most High and His trusting creatures. This abides the most vital factor in the religious consciousness of mankind. Till we come to recognise that God is in Heaven and we on earth, there can be no true religion. While Christianity has doubtlessly shed a wealth of light upon the Fatherhood of God, the Father in Heaven, in virtue of the fact that He is in Heaven, is recognised as bearing a sovereign relationship to His people. The proper response to that sovereignty on the part of His creatures is fear, and it is with awe that the children meet at the foot of the Father's throne. This relationship, therefore, gives us no right to presume upon God's prerogative or to

dispute His right to give or withhold as seemeth best to Him. Even when He dispenses grace, we are reminded that it is from a Throne of Grace where His royal sovereignty, no less than His royal bounty, will be manifested to His suppliants. Even there, we must be still and know that He is God.

We feel that it is the absence of this fear of God that has made so much of our present-day religion noisy, cheap, and irreverent. Men forget the majesty and mystery of God and do not see that His throne is "high and lifted up." And forgetting this, they become clamorous, familiar, and, all too often, flippant. In this respect, as in many others, the fear of the Lord is truly the beginning of wisdom. It brings a hush upon the soul in which the Infinite reveals Himself to His finite creature as the One that is past finding out. It was this consciousness that led an ancient prophet to cry out, in an agony of spiritual desire, "Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself." No advance in true religion can ever rid the soul of this awe before the Infinite and Eternal One, and no advance in knowledge can evade the challenge: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" Fear is thus the atmosphere in which true religion lives and aspires, and seeks. It is, in truth, the foundation of religion, the pulse of the spiritual life, the breath of every spiritual movement Godwards.

### II

It is in the fear of God that we find the spirit of every true religious exercise, inasmuch as fear is the parent of reverence. Reverence is what we owe to character, and this is the only appropriate response that man can make to the character of God as He has been pleased to unveil Himself to man's moral and spiritual perceptions. It is man's rightful response to the holiness of God. In every case recorded in Scripture in which God drew near to man in the way of self-revelation, the response was one of reverential awe and holy fear. Thus Moses responded at the Burning Bush when he "hid his face and was afraid to look upon God." This was Isaiah's response when he saw "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," and cried, "Woe is me, for I am undone for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." And this was John's response when in Patmos he saw the Son of Man whose "eyes were as a flame of fire," and he "fell at His feet as one dead." If the Divine holiness does not strike fear and awe into the heart of man, it is because he

has no understanding of the One who is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises." Till "the spirit of the fear of the Lord" enters into the heart of man, he cannot worship the Lord "in the beauty of holiness." It is the absence of this fear that mars our worship and turns the voice of our witness into the mere "sounding of brass and tinkling of cymbals."

Reverence is, perhaps, the greatest lack of our age, and it will not return till the fear of God takes its proper place in our religious exercises. When the early disciples were assembled in worship it was declared that "no man durst join himself unto them." Our assemblies to-day possess no awe for the outside world because we do not meet in the fear of God. "Thoughtful Americans," said a prominent English preacher some years ago, "have said that, amid all the natural greatness of their country, their greatest anxiety for the future is caused by the absence of reverence among all classes of the people." While this is probably more true to-day of the American people, and more especially of their religious leaders, than when it was uttered, irreverence is by no means confined to American books and American pulpits. The same irreverence and flippant abuse of sacred things has invaded our own country, sweeping away, as by a flood, the distinction between things secular and things sacred. American evangelistic technique may have something to do with this, but not everything. When our religion has lost its fear and awe before a holy God, it has lost its reverence and has forgotten what a prominent theologian describes as "the qualitative difference between God and man." The same theologian accuses the present generation, not unjustly, of thinking that they were speaking of God when "they spoke of man in a loud voice." When the fear of God returns to our religion our worship will be purified and uplifted and we shall fear to bring into the presence of the Lord what is merely of our own foolish thoughts and desires. Only then shall we be in a fit spirit to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

### III

We must conclude that the culture of all true religion stands in the fear of God. In other words, the fear of God is the most sanctifying influence

that religion can bring into human experience. Throughout the whole of the Old Testament and much of the New, the fear of the Lord is given as the motive power in a life of obedience. As Joseph in Potiphar's house found the fear of God the all-powerful deterrent to sin, so throughout the Book the whole of the religious life of man comes under the preacher's summarisation: "Fear God and keep His Commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Not only is the fear of God a discipline that places restraint upon unruly man, but it is a potent factor in the building of choice Christian Character. It inworks meekness and gentleness and gives deliverance from the self-confidence and self-assertiveness that so often mar the Christian's witness. It is the ground-work of saintly character as men and women go on "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." It is the condition of all true understanding and insight into spiritual truth, for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." It is the spur to diligence and obedience as the believer works out his own salvation "with fear and trembling." It is the counter-part in the daily life of assurance and peace, giving us the balanced walk of true humility, as we "walk in the fear of God and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." It is where the fear of God dwells that the comfort of the Holy Ghost can come.

This is perhaps the underlying cause of what has often been remarked upon—the difference between the Christian character that is being generally developed to-day and the Christian character of the past when religion was a more vital and living force. The quality of Christian character that is most conspicuously lacking to-day may be the self-discipline and self-restraint that is the fruit of the fear of God. Certain we are that the absence of it has robbed our religion of its mystery and its wonder, our character of its fragrance and its humility, and our service of its quiet power and its consecration to the will of God.

**Note:** For the foregoing timely and discerning article, we are indebted to **The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland**, Edinburgh. The article is reprinted here from the March, 1953, issue of that publication. Ed.

## Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter VII

Contending with the King — A. D. 1582

The Covenanted Church flourished under the care of the General Assembly like a well-watered garden. The small band of ministers and elders, who had organized the Assembly, were richly blest in their labors. They had assembled at the

risk of their lives to give the supremacy of Jesus Christ its loudest utterance, and the unity of the Church its grandest expression; and the signal favor of God was their reward. The first ten years of the General Assembly were the halcyon

days of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Under the showers of the Holy Spirit, pious people sprang up "as among the grass, and willows by the water-courses." The power of the Papacy was broken and its horrors checked.

The clear sky, however, soon gathered blackness. The first cloud was, in size, and in cunning, too, as a man's hand. The national government had condemned Popery as a religion, and had confiscated the vast wealth which the priesthood had amassed and had long enjoyed. This immense property, including rich revenues, large buildings, broad fields, and annual harvests, was held for distribution. How shall it be distributed? That was the burning question of the day, and it started a conflagration in the Church, that kindled many a fire at the stake. The civil court decided that one-sixth should be given to the Church. The Church accepted the allowance. It was a sweet morsel in her mouth; but bitter, oh, how bitter in her bowels!

Regent Morton held the reigns of government at that time. That cunning ruler in bestowing this gift expected large returns. If the Church get gold at his hand, she must make concessions on his demand. From that day the Covenanted Church was in trouble. She was compelled to keep up a constant warfare for her heaven-given independence, a bitter fight at the cost of much blood for the right of self-government under her Lord. The Bride of the Son of God had linked arms with an earthly suitor, and leaned on him for support, to her shame and sorrow. The Church of Christ, free-born and independent, endued with divine power, enriched with the indwelling Spirit, and sufficiently resourceful for all conditions and obligations, now depended on the State for financial help. The mistake grew more evident, and its correction more difficult, as time rolled on.

The sovereignty of Jesus Christ is one of the cardinal doctrines of Presbyterianism. Christ in this form of Church government is glorified as Lord over all, and blessed forever. Enthroned on the right hand of the Majesty on high, He rules over a dominion whose limits include the utmost bounds of creation. On earth He has organized the Church, of which He is the only Head and King. He has also established the State, of which He is both King and Judge. The Church and State under Jesus Christ are mutually independent; each should be cordial and co-operative with the other; both are directly accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Morton saw his opportunity when the Church took the money. In those days the ruler of Scotland insisted on being recognized as head of the Church. Morton put forth his claim of control; the faithful ministers of Christ resisted. Since the reign of Henry VIII, the Episcopal Church has acknowledged the reigning sovereign as supreme in her government. In this position the ruler can use the Church as an arm of his govern-

ment, a handmaid in his administration, an instrument in carrying out his designs, an ally in supporting whatsoever may originate in his heart.

Morton attempted to introduce Episcopacy into the General Assembly. Even there he found some ready to do his bidding; and thus began the long controversy between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy. The struggle of Protestantism and Romanism had well-nigh disappeared; the fight was now between the Presbyterian and the Episcopalian.

Morton's leaven quickly did its work; the Assembly became deeply infected. For more than a hundred years the terrible struggle continued. In the early years of this fierce conflict, Andrew Melville, mighty in the power of Jesus, stood in the forefront of the battle. Melville was scholarly, intrepid, adventurous, highly emotional, and vehement in the cause of the Church's independence. He had some sharp encounters with Morton. Morton in a rage said to him one day, "The country will never be in quietness till half a dozen of you be hanged or banished." Melville, looking him in the face with his piercing eyes, replied, "Tush, man, threaten your courtiers after that manner. It is the same to me whether I rot in the air or in the ground. The earth is the Lord's. My country is wherever goodness is. Let God be glorified, it will not be in your power to hang or exile His truth." Morton felt himself outdared and outdone by the courage and calmness of this humble servant of Christ.

Morton resigned the regency in 1578, to make way for James VI to ascend the throne, who continued the war against the Presbyterians. He asserted that his crown depended on the office of the bishop. "No bishop, no king," was his motto. He aspired to become dictator to the Church. The General Assembly rejected his claim. A delegation was sent to the king with a strong remonstrance against his tyrannic course. Melville was a member of the delegation, and his energetic spirit constituted him speaker. The delegation appeared in the royal court where the king sat among his advisers. The remonstrance was read; it filled the king with rage. "Who dare subscribe this treasonable paper?" was asked. "We dare," replied Melville, taking hold of his pen and calmly writing his name. The others followed the bold example. The king and his company were overawed by their holy bravery.

At another time Melville became so animated in his remonstrance against the despotic monarch, that he took hold of his arm, and gave him an admonition such as few kings have ever heard. His passionate eloquence flowed in a torrent: "I must tell you, Sir, that there are two kings, and two kingdoms in Scotland. There is King James VI, head of the commonwealth; and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject King James is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. Sir, when you were in your swaddling clothes, Christ Jesus

reigned freely in this land, in spite of all his enemies." The words penetrated the guilty soul like flashes from the eye of God. For the time the men had exchanged places; Melville was king.

Melville suffered for his faithfulness; he was banished. Yet he was rewarded with a green old age and a triumphant death. At the age of sixty-eight he wrote from the land of his exile, "I thank God, I eat, I drink, I sleep, as well as I did thirty years bygone, and better than when I was young. My heart is yet a Scotch heart, and as good, or better than ever, both toward God and man. The Lord only be praised for this, to whom belongs all glory." He died in France in 1622.

The supremacy of Christ is the glory of the Church. Jesus is the Fountain-Head of life, love, law, government, and authority. Are we maintaining this exalted truth with the courage of our ancestors? The zeal of our fathers, if revived in these days, would electrify the world.

#### POINTS FOR THE CLASS

1. What financial question in those days en-snared the Church?
2. How was her independence affected by state patronage?
3. What was the great question in controversy?
4. How did the state make use of Episcopacy in the battle with Presbyterianism?
5. How did Melville resist the king's attempt to rule the Church?
6. What did Melville's faithfulness cost him?
7. What need now to advocate the supremacy of Jesus, and the independence of the Church?

(To be continued)

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## *Christ's Voluntary Death*

By the Rev. B. J. Danhof

The death of Christ is repeatedly taught in the Scriptures, and is always presented as of inestimable value for all believers. Much of the preaching of faithful ministers centers on the death of Christ. Reflection upon the fact and the value of Christ's death has brought to the consciousness of His Church that the death of Christ is what some theologians have called "the heart of the Gospel". For this reason there is always need to stress the importance of the death of Christ.

The death of Christ is taught in the Bible as related to many other equally important truths. These truths are sidelights which enhance the meaning of this death of Jesus. Although many books have been written on this subject, undoubtedly many more will yet be written. Dr. K. Schilder's three books on the sufferings and death of Christ provide an amazing wealth of valuable information (**Christ in His Suffering, Christ on Trial, Christ Crucified**; total 1577 pages; \$3 per volume from Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan). Yet the feeling lingers that all has not yet been written that should be taught and written concerning the death of Jesus as the Holy Spirit continues to lead His Church into all the truth.

Mention follows of a few texts in which the death of Jesus stands related to other truths:

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have

power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17,18).

". . . Jesus of Nazareth. . . Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:22,23).

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree" (Acts 5:30).

"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him, And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain" (Acts 13:27,28).

These texts teach plainly that both God and man had definite connections with the death of Jesus. God delivered Him in keeping with His determinate counsel and foreknowledge. Wicked Jewish hands are charged with the crucifixion and death of Jesus. The Gospels teach that the hands which actually did the crucifying of Jesus were those of the Roman soldiers, in keeping with Pilate's permission.

The Scriptures quoted above also teach that the death of Jesus can be viewed from at least two different points of view, insofar as the immediate and the final cause for His death are concerned. On the one hand, men are deemed responsible for His death. "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). On the other hand Jesus affirms in strong

language: "No man taketh it (his life) from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10:18). In one group of texts men are represented as causing the death of Christ, or at least as being responsible for that death. In contrast with this idea, Jesus teaches that He laid down His own life, since no man could take it from Him. For a correct understanding, each of these texts must be studied in the light of other Scripture statements.

In spite of all that wicked men did to cause the death of Christ, the final, all-important reason why He died is because He, as Lord of life and death, decided to die. It is pertinent to add that no condition or set of circumstances could press the life out of the Christ who died the death of the accursed. To be sure, men inflicted sufficient damage upon His soul and body to cause death, speaking from a human point of view. His crucifixion would under all other circumstances have caused death, the separation of soul from body. In will, intention and purpose, wicked men sought and acted to cause the death of Jesus. Hence, theirs is the full responsibility for the death of Christ. They had the motive of murder; they killed the Prince of Life. Their motive as well as their numerous words and deeds were undeniably linked with murder. They stood guilty of sin against the sixth commandment: Thou shalt not kill.

In spite of all this, it is equally true that Jesus died by His own volition. His will was the deciding factor. In His case appearances did not cover all of the reality, unless we include in these appearances all that Jesus Himself said and did. Even Isaiah 53:12 teaches that He "poured out his soul unto death". It was Jesus Himself that committed His spirit into the hands of His Father. Crying with a loud voice, as Jesus did just before dying, is not the mark of one who is in the grip of death's approach; rather, just the opposite is true.

These facts in the death of Jesus call for explanation. At the outset we should remember that there is a mysterious element in the death of Jesus, no doubt because the Deity was active in this death. There is interaction and intermingling of divine and human activity. God delivered Jesus. God's love must be expressed in Jesus' dying. Jesus came to do the will of His Father. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. Jehovah made His soul an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10). And Jesus, although He assumed weak human nature, and became like other men in all things except sin, did in His dying and death make the whole offering for sin, all by Himself, without the aid of wicked men. Jesus did the dying wholly, completely, fully. His is the death that is the one, whole, perfect, eternal sacrifice for sin. His death as the atoning sacrifice for the sin of His people is His alone; men have contributed nothing to it.

Jesus, too, came to determine Lordship over life and death. He had shown Himself Lord of life in raising the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow of Nain, and in calling Lazarus back to life after four days in the grave. But would He be able to show Himself Master of death if death's force should lay hold upon Him? While on the cross, when all the forces of death seemingly would engulf and subdue Him, the taunt came from those nearby: "He saved others, himself he cannot save." Was this true? In one sense, yes, but only because He would not save Himself, but others. But wholly untrue, if by this statement is meant that Jesus was overpowered by death-forces. How long will men forget that death is not a power or influence that can exist apart from the will and activity of God Himself? God may make use of instruments, like disease, and of men and Satanic forces, to bring death to people. Yet none of these can have power to effect death, unless that power be given them by God. Jesus as the son of God exercised the power of God to effect His own death in His human nature. This Jesus is the Word of God. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

Jesus, as Son of God, is the cause of the world's existence, the cause and origin of human life, of human knowledge. Is there then a secret in death that was unknown to the Son of God? Could there be a force in death that He Himself did not possess? This Lordship over creation, in life and death, Jesus expressed when He died. Therefore we conclude that the death of Jesus was at one and the same time the death of the Son of God who willed it and effected it in pure sovereignty and Lordship. Was it not Jesus who said to John the apostle: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18).

(Note: The author of the above article, the Rev. B. J. Danhof, is a minister of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.—Ed.)

#### The Mighty Redeemer

Thou saidst in vision to Thy saints  
Deliverance I laid  
Upon a Mighty One raised up,  
Of whom I choice have made.  
My servant David I have found  
And have anointed King;  
My hand shall ever be with Him  
And strength Mine arm shall bring.  
The foe shall not exact from Him,  
Nor son of mischief wrong;  
His haters I will smite, and crush  
His adversaries strong.

—Psalm 89

## *The Social and Economic Responsibility of the Visible Church*

By J. G. Vos

**Note:** This article is reproduced by permission from **The Westminster Theological Journal**, Vol. X, No. 2 (May, 1948).—Ed.

(Continued from last issue)

### 3. That the Church's Social Message is Coordinate with its Message to the Individual

A third common view of the social and economic responsibility of the Church would regard the social message as coordinate with, or parallel to, the message to the individual. This view is held not only by advocates of the liberal "social gospel" but by many conservative Christians who are concerned about the importance of an application of Christian principles to the problems of society, but who have not arrived at an organically integrated conception of the relationship between the individual message and the social message. The tendency in such cases is to assert that the Church must of course preach the gospel to individuals, but the Church must also proclaim redemption and righteousness to society; and these two functions of the Church are juxtaposed in a more or less mechanical fashion as if they constituted two distinct but parallel or coordinate assignments. Such a view must be regarded as erroneous because over-simplified and mechanical in its conception of the relation of the social obligation to the Church.

The great peril of regarding the social message as coordinate with the message to the individual is that this view inevitably leads to the anomaly of a belief in the possibility of "Christianizing" the social structure apart from the regeneration of its individual members (or the controlling portion of them). If the message to society and the message to the individual are parallel and not organically related the one to the other, then each of them may attain results independently of the other. In that case, there might conceivably exist a "Christian" State with a very small proportion of Christian citizens, or even with none at all; or there might exist a "Christian" economic order operated by unbelievers, that is, by persons converted to the Church's social and economic message but not to its individual message. From any truly Christian point of view such a thing is of course an absurdity, yet it is logically possible if the social message and the message to the individual are regarded as coordinate.

The view under consideration includes all attempts to arrive at a Christian society or the Kingdom of God *en masse*, by the shortcut of attempted direct cultivation of the social fruits

of Christianity apart from the cultivation and growth of the tree. This entire conception stands condemned by the affirmation of the Scripture that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit (Matt. 7:17). A corrupt tree—a society made up of individuals who are personally unregenerate—may indeed bring forth fruit which superficially seems to be good, and may even, by the operation of God's common grace, bring forth fruit which is "good" in a relative and limited sense—that is, which is "good" if judged from a humanistic rather than from a theistic point of view—but cannot yield fruit which is truly good in the Christian sense of the word.

The truth is that the Church's social message is organically related, subordinately, to the message to the individual. Christ is the Saviour of society, of nations, of social institutions, only by first of all being the Saviour of individual human beings, not otherwise. The ethical principles of Christianity are applied in the social sphere by Christian people, not by the children of the world. The notion that those who are not personally believers in Christ can apply the ethical teachings of Christianity in their social and business life is simply a delusion, albeit a very common delusion. There is no shortcut to the Kingdom of God; it cannot be attained by a mass movement of the unregenerate. Those who think that non-Christians can practice the ethical teachings of Christianity have a sadly superficial, mechanical and erroneous idea of what the ethical teachings of Christianity are and what is involved in practicing them. This stricture is relevant against those who glibly talk of "applying the Golden Rule" to industry and business, as if any non-Christian could easily apply the Golden Rule simply by deciding that it would be a good thing to do. Of course no person can even begin to apply the Golden Rule to any sphere of life until he is born again, for the Golden Rule is not really applied unless it is done with a motive of love for God and as a matter of obedience to the will of God.

The Christianization of society may indeed lag far behind the regeneration of individuals; in fact, it must inevitably do so, owing to the human lethargy of the regenerate (who are in this life only imperfectly sanctified) and their sinful neglect of their duty of applying their Christian principles consistently in the social sphere. But while the Christianization of society will always lag behind the regeneration of individuals, the proposition may not be reversed. The regeneration of individuals can never lag behind the Christianization of society; the fruit may develop much more slowly than the tree,

but the tree will never lag behind the development of the fruit. For the fruit is dependent on the tree, not vice versa.

The liberal "social gospel" or "Kingdom of God" propaganda wrongly assumes that the mass of the people in so-called Christian countries are individually already Christians in the proper sense of the term. Or rather, liberalism does not believe in individual Christianity in the proper sense of the term; it posits a naturalistic religious experience in place of the supernatural subjective salvation of orthodox Christianity. Doing this, it easily regards the Church's message to the individual as already pretty well attended to, and thinks that the Church can go on from this point with the great unfinished task of the social message. But the whole idea is false. The masses in so-called Christian countries may be baptized, they may be nominal Church members (though reliable statistics would seem to indicate that, in the United States at least, it is doubtful whether the majority of the population has even a nominal Church membership status), but there is no reason to believe that vital Christianity, or personal regeneration, is now or ever has been the portion of the majority of individuals of Christendom or any country in it. Therefore, we must conclude, the social application of Christianity now can, in the nature of the case, only be undertaken by a minority of the population.

#### 4. Confusion of Ethics with Eschatology

Confusion of ethics with eschatology is far from uncommon, and is responsible for two mutually antagonistic extreme views with respect to the social and economic duty of the Church. On the one hand, there exists the rejection of ethics in the interests of eschatology. This extreme is characteristic of certain types of dispensationalism which verge on, if they do not actually involve, antinomian attitudes in the social sphere. On the other hand, there exists the rejection of eschatology in the interests of ethics, an extreme which is characteristic of those who are zealous for the liberal "social gospel" or "Kingdom of God" concept, and who accordingly tend to think of the Kingdom of God as "coming" or even "being built" by a humanly planned and executed program of social reforms, and who tend to think of the "Christianization" of society as something to be attained by political action along certain specific lines.

Both of these extreme views involve the same basic confusion of thought. There is no real conflict between Christian ethics and Christian eschatology rightly conceived. Eschatology is based on prophecy, that is, on the revealed portion of the counsel or decrees of God concerning future events. Ethics, on the other hand, is based on the moral law revealed in the Scripture. The former deals with the will of God in the sense of decree or purpose; the latter deals with the will of God in the sense of precept or command.

The one is the basis of hope; the other is the basis of duty. Yet there are those who say that we should not attempt to apply Christian ethical principles to social institutions because, they assert, such "is not the will of God for this dispensation"; or because they hold that the Scripture prophecies of iniquity to continue in the world until the consummation of the age remove all obligation to work for righteousness in the social sphere. Some have gone so far as to call efforts toward the application of Christian ethical principles to social institutions 'the devil's righteousness'. It would be as logical to say that since it is appointed unto men once to die, there remains no reason why we should establish and support hospitals.

The rejection of eschatology in the interests of ethics is equally erroneous. Granted that the Kingdom of God is present as well as future, only an utterly naturalistic Pelagianism can hold that the Kingdom in its absolute and final form can come within history, that is, before the resurrection of the dead. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (I Cor. 15:50). Why should an earnest concern about the application of Christianity to society be regarded as incompatible with an eager anticipation of the return of the Lord? Yet it is undeniably characteristic of many devotees of the "social gospel" that they have, to all intents and purposes, no real eschatology. This attitude is typical of what may perhaps be called "pseudo-postmillennialism"—the belief that the Kingdom of God will be achieved gradually by the naturalistically conceived process of "Christianizing" social institutions through a series of social reforms deliberately planned and promoted. This idea of the Kingdom of God becomes, to those who hold it, virtually a substitute for eschatology. While they may perhaps believe theoretically in a general eschatology, this is to them a thing detached and not related in any organic way to their thinking concerning the world in which they live today. The thing that really matters to them is the "coming" of the Kingdom within history, here and now. Their zeal for the Kingdom within history is so great that they quite fail to grasp the import of the Scripture affirmation that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; they absolutize the Kingdom within history and make it, not merely the sphere of their social ethical duty, but the object of their hopes. Thus time supplants eternity, the earthly supplants the heavenly, and ethics supplants eschatology. The result, from the standpoint of the Christian who loves the Lord's appearing, is a particularly drab and dreary substitute for "that blessed hope". The Christian's yearning aspiration "Come, Lord Jesus" has been lowered and transformed to the resolution "Let us be Kingdom builders". Those who very properly call attention to the Scripture teaching that the Kingdom within history must always be partial and imperfect, and that only

the eschatological Kingdom can rightly be the object of Christian hope in the absolute sense, are likely to be waved out of court with a bland assertion that they are reducing the work of the Holy Spirit in this age to "a charge of the light brigade". Doubtless the spirit of American pragmatism has done its work here, with the usual result of the worship of "success": we are virtually told that a proper devotion to Christian duty in the social sphere is meaningless unless the absolute object of our ultimate hopes is attainable by it. Why can those who have this attitude not see that the obligation of duty is not contingent upon the existence of a probable prospect of immediate success, nor even, indeed, upon a prospect of the attainment of complete success at any time during the present age—that duty and hope are two different things? Has the leaven of pragmatism so permeated American liberal Protestantism that it must be held treason to believe

in any mountain higher than men can climb, any Kingdom more perfect than the Church can "build"? This virtual negation of eschatology is utterly contrary to the whole emphasis of the Scriptures, and must always be abhorrent to the Christian heart. If recognition of the Church's responsibility in the social sphere must rob us of the comfort of "that blessed hope" of our Lord's return and the eschatological Kingdom of God, it were indeed better to hold fast our eschatological hope and surrender our social ethical responsibility. But the antithesis is a false one; we are not reduced to any such hard alternative. It is not a case of "either . . . or" but of "both . . . and". Every real Calvinist must necessarily affirm both the social ethical duty and the ultimate eschatological hope. Only those afflicted with the myopia of pragmatism will think that the one cancels the other, that we must choose between the two.

(To be continued)

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## *The Covenant-Idea in Scripture*

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

(Continued from last issue)

### 6. The Responsibility of Man

The will of God expressed by His word determines beforehand whatsoever comes to pass. This is true, specifically, of man endowed with the free agency of a moral creature, which implies capacity and ability to obey the command of God. God alone is sovereign. Contrary to the devil's lie, "You shall be as God," Adam had to give account to God for what he had done. He was held responsible for his free agency. Whatever degree of free agency man possesses is to be exercised in submission to the revealed will of his Sovereign. Adam was fully apprised of this by the terms of the covenant. Hence, it is not man as independent, but man as morally responsible to God that gives to the covenant its two-sided, two-party aspect.

### 7. The Consequences of Adam's First Sin

On man's side, the Covenant of Works (or Covenant of Life) was broken. That is, Adam, having deliberately chosen to disobey the covenant commandment, to disregard **perfect obedience to God** as the condition of life, transgressed the covenant, thus putting himself outside of it, forfeiting the promise of life, and incurring the immediate curse of death upon himself and his posterity.

"The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression" (S.C. 16).

That the covenant was made with Adam in accord with the nature God had given him, "not only for himself but for his posterity," has many proofs. For example:

1. Since **Sabbath-keeping**, which is the appointed sign of covenant relationship with God (Ex. 31:13, 16, 17; Ezek. 20:12, 20), is for all mankind (Mark 2:27), it follows that the covenant itself is for all mankind.

2. Since **Marriage**, a divine institution in the form of a covenant between husband and wife, in the name of God, is for all mankind (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6), its validity depends on the continued validity of the original covenant. Of an unfaithful wife, it is written, "She forgetteth the covenant of her God" (Prov. 2:17); of an unfaithful husband, "Jehovah hath been witness between thee and . . . the wife of thy covenant" (Mal. 2:14, 15).

3. The Universal Prevalence of Sin and Death Within the Race. Of **sin**, "all (men) sinned" (Rom. 3:23); "there is no man that sinneth not" (1 Chron. 6:36). Of **Death**, "As through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned" (Rom. 5:12, RV). It is significant that the three verbs of this last quotation are of that form (the Greek Aorist) which is used to describe some one definite act in the past. The entrance of sin was one act; the passing of death to all mankind was once for all; so "all sinned" accurately describes the effect of Adam's first sin. Disobedience in one point

(one command) of God's law is rebellion against God and attempt to usurp His sovereign authority (James 2:10, 11; Deut. 27:26; Matt. 5:18, 19; Gal. 2:10). The curse was afterwards repeatedly stated in universal form, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4, 20); "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

Disobedience is an act of the will, that is, of the spirit. The curse of death, therefore, is primarily upon the spirit of man. His Godlikeness is marred; his spirit is dead. The death of his body follows as a matter of course.

4. The Parallel drawn in Scripture between the way of life in Christ and the way of death in Adam (Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:22).

**On God's side**, however, the Covenant of Life as the expression of His will and decree stands firm. His promise to give life to whom He will give it, and perfect obedience to His commandment as the condition on which life shall be received, are unaltered. And, strange to say, God still loves man.

#### B. The Love of God

The gracious purpose of the Covenant of Life and all the wonderful provisions for its permanent benefits to mankind proclaim it to be a Covenant of Love, of the love of God for the creature He had made in His own image. But, when that creature spurned that love and refused that grace, rebelled in selfishness and pride against the known will of God, and defiantly, with the devil, took a position of enmity against God, then the immeasurable dimensions of "the love that passeth knowledge" began to be manifested in God's coming forth "to seek and to save that which was lost." God called to the man trying to hide from His presence, afraid with "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." And it was an effectual calling for Adam and his wife, though spiritually dead, having no life in themselves, and no more able to repent and obey the word of God than a dead body is able to rise up and walk, turned back to God.

The dead heard the voice of Jehovah walking in the garden, and when they heard, they lived (Cf. John 5:25 and Gen. 3:8,9). The first resurrection had begun! "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!" Yet God will reveal more and more of His ways as men need to be taught.

The significance of the time, "in the cool of the day", is obscured by our English translations. It is, literally, "in the wind of the day," that is, when the wind was blowing. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). The Spirit of God was present in His creative power. A new creation was begun! Adam and Eve were made new creatures.

Their attitude toward the devil was changed. The woman knew she had been deceived; she said, "The serpent beguiled me." Resentment against the deceiver was aroused. Adam knew he had sinned against God; he had broken the Covenant of Life, and had no covering for his sin; he said "I was afraid because I was naked." Yet they came back to God just as they were; not by their own strength, but by God's enabling grace. They were given new spiritual life, evidenced by repentance and faith. They made no further effort to conceal their sin, but confessed, "I did eat" and "I did eat." The love of God had prevailed. He would now deal with them on the terms of a new covenant that would confirm the original.

#### 9. The Covenant of Grace

"God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer" (S.C. 20).

Though Adam proved faithless, "God abideth faithful, for he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:13). He continued without a moment's hesitation to fulfil His purpose and word, that is, to confirm and establish His covenant.

(Since God is eternal and unchangeable, any particular word of His, any saying, promise, command, decree, law, precept, statute, ordinance or judgment of God is of one piece with His covenant, and may stand for the whole. Accordingly, such terms are synonyms of "covenant", and are so used in Scripture constantly.)

First, God pronounced judgment upon the serpent, upon the woman, and upon the man, in the order of their sin (Gen. 3:14-19). The curse of spiritual death having already fallen upon the man and woman, the curse of physical death was implemented upon the man by a curse on the ground, and consequently on its produce, so that man would have to get necessary food by hard labor, with pain and sweat; upon the woman by the curse of travail in childbearing and subservience to the man. A posterity ("seed") is taken for granted in the natural course. The curse upon the serpent was to grovel on the lowest levels of degradation, where he would suffer continual defeat, inevitably biting the dust in every conflict with a stronger one. Furthermore his sentence involved the man and woman with him. Since they had chosen to follow him instead of God, it was but plain justice that they should share in his judgment.

"And enmity will I put between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall crush thee (as to thy) head, and thou shalt crush him (as to his) heel" (Gen. 3:15).

In wrath God has remembered mercy. Even in judgment He reveals His love. Couched in

His sentence of judgment there is a **promise**, a promise of enmity, of ensuing **conflict**, and of its final **outcome**. At the same time and in the same words it is a promise of **deliverance** and **salvation**, for the outcome shall be the complete destruction of the head (the power) of the enemy of God and man, "the old serpent, he that is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver."

The Hebrew word (found only here and in Job 9:17 and Psalm 139:11) which we translate "**crush**", undoubtedly means something far more decisive than is implied in our common use of "bruise," the rendering of our English versions. Gesenius, in his Hebrew-German lexicon, gives "**zermalmen**", that is, "**smash to pieces**," "**shatter**," "**trample under foot**," "**crush**." This is supported by the Septuagint rendering; by the ancient Syriac, which employs the same Semitic root; and by the Greek of Rom. 16:20. A "**shedding of blood**" is necessarily involved for the man.

This promise of final victory over the devil and his seed guarantees a power of spiritual life in the woman and her seed that is able to cope with the deceit and wickedness of the enemy. But God is the only source of life. Life is the **gift of God**. Hence, the promise here is a **new promise of life**, or rather, a **promise of new life!**

It is a promise given in terms of God's sovereign **command**: "he shall crush thy head"; "thou shalt crush his heel." The infinite resources of God are devoted to that end. It is a new promise and a new command of God concerning man; it is a **new covenant**! Yet, there is **no condition, no penalty** devolving on dead, fallen man. It is a new order of things which God undertakes alone to carry out in His own time and in His own way. As we shall see, He will bring the man He loves into perfect agreement and cooperation with Himself. His decree stands as a sovereign testamental disposition, but shall become covenantal in its permanent realization.

Now notice that this promise of life, of conflict and of victory is given to "**her seed**"—the seed of the woman—not to the seed of Adam who had lost his opportunity to be the head of a race of real men according to the purpose of God. There is no promise of life to his natural seed. "That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are the children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed" (Rom. 9:8).

But, the woman, **naturally**, has no "seed." By ordinary generation she brings forth children, yet, in the view of Scripture, they are not "**her seed**"; they are the seed of her husband, invariably described as "**his seed**." Therefore "**her seed**" is not a natural, but a **supernatural** seed, given to her of God; in other words, a seed "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "Born of the Spirit," "born from above," and afterwards called "**sons of God**," from Gen. 6:2 onwards. "Behold,

what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"

This peculiar expression, "**her seed**," occurs in only one other place in Scripture, Rev. 12:17. (The 12th chapter of Revelation gives a panorama of the conflict from its beginning to the present day. The reader is urgently referred to Dr. W. J. McKnight's illuminating exposition in his book **What Is Bound to Happen**, pp. 153-164). However, that which "**her seed**" describes becomes the central subject of all the rest of Scripture, very frequently referred to in unmistakable terms. For example, begin with Gen. 4:25. Eve, by ordinary generation again, "bare a son, but called his name Seth: For, said she, God hath appointed (prepared and given) **to me another seed** instead of Abel; for Cain slew him." This shows that she believed the new promise of God; that she recognized, by his different spirit, the fact that Abel was "**her seed**" and had already suffered in the conflict; and that now, true to His promise, **God had given her another seed** to carry on the conflict as Abel had done, in the faith and righteousness of the life from above. As we read in Heb. 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was **righteous**."

On the other hand, "Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. **He that loveth not abideth in death.** Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:12-15). These verses focus their light on the situation before us. Cain was a child of her pain and sorrow, but not "**her seed**." He was of the natural seed of Adam, not of the seed of the promise, not of God. He was spiritually dead and continued to abide in death. He had no eternal life in him, no faith in God, none of the righteousness of God.

Abel and Seth, however, proved themselves to be "**of God**," and by the two of them was established that line of promise which is followed by Scripture through Jesus Christ to the day of the last judgment.

The real serpent (not the animal used by him), being a spirit, could of course have only a spiritual seed, after his own kind, that is, hating God, loving the lie, "**sons of the evil one**," "**unbelievers**" such as those to whom Christ said, "Ye are of your father the devil." Hence again it appears that the conflict is a spiritual conflict, truth against falsehood, righteousness against unrighteousness.

Thus, the covenant promise divides the human race into to distinct groups, or rather, two opposing camps in conflict the one with the

other. On one hand, "the sons of God"; on the other, "the sons of the evil one"; all alike "dead by reason of trespasses and sins," with no power or means to help themselves. The division, therefore, is by God's own sovereign election, by His free gift of life to those whom He chose to receive it. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Tit. 3:5).

We note further that the serpent and his seed, the woman and her seed, are individualized by the singular pronouns used. Man, by following his own will in rebellion against the command of his covenant God, went down in defeat before Satan. One able to overcome Satan and destroy his power must be stronger than Satan. Accordingly, the promise guarantees ONE who shall "in all things have the pre-eminence"; ONE who shall be ready to say at the outset, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; Yea, thy law is within my heart"; and able to say when the enemy ap-

proaches, "he hath nothing in me,"—nothing that the prince of this world could take hold of, no slightest taint of sin nor trace of moral weakness. The sinlessness, the perfect righteousness, of the Victor is necessarily involved in this promise. And yet He was to be "her seed." This apparent paradox had already been solved by the wisdom and knowledge and love of God in the Virgin Birth, which became the "sign" to all, that the sinless One had arrived on the field of battle. "And the virgin's name was Mary." And the angel sent from God said to her, "the Holy One born of thee shall be called, SON OF GOD" (Luke 1:25-37). When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth HIS SON, born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4), "manifested to destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:5). "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

(To be continued)

## *Religious Terms Defined*

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

**SALVATION.** This term is used in the general sense of preservation or deliverance from any kind of trouble or danger (as I Sam. 19:5); but more particularly, it is used to describe that work of God, through the mediation of Christ and the application of the Holy Spirit, by which His people are delivered from sin, wrath and hell, and brought into union and communion with Himself.

**SANCTIFICATION.** "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness" (S.C. 35).

**SANHEDRIN** (also spelled Sanhedrim). The highest Jewish governmental assembly in the time when Jesus Christ was on earth. In the King James Version the word "council" is used.

**SATAN.** Literally, "adversary." Satan is

that spiritual being who is the chief adversary of God and His people. He is called in Scripture Apollyon (Destroyer), the devil (slanderer), the prince of this world, the father of lies, the old serpent, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, the god of this world. Scripture teaches that Satan is real, personal, intelligent, desperately wicked, utterly contrary to God, and of great but strictly limited power.

**SAVIOUR.** One who saves. In the general sense a saviour is anyone who saves from any evil or danger (1 Kings 13:5; Neh. 9:27). In the general sense, God is called "the Saviour of all men" (I Tim. 4:10). Specifically, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world (I John 4:14). The New Testament, as well as the Old, often speaks of God as our Saviour. Of course God is our Saviour from sin and wrath only through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

## *Some Noteworthy Quotations*

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

—J. C. Ryle

"'Sincerity' is not Christ, and therefore sincerity cannot put away sin! A religion that takes away from Christ, or one that adds anything to

Christ, or that puts sincerity in the place of Christ, are all dangerous and to be avoided as contrary to the test of Scripture."

—J. C. Ryle

"The greatest charity is to tell the greatest truth; the least is to be complacently indifferent

to seeing 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

"Formality is, perhaps, the most besetting sin of the human mind."

—Robert Murray McCheyne

"If we are interested in what God thinks of us, we shall not be deterred by what men think; the very desire for justification in the sight of God makes us independent of the judgment of men."

—J. Gresham Machen

"There is not a more miserable deceived soul in the world than that soul among you who, like Herod, hears the preached Gospel gladly, and yet, like Herod, lives in sin."

—Robert Murray McCheyne

"He is not a Christian which is one outwardly, neither is that baptism which is merely the outward washing of the body; but he is a Christian which is one inwardly, and true baptism is that of the heart, when the heart is washed from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

—Robert Murray McCheyne

## *Psalm Seventy-Four The Cause of God*

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

### I. It Seems to be a Lost Cause (verses 1-11).

"Why, O God, hast thou entirely cast us off? Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? Remember thy flock which thou didst purchase of old; didst redeem to be the tribe of thine inheritance;—Mount Zion where thou didst dwell!" (verses 1,2).

Why is God so angry with His people? Even the men on the street will answer, "Because they forsook the covenant of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, . . . and went and served other gods, and worshipped them; . . . therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against this land to bring upon it all the curse that is written in this book" (Deut. 29:24-29; Jer. 22:8,9). It is because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests" (Lam. 4:13). "Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is become as an unclean thing" (Lam. 1:8). It is written! No need to ask.

The man used of God to write this prayer knows God, knows His Word, knows how to find Him; and knows His sheep, being one of them. Silly and wayward though they be, they are the sheep of Jehovah's pasture. He redeemed them, bought them with a price; they are His possession. Though no excuse can be offered for their faithlessness, a plea can be urged for the honor of the Shepherd's name, on the ground of His unchanging faithfulness. Concerning Mount Zion, He promised, "This is my resting-place forever; here will I dwell." He has indeed a controversy with His people, but Remember, O Remember, thine own cause is at issue!

"Lift up thy footsteps (Come quickly) to the ruins, the utter (devastation); to all the havoc wrought by the enemy in the sanctuary! Thine

adversaries made uproar in the midst of thine appointed assemblies; they set up their own signs for signs. It looks as when men slash a stand of trees with axes; So now with hatchets and hammers they break down all the carved work of the sanctuary. They set thy sanctuary on fire; They have leveled to the ground the dwellingplace of thy name. They said in their heart, We will destroy them utterly. They burned all the appointed meeting-places of God in the land. We see not our signs: There is no more any prophet: And there is none among us that knoweth how long" (verses 3-9).

Come see how low it has fallen! He speaks to God, not of national or political enemies, but of the enemies of the Church; "Thine adversaries," "the enemy" of God and of His cause. The destruction described is not in streets, or houses of the people, or markets, or fields; it is in the sanctuary of God, "the dwellingplace of thy name." "All the appointed meeting-places of God are burned." And this evil work has been done from the inside, not from the outside.

They have set up the symbols of their false religions. We see not our signs. We see not our covenant sign of Sabbath-keeping. We see not the outward signs of God's saving grace. There is no more any prophet, no preaching of the pure Word of God. Instead of the commandments of God there are the doctrines of men. The sacraments are empty counterfeits. Instead of the signs of the House of Prayer there are the signs of a den of robbers. Instead of coals from off the altar there is strange fire.

This survey of the wreckage is written for our instruction as we face essentially the same spiritual conditions today. As too often before, the structure of the Visible Church, as God's

Dwelling-place with men, the temple of His worship and throne of His power; its strength, its beauty, and its usefulness in the service of God and for the good of men, is again, to an appalling extent, in ruins. It was built around the ark of His covenant. There was kept His written Word, Promise and Commandment; His appointed ordinances and offices; Scriptural doctrine, Scriptural worship and Scriptural government, all wrought into a beautiful system of truth and order, the "carved work" of the sanctuary.

The destruction has not been made by attacks from without, but by ignorant and foolish persons, hypocrites, and cunning enemies, who somehow were admitted and allowed to do their worst.

What has been going on is plainly told in a recent book, **Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century**, being a symposium (by twelve liberal leaders in various departments of thought and teachings in the Protestant Church, and the editor, Dr. Arnold S. Nash, Department of Religion, University of North Carolina), covering developments within the Protestant Churches during the first half of the 20th Century, called "the cataclysmic half-century" by one of the writers.

The common point of view is that of Evolutionary Naturalism, regarding the Church as part and parcel of the development of human thought and activity in politics, economics, education and religion during the "modern" period. In the opening chapter entitled, "America at the End of the Protestant Era", the editor says, "Today the optimism to which Protestant life and work is culturally and theologically so closely tied, has been so profoundly shaken in every aspect of human life that no Church which links itself to it can hope to survive, except as a vestigial remnant of a culture that is gone. In short the 'Protestant' era really has ended, and we go forward into an age that many shrewd and informed observers call the post-Christian era."

There is no attempt to conceal the facts, only they are interpreted as human glory and progress. Yet there is some relief in not being told again that nothing has happened. It is frankly admitted that neither Luther, nor Calvin, nor Knox, nor Cranmer would be able to recognize what is called Protestantism today. Yet the thought of a return to the eternal foundations is not for a moment entertained.

Naturally the authors project the movement, as they see it, into the future, and tell us that hope lies only in the so-called Neo-Protestantism; "within the context of the ecumenical movement"; the preaching of the social gospel, "the most active formative force in liberal theology," which has prepared "a purely humanistic interpretation of Christianity"; a witness for "all that modern science and humanism have stood for"; and the application of the Theory of Progressive Education, which in religion has "laid down the dictum

that Christian faith is progressive," not that which was "once for all delivered to the saints" by the Holy Spirit. It has discovered that sin is not transgression of the law of God, but merely selfishness toward one's neighbor. The Bible as the infallible Word of God, with the Bible Church and Bible Christianity are recklessly abandoned to complete destruction.

Such a book is mentioned here only, if possible, to arouse Christians at ease in Zion to a realization of certain critical facts, and to remind them of God and of the covenant He has sworn. "And there is none among us that knoweth how long."

**"How long, O God, shall the adversary revile? Shall the enemy go on and on blaspheming thy name? Why drawest thou back thy hand, even thy right hand? From the midst of thy girdle put an end to this!" (verses 10,11).**

**How long?** No one but God knows. It shall be as He decides. And He is not dependent on man. "From the midst of thy girdle (where the handle of thy sword is waiting), put an end to this!"

## II. God Has Never Abandoned His Cause (verses 12-17).

**"Yet God is my King from of old, Always working salvation in the midst of the earth. THOU, even Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: Thou didst break the heads of monsters in the waters: THOU, even Thou didst shatter the heads of Leviathan. Thou gavest him for food to the desert animals. THOU, even Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: THOU, even Thou didst dry up the ever-flowing rivers. Thine is the day, thine also is the night. None but THOU didst prepare the lights and the sun. None but THOU hast set all the bounds of the earth. As for summer and winter THOU THYSELF hast made them."**

Yet all the while God is my covenant King; always the same, yesterday, and today, and forever, always faithful to His promise, always working salvation in the earth. The Church had long since perished from the earth had not God maintained His cause.

Seven times the emphatic pronoun THOU is used in the following six verses. God kept His covenant as confirmed to Abraham, and saved the covenant people when Pharaoh and his armies were about to overwhelm them in the Red Sea. Those monsters He gave to be food for the desert animals. "And Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the sea shore" (Ex. 14:30). It was He who opened the rock and gave them drink. It was He who dried up the Jordan that they might enter the land of His promise.

Also, God has kept His covenant as confirmed to Noah. He has maintained the day and the

night, the radiance of the sun and stars, the boundaries of the earth that His people might have a dwelling-place, and the seasons that they might have food; in short, He has maintained all outward conditions necessary that His covenant promises might be fulfilled. He is not less able and not less faithful in the inward matters of the spirit. From the beginning His covenant has been His cause; He has kept it through the ages; He is keeping it now. "For Jehovah will not cast off his people, Neither will he forsake his inheritance. For judgment shall return unto righteousness; And all the upright in heart shall follow it" (Psalm 94:14,15). "The Lord will not cast off forever. For though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. . . . Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" (Lam. 3:31-39). "God did not cast off his people whom he fore-knew" (Rom. 11:2). His covenant is His cause!

### **III. It Shall Triumph as He Decides (verses 18-23).**

"O remember this, the enemy hath reviled Jehovah! And a foolish people have blasphemed thy name! Thou wilt not give the soul of thy dove to the beast; The life of thy poor thou wilt not entirely forget. Have regard to the covenant! For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. The downtrodden shall not return ashamed. The poor and needy shall praise thy name. Arise, O God, decide thine own cause! Remember thy reproach from fools all the day. Thou wilt not forget the noise of thine adversaries, — the uproar of them that fight against thee, which ascendeth continually."

O Remember this cause is Thine own! The enemy fights against Thee! against Thine everlasting covenant! "Plead thine own cause!" But the original words are not so mild. God does not "plead" His cause as an Advocate, but as a Judge and Executive. He does not "plead" His cause, He **decides** it. "Plead thine own cause" means Fight thine own battle; Strike the decisive blow that shall end the conflict. Fulfill thy word, "I will bring a sword upon you that shall execute the vengeance of the covenant" (Levit. 26:25).

This is asking according to His will. And this He will do in His own time and way. But first He will plead with His enemies and His wayward, foolish sheep not to fight against God, but to come over to His side, and take refuge in the towers of His mercy. The way to His mercy is through repentance and faith and new obedience. "For Jehovah hath comforted Zion; he hath comforted all her waste places, and hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody" (Isa. 51:3).

It is time to take a fresh hold on His covenant. Let us make sure that our faith is not tied to a secular culture that is shifting, but anchored to the rock that is everlasting. Only as on our part faithful to His covenant can we escape the confusion and rise above the clamor of fools, and the destroying forces of evil, to join in praises and thanksgivings to God with all those "downtrodden", "poor and needy" lifted high by His grace.

(Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued, D. V., in future issues of this publication.—Ed.)

## ***Sketches from Our History Contending for the Faith Through the Ages***

### **CHAPTER VIII**

#### **JOHN CALVIN, THE REFORMER OF GENEVA**

(Continued from last issue)

##### **4. Calvin's Call to Serve God at Geneva**

In 1536 Calvin made a brief visit to Italy, then returned to France, intending to settle his affairs there preparatory to leaving his native land more or less permanently. It was his purpose, at this time, to settle either at Strassburg or at Basel, and to spend his life as a scholar. As there was at the time a war going on between Francis I, king of France, and Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman (German) Empire, it proved impossible for Calvin to reach Strassburg by the direct and ordinary route, so he travelled toward

Basel, being accompanied at the same time by his brother Antoine and his half-sister Marie.

In the course of this journey, the party stopped at the Swiss city of Geneva. The intention was merely to stop here briefly and then continue to Basel. But God had purposed differently, and it turned out that Geneva was to be the place of Calvin's activity for most of his life.

The war in which the Reformer Zwingli had lost his life turned out to the advantage of the Church of Rome, and left most of Switzerland in the hands of the Catholics. Three important

cities—Zurich, Berne and Basel—however, remained true to the doctrines of the Reformation. To these three Protestant centers there was now added a fourth, Geneva, through a combination of religious and political factors. We shall not enter into the rather complex history back of this revolution at Geneva further than to state that the city had been through a long and difficult struggle for civil freedom from the Duchy of Savoy. In the year 1533 this struggle came to a successful conclusion and the civil and military power of Geneva was in the hands of the people of the city.

This struggle for civil freedom was followed by a religious revolution at Geneva. The Protestant influence came to bear on the city from Berne. The principal promoter of Protestantism at Geneva was William Farel. Like Calvin, Farel was a Frenchman who had been converted to Protestantism and had to leave France on account of persecution. He found a reception in Switzerland where he was able to preach to the French speaking part of the population in their own language. Farel was a bold and determined man, and he preached against the errors and abuses of Romanism wherever he went, in the most outspoken terms. In our day of lukewarm compromise and indifference to truth we should realize that the Protestant Reformation was not won by theological fence-straddlers, middle-of-the-roaders and doctrinal indifferentists. It was won by men whom God had raised up to lead His people—men who had a burning conviction and a consuming zeal for the truth, who fought hard and long and hewed to the line in their rejection of error. These men were not simply "orthodox" or "sound"—they were filled with a consuming zeal for the truth. They could not tolerate what our Covenanter forefathers called "a detestable neutrality" in the cause of God and of truth.

Such a valiant-for-the-truth was William Farel. Born in 1489, he was Calvin's senior by twenty years. It is recorded that at one time he came upon a Roman Catholic procession bearing some "sacred" relics, and snatched these relics from the hands of the priest and threw them into a nearby river. On many occasions Farel suffered personal violence, and even his life was endangered. He called the compromising Erasmus a "Balaam", to which Erasmus replied that Farel was "the most arrogant, abusive, and shameless man" he had ever met. Of course, to compromisers like Erasmus every clear-cut defender of the truth will seem "arrogant". No doubt Elijah seemed arrogant to Ahab, and John the Baptist to Herod.

Farel began his work of reformation at Geneva in 1532, but was soon driven from the city. In the providence of God his life was spared when a gun that was aimed at him burst asunder in the firing. Later Farel returned to Geneva and was more successful. Many of the people

became Protestants. The assembly of citizens formally adopted the Protestant faith as the religion of the city. Romanism was officially rejected. All special festivals and days except the Lord's Day were abolished. The Lord's Supper was to be administered three times yearly.

But these reforms soon aroused opposition, and many of the more pleasure-loving of the people became restless and complained at the restraints on their liberty to do as they pleased. The evidence indicates that moral conditions were very low in Geneva at this time, and it seems that the Catholic priests and monks were notoriously evil in their manner of living. Prostitution, gambling and drunkenness were common evils. Those who wanted to enjoy the pleasures of sin naturally resented the restraints placed upon them by the discipline of Protestant Christianity.

Such was the situation at Geneva when Calvin arrived there in 1536. Taking lodgings at an inn, his intention was to remain there only briefly, and then press on to his destination at Basel. But God's hand, through one of His servants, arrested him. The story of what happened is told by Calvin in the Preface to his Commentary on the Psalms.

A friend named Du Tillet informed Farel that Calvin had arrived in the city. Farel at once called on Calvin and implored him to remain at Geneva and assist in the work of reformation there. Calvin, however, was most unwilling to comply. He declined the proposal, stating that he was unwilling to limit himself to any single locality, and that he desired to live a quiet life of devotion to scholarship. All of Farel's persuasions were without result.

Farel then told Calvin that his devotion to his studies was only an excuse, which God would not accept. He said that the curse of God would descend upon Calvin if he would not engage in the Lord's cause. Calvin in his writings often referred to this scene. He spoke of Farel's statement as a "formidable obtestation". "He says that he was struck with terror, and felt as if the hand of the Almighty had been stretched out from heaven and laid upon him. He gave up his opposition." Thus Calvin became the Reformer of Geneva. He hurried on to Basel, transacted some necessary business there, and returned to Geneva without delay.

At once Calvin began his work as a reformer at Geneva. He began preaching on the Epistles of Paul in the Church of St. Pierre. After about a year the magistrates, with the consent of the people, appointed him officially as preacher. At this time Calvin was twenty-eight years old. Except for a brief interval, he spent the rest of his life at Geneva.

(To be continued)

## *People and Places in the Psalms*

BASHAN. 22:12; 68:15 (twice), 22; 135:11; 136:20. A region located to the east of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee. About 2,000 feet above sea level, it was famed in ancient times for its oak trees and its fine cattle. In Abraham's day Bashan was the home of Rephaim (giants), Gen. 14:5. Psalm 22:12 is part of a prophecy of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; in this verse "strong bulls of Bashan" is a figure of speech for the wicked men who crucified and mocked our Saviour. In Psalm 68:15,22 "the hill of Bashan" probably means Mount Hermon, the highest mountain of Palestine. Barnes comments that Zion was, by the presence and protection of God, what Bashan was by its natural strength and grandeur. "Comparatively low and unimportant as Zion was, it had in fact more in it to show what God is, and to constitute safety, than there was in the loftiness and grandeur of Bashan." In verse 22 there may be an illusion to the great victory over Og, king of Bashan (Num. 21:33-35). "The idea may be that as, at that time, a victory was achieved over a formidable enemy, so in times of similar peril, God would deliver his people, and save them from danger" (Barnes). Psalm 135:11 and 136:20 commemorate in song the great victory of Israel over Og, king of Bashan—a victory which was one instance of the redemptive power of God in delivering His people from Satan's kingdom.

BENJAMIN. 68:27; 80:2. Benjamin means literally "son of the right hand." Benjamin was the youngest of Jacob's sons. In the Psalms the reference is to the tribe of Benjamin. In Psalm 68:27 it is referred to as "little Benjamin". At one time in its history the tribe had almost been

exterminated because of sin (Judges 19-21). Yet God kept the tribe alive, and in His providence the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, was born of this tribe.

CANAAN. 105:11; 106:38; 135:11. Originally, it seems, the name Canaan was applied only to the coast line of Palestine, as distinguished from the hilly country further east. Later the name Canaan was applied to the Jordan valley, and then to all of Palestine west of the Jordan River. Psalm 105:11 refers to God's covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, promising, among other things, to give them the land of Canaan. Psalm 106:38 refers to the abominations practiced in the religion of the Canaanites, such as infant sacrifice. Psalm 135:11 commemorates in song the conquest, by the power of God, of "all the kingdoms of Canaan."

DATHAN. 106:17. One of the principal characters involved in the conspiracy of Korah, as related in Num. 16:1-35. The reference to Dathan in Psalm 106:17 is part of a long catalog of sins, rebellions and apostasies of the children of Israel against their covenant God. The incident teaches us that "God is not mocked" and His authority and ordinances cannot be rejected and set aside as we please. Not every rebellious despiser of divine authority and order perishes suddenly as Dathan did, but the recorded incident is sufficient to show what God thinks of such an attitude, and how sinful it is in His sight. Many today who reject the authority of God's Word in various matters, and claim liberty to do as they please or consider popular, should take warning from the history of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

(To be continued)

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## *Studies in the Epistle to the Ephesians*

### LESSON 1

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

##### Authorship of the Epistle

The Epistle claims in 1:1 to have been written by the apostle Paul. This Pauline authorship is accepted by practically all scholars, though a few have questioned it on the ground that though Paul had spent much time in Ephesus, yet the Epistle does not mention any of the Ephesian Christians by name, thus seeming, it is held, to indicate lack of personal familiarity with the Church at Ephesus. This argument, however, is without any real weight. The evidence that Paul wrote the Epistle is overwhelming. As for his not mentioning any of the Ephesian Christians by name, this is easily explained by the fact that this epistle was evidently not intended exclusively for the church at Ephesus, but was to be circu-

lated among other churches also, therefore the author intentionally omitted personal references; compare Col. 4:16.

##### Place of Composition

It is commonly agreed that Paul wrote this epistle at Rome. The Epistle itself does not state where it was written, though it does mention that at the time of writing Paul was a prisoner (3:1; 4:1; 6:20). This is understood by nearly all scholars to mean Paul's imprisonment at Rome, which is recorded in Acts 28:16-31.

Some few scholars have held that the imprisonment mentioned was not Paul's imprisonment at Rome, but that at Caesarea (Acts 23:33 to 26:32). However, a comparison of the contents

of the "prison epistles" (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon) with the history of Paul as we find it in the book of Acts, indicates that the place of composition was not Caesarea but Rome.

A few scholars have also held that the "prison epistles" were written at Ephesus while Paul was imprisoned there during the stay recorded in Acts 19. But the book of Acts does not say that Paul was imprisoned during this visit to Ephesus, though of course it is still possible that he was. But the theory that these epistles were written at Ephesus is only a speculation and lacks all real evidence. The view that they were written at Rome is far more satisfactory.

#### Time of Composition

During his imprisonment at Rome Paul spent two full years in that city, living in his own rented dwelling (Acts 28:30). These two years were approximately A.D. 61-63. It was during this period that the "prison epistles"—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon — were written.

#### Recipients of the Epistle

The Epistle itself states in 1:1 that it was written "to the saints that are at Ephesus." However the words "at Ephesus" are lacking in the two most important Greek manuscripts (**Codex Vaticanus** and **Codex Sinaiticus**). These two words are also lacking in several other ancient manuscripts. Very little real evidence for the words "at Ephesus" exists. This fact, together with the fact that the Epistle does not mention any Christians at Ephesus by name, has led some scholars to deny that the Epistle was originally sent to the church at Ephesus.

The facts are probably to be explained as follows: Paul wrote the Epistle for the church at Ephesus, but not for that church alone; he also intended that it be circulated among other churches, as is suggested by the Epistle to the Colossians (Col. 4:16) in the case of the latter epistle. Then one copy of the Epistle was sent to Ephesus and either Paul or one of his helpers inserted the words "at Ephesus" in that particular copy which was sent to Ephesus, while these words were left out of other copies that were intended for general circulation among other churches. On this theory, our most reliable Greek manuscripts, the **Codex Vaticanus** and the **Codex Sinaiticus** are derived, not from the copy actually sent to Ephesus, but from an original that lacked the words "at Ephesus."

#### Occasion for Writing the Epistle

The occasion for writing the Epistle to the Ephesians seems to have been the danger of a division in the church between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Large numbers of Gentiles had been converted to Christianity at

Ephesus, which was predominantly a Greek city. But there were also many Christians with a Jewish background. These two groups of Christians differed widely in their background, customs, former manner of life and general attitudes, so that there came to be a danger not merely of friction, but actually of division. The apostle Paul endeavored to avert this danger by writing this Epistle, showing that the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians are one body in Christ, so that there cannot be such a thing as a Jewish Church or a Gentile Church, but only the Church of Christ, in which all are one in Him.

#### Theme and Scope of the Epistle

The Epistle is however broader than would be required by the apparent occasion for writing it. Paul does not by any means limit himself to the danger of a division between Jewish and Gentile Christians. This danger only forms his starting point to present a Christian philosophy of history, showing a majestic panorama of God's dealings with the human race from eternity to eternity. It begins back in the eternity of the past, before the creation of the universe, and it goes on through the history of the world to the completion of the great Plan of Redemption in the eternity of the future.

Chapter 3:9-11 may be regarded as setting forth briefly the scope of the Epistle. These verses show that the Church is intended for a great purpose—to manifest God's glory and His wisdom, not only in this world, but even to the angels, the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Paul shows that the Church of Jesus Christ possesses cosmic significance. It is important not only for time, but for eternity; not only for this world, but for the entire universe.

#### An Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians

- I. Salutation and Title. 1:1,2
- II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21
  1. The Church is the Workmanship of the Triune God. 1:3 to 2:10
    - (a) Predestinated by the Father from eternity. 1:3-6
    - (b) Redeemed by God the Son. 1:7-12
    - (c) Sealed by the Holy Spirit. 1:13,14
    - (d) Formed into the body of Christ. 1:15-23
    - (e) Saved from sin by God's free grace. 2:1-10
  2. Jewish and Gentile Christians are one Body in Christ. 2:11-22
    - (a) The original sinful state of the Gentiles. 2:11-13
    - (b) The wall of partition broken down. 2:14-18
    - (c) The Church a habitation of God through the Spirit. 2:19-22

## 3. The Mystery of the Church. 3:1-21

- (a) This mystery was formerly hidden, but is now revealed. 3:1-6
- (b) Paul's own connection with this mystery. 3:7-9
- (c) The divinely intended purpose of the Church. 3:10-12
- (d) Paul's prayer for the Church. 3:13-21

**III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24**

## 1. The Responsibilities of members of Christ's Church. 4:1-32

- (a) The duty of maintaining spiritual unity. 4:1-6
- (b) The gifts of ministry given by Christ to the Church. 4:7-11
- (c) The intended purpose of these special gifts. 4:12-16
- (d) The duty of cultivating practical holiness. 4:17-32

## 2. The Duty of Christians in Personal and Social Matters. 5:1 to 6:9

- (a) Separation from idolatry and uncleanness. 5:1-17
- (b) Spiritual worship. 5:18-20
- (c) Mutual duties of husbands and wives, including a discussion of marriage as an illustration of the relation between Christ and the Church. 5:21-33
- (d) Mutual duties of parents and children. 6:1-4
- (e) Mutual duties of masters and servants. 6:5-9

## 3. The Christian's Equipment for his Conflict with Sin. 6:10-24

- (a) The true source of the Christian's power. 6:10
- (b) The Christian's enemies and his spiritual armor. 6:11-17
- (c) The duty and privilege of prayer. 6:18-20
- (d) Conclusion and benediction. 6:21-24

**Questions:**

1. What verse names Paul as the author of the Epistle?
2. What argument has been used to deny that Paul was the author?
3. Why is this argument without any real weight?
4. Where was Paul at the time of writing the Epistle?
5. What ground do we have for holding that he was there?
6. What other theories have been held by some scholars as to the place where the Epistle was written? Why are these theories without value?
7. What was the approximate date of writing Ephesians?
8. What other Epistles of Paul were written at about the same time?
9. On what ground has it been denied by some scholars that this Epistle was addressed to the church at Ephesus?
10. What two words in the first verse of the Epistle are missing in the two most important Greek manuscripts?
11. How is the omission of these two words from the most important Greek manuscripts probably to be explained?
12. What was the occasion for writing the Epistle to the Ephesians?
13. What is the general scope or theme of the Epistle?
14. What verses of the Epistle may be regarded as setting forth briefly its general scope?
15. Into how many main sections may the Epistle be divided?
16. What is the character of each of these sections?

**LESSON 2****I. Salutation and Title of Book. 1:1,2**

We have already considered verse 1 in the previous lesson. We here note that Paul's apostolic office was by the will of God. This is something that is disregarded by "liberal" scholars who claim that Paul contradicts Jesus Christ, and that we should forget Paul and go "back to Christ." It is also disregarded by some evangelical Christians who take the liberty of setting aside this or that teaching of Paul which they do not like. Paul was an apostle by the will of God. What Paul wrote is the word of God; what he commanded is the commandment of the Lord. At the Judgment Day men will have to give

answer to the Lord for their treatment of the teachings and commands found in Paul's epistles. If Paul was indeed an apostle by the will of God, then Paul's Epistles are of divine authority.

The Epistle is addressed to the saints (at Ephesus) and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. In the New Testament, "saints" is a description of all Christians. A Christian is a saint; a saint is a Christian. "Saint" means **holy person**. A Christian is therefore a holy person. It is not merely that he **ought** to be a holy person; a Christian **is** a holy person, and if not a holy person, then he is not really a Christian. The modern usage of the word "saint", meaning a remarkable or emi-

nent Christian in the history of the Church, is unknown in the New Testament.

Since Christians are called saints, there is something terribly wrong with any church whose members are not holy in life. When the general membership of a church is conformed to the world in its manner of life, a state of spiritual backsliding or even of apostasy has set in. Real Christians are saints, and a real church is made up of saints.

Christians are also called "the faithful in Christ Jesus". The word "faithful" here means believing. Christians are not only saints; they are believers. The importance of faith is greatly minimized today. On every hand we find people who say that life is more important than faith. This absurd opinion is often found even within church circles. But it is not found in the Bible. Christians are faithful; they are believers; they are committed to the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

To the Christians, Paul pronounces grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. "Grace" means the special love and favor of God given to the undeserving, who are also the ill-deserving. "Peace" is the state and condition of life which results when a sinner has received grace; it is the condition of a life reconciled to God. Someone has truly remarked that real peace is not the absence of war but the presence of God. That is the life of the Christian, who has received the grace of God in his soul.

Note that grace comes first, and peace second. There can be no real peace except on the basis of grace received from God. Many people are concerned about peace today, who are not in the least concerned about grace. It is one of the sins of ministers to wish people peace when those people cannot possibly have peace, because they do not have grace. When ministers are talking with or praying for people who are still in their sins, they should not wish them peace. Instead they should pray that God would give them no

peace day nor night until they receive His grace in Christ.

Grace and peace come not simply from God the Father, but from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Their source is indeed God the Father, but they are mediated to sinners through the Lord Jesus Christ. The church has no true message except the message of redemption mediated through Christ. The modern tendency to speak only of God and leave Christ out is therefore an anti-Christian tendency. When Christ is left out, what is left is not Christianity.

#### Questions:

1. What was the source of Paul's authority as an apostle?
2. What mistake is made by those who say we should forget Paul and go "back to Christ"?
3. What sin is committed by Christians who take the liberty of setting aside those teachings of Paul which they do not like?
4. What is the meaning of the word "saint" in the New Testament?
5. What is wrong with a church whose members are not holy?
6. What does the word "faithful" mean in 1:1?
7. What is the importance of faith in the Bible?
8. What is the meaning of "grace" in the Bible?
9. What is the nature of real peace?
10. Why does Paul mention grace first and peace second?
11. Why is it wrong to wish peace to people who are yet in their sins?
12. From whom do we receive grace and peace? Why does Paul mention the Lord Jesus Christ in this connection, in addition to God the Father?

### LESSON 3

#### II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21

##### 1. The Church is the Workmanship of the Triune God. 1:3 to 2:10

###### (a) The Church Predestinated by God the Father from Eternity. 1:3-16

The doctrine of predestination is a difficult one, and it is a doctrine liable to misunderstanding, which requires very reverent and careful handling. However it is a doctrine of God's Word, and we should not be reluctant to study it.

Here we note that the Church has been predestinated by God the Father. The following particulars should be observed:

① The time of predestination: before the foundation of the world, 1:4.

② The cause of predestination: the good pleasure of God's will, 1:5. This means the sovereign choice of God, for which no other reason can be assigned than that it pleased God so to act.

③ The effect of predestination: that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 1:4.

④ The aim of predestination: adoption as God's sons, 1:5a; the praise of the glory of God's grace, 1:6.

From these verses we note that the Church's

and the believer's salvation does not originate in human free will, but in the eternal purpose of God — His eternal love and purpose of grace.

Needless to say, the very idea of election ("chosen us", 1:4) implies the selection of a part of humanity from the whole. Some say that God elected the entire human race to eternal life, but that is contrary to the definite statements of the Bible. If all are elected, then none are really elected. To "choose" implies the selection of some and the non-selection of others. A church may hold an election to choose deacons; but who ever heard of a church of 100 members choosing the entire 100 to serve as deacons?

This passage reveals to us the origin of the Church in the secret counsel of God back in eternity before the universe existed. We may note in passing that the rest of the Bible teaches exactly the same doctrine. Our salvation originates not in ourselves but in the eternal purpose of God. The initiative, the first step, the original purpose, which brings about the salvation of an individual, is of God, not of man.

Many parallel passages might be cited which set forth the same truth, but space would not permit. However, we shall note one passage in each Testament:

<sup>1A</sup> Psalm 65:4, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts." (Note that the initiative is with God; God chooses the man and causes him to approach unto Himself).

John 17:1,2, "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." (Note that Christ's commission is to give eternal life, not "to as many as may choose to accept the offer," but "to as many as thou" — God the Father — "hast given him").

<sup>Practical application</sup>  
Many people object violently to this doctrine. It has perhaps been opposed more than any other single doctrine of the Bible. We are not particularly concerned to answer these objections here, for they are hardly ever based upon a study of the Scriptures; almost invariably objections to the doctrine of predestination arise from human reasoning and an insistent desire to assert man's independence over against God. The objectors are not willing for the eternal issues of life to be determined by God; that is, they are not willing for God to be really God. Such objectors are not in a truly religious relation to God; they are not willing for God to be really God and themselves to be only creatures of God; they demand that God shall take a subordinate place on the sidelines while the eternal issues of life are decided by the free will of man. Some popular evangelists have

gone so far as to say "God's hands are tied; he cannot save you until you yourself make the decision." Others say, "God is helpless; he can only wait for us to accept Christ."

Still others try to escape from the doctrine of predestination by explaining it away. A common representation, sometimes found in evangelistic tracts, runs thus: The doctrine of election is a doctrine of the Bible, but should not be misunderstood. What it really means is that God votes for everyone, the devil votes against everyone, and each person casts the deciding vote in his own case.

This view of the matter only represents God as "voting", not as electing or choosing anyone. Moreover it puts God and the devil on a par as if each had exactly the same power and effect in the world. According to this idea, God does not really elect anyone; each person elects himself for eternal life or eternal perdition. God simply elects those who elect themselves. This is dishonoring to God for it reduces His sovereignty to a mere rubber-stamp ratification of the decisions of His creatures.

Another evasion of the doctrine of predestination is found in the common idea that God has elected people, not to eternal life, but merely to "a chance for salvation", that is, to such external privileges as hearing the Gospel, coming in contact with the Bible, etc. This idea seems very attractive to some people, but the Bible does not sanction it. Note carefully that according to the passage before us, God has chosen individuals, not merely to external privileges or "a chance", but to holiness and moral perfection (1:4) and to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself (1:5). This predestination and election is unto actual salvation, not just unto "a chance", for salvation. It does not merely give people "a chance", for them to "take it or leave it"; it results in their being accepted in the beloved (1:6).

Many pages could be devoted to a point-by-point refutation of the common objections to the doctrine of predestination. Those who wish such a refutation are referred to two excellent books, namely: The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, by Loraine Boettner. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. \$4.50. The Sovereignty of God, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. \$2.75. It is sufficient for our purpose here to state that the doctrine of predestination is clearly and emphatically taught in Scripture. Whether this doctrine is pleasing to man is not the question; the question is only whether it is true.

#### Questions:

1. Why should we not hesitate to study the doctrine of predestination? *in bible*
2. When was God's decree of predestination made? *Before world*

26  
24  
22  
20  
18  
16

Xmas.

133

3. What is the only cause that can be assigned to God's decree of predestination? *golurut gen.*
4. What is the effect of God's predestination?
5. What is the two-fold aim of God's predestination?
6. Where does the salvation of the church and of the Christian originate?
7. Why is it not correct to say that God has elected everyone to eternal life?
8. What text in the Psalms teaches the doctrine of election?
9. What text in the Gospel of John teaches it?
10. Why do many people object violently to the doctrine of predestination?
11. What can be said about the religious life or those who are opposed to predestination?
12. Why is it wrong to say "God's hands are tied"?
13. Why is it wrong to say: "God votes for you, the devil votes against you, and you yourself cast the deciding vote"?
14. Why is it wrong to say that God has elected people to "a chance for salvation"?
15. Name two books that provide answers to the common objections to predestination.
16. Why is the real question not whether the doctrine of predestination is pleasing to man?

#### LESSON 4

##### II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21, Continued

###### 1. The Church is the Workmanship of the Triune God. 1:3 to 2:10, Continued

###### (b) The Church Redeemed by God the Son. 1:7-12

"Redemption" means the purchase, or buying back, of something by the payment of a ransom price. We should note that there is a close and necessary connection between election and redemption. Those whom God the Father has elected from eternity, Jesus Christ has redeemed by His work of atonement — His sufferings and death on the cross. This connection is clearly brought out by the present passage: "he hath chosen us in him", that is, of course, in Christ, 1:4; "In whom we have redemption through his blood" (1:7), meaning, of course, In Christ in whom we have redemption through his blood.

Christ's atonement was of infinite value, and would have been sufficient for the redemption of all men, if such had been its intended purpose. But the Bible teaches us that its intended purpose was the redemption of the elect, whom God had chosen from eternity unto everlasting life.

From 1:7 we note that the source of our redemption is the grace of God, and the effect of our redemption is the forgiveness of our sins. (Read the verse). We should note, too, that this work of redemption is "through his blood", and is not a mere example as Modernism asserts, but a truly vicarious or substitutionary atonement.

This redemption proceeds from the riches of God's grace. The Scripture idea of grace is that of divine favor bestowed upon those who have no legal claim to it. Grace proceeds from God, and is characteristic of God, while graces may be possessed by man as gifts from God — the grace of prayer, the grace of liberality, etc.

The Christian is saved "according to the riches of his (God's) grace". That is, his salvation is wholly the result of God's unmerited favor, and is not based in any degree on human merit, works or achievements. Salvation is therefore a gift, pure and simple, not an accomplishment or achievement of man.

In 1:8 "wisdom" and "prudence" are mentioned. The former of these terms refers to God's eternal plan for human salvation; the latter to God's manner of executing that plan. According to the unsaved, God's plan is mere foolishness (see 1 Cor. 1:18-30), but in reality it is the wisdom of God.

In 1:9 we find the word "mystery" used for the first time in this Epistle. Compare 3:3. The Bible idea of a "mystery" is something formerly hidden, therefore unknown, but later revealed, and therefore known to the initiated. It does not mean something so profound or obscure as to pass human comprehension, but something which could never be known except by divine revelation! This is different from the modern usage of the word "mystery" to mean something inherently unfathomable or baffling, such as the relation of time to eternity.

The mystery spoken of in 1:9 is the mystery of the salvation of the Church as the spiritual body of Christ. Verse 9 says that this mystery is "made known unto us." No doubt it is the same as the "mystery of the gospel" mentioned in 6:19, the "mystery of Christ" in 3:4, and the "mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God" of 3:9. From 3:6 we learn that this mystery included the truth that the Gentiles should be fellow members in the body of God's covenant people, the Church.

In 1:10 we read of "the dispensation of the fulness of times." Scofield and others take this as designating the millennium, but this interpretation is unwarranted. It means rather the whole

duration of the age of the Gospel, beginning with the coming of Christ in the "fulness of time" (Gal. 4:4), and continuing until all things are fulfilled. The events and conditions of this period, including all arrangements for the preaching of the Gospel and the gathering of the elect into the Church, were ordained in eternity, and are accomplished progressively in time, according to the divine purpose, until all shall have been completed.

1:10 tells us that it was God's purpose to "gather" or sum up all things in Christ, both those in heaven and those on earth. This text implies Christ's present kingship as Mediator over the universe, as in Matt. 28:18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth", etc.

**ARV** In 1:11 we are told that we have obtained an inheritance. There is, however, a question about the translation of this verse. The ARV renders it: "In whom also we were made a heritage", etc. It is true, of course, that we as Christians have obtained an inheritance; but the probable meaning of 1:11 is that we ourselves are Christ's heritage.

Note that according to 1:11 the whole of the Church's salvation depends upon the sovereign free grace and eternal purpose of God: "being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." If God works all things after the counsel of His own will, then He works our salvation after the counsel of His own will, too, for our salvation is included in the category "all things." To God, not to man, belongs the honor and glory of it.

In 1:11,12 the pronoun used is "we". Verse 12 says: "we... who first trusted in Christ," meaning Jewish Christians who had lived under both dispensations, and had, formerly, under the Old Testament dispensation, looked forward to or hoped for the promised Messiah. But when we turn to 1:13a we see that the pronoun is changed from "we" to "ye", indicating that a different class of people is being spoken of. As shown by 13:a, the "ye" refers to Gentile Christians who heard the Gospel, believed, and thereupon received salvation. The two together—Jewish and Gentile Christians—constitute Christ's heritage, the "purchased possession" spoken of in 1:14. In these

believed  
possessor  
Jewish  
Christians  
Gentile  
Christians

## II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21, Continued

### 1. The Church is the Workmanship of the Triune God. 1:3 to 2:10, Continued

#### (c) The Church Sealed by the Holy Spirit. 1:13,14

In 1:13b we note that those who believed on Christ were "sealed" with the Holy Spirit of

verses Paul prepares the way for the great doctrine of the unity of the Church in Christ, which he intends to introduce in the next chapter.

### Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the term "redemption"?
2. With what other doctrine is the doctrine of redemption closely connected in the Bible?
3. What was the intended purpose of Christ's atonement?
4. What was the value of Christ's atonement?
5. What is the source of our redemption?
6. What is the effect of our redemption?
7. What phrase in 1:7 shows that Christ's atonement is a substitutionary atonement and not a mere example?
8. What is the difference between "grace" and "graces"?
9. What verse of chapter 1 shows that salvation is purely a gift of God? 1:7
10. What is the meaning of the word "mystery" in Scripture?
11. How does the Bible meaning of "mystery" differ from the modern usage of this word?
12. What is the mystery referred to in 1:9?
13. What other verses of the Epistle speak of the mystery?
14. What is "the dispensation of the fulness of times" mentioned in 1:10?
15. What truth concerning Jesus Christ is implied in 1:10?
16. What question exists concerning the translation of 1:11? Which translation is probably correct?
17. How does 1:11 prove that the whole of salvation depends upon the eternal purpose of God?
18. What class of persons is referred to by "we" in 1:11,12, and what class by "ye" in 1:13?

### LESSON 5

promise. This indicates, first, that every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit; and second, that the Holy Spirit is received at the time of believing on Christ for salvation; and third, that the Holy Spirit does not depart from those who have thus received Him.

The very meaning of "seal" is a pledge or guarantee of permanence. In common affairs, such as in legal documents, no statement to which an

official seal has been affixed can be altered after that. In 1:14 the figure of the seal is further set forth. It is an "earnest", that is, a payment ~~on account, or a deposit to guarantee the payment of the balance due, until the redemption of the purchased possession."~~

The time of this redemption of the purchased possession is the time of the resurrection of the body, as Paul tells us elsewhere, for example in Rom. 8:23, "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Eph. 4:30 also speaks of the "day of redemption." From this we learn that the Holy Spirit remains in believers and will continue to abide in them until the resurrection—in fact, for ever and ever. Hence for the true believer in Christ to "fall from grace" and be eternally lost is impossible. The Christian's perseverance in grace and ultimate salvation are fully assured by the indwelling Spirit of God. Christ has purchased the Church to be His own possession (or has purchased an eternal possession for the Church, if we prefer that translation); this purchased possession will be fully redeemed at the resurrection; but meantime an "earnest" is given, which guarantees the completion of the transaction at the appointed time.

#### (d) The Church Formed into the Body of Christ. 1:15-23

In this section, Paul tells how he gave thanks for the faith of the Ephesian Christians, and how he prayed for them, 1:15-18. This is truly a model prayer for all Christians. Paul does not accuse his fellow Christians to the Lord, but on the contrary gives thanks for their faith and love, and in petitioning, he requests for them spiritual and heavenly blessings, that they may know Christ and the hope of His calling, as in 1:18.

From this point Paul goes on to speak of the great power of God by which He raised Christ from the dead. That same power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead is at work in the Christian believer, as we see in 1:19, 20. Following this, Paul speaks of the consequences of the resurrection of Christ, of which he names four, as follows:

- ✓ 1. Christ's being seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven, 1:20.
- ✓ 2. Christ's supreme authority over all created things, 1:21.
- ✓ 3. Christ's headship over the Church, 1:22.
- ✓ 4. The Church becoming Christ's body, 1:23.

The supreme authority attributed to Christ in 1:21 cannot be limited to the period after His second coming, for two reasons. First, in 1:21b, not only "the world to come", but also "this world", that is, this present age, is included in its scope.

Second, verse 20 cannot be arbitrarily separated from verse 21. In verse 20 Christ sits at the right hand of God; in verse 21 He exercises supreme authority. But Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father today; therefore it follows that Christ is now, during this present age, supreme ruler over the entire created universe.

In 1:22 we note that Christ is not only Head over the Church, though of course He is that, but that He is head over all things for the benefit of the Church. It does not say "head over all things IN the church", but "head over all things TO the church." His purpose in His headship or authority over the universe, the purpose for which all things have been put in subjection under His feet, is that His Church may receive protection and benefit.

In 1:23 we read that the Church is Christ's body, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." These last words present a certain difficulty in interpretation. Perhaps we may best explain them as follows:

(1) 1. The Church is Christ's fulness, or is filled with Christ, who is present in every member of the Church by His Holy Spirit. Christ is everywhere present in His Church; the Church is baptized into His Holy Spirit; hence the Church is filled by Christ. Also it is by the Church that the life of Christ is most fully manifested in the world. The Church is the fullest and most complete way by which Christ is connected with any part of the created universe. It is Christ's body, and therefore it has the most intimate and complete connection with Him.

2. But apart from the Church, Christ, because He is divine, fills all in all. He not only fills the Church, in a special way, with His presence; He also fills all created things, in a general way, with His presence. If we may so interpret the text, it is a reference to the omnipresence of Christ's divine nature; that is, it is a reference to the fact that Christ, because He is God, is everywhere. Thus we may say that as the Church is filled with the presence of Christ in a moral and spiritual way, so the entire universe is filled with the presence of Christ in a cosmic way. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" said the Lord" (Jer. 23:24).

Returning to the thought of the Church as Christ's body, and Christ as the Church's head: this of course does not mean that body which in His glorified humanity He personally wears, with which He rose from the tomb. It means His mystical or spiritual body on this earth, through which His will is done on earth while He is in heaven. The Head partakes of the sufferings of the members on earth, by sympathy; the members partake of the power of the heavenly Head, by faith.

**Questions:**

1. What persons are indwelt by the Holy Spirit?
2. When is the Holy Spirit received by a Christian?
3. What is the meaning of a seal?
4. What is meant by the statement that the Holy Spirit is an earnest until the redemption of the purchased possession?
5. When will the redemption of the purchased possession take place?
6. What do 1:14 and 4:30 imply as to the possibility of a true believer "falling from grace" and perishing for ever?
7. What special features are found in Paul's prayer for the Christians, 1:15-18?
8. What tremendous power is at work in the Christian believer?
9. What four consequences of Christ's resurrection does Paul name?
10. Why can Christ's supreme authority, mentioned in 1:21, not be limited to the period after His second coming?
11. What is implied in the statement of 1:22 that Christ is head over all things to the Church? How does this differ from His being head over all things in the Church?
12. What is meant by the statement that the Church is the fulness of Christ?
13. Apart from filling the Church, what does Christ fill?
14. Why can Christ be said to fill all things?
15. In what sense is the Church called "the body of Christ"? *body*

**LESSON 6 — 9 ON 2-1-10**

**II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21, Continued****1. The Church the Workmanship of the Triune God. 1:3 to 2:10, Continued****(e) The Church Saved from Sin by God's Free Grace. 2:1-10**

In Chapter 2 we come to the application of redemption, in which God the Holy Spirit is the most prominent Person of the Trinity.

The need for salvation lies in the lost condition of the "natural" or unsaved man. This condition is described by Paul in five particulars, as follows:

1. A Condition of Spiritual Death. The unsaved person is said to be "dead in trespasses and sins" (2:1) and "dead in sins" (2:5). This means that he is alienated from God. It is a state described as spiritual death; not merely sickness, weakness or imperfection, which could be repaired; not merely incompleteness or deficiency, as the theory of evolution implies; but "death", which implies man's total depravity and his total inability to save himself. Because the state of the unsaved man is a state of death, all reform, good resolutions, self-culture, etc., are sure to fail to save him. Man needs not merely reform, education, guidance, etc., but new life.

2. Characterized by a Sinful Walk. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (2:2). Not only is the unsaved man spiritually dead; he is characterized by a sinful course of conduct. This is true of every person who is without Christ.

Many persons who walk in a sinful course would not admit this fact. The greatest sinners when Christ was on earth were not the publicans and prostitutes, wicked as these were, but the scribes and Pharisees — the very people who proudly supposed themselves to be righteous.

Paul tells us that walking in trespasses and sins is the same thing as walking according to the course of this world. No wonder, then, that the world does not see anything sinful in such conduct. Paul is speaking from the standpoint of God's standard — His moral law — not from the standpoint of the depraved and darkened opinions of men. We must remember that the Bible states that what is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

The outward form of sin varies, but the essence is always the same — want of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God. God looks on the heart and sees the real condition, while men — even Christians — almost always tend to look on the mere outward appearance. Before we venture to say that we are not walking in trespasses and sins according to the course of this world, we should ask God for light to compare ourselves, not with other people, but with the perfect moral standard found in the Bible.

3. In Bondage to Satan. "According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (2:2b). This is none other than Satan or the devil. There are some people who are obviously the agents of Satan. Others are really such though they do not appear to be so.

In the Bible we read of persons who were possessed by demons. In demon possession an

evil spirit captured and took complete control of the personality of a human being, so that the human being spoke the evil spirit's words and carried out its intentions. But that is not the only way that people are in bondage to Satan.

We should realize that Satan is a very intelligent being. He is described in the Bible as crafty and subtle in accomplishing his evil purposes. Not only the victims of demon possession, but every unsaved person is really in bondage to Satan. Our Lord called him "the prince of this world." Paul calls him "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." We rightly feel that the afflicted people forced to live under dictator government in communist countries are in a miserable condition of slavery. The fact that many of them believe in those tyrannical governments makes it an even worse form of slavery — slavery not merely of the body but also of the mind and the spirit. But here in Ephesians chapter 2 we see an even more universal and more dreadful form of bondage, the bondage of the unsaved world to Satan, the prince of the power of the air.

The notion that Satan is now in hell is a piece of popular imagination unsupported by the Word of God. The Bible speaks of everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, but they will not be consigned to it until the Judgment Day (see Rev. 20). Today Satan is intensely active throughout this world. In calling him the prince of the power of the air, Paul perhaps is calling attention to the fact that Satan is a supernatural being, higher than this world, but far beneath God who dwells in the highest heavens. But we should never forget that Satan is active in the world of men today, seeking to accomplish his sinister purposes.

#### Questions:

1. Which Person of the divine Trinity is the most prominent in the application of redemption?
2. In how many particulars does Paul describe the lost condition of the unsaved man?
3. What is implied by the statement that the unsaved person is dead in trespasses and sins?
4. Why cannot moral reform save the sinner?
5. What kind of conduct characterizes the unsaved person?
6. What classes of people were the greatest sinners, in God's sight, when Jesus Christ was on earth?
7. Why does the world not see anything specially sinful in the conduct of unsaved people?
8. What is there about sin that changes, and what is there about it that always remains the same?
9. What is the essential nature of sin?
10. Whom does Paul call "the prince of the power of the air"?
11. What was the nature of demon possession as described in the Bible?
12. Who is in bondage to Satan?
13. What is the worst form of slavery?
14. Why is it incorrect to say that Satan is now in hell?
15. What may be the reason why Paul speaks of Satan as "the prince of the power of the air"?

#### LESSON 7

##### **II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21, Continued**

###### **1. The Church the Workmanship of the Triune God. 1:3 to 2:10, Continued**

(e) **The Church Saved from Sin by God's Free Grace. 2:1-10, Continued**

We have been considering Paul's description of the lost condition of the unsaved person. Paul describes this condition in five particulars. We have already considered the first three of these, namely, 1. It is a condition of spiritual death. 2. It is characterized by a sinful walk. 3. It is a condition of being in bondage to Satan. We shall now continue, and take up the remaining two particulars.

4. The Objects of God's Wrath. "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others", 2:3b. The unsaved person has a positively sinful nature. His nature has a stubborn, determined

bent away from God and toward evil. So Paul says that he is by nature a child of God's wrath.

This term "wrath" should not be misunderstood. It does not mean the same as human anger or ill temper. When the Bible speaks of God's wrath it means God's righteous moral indignation, God's absolute disapproval of sin. In Rom. 1:18 Paul tells us that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (down) the truth in unrighteousness." Many people today speak as if God were nothing but mildness and love. The Bible does indeed say that "God is love," but it does not say that "God is only love." Love is one of God's attributes, one phase of God's character. But there is another side. Another of God's attributes is His wrath, His moral disapproval of sin.

The natural or unsaved man is **by nature** the object of God's wrath. He is not just "by conduct" or "by habits" the object of God's wrath, but

BY HIS NATURE the object of God's wrath. That is to say, man's nature, the permanent state and inclination of his heart, considered entirely apart from his conduct, is the object of God's righteous indignation and disapproval because of sin. If it were merely a question of conduct or outward habits, someone might try to argue that we could reform by turning over a new leaf. But we cannot change our nature. It is our nature that is contrary to God.

**5. Totally Unable to Save Himself.** "Even when we were dead in sins . . .", 2:5a. It is when we are dead in sins that we need salvation. But a dead person cannot do anything for himself. Lazarus had been in the tomb four days when Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth". And if the Son of God had not spoken those words, Lazarus would be there to this present day. If some person had come and urged the dead Lazarus to use his free will and try, at least, to arise from the dead, everyone would have realized the absurdity of such a course. It is the same with the person who is spiritually dead in sin. He cannot raise himself from the dead. It is indeed his duty to repent and turn to God, but he cannot do it of himself, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart to make him want to believe, repent and be saved.

There is a story of a professor who was asked to give a lecture on the subject of "Free Will." Those who invited him to lecture on this subject did not believe that man is spiritually helpless to save himself; they believed that the sinner by using his free will can turn to God at any time. The professor accepted the invitation, and to the surprise of his audience announced his subject as "The Free Will of a Corpse." Thus he brought out strikingly the Biblical truth that man, who is dead in trespasses and sins, cannot raise himself to spiritual life by his free will.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not good advice but good news. This is because man is utterly unable to save himself. The liberal churches of our day never cease to preach various schemes of self-salvation, such as salvation by character-building, salvation by education, salvation by religion, etc. But the Word of God shows that all these are vain and useless. Man is dead in sin. He needs more than reform or culture; he needs new life from God.

To summarize: the need for salvation arises from the condition of natural man, in its five-fold aspect. He is in a state of spiritual death, he is characterized by a sinful walk, he is in bondage to Satan, he is the object of God's wrath, and he is totally unable to save himself from this deplorable condition.

Conviction of sin is fundamental to real Christian experience. Such conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit. We may preach both the law and the Gospel, but only the Holy Spirit can convince people that they are really lost sinners in need of a Saviour.

The free recognition of these various truths is one of the signs of the real work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life. On the other hand, the person who stubbornly denies that he is dead in trespasses and sins, who denies that he is in bondage to Satan, who denies that he is the object of God's wrath, is the very person who is a total stranger to the real saving work of the Holy Spirit. These truths are neither pleasant nor popular, but they are TRUE, they are revealed to us in God's Holy Word.

#### Questions:

1. What is meant by God's wrath?
2. Why is it wrong to say that God is nothing but love?
3. What is meant by the statement that the unsaved person is **by nature** a child of God's wrath?
4. What does the fact that we are by nature children of wrath imply concerning the possibility of saving ourselves by moral reform?
5. What does the fact that we are dead in sins imply concerning the possibility of turning to God by our free will?
6. What is meant by saying that the Gospel of Christ is not good advice but good news?
7. What are some of the futile schemes of self-salvation which are being advocated by the liberal churches of our day?
8. What is the place of conviction of sin in Christian experience?
9. Who alone can produce real conviction of sin in a person?
10. What does the free recognition of these truths imply concerning a person's life?
11. What kind of persons stubbornly deny that they are dead in sins, in bondage to Satan, objects to God's wrath, etc.?
12. How can we know that a doctrine is true, even though it may be unpleasant and unpopular?

## LESSON 8

**II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21,  
Continued****1. The Church the Workmanship of the Triune  
God. 1:3 to 2:10, Continued****(e) The Church Saved from Sin by God's Free  
Grace. 2:1-10, Continued****God's Way of Salvation**

Having considered the subject of the condition of the unsaved person, we shall now turn to the other side of the matter, and discuss God's way of salvation. We shall consider four things about it, namely, its origin, its basis, its methods, and its end.

**1. The Origin of God's Way of Salvation.** The plan of salvation originated in the fathomless love of God. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)", 2:4,5. We learn here of God's great love, of His rich mercy (love for those in distress), and of His grace (love for those who have offended against Him).

Note that the way of salvation did not originate with man, but with God; it is not rooted in man's worthiness, but in God's great love and mercy. Moreover, God's grace is the first step in the actual experiencing of His salvation, for He quickens us (makes us alive) when we are still dead in trespasses and sins. He does not do this after we have turned over a new leaf, have repented and turned to Him, or any such thing on our part, but when we are dead in trespasses and sins. A work of God comes first, before any experience of salvation on man's part — not only a work of God **for us**, but a work of God **in us**.

**2. The Basis of God's Way of Salvation.** Its basis is the work of Jesus Christ. In these ten verses Jesus Christ is repeatedly mentioned: "with Christ" (verse 5); "in Christ Jesus" (verse 6); "through Christ Jesus" (verse 7); "in Christ Jesus" (verse 10).

Christ's work is set forth fully in the Bible. It included all of His life on earth, His perfect obedience to God's law, and especially His sufferings and death and resurrection as the Substitute for sinners. All of this taken together forms the basis of God's way of salvation. This is the foundation on which the house of salvation has been built. And the Bible tells us that this is the only adequate foundation, for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

The work of the Holy Spirit is never divorced from the finished work of Jesus Christ. Christ purchased redemption for the elect; the Holy

Spirit applies that redemption to the elect. His office is to apply the redemption purchased by Christ. Where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is rightly proclaimed, there the Holy Spirit will be at work, making alive people who were dead in trespasses and sins. Those who exalt Christ most are most led by the Holy Spirit. He did not come to glorify Himself; it is His office to glorify Christ by applying Christ's redemption to men.

**3. The Methods of God's Way of Salvation.** We now must consider the means or methods by which God works out His way of salvation in our lives. These are included in what the Shorter Catechism calls "effectual calling". "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel" (S.C. 31). In connection with this we shall consider two things, Regeneration and Faith.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Regeneration is called by various names in the Bible, such as being born anew, being a new creature or a new creation, the washing of regeneration, receiving a new heart, and other expressions. In our passage we find it described as being "quickened" or made alive. This is just another way of saying that we must be born of the Holy Spirit.

Note that this great change is represented as being entirely an act of God. It is not something we can accomplish for ourselves, nor even something that we can cooperate with God in doing; it is wholly the work of God's Spirit.

We see, too, that it is a creative work, for it gives new life to those who were spiritually dead. This shows why the new birth is indispensable, as our Lord said to Nicodemus. A person might be a leader in Israel and have the law of God on the tip of his tongue, but if he had not experienced the new birth, he was just a poor lost sinner, dead in trespasses and sins.

The new birth is a fundamental change of a person's inner character — what the Bible calls "the heart." It is not a change of our personal identity; the person who is born again is still the same individual, but his character has been changed by the almighty power of God. By divine power the person's character, the governing moral disposition of his soul, is changed from evil to good. This change is an act, not a process; it takes place in an instant of time. Consciousness of it may come gradually to the person concerned, but the new birth itself is always instantaneous.

The new birth is mysterious because it does

not take place in our mind, where we would be conscious of it, but in our heart, where we are unconscious of it except as we come to see its effects in a changed life and changed attitudes and desires. "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). This spiritual change takes place once only in any person's life, and never can nor need be repeated. The new life is planted in the soul but once, and lives on forever.

#### Questions:

1. What is the origin of God's way of salvation?
2. What is meant by God's mercy?
3. What is meant by God's grace?
4. What is the first step in a person's actual experiencing of salvation?

5. What is the basis of God's way of salvation?

6. What is included in the work of Jesus Christ as our Saviour?

7. How is the work of the Holy Spirit related to the work of Jesus Christ?

8. What is effectual calling?

9. What are some of the terms used in the Bible to designate the change called Regeneration?

10. Whose work is regeneration? What is man's part in it?

11. What is meant by saying that regeneration is a creative act?

12. What is the nature of the change wrought in a person by regeneration?

13. Why is the new birth mysterious?

14. How many times can a person experience the new birth?

LESSON 9

*START AT 11*

#### II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21, Continued

##### 1. The Church the Workmanship of the Triune God. 1:3 to 2:10, Continued

###### (e) The Church Saved from Sin by God's Free Grace. 2:1-10, Continued

###### God's Way of Salvation, Continued

We shall now consider the subject of Faith. This is mentioned in 2:8,9. The person who is born again begins to exercise faith in Jesus Christ. He believes on Christ as his Saviour.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (2:8,9). Note that in verse 8 faith is said to be a gift of God. If anyone is a believer in Christ, this is not something that he can claim any credit for; it is something he should thank God for. It is not that we made up our minds to accept Christ, but that God set His love on us and sent His Spirit to work faith in us.

Christ is the object of faith. We are not saved just by believing, nor just by believing in the Bible, nor even just by believing in God. The true object of saving faith is Christ as Saviour. It makes a tremendous difference in whom we believe, and how we believe in Him.

There are various kinds of faith described in the Bible. Not all faith is real saving faith. There is historical faith, the kind that the demons have, and tremble. When a person believes in Jesus Christ in the same way that he believes in Abraham Lincoln or Napoleon, that is mere historical

faith. Then there is temporary faith, the faith of those that believe for a while, but having no root in themselves, later fade away, as illustrated in the parable of the Sower. And there is true saving faith that really embraces Christ for salvation, as described in Ephesians 2:8,9.

The Bible speaks of strong faith and weak faith. No doubt strong faith is better than weak faith. But there is one thing even the weakest faith will do, provided it is indeed faith in Christ — even the weakest faith lays hold of an almighty Saviour and unites us to Him so that we can never perish but shall certainly inherit eternal life. We may or may not have the faith that removes trees and mountains, but it is a great thing if we have the faith that lays hold on Jesus Christ and Him crucified as our Saviour from sin and eternal death.

4. The End of God's Way of Salvation. We shall now consider the purpose of God's way of salvation, the great end for which the whole arrangement was intended by God. Two such ends or intentions are mentioned in the passage we are studying.

The first is mentioned in 2:7, "That in the ages to come he might show forth the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Thus the plan of salvation is intended to manifest God's glory.

When we say that man's chief end is to glorify God, we do not mean that man can add anything to God's glory, for that is impossible. We mean rather that God created man as a way of manifesting forth the glory which God already had in

Himself. And this is the great end of the plan of salvation. Through the endless ages of eternity, the redeemed of earth will be the living monument of God's grace and mercy. In the ages to come God will show the whole universe what He did for our salvation when we were lost in sin and far away from Him.

The second intention of the plan of salvation is mentioned in 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We are not saved by good works, but we are saved unto good works. God did not provide a way of salvation merely for our selfish enjoyment. He saved us for service to Himself. We should never trust in our good works as any part of the ground of our salvation, but we certainly ought to cultivate good works as the proper fruit of our salvation. That is what God intended when He provided salvation for His people.

God is the source, power and end of man's salvation. Do we know this infinite, eternal, sovereign, gracious God? Is our Christian experience a reality, or is it just a formality, as it is in the case of many who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof by their manner of life? Paul had personally experienced the things he wrote about. Multitudes of Christians have experienced them in our own day. If we lack these things, we should seek them at once from Him

who alone is the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

#### Questions:

1. What does a person begin to do after he is born again?
2. What is meant by saying that faith is a gift of God?
3. What is the true object of saving faith?
4. Besides saving faith, what other kinds of faith are described in the Bible?
5. What is meant by historical faith?
6. What is temporary faith, and what parable of Jesus illustrates this kind of faith?
7. Do we have to have strong faith in order to be saved?
8. What will even the weakest faith do?
9. What is the first end or purpose of salvation, as shown by 2:7?
10. What do we mean by saying that man's chief end is to glorify God? If God is a perfect being, can we add anything to His glory? How do we glorify Him?
11. What is the second intention of the plan of salvation, as shown by 2:10?
12. What is the true relation between good works and salvation?

#### LESSON 10

##### **II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21, Continued**

2. Jewish and Gentile Christians are one Body in Christ. 2:11-22
  - (a) The Original Sinful State of the Gentiles. 2:11-13

Concerning the position or status of the unsaved Gentile, we are here given five particulars:  
1. He is separate from Christ. 2. He is alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. 3. He is a stranger from the covenants of promise which God has made with His people. 4. He is without hope in the world. 5. He is without God in the world. Since the unsaved Gentile lacks these benefits, he is described as being "afar off" from God, 2:13. We may compare Christ's statement to the Samaritan woman, "Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

Note that according to 2:12, the Gentile who is saved thereby becomes a member or citizen of "the commonwealth of Israel," the spiritual people of God. In the Old Testament dispensation, the commonwealth of Israel was limited to the descendants of Abraham. In the New Testament

dispensation, it is the Christian Church. Both the Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church constitute one single, continuous, uninterrupted "commonwealth of Israel," or visible society of people in covenant with God. So long as the Gentile remains outside the commonwealth of Israel, he is far from God. Therefore, when the Gentile becomes near to God, we may properly conclude that he has become a member of the commonwealth of Israel. And in the case of both Jew and Gentile, whoever obtains such benefits, obtains them solely through the blood of Jesus Christ, as is shown by 2:13.

We see how far the apostle Paul was from teaching the popular modern doctrines of the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal Brotherhood of Man. Paul did not teach that all men are God's children. On the contrary, he insisted emphatically that the person who is without Jesus Christ is far off from God, and without God and without hope in the world.

- (b) The Middle Wall of Partition Broken Down. 2:14-18

The original relation between Jews and Gentiles was a relation of enmity, but in the Church they are reconciled to each other through the work

of Christ. The "middle wall of partition" spoken of in verse 14 is the wall dividing Jew from Gentile. The "twain" mentioned in verse 15 are the Jew and the Gentile.

The "law of commandments contained in ordinances" (2:15) includes the various laws given by God to Israel. The ceremonial law which in many ways made Israel a strictly separate people, caused great enmity between Jew and Gentile. We get a glimpse of this enmity here and there in the pages of the New Testament. For example, note John 4:9. "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Then in John 18:28 we read: "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment; and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover...". They would not enter Pilate's judgment hall, lest they be defiled. Needless to say, a Roman might easily regard such an attitude as a great insult to himself and his nation.

In Acts 10:28. Peter tells the people assembled in the house of Cornelius, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation."

The law made Israel a special, separated people. It set them apart from all other nations and races. This very fact tended to cause friction and enmity, hatred between Jews and people of other races.

But the law not only caused enmity between Jew and Gentile; it also caused both Jew and Gentile to be at enmity with God, for both had violated the law of God. Thus Christ's atonement had a double result: (1) It caused Jew and Gentile to be reconciled to each other in the Church through Christ; (2) It reconciled the sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, to God through Christ's cross.

How are we to understand the statement of 2:15 that Christ had abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances? How has Christ abolished the law? In the first place, the law can no longer condemn the believer. It has been abolished as a condemning power, so far as the believer in Christ is concerned. Compare Gal. 3:13.

As for the ceremonial law, it has been completely abolished, and forever. Even the Jew is emancipated from its requirements; therefore the ceremonial law can no longer act as a barrier between the Jew and the Gentile who are in Christ.

2:16 takes up the wider reconciliation, and affirms that Christ has reconciled both Jew and Gentile to God. Christ has done this by making both Jew and Gentile into a new man. After this the Jew is no longer a Jew, but a new creature

in Christ Jesus; and the Gentile is no longer a Gentile, but a new creature in Christ Jesus. These two classes of people have been (1) reconciled to each other by the cross of Christ; (2) both reconciled to God by the cross of Christ.

2:17 informs us that Christ came and preached peace to those that were afar off, and peace to those that were near. This preaching was necessarily done after Christ's crucifixion, and therefore it was done through the apostles and the Church, with the power of the Holy Spirit making it effectual.

2:18 summarizes by stating the fundamental unity between the redeemed Jew and the redeemed Gentile. Both have access to the same heavenly Father; both have access through the atonement of the same Saviour; both have access through the applying work of the same Holy Spirit. Their experience being thus identical, there can remain no more occasion for enmity, but only a happy unity.

The only real remedy for the enmity between Jew and Gentile is Christ. As long as both Jew and Gentile are without Christ, there is no real hope for peace and harmony between the two. All organizations and committees that work for "tolerance" along lines that do not include bringing Jew and Gentile to the crucified Christ, are necessarily futile and superficial.

#### Questions:

1. What is the religious condition of the unsaved Gentile, according to 2:11-13?
2. What is the "commonwealth of Israel" mentioned in 2:12?
3. Does this commonwealth of Israel exist at the present day? Where is it found?
4. How do Gentiles become members of the commonwealth of Israel?
5. What would the apostle Paul have thought of the modern liberal doctrines of the Universal Fatherhood of God and the Universal Brotherhood of Man?
6. What was the original relation between Jews and Gentiles?
7. What body of law especially caused friction between Jew and Gentile?
8. Give some examples from the Bible of enmity between Jew and Gentile.
9. Besides separating Jew from Gentile, what separation was effected by the law of God?
10. What double reconciliation was brought about by the work of Christ?
11. In what sense has Christ abolished the law?
12. When was the ceremonial law abolished?

13. How has Christ reconciled both Jew and Gentile to God?

14. When and how did Christ preach peace to those that were afar off and to those that were near?

15. What is the only real remedy for the enmity between Jew and Gentile?

16. Why are efforts to bring about "tolerance" between Jews and Gentiles, without bringing them to Christ, bound to fail?

## LESSON 11

### **II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21, Continued**

#### **2. Jewish and Gentile Christians are one Body in Christ. 2:11-22, Continued**

##### **(c) The Church a Habitation of God through the Spirit. 2:19-22**

Verses 11-13 gave the Gentile position by nature; verses 19-22 give the Gentile position by grace. The Gentile who is a Christian has become a fellow-citizen with the saints and a member of the household of God.

There is but one household of God, and it includes God's people in both the Old and the New Dispensation. This chapter recognizes only one commonwealth, one household, one foundation. It does not recognize one foundation of the prophets, and another of the apostles, but only the one foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which Christ Himself is the chief corner stone. The external form of "Israel", the commonwealth of God's covenant people, has changed from the Old Testament form of the nation of Israel to the New Testament form of the Christian Church; but it is still Israel, the covenant people of God.

2:20-22 presents a beautiful figure, the figure of a temple. Christ is the chief corner stone. Apostles and prophets are the foundation stones. Upon this foundation is erected the edifice; both Jewish and Gentile Christians are built into its structure. Every believer, every child of God, is a living stone in the temple.

The purpose of this temple is to provide a habitation for God. God dwells in it, by His Holy Spirit, who dwells in every believer, both Jew and Gentile. Since both Jewish and Gentile Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they are both, by that same Spirit, constituted the habitation of God. This same truth is set forth in 1:23, where the Church is called Christ's body; here in 2:22 it is called a temple or habitation of God through the Holy Spirit.

Where do we stand in relation to the truths of Ephesians 2? Have we experienced the salvation by grace described in verses 1-10? Do we know that we, who once were dead in trespasses and sins, have been made alive by Jesus Christ? We who were Gentiles, far off from God, have we really been "made nigh by the blood of Christ"? Are we still strangers and foreigners, or do we know ourselves to be fellow-citizens of the

saints, and members of the household of God? Can we say that we are living stones, built by the Holy Spirit into that spiritual temple which is the habitation of the living God? Are we standing on that one solid, firm foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone? The study of this chapter may add something to our understanding of the Bible, but it will be in vain unless we apply its truths to our own lives, and measure ourselves by its teachings. It was not meant merely for the people of Ephesus, but also for us.

#### **3. The Mystery of the Church. 3:1-21**

##### **Start (a) This Mystery was Formerly Hidden, but is Now Revealed. 3:1-6**

Chapter 3 of the Epistle opens with the expression "For this cause", which connects the thought that is to come up with the closing words of chapter 2. The idea is: "Because the Jewish and Gentile Christians are in Christ built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, therefore I Paul... (do certain particular things)." But there is a break in the grammar of the passage, and several verses are inserted as a parenthesis. Look at 3:14 where the words "For this cause" are repeated. Paul starts out in 3:1 by saying "For this cause" but he does not immediately inform the reader as to what he is doing for this cause, until he comes to verse 14, where we finally learn what it is: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We take 3:2-13, then, as a parenthesis inserted at this point for a special purpose, and we find that the main thought of verse 1 is resumed at verse 14. The structure of the chapter would then appear to be somewhat as follows:

1. Verse 1, Introduction, linked with chapter 2.
2. Verses 2-13, Parenthesis, stating Paul's relation to the Church.
3. Verses 14-21, Main thought resumed, setting forth the aim of the Christian life in the form of a prayer.

We shall consider each of these parts of the chapter in turn.

1. The Introduction, 3:1. "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." For this cause — because they were built

together in Christ for a habitation of God through the Spirit; because they have such a standing in God's Church — Paul is going to offer a special prayer for their progress and growth in grace.

*Q 10 A*

Paul calls himself "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." Remember that this is one of the "prison epistles", written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome. But how was he a prisoner for the Gentiles? Paul's preaching and evangelistic effort among the Gentiles, in obedience to the Lord's command, aroused the anger of the Jews, who arrested Paul and turned him over to the Romans; so it really was because of his work for the salvation of the Gentiles that Paul was a prisoner. He does not refer to himself as "the prisoner of Caesar" or "the prisoner of the Roman Empire," though he was indeed such, but "the prisoner of Jesus Christ" because it was really on account of the Lord's will that he was suffering imprisonment in Rome. Back of it all was the Lord's will and purpose.

#### Questions:

1. Is there only one household of God, or two? What verse shows this?

*Q 11 A*

■ In what respect has the commonwealth of Israel changed, and in what respect is it still the same?

3. Who is the chief corner stone of God's spiritual temple?

4. What is the place of apostles and prophets in the temple?

5. What is the purpose of the spiritual temple?

6. How can the teachings of this chapter benefit us?

*Q 12 A*

7. What is the force of the opening words of chapter 3?

~~X~~ 8. What is the nature of the passage 3:2-13?

~~X~~ 9. What idea is repeated in verse 14?

~~X~~ 10. Why does Paul speak of himself as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ"?

*Q 13 A*

Y 11. What was the connection between Paul's imprisonment and the spiritual welfare of the Gentiles?

## LESSON 12

### II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21, Continued

#### 3. The Mystery of the Church. 3:1-21, Continued

##### (a) This Mystery was Formerly Hidden, but is Now Revealed. 3:1-6, Continued

*Paul*

2. The Parenthesis, 3:2-13. First, Paul tells us that it was the grace of God that caused him to have any connection at all with the Christian Church. It was the grace and mercy of God that changed Paul from the persecuting, blind Pharisee to the apostle, the missionary, the preacher of the Gospel to the Gentiles. He speaks of this in verse 2: "the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward."

Then in 3:3,4 he tells us how he got his knowledge of Christian truth, and especially that truth which is the special theme of this Epistle, the mystery of the Christian Church. It was not by research, or study, or speculation, or profound investigation of the Scriptures — it was "by revelation." We will do well to pause and consider what this expression means. In the Bible "revelation" or "to reveal" is a technical term. It means the communication of truth by God to the human mind.

We could not know anything at all about God and His will except by revelation. Man cannot by searching find out God, but God has been pleased to reveal Himself to man. We find a triple revelation of God: in nature, in human nature,

and in Scripture. The revelation in nature and in human nature is sufficient to leave men without excuse, but it is not sufficient for salvation. So God has provided the third form of revelation, called "special revelation." This special revelation is now a completed whole and we have it in written form in the Holy Bible. In Paul's time it was still in process, still incomplete. So we are told that it was "by revelation" that he attained his knowledge of these truths.

It is important to realize that Paul's knowledge was derived from special divine revelation, because it is common today to represent Paul as a kind of thinker or philosopher who invented it himself or took it over from some ancient pagan source. In fact it is quite common in our day to say that the original Christianity as taught by Jesus was a very simple thing — just that we should love God and our neighbor — and that Paul later spoiled it all by adding a lot of complicated doctrines about the Deity of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, and so forth. But this idea is far from the real truth. Paul claimed to have received the truths he teaches by special revelation. The "simple gospel" of Jesus is only a figment of the imagination of liberal preachers and theologians; it never really existed. Between the teachings of Jesus Christ and those of the apostle Paul there is not only no real contradiction; there is actually perfect harmony and organic continuity. It is a common and cheap practice today to set Scripture against Scripture as if the Bible were full of contradictions. But it is

perfectly clear that the Biblical writers themselves were not conscious of any such contradictions, but believed themselves to be in harmony with each other and with the whole (compare 2 Peter 3:15,16).

#### Questions:

1. How did Paul come to have a connection with the Church?

2. How did Paul gain his special knowledge of divine truth?

3. What is the meaning of the term "revelation" in the Bible?

4. In what three ways has God revealed Himself to man?  
 ① *Nature*  
 ② *Human nature*  
 ③ *Salvation*  
 ④ *Scripture*

#### II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21, Continued

#### 3. The Mystery of the Church. 3:1-21, Continued

(a) This Mystery was Formerly Hidden, but is Now Revealed. 3:1-6, Continued

The Mystery Summarized, 3:4-6. Remember the Bible idea of a mystery — not something that is inherently obscure, profound or baffling, but something which could not be known except by special divine revelation. A mystery, in the Bible, is not an incomprehensible truth, but a secret fact, later revealed. For ages it was hidden in the mind of God; then there came a time when it was revealed to men, and so became known.

What is the mystery that Paul is discussing? In the broadest terms, Christ Himself is the mystery — the great truth once hidden but now revealed — as we see from 3:4, "the mystery of Christ." But in this chapter Paul intends to deal with a narrower, more specific part of the mystery, namely, the Church. Of course the apostle is not speaking of any single congregation, nor of any one denomination, but of the true Church in its completeness, which is Christ's spiritual body.

3:5 tells us that this mystery was formerly concealed, but later revealed: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Verse 6 then goes on to tell us just what the mystery was that Paul is speaking about: it was the great truth that the Gentiles should be incorporated into the same body with believing Jews, becoming with them the spiritual Israel by partaking of the Gospel salvation.

But, we may ask, how was that a mystery? Did not the Old Testament over and over again predict the salvation of the Gentiles? Did not God tell Abraham that in his seed all the families

5. What kind of revelation is necessary for salvation? *Special*

6. What is the difference between God's special revelation in Paul's day and at the present day? *Special Rev → Bible*

7. Why is it important today to realize that Paul's knowledge of divine truth was derived from special revelation? *Our Christian doctrine of God's Word comes from the Bible*

8. What wrong idea exists concerning the relation of Paul's Epistles to the teachings of Jesus? *Set scripture against scripture*

9. What do some liberal preachers mean by "the simple gospel of Jesus"? *Love God & neighbor*

10. Does Scripture contradict itself? What verses in 2 Peter bear on this question?

#### LESSON 13

of the earth would be blessed? Did not Paul in Romans 9-11 explain in great detail how the Old Testament predicted the rejection of the Jews and the salvation of the Gentiles? All this is certainly true. How then could the salvation of the Gentiles, and their incorporation into the body of God's covenant people, have been a mystery, something hidden but later revealed?

There are total mysteries and partial mysteries. The doctrine of the Trinity is rightly called a mystery; only by God's revelation in the New Testament do we know it; yet there are some hints and suggestions of it in the Old Testament. In the same way, the Old Testament predicted the salvation of the Gentiles. Peter was a student of the Old Testament, yet when he was called by God to preach to the household of Cornelius, he would have been hesitant to do so except for the special preparation of the vision on the housetop at Joppa; and when he returned from Cornelius, the Jerusalem church criticized him for having preached to Gentiles.

The resurrection of Christ from the dead was quite clearly predicted in the Old Testament, yet when it really took place, it was very difficult for the disciples to believe that it was really true. The fact that the Christ must suffer, and be despised and rejected of men, and be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and be killed — all this was revealed in the Old Testament, yet the disciples had the greatest difficulty in grasping these truths.

Similarly, the salvation of the Gentiles was predicted in the Old Testament, so it was not a total mystery nor a complete secret. But that was not enough. So there came a time, after Jesus was crucified and had ascended into heaven, when the full truth was revealed plainly, that the Gentiles were to be fellow heirs of the same body, with the spiritual Israel, and partakers of the same

salvation. This revelation was made first to the apostle Peter, and later, more fully, to the apostle Paul.

If we look closely at the text, we will see that Paul does not assert that this truth had previously been something completely unknown; he says in 3:5 "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed . . .". The Old Testament revelation of this truth had been like the light of a candle, a ray of hope, to be sure, but nothing like the blaze of the noonday sun of the New Testament revelation.

With 1900 years of Gentile Christianity behind us, it may not strike us as strange at all that Gentiles should be saved and made members of the same body with the Jews. But remember that in Paul's day this was a new thing, a strange thing, an almost unbelievable thing, both for Jews and for Gentiles. It was almost unbelievable — but it was taking place before their very eyes in the cities where Paul preached.

#### Questions:

1. What is the Bible idea of a mystery?

2. What, in the broadest sense, is the mystery Paul is dealing with?

3. What is the specific mystery discussed in Ephesians 3?

4. Show that the Old Testament predicted the salvation of the Gentiles.

5. Show how some truths revealed in the Old Testament were not adequately grasped by Jesus' disciples and the early Christians.

6. What words in 3:5 imply that the salvation of the Gentiles and their incorporation in one body with the Jews was not something previously completely unknown?

7. Why does this truth, which seemed so strange and new in Paul's day, not cause us any special difficulty at the present day?

8. To which of the apostles was this truth made clear before it was revealed to Paul?

(To be continued)

## *The Revised Standard Version of the Bible*

### *Concluding Article*

By the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick

**Note:** This is the last of a series of three articles by Mr. Kilpatrick on the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. The first two articles of the series were published in the January-March, 1952, issue (pages 16-18) and the April-June, 1953, issue (pages 104-6).—Ed.

In a former article three questions were proposed to which the ordinary reader of the Bible, not specially trained in Hebrew, Greek and theology, is competent, after consideration of the evidence, to render an answer.

We found (1) as to a question strictly preliminary, that the RSV is, generally speaking, a version in language more understandable and of more current usage than the King James Version. Then, since accuracy of translation is of first importance, and we must depend here on the judgment of others, we considered the question (2) whether or not the publicity program used to promote the new Bible is such as to suggest confidence, and we found things rather which arouse distrust and which demand utmost caution. (3) As to the competence of the translators, we found them men of recognized attainment in their various fields, but, with a single exception among the more than 20 names, men who are on record as denying or

expressing doubt concerning one or more of the historic cardinal verities of the Christian Faith. This, again, demands of us careful and critical study before accepting the new Bible as our "standard" version.

As to contents, it is obviously impossible, in a brief article, to do more than direct attention to a passage or two which characterize the RSV with respect to a few matters vital to a dependable version of the Scriptures.

1. In its favor it may be said that the RSV is in language **more readily understood by a majority of the people today than the KJV**. There are many words used in the KJV that have become unfamiliar or have changed in meaning, in some cases even to the point of meaning the very opposite of what they meant 300 years ago. The word "let" now means "to permit," but in Rom. 1:13, Paul says, according to the KJV, that he "was let hitherto" from going to Rome, meaning that he was hindered or prevented. The same meaning is intended in 2 Thess. 2:7, "He who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." Some KJV Bibles have notes at the back listing 100 or more of the most important of such words. The American Revised Version, sometimes called the

American Standard Version (of 1901), made the needed changes in the majority, but not all, of such cases. However, the ARV does not equal either the KJV or the RSV in beauty of expression and rhythmic English.

2. The RSV has some few changes from the KJV in the interest of accuracy, because there are more and older manuscripts (abbreviated MSS) available for study today than 340 years ago. Also, there has been advancement in the understanding of the ancient languages and customs, through archaeology and the science of language, including textual criticism.

Probably the most notable contribution in recent times to a better understanding of the Bible through archaeology came in the last year of the 19th Century, when a vast number of papyri (letters, records of business transactions, really waste paper, writing which had served its purpose and been thrown away) were discovered in Egypt and elsewhere in the Near East. Thayer's Greek Lexicon — up to that time perhaps the most used and respected in Britain and America — had a list of over 700 "Biblical Words" in an appendix. That is, since these words were not found in other Greek literature, it was thought that they were a special class of words which was not familiar to people generally, but was peculiar to the Bible. But from the papyri it was found that practically all of these words were used in the everyday conversation of the marketplace and the home. The Bible was written in language that the common man could understand. Apparently the word translated "simplicity" in the KJV (for instance, in Rom. 12:8) has been found to include also the idea of "liberality."

Then within the past five or six years a number of Old Testament MSS have been found in the vicinity of the Dead Sea. These have not been certainly dated and evaluated as yet, but they have been found to confirm remarkably the correctness of the later MSS on which scholars have depended.

3. On the other side of the ledger, it must be said that the testimony of the Bible to the deity of Christ has been unjustifiably weakened in the RSV. One particular in which the doctrine of the deity of Christ has been weakened is in the use of "you" when Christ is addressed, instead of "thee" or "thou." This is not, however, merely because the more common, informal word has been used. The revisers state (*Introduction to the RSV New Testament*, p. 56) that they decided to follow modern usage "except in language addressed to God." Thus, they have undertaken to distinguish as to when Christ was addressed as God and when He was not, although the original Greek shows no such distinction. The revisers have decided that in every case when Christ was addressed by humans on earth, He was not addressed as God, but as a man only. When Peter

walked on the water, became frightened and called for help, the RSV reads, "Those in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'" Peter in his great confession, the RSV implies, did not address Jesus as God: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Even when the disciples were gathered around Christ after the resurrection, immediately before He ascended, the revisers imply that the disciples did not address Him as God: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" It is only when Christ is addressed by God at His baptism, and when He is spoken of as in heaven (Matt. 25:37; Rev. 5:9) that the RSV regards Him as being addressed as God. If they had uniformly used "you" instead of "thou" and "thee," this charge could not be made; but when they intrude themselves and their ideas into the RSV, declaring that the disciples never looked on Christ as God while He was on earth, it is certainly an affront to the Bible's teaching on the deity of Christ.

Also in the Old Testament, Psalms 110:1, quoted by Christ in Matt. 22:44 as referring to Himself, the RSV uses "your" instead of "thy." Psalms 2, 45 and 72 are also notably at fault with regard to the deity of Christ. (See the excellent discussion of the RSV treatment of Psalm 72 in *The Covenanter Witness*, 11 March 1953, page 149, by the Rev. Frank D. Frazer.)

We do not say that the doctrine of the deity of Christ has been "removed" from the RSV. That would be well nigh impossible. This doctrine is inseparably woven into the record. An instance or two may even be pointed out where the deity of Christ appears to be more definitely stated — though the different meaning is merely a possible, not a necessary one — in the RSV than in the KJV, as Tit. 2:13 and 2 Pet. 1:11, where the RSV reads: "Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ," instead of "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" and "God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" as in the KJV.

Those who have tried to defend the RSV against this charge have not faced it at all. For instance, Frank H. Mann, General Secretary of the American Bible Society (*The Covenanter Witness*, 22 April 1953, p. 245) cites a number of Bible references to prove that various doctrines "have not been omitted from the new version." As the Editor of *The Covenanter Witness* points out, Mr. Mann is "answering" a charge which most critics of the RSV have never made. He does not attempt to answer the charge which they do make, namely, that the doctrine of the deity of Christ has been weakened. And certainly in the overall picture it has been weakened.

4. The testimony to the virgin birth of Christ has been unjustifiably weakened or removed in at least two places. The word in Isa. 7:14 translated as "virgin" in the KJV, is, in the RSV, "young woman." This change has been stoutly challeng-

ed from many quarters, and the RSV revisers have come to the defence of their translation by insisting that the Hebrew word means simply "a young woman of marriageable age." However, even the revisers admit that the word **may mean** "virgin" for they have included a footnote reading: "Or, virgin."

Now if it be admitted that the Hebrew word **may mean** "virgin," then Matt. 1:18-23 makes it certain — if one really accepts the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures — that in this case "virgin" was the intended meaning. "... All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel. . .' Yet the RSV rejects this "sure word" and only admits it as a possibility, in a footnote.

Then there is a footnote to Matt. 1:16 (This footnote was not in the RSV New Testament published in 1946, but is found in the new edition of the complete RSV Bible published 1952) which would remove the testimony of that verse to the virgin birth. It reads: "Other ancient authorities read 'Joseph, to whom was betrothed the virgin Mary, was the father of Jesus who is called Christ'." The only evidence for this reading is from sources not credited by scholars, liberal or conservative, as dependable. Yet it is placed here in the RSV, while the **unanimous** testimony of hundreds of other MSS and versions is against it. (Note: as we go to press, information has been received to the effect that the editors of the Revised Standard Version have decided to omit this footnote to Matt. 1:16 after all. It is reported that this footnote is now recognized by the RSV editors as incorrect, and that it is to be omitted from future printings of the new Bible. See **The Presbyterian Guardian**, 15 May 1953, page 97.—Ed.).

Here again, the doctrine of the virgin birth has not been removed completely. It is found in Matt. 1:18-25 and in Luke 1:26-35, but doubt has been cast on the Isaiah prophecy, and on the dependability of the New Testament which says that it was fulfillment of the prophecy of Isa. 7:14.

**5. Doubt has been cast on the dependability of the Scriptures by the numerous "corrections" which the revisers have declared it is necessary to make in the Old Testament Hebrew, certainly suggesting that our copies of the Old Testament have been corrupted in transmission.** There are more than 300 footnotes in the RSV Old Testament introduced by "Cn." This stands, we are told, for "a correction" (previously scholars have more aptly and honestly termed such changes in the text "conjectures") and means that the revisers have found no evidence in the Hebrew, nor even in any of the ancient versions of the Old Testament, to warrant the translation they have given in the RSV, but they have "corrected" the text as they think it should be. In several hun-

dred more cases they have "corrected" the Hebrew text by using one of the ancient versions (Septuagint, Samaritan, Syriac, Targum, Vulgate and others) as a basis. Certainly these thousand and more "corrections" declare plainly that the Hebrew text from which our Old Testament is translated is, in the opinion of the revisers, greatly corrupted, and that they consider their ideas of what the text should be, better than what they have found written.

The versions cited as authority for a change in the Hebrew text date from the first to the 5th century after Christ, except for the Greek "Septuagint" which dates from the 2nd or 3rd Century B.C., and the Targum which dates in part at least B.C. These versions were all available to the KJV translators. Yet they, as well as the ARV translators, did not count them dependable. No new evidence has been offered to give ground for considering them more accurate than the original Hebrew.

Furthermore, the recently discovered "Dead Sea" MSS (the Isaiah MS was found in 1947; others have been discovered within the year), insofar as they have been examined by scholars, tend to confirm remarkably the Hebrew text, rather than the ancient versions. The versions vary considerably among themselves and often differ from the Hebrew, so that it would appear to be the element of the human preference of the RSV translators, rather than factual evidence, that has prompted such extensive use of the versions.

Would it not be better to have a Bible that is a translation of what the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament actually say, as accurately as that may be accomplished, rather than a Bible changed to what a certain group of scholars think they ought to say?

**6. Finally, there is the matter of the translators' interpretations being injected into the RSV.** We found a most serious example of this in the discussion of the deity of Christ.

Then the use of quotation marks, of which there are none in the original, means that — besides the confusion of quotes within quotes within quotes — we have the translators' ideas of "who said what," presented as the Bible. For instance, John 3 has two examples, the former a statement of Christ, the latter, one of John the Baptist, in which scholars are not agreed as to where the direct quotation ends. The RSV admits in footnotes in this case that this difference of opinion exists, but they do not give notice of it in various other places, for instance, Isa. 6:11-13.

Of course, interpretation is sometimes unavoidable if grammatical English sentences are to be formed. The KJV and the ARV translators recognized this, and one way in which they showed where it had taken place was by using italics where they had added a word or idea. In the

RSV, in some cases, such additions are indicated by footnotes; but Hebrew scholars tell us that in many cases they have changed the Hebrew, or added to it, or taken away from it, with nothing to indicate this fact.

Interpretation on the part of the translators has thus been deliberately mingled with the text so as to make it indistinguishable by the reader. A case in point is Hebrews 2:11, where the RSV reads, "For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin"; the KJV and the ARV read, ". . . sanctified are all of one." The KJV has the word "are" in italics. If the RSV translators think the word "origin" is necessary to the sense, certainly it is proper for them to place it there, but they should serve notice in some way that the word is their addition. In this case it is serious, for such a reading would get rid of the idea of the existence of Jesus Christ before He was born as a human.

When we know that most of the translators disbelieve in one or more of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian Faith, and then find that they have introduced their own interpretations into the text, it ought to make us regard with suspicion any new idea we get from reading the RSV.

That the RSV is an improvement over the KJV in many particulars, probably no competent and fair student will deny. The KJV is not perfect, nor will there ever be a perfect version. In the choice of a version for common usage excellencies must be added up and weighed.

The benefits of most of the improvements to be found in the RSV may be gained through the notes and dictionary-concordances in the back of many KJV Bibles. The defects of the RSV, on the other hand, are of such a nature that they cannot be so easily overcome. Especially is this true of the doubt cast on the Scriptures as being given by God and therefore wholly dependable.

There are many cases where there seems to be an attempt to leave a contradiction between parts of the Bible, rather than to accept a possible rendering which would leave the parts harmonious. (This latter is the accepted procedure in interpreting the testimony of a witness in our civil courts.) For instance, 2 Sam. 8:18 RSV: "And David's sons were priests." (KJV, "chief rulers"; ARV, "chief ministers.") 1 Chron. 18:17 uses another Hebrew word which the RSV translates "chief officials": "David's sons were the chief officials in the service of the king." In calling David's sons "priests" in the one place they follow Gesenius' assertion in his Hebrew lexicon, in which he freely admits that this translation calls in question the agreement of the two passages. Tregelles, also a Hebrew scholar, repudiates Gesenius' as-

sertion, and insists that the word in 2 Sam. 8:18 may also mean "chief ruler." There are other Scriptures that support this idea. Hebrews 7:14 RSV: "For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests." 2 Chron. 26:18 RSV: "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense."

The RSV, it would seem, refuses to admit even that a "standard" original text of the Scriptures ever existed; yet they insist on making their own version "standard" for use today. "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. . . . Making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered. . ." (Mark 7:9, 13).

Doubt cast on such doctrines cannot be considered as details of fault to be balanced by other merits. Such faults, though they may not appear large, yet strike at the foundation of the Christian Faith, and render the RSV unworthy of acceptance as a successor to the KJV.

While we study and witness we must await Time's verdict. Bishop Oxnam, addressing the meeting of the National Council of Churches in Denver in December 1952, estimated that opposition to the RSV represented less than 1% of Protestantism. The Gallup Poll, for those who may still credit its findings, said, under date of 25 December 1952 that the opposition is 22% of those interviewed. Gallup reported that 67% of those interviewed had heard of the RSV, "a phenomenal record" for effective publicity in a book out less than three months. Of those interviewed, 28% said that they approved, 22% that they disapproved of the new Bible, 17% had no opinion, and 33% had not read or heard of it.

Modern English translations of the New Testament are fairly numerous, but there are few of the Old Testament. Announcement has been made recently that the Berkeley New Testament is to have a companion Old Testament, the publication date being set for 1955. The committee working on this translation includes members of the teaching staffs of Gettysburg (Lutheran), McCormick and Western (Presbyterian), Asbury (Methodist), Calvin (Christian Reformed), and Fuller (Independent) Theological Seminaries, as well as from several other institutions, all under the leadership of Gerrit Verkuyl, former New Testament Fellow of Princeton Theological Seminary. The end of modern English translations is not yet.

As a Bible for study, I personally prefer the American Revised Version, though in some respects it is decidedly inferior even to the RSV, notably 2 Tim. 3:16 and the John 9:38 footnote.

For public reading where the element of euphony and smooth English are somewhat more important, I still prefer the KJV. Also there are editions of the KJV published by several Bible publishing houses — Holman, Collins, World, and others — with excellent objective notes for study. Certain of the annotated editions lack objectivity.

For instance, the notes in **The Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible** (The Westminster Press, 1948) completely undermine the doctrine of the reliability of the Scriptures, while the Pilgrim and Scofield editions are definitely dispensational in their notes.

## 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 this magazine.

**UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD**, by Alan M. Stibbs. Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1, England, Pp. 64. 2s6d. In Canada: Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 30 St. Mary St., Toronto 5, Ont. In U.S.A.: Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1444 North Astor, Chicago 10, Ill. \$1.00.

The author of this handbook is Vice-Principal of Oakhill Theological College, London, England, and co-author with C. T. Manley and G. C. Robinson of **The New Bible Handbook** published by the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. He is also author of a number of other short works. All his writings that this reviewer has read are soundly evangelical and Calvinistic. He has a direct, simple style of expression that is very attractive and effective.

The Preface states: "The simple purpose of this book is to suggest to willing and would-be students of divinely-revealed truth ways in which they may pursue more completely and with enlarged understanding the study, faith and practice of God's written Word."

The work consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 sets forth a discerning statement of the need for a carefully studied understanding of the Word by the one who proposes to be a teacher of it to others. Chapter 2 examines the need for critical study of the text on the part of the individual minister. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 give clear, concise rules to be followed in general understanding, exegesis and interpretation of the text, with special rules for figurative materials and historical materials. Chapter 6 is entitled "The Bible and Christian Living." It ends with the advice: "Never stop seeking to make further progress in understanding and obedience."

Some sample rules: Get at the true meaning of single words. Get at the character of the composition. Interpret grammatically; in relation to

the context. Recognize the character of what is revealed in Scripture, namely, spiritual truth otherwise unknown. Recognize the main purpose of all Scripture, namely, to reveal the ways of God with men and for men. Compare Scripture with Scripture, and let Scripture check one's interpretation of Scripture. Seek the enlightenment and testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Some sample statements: Before we can properly serve the Word of God we must properly understand it. Otherwise there is serious danger lest in our excess of zeal we actually misrepresent it . . . Events have a tongue . . . Christianity is an historic revelation . . . Study should be synthetic as well as analytic, comprehensive as well as selective, . . . Any study of this subject which is not clearly calculated to magnify Him and to promote His glory and His Kingdom ought to be abandoned for study that is.

This is a truly godly work of great practical value to the minister and student of theology.

—E. Clark Copeland

**REVISED VERSION OR REVISED BIBLE? A CRITIQUE OF THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (1952)**, by Oswald T. Allis. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1953, pp. 64, paper cover. 60 cents.

Perhaps the most thorough analysis of the RSV New Testament (published in 1946) came from the pen of Dr. O. T. Allis under the title **Revision or New Translation?** (reviewed briefly in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, January-March 1949, page 19). The present booklet is not so extensive a work, but the reader cannot escape the conclusion that Dr. Allis is richly qualified for this task, and that his study of the RSV has been detailed and thorough. He was in the department of Semitic languages at Princeton Theological Seminary

for many years previous to 1929, after which he served as professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary. He knows first hand the materials with which the committee which prepared the RSV was working — the ancient languages and the versions of the Old Testament. He is well acquainted also with a wide range of critical and expository literature relative to the Scriptures. He is objective in treatment, fair in judgment.

The bulk of the book, pp. 7-50, is made up almost entirely of factual examples of what he discusses. His conclusion is only one paragraph in length. The material speaks for itself. "It (the RSV) is not 'a faithful rendering of the original.' On the contrary, it treats the Old Testament with a freedom which is incompatible with that high regard for its trustworthiness and divine authority, which is so marked a feature of the version of 1611. This is the great reason that this 'revision,' however excellent it may be in some other respects, cannot be satisfactory to Bible-believing Christians and cannot be accepted by them as a 'standard' version."

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

**THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE**, by Charlotte Yonge (condensed reprint). Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 309. \$3.00.

What one feels as he lays down this sublime story is what Adam Bede in George Eliot's novel felt when Arthur Donnithorne came to him seeking forgiveness. Donnithorne had tried desperately to make amends for what could never be mended. He was forgiven, but after all, the deed was done. Adam Bede the carpenter remarked later, "It's like a bit o' bad workmanship — you never see th' end o' th' mischief it'll do."

The life of Philip in **The Heir of Redcliffyfe** demonstrates what sin, when it is finished, will do to a person. Philip is typical; he is just the average person. His selfishness, pride and independence make him a true example of "human nature." Philip is scrupulously moral; his integrity is everything. Whatever he does is marked by unsullied devotion to duty. But Philip does not know his own heart. He thinks his motives and intentions are quite proper. In reality they are vicious. His heart is full of venom and envy. He tries to cast suspicion on the great character of Sir Guy, who stands between him and the fortunes of the Redcliffyfe estate. Eventually, however, his malicious calculations are exposed and he becomes a pitiful mental wreck, bowed down under a mournful load of remorse and shame. His sins are forgiven, but their consequences mar his whole life.

Sir Guy is noble and generous. His big heart trembles lest he might offend even those who

hate him. He is willing to go any length to return good for evil. He commissions himself with this charge: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." Guy more than fulfills this in behalf of his arch-foe. He exemplifies the words of Christ: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."

This is one of the noblest character stories ever written. It is a powerful story. It has a profound influence on the life of Abraham Kuyper, eminent champion of the Reformed Faith and Prime Minister of the Netherlands. He called it the means of his conversion. In that warm account of his religious development, called **Confidentially**, he wrote, "That masterpiece was the medium which broke my self-reliant, rebellious heart" (quoted in **Eerdmans Quarterly Observer**). Others, too, have felt the impact of this classic book. Charles Kingsley, the novelist, wept over it; Dante Gabriel Rossetti was moved by it; and British officers in the Crimea read it eagerly.

This is not an ordinary novel. The author knew how to take ordinary lives and clothe them with an aurora of spiritual beauty. She gives the Christian life an aura of charm, and makes one feel that to live it is something of supreme worth.

—Joseph A. Hill

**THE MEANING OF MY CONFESSION OF FAITH**, by Bastian Kruithof. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952, pp. 30, paper cover. 25 cents.

This is an exposition of the prescribed form that is used in the Reformed Church in America for induction into communicant membership in the church. The Form consists of five queries, three of these being the Apostles' Creed, plus two additional commitments to steadfastness and submission to the care of the church.

In defending the use of the Apostles' Creed in the Terms of Church Membership, the author says: "This great, historic creed sums up exactly our evangelical faith." In the opinion of the present reviewer, this is not the case. It is true, as the Westminster Assembly of Divines declared, that the Apostles' Creed is "a brief sum of the Christian faith"; but the Apostles' Creed does not sum up exactly the Christian faith. It is too brief to do this. It is true and Scriptural as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough to comprise an adequate profession of faith. It omits some very important doctrines of the Christian faith, such as the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, justification by faith, the new birth, adoption, sanctification, the substitutionary atonement of Christ (see **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, January-March 1953, p. 39).

The standard fixed by the Form is not as high a standard as that fixed by the Scriptures. It is

clearly deficient in the following particulars: (1) There is in the Form no acknowledgment of the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and conduct. This is basic to the simplest statement of faith. (2) There is no real personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour. The profession of belief in Christ as given in the Form could be subscribed to as a matter of mere historical faith. (3) There is no confession of sin and guilt. (4) There are no vows of personal piety. (5) There is no engagement in the service of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In the latter two queries of the Form the emphasis is on loyalty to the church, rather than loyalty to the Head of the church. This was one of the issues that brought on the Protestant Reformation. And one of the great truths attained by the Reformers was that of fidelity to Christ above and beyond all institutional loyalties, except as the latter conform to His will. The matter is not so-qualified in the Form.

The present writer believes the Form to be seriously defective as a covenant of church membership. Comparing the Form with the Covenant of Church Membership used by the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church, one observes the inadequacy and paucity of the former, the fulness, loftiness and beauty of the latter.

—Joseph A. Hill

**THE RELEVANCY OF THE PIVOT POINTS OF THE REFORMED FAITH**, by John E. Kuizenga. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1951, pp. 21, paper cover. 25 cents.

This is not, as might be expected, an exposition of the main tenets of the Reformed Faith. It is rather a discussion of the relation of this system of faith to the total world situation. Its design is to show what bearing Calvinism has on the political, social and economic issues of the times. It presents a Reformed philosophy of history.

The material presented in this booklet was given as an address in 1941. It is brief and does not purport to treat exhaustively of the issues involved. What it does is to show that the Reformed Faith, in its broad outline, is supremely relevant today.

The following points of the Reformed Faith are considered in their relation to current history:

- I. The Reformed Faith as a Totalitarian Religion.
- II. The Sovereignty of God.
- III. The Reformed Conception of Sin.
- IV. The Reformed Conception of Grace.
- V. The Lordship of Jesus Christ.

This timely booklet touches on the problem of dictatorship, as embodied, for example, in the Communist state, the respective problems of freedom, morals, justice, race and caste, labor and

management, and others. A few sentences will suffice to show the author's viewpoint and style: "Unless and until democracy becomes a symbol of loyalty to something higher than democracy, democracy cannot endure. . . Youth demands a religion — something supreme to live for, to adventure for, if need be to die for. If we cannot present and exemplify such a Christianity, then Nazism and Communism hold the 'Open Sesame' to their hearts. Nazism is a much higher faith than some of our contemporary Christianity." "The Reformed conviction of sin would restore to us the 'power of the sword' for dealing with vice and crime, economic exploitation, and moral debauchery of whole communities within the nation." "You will never get men to live or die for men because they see human misery; pity and humanitarianism do not see deep enough. . . We had better learn before it is too late that you join 'the grand society' only when you look at men *sub specie aeternitatis*, and by the radiance streaming from the cross." "You cannot have the stewardship of capital and refuse the stewardship of labor. It is worse to steal a man's chance to work than to steal his property.' "The kingship of Christ is. . . the hammer that has smashed all tyrannies thus far, and established democracies." "Only on the basis of a theocracy can you have a democracy — only on the basis of the Kingship of Jesus, in the end, will men live and die for democracy."

The author was formerly President and Professor at the Western Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America, and later Charles Hodge Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. He has passed on, but the truth that he loved and preached lives on. This sample of it deserves to be read and then re-read.

—Joseph A. Hill

**THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE**, by Henry Bast. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1951, pp. 29, paper cover. 25 cents.

The full title of this booklet is **The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible as the Word of God**. The author is Pastor of Bethany Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He contends that the Protestant view of the Scriptures is not the view that is held by liberals today, but the historic doctrine of plenary inspiration as held by the Church through the centuries. To establish this point citations from the various Confessions are given, e.g., The Belgic Confession (A. D. 1561), The Westminster Confession (A. D. 1647). The view of the Scriptures as held by Luther and Calvin is stated briefly, and the witness of Scripture itself to its own authority is discussed. The author points out the relevancy of the historic doctrine of inspiration to our faith and life, the crucial necessity for

the authoritative Word of God and its tragic importance at the present time.

—Joseph A. Hill

**THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER,** by George C. Douma. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1951, pp. 32, paper cover. 25 cents.

Here is a clear, simple unfolding of the significance of the Lord's Supper, written from the Reformed viewpoint (documented by the Heidelberg Catechism, the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America and The Liturgical Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper).

The author, who is Pastor of Calvary Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, discusses the nature of the sacraments in general, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the significance of the symbolic elements (bread and wine) and the efficacy of the sacrament (as attended by the Holy Spirit and faith). Examination of the faith and conduct of prospective communicants on each occasion by the church court as well as self-examination on the part of each communicant is set forth as a matter of grave importance.

The emphasis lies chiefly on the personal aspect of the sacrament, that is, on the sacrament as a transaction between the individual believer and his Lord, although the author does not entirely overlook the social aspect of the sacrament. In the New Testament this is a prominent feature of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:16,17; Luke 22:17). In the Lord's Supper believers have fellowship with one another as well as with Christ. The Lord's Supper is the communion of the Body of Christ with its Head. It is the fellowship which the Church as a unit has with Jesus Christ. In addition to its being the Holy Spirit's witness to each believer, the Lord's Supper is the social bond of a witnessing Church. This idea needs to be strongly emphasized, for there is among Christians today a common notion that communion in the sacrament is simply an isolated relationship between the Christian and his Christ. We must remember that in the sacrament we have also a relationship to other Christians who have pledged the same loyalty to Christ that we have. And only in so far as communicants agree in their conceptions of what it means to be loyal to Christ will the sacrament be a true communion for them. When the faith or practice of even one communicant falls short of the Scriptural standard, the communion between the congregation and Christ is to that extent weakened, just as a chain is made weak by the presence of one weak link. The neglect of the social implications of the Lord's Supper will by logical necessity lead to the neglect of proper discipline and will leave its indelible mark upon the purity and corporate witness of the Church.

—Joseph A. Hill

**THE MEANING OF BAPTISM,** by M. Eugene Osterhaven. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1951, pp. 46, paper cover. 25 cents.

This excellent little booklet is heartily recommended to those who want a simple yet not superficial explanation of the real meaning of baptism. This would be a good booklet for pastors to keep on hand to give to candidates for baptism and to parents who present their children for baptism.

It is a sad fact that many people have taken serious vows lightly and have carelessly and faithlessly profaned the ordinance of baptism. In view of the widespread ignorance concerning the sacraments, and the wholesale indifference to them, there is a crying need for this kind of literature.

The entire subject is discussed on the basis of the Liturgical Form for the administration of baptism as prescribed by the Reformed Church in America. It is thoroughly Calvinistic and is in general agreement with the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. According to the author, who is Professor of Bible in Hope College, Holland, Michigan, the significance of baptism is threefold: (1) Cleansing from sin; (2) salvation through union with Christ in the covenant of grace; and (3) new obedience in the Lord's service.

The case for infant baptism rests upon the premise that the New Testament economy is the unfolding and fulfilment of the covenant made with Abraham and that the necessary implication is the unity and continuity of the Church. The covenant idea involves the principle that the infant seed of believers are included in the covenant relation and provision.

Common objections to infant baptism are answered and stress is laid on the vital importance of parental faithfulness to covenant vows, lest "the child who once lay in their arms as a child of the covenant . . . become a child of this world" (p. 45).

—Joseph A. Hill

**TECHNIQUES OF A WORKING CHURCH,** by Clarence H. Benson. Moody Press, 820 N. La Salle St., Chicago 10, Ill. 1946, pp. 266. \$3.00.

Leadership-training is now recognized as essential to an effective and growing church. Before Mr. Benson went into the work of teaching at Moody Bible Institute he had already acquired experience in the business world. It was this experience that led him to devote his life to increasing the efficiency and organization of practical elements of the church's work. For twenty years he served as instructor in Church Supervision at Moody Bible Institute. This book was written as a text-book. It deals with the organizational

problems of almost any local congregation. He does not deal with the variety of denominational organizational structures, but limits himself to the common problems met in the average congregation, be it large or small, urban or rural.

Four chapter headings indicate some of the emphases that are made. "The Leadership of the Church"; "The Force of the Church"; "The Field of the Church"; and "The Finance of the Church." Not every congregation would find every section of this discussion helpful to their local needs. However, there are enough suggestions on "techniques," which should make this a helpful study manual for Sessions, Boards of Deacons, or Sabbath School Councils.

—S. Bruce Willson

**THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES,**  
by Louis Berkhof. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.,  
255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich.  
1949, pp. 293 \$5.00.

Although the twentieth-century church might well benefit by the vast reservoir of thought and experience of the past, that store, all too often, has remained untapped. Experience, rather than doctrine, is the key-word of our modern mood. These two need not be mutually exclusive, however. Perhaps we may learn that our experience becomes all the richer, if we are capable of learning from the group experience of the past as well as the present.

In the field of doctrine, because the problems become complex, and the battle of words waxes warm at times, some have assumed that the fervor of Christian living would only be chilled by being subjected to the discipline of learning the reasons for the body of faith the church now holds and presents to the world. But a good heritage must be known to be appreciated and used.

There are many excellent "histories" of doctrine. The nature of the study has made necessary a variety of presentations. Some have taken periods of history and have shown the development of doctrine in each period. Others have taken up the study of separate doctrines and traced them through their development until they reached their final form. The first is called the "horizontal" method, and the latter the "vertical." Dr. Berkhof has chosen to follow the latter method.

The doctrines that are traced historically are: The Trinity, the Doctrine of Christ, Sin and Grace, Atonement, Soteriology, the Church, the Sacraments, and the Last Things.

This text-book is quite brief, and assumes that the student will have access to other works, such as those by Fisher, Seeberg, Sheldon, or Shedd. But its very brevity and clarity recommends it to the beginner. The Prolegomena alone is particularly adapted to introduce the student to an eval-

uation of the place of Christian doctrine in the light of modern-day presuppositions.

The printing format of the book is good, and the "questions for study" and bibliographical reference should be stimulating to further research.

—S. Bruce Willson

**GREAT LEADERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**, by Elgin S. Moyer. Moody Press, 820 N. La Salle St., Chicago 10, Ill. 1951, pp. 490. \$5.00.

To an age conditioned to do its reading in condensed form, this book is an excellent introduction to Church History. In thirty chapters, the name and characteristic contribution of thirty leaders of the Christian Church serve to focus attention upon one of God's methods of carrying on His work. As the gospel writer could say of one, "There was a man sent from God . . .", so one sees God sending men at crucial times to lead out in the development of His church. Dr. Moyer tells of these men, from "Peter and the Founding of the Christian Church," to "Dwight L. Moody and the Great Revivals." Although the biography of great men, it is a rounded-out study of events, movements, religious activities, the interchange of ideas, the clash of forces.

The value of this book to the reader desiring to make further inquiry is that a full bibliography with page references has been given at the end of each chapter. Another valuable feature for those who are not familiar with some words and phrases that occur in their historical setting is that the author has appended to many chapters a list of definitions of significant terms.

The solid work of other historians has been used freely. L. P. Qualben, Philip Schaff and Williston Walker have been quoted at some length. The spirit in which this book is written can best be understood in the words of the author: "Church history can be and should be read as a story, for that is exactly what it is. While our study has to do with these thirty men, its chief purpose is to present a connected and orderly delineation of the growth and development of the Christian Church, the Body of Christ, here on earth. It is hoped that the student will detect the mighty hand of God working through these individuals to bring about His great purpose in His Church" (p. xi).

—S. Bruce Willson

**MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS**, by Edward J. Young. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 231. \$3.00.

The book claims to be an authoritative interpretation of the institution of the prophets and the claim is reasonably well justified. The prophets of the Old Testament declared that they

had a message from God for the people and it was their duty and privilege to deliver that message faithfully. Dr. Young traces the origin of the prophetic institution to the promise of God made to Israel in Deuteronomy chapter 18. The prophets did not arise naturally as a counterpart to the soothsayers of Canaan, but were a definite gift of God to His people that they might learn His ways. That Christ is the perfect anti-type of the Old Testament prophets is shown by the Apostle's reference in Acts chapter 3 to His fulfilment of Deut. 18. The position of Moses as a prophet is declared to be unique, and the author soundly defends the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

The prophetic message was revealed in four ways: by word of mouth, by sight, by riddle and by a revelation of the Divine form. The prophet was always a spokesman for a superior and he declared simply what he had seen or heard. The prophets were not products of circumstances in the history of Israel, they were a special gift of God and by them He guarded the principles and practices of the Theocracy. Dealing with the Prophet and the Church, Dr. Young declares that there was no opposition between prophet and priest; the two were complementary. False prophecy, the bane of Israel's experience and the cause of great calamity for the nation, was a degeneration of the true. The source from which the message came showed the real difference between the false and the true. We are faced with a similar problem today through the presence of unbelieving men in the Christian ministry.

Dr. Young concludes with two chapters on the prophets as writers and as recipients of revelation. He shows that they had a message for a future age, that their personality was not suspended, but that the manner of revelation was suited to the type of each prophet. Chapter 8 is disappointingly brief as he deals with the Writing Prophets. We would have liked much more on the Major Prophets of the Old Testament and on the permanent value of Prophecy, with an application of the message to our own day. There is a practical conclusion of one page, and here again one would have wished for something more definite and more elaborate.

The book is excellently written, the argument is clear and simple, and the whole trend of the book easy to follow, because the author with diligence and thoroughness summarises his arguments in each chapter. It is a worthy addition to the orthodox literature on the Old Testament.

—Adam Loughridge

**EATING AND DRINKING CHRIST**, by Herman Hoeksema. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 189. \$2.50.

This is the seventh volume in a series of Expositions of the Heidelberg Catechism. The book is divided into four sections, and covers in detail the answers to questions 75-85 in the Catechism. In Section 1 the author deals with the institution of the Lord's Supper. He shows the significance and the meaning of the various symbols; what is represented by the bread and wine, the breaking of the bread and the pouring out of wine, the eating and drinking, and how by partaking in fellowship and communion we feast upon Christ through faith. He shows clearly that the Lord's Supper is more than a commemoration of His death; it is a means of grace.

In Section 2 the errors and false teaching concerning the Supper are exposed. The author reviews the positions held by the Romanists, by Luther, by Zwingli and by Calvin. He gives an accurate survey of the whole teaching on the subject from a historical and from a doctrinal angle, and the arguments are well substantiated by references to the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent on the one hand and to the Reformed Confessions on the other. He concludes convincingly that the spiritual food at the table of the Lord can only be received in a true spiritual disposition of heart and mind.

Section 3 deals in a most heart-searching manner with the question of those who would worthily partake of the Sacrament. Three distinguishing marks of a worthy communicant are listed and expounded. There must be sorrow for sin, trust in the Saviour for forgiveness of sins, and a desire for a stronger faith and for holiness in life and walk. The believer is to examine himself in the light of God's Word on these three points. The subject of self-examination is dealt with faithfully and in great detail.

The concluding section brings refreshingly before us the much neglected matter of discipline. In every true church there should be three things: the preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the Sacraments, and the right exercise of Christian Discipline. The modern Ecumenical Movement has discarded the use of discipline and has attempted to make one body of all the churches. The result is a failure. The preaching of the Word is corrupted, the sacraments are profaned, and the body thus formed, whatever it may be, is certainly not the body of Christ. The exercise of discipline in the spirit of love will glorify God, promote the well-being of the Church and the salvation of its members.

In a thought-provoking chapter on the preaching of the Gospel the author effectively argues that the Gospel is not a conditional offer to be received or rejected by man at will, but an unconditional promise of salvation to the heirs of the promise, the elect of God.

The book is a faithful interpretation of the Heidelberg Catechism. The language is simple,

the argument lucid, the tone most sincere and earnest, the appeal heart-searching and altogether full of spiritual comfort for the believer. Here and there in the book the very intensity of the author leads him to use language that is strong almost to the point of extravagance. In his evident desire to magnify the Grace of God in our salvation, the doctrine of man's depravity, with which we are in entire agreement, is over-emphasized on pages 47 and 48 to the extent of denying the existence of any good whatsoever in the unbeliever. Surely also at the top of page 136 it is not correct to say that to debar those who hold false doctrines from the Lord's Supper is essentially the same as to excommunicate them from the Church of Christ. A man may be suspended from fellowship without being excommunicated from the Church.

The book will be read with pleasure and profit by all who love the Lord and His ordinances.

—Adam Loughridge

**THE SECRET OF PULPIT POWER  
THROUGH THEMATIC CHRISTIAN PREACHING,** by Simon Blocker. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1951, pp. 209. \$3.00.

A reappraisal of Protestant emphasis is being found necessary today. With the architecture of houses of worship reflecting a trend toward an altar, Protestantism must again evaluate its distinctive possession. In the light of popular concepts it is heartening to hear voices being raised calling the Church to its real task of proclaiming the message of The Book.

Pulpit power has been sadly lacking wherever there has been a decline in respect for either the Scriptures as the Word of God, or preaching which proclaims the great themes of that Word. "Thematic Christian preaching" is defined as "the proclamation in sermonic form of God's self-revelation as contained in the Bible" (p. 13). It calls for "appraisal, grading, selection and classification. Primary stress is wisely laid on acquiring and preaching the primary meaning." It "covers both 'substance' and 'form of preaching'." It "expresses its essential spiritual message in a single sentence at the close of a brief introduction" (p. 18).

Dr. Blocker, the author of this text on "thematic preaching," is the professor of Practical Theology at Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan. He brings to the problem of effective sermonizing twenty-eight years of experience as a pastor, and sixteen years of experience as a teacher. This text, which can be recommended to pastors as well as to beginning theological students, combines emphases needed today. There is the continued requirement for careful study to gain an understanding of what God is

saying in His Word. There is the additional need to clarify the essence of the message, centered around a relevant theme, so that he who runs may understand.

That Scriptural preaching is no easy task is shown in Dr. Blocker's analysis of the problems involved. "Preaching the Gospel of Christ is the supreme, Divinely ordained and honored technique for overcoming the barriers of human resistance. Only the highest possible ideals of preaching, laboriously and prayerfully pursued, with never a let-up or a let-down, can match the hour of responsibility and opportunity to gain Christ His Crown in a world 'hell-bent for destruction.' Shun self-pity, slough off the robes of laziness, shunt away soft and easy aids: live, sweat, struggle, bleed and die to preach with earned, home-grown, God-given ability the glad tidings of redemption and the solemn alarms of coming and present doom to the impenitent" (p. 73).

The author does not limit "thematic" preaching to any one form. He discusses "thematic" preaching under the usual heads of Expository, Topical, Textual, Doctrinal and Narrative. Demonstration sermons of each of these types are included in the volume.

—S. Bruce Willson

**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.

G. C. Berkouwer is Professor of Systematic Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam. This volume on "Faith and Sanctification" is the first of a series of "Studies in Dogmatics" to be published in 19 volumes by Eerdmans.

The apparent contradiction in the mind of many American Protestants between the doctrine of *sola fide* (justification by faith alone) and the doctrine of sanctification is nothing new. The present day discussion simply indicates that the early reformers did not exhaust the subject when they challenged the teachings of the medieval church. But the emphasis upon justification by faith was often interpreted to mean that the believer is made holy on some other grounds than faith. Whereas the Scriptures are emphatic that the believer is both justified and sanctified through faith in Jesus Christ.

This discussion is not wholly theological, but deals also with the practical aspects of the struggle of the Christian life. As Berkouwer says, "The world puts Christianity on trial by asking, 'Are the children of God indeed a different breed from the rest of men?' (p. 10), and 'Is there no common sphere of operation in which to work toward the sanctified society? '" (p. 12).

Augustine's words, "Love God and do as you

like" are often used to indicate that spontaneous love replaces any need for law or sanctification. "But at bottom it reveals only one aspect of sanctification: its orientation in love for God. Scripture goes further. It teaches also love for one's neighbor and continually subordinates the human will to the divine commandments. For the law of Christ overarches the whole of our lives belonging to him. This law, though Christ's law, is nonetheless law."

"In the bond between faith and sanctification we perceive, no less than in the bond between faith and justification, the pulse-beat of the Gospel. If faith will but lift its blossoms to catch the sunlight of God's grace, the fruit will be a life imbued with holiness" (p. 193).

This discussion is greatly needed for understanding and counteracting much of the superficial "perfectionism" or "holiness" of some of the sects in America which make their interpretation of Scripture a distinctive principle. It is also a stimulating introduction to this theologian of the Netherlands, and whets the appetite for more of the promised studies of Scripture from his pen.

—S. Bruce Willson

**GOD-CENTERED LIVING**, by the Calvinistic Action Committee. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1951, pp. 270. \$3.50.

This book is a symposium published under the auspices of the Calvinistic Action Committee. The participants are drawn largely from the membership of the Christian Reformed Church. Their discussion of "Calvinistic Action" is however not limited to the activities of that denomination.

To this reviewer this symposium points the way to the fulfilment of a twofold challenge to the adherents of the Reformed Faith today. 1. It is a reminder that true Calvinism is a direct challenge to the type of Christianity which delimits the Sovereignty of God and the authority of His Word in certain areas of life. The authors indicate that to be Christian implies to the Calvinist, a God-centered perspective that views all of life as His province, and a consequent faith and action on the part of such a believer. This is particularly significant in a world which looks upon Christianity as a more or less irrelevant relic of the past, or which sees the practical problems of human existence from a purely secular point of view, or which attempts to make an orthodox version of Christian doctrine apply only to the individual "snatched from the burning."

2. The thesis developed in this symposium also belies the popular notion, fostered in many text-books on Protestantism, that Calvinism is summarily comprehended in the "five points of Calvinism." There is no question but that the "five points" are an essential part of the theological

system that bears that name. But to attempt to understand all that is contained in the theology of Calvin from the "bare bones of the five points" is to miss the chief thrust of the Reformed Faith. This aspect of Calvinistic theology is not directly mentioned in this symposium, but it makes plain to any who will examine the evidence, that the Reformed Faith is relevant to the complex of human problems today.

Dr. Clarence Bouma, Professor of Apologetics at Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, writes the Introduction on "The Relevance of Calvinism Today." In it, he indicates the principles upon which all the writers seek to find a solution to problems in many fields. They are "the principles of Common Grace, of the Antithesis, and that of Sphere Sovereignty" (p. 26). The remarkable degree of unanimity shown throughout this discussion is no doubt due to the influence of Abraham Kuyper's thinking upon the development of Calvinism in Holland and among those in this country who derive their spiritual heritage from there.

The scope of the discussion can be seen by a glance at the table of contents. Three main divisions are followed: I. Calvinistic Action and the Church. II. Calvinistic Action and Education. III. Calvinistic Action and the Political and Social Spheres.

In the first division, Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer discusses Calvinism and the Missionary Enterprise. As a world-acknowledged authority both through research and experience, the late Dr. Zwemer had the right to speak out on world missions. Covenanters would do well to read this section as an encouragement and a challenge to the future. Other articles in this division are entitled: "The Task of the Church for the Solution of Modern Problems" and "Calvinism and the Evangelization of America."

In the division dealing with Education, articles include: "A Calvinistic Program for Elementary and Secondary Education," "Calvinism and the Appreciation of Art," "Calvinism and the Problem of Recreation and Amusements." Dr. W. Harry Jellema, Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College, with his usual clear analysis points out the essential problem of Christian education in the present day as it applies to "Higher Education": We have attempted to salvage some Christian fragments, while relinquishing the "God-Centered Kingdom" which is essential to the survival of a really Christian society. Dr. Jellema shows himself to be steeped in the Pauline-Augustinian-Calvinistic tradition, when he pleads for a renewed appreciation of the "Kingdom of God" in its fullness, which cannot be realized in the pursuit of fragmentary bits of unrelated data.

It would seem that Dr. William Spoelhof, President of Calvin College, dismisses too lightly the problem of the relation of the Divine Sover-

eignty to civil government. He refers with approval to the Kuyper lecture on Calvinism and Politics, and hastens on to the practical issues of the Calvinist and political parties, pressure groups, individual participation, and general influence.

Other chapters dealing with the social sphere are: "Calvinistic Action and Modern Economic Patterns," "Calvinism and Contemporary Business Endeavor," "Social Problems," and "International Relations." An Appendix is added listing a bibliography in the field of this discussion which will be found helpful.

—S. Bruce Willson

**AN EVENING IN ANCIENT ROME: A TALK ON JUSTIFICATION**, by Thomas Bradbury. Sovereign Grace Union, 34 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. 4, England. 1952, pp. 20, paper cover. Per copy, 6d.; per doz., 4s6d., postpaid.

Here is the Pauline theology of sin, grace, the imputed righteousness of Christ and justification by faith presented in the form of a very readable conversation between a number of members of the Church in Rome, soon after Paul's Epistle to the Romans has been received by that church. Here man's lost condition, Christ's complete redemption and the way of salvation are presented in an unconventional and arresting fashion. In our day of vague general ideas about these important subjects, this booklet which brings out the Biblical precision and inter-relation of the truths concerned, is of real value.

—J. G. Vos

**PRACTICAL GODLINESS**, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 4-page leaflet. 12 cents per dozen; 80 cents per 100.

In this tract the late Mr. Pink pleads earnestly for a real concern about a life aimed at pleasing God. "Many a one engages in 'personal work' or some form of Christian 'service', while his own life remains full of things displeasing to God!" "If the young convert does not early form the habit of treading the path of practical obedience to God, then he will not have His ear when he prays!" An excellent, though brief, antidote to the superficial type of evangelism which says "only believe" and has no message about obedience to the revealed will of God.

—J. G. Vos

**A MESSAGE TO PREACHERS**, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 10-page booklet, paper cover. Per copy, 8 cents; per doz., 90 cents.

An earnest exhortation to preachers of God's Word to be diligent and faithful in the discharge of their stewardship of the Gospel. "The mere quoting of Scripture in the pulpit is not sufficient —people can become familiar with the letter of

the Word by reading it at home; it is the **expounding and application** of it which is so much needed." "No preacher should be content with being anything less than 'a man mighty in the Scriptures' (Acts 18:24). But to attain thereunto he must subordinate all other interests." This is an excellent booklet and should have a wide circulation.

—J. G. Vos

**RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE**, by Francis A. Schaeffer. Published by the author at 800 N. Union Blvd., St. Louis 8, Mo. and at Chalet Bijou, Champéry, Switzerland. 1953, pp. 24, paper cover, 8 cents; per dozen, 80 cents. 15 copies for \$1.00.

This booklet contains five short articles, which are entitled: "Righteousness and Peace Have Kissed"; "The Danger from Without and From Within"; "The Secret of Power and the Enjoyment of the Lord"; "Gardens"; "Conclusion." Though the treatment of these various themes is quite brief, it is substantial and helpful. The author pleads for giving both holiness and Christian love their rightful places in our personal and ecclesiastical lives. He pleads for a truly Scriptural administration and acceptance of church discipline as over against the rampant individualism of our day. He emphasizes that for Christian power and enjoyment of the Lord there must be both an insistence upon Church and individual purity and an insistence on love for men and their souls. He pleads for compassion for the multitudes of lost sinners who are marching onward toward an eternity in hell. This booklet is well filled with practical statements of Biblical truth and duty.

—J. G. Vos

**LETTERS TO YOUNG CHURCHES: A TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES**, by J. B. Phillips. The Macmillan Company, New York, N.Y. 1952, pp. 230. \$2.75.

This volume presents an extremely free translation of the New Testament Epistles, that is, of all of the New Testament except the four Gospels, Acts and the Book of Revelation. The translator is a clergyman of the Church of England. In his Preface he tells us that he does not hold "fundamentalist views on 'inspiration'". We do not know just what he means by this statement, but we consider it unfortunate as it apparently implies something less than a belief in the infallibility of Scripture on the part of the translator.

Every translator must make his choice between literal and free translation. The former is unquestionably the more accurate, but the latter is more readable and if competently done may give a very good idea of the original to the reader. Mr. Phillips has chosen free translation, and has sometimes carried this freedom to such an ex-

treme that the product is rather a paraphrase than a translation.

A book of this kind can be very useful if properly used. By proper use, we mean to use it as a help, not as an authority. It should be used, not by itself, but in connection with a reliable and more nearly literal translation such as the American Revised Version (1901) or Williams' translation of the New Testament.

It would seem that Mr. Phillips, in his earnest effort to make the New Testament Epistles speak the English of today, has not entirely escaped the danger of importing into them ideas which are modern rather than truly Biblical. One or two instances may serve the purpose of illustrating what we have in mind.

Romans 8:29 reads in the King James Version: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate. . . ." This is a very accurate rendering of the original Greek of the verse. It should be noted that the pronoun "whom" is the direct object of the verb "did foreknow". The object of "did foreknow" is not facts but persons. The text does not imply that God predestinated those concerning whom He foreknew that they would repent and believe on Christ; rather, it says that God predestinated those whom He foreknew. That is, those persons whom God from all eternity knew as His own special people, He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. This usage of the verbs "know", "foreknow", is a Biblical one. It means that God set His special personal affection upon those persons. It does not mean that predestination is a rubber-stamp ratification of what God knew beforehand would happen anyway.

But in Phillips' translation, this Biblical idea is simply lost, as he translates: "God, in his foreknowledge, chose them. . . ." This, we believe, not only loses the truly Biblical meaning and force of "foreknew," but also seems to imply the modern Arminian notion that God's decree of predestination is based on His eternal knowledge of the decisions His creatures would make in time.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews and elsewhere, Phillips repeatedly translates the Greek word for "covenant" by "agreement." The word "covenant" in modern usage may mean an agreement, but in Biblical usage the essential idea of God's covenant with man is certainly not agreement; rather, it is God's sovereign disposition, which man is bound to accept and obey. The word "agreement" leaves room for the idea of negotiation and ratification between parties on an equal basis. This is of course in accord with modern ideas of the autonomy of man in religion, but the word "agreement" would seem particularly ill-suited for bringing out the real meaning of the words translated "covenant" in our common English versions of the Scriptures.

We wish also to mention Phillips' inconsistency in translating particular terms. In Eph. 5:19 he translates "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," but in Col. 3:16 he translates the identical Greek terms as "psalms and hymns and Christian songs." In 1 Tim. 5:1, where the King James Version has "Rebuke not an elder," Phillips renders, "Don't reprimand a senior member of your Church." In 1 Tim. 5:19 he translates the identical Greek word as "a priest." But in Titus 1:5 he translates the plural of this same Greek noun by "elders." We believe it would be much better to use "elder" or "elders" consistently in all these and similar instances.

This version of the New Testament Epistles possesses some value for its freshness of presentation. But it will not do what no translation can ever do, namely, make the great truths of the New Testament perfectly clear to the casual reader without mental effort on his part. God's Word challenges study, not mere reading. Yet many people today are unwilling to devote any effort to studying the Bible. The main difficulty in our day is not merely the obsolete language of the King James Version. Today many people are unable to grasp the ideas of the Bible. The real solution to this problem, we are convinced, lies in raising the readers to the Bible's level. The Church must systematically teach the great concepts of God's revelation.

We shall give one verse as a sample of Phillips' tendency to paraphrase. In the King James Version Romans 3:24 reads: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This is an accurate translation of the Greek, and any difficulty that it presents is inherent in its ideas, not in its mere language; the difficulty cannot be removed without removing the ideas. Phillips renders this verse as follows: "Under this divine 'system' a man who has faith is now freely acquitted in the eyes of God by His generous dealing in the Redemptive Act of Jesus Christ." We do not believe that this has removed any of the real difficulty of Romans 3:24. In either version this text will baffle a novice in Bible truth, and he will never gain a grasp of its real meaning except by patient study or by the help of a competent teacher soundly versed in theology. There is no shortcut to a knowledge of Bible truth.

The reviewer suggests that the greatest benefit will be obtained from *Letters to Young Churches* if it is read with an open copy of the American Revised Version (1901) at hand for constant comparison. Phillips' version should not be uncritically accepted as better than the traditional versions simply because of the more modern English in it. It will be found that in many cases Phillips has attained a modern idiom at the cost of accuracy. But the verse by verse comparison of this version with the King James or ARV may be

of great value by arousing the reader to think beyond well-worn familiar phrases to the ideas they teach.

—J. G. Vos

**THE CHRISTIAN WORKER'S HANDBOOK,**  
by William Goulooze. Baker Book House, 1019  
Wealthy St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1953,  
pp. 218, pocket size. \$2.00.

This little volume is an excellent "working manual for the pastor, counselor, soul winner, visitor, and all personal workers." Part I deals with "The Biblical Basis for Christian Service". Part II presents "Bible Passages for Personal Workers" under many classifications, such as "God's relation to Man", "Excuses for not Accepting Christ Because there is no Felt Need," "Bearing Burdens." We do not wish to seem to pick flaws in such a worthy production as this book, but would like to point out that according to Scripture "Christian service" is much broader than the Christian **religious** service with which this book deals. According to the Bible, every lawful activity of a Christian is to be regarded as a service to Christ (Col. 3:23,24); in this are included such things as plowing a field, repairing an automobile engine, washing dishes, as well as soul winning and religious counseling. We believe that the prevalent tendency to regard only **religious** service as really "Christian service" is indicative of an unbiblical dualism of religion and life. We feel sure that Dr. Goulooze would agree with this, and that he did not mean to imply that the "ordinary" life of a Christian is not a service to Christ.

Part II presents "Bible Passages for Personal Workers", arranged under many categories. Part III gives "Bible Passages for Special Problems", such as affliction, fear, anxiety, sleeplessness, etc. Included is a chapter on "Facing the Isms with Scripture", giving suitable Scripture passages for dealing with eleven false systems or cults. Part IV gives "Biblical Forms for Special Services" including a form for the solemnization of marriage and "Forms for Committal of the Dead." The latter includes a form of committal for use in the burial of an unbeliever, which speaks of the deceased person as "our departed brother". This we believe to be improper if the word "brother" is used in the religious sense. We are aware of the embarrassment involved in a Christian minister conducting the funeral of an unbeliever or unsaved person. Apart from the use of the word "brother" the form in no way implies that the deceased had any Christian standing, and it is quite different from the form provided for the funeral of a believer.

There is an abundance of valuable help in this little book. The convenient size of 4 x 6½ inches (just over ½ inch thick) will add to its usefulness.

—J. G. Vos

**YOUNG'S LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY BIBLE**, by Robert Young. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1953, pp. 766. \$5.00.

This is a literal translation of the entire Bible by the compiler of the well-known Young's Analytical Concordance. Robert Young, who lived 1822-1888, was a layman of the Free Church of Scotland. As a literary missionary in India he was superintendent of a printing establishment for several years. He is chiefly remembered for his excellent Concordance, which in the judgment of the present writer has never been surpassed. His **Literal Translation of the Holy Bible** reflects his personal conviction that a strictly literal translation of the Scriptures is the only truly adequate translation. Young was obviously a thorough student of the Biblical Hebrew and Greek, and this literal translation must have required years of labor.

What a translation gains in literal accuracy it may lose in readability, especially if it is strictly literal above everything else. No one will find Young's **Literal Translation** as readable as the King James, American Revised or Revised Standard Versions. But for the ordinary reader who has no knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, this literal translation will prove a gold mine of Scripture treasure. The present reviewer knows of nothing to compare with it for the reader who knows no Hebrew or Greek. Not only will Young in many, many passages give a new insight into the exact meaning of the original, which cannot be obtained from any ordinary version, but he preserves in a large measure the idiom and word order, and hence the distinctive flavor, of the original. This is true in both Testaments, but particularly in the Old. The reader will get a better idea of what the Old Testament is like in the original Hebrew from this translation than can be gotten in any other way except by learning Hebrew.

We believe that in some instances Young has overstressed his principle of literal translation, and also that he has overstated his position concerning "The Battle of the Hebrew Tenses", where he crosses swords with several "standard" Hebrew grammarians on the translation of Hebrew "tenses" and the force of the "Waw Conversive." Hebrew really has no tenses in the sense of tenses in Greek, English or other Indo-European languages. It has only completed and incompletely completed action, and the "tense" (past, present or future) must be gathered from the context. But we do not wish to burden this review with such technicalities.

Though the type is rather small, the book is clearly printed and substantially and attractively bound. Though this translation will probably never enjoy the popularity of the "standard"

versions, it will always prove useful to the lover and serious student of the Word of God.

—J. G. Vos

**THE BEARING OF RECENT DISCOVERY ON THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**, by William Ramsay. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1953, pp. 427. \$4.50.

This is another reprint of a work of Sir William Ramsay issued by the Baker Book House. The book presents the James Sprunt Lectures for 1911, delivered at Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia. The careful scholarship and painstaking attention to detail which characterize Ramsay's work are evident throughout. In the Introduction the author tells something of his own life history, relating how he was brought to the study of the writings of Luke and Paul and the New Testament in general, and how his early critical opinions were changed by study of the evidence. In general, it may be said that Sir William Ramsay adhered to supernatural Christianity, though he did not fully accept the orthodox view of the infallibility of Scripture. There is much in the present volume which is not only intensely interesting, but which tends to confirm the reader's confidence in the integrity of Holy Scripture. The reader will get not merely opinion, but much light on the conditions existing in the Roman Empire in the days of the apostles.

The Chapter entitled "Rhoda the Slave-Girl" (pp. 209-221) suggests that Peter's deliverance from prison was not strictly a miracle, but rather a special providence, and that "there is . . . nothing improbable in the supposition that some person influential in the entourage of Herod Agrippa I. had skilfully engineered the escape of Peter" (p. 220). In other words, it is suggested that Peter's deliverance from the prison, though it was an answer to the prayers of the church, was accomplished not by a real angel but by some human being who had access to the inside of the prison. This theory does not commend itself to us. We believe that the incident is related in Acts as miraculous and not merely providential. The theory is very ingeniously developed by Ramsay. We believe that Peter and Luke knew the difference between miracles and special providences very well, and that both represented the deliverance as supernatural in the strict sense.

There are some other things in the book that we do not agree with, but we found the volume intensely interesting and well worth careful reading. There are a number of photographs and drawings showing archaeological discoveries. The book is well printed and bound.

—J. G. Vos

**THE DAWN OF WORLD REDEMPTION: A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF SALVATION IN**

**THE OLD TESTAMENT**, by Erich Sauer, translated by G. H. Lang. 1952, pp. 206. \$3.00. (Designated in review as Vol. 1).

**THE TRIUMPH OF THE CRUCIFIED: A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF SALVATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**, by Erich Sauer, translated by G. H. Lang. 1952, pp. 207. \$3.00. (Designated in review as Vol. 2).

Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich.

These two volumes—originally published as one in German—have been translated also into Dutch, Swedish and Norwegian, with editions in Spanish and French in preparation. Few books have recently received such unqualified words of praise from recognized evangelical leaders—O. Hallesby, Wilbur M. Smith, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, C. Stacy Woods, C. F. Henry, and others.

In these books the point of view is that the Scriptures are God-inspired and therefore inerrant and wholly dependable.

The pre-creation "history" of salvation and the treatment of the events to come in God's plan following the vindication of the righteous from the "judgment seat of Christ" constitute perhaps a third of the two volumes. As might be expected, in view of this fact, there is considerable interpretation of Scripture that has not found expression in the historic creeds of the Church. Perhaps this is why Prof. Wilbur M. Smith says, "There are things here which previously have not even been hinted at in the more popular volumes dealing with Old Testament theology."

This work is definitely dispensational in character. It represents a refinement of this system as portrayed in the Scofield Reference Bible, but contains no radical departure from Darby dispensationalism. Sauer contradicts—but does not name—Scofield with regard to Eph. 3:6 (Vol. 1, p. 65) as to the mystery of the Church, and as to the identity of the kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven in Scofield's note on Matt. 6:33 (Vol. 1, p. 23). He adheres to the seven-fold division of all time, though he names these dispensations somewhat differently from Scofield, and omits the first (Vol. 1, pp. 50 ff.).

In illustrating the necessity for distinguishing the dispensations, Sauer draws material from distinctions between Old Testament times and New Testament times (Vol. 1, p. 194). Protestantism is unanimous in acknowledging this distinction. He has failed, so far as this reviewer can see, in giving any substantial help in Scripture interpretation through the other dispensational divisions.

While seeking to be true to the idea of the sovereignty of God (Vol. 1, p. 23), he never really comes to grips with the central truth of predestination. "But out of the number of the wicked He chooses individual wicked men (for example,

Pharaoh of Egypt; Rom. 9:17), so as to show in them a special example of His power to judge; and out of the number of believers He chooses individual believers so as to make them special agents for tasks in the outworking of salvation (1 Cor. 12:4-11, 29, 30). It was in this sense that even Abraham was called" (Vol. 1, p. 90). "But the

new birth has man's conversion as a presupposition, . . . " (Vol. 1, p. 122).

The distinction between Old Testament Israel and the Church is strenuously maintained (Vol. 2, p. 144) — a distinction which runs counter to Reformed theology at many points.

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

## *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.

**Publications of Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich.**

**AN EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW,** by Alfred Plummer. 1953, pp. 451. \$5.00.

**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH: SEVEN SERMONS ON ISAIAH 53,** by John Calvin. 1953, pp. 133. \$2.00.

**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA,** by Herman N. Ridderbos. 1953 pp. 238. \$3.50.

**COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS,** by F. W. Grosheide. 1953, pp. 415. \$5.00.

**COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE,** by Norval Geldenhuys. 1952, pp. 685. \$6.00.

**REVELATION AND INSPIRATION,** by James Orr. 1953, pp. 224. \$3.00.

**Publications of Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich.**

**SERMONS AND OUTLINES FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS (Symposium).** 1952, pp. 100. \$1.75.

**THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS,** by F. B. Meyer. 1952, pp. 261. \$2.50.

### **Publications of Other Firms**

**REFORMED STANDARDS OF UNITY, WITH INTRODUCTION BY LEROY NIXON.** Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952, pp. 119. \$1.25.

**THE SILENCE OF GOD,** by Robert Anderson. Kregel Publications, 525 Eastern Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 232. \$2.00.

**EDUCATION IN CYPRUS,** by Wilbur W. Weir. Published by the author, c/o American Academy, Larnaca, Cyprus, 1952, pp. 312. \$3.50 postpaid.

**TOWARD A REFORMED PHILOSOPHY,** by William Young. Piet Hein Publishers, 1300 W. Butler St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952, pp. 157. \$2.50.

**DIVORCE,** by John Murray. Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Belvidere Road, Phillipsburg, N. J. 1953, pp. 117. \$2.50.

## *Blue Banner Question Box*

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

### **Question:**

Please publish a review of **Letters to Young Churches,** by J. B. Phillips.

### **Answer:**

See review in **Reviews of Religious Books** in this issue, pp. 158-160.

### **Question:**

Just what is the difference between the Re-

formed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church and the Free Church of Scotland?

### **Answer:**

The two bodies named have much in common, though there are some important points of difference between them. Down to the year 1660 their historical background is identical. From 1660 to 1688 was a period of persecution in Scotland during which the government attempted to force the Prelatic (Episcopal) Church on the people and

nation of Scotland. In 1688 the Revolution brought religious freedom. Following this the Revolution Settlement (1688-1690) restored the Presbyterian Church as the official or established Church of Scotland. However it was on a somewhat different basis from that prior to 1660. The National Covenant of Scotland was ignored, as was the Solemn League and Covenant. The Presbyterian form of church government was adopted, but not on the ground of being the only Scriptural form of church government. The Episcopal form of church government was rejected, not on the ground that it was unscriptural, but because it was "a grievance" contrary to the wishes of the people of Scotland. The Church of Scotland as re-established by the Revolution Settlement was an impure and corrupt church. Many of the worldly Episcopal "curates" and of the compromising "indulged" Presbyterian ministers were admitted to its ministry without any evidence of repentance or real Presbyterian convictions. And the Church of the Revolution Settlement was unable to prevent infringement of its freedom by the state.

A few thousand loyal Presbyterians had refused all compromise and had kept their faith and integrity through the period of persecution. Their ministers, one after another, had been arrested and put to death, ending with James Renwick in 1688. They had no church organization, but were bound together in a fellowship called the United Societies. At the time of the Revolution Settlement they approached the General Assembly of the newly re-established Church of Scotland in the hope that some of the evils in that body might be corrected so that they could conscientiously join it, but their earnest pleas were hastily and heartlessly brushed aside by the General Assembly. Compromise was in the air and the Assembly had little patience with these people who stood for the historic Covenants of Scotland. So a considerable number of these Covenanters became dissenters, remaining separate from the established Church of Scotland. They continued their separate existence in the form of societies until the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland was organized in 1743.

In 1863 the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland split into two parts over the question of political dissent. The majority gave up political dissent as a matter of church principle, while the minority retained it as a necessary requirement for church fellowship. Thus there came to be two Reformed Presbyterian denominations in Scotland. In 1876 the larger of the two united with the Free Church of Scotland. The smaller body continues to the present day as the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It has sister synods in Ireland and North America.

The Free Church of Scotland traces its separate history back to the Disruption of 1843. The Church of Scotland following the Revolution Settlement was soon troubled by the doctrinal laxity of many of its ministers and the compromises

made when it was organized. The "Moderate" party, made up largely of the "curates", preached a bloodless, graceless "gospel" of salvation by works, or moralism. This party, which had no zeal whatever for real Presbyterian faith and principles, gradually gained control of the church machinery. Meanwhile the Patronage controversy became more and more acute. Ministers were forced on congregations against the wishes of the membership, after being nominated by a "patron." Matters became worse and worse. All efforts to remedy the evil were fruitless; the Church of Scotland was very sick. Finally in 1843 matters came to a crisis under the leadership of Thomas Chalmers. Government interference with the freedom and government of the church had become intolerable, and all possible remedies had been exhausted without effect. Out of 1203 ministers in the Church of Scotland, 451 left the established Church and constituted the Free Church of Scotland. The Church thus formed was a strongly evangelical and Calvinistic body, having shaken itself free from the evils which clung to the established Church. In 1900 the majority of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland united with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The minority protested against this union on the ground that it compromised some of the historic principles of the Free Church. This minority continued the Free Church of Scotland on the basis of its historic principles. Their claim to be the real Free Church of Scotland was disputed by the United Free Church, but in the end the House of Lords decided the dispute in favor of the smaller body, which was declared to be legally the Free Church of Scotland. This body continues to the present day as a pure, faithful, witnessing, orthodox Calvinistic Church in Scotland.

With regard to differences between the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Free Church, the following are the most important points:

1. The Reformed Presbyterian Church does, and the Free Church does not, hold the principle of political dissent, that is, of not voting or holding political office under the present constitution of Britain (or America).
2. The Free Church holds "the establishment principle", that is, it holds as a matter of principle that it is the nation's duty to establish the true religion as the State Church. The Free Church holds that the Church has the right to be established as the national church, and at the same time the right to maintain its own jurisdiction without government interference. This is held, not as a mere matter of expediency, but as a matter of principle. The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland historically held the same position, but in America, at least, has adopted the **separation of church and state** as a matter of principle. The American R. P. Testimony (XXIX.7) declares that Church and State are, not only distinct institutions, but **separate** institutions. This is contrary to the

principle of establishment held by the Free Church.

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

In discussing Rom. 14 (**Blue Banner Faith and Life**, Oct.-Dec. 1952) you say that a person's conscience may err and need correction. Yet later on you state that it is wrong to encourage those who have scruples about certain things, to lay them aside. If the "weak brother" has scruples about things that are not really wrong, may it not be our duty to try to instruct him more fully, so that he may be relieved of his erroneous scruples?

**Answer:**

The discussion of Rom. 14 referred to perhaps failed to make quite clear the distinction between persuading a weak brother that his scruples are mistaken, and persuading him to act contrary to them while he still believes that they are binding upon him. Certainly it is right, and it may be our duty, to attempt to lead a "weak brother" into a fuller understanding of the principles of God's Word, so that he will no longer be burdened by scruples about things which are not really sinful. If we are successful in this attempt, the "weak brother" will no longer be weak; having escaped his erroneous scruples, he will be strong, he will have a truly Scriptural attitude toward the matters in question. But it is not right to try to persuade the weak brother to disregard his scruples; that is, to do what he believes to be wrong, while he still believes it to be wrong. The apostle says, "He that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). It is one thing to try to instruct a weak brother in order that he may become strong; it is something quite different to encourage the weak brother to copy the conduct of the strong Christian while he is still "weak", that is, burdened with scruples, in a doubting frame of mind about the matter.

— J. G. Vos

**Question:**

If Rom. 14 teaches that it is wrong for a person to do anything which he believes to be wrong, and we should not encourage a "weak brother" to violate his conscience by doing something he considers wrong, then how could we invite Roman Catholics to Protestant evangelistic meetings to hear the Gospel? And how could we ask Buddhists or Mohammedans to read the Bible, or attend the preaching of the Gospel?

**Answer:**

The "weak brother" whom Paul discusses in Romans 14 is not an adherent of a false system or a heathen religion, who needs to learn the way of salvation. On the contrary, he is a saved Christian, whom God has already received (verse

3) and who knows, loves and worships the true God (verse 6.). This "weak brother" is definitely a Christian, but he is hampered and burdened and entangled by scruples which are really groundless. It is not wrong to eat meats, but the weak brother thinks it is wrong. He is mistaken, but his motive is one of love and thankfulness to the God who has redeemed him (verse 6). Such persons, Paul tells us, are to be gently dealt with, and as long as they are still burdened by their scruples, we must not try to get them to do what they (mistakenly) believe to be sinful.

The case of a person who is involved in Romanism or in a non-Christian faith is very different. This person may be quite sincere in his erroneous belief. But he is not in the position of the weak brother whom God has already "received"; he is outside of Christ, and needs salvation. The mistaken beliefs of the unsaved are not the same thing as the mistaken scruples of saved but weak Christians. In the case of the unsaved, of course we must disregard their false beliefs and their misguided conscience, and must do all we can to bring them into contact with the true Gospel of Christ.

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

Why did the apostle Paul, in discussing the question of the weak brother's scruples about eating meats, etc., in Rom. 14, not refer to the Apostolic Council of Acts 15 where it was once for all decided that the precepts of the ceremonial law are not binding on Christians?

**Answer:**

The Epistle to the Romans was written after the Council of Acts 15; therefore the apostle could have mentioned the decision of the Council, had it been his purpose to do so. As a matter of fact, however, he does not mention it. The question is raised as to why it is not mentioned.

While at first sight it would appear that Acts 15 and Rom. 14 deal with the same question, the fact is that they do not deal with exactly the same question. The Judaizing teachers who were the occasion for the Council of Acts 15 persistently taught that obedience to the ceremonial law of the Old Testament is necessary for salvation (Acts 15:1). The Council was concerned, therefore, with condemning a false doctrine of salvation and clearing the true doctrine of salvation. In Romans 14, on the other hand, there is no question of a false doctrine of salvation. The weak brother who is there discussed believes on Christ for salvation, and God has received him (verse 3). The issue in Rom. 14 is not the true versus a false doctrine of salvation, but how the strong in faith ought to conduct themselves in relation to the scruples of the weak brother. The two chapters have in common a consideration of certain ceremonial precepts, but in Acts the question is one

of the way of salvation, in Romans it is one of Christian ethics. Of course, Paul could have mentioned the fact that the Jerusalem Council had declared the ceremonial law not binding on Christians. But he does not mention this fact in Rom. 14. Why, we cannot say. Possibly the reason was that he felt it would confuse the issue by introducing the question of what is necessary for salvation. Evidently the "weak brethren" of Rom. 14 were sound in their belief as to the way of salvation; they were not counting on their abstaining from meats, etc., to gain them merit before God; they realized that we are saved by the blood and righteousness of Christ alone. Yet they felt — mistakenly — that they must observe these ceremonial precepts as a matter of thankfulness and devotion to God (verse 6). If these "weak brethren" of Rom. 14 had been trusting in their own works or abstinences for salvation, Paul would never have treated them so mildly as he did. When a false view of salvation — a false gospel — was involved, Paul was always outspoken in his condemnation of it; see for example Gal. 1:6-9; 3:1-3; 5:11,12; Col. 2:14, 20-23. But in Romans 14 Paul is dealing, not with a false gospel, but with weak Christians.

—J. G. Vos

#### **Question:**

An objection has been raised against the word "damaging" in Section 2 of the Reformed Presbyterian Church Covenant of 1871. The objector stated that he could not think of the Baptist Church as "damaging". How can this objection be answered?

#### **Answer:**

The sentence of the Covenant in question reads as follows:

"Believing Presbyterianism to be the only divinely instituted form of government in the Christian Church, we disown and reject all other forms of ecclesiastical polity, as without authority of Scripture, and as damaging to purity, peace and unity in the household of faith."

It should be noted that the Covenant does not say that "the Baptist Church is damaging". It says that unscriptural forms of church government are damaging to purity, peace and unity in the household of faith. This does not imply that a Baptist or Episcopal Church is not a Christian Church, nor does it in any way deny or disparage the good work that may be done by some denominations which we believe have an unscriptural form of church government.

Augustine of Hippo, the greatest Christian thinker between the apostle Paul and the Reformation, said: "Every lesser good involves an element of sin." This statement is strictly true, and we should ponder it well. If there are two forms of church government, and one of them is less

Scriptural than the other, then the less Scriptural form involves an element of sin. Everything that falls short of absolute conformity to the will of God revealed in Scripture, involves an element of sin. This does not necessarily mean intentional or deliberate sin. In most cases it may be unconscious, unintentional sin. But sin it is, none the less. "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God" (Shorter Catechism, 14). Many people have an inadequate idea of what sin is. They think something is not sinful unless it is done with deliberate sinful intent. But that is not correct. Sin is anything that is not fully in harmony with the absolute will of God. Our lives are full of sins that we are not conscious of and do not even recognize as sins. "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Psalm 19:12).

To say that unscriptural forms of church government are damaging to the purity, peace and unity of the church is no reflection on the Christian character, love, zeal or devotion of those who hold to these forms of church government. Many of these people may be, in some respects, more devoted to Christ than we are ourselves. Our Covenant itself recognizes the Christian devotion of many in other denominations, when it says in Section 4: "Considering it a principal duty of our profession to cultivate a holy brotherhood, we will strive to maintain Christian friendship with pious men of every name, and to feel and act as one with all in every land who pursue this grand end."

While gladly recognizing the Christian character and graces of many from whom we differ about church government, we must none the less assert that the Episcopal and Congregational (or Independent) forms of church government are unscriptural, and therefore they are wrong. The fact they are maintained by many fine Christian people does not make them Scriptural. To answer the questions "What is true?" and "What is right?" we must turn to the Bible alone as our supreme authority. The fact that many Christian people believe something does not make it true; nor does the fact that many Christian people do something make it right.

We must honestly face two questions: (1) Does the Bible set forth a form of church government? (2) If the Bible sets forth a form of church government, what form is it?

The great majority of American evangelical Christians have never faced either of these questions. They have simply accepted the existing forms of church government uncritically. The prevailing opinion is that the form of church government is "non-essential" and that any form is all right if the majority is in favor of it. Such people really have no convictions on the subject of church government. They have only some customs and traditions.

A minority of American evangelical Chris-

tians, including some Episcopalians, Baptists and others, have studied the question of the form of church government and have come to the conclusion that a particular form of church government is Scriptural and therefore right. We freely recognize their right to their conscientious convictions. But just as they have a right to their convictions, so we have a right to ours. Baptists do not hesitate to say that the **Presbyterian** form of church government is unscriptural. We give them credit for sincerity in their conviction, even though we believe they are mistaken in their interpretation of the Bible. But why should objection be raised against our saying that the Independent form of church government is unscriptural?

We believe that Baptists, though sincere in their adherence to the Independent form of government, are mistaken, and we believe the reason they are mistaken is because they have not yet studied the Scripture data on this matter thoroughly enough. It is not a simple matter by any means. On the contrary, it is difficult and complicated. But it is not impossible to arrive at a sound conclusion. We believe (1) that the Bible does set forth a form of church government; (2) that the form of church government set forth in the Bible is, in its essential elements, the Presbyterian form; and (3) that therefore any other form of church government is out of harmony with the will of God revealed in Scripture, and therefore sinful.

Those of our readers who are interested in a brief outline of the Bible evidence for the Presbyterian form of church government are referred to the article entitled **Bible Authority for Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods**, by the Rev. Frank D. Frazer, in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, July-September 1952, pages 119-123.

But is the Independent form of church government, as held by our Baptist friends, really "damaging to purity, peace and unity in the household of faith"? We believe that it definitely is, and we shall give a brief statement of the reasons below.

1. The Independent form of church government is damaging to **purity** in the household of faith. In the Independent form of government, there is no authority having jurisdiction over more than a single local congregation. The Baptist conventions are advisory only, and possess no jurisdiction over the local churches. Now suppose a minister is preaching heresy. Suppose, for example, he is preaching evolution and denying the Deity of Christ and His substitutionary atonement. It often happens that a minister can get his own local congregation pretty well convinced that he is orthodox, when in reality he may be very unsound. Under the Independent form of church government, the ministers and members of other congregations of the same faith cannot take any positive action to correct the evil. They

have no jurisdiction over the matter. At most they can withdraw from fellowship with a congregation which has an unsound minister. But they cannot correct the evil by disciplining the offending minister. Thus there is no way of enforcing purity in the household of faith under this system. Under the Presbyterian system, on the other hand, any member or minister of the denomination can bring charges against any other member or minister and the matter can be adjudicated to a final conclusion by the courts of the church (presbytery, synod, etc.).

2. The Independent form of church government is damaging to the **peace** of the household of faith. It provides no right of appeal from the decision of a local congregation. Everyone knows that in our civil judicial system decisions of local courts are often reversed by the higher courts, and in important matters an appeal can be carried clear to the Supreme Court of the United States. It often happens that because of prejudice, ignorance, or other causes, injustice occurs in local courts, but by appeal to higher courts or to the Supreme Court the effects of prejudice or ignorance can be removed and real justice obtained. Why should members of a church be denied the right of appeal which is recognized as a basic right in our civil structure? Under the Independent form of church government, a member who has been treated unjustly by a local congregation has only two courses open to him: (1) he can put up with the injustice and continue as a member of that church; or (2) he can protest against the injustice by leaving that church. He has no right of appeal by which real justice can be obtained. A system which leaves injustices without any adequate remedy, we believe to be truly damaging to peace in the household of faith.

3. The Independent form of church government is damaging to **unity** in the household of faith. By its rejection of the right of appeal and by its rejection of church courts having jurisdiction over more than a single local congregation, this system in effect denies the unity of the visible church. It denies, in effect, that **the church is one body**. We do not mean to say that those who adhere to the system mean to deny this truth, or that they realize that they are denying it. But we believe that the system involves a practical denial of the unity of the church. In this system, the eye can say to the hand, "I have no need of thee", and the head can say to the feet, "I have no need of you" (1 Cor. 12:20,21). What a congregation does is held to be its own business, and other congregations and their ministers have no right to meddle with it. There is no sense of corporate responsibility of all the congregations of the same faith; corporate responsibility is felt only within the local congregations. We believe, on the contrary, that the fact that the church is a body implies that it must be a unity and that every member and officer of **any** congregation has a responsibility before God for the welfare, purity

and orthodoxy of all the members and officers of all the congregations of that faith. The Presbyterian form of church government does, and the Independent form does not, provide a practical recognition of the unity of the church beyond the limits of the local congregation.

We trust that we can hold our own conscientious convictions on this subject without any personal ill-feeling toward any Christian brethren who hold different views on the same subject. They are responsible to God for their beliefs, just as we ourselves are. We feel, too, that many of these denominational differences could be settled if only the churches wanted to settle them earnestly enough. The churches of the present day are not willing to pay the price for real church union on the basis of Scripture. See the article entitled **The Visible Church: Its Nature, Unity and Witness in Blue Banner Faith and Life**, October-December 1951, pages 165-168, especially the last paragraph on page 167-8.

— J. G. Vos

**Question:**

Is it sinful to take out a life insurance policy? Does this involve lack of trust in the promises and providence of God? Is an insurance policy an attempt to get something for nothing, and therefore essentially the same as gambling?

**Answer:**

The question of the propriety of insurance has troubled many conscientious Christians. Those who are convinced that insurance is sinful should of course avoid it as long as they continue in that belief, "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23); that is, we are not to do anything which we do not believe to be right. However, we believe that those who consider insurance sinful are mistaken, and that a more thorough study of the question in the light of God's Word should lead them to the contrary conclusion.

The questions involved can be reduced to two: (1) Does insurance involve lack of trust in God? (2) Is insurance a form of gambling? If either of these questions can rightly be answered "Yes", then it is our Christian duty to abstain from insurance in all its forms. The present writer, however, believes that the proper answer to both questions is "No".

\* 1. Does insurance involve lack of trust in God? Insurance is a device by which sudden and great financial needs or losses are spread over a long period of time and distributed among a great number of people. It is the latter aspect which specially concerns us here. A man pays, say, \$20.00 per year as premium on a fire insurance policy. The same is done by thousands of other individuals who hold policies in the same company or association. These premiums, paid by all the policy-holders, pay for the sudden and great losses suffered by the few whose homes are

destroyed by fire. In other words, each policy-holder pays a small sum each year, in order that no policy-holder may suffer a calamitous loss. This is a use of human society to spread or distribute the burden of loss by fire. In principle it is the same as life-insurance, accident insurance, public liability insurance, and other types of insurance. The loss which would be financially ruinous to any one individual is distributed over many individuals in the form of premium payments. Thus each policy-holder not only benefits himself but also benefits others. From the human standpoint it is not a certainty that any particular individual will suffer loss of his home by fire, but it is practically a certainty that out of every hundred thousand homes, say, a certain number will be destroyed each year by fire. Insurance is a provision that the many who pay premiums shall share the financial loss of the few whose homes are destroyed by fire.

Does this involve a lack of trust in the promises and providence of God? Those who hold that it does usually fail to realize that trust in God is not contrary to the use of proper means. God's ordinary way of working is through means or "second causes". A farmer trusts God to give him a crop, if it is His will, but that does not mean that he need not plant any seed. A sick person should trust God to make him well, if such be God's will, but this does not mean that the use of medicine, physicians and hospitals must be avoided. God gives us food to eat; He gave the Israelites manna from heaven, but ordinarily He gives His people food by the use of natural means, such as soil, sunshine and rain. To reject the use of proper means, and still expect God to care for us and provide for our needs, is not really trusting in God; rather, it is tempting God by despising the means which He has provided by which suffering and need can be relieved or avoided.

"He works through means as a rule. He has put in creation such resources and forces and laws that one thing is dependent on the other, and altogether constitute an organized whole. God is the first cause of all things, but it is His rule to carry out His plans through means or second causes. . . . It is our duty to study the resources and laws of everything and then learn to use them for our welfare and God's honor. It is not a healthy conception of divine providence that leads man to neglect the means and to expect strange interventions from above" (**Exposition of Reformed Doctrine**, by M. J. Bosma. Quoted from third edition, Grand Rapids, 1907, pp. 81-2).

Human society is part of the "organized whole" which God has created, just as truly as are sunshine and rain. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). It is the present writer's conviction that it is not wrong to avail oneself of the device of a human social organi-

zation to distribute human burdens and losses, any more than it is wrong for a farmer to avail himself of the soil, sunshine and rainfall which God has created.

2. Is insurance a form of gambling? In gambling a person tries to get something of value by a relatively trifling expenditure, the outcome being determined by "chance", that is, by the humanly incalculable outcome of an act such as throwing dice, spinning a wheel, etc. Gambling is essentially different from insurance in that the former is not a social effort to provide for unpredictable but legitimate needs in human society. Insurance is the distribution over a section of human society of the losses incurred through fire, accident, death of a breadwinner, etc. Gambling lacks this character entirely. It is truly an attempt to get something for nothing by playing with what is called "chance" (but is really the providence of God). Therefore, the present writer believes, gambling is sinful, while insurance is legitimate.

There may, indeed, be some forms of insurance which are akin to gambling and therefore are sinful. To suppose a hypothetical case: if a reader of this magazine were to take out an insurance policy on the life of Malenkov, the dictator of Soviet Russia, naming himself as the beneficiary, that would, we hold, be gambling. For the readers of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" are not dependents of Malenkov, nor is he in any way obligated to provide for them. But for a man to take out life insurance naming his wife and children as the beneficiaries is entirely different. For by God's appointment they are his dependents. A man's death may mean financial tragedy to his wife and children. The fact that God in His Word has made special promises to widows and orphans in no way cancels the obligation to use proper means when they are available.

Does the holder of an insurance policy attempt to get something for nothing? Does the beneficiary actually get something for nothing? We believe not. What he gets is security provided by distribution of loss over a large group of individuals. And does he get this for nothing? Certainly not. As the security of the individual is provided for by the entire group, so also each of the individuals pays for the security of all the others in the group. It is a case of each for all, and all for each.

While we have sympathy with those brethren who have conscientious scruples about insurance, nevertheless we believe that though sincere they are mistaken, and that insurance as such is not sinful.

— J. G. Vos

#### Question:

What should we believe about freedom of re-

ligion? If it is not permissible to steal and murder, why should it be permissible to propagate atheism? Has not the so-called freedom of religion gotten us into the condition we are in today?

#### Answer:

It is SIN that has gotten us into the condition we are in today. The only bondage of the human race is the bondage of sin. "He that committeth sin is the slave of sin."

God is the Author of freedom and all its blessings, as He is of life itself. God created man in His own image; made man a free agent, "unrestrained in his volitions by the immutable decree of God." Man was perfectly free to know and believe the truth, and to do the right, i.e., to live a life of perfect freedom. However, "Man, by his fall into a state of sin hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation." He did not lose all ability to will, but his freedom to will was curtailed within the narrow confines of the state of sin.

Then God, in His mercy, set about to deliver him from the state of sin and bondage into a state of salvation and freedom by a Redeemer. He does this, not by forcing man against what will he has left, but by giving him, dead in sin as he is, a new life, a new heart, mind and will to be exercised in a new state of grace.

"When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin; and by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil" (Westminster Confession of Faith, IX.4). Please study all of Chap. IX ("Free Will") and Chap. XX ("Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience").

Sin is no light inconsequential. Deliverance from its bondage is not even possible except by infinite love and wisdom and almighty power. The above quotation shows, about as clearly as words can, the situation faced by Christians today. It is an exceedingly complex and difficult situation. It involves inescapable conflict. But God has it in His absolute control. He works in perfect accord with His original decree of freedom for man, and His sentence of death upon all who will to disobey Him.

Of course, it is no more "permissible" to propagate atheism, or any false religion, than to steal or murder. There is only one Lawgiver. His law is one and indivisible. And He "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent," for the day of judgment, in which we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, is set and comes on apace.

Yet we are not permitted, nor able, to force

or compel a man to believe the truth, or to do the right. But there is plenty we can and ought to be doing which we are not doing as we should. And we should be deeply thankful to God, and mindful of the blood of the martyrs of the Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries shed, for the freedom we have in the United States of America to do what God has commanded us to do. We can much more fully do the part God has assigned us in His plan. We can give a far larger and more faithful witness, by word and manner of life, for the truth, the commandments, and the mercy of God. We can expose sin where we find it. We can expose the "so-called" freedom of religion, which has no God, no religion, and no freedom, or is one of ten thousand approximations to such a state of terror and anguish and death. We could do this far more intelligently and efficiently, if we would more earnestly and prayerfully study God's Word; if we would apply the great principles of truth revealed therein, and summarized in the Church Standards which we have acknowledged, but seem so reluctant, or ashamed to use. So far as these principles are not made known and applied, ignorance and confusion run rampant. Ignorance and confusion are among the most dangerous enemies of freedom, the chief allies of totalitarian tyranny, whether in state or church.

Again we see Churches and nations and peoples, that had proved unfaithful to God, being deprived of their freedoms. It is time to wake up and exert ourselves for the truth that makes men free (John 8:31,32).

— F. D. Frazer

**Question:**

What should we believe about attempts to convert men? Is it proper to select an individual for conversion with the expectation that if we are earnest and patient enough, this person will eventually be converted to Christ?

**Answer:**

The preceding question is preparatory to this, and should be considered first. This was evidently framed in view of a conspicuous tendency of modern evangelism to be "man-centered rather than God-centered"; to concern itself with man's believing rather than with an adequate setting forth of the only proper object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ as offered in the Gospel; to concern itself with man's praying rather than with the will of God; with man's power rather than with the power of the Holy Spirit. In charity we should suppose that this change of emphasis is due to ignorance, yet it is none the less dangerous to all concerned. (The reader is referred to the article *The Trend of Modern Evangelism* in the January-March 1953 issue of this magazine, p. 3).

To know what to believe about attempts to convert men, we should know something of how

men are converted. The Westminster Confession of Faith gives a summary of what God has said on this subject. Please study all of Chap. X, "Effectual Calling."

"All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time effectually to call by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving to them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace."

"This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it."

From this we learn that only God can convert a man, for it is done by His giving a new life, a new heart, and mind, and will, and a new freedom. He does this only in those whom He has chosen by His own sovereign election. This we cannot understand, but from all else we know of Him, we can trust Him to do what is right and just and best.

So, evidently, we are not to attempt to do what only God can do. We are not to imagine that we can select where His election has already determined what shall be done. And, we are not to expect that our poor, fickle earnestness or patience could accomplish anything of itself. God's infinite labor of love and long-suffering patience are required.

BUT, — God often uses His people as His servants; uses them as instruments in His hand for the accomplishment of His will. And when the Holy Spirit lays upon our hearts an individual in need, or more than one, we are called to do what we can, — not what we cannot — to be workers together with God as He may direct by His Word and Spirit and providence. But our faith must be in Christ, not in ourselves. Our prayers must be conditioned as Christ taught us, "not my will, but thine be done." We must remember that without Christ we can do nothing. When Jacob wrestled with God, the first thing that happened was the utter defeat of Jacob, Jacob the supplanter, the self-reliant. Then when he gave up the struggle, admitted his helplessness, and put all his confidence in God unreservedly, he prevailed; he received a new name. Though he "halted" in his walk on earth, and was still sometimes called "Jacob," he went on winning the victory and held his name "Israel."

And there is a crown of righteousness awaiting all those who have centered their love on "His appearing," i.e., on Christ's **manifestation of the power and glory of God**, — not on their own imagined abilities and achievements (2 Tim. 4:8).

— F. D. Frazer

**Question:**

Is it correct to say if you are saved you are bound to know it?

**Answer:**

It is correct to say if you are saved you are bound to know it eventually, but it may be that you are not fully assured of it now. Our knowledge is a matter of degrees. But it can be increased.

Roman Catholics capitalize on keeping men in perpetual doubt and uncertainty as to their salvation. Arminians, by denying the certainty of the perseverance of the saints, teach that it is impossible for one to know from one day to another whether or not he will be finally saved.

The Westminster Confession of Faith establishes from Scripture, "The Perseverance of the Saints" in Chap. XVII; then "Assurance of Grace and Salvation" in Chap. XVIII. The reader is urged to study both chapters, and especially the First Epistle of John, which was "written that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

The attainment of a satisfying knowledge, an "infallible assurance" of personal salvation, by using ordinary means, is not only a possibility, but the duty of every believer. This the Scriptures teach, 1. **by many exhortations:** Peter, after showing how to do it, urges all believers, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (1 Pet. 1:3-11). Paul exhorts, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5). "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Heb. 6:11). 2. **By revealing the marks of true believers:** "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." 3. **By the testimony of many saints:** "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

This assurance is "founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidences of those graces unto which these promises are made, and the testimony of the

Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God." This is a triple foundation consolidated,—

**1. Of Unchangeable Truth,** the infallible Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. He said, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people." "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." This comprehends His covenant everlasting, of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator and Surety. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." I believe, therefore, I am saved.

**2. Of Facts of Experience.** There is no room for doubt about the Word of God. That is absolutely sure. But, do I truly believe? Do I know Him whom I believe? Or, am I deceiving myself? I must have substantial evidence about myself. Am I really sorry for my sin? Do I abhor it, and turn from it to God for righteousness? Do I love God above everything else? Do I love the brethren? Do I delight in the law of God, and am I keeping His commandments? Am I getting rid of the chains of sin? These things are factual, of personal experience, and can be appraised by a man for himself.

**3. Of Unimpeachable Witness.** I find substantial repentance, love, new obedience and new freedom, but where did these things come from? Am I producing them of myself because they are desirable and of good report? Am I after all a hypocrite? Or, is my righteousness from God? Is my liberty that liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free? To answer such questions, I need the witness of another who knows and can be depended on. Accordingly, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16).

In this connection we should remember that "witness" in Scripture is not only by audible word, or voice, but rather by the presentation of evidence. As in Heb. 2:4, God is said to bear witness with signs and wonders, manifold miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. So, for the witness of the Spirit here we are not to expect a "voice." We are to look for proof as He shows us. Read Rom. 8:13-21. As the Spirit of the truth, He is our Teacher. He takes of the promises of God and shows us what we have in fulfilment of those promises; that our liberty is the liberty of the sons of God. He is the Spirit of adoption, who enables us to act toward God as to our own Father. He enables us to say that Jesus is **LORD**, in the full Scriptural meaning of that title (1 Cor. 12:3). He is the Spirit of life. He shows where our new life came from by its activities and its growth.

By many such demonstrations it becomes settled in your minds, and you know that "you were sealed by the Holy Spirit of the promise" (Eph. 1:13, 14).

— F. D. Frazer



# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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"The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

Jeremiah 23:28,29

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## **What Then?**

By J. Whitfield Green (adapted)

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

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

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

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

## **Linger Not**

By Horatius Bonar

The time is short!  
If thou wouldst work for God it must be now;  
If thou wouldst win the garland for thy brow,  
Redeem the time!

Shake off earth's sloth!  
Go forth with staff in hand while yet 'tis day;  
Set out with girded loins upon the way;  
Up! Linger not!

Fold not thy hands!  
What has the pilgrim of the cross and crown  
To do with luxury or couch of down?  
O Pilgrim, on!

With His reward  
He comes; He tarries not: His day is near;  
When men least took for Him will He be here.  
Prepare for Him!

Let not the flood  
Sweep the firm feet from the eternal rock;  
Face calmly, solemnly, the billow's shock,  
Nor fear the storm.

Withstand the foe!  
Die daily, that thou may'st forever live;  
Be faithful unto death: thy Lord will give  
The crown of life.

## **I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes**

By John, Duke of Argyll

Unto the hills around do I lift up  
    My longing eyes:  
O whence for me shall my salvation come,  
    From whence arise?  
From God the Lord doth come my certain aid,  
From God the Lord who heaven and earth hath  
    made.

He will not suffer that thy foot be moved:  
    Safe shalt thou be.  
No careless slumber shall His eyelids close  
    Who keepeth thee.  
Behold, He sleepeth not, He slumbereth ne'er,  
Who keepeth Israel in His holy care.

Jehovah is Himself thy keeper true,  
    Thy changeless shade;  
Jehovah thy defence on thy right hand  
    Himself hath made.  
And thee no sun by day shall ever smite;  
No moon shall harm thee in the silent night.  
  
From every evil He shall keep thy soul,  
    From every sin:  
Jehovah shall preserve thy going out,  
    Thy coming in.  
Above thee watching, He whom we adore  
Shall keep thee henceforth, yea, for evermore.

(Based on Psalm 121)

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## *Sketches of the Covenanters*

By J. C. McFeeters

### Chapter VIII

#### Men of Might — A. D. 1596

Jesus Christ is "the King of Glory; the Lord strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle." His servants, filled with the Holy Spirit and devoted to His cause, grow like Him in moral courage and irresistible action. Every age supplies the opportunity for heroic service.

The Church has always had mighty men willing to venture their lives, when religion and liberty were attacked; but at no time has there gone forth a more illustrious band whose heart God touched, than in the last years of the Sixteenth century. The tide of defection was then rolling in upon the Church with desolating violence. The truth of Christ's supremacy was being submerged beneath the waves of Episcopacy. The right of Christ to rule His Church was disputed by King James, and claimed as his own prerogative. The true servants of God writhed in shame and sorrow, as they saw the diadem of Christ snatched from His brow and clutched by a presumptuous man. The times demanded men who would not quail in the presence of the sceptered monarch; or at his threats of imprisonment, banishment and death. The soldiers of the cross stepped forth. The "threescore valiant men of the valiant of Israel" were there, standing about the KING OF KINGS; "every man with his sword on his thigh, because of fear in the night."

Andrew Melville was chief among the captains in those days. His face was luminous with an inner light; his eye pierced through the countenance of his adversaries; his bearing overwhelmed his enemies with the innate majesty of truth and holiness. What a torrent his electrified soul poured forth when he opened his mouth and protested against the wrongs done to Jesus Christ and the Church! His eloquence was like a rushing river, an irresistible Niagara. Like Knox, it was said, "He never feared the face of man." In private and in public, in the pulpit and through the press, he reproved kings, princes, judges, and nobles for their sins. He did his best work when he met them face to face. The dishonor done to Christ by denying His royal rights made his blood boil, and fired his soul with vehement love in defence of his Lord and Master. But he suffered for his faithfulness. He was imprisoned; yet four

years spent in jail, eating bad bread, breathing foul air, sleeping on a hard bed, groping in the darkness, lonesome in the pest-room, brought him no regret for preaching Christ. From prison he went into banishment, and from banishment, home to heaven. In his last illness he was asked if he desired the return of health. "No, not for twenty worlds," was his spirited reply.

John Davidson also shines in history as a minister of dauntless courage. He breasted the destructive flood of declension, and endured the buffeting of the waves. His humility prepared him for great service in the kingdom of God. He was deeply grieved by reason of the loose doctrines and practices prevailing within the ministry. The Church was infected and corrupted with the inventions of man. Through his effort the General Assembly held a special meeting in 1596, to observe a fast and renew the Covenant of 1581. The meeting was held on the 30th of March of that year. The showers of spring were falling, the mountain streams were flowing, the fields were putting on their soft verdure, the flowers were appearing in their beauty — all nature seemed to be breaking forth into holy laughter through her tears. How impressive this emblem of the memorable meeting, where earnest men prayed and wept and sobbed and sat in sadness and silence, in the presence of God, confessing their sins! Then, with uplifted hands, they "made promise before the Majesty of heaven to amend their ways." A great revival followed, and many hearts were made glad. Two years later Mr. Davidson met the king, and, refusing to submit conscience to his tyrannic will, was cast into prison.

John Welch, too, is found in the front ranks of the Church's noblest defenders. His wife, Elizabeth, daughter of John Knox, was his equal in courage and steadfastness. His life caught high inspiration from her faith, and her heart gloried in his heroic spirit; the two mountains were alike high.

King James had determined to crush the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. That Assembly stood in his way as he strode toward

despotic power. He must remove the hindrance, or fail in his ambition. He commanded the Assembly to hold no more meetings, except by his permission. Against his royal decree, a few bold-hearted men met on the first Tuesday of July, 1605. This was the last free General Assembly for a whole generation. In 1618 this court of God's house disappeared altogether under the king's despotic rule, till 1638, when Scotland arose once more in the power of the Lord, and renewed her Covenant.

John Welch was one of the few ministers who braved the king's wrath, and approved of the forbidden meeting. Within a month he was in jail. The place of his detention was called "Blackness." In his little cell, damp, dark, foul, and lonely, he had time to reflect. He remembered his happy home, faithful wife, loving children, garden walks, sweet sunshine, soft breezes, pleasant Sabbaths, inspiring pulpit, glowing audience — he could now think of all, and see the cost of fidelity to Jesus. Did it pay? He could lay his aching head on its hard pillow, and dream of the happiness that was gone, and awaken to ask if it had been worth while. Did it pay to be true to Christ? Listen; he speaks from his prison: "We have ever been waiting with joyfulness to give the last testimony of our blood to Christ's crown, scepter, and kingdom."

Welch found his great strength in prayer. Prayer to him was conversation with God. His soul was familiar with Jesus. He often arose from his bed to talk with God. He kept a shawl at hand, when at home, to cast over his shoulders during these rapturous hours. In the summer nights he spent much time under the trees in communing with the Lord of heaven. To him the stars lost their brilliancy in the presence of the Bright and Morning Star. His soul took many a bath in the ocean of eternal light. On one occasion his wife listened to his mysterious talk with God. He was in the agony of earnestness. "Lord, wilt not thou give me Scotland?" he cried.

Then followed the outpouring of contentment: "Enough, Lord, enough." At another time, the awful glory of the Lord was let in upon his soul, till he called out, "O Lord, hold Thy hand; it is enough; Thy servant is a clay vessel and can hold no more."

Mrs. Welch was as heroic as her husband. When she pleaded with the king for his release, he consented, on condition that Welch would recede from his position. Mrs. Welch, lifting up her apron in the presence of the king, replied, "Please, your majesty, I would rather keep his head here!" referring to the axeman's block, and the head rolling from it into her apron.

The sovereignty of Jesus calls for heroic lives. This royal truth, defended by the fathers, at the cost of much blood, must yet be lifted up in the sight of the world. Brave men and women are needed now as much as ever, even those who count the honor of Jesus worth more than life, yea, more precious than all that the heart holds dear on earth.

#### POINTS FOR THE CLASS

1. What great principle in the Church was here at stake?
2. How did Christ's servants contend for His supremacy?
3. What notable men did God raise up for the occasion?
4. By what means was the Church again revived?
5. What violence did the Presbyterian Assembly suffer by the king?
6. How long was the Assembly suppressed?
7. What was the secret of power in these defenders of the truth?
8. State the present need of moral heroes.

(To be continued)

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## *The Nature and Meaning of the Lord's Supper*

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, a symbolic action; not God's way of saving men, but a true picture of that way, exhibited that it may be known among all nations. It is a holy ordinance instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, and its proper observance explicitly commanded by Him, therefore, one of the most important duties of the Christian. That it may be attended to intelligently and acceptably, its nature and meaning are plainly told in the words of Christ. It is:

1. A **Communing** of believers together with Christ and one another. For, "Jesus took bread

(a loaf), and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' "And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink all ye of it, for this is my blood of the covenant.' "Take this and divide it among yourselves'."

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a **communion** (joint participation) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we brake, is it not a **communion** (joint participation) of the body of Christ? Since there is one bread (loaf), we, the many, are one body, for all we are partakers of

that one bread." (I Cor. 10:16, 17). In other words, "Believers form one body by virtue of their **joint participation of Christ**." All that believers can and do have in common with Christ is that which they receive from Him. The essential unity of the church, as the body of which Christ is Head, is to be realized and exhibited in this sacrament.

A believer may at any time, have communion with Christ in the Word and in prayer, —alone, or in company with others. But a sacrament is not for him alone; not of private administration. Of the Lord's Supper, we acknowledge that "receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other alone . . . is contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ." (Conf. Faith, xxix, 4).

From Heb. 3:14, we know that "We really have become partakers of Christ, if indeed we hold fast, firm unto the end, the beginning of our confidence ('hypostasis', the substantial foundation of our faith)." The if here is momentous. It reminds us of the condition necessary to our having anything in common with Christ, and that the purpose of the sacrament is to be:

2. A **Commemorating** of Christ by those who know Him. "This do in remembrance of me." Literally, "This do ye with a view to mine own proper recall to mind", i.e., This do ye with the purpose of bringing Me as I am to remembrance, by your concerted action.

The Greek word Christ used, translated "remembrance", is an unusual word. Plato defined it as "a flood-tide of thought that had ebbed." Olympiodorus, as "the rebirth of knowledge." (Trench, Synonyms). The action, accordingly, which Christ commands is to be **within** the minds of the disciples, who have met with Christ before, have learned of Him, have some knowledge of Him received as the substantial foundation of their faith. But even Christians are prone to leave Christ unthought of. Now they are to bring up from memory, from the subconscious into full consciousness, what they know of Christ.

Hence, the Lord's Supper is not merely a "memorial," a thing that acts on the mind from **without**. When Christ meant "memorial" He used the right word for it, a word different from the one used here, as when He said that Mary's loving tribute would be "**told** for a memorial of her." If the sacrament were merely a memorial, it would be for all alike, as the Word is for all. If it were merely a memorial, there would be no necessity for "self-examination", which is not prerequisite to sharing the Word.

But since in this sacrament Christ asks of me what I know of Him, self-examination becomes imperative. Do I possess **within me** the knowledge to discern the Lord's body?—the knowledge revealed by His Word and Spirit—a knowledge increased by the exercise of faith, repentance, love, and new obedience? In effect, Christ re-

peats His question, "What think ye of Christ?" What others may say of Him is set aside from this Table. The important thing here is: What do you Reformed Presbyterians, you Covenanters, know of Christ? Who is He? What did He do? Why did He do what He did? What is He about to do? What have you held fast as the substantial foundation of your faith, and intend to hold firm unto the end?

Our answer is ready. Here is what we know, plainly stated in our Confession of Faith, our Declaration and Testimony, our Books of Government, Discipline, and Worship. This is what we have learned of Christ, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, from His own Word. This, by the help of Him who Christ said "shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you", is what we now recall of Christ as He is,—not only as **Priest** who offered Himself a sacrifice for our sins, and continues to make intercession for us with His blood; but also as **Prophet** by whom God speaks His truth to us; and as **King** whose commands we obey, by whose grace, and under whose protection we live.

The oneness of the assembled body of believers is further realized and exhibited in the Lord's Supper as:

3. A **Covenanting** of believers with God through Jesus Christ, and with one another. "And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink all ye of it, for this is My blood of the covenant which is poured out for many unto remission of sins'." "This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is poured out for you."

This "new covenant" is God's sovereign offer to men of eternal life, which is **knowing** the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent, written, in the light of God's providence in history and experience. It presents God's promises for man's faith, and God's commandments for man's obedience, the only infallible rule of faith and conduct.

The believer signifies his acceptance by taking and drinking the cup that symbolizes the ratification of the covenant by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. This act, being performed by each individual present, becomes the **joint action** of the Church present in its accepted faith, government, and worship.

Then the solidarity of the Church, and the membership of the individual in the body of Christ are confirmed in this sacrament as:

4. A **Confirming**, or **Sealing** ordinance. On **God's part**: it is "made effectual to the elect for salvation." (SC 88). "Christ and the benefits of the new covenant" are not only represented, but also "sealed and applied to believers." (SC 92); but this "only by the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them." (SC 91). The covenant was sealed

once for all by the blood of Jesus Christ, but God in His loving kindness adds many comforting assurances. Having believed in Christ, "ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of the promise, who is an earnest of our inheritance." (Eph. 1:13, 14). "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life" as an immediate possession." (Jn. 3:36).

**On the believer's part:** "He that hath received His (Christ's) testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." (Jn. 3:33).

But the knowledge of Christ brought forth in remembrance of Him is not only for the communion and covenanting of believers, but now that it has been confirmed in the new life of believers, it is to be offered to all men. It was called up for acknowledgment, and now acknowledgment is to be made public. And this by the Lord's appointment of His supper to be:

**5. A Public Proclaiming, Witnessing, Confessing Action.** "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do proclaim the Lord's death till He come." (1 Cor. 11:26). The word rendered "proclaim" is a compound word, which by form and usage defines the proclamation as public, authoritative, complete and definite (to be understood). It is a confession-in-union of faith in the whole Word and Covenant of God as centered in and confirmed by the death of Jesus Christ, proclaimed from the platform of the Church, "the pillar and ground of the truth." This is more than any individual can do alone. He can give his personal witness at other times, but here he is contributing to the more powerful witness of the Church.

But certainly, if there is to be real communion, not confusion; if there is to be a clear understandable testimony, not Babel, there must be agreement beforehand by all the participants as to what is the truth of Christ and what is to be proclaimed concerning Him.

Thus the Lord's Supper, in its every aspect, COMMuning, COMmemorating, COvenanting, CONFIRMing, CONFessing, appears as a joint, concerted action of one united body,—the Church administering it to its members. The individual partaking has the privilege of acting **only as a member** of that Church. There is nothing else he can do in this sacrament. The necessary and sufficient condition for partaking is exactly the same as for membership in the Church. **The significance and force of the Lord's Supper are in its being the action of the Church, not of an individual.**

Here let us remind ourselves that the sacrament is a **symbolic** action. The first thing required of any symbolism is that it truthfully express its meaning. By his act of partaking each individual declares that the creed and profession of this Church is his own creed and profession. As a member, he has been instructed, and knows what he is doing.

With the proclamation of the Lord's Supper there goes an insistent invitation to all people. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!" Everyone, therefore, should know,—if he does not know he should be informed,—as to what the Lord's Supper is, what it means. Then if he does not agree with the profession of the Church administering it, he will not want to act as if he did. He is an honest person. If he does agree he will accept the invitation declaring his agreement, and he will be cordially welcomed.

The church has always had formal Confessions of Faith, not only as summaries of Bible truth for teaching and testimony, but as defense against opposing doctrines and practices. The faithful church has kept its testimony equal to the need. Among the earliest of these Confessions that have been preserved, is what is known as the Apostles' Creed. We have some records of its growth from smaller beginnings. But there is in it no testimony for the Covenant of Grace; none for the Scriptural worship and government of the church; not because these things were not regarded as essentials, but simply because they were not at issue at that time. The Christian church grew up within the synagogue, which was bound in the Covenant of Grace, and therefore, the Scriptures so far as written were its standards of doctrine, of worship and of government. Its government was Presbyterian, the laws of God administered by courts of elders. The Scriptures were read and explained. The Psalms were sung. There were no other songs to sing in the worship of God. There were no instruments of music, for these belonged to the altar in the temple.

In process of time, the Word of God was neglected, then the church, especially in its larger and wealthier congregations, became corrupt in government and worship and doctrine. It had to be reformed to save its witness for Christ. The Reformed Confessions restated the great truths that had been denied and thrown away.

Again apostasy has become so generally "advanced", away from the foundation which is Christ, that a new reformation is urgently called for. The same old errors and opposition continue, albeit with other names and faces. If we should attempt to compromise the testimony of the Lord's Table that has been entrusted to our administration, by so much would we lower the testimony of the church as a whole for Jesus Christ. The Covenanter Church has been preserved for a purpose. Today it faces a great responsibility and a great opportunity for a new fidelity to Him for whom we have professed a superior loyalty. It is our business to hold fast the foundation of faith, and "whereunto we have attained, by that same rule to walk." (Phil. 3:16).

The writer in closing, adds a word of personal testimony. I was born and grew up in the United Presbyterian Church. I have witnessed its sad decline,—not in numbers or wealth—but from an

exceptionally high and clear Scriptural testimony to the depths of modern liberalism and the confusion of the "ecumenical movement." I speak in general, for there are still some coming out of her. Her first official step in this decline was to leave the matter of Sacramental Communion to the autonomy of the local Session. Within less than 25 years all the distinctive principles of the United Presbyterian Church were commonly being violated, and some of them officially repealed. And the United Presbyterian Church is not an isolated case.

Many other Churches now in spiritual decline, began to slip when the testimony of the Lord's Table was compromised in the interest of "brotherly love," or something. It is easier and more successful to attack the church from the inside, rather than the outside. The specious

argument is always put forth that lifting the terms of Church membership from the Lord's Table will benefit and not harm the Church. But if our terms of Church membership are Christ's terms, as we declare, then they belong to His Table, which is an integral part of our witness for Christ, and our obligation to Him. **Administration of the Lord's Supper according to Christ's institution is a primary test of the fidelity of the Church.**

The division of the church is a great evil, but the root of that evil lies in man's hatred of the truth and refusal to let matters of faith and conduct be determined by the Word of God. They are not chargeable with that evil who hold fast the unbreakable Scripture as the only infallible rule of faith and life.

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## *The Social and Economic Responsibility of the Visible Church*

By J. G. Vos

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(Continued from last issue)

### **III. The Witness of the Visible Church in the Social and Economic Spheres**

#### **1. Study of the Scriptures in Relation to Social and Economic Problems**

If the Church is under obligation to bear a testimony concerning social and economic matters, as Calvinism necessarily implies, it must be recognized as of the utmost importance that this testimony shall be **Scriptural**. The Church is to bear witness to the truth of God, not to the theories or prejudices of men. It is precisely at this point that a great deal of current and recent purported social and economic application of Christianity breaks down. What claims to be the "social gospel" or a social application of the ethical implications of the gospel, often turns out to be an alien fruit that has been produced by a strange vine and is wrongly labelled "Christian" and urged upon the Church as if it were a genuinely Christian product. The word "Christian" has become so debased that it is often applied to whatever the user believes to be good, reasonable or beneficial, quite regardless of whether or not it is really Christian in the sense of historic Christianity.

A real social and economic witness for the Church, then, must proceed from the Scriptures, not from human theories about sociology and economics. The important thing is to ascertain with accuracy what the Scripture teaches, first

about the realms of society and economics, and the relation of the Christian to them; and secondly, what the Scripture teaches about the relation of the visible Church as an institution to these spheres.

Every Christian is of course under obligation to search the Scriptures and to seek to understand and apply their teachings to all of life. Ministers and theologians must undertake such study in a special way, and those who are properly qualified should endeavor to search the Scriptures exhaustively and formulate their teachings systematically, for the benefit of the Church as a whole, since obviously such specialized and intensive study of the Scriptures cannot be undertaken by every Christian, or even every minister, for himself.

In our day it often falls to ecclesiastical committees to undertake studies and bring in reports on matters assigned to them. In such cases the temptation often exists to abide by the obvious, the generally accepted and traditional views on social and economic questions. These traditional positions may of course be Scripturally correct, but Church committees should not simply take this for granted but should avail themselves of the best possible assistance and should seek to present really thorough and convincing exegesis of the Scriptures in support of their conclusions. Surely there is room for great advance and improvement in this respect. In our age, however, even the Church is often impatient of thorough study and investigation, and insistent on a "practical" emphasis. We should always realize that nothing can be really practical unless it is founded on truth, and that nothing in the Church's witness

can be accepted as truth unless it can be shown to be really **Scriptural**. Patient study, careful exegesis of the Word of God, is the absolutely necessary groundwork and presupposition of any really sound and adequate testimony in the social and economic spheres as in any other sphere.

## 2. Formulation of Creedal Doctrine

The Scriptural truth ascertained in process of time by investigation on the part of Christian people, and especially ministers, theologians and ecclesiastical committees, should eventually result in a measure of agreement with respect to the subjects involved, in the visible Church or a particular branch of it, and should then crystallize in the form of definite creedal doctrine which will be documented in confessions of faith, catechisms, testimonies or other formal creedal standards. This does not imply, of course, that the formulation of creedal doctrine represents the attainment of the Church's legitimate social and economic objective, but only that it is a proper, and highly desirable, element in such attainment. For creedal doctrine is the corporate witness of a particular branch of the visible Church. It is the landmark of progress made in agreement on the teachings of the Word of God. As such it constitutes the Church's manifesto to the public and also the norm of truth, subordinate to the Scriptures, for the Church's own internal life.

Clearly this work of formulating creedal doctrine relating to social and economic matters has in the past been accomplished only in a very imperfect and partial manner. There remains very much land yet to be possessed. But it would be a mistake to assert, as some do, that until the twentieth century no Church in its creed paid any attention to "social justice" or "the social teachings of Jesus". Such statements are gross exaggerations. Only part of the task has been accomplished, it is true, but part has been accomplished, and that part no inconsiderable part.

Contrary to the sweeping assertions that are sometimes made, "social justice" is not a recent discovery; only certain special theories of it are

recent. When a person claims that "social justice" as a concern of the Church is something new, it will usually be found upon investigation that what is meant is not really **social justice** as such but **Marxian socialism** in one form or another. What is recent is the man-centered, humanistic conception of "social justice", that is, social justice regarded not as a duty owed to God, but regarded from the standpoint of its "value" to humanity. Indeed, the whole idea of "values" in religion and ethics may be said to be not only relatively modern, but perverse. When religion is professed because of its "value" (that is, of course, its value to man), then man and not God is regarded as the center of the universe; when ethical virtues are practiced, not because they are **right**, but because they have "value" to humanity, then the idolatry of man-worship has already triumphed.

As a matter of fact, the great Reformed creeds are far from blind to social justice, even though we may freely recognize that there remains a vast unfinished task. Mention may be made of the teachings of the Westminster Confession on the civil magistrate (or the State), on marriage and divorce, on war, and on oaths—all of them matters in the social sphere. Particularly worthy of mention is the long section in the Westminster Larger Catechism dealing with the Ten Commandments (Q. 98-148), especially the portion dealing with the second table of the Law (Q. 122-148), which presents a carefully worked out and detailed discussion of social and economic obligations, solidly and squarely grounded on the Scriptures at every point. This section of the Larger Catechism is worthy of much more attention than it has commonly been given. Although written more than three hundred years ago, it has stood the test of time and will be found to present a very thorough summary of the teachings of the Bible on social and economic matters. Certainly it is vastly superior to the collections of nebulous ideas and subjective opinions that sometimes pass for advanced studies in "social justice" today.

(To be continued)

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# *Sketches from Our History*

## *Contending for the Faith Through the Ages*

### CHAPTER VIII

#### JOHN CALVIN, THE REFORMER OF GENEVA

(Continued from last issue)

##### 5. Calvin Banished from Geneva

The young Calvin — he was about 27 years of age — was full of zeal and enthusiasm for the reformation of religion at Geneva according to

the Word of God. With his colleague Farel he started work on the most urgent elements of reformation. But he was soon to learn what every faithful servant of God must learn — that the sacred cause to which he had dedicated his

life was regarded with indifference by many professing Christians, and with downright opposition by others. No real work for God makes much progress without meeting opposition. The devil is quite willing to let dead "Christians" and churches alone, but when someone starts a really vital work for God, Satan will stir up opposition and trouble.

Geneva had renounced Roman Catholicism, but very little had been done in a positive way to set the religious life and the Church in order. Many religious and moral evils persisted, which would have to be faced and dealt with. Calvin and Farel were practical men and they did not try to do everything at once, but wisely proceeded step by step in the work of reformation. They took up the most urgent matters first. Approaching the city council of Geneva, they asked for the adoption of three proposals: (1) That the Lord's Supper be administered each month, and that ungodly persons be excluded from partaking of the sacrament by Scriptural church discipline, including, when all other measures failed, the sentence of excommunication; (2) that a creed or doctrinal statement of 21 articles be accepted and sworn to by the citizens of the city; (3) that a catechism for the instruction of children and youth, prepared by Calvin, be adopted.

These proposals were at first accepted, and began to be put in operation. But soon discontent and opposition began to arise. A party known as the Libertines became influential and bitterly opposed the work of reformation. The Libertines were supported by those citizens who wished to live as they pleased and who resented any interference with what they regarded as their personal liberty. This opposition was partly occasioned by the very strict moral regulations which had been put in force and which involved civil penalties. Dancing and card playing, for example, were punished by the magistrates. Calvin held that these types of recreation were not wrong in themselves, but he felt that they had been so abused that the only proper remedy was to prohibit them altogether.

There was also opposition to some features of the religious worship as reformed by Calvin and Farel. The festival days — Christmas, New Year's Day, Annunciation Day, Ascension Day — had been abolished as religious or holy days. The use of common bread in the Lord's Supper had been introduced, in place of the old practice of using unleavened bread — a practice which was retained in the Swiss city of Bern. Farel had introduced a very simple form of worship in Geneva. But there were those who wished to introduce the liturgy of Bern. Another matter was the use of baptismal fonts, which was retained at Bern but rejected at Geneva.

Some of these matters were clearly more important than others. Calvin was willing to yield on some of the points at issue. He later declared that he would be willing to allow the use of unleavened bread in the Lord's Supper, the use

of baptismal fonts, and to have public worship on the "festival days" provided these days were not regarded as holy days — the people must be allowed to go about their ordinary business once the church services were dismissed. But Calvin was strongly opposed to the intervention and dictation of the civil authorities in these religious matters. He was jealous for the authority and jurisdiction of Christ's Church. When it was attempted to impose the Bernese liturgy on Geneva by State power, Calvin absolutely refused to consent.

Matters came to a head early in 1538 when Calvin and his associates refused to administer the Lord's Supper in the Bernese form, and on Easter of that year refused to administer the sacrament at all, holding that the people were not in a fit state of mind to partake of the Lord's Supper. The civil authorities had prevented any adequate practice of church discipline, but they forbade Calvin and his fellow-pastors (Farel and Viret) to preach. The ministers ignored this ban and preached the Word of God, though refusing, as stated above, to administer the Lord's Supper.

This was a real crisis. The reformers were promptly banished from the city by action of the city council, which was confirmed the next day by a majority vote of the general assembly of the citizens of Geneva. So Calvin and Farel had to leave Geneva. They went first to Bern and later to Zurich where a synod of Swiss pastors was to meet. Calvin explained his position to this synod, stating that he was willing to make concessions on some matters, as explained above, but he positively would not yield on the matter of church discipline, which must be allowed, and which must be under the jurisdiction of lawful church officers, without interference by the State. Calvin also stated that he wished the Lord's Supper to be observed more frequently — at least monthly — and that congregational singing of the Psalms should be practiced in the churches. On this basis the Zurich synod attempted to mediate between the reformers and the people of Geneva, to persuade them to receive their pastors back. But through opposition of some of the leaders at Bern, this plan was frustrated, and the only outcome was a second decree of banishment issued by Geneva.

Calvin and Farel decided to separate, the former going to Strassburg and the latter to Neuchatel. Calvin remained at Strassburg from May, 1538, to September, 1541. Though he was disappointed at the way things had turned out at Geneva, he welcomed the freedom from strife and the opportunity for study. But God's plans for reformation at Geneva involved better days in store for the city. Though the work of reformation there seemed to be all but wrecked, it would rise again, and God's true servants would be vindicated in His own time.

(To be continued)

## *Religious Terms Defined*

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

**SCEPTIC.** One whose religious attitude is that of doubt rather than that of faith; in particular, one who doubts the existence of God, the truth of the Bible, the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, etc.

**SCHISM.** An unjustifiable division in the Visible Church. (In every case of denominational division, at least one party is guilty of the sin of schism. The guilt does not necessarily rest upon the minority or separating party; it may rest upon the party separated from, which by defection from the truth may have made the separation necessary. (See **R. P. Testimony**, XXI.5).

**SCORNER.** "One who treats any person or thing with contempt" (Buck's **Theological Dictionary**). A common form of religious scorning is the contemptuous rejection of some doctrine or principle which the scorner does not understand, and will not take the trouble to study. Those who say that, no matter what the Bible teaches, they will not believe in the doctrine of predestination, are religious scorners.

**SELF-EXAMINATION.** The Christian duty of calling ourselves strictly to account, in the light of God's Word, for our attitudes, thoughts, actions and neglects. It is a Scriptural duty (2 Cor. 13:5), and to be specially exercised in connection with the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:28).

**SEPTUAGINT.** The Greek translation of the Old Testament, made in Egypt about 285-150 B. C. It is called the "Septuagint" from the Latin word for "seventy" because of a tradition that the work of translation was done by 70 scholars (more precisely, 72, but 70 was preferred as a round number). This version of the Old Testament is often designated by the abbreviation **LXX**.

**SIMONY.** The sin of obtaining, or attempting to obtain, any church office by bribery or other corrupt practices. The name "simony" is derived from Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24), who attempted to purchase the gift of the Holy Spirit with money. Simony is a violation of the Second Commandment; see **Westminster Larger Catechism**, 109.

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## *Some Noteworthy Quotations*

"We approve not of the intemperance of those who do everything tumultuously, and would rather burst through every restraint at once than proceed step by step. But neither are those to be listened to who, while they take the lead in a thousand forms of impiety, pretend that they act thus to avoid giving offence to their neighbor, as if in the meantime they did not train the consciences of their neighbors to evil, especially when they always stick in the same mire without any hope of escape. When a neighbor is to be instructed, whether by doctrine or by example, then smooth-tongued men say that he is to be fed with milk, while they are instilling into him the worst and most pernicious opinions. . . . But granting that such dissimulation may be used for a time, how long are they to make their pupils drink that kind of milk? If they never grow up so as to be able to bear at least some gentle food, it is certain that they have never been reared on milk."

—John Calvin

"From peace that is bought at the expense of truth the good Lord deliver us!"

—J. C. Ryle

"Unconverted souls seldom take delight in the ordinances of Christ. They see no beauty

in Jesus, they see no form nor comeliness in Him, they hide their faces from Him. Why should you wonder, then, that they take no delight in praying to Him continually, in praising Him daily, in calling Him blessed? Why should you wonder that the preaching of the cross is foolishness to them, that His tabernacles are not amiable in their eyes, that they forsake the assembling of themselves together? They never knew the Saviour, they never loved Him; how, then, should they love the memorials which He has left behind Him?"

—Robert Murray McCheyne

"The days were in this land when men had much zeal for Christ. They thought themselves happy to be zealous for God's name; and now we have the same opportunity that our fathers had, who put all in hazard for the doctrine, worship, discipline, and form of government of the house of God. They put themselves into the state of the quarrel to get the Gospel in its purity transmitted to posterity in succeeding generations. But, Oh, how few men will now quit anything for Christ! Will ye not do so much as quit these things? I tell you that ere long you and these things shall be for ever parted asunder."

—Richard Cameron

## *People and Places in the Psalms*

DAVID. 18:50; 72:20; 78:70; 89:3,20,35,49; 122:5; 132:1,10,11,17; 144:10; also in titles of many Psalms. The second king of Israel, son of Jesse and father of Solomon. Besides being the author of many of the Psalms, David figures in the Psalter as the chosen anointed king of God's people, and thus as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true Messiah or "Anointed One" of God. Psalm 89 is particularly noteworthy in this respect, speaking of the everlasting, unbreakable covenant made with David; what is said of David in this Psalm is true in the fullest and deepest sense of Christ; note, for example, verses 26, 27, 29, 36. Of all the blessings and honors granted by divine grace to David, none is greater than his privilege of being a type of the Messiah.

EDOM. 60:8,9; 83:6; 108:9, 10; 137:7. A country located to the southeast of the Dead Sea, and its ancient inhabitants, who were descended from Esau, the grandson of Abraham and brother of Jacob. Thus the Edomites were racially akin to Israel, though their attitude was often hostile (Num. 20:14-21; Psalm 137:7). In Psalm 83:6 Edom is listed as one of the nations conspiring against Israel. In Psalms 60 and 108 we read "over Edom will I cast (out) my shoe"; on this expression Barnes comments: "Edom or Idumea was the country which still remained unsubdued. This David was anxious to possess, though the conquest had been delayed and prevented by the adverse circumstances. . . . It was a region whose possession was necessary to complete the acquisition of territory that properly pertained to the Promised Land; and David was now intent on acquiring it. He here expresses the utmost confidence that he would succeed in this, notwithstanding the adverse events which had occurred. It is supposed that there is allusion in the expression 'I will cast out my shoe,' to the custom, when transferring a possession, of throwing down a shoe on the ground as a symbol of occupancy. Comp. Ruth 4:7. . . . The idea is, that he would take possession of it, or would make it his own." In the New Testament, the notorious Herod family was of Idumean (Edomite) race, though seeking to be regarded as Jews.

EGYPT. 68:31; 78:12,43,51; 80:8; 81:5,10; 105:23, 38; 106:7,21; 114:1; 135:8,9; 136:10. Ancient Egypt was the country watered by the Nile River from the first cataract to the Mediterranean Sea, including also a chain of oases in the western desert, and the region between the eastern mouth of the Nile and the "River of Egypt" (which formed the boundary between Egypt and Palestine). In Psalm 68:31 Egypt is spoken of prophetically as a country from which rulers shall come and ac-

knowledge the true God. "Egypt is referred to here as one of the most prominent of the foreign nations then known; and the idea is, that the distinguished men of foreign nations—the rulers and princes of the world—would come and submit themselves to God, and be united to his people" (Barnes). In the other references to Egypt in the Psalms, the emphasis is on ancient Egypt as a mighty power set against God and God's people. The tremendous events of the days of Moses are recited, and it is emphasized that the almighty power of God delivered His People from that land of bondage and cruelty. Thus considered, Egypt stands for Satan's kingdom, and God's deliverance of His people from Egypt teaches us the lesson that by divine grace we are redeemed (a) from an objective realm of evil; and (b) by the almighty power of God alone. Compare Ex. 20:2; 12:12. This lesson is greatly needed today when the tendency is to emphasize the subjective side of religion at the expense of the objective side.

EPHRAIM. 60:7; 78:9,67; 80:2; 108:8. Ephraim was the younger son of Joseph and Asenath, born while Joseph was in authority in Egypt. The name Ephraim is often used in Scripture to designate the tribe descended from this individual. In the Old Testament prophets, however, the name is often used for the northern ten tribes, of which the tribe of Ephraim became the chief. The reference of Psalm 78:9, "The children of Ephraim being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle," is presumably to the ten tribes after their revolt from the Davidic dynasty. The meaning is evidently that because of their apostasy from the true worship of God, the seat of government and worship was transferred to another tribe, that of Judah (see 78:67, 68). "There is probably no reference here to any particular battle, but the idea is, that in the wars of the nation—in those wars which were waged for national purposes—they refused to join with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in defence of the lawful government" (Barnes).

EPHRATAH. 132:6. A name of the city of Bethlehem, also written Ephrath (see Gen. 35:16-19; 48:7; Ruth 4:11; Micah 5:2). Bethlehem is noted as "the city of David" and as the birthplace of our Lord. The single mention of it in the Psalter concerns the re-discovery of the ark of the Covenant. It was at Ephratah that the seekers heard of it; later they found it "in the fields of the wood"—perhaps at Kirjath-jearim, which means "Forest Town" or "City of the Woods" (see 1 Sam. 7:1).

# *Studies in the Epistle to the Ephesians*

## LESSON 14

### II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21, Continued

#### 3. The Mystery of the Church. 3:1-21, Continued

##### (b) Paul's Own Connection with this Mystery. 3:7-9

Paul was made a minister, that is, a servant, of this mystery by the grace and power of God (3:7). He calls himself "less than the least of all saints," perhaps because he had formerly persecuted the Christian Church; compare 1 Cor. 15:9, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

Paul was the special apostle to the Gentiles (3:8). Hence it was his special work to make "all men"—not merely the Jews, but the Gentiles also—see what is the fellowship of the mystery, that is, the fellowship of the Christian Gospel and Church. This great truth, hidden in the secret plans of God from eternity, slightly revealed in the Old Testament, now burst upon the world in its fulness through the apostle Paul.

Note the truth concerning God's work of creation which is stated in verse 9: "God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." The emphasis is on the words "all things"; the words "by Jesus Christ" are not found in the most ancient and reliable Greek manuscripts. It is certainly true, of course, that all things were created by Jesus Christ, as is proved by John 1:3. But the evidence indicates that the phrase "by Jesus Christ" is not a part of the genuine text of Eph. 3:9. Alford states the meaning of the clause as follows: "The stress is on all things—this concealment was nothing to be wondered at—for God of His own will and power created ALL THINGS, a fact which involves His perfect right to adjust all things as He will." Being the sovereign Creator of all things, God had an absolute right to keep the "mystery" a secret until it was His will to reveal it in its fulness through His servant the apostle Paul.

##### (c) The Divinely intended Purpose of the Church. 3:10-12

The real purpose of the Church, composed as it is of redeemed Jews and Gentiles, is to manifest the wisdom and glory of God, as we see in 3:10. The wisdom and glory of God are to be manifested by the Church, not merely to men, but also "unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places," that is, to the angelic beings.

This manifestation of God's wisdom to the angels by the Church is not merely something that will take place in eternity; it is to be done

"now", as is plainly stated in verse 10. Right now, in this present age, the Church is to manifest God's wisdom to the angels in the heavenly places. From this we gather that the Church on earth is seen and noted by the angels, and watched over by them with care. Compare Hebrews 1:14, which says concerning the angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Note also 1 Peter 1:12b, "... have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

We should realize that this manifesting of God's power and glory and wisdom was purposed in Christ Jesus from all eternity, for verse 11 says: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." God does not work by changeable, hit or miss methods, nor is He "an experimenting God" as some people say. He has one single, consistent, unchanging plan from eternity to eternity. Scripture teaches clearly the doctrine that God has foreordained all things that shall come to pass—the fall of a sparrow, the redemption of the Church, the end of the world, the new heavens and the new earth. Those who attempt to deny the doctrine of predestination or foreordination are greatly embarrassed by some of Paul's statements—which are really, of course, statements of the Holy Spirit—and have great difficulty in their effort to explain them away. How much better it is not to try to explain them away; how much better it is to accept them as they are!

Verse 12 concludes this sub-section by stating that it is in Christ that we have access with boldness and confidence. We have become so accustomed to this that we do not feel its full force any more. But those just converted from paganism, as the Ephesians were, must have felt it as a strange and new experience; and the same is true on foreign mission fields today. To be able to approach into the presence of the infinite, eternal, holy God through a crucified and risen Mediator, with "boldness", that is, without hesitation on account of our creaturehood or our sinfulness, and with "confidence", that is, with full confidence of being accepted by God—what marvellous spiritual privileges and blessings have been given to Christians! How different from attempting to approach God indirectly and afar off through an earthly human priesthood! We may be sure that Paul and the Ephesian Christians felt the wonder of their free access to God's presence in Christ.

#### Questions:

- What is the meaning of the word "minister" in 3:7?

2. What may be the reason why Paul calls himself "less than the least of all saints"?
3. What three words in 3:9 are not found in the best Greek manuscripts?
4. What verse in the Gospel of John proves that all things were created by Jesus Christ?
5. What is the connection between the clause "God, who created all things" and the rest of verse 9?
6. What is the real purpose of the Church?
7. What is meant by "the principalities and powers in the heavenly places"?
8. When is God's wisdom to be manifested to the angels by the Church?

9. What verse in Hebrews shows the connection of the angels with the salvation of Christians?

10. What verse in 1 Peter speaks of the interest shown by the angels in the Gospel preached on earth?

11. Why is it wrong to speak of God as "an experimenting God"?

12. To whom are some of Paul's statements embarrassing?

13. Why do not we modern Christians feel the truth stated in verse 12 as something wonderful?

14. How must the truth stated in 3:12 have impressed the Ephesian Christians?

## LESSON 15

### **II. Doctrinal Section of the Epistle. 1:3 to 3:21. *Continued***

#### **3. The Mystery of the Church. 3:1-21, Continued**

##### **(d) Paul's Prayer for the Church. 3:13-21**

"Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory" (3:13). Paul is thinking of the glorious things which he has spoken of in verses 1-12, and especially he is thinking of his own connection with those glorious things—he had been made a "minister" of them. The last phrase of verse 13 should be translated "which are your glory", as it is in the ARV.

(1) The meaning is that Paul's afflictions are the glory of the Ephesian Christians. Through Paul's sufferings it became possible for them to receive the Gospel and be saved. Therefore, he says, he does not want them to "faint" at his sufferings

\*(2) for them. By "faint" he means "be disheartened."

(3) He does not want them to feel that he had suffered far too much, or that God should not have permitted such great sufferings to befall him, for after all, these sufferings had accomplished a glorious purpose. Paul himself felt that this purpose was worth all it cost, and he wanted the Ephesians to feel the same way about the matter.

(4) We have seen that verses 2-13 of chapter 3 form a parenthesis (see Lesson 11, pages 143-144). Chapter 3 starts out with the words "For this cause . . ." but Paul does not tell what it is that he does "for this cause". Instead, he inserts a long parenthetical statement, verses 2-13. Then with verse 14 he resumes the main thought, and again says "For this cause . . .". We now learn what it is that Paul does "for this cause."

\*(5) Because the Ephesian Christians had such a noble standing—being builded together in Christ for a habitation of God through the Holy Spirit (2:22)—Paul bows his knees and offers prayer for them.

Note that he says "I bow my knees." Posture

in prayer is not a matter of no importance. It affects the mental attitude of the person praying and so affects the prayer. The Directory for Worship of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (II.7) says: "The posture in prayer is not a matter of indifference. Kneeling or standing are Scriptural and are expressive of the spirit of reverence and devotion." Many people who habitually remain seated in prayer to Almighty God would immediately rise to their feet if the President of the United States were to enter any public assembly where they were present. Except in the case of very brief prayers, the present-day tendency to maintain a sitting posture during prayer would seem to be one sign of the increasing irreverence of the age. Of course, exceptions must be made in the case of those who by reason of sickness or bodily infirmity are unable to stand or kneel.

The Person to whom Paul prays is not a vague force or influence, as some people hold today, but the living God, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named" (3:14, 15). This is a personal God, a God who can and does love us, a God who can and does hear and answer prayer.

(6) "The whole family in heaven and on earth" includes the redeemed on earth and in heaven, and also the angels. All God's servants who willingly love and serve Him, are described in the Bible, sometimes as the "kingdom" of God, and sometimes, more intimately, as the "family" or "household" of God. God is not only our Ruler, of whose Kingdom we are made citizens, but also our Father, into whose family we are adopted as His children.

This is Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, and therefore also for all Christians, since the Epistle was not written for the Ephesians alone. It is a prayer that all Christians may have a full Christian experience and a full Christian knowledge.

Paul prays that the Christians may have more inward spiritual strength, which comes from the Holy Spirit (verse 16) and from a vital union with Christ by faith (verse 17), and that they may be "rooted and grounded in love," that is, in love to God and to the people of God (verse 17b). We have here two figures, those of a tree (being "rooted") and of a building (being "grounded"). The one figure suggests growth (14) the other suggests stability. And these two things, growth and stability, must be in every Christian life that is to amount to anything. Some Christians have emotional experiences, they have what they call "inspiration," they perhaps "just feel they are saved," yet they show no growth and they possess no stability. They make no real progress, but just stand still or go round and round in a little circle. They are no different (15) certainly no better—than they were a year ago, or ten years ago. And as they lack stability, they may be carried off their feet by any new religious fad or fancy. Every new religious movement or program impresses them for a little while, then they forget it and turn to something else.

The truly spiritual Christian—the kind of Christian Paul wanted the Ephesians to be—on the other hand, is both a growing Christian and a stable one. He is rooted and grounded in love. Love is the climate in which the Christian life thrives. Read 1 John 4: 7-11.

Next, Paul prays that the Christians may be full in knowledge. Note that Paul was free from (14) the anti-intellectual spirit which is the blight of the modern Protestant Church—the idea that knowledge, truth, doctrine, are unimportant, while "life" is the thing that matters. Paul would have had no sympathy for the modern notion that "Christianity is not doctrine but life." He knew nothing of an antagonism between piety and knowledge. Nor did he emphasize spirituality and disparage knowledge of the truth as some do today. Of course, what Paul speaks of is a real spiritual knowledge, not a mere "head knowledge" of the truth (though we must have that first of all, to be Christians).

What Paul speaks about transcends human thought: "to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (verse 19). The love of Christ—not our love to Christ, but His love for us. But how can we know something which passes knowledge? We now know in part. We come to know (15) more and more fully as we make progress in the Christian life. We shall know still more fully in heavenly glory when we see the Lord face to face. But we shall never know it all. We shall

never get to a point where we can draw a circle around the love of Christ and say, "I know it all now." There will always be more beyond, and more beyond, and more beyond. To all eternity we shall be learning more, and more, and still more, of the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

\* This is not a mere mystical experience or emotion, but a matter of knowledge, though it can be known only by those who have the experience. Paul's prayer ends in a burst of praise (verses 20, 21), giving all the glory to God by Jesus Christ. How different this is from the modern spirit of glorifying man which is so common today! Paul believed in a great God and a great Christ. And if we are true believers, then Paul's Christ is our Christ too.

#### Questions:

1. What was the glory of the Ephesian Christians?
2. What did Paul mean by the word "faint"?
3. Why did he not want the Ephesian Christians to "faint" at his sufferings for the Gospel's sake?
4. What change in the line of thought takes place in verse 14?
5. What was it that Paul did "for this cause"?
6. What is the importance of posture in prayer?
7. Is the common custom of remaining seated in prayer a sign of irreverence?
8. How does Paul describe the God to whom he prays?
9. What is included in "the whole family in heaven and on earth"?
10. What is the difference between the "family" of God and the "kingdom" of God?
11. What idea is suggested by the word "rooted" in verse 17?
12. What idea is suggested by the word "grounded" in verse 17?
13. What will a Christian be like if he lacks growth and stability?
14. How does Paul's appraisal of the value of knowledge differ from that of many present-day Christians?
15. If the love of Christ passes knowledge, how can the Christian know it?

#### LESSON 16

- III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24**
1. The Responsibilities of Members of Christ's Church. 4:1-32
    - (a) The Duty of Maintaining Spiritual Unity 4:1-6

In verses 1 and 2 Paul calls upon his readers to live worthily of the calling wherewith they were called, that is, the calling of the Gospel, and God's call to faith in Christ. They should walk in a spirit of meekness, longsuffering, forbearance

and love. Then he urges them to preserve what he calls "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

What is meant by "the unity of the Spirit"? Think back to the situation in the church at Ephesus and other similar churches of Paul's day. The members were partly Jews and partly Gentiles. Their background, traditions, manner of life, customs and education had been very diverse. These different kinds of people have been incorporated into one body. They are in fellowship with each other in one organism. In spite of the great differences of their background, education, and the like, there is a real sense in which they are one. But what kind of unity is this, and how did it originate? It is not the unity of human programs or organizations. It is the **unity of the Spirit**. This means, of course, the unity of the Holy Spirit. It was God the Holy Spirit that took all these diverse people and made them one. Whatever their differences, they had all had one and the same experience of salvation through faith in Christ. This experience was produced in them by the operation of the Holy Spirit, applying Christ's redemption to them. So their unity was "the unity of the Spirit."

Now this unity of the Spirit must be preserved; it must not be broken by factions and disputes arising from their past differences. "Peace" is to be the bond that preserves the unity of the one body, the Church. Note that Paul says "endeavoring," that is, trying or attempting, to keep the unity undamaged. Circumstances may arise making it difficult or even impossible to do this, but still the ideal is to preserve the Spirit-constituted unity in the bond of peace.

We know that in the Bible the number seven often symbolizes perfection. Here we have mentioned seven aspects of Christian unity. Let us note them one by one.

1. There is one body. This we take to be not any one denomination, but the true Church as a whole. It is the body of those who profess the true religion, and of their children with them. In its invisible aspect, it is the body of the elect of God, who are redeemed by Christ.

2. There is one Spirit, the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent, who gathers people from the world into the membership of the body, the Church.

3. There is one hope of our calling, the hope of salvation and eternal life, both now and forever.

4. There is one Lord, namely, Jesus Christ, the Head of the body.

5. There is one faith, by which all the members believe on Christ.

6. There is one baptism. This is not the baptism of the Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is mentioned separately in verse 4. The baptism spoken of is water baptism, the sacrament of baptism, which

is a sign and seal of membership in the Church of Jesus Christ.

7. There is one God and Father. Here is the sum of it all — one God and Father, who is above all, through all, and in all.

Most of the items of this Christian unity specified by Paul are quite clear and do not raise any special problems. However, we may consider one or two of them in more detail.

The "one body" is of course the true Church. As an invisible organism, seen only by God, of which all the redeemed are members, the unity of the church cannot be broken. Denominational divisions do not affect the unity of the Church as an invisible organism. It includes all true believers of all denominations. All who have been born again are members of it.

As a visible body the Church is divided by denominational distinctions. These denominations, such as Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists and Covenanters, actually exist and they break up the unity of the Church as a visible body. We maintain that these divisions are sinful and ought not to exist. Every such division is a product of sin, and involves an infringement of the ideal unity prescribed by Scripture. These divisions originated in sin. Wherever such a division has taken place, either the separating church or the church separated from is guilty of the sin of schism, which means an unjustifiable division in the body of Christ. In some cases, indeed, both parties may be involved in the sin of schism, and one party may be more guilty than the other. As in the case of divorce suits in our civil law courts, the party suing for divorce is not necessarily free of the guilt of wrecking the marriage. Both parties may be guilty, and yet one may be more guilty than the other. Wherever denominational division has taken place there has been a departure from truth, and whichever party has deviated from the truth is guilty of the sin of schism.

But the sin of denominationalism did not stop with the original acts of separation between churches, most of which took place long ago. Christian people are guilty of this sin today if they complacently allow these sinful divisions to continue to exist, without making any serious effort to provide a remedy. "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jer. 8:22). Denominationalism is not an incurable disease; it continues because the churches do not value truth highly enough to make the necessary sacrifices to cure the disease; they are unwilling to pay the price in money, manpower, crucifixion of stubbornness and pride, and patient effort. It is a high price, the price of real church union on the basis of Scriptural truth and order — and very few today are interested in buying it at that price. The historic Westminster As-

sembly of Divines, 300 years ago, was willing to pay the price. But today those who are concerned about church union are mostly seeking it on the bargain counter — by a shortcut which regards truth as unimportant.

In seeking and preserving unity, truth is the most important factor. Those who seek truth first, will attain unity eventually, for the truth is one — it is not divided. But those who seek union as the most urgent matter, usually seek it at the sacrifice of truth, and so they attain neither truth nor unity. Denominationalism is certainly a great evil, but after all it is not the greatest possible evil. There are even worse conditions, and church union attained by the sacrifice of truth is one of them.

It is remarkable that while baptism is mentioned in Eph. 4:1-6, the Lord's Supper is not mentioned. Why this should be the case, we cannot say. Possibly the reason is because baptism is the initiatory rite of church membership, a sign and seal of our membership in the body of Christ.

#### Questions:

1. What is meant by "the unity of the Spirit"?
2. Why was it specially necessary for the churches to which Paul wrote to maintain the unity of the Spirit?
3. How may the unity of the Spirit be broken?
4. What is implied by Paul's use of the word "endeavoring" in 4:3?

5. What does the number seven often symbolize in Scripture?

6. What is the "one body" that Paul speaks of?

7. What is the baptism mentioned in verse 5? How do we know that it is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

8. How is the origin of separate denominations to be explained?

9. What is the sin of schism, and who is guilty of it?

10. Where denominational division has taken place, how may the guilt be divided?

11. Apart from the sin of the original acts of separation between churches, how are Christian people involved in the sin of denominationalism?

12. Is denominationalism an incurable disease?

13. Why do denominational divisions continue without being healed?

14. What historic body of 300 years ago was willing to pay the price for real unity on the basis of Scripture?

15. How are people trying to gain church union at a bargain price today?

16. What evil is even greater than denominational division?

#### LESSON 17

#### III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24, Continued

##### 1. The Responsibility of Members of Christ's Church. 4:1-32, continued

###### (b) The gifts of ministry given by Christ to the Church. 4:7-11

The apostle goes on, in verses 7 to 16, to speak of the members and officers of the church and their various functions. In verse 7 we see that grace is given to every Christian, while in verse 11 we see that special gifts for service are given to some. Verse 8 is quoted from Psalm 68:18, properly regarded as a prophecy of Christ's ascension. It is the ascended Christ who sends the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit imparts spiritual gifts to members of Christ's body.

Verse 9 explains that Christ first descended (that is, at His incarnation), and then ascended "far above all heavens" (that is, to the presence of God), "that he might fill all things." These last words, "that he might fill all things," necessarily refer to Christ's divine nature, not to His glorified human nature, which, though glorified, is still finite, and therefore necessarily localized in some

particular place. "As God, Christ is everywhere present; as glorified man, He can be present anywhere." But as glorified man He cannot be present everywhere at once.

Grace and spiritual gifts of some kind are given to every Christian (verse 7), but not all Christians receive any particular gift. The official gifts here mentioned are five in number, namely: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers.

The meaning of verse 11 is that the men who filled the offices, as well as the offices themselves, were the gifts of Christ to the Church. When a church recognizes a lack of any of these, they should be sought from Christ, who is the Head of the body and the Lord of the harvest. It is a great sin for anyone to take such work upon himself when he has no reason to believe he has been called to it by Christ.

Of the five offices that are mentioned, two (apostles and prophets) were temporary in nature, and have passed away with the close of the apostolic age. The other three (evangelists, pastors, teachers) are permanent, continuing in the Church until the present day. The grammar of the Greek text indicates that "pastors and teachers" are not

two classes, but one office with two functions, just as we sometimes say, for example, "Dr. Blank, Physician and Surgeon." We believe, too, that the office of "evangelists" is not essentially different from that of "pastors and teachers"; the difference is one of function rather than of essential nature. A minister who is ordained to labor as a missionary in the home or foreign field is properly an evangelist; a minister who is ordained and installed in the pastoral charge of an established congregation, is properly a **pastor and teacher**. The qualifications and authority are the same; the differences are in function.

We may be surprised that the office of deacon is not mentioned here, and that there is no distinction made between "pastors and teachers" and what are called "ruling elders." But we should realize that Paul's purpose in this passage is not to outline the structure of church government, but to emphasize that spiritual gifts come from Christ to the Church. In the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) Paul takes up the matter of church government and specifies the various kinds of church officers, including deacons.

At the present day there is a tendency to regard church office from a worldly viewpoint, as if the officers were simply elected by the people, just like the officers of any social club or business organization. But in reality the officers of the Church are Christ's gift to the Church, and to be so regarded. In choosing a pastor, or elders or deacons, we are to ask ourselves whether there is reason to believe that Christ has called particular persons to these offices. Has Christ, by the Holy Spirit, given them the qualifications needed for the offices? Has He put in their hearts a deep and earnest concern about the welfare of Zion? Has He led them to sacrifice some worldly interests for the sake of the Church? An election of church officers should not be regarded as a popularity contest. The real question is what does the Head of the Church want us to do.

#### Questions:

1. What is given to every Christian?
2. From what Psalm is verse 8 quoted, and of what is it a prophecy?
3. Does the clause "that he might fill all things" refer to Christ's divine nature or to His human nature? Why?
4. How many official gifts does Paul mention in this passage?
5. What should a church do when a lack of proper officers is felt?
6. When is it a sin for a person to take the work of a church officer upon himself?
7. Which of the offices mentioned by Paul were temporary?
8. Does "pastors and teachers" refer to two offices, or to two functions of a single office?
9. What is the difference between "evangelists" and "pastors and teachers"?
10. How can we explain the fact that Paul does not say anything here about the office of deacon?
11. In which of Paul's Epistles does he deal specially with matters concerning church government? What are these Epistles called?
12. What wrong attitude toward church office sometimes exists?
13. What is meant by the statement that "an election of church officers should not be regarded as a popularity contest"?
14. What are some of the evidences that may show that Christ has called a man to office in the Church?

#### LESSON 18

#### **III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24, Continued**

1. **The Responsibilities of Members of Christ's Church. 4:1-32, continued**
  - (c) **The intended purpose of these special gifts. 4:12-16**

In verses 12 to 16 Paul discusses the purpose of these gifts to the Church. Their purpose, in brief, is for the work of the ministry, the building up of the body of Christ, verse 12. The verses which follow expand this idea and explain just what is necessary.

The first aim in "the work of the ministry" is that all Christians shall become perfect — that they shall attain perfection as measured by the

perfection of Christ Himself (verse 13). In the Bible, absolute perfection is the goal. Moreover, absolute perfection is the destiny of each and every Christian (Jude 24). This goal will not be attained in the present life, but only when we enter the state of glory. Yet we may never lower the ideal of absolute perfection. Every Christian must strive toward it; the ministry of the Church is intended to promote and further it. We should remember that the Bible never tells us to "be good", but it always commands us to be **perfect**. It is one of the evidences that Christianity is the true religion, that it is the one and only religion which places before man an ideal so high that it cannot possibly be attained in the present life — it requires of man not mere "goodness" but absolute moral perfection.

This perfection, of which Christ's own perfection is the measure and standard, is to be sought "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." Many people today seem to think that moral character has no connection with what a man believes, nor any connection with a man's relation to Jesus Christ. But real moral perfection comes in no other way than "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." It is those who are walking on this highway that shall be presented faultless before the presence of God's glory in the end (Jude 24). Those who only sell the Christian faith for a mess of pottage will not be among those who reach that goal.

Another feature of the purpose of the gifts of ministry to the Church, is the aim that Christian people shall be able to discern between true and false doctrine (verse 14). Some modern Christians exactly fit Paul's description; they are "carried about with every wind of doctrine," and so are influenced by every new fad and fancy in religion. Their theology is that of the last book they have read; when they read a different book, they will have a different theology. Or, perhaps they do not read any books at all, in which case they are even more open to the perils mentioned by Paul in the last part of verse 14.

Many people at the present day cannot discern between false doctrine and true, except in cases where the difference is completely obvious on the surface. If a man says, "I am an atheist", they will readily admit that he is not a Christian, and that atheism is not Christianity. But the difference between the true doctrine of the substitutionary atonement and the false doctrine of the "moral influence view" of the atonement baffles them completely, and they will take refuge in some remark about "theological hair-splitting" as an excuse for their inability to discern truth from error.

We should realize that this inability to discern between truth and error is sinful; it is, as Paul implies, an evidence of spiritual immaturity and childishness (verse 14a). The true aim is such a degree of spiritual maturity and stability that false doctrine will be instantly discerned and rejected. This aim is to be promoted by the offices which Christ has given to the Church "for the perfecting of the saints." In particular, the regular, faithful, systematic preaching of the Word of God enables Christian people to attain the maturity and stability spoken of in verse 14. Those Christians who attend the preaching of God's Word irregularly are not only breaking their own vows and placing a stumblingblock in the path of others; they are also shortchanging themselves religiously. Those who attend on the preaching of the Word only occasionally will to their dying day be like "children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

Another feature of the goal in view is "speak-

ing the truth in love," something which is very different from merely speaking the truth. The **Larger Catechism** of the Westminster Assembly, Q. 144 and 145, is most instructive concerning this Christian duty of "speaking the truth in love." We note the emphasis in verse 15 on both truth and love. Some people are strong on speaking the truth, but they forget about love. Others stress love, and forget about the obligation to speak the truth. But the real Christian's aim is to speak the truth in love — and when a Christian does that he has made great progress in the Christian life.

Finally, the aim is increasing growth in vital union with the living Christ (verses 15b, 16). Christ is the source of all spiritual life, growth and power. Both in these two verses, and in the whole section, verses 12-16, note the spiritual character of the things spoken of. How different Paul's emphasis is from the emphasis on programs and organization which exists in many churches of the present day. According to Paul, both the individual Christian and the Church as a body grow spiritually through vital union with Christ. This is something that cannot be measured by "standards of efficiency" nor can it be tabulated in columns of statistics. It is the real spiritual growth of the Church.

#### Questions:

1. What is the purpose of Christ's gifts of ministry to the Church?
2. What is the goal of the Christian, in the Bible?
3. How is the Christian's perfection to be measured?
4. When will the goal of absolute perfection be attained?
5. What is the relation between the goal of perfection and our daily life?
6. Instead of commanding us to "be good", what does the Bible command us?
7. What does the obligation of moral perfection imply concerning the truth of the Christian religion?
8. How is the goal of moral perfection to be sought?
9. What is our duty with regard to true doctrine and false doctrine?
10. If Christian people are unable to discern between true and false doctrine, what does this indicate concerning their religious attainments?
11. How can the ability to discern between true and false doctrine be strengthened and increased?
12. What is the difference between "speaking the truth" and "speaking the truth in love"?
13. What is the secret of the real spiritual growth of the Christian and the Church? Why can such spiritual growth not be measured by "standards of efficiency" or statistics?

## LESSON 19

III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24,  
Continued1. The Responsibilities of Members of Christ's  
Church. 4:1-32, continued

## (d) The duty of cultivating practical holiness. 4:17-32

Lest anyone suppose that all that is required is a purely "spiritual" or mystical holiness, Paul makes it very clear that real holiness is an intensely practical matter, which extends to all phases of life. Hence he counsels Christians, first, to be different from the unsaved Gentiles (verses 17-20), saying, "ye have not so learned Christ." In verses 17-19 Paul tells us how people that are not Christians live. He describes both their character and their conduct, both the root of their lives and the fruit of their lives. Their character is a condition of spiritual blindness and therefore of spiritual darkness. Their heart is blind, their understanding is darkened, they are grossly ignorant of the things of God. So much for the character of the person who is not a Christian. But what about the conduct of such people?

17  
19  
Their conduct, of course, is not all the same. Some are worse than others. But taking non-Christians as a class, we find their conduct described in verse 19: lasciviousness, uncleanness, greediness. Who can deny that this picture fits the condition of the world today? Our moving pictures, our magazines, our newspapers, the whole life of our modern world shows that verse 19 is the plain truth about human life when Christ is left out. But Paul adds, "Ye have not so learned Christ." Christian people are expected to be different from the world.

21  
In verse 21 the apostle continues, "If so be that ye have heard him and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." That is to say, if the Christian really knows Jesus Christ, if Christ has really touched and changed his life — if he is really a Christian — his life will be very different from the life of the worldly person. Paul assumes his readers to be saved and Spirit-taught people. From this starting point he goes on to explain in detail what the difference ought to be between them and the world.

22  
Therefore Christians must put off the old man (verse 22), that is, their old sinful nature, their original corruption. When a person becomes a Christian the Holy Spirit imparts to him a new heart or a new nature, called in the Bible by such terms as "the new man," "the new creature," etc. This new nature is good and holy. It loves and serves God. But the old, sinful nature is still there. In the Bible it is called by such terms as "the old man," "the flesh," "the body of sin," and others. This old nature is just the opposite of the new nature. It is set against God, against the law

of God, against holiness, against all that is pure and good and unselfish and lovely.

This sinful nature is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (verse 22b). It will actively influence the Christian toward committing sin. What is the Christian to do about his sinful nature?

We cannot make a negotiated peace with the sinful nature. If we give it an inch it will take a mile, and be in danger of dominating our lives. Paul tells us, rather, to put it off. By a figure of speech he is comparing the sinful nature to a garment. He commands, "Put it off!" But what does this mean? It is a very simple matter to take off a coat or a shirt. But how does a person take off his old sinful nature?

In another place, Paul commands us to crucify the old nature. To crucify it means to nail the old nature to a cross. But a man that is crucified is not necessarily dead. He may continue to live for a considerable time. But he is no longer in control of things. And this illustrates what Paul means by "putting off" the old man. It means to put the old nature off the throne of our life; we are no longer to allow the old nature to dictate how we are going to live.

If we may think of our life as an automobile, we might say that we cannot get rid of the old nature completely in this life, but at any rate we are to put the old nature out of the driver's seat and make it ride in the back seat of the car. It will still be with us during our earthly life, but it is not to be allowed to control our decisions and actions.

We should realize that putting off the old man is not something that we can do once for all and get it over with. A person can become a Christian only once, but he has to keep on "putting off" the old man every day of his life until at last he enters the state of glory.

To continue the illustration of the automobile, we may say that the old nature has a remarkable way of climbing back into the driver's seat, so that we have to keep on putting him out of the driver's seat and into the back seat of the car. Only when we enter heaven will we be entirely rid of the sinful nature.

## Questions:

1. What do we mean by saying that holiness is a practical matter?
2. How does Paul describe the character of people who are not Christians?
3. In what terms does Paul describe the common conduct of people who are not Christians?
4. How does Paul's description of the character and conduct of non-Christians fit the world of today?

5. Why does Paul expect Christian people to be different from the world?
6. What are some of the terms by which the Christian's new nature is designated in the Bible?
7. What are some of the terms used in the Bible to designate the old, sinful nature?
8. What is the real character of the old nature?
9. What effect will the old nature have on the Christian?

10. Why can we not negotiate a peace with our old nature?

11. What does Paul mean by "putting off" our old nature?

12. How often must a Christian put off the old nature?

13. When will we be completely rid of the sinful nature?

## LESSON 20

### III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24, Continued

#### 1. The Responsibilities of Members of Christ's Church. 4:1-32, continued

##### (d) The duty of cultivating practical holiness. 4:17-32, continued

Putting off the old nature must be accompanied by putting on the new nature. So Paul goes on to say: "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (verses 23-24). This new nature, here called "the new man," is not something we can achieve ourselves; it is a gift of God. It is not something developed by man, but something created by God. So Paul says, "which after God is CREATED in righteousness and true holiness." Being born again is not an accomplishment; it is a miracle; not our own doing, but God's work. We receive it as a gift. But having received it, what are we going to do about it?

Some professing Christians seem to think that they can receive this wonderful new nature from God, and then let it ride in the back seat all their lives, while their old, sinful nature occupies the driver's seat and holds the steering wheel of their lives. It is perhaps possible that some who do this will go to heaven in the end, but at any rate they will not be happy or useful Christians in this world. And there is reason to doubt that such people will go to heaven if they live that way all their life without change.

What, then, are we to do about our new nature? Put it on. Put it in the driver's seat; place it in control of our lives and conduct. The Christian life is a continuously repeated process of putting off the old man and putting on the new man. We will have to continue with this process until we enter eternal glory. Then, in the state of glory, our new nature will be perfectly and completely in control; we shall be made perfect in holiness, and will never have to contend with the old nature again, to all eternity. For at the believer's death the sinful nature is completely eradicated from his personality.

Next, Paul takes up some practical details of

Christian conduct. Christianity is really a very practical religion. And that means that it must be practiced. No one can be a real Christian unless he is a practicing Christian.

A person might purchase a book on how to swim, study it and pass an examination on it with a grade of 100. But he will never be a swimmer until he jumps into the water and actually starts to swim. It is not possible to be a practicing swimmer without getting wet. A person might read many books about the Christian religion, and pass an examination on the history and doctrines of Christianity, and yet not be a Christian. To be a Christian one must experience the saving power and life of Christ personally, and then practice the teachings of Christianity in his own life.

Paul has told us that there is a great difference between the Christian's life and the worldly person's life. He has also told us that the Christian must put off the old man and put on the new man. Now he proceeds to add some practical details about the change this ought to bring in the person's life. Of course what we have here is not a complete list of all the Christian virtues. In another place Paul gives a list of "the fruit of the Spirit" and includes some things not mentioned here. This is not intended as a complete list, but rather as a sample or representative list of details of Christian conduct.

The first great difference is truthfulness. These Ephesian Christians, many of them, were converts from Greek paganism. They came from a society or culture in which it was not considered wrong to tell a lie. Here in America even worldly people have been considerably influenced by Christian tradition. Most people in America will say that it is wrong to tell a lie, even though they themselves may tell lies sometimes. But in a pagan society such as that of Ephesus people were not ashamed of telling lies, though they might be ashamed of their stupidity in allowing themselves to get caught telling lies.

In our American society, however, there are some people who think it is all right to tell a lie, provided it is a "white" lie, not a "black" lie. The theory is that a lie told with a bad motive

—to cheat someone, for example—is a “black” lie, but a lie told with a good motive—for example, to avoid hurting someone’s feelings, or to cheer a sick person up—is a “white” lie, and is considered justifiable.

Really this distinction between “white” and “black” lies is wrong. We might just as well speak of “white” thefts and “black” thefts, “white” murders and “black” murders. If a thing is wrong, it is wrong, and our having a good motive does not make black white. And yet all of us are involved in this evil of “white” lies to some extent. Our civilization and culture, our code of politeness, are all wrapped up in this system. A guest will tell his hostess that he had a lovely evening, when he really was miserably bored and wanted to go home as soon as possible. Someone has a headache and feels all out of sorts, but upon being asked “How are you?” will reply, “Just fine. How are you?” Not very important, perhaps, but still it is an aspect of the pagan character of our modern society. We feel that other people expect us to tell these little “white” lies, so we keep on doing it. But we ought to realize that this demand is being made on us by a non-Christian society. Our Christian ideal is higher, the ideal of full truthfulness. We should strive toward that ideal.

#### Questions:

1. Besides putting off the old nature, what must we do?

## LESSON 21

### III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24, Continued

#### 1. The Responsibilities of Members of Christ’s Church. 4:1-32, continued

##### (d) The duty of cultivating practical holiness. 4:17-32, continued

The next great difference between the Christian and the worldly person which Paul mentions is the matter of controlling one’s temper. Everyone has a temper to control. Some have more temper to control than others. But the trouble comes when our temper starts to control us. God told Cain to control his anger, and not let it control him (Gen. 4:6,7). Paul does not say that a Christian should not have a temper. He does not even say that a Christian should never get angry. Sometimes we cannot help getting angry. When we have been unjustly treated our natural reaction is anger. A person may be righteously angry, because of injustice suffered by himself or by someone else. Paul does not say that a Christian should never be angry. But he says that we should not stay angry. “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” When something happens that makes us angry, we are not to let the old nature take over the

2. What is the source of the new nature?
3. How do some professing Christians deceive themselves in their idea of the Christian life?
4. What process must be continuously repeated in the Christian’s life?
5. When will the sinful nature be fully eradicated from the Christian’s personality?
6. What is meant by saying that Christianity is a practical religion?
7. Why is a merely theoretical knowledge of Christianity not sufficient?
8. Does Paul present a complete list of Christian virtues in verses 25-32?
9. What was the attitude of Greek paganism to the question of truthfulness?
10. How can we explain the fact that in America many people who are not Christians consider it wrong to tell a lie?
11. What is the distinction between “white lies” and “black lies”?
12. Why are “white lies” wrong?
13. How are even Christian people involved in the social demand for telling “white lies”?
14. What is the bearing of the Christian ideal of truthfulness on the common practice of telling “white lies”?

steering wheel of our lives and drive us into sin. We are to settle the matter in some way, as soon as possible. Possibly we can talk matters over with the person who has angered us. But perhaps that will be impossible. In that case, we can pray about it and commit the matter to the Lord, and leave it in His hands. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass... Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil” (Psalm 37:5, 8). If we commit the matter to the Lord, our anger will pass and peace will return to our soul. So Paul says, “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath”; that is, don’t let the matter go beyond that one day; settle it in some way immediately. He adds, “Neither give place to the devil.” That is, do not give the devil any standing room in your life.

When we are living right as Christians, the devil has to try to work on us from the outside. He is like a person standing in the street in front of our house trying to throw messages in through a crack in a door or window. He cannot accomplish much that way. But when a Christian “gives place to the devil” he opens the door and lets the devil in and gives him standing room on the inside. And the devil can really work when

he has standing room on the inside of a person's life.

Sometimes a person that we know to be a Christian falls into sin and goes from one sin to another until we almost despair of that person ever getting back to godly living again. What has happened? He has given place to the devil. Instead of trying to work on that person by temptations from the outside, the devil has gained standing room on the inside of that person's life—a very sad state of affairs indeed. In such a case, it is usually only through God's mercy in the form of severe affliction and suffering that the person can be restored to a spiritual state.

The Christian who cherishes and nurses his anger is giving place to the devil. He is opening a door in his life that will give the devil an entrance. The Christian who has a grievance against some other person, and instead of settling it or committing it to the Lord, just broods over it and harbors a permanent grudge against that person, is giving place to the devil. He can hardly pray, so his Christian friends ought to pray for such a person, that by God's great mercy he may be restored to a spiritual state again.

The third great difference between the Christian and the worldly person in the matter of conduct concerns honesty. "Let him that stole steal no more" (verse 28a). Stealing, of course, is just one form of dishonesty. There are other forms. One form of dishonesty is idleness. The Christian who lives without working is dishonest, so the apostle commands Christian people, not only not to steal, but also to labor, to work at some kind of job or occupation. In that way he will live honestly himself, and also will have something to give to others who may be in need. The person who is not a Christian will work because of necessity, or ambition, or interest; but the Christian will work because of **conscience**—because he is convinced that it is not right to live without working.

The Christian should avoid all kinds of gambling, because they are all attempts to get something for nothing, without giving a comparable value in return. All attempts to get something for nothing are contrary to the Christian ideal of honesty. The person who participates in a lottery pays perhaps \$1 for a ticket and hopes that he will have the lucky number and win \$100 or \$1000 or even more. That is dishonest;

it is trying to get out more than is put in. The same is true, to a greater or less extent, of every form of gambling. The essential paganism of our modern American culture is revealed by the present craze for getting something for nothing. This is promoted by merchants all over the land, many of them respectable church members. Christian people, we believe, should separate from and protest against the whole system.

A Christian should also avoid trying to get an advantage over another person by driving too sharp a bargain. That, too, is an attempt to get more than we really are entitled to. If we love our neighbor as ourselves we cannot be guilty of such practices. They are really dishonest.

#### Questions:

1. Is it wrong to have a temper?
2. Why was Cain angry, and what did God tell him about his anger?
3. When we are angry, what must we specially guard against?
4. What does Paul mean by saying "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath"?
5. How can we keep the sun from going down on our wrath?
6. What is meant by giving place to the devil?
7. What is the result of giving place to the devil?
8. When a person has given place to the devil in his life, how can he be restored to a spiritual state again?
9. Why is idleness a sin?
10. Give two reasons why every Christian ought to work at some job or occupation.
11. What is the difference between the worldly person's motive for working and the Christian's motive for working.
12. Why are all forms of gambling wrong?
13. What should be our attitude as Christians to the prevalent craze for getting something for nothing?
14. Why is it wrong to attempt to drive too sharp a bargain?

#### LESSON 22

##### III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24, Continued

###### 1. The Responsibilities of Members of Christ's Church. 4:1-32, continued

###### (d) The duty of cultivating practical holiness. 4:17-32, continued

The fourth great difference in conduct between the Christian and the worldly person is clean speech: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (verse 29). This command is

being violated today chiefly in two ways. The first is by profanity, and the second is by filthy or impure speech.

Profanity, or cursing and profane swearing, is extremely common today. We hear it on every hand. Some people never say "Jesus Christ" except as a swear word. No Christian should ever indulge in profane swearing. The Christian should avoid not only what the world calls swearing, but also the very common practice of using God's attributes profanely in such expressions as "For goodness' sake!", "Goodness gracious!", "Mercy on us!", "Good heavens!", and the like. Also the Christian should conscientiously avoid the prevalent practice of using "minced oaths," that is, slightly disguised imitations of the profanity the worldly person uses. These "minced oaths" include such common expressions as "darn" (damn), "heck" (hell), "Gosh" (God), "Jeepers" (Jesus), "Cripes" (Christ), "Gee" (Jesus), and many other approximations which Satan persuades Christian people to use. Many Christian people are extremely careless about their speech. We should be shocked every time we hear a Christian say "Goodness gracious!" or "Good Gosh!" The lack of sensitivity to the sinfulness of such speech is one of the signs of spiritual decadence at the present day. If a person is really a Christian, his speech should be free from all forms of profanity. It should be in marked contrast to the speech of the worldly person.

The other common violation of clean speech is by the use of filthy or impure language. This is not so much a matter of the actual words used as it is of the way they are used and the thoughts in the person's mind. It is a terribly common sin today. No Christian should ever tell or listen to what are called "dirty stories" or "dirty jokes." To do so is to copy the sins of the world, and to offend against God, and grieve His Holy Spirit.

Last of all, the Christian will cultivate a forgiving spirit. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (verses 31, 32). Instead of malice, bitterness, evil speaking, etc., the Christian should cultivate kindness and a forgiving spirit. This is just the opposite of the way worldly people live. The world's code is to hold a grudge against a person who has wronged us, to get even if possible, and never really to forgive the wrongdoer.

A cartoon in a religious magazine portrayed two Christians who had been involved in a quarrel because of an injury which one of them had done the other. They had been outwardly "reconciled" and were seen shaking hands as a token of reconciliation. Each was extending his right hand to shake hands with the other. But each held his left hand concealed behind his back. In

the left hand of one was a knife, in the left hand of the other, a hatchet. Beneath the cartoon was the caption: "Yes, brother, I can forgive but I cannot forget." The worldly person does not really forgive an injury. He puts up an outward appearance of forgiveness, but he continues to hold the wrong against the other person. He may not actually be planning how he can "get even" but he does not really feel friendly toward the other person. Such is not forgiveness in the Christian sense.

The Christian will really forgive. His forgiveness is not mere polite formality concealing a heart full of bitter enmity. His forgiveness is without reservations and it comes from his heart. For the Christian himself knows what forgiveness is; he has experienced it — he has a motive for forgiving others: to show gratitude to God, who has already forgiven him.

There is great need for this forgiving spirit among Christian people. Some who have a zeal for God and for the truth of God yet in reality neutralize the effectiveness of their testimony by their bitter, unforgiving spirit. It is to be feared that the sin warned against by the cartoon described above, is only too common. This is just another proof of the low spiritual state of the churches today. Revival is badly needed—not the superficial, emotional kind of revival, but the real revival that is wrought by the Holy Spirit, which will lead Christian people to realize, confess and forsake their sins.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (verse 30). Christian people who commit the sins Paul has been speaking of in this passage (4:25-32) thereby grieve the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in every born again Christian, carrying on His sanctifying work. When a Christian falls into sin, this grieves the Holy Spirit.

It is not enough to avoid giving place to the devil. We must also avoid grieving the Holy Spirit. What is meant by "grieving the Holy Spirit"? This is clearly not the same thing as the "unpardonable sin" of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The sin of grieving the Holy Spirit is not unpardonable; it is a sin that can be forgiven. It is evident from the context that by "grieving the Holy Spirit" Paul means falling into sins such as he has been describing. By so doing, the Christian would offend or displease the Holy Spirit, resulting in a decrease, for a time, of the manifestation of the Spirit's presence in the person's soul. Such a person will lose, for a time, his Christian joy, his consciousness of God's favor, his assurance of salvation. He will also lose his usefulness in God's Kingdom, and will become a problem to his fellow Christians and to his church. Those who seek a further discussion of this matter are referred to the Westminster Confession of Faith, XVIII.4 and the Larger Catechism, Q. 81.

Grieving the Holy Spirit is itself a sin, but it does not result in the Holy Spirit abandoning the person, as some have held. The Holy Spirit never abandons those who have been born again. He takes His abode in their souls and remains there for ever. This is, indeed, taught by verse 30, which adds that believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. The "day of redemption," of course, is the Last Day, the Day of the Lord, the day of Christ's second coming, of the resurrection and the judgment. See Romans 8:23, which speaks of Christians waiting for "the redemption of our body." Compare also 2 Cor. 1:21,22, ". . . God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts"; 2 Cor. 5:5, ". . . God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit"; Eph. 1:13,14, ". . . after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, . . .". The teaching of these various texts is closely related. Two ideas are prominent, the idea of the "seal" and the idea of the "earnest." It is affirmed that believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption, and that believers have received the earnest of the Holy Spirit.

A seal is an official pledge or guarantee, placed on a document such as a contract, will, treaty, etc., to guarantee that it is genuine and valid and that it will be faithfully carried out without failure and without alteration. Once officially sealed, no changes can be made. It is a binding, unalterable obligation of the person who has affixed the seal. The Holy Spirit is God's "seal" placed upon the soul of the Christian. This is God's guarantee that the work of salvation will be carried on in that person until it is finally complete at the day of redemption — the time of the resurrection of the body. The seal is God's binding pledge that He who has begun a good work in us will carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ.

The earnest is what we would call a "down payment" today. It is a partial payment which proves that the transaction is binding and will not be canceled later. It is not, of course, as if God owed the Christian anything; but rather, that God has chosen to give the Holy Spirit to His children as a first instalment, thus pledging that all other blessings and benefits will be bestowed in due time. Thus the Holy Spirit in the Christian's soul is God's pledge and certification that all other blessings — the Kingdom of God, the sum-total of all good to all eternity — will surely be the Christian's portion. The Christian believer, having received the Holy Spirit, is also guaranteed all other blessings. He will receive these at the resurrection, when consummate blessedness shall be his portion. But meantime, while waiting for that blessed time, he has the Holy Spirit as God's seal and as God's earnest — God's unbreakable pledge that all shall be his at "the day of redemption."

If it were possible for the Holy Spirit to abandon and forsake any true child of God, then all that we are taught in the above-cited texts about the Holy Spirit as a seal and an earnest would amount to nothing. It is only because of the truth that the Holy Spirit abides in the Christian's soul permanently, that He can be a seal and an earnest until the day of redemption.

We may note, too, that Eph. 4:30 is one of the texts which prove the personality of the Holy Spirit. Many people think of the Holy Spirit as a kind of impersonal force or influence, such as magnetism or gravity. But Paul speaks of "grieving" the Holy Spirit. Clearly, a force or influence cannot be grieved. Only a person can be grieved. And if it is possible to grieve the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit must be a Person, not a mere force or influence.

May we all, as Christian people, believers in Christ, put off the old man, put on the new man, and cultivate real practical holiness in our daily living. May we all be practicing Christians.

#### Questions:

1. How is the command to avoid corrupt speech most commonly violated today?
2. What is profanity, and why is it wrong?
3. Why should a Christian avoid such expressions as "Goodness gracious"?
4. What are "minced oaths" and why are they wrong?
5. What should be the Christian's attitude toward what are commonly called "dirty stories" and "dirty jokes"?
6. What is the world's code with regard to forgiving others?
7. How does real Christian forgiveness differ from the world's kind of "forgiveness"?
8. What kind of religious revival is needed today?
9. What is the Christian's great motive for forgiving others?
10. What is the difference between "grieving the Spirit" and the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?
11. What is meant by "grieving the Holy Spirit"?
12. What are the results of grieving the Holy Spirit?
13. What is meant by "the day of redemption"?
14. What is the meaning of a seal, and how is the Holy Spirit a seal?
15. What is an earnest, and of what is the Holy Spirit an earnest?
17. What is the bearing of Eph. 4:30 on the personality of the Holy Spirit?
16. How can it be shown from Scripture that the Holy Spirit never abandons any true child of God?

## LESSON 23

**III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24,  
Continued****2. The Duty of Christians in Personal and Social  
Matters. 5:1 to 6:9****(a) Separation from idolatry and uncleanness.  
5:1-17**

In chapters 5 and 6 we have a treatment of the personal and social duties of Christians; that is, not so much their duties as members of the Church, as their duties as individuals and members of society, in the home and in the world. There follows also a concluding section on the believer's spiritual warfare and weapons.

- (1) Verse 1 with its "therefore" connects the thought up with what has preceded, in chapter 4: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children." This is a general statement that the Christian, as a child of God, must also be a follower of God. Verse 2 adds the obligation to follow Christ's example of love. The Christian is not merely to have love, nor merely to claim to have love, but actually to walk in love. Christ's example of love was love carried into action; He "loved us, and hath given himself for us." It is easy to say that we ought to love God and our fellow Christians; but what is needed is to walk in love, to carry love into the practice of our daily lives.

Verses 3 and 4 urge the avoidance of uncleanness in thought, word and deed, and the substituting therefor of "giving of thanks." We should realize that immorality such as is mentioned in these verses was extremely common in the ancient pagan Greek world, and was not even regarded as sinful. It was therefore the more necessary that Paul warn the Christians against such sins, since they were living in such an environment.

The statement in verse 5 that no such person has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God means, of course, none that is unrepentant. There is no sin so great that it can exclude from God's Kingdom those who truly repent. See the Westminster Confession of Faith, XV.4.

Verse 6 is a solemn warning against those who would deceive the believer with "vain words". By "vain words" the apostle means what we would call "empty talk." It is a warning against the popular idea that Christians can commit such sins as are mentioned in verses 3-5 without danger to his Christian standing or his spiritual life. As a matter of fact there were those in the Gentile churches of Paul's day who claimed that as the body is a comparatively unimportant part of the human personality, what the body did could have no effect on the spirit, and so Christians could indulge in fornication without committing sin and without interfering with their sanctification. The results of putting such a theory into practice can be easily imagined. The adherents of such a view

apparently were able to put up a learned and plausible argument in favor of their idea, but Paul brands it as "vain words" and warns Christians against being deceived by it. Instead of what the body does being unimportant, Paul says, it is because of such things as these that the wrath of God comes upon wicked people. The serious Christian will not want to dabble and play with the sins of the world; rather, he will make a clean break of separation from them, and bear witness against them. "Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (verse 7). Those who partake of the sins of the world, can expect to share in the judgments which come upon the world. Christians should be separated.

In verse 8 we have the believer's former state of pagan darkness contrasted with his present state of divine light, coupled with an exhortation to walk in that light. Those who think that the heathen have a religion which is suited to their need, and that we should therefore not send missionaries to win them for Christ, do not know what heathenism is. There is a great deal of foolishness written about some of these heathen religions, regarding them as beautiful or romantic. But Paul describes them correctly as "darkness," while Christianity and Christian people are "light in the Lord." To "walk in that light" means, of course, to conform our conduct to the law and will of God.

In verses 9 to 10 the apostle enjoins Christians to bring forth in their lives the fruit of the Spirit, namely, goodness and righteousness and truth. Note that here, as in Gal. 5, it is the "fruit" of the Spirit, in the singular, not "fruits" but "fruit". But, as in Galatians, the contrasted sinful works are spoken of in the plural: "works," not "work."

The "unfruitful works of darkness" mentioned in verse 11 probably means the sinful works which were characteristic of pagan society; the word "darkness" recalls verse 8 ("Ye were sometime darkness . . ."). It is possible that in verses 11 and 12 Paul may be referring to the secret religious rites of some of the cults of that age. Those who are interested in a description of the ancient "mystery religions" are referred to **The Origin of Paul's Religion**, by J. Gresham Machen: Chapter VI, **The Religion of the Hellenistic Age**; see pp. 227-237 of the 1921 edition.

Whether "the unfruitful works of darkness" refers to religious rites or, as is more probable, to moral offences, it is clear that the Christian is to maintain separation from them. He is to have no fellowship with them, but rather to reprove them. The fact of secrecy is often a sign that evil is being done. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:20,21).

In contrast to all works of darkness, the Christian belongs to the realm of light.

So Paul adds, "But all things that are reprobred are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (verse 13). That is, the light of the Christians' pure and good life, by way of contrast will reprove the works of darkness, and bring out their true character. Christian people's life should be in strong contrast to the non-Christian life around them. They should live so that their very lives will be a powerful reproof of the sins of the world.

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (verse 14). Compare the somewhat similar thought in Rom. 13:11-14. "He saith" means, of course, God saith. The verse is apparently a paraphrase or free quotation of Isaiah 60:1,2, where "the church is set forth as being in a state of darkness and of death, and is exhorted to awake, and become light, for that her light is come, and the glory of Jehovah has arisen upon her" (Henry Alford). The fact that Paul does not quote Isaiah word for word, but rather gives a paraphrase or free quotation, is to be explained on the principle that the Holy Spirit is the real author of both Isaiah and Ephesians. When an author is quoting his own previous writings, he may be allowed a degree of liberty which it would not be proper for another, quoting him, to take. By divine inspiration, Paul's quotation grasps the true meaning of the text in Isaiah.

Verses 15-17 concern practical matters. The Christian, as a wise man, is to walk "circumspectly," that is, carefully, thoughtfully. He is to "redeem the time, because the days are evil"; Christians cannot do everything; they must spend their time on what is really important; they must regard time as a sacred stewardship, not to be wasted. The Greek means "buying up the time,"

taking advantage of it. The Christian is not to be unwise, but to understand what the Lord's will is. The Greek word for "unwise" means senseless. Christians who are absorbed in the things of the world and can scarcely bring themselves to devote an hour or two occasionally to the worship of God, will tend to be "senseless," religiously obtuse, with no sensitivity as to what the Lord's will is. Paul exhorts his readers to be just the opposite.

#### Questions:

1. What is the general subject of chapters 5 and 6? *DUTIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH*
2. What is meant by walking in love?
3. Does 5:5 mean that anyone who has committed the sins mentioned cannot be saved? *NO*
4. What does Paul mean by "vain words"? *EMPTY TALK*
5. What kind of "vain words" were Paul's readers liable to be deceived by?
6. How does Paul describe the religious and moral condition of heathenism?
7. Why should a Christian separate from the "unfruitful works of darkness"?
8. From what source is the quotation of 5:14 apparently taken?
9. How can we explain the fact that Paul gives a paraphrase rather than an exact quotation?
10. What is the meaning of "circumspectly"? What is involved in walking circumspectly?
11. What should be the Christian's attitude to the use of time?
12. What is meant by "unwise" in verse 17? How can Christians avoid the danger of being "unwise"?

#### LESSON 24

##### III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24, Continued

###### 2. The Duty of Christians in Personal and Social Matters. 5:1 to 6:9, continued

###### (b) Spiritual worship. 5:18-20

Verse 18 teaches that the believer is not to be drunk with wine, wherein is excess — a teaching very important not only in Paul's day, but also in our own. But there is one matter in which the Christian need fear no excess, and need exercise no temperance, namely, being filled with the Holy Spirit (18b). The "intoxication" produced by being filled with the Holy Spirit is beneficial to the believer, to the Church and to the world. For the result of being filled with the Spirit is a spiritual, as opposed to a merely formal, worship of and devotion to God.

Note that to "be filled with the Spirit" is a command, not merely the description of an experience. Since we are commanded to "be filled with the Spirit" it must be our duty to seek this blessing from God. Of course there is no reference here to any of the phenomena characteristic of what is called "Pentecostalism," nor to any idea of receiving the Holy Spirit as an experience separate from receiving Christ as our Saviour. Rather, the meaning is that we are continuously, by our prayers and by our manner of life, to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Christian's worship will include praise and thanksgiving. Praise usually takes the form of song. We should observe that in the Greek text the adjective "spiritual" probably goes with all three nouns: Psalms, hymns, songs. Paul de-

signates all three as connected with the Holy Spirit. The word "spiritual" in Scripture never has the modern meaning of "religious" or "devotional". In this text it means dynamically connected with the Holy Spirit as author or source. A spiritual song is a song of which the Holy Spirit is the Author.

In Paul's day the only hymnbook in use was the Old Testament Psalter. This is an historical proposition capable of abundant proof, and no one can prove the contrary. We may add that the Greek words for "Psalms, hymns, songs" are found in the titles of the Old Testament Psalms in the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament). This was the form of the Old Testament commonly used by Paul and by the churches to which he wrote his Epistles. We conclude, therefore, that "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" in Eph. 5:19 (and the same terms in Col. 3:16) is a reference to the Psalms of the Old Testament, and contains no reference to any other materials of praise.

For a full study of this text the reader is referred to the article "Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs" by the Rev. Frank D. Frazer, in the April-June 1948 issue of this magazine, pages 83-85; reprinted in the October-December 1952 issue, pages 164-166; reprints of this article are available at 5 cents each or 25 for \$1.00, postpaid. 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 Mr. Frazer presents in the above-mentioned article. We do not have space available here for a full discussion of this subject, but refer the reader to Mr. Frazer's article.

We shall, however, say something about an objection that is often raised against the exclusive use of the Psalms in divine worship. This objection is to the effect that many hymns are just as "inspired" as are the Old Testament Psalms. For example, it has been claimed that Fanny Crosby's hymns are just as "inspired" as any of the Psalms. This objection is not only a very common one, but it is raised with an air of complete confidence, as if it disposed of the subject once and for all, beyond all possibility of a rebuttal.

In reply to this objection, it may be said, first of all, that if Fanny Crosby's hymns are just as inspired as the Psalms, then they will have to be printed in every copy of the Bible. Whatever is inspired is Scripture and is a part of the Word of God and must be included in printed copies of the Bible. If Fanny Crosby's hymns are really as inspired as the Psalms, then we can appeal to any line in her hymns for proof of doctrines, and for decision of controversies.

But of course, the objector does not hold that Fanny Crosby's hymns should be incorporated into the text of the Bible. Yet he says that those hymns are "just as inspired as the Psalms of the Bible." The explanation is, of course, that the objector is using the word "inspired" in a different sense from its proper meaning when it is used to describe the Bible as "the inspired Word of God." The person who says that Fanny Crosby's hymns are as inspired as the Psalms may have too high an idea of Fanny Crosby's hymns, or he may have too low an idea of the Psalms. In most cases, probably, the latter is the case. The objector does not mean by "inspired" what this word properly means in connection with the inspiration of Scripture. Rather, he means by "inspired" something like "inspirational" or "productive of religious sentiment and emotion." We are not concerned to deny that Fanny Crosby's hymns possess this quality, but this is something quite different from their being "inspired" in the sense in which "inspired" is used in the Bible and in theology. The person who raises the objection we are considering, usually has no adequate idea of the inspiration of Scripture. His real meaning is not that Fanny Crosby's hymns are as inspired as the Psalms, but rather that the Psalms are no more inspired than Fanny Crosby's hymns. And if a person has no conviction of the real inspiration and infallibility — the divine character — of the Bible Psalms, it is practically useless to discuss the matter with him at all.

Christian worship includes also giving thanks. Paul instructs Christians to give thanks "always for all things", which includes even those things in God's Providence which may seem hard and grievous to us. As we see from Rom. 8:28, all things work together for good to the Christian, so in some way we can give thanks "always for all things."

Thanksgiving is to be "unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let us never forget that our only approach to God is through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our only Mediator and High Priest. All our prayers are acceptable to God only through Him.

#### Questions:

1. What does verse 18 teach us on the subject of temperance?
2. What kind of "intoxication" is beneficial to all concerned?
3. What is the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit?
4. What is implied by the command to be filled with the Spirit?
5. What is the difference between the meaning of "spiritual" in verse 19 and the common meaning of "spiritual" in modern usage?

6. What does Paul mean by "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"?
7. What was the only hymnbook in use in the churches in Paul's day?
8. In what version of the Old Testament are the words "Psalms, hymns, songs" found in the titles of the Psalms?

9. What was the relation of this version of the Old Testament to Paul and the churches to which he wrote his Epistles?

10. How can we answer the person who says that Fanny Crosby's hymns, for example, are "just as inspired as the Psalms of the Bible"?

## LESSON 25

### **III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24, Continued**

#### **2. The Duty of Christians in Personal and Social Matters. 5:1 to 6:9, continued**

(c) **Mutual duties of husbands and wives, including a discussion of marriage as an illustration of the relation between Christ and the Church.** 5:21-33

In this section we have the apostle Paul's teaching on the mutual duties of husbands and wives, and interwoven with this we find an illustration or figure of the relation between Christ and the Church.

Verse 21 ("Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God") according to the grammar is part of the sentence which starts at the beginning of verse 18. But it is difficult to see the connection, for verses 18-20 concern religious duties owed to God, whereas verse 21 concerns a general moral duty owed to men. Although the connection is obscure, the meaning of verse 21 is quite plain: Christian people are not to think of themselves only, and what they want or prefer, but to be willing to yield to others, for the sake of harmony and fellowship.

Paul finds in the divinely appointed constitution of the family a parallel to the relation between Christ and the Church. He teaches here that as Christ is the Head of the Church, so in the family the husband is the head of the wife (verses 22-24). We shall consider what this involves, first as regards the relation between Christ and the Church, and secondly as regards the relation between husband and wife in the family.

Paul asserts that Christ is the Head of the Church, adding that He is "the Saviour of the body." All Christians accept the truth of Christ's Headship over the Church, at least in theory. This truth is not always honored in practice, however. The Roman Catholic Church at least pays lip service to Christ's Headship over the Church, in its claim that the Pope of Rome is Christ's vicerent, that is, Christ's earthly representative or agent. But we believe that Romanism grievously denies the truth of Christ's Headship in practice, by claiming for the pope and the hierarchy powers and privileges which in reality belong to Christ alone, such as the power to forgive sins.

Another grievous infringement of Christ's Headship over the Church is found in the Erastian system, according to which the civil magistrate (that is, the State) is supreme over the Church. It was against a particularly offensive form of this Erastian system that our Covenanter forefathers in Scotland witnessed and struggled three centuries ago. But the Erastian system is not dead by any means. In a large part of the world today it is taken for granted that the State is supreme in the sphere of religion, and therefore supreme over the Christian Church. An extreme form of Erastianism existed in Germany under Hitler, and in Japan and Japanese-occupied Asia during the Second World War and for a year or two previous to it. And it would seem that Erastianism now prevails in Soviet Russia and her satellite countries including Communist China, where the Church exists only by the permission and at the mercy of a totalitarian State. We maintain that Erastianism is a dishonor to the Lord Jesus Christ and a grievous injury to His Church, against which all faithful Christians should testify.

Christ's Headship over the Church is also infringed by the popular modern notion that the Church is an absolute democracy in which the members can change the doctrines or manner of worship by a majority vote if they see fit to do so. This is a practical denial of Christ's Headship over the Church. If Christ is really the Head of the Church, then the members are not the head of the Church. If Christ is really the Head of the Church, then the members are not free to do as the majority may see fit. For if Christ is really the Head of the Church, then, as Paul says, the Church must be subject unto Christ. The Church is to be controlled by the will of Christ revealed in His Word, through the medium of lawful church government as instituted by Christ through His apostles.

Another infringement of Christ's Headship over the Church is found in the spirit of modern individualism which has come down to us, not from the Bible, but from the French Revolution—the modern spirit of everyone wanting to do as he pleases in the sphere of religion as in all other matters. Some dare to say openly that they will believe and live as they please; others are not so bold as to say this openly, but they say it day after day by the way they live. All such dishonor

constitution of the Church and that of the family?

4. Is the truth of Christ's Headship over the Church accepted by the Roman Catholic Church? *etc*  
How is it denied in practice by that church?  
~~Popl given churc power - pl forgive sin~~

5. What is the Erastian system, and why is it wrong? *State our church*

6. Give some examples of the Erastian system from the history of the Church.  
*Seel and persecusion by 300c*

7. How is Christ's Headship over the Church infringed by the popular idea that the Church is an absolute democracy?  
*Change doctrine by majority vote.*

8. How does the modern spirit of "doing as we please" infringe Christ's Headship over the Church?

9. What does Christ's Headship over the Church imply concerning the government of the Church?

## Questions:

1. What new subject does Paul take up in this section of the Epistle? *Christ* → *church*  
*Husband* → *wife* → *family*
  2. What is the meaning of verse 21 ("Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God")? *moral duty owed to men*
  3. What parallel does Paul present between the  
*Christ - head of church*  
*Husband - .. .. family*

LESSON 26

### **III. Practical Section of the Epistle. 4:1 to 6:24, Continued**

## **2. The Duty of Christians in Personal and Social Matters. 5:1 to 6:9, continued**

(c) Mutual duties of husbands and wives, including a discussion of marriage as an illustration of the relation between Christ and the Church. 5:21-33, continued

In the last lesson we considered Paul's statement that Christ is the Head of the Church. We shall now take up the parallel statement that "the husband is the head of the wife" (verse 23).

"God never created anything without giving to it the law of its being. The family is of God; and the blessedness of the family relation depends upon obedience to the divine law. Should a wife render obedience to her husband? The law of God must answer the question. 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church. (Eph. 5:22,23). Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.'

"What duty, then, does the Scripture lay upon the husband that is at all commensurate with the submission required of the wife? Simply this: 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth

and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.' (Eph. 5:25-29). If the husband gives to his wife the full measure of self-sacrificing love which the word of God demands of him for her, it will be an easy thing for the wife to give to her husband that reverence for him which is required of her. The obligations are mutual and neither party has the right claim what is due from the other, while withholding what is due to the other." (R. J. George, in **Lectures in Pastoral Theology**, First Series, **The Covenanter Pastor**, 1911, page 224).

Though this may be an unpopular teaching in some circles at the present day, it is a teaching of the Word of God. We believe that the statement of Dr. R. J. George, quoted above, is a sound and Scriptural summary of the Bible teaching on this subject.

Back of this teaching of Ephesians 5 is the Biblical view of the origin and constitution of the family. In verse 31 Paul quotes the statement of Gen. 2:24 which proves that the family is a divine institution going back to the very beginning of the human race. This is contrary to the common modern idea that the family is a product of natural social evolution. According to the Bible, the family is a divine institution. But if God instituted the family, then its constitution and principles of existence must also be prescribed by God. As Dr. George wrote, "God never created anything without giving to it the law of its being." The constitution of the family must therefore be sought in Scripture. And it is perfectly clear in Scripture that God has ordained

that the husband shall be the head of the family. The revolt against this principle which is so prevalent today is more than a revolt against the idea that the husband is the head of the wife; it is a revolt against the whole idea that the family is a divine institution with a constitution ordained by God. The objection to Paul's teaching that wives should be subject to their husbands, as the Church is to Christ, is rooted in a deeper revolt against the authority of Scripture, which is, ultimately, the authority of God.

There are of course certain limits to the injunction that wives should be subject unto their husbands, just as there are certain limits to the obligation of Christian people to obey magistrates, which Paul inculcates in Romans 13. These limits are not discussed, or even stated, in this passage; rather, they are assumed. In general, there can be no obligation of obedience in any matter which is contrary to the law of God. God's commandments take precedence over all authority delegated to human beings.

Commenting on this passage in Ephesians 5 and its briefer parallel in Col. 3:18, together with Gen. 3:16, the late Dr. Walter A. Maier of *The Lutheran Hour* wrote as follows:

"It must be evident from these passages that according to divine will the family, instead of having two heads, is to have one, the husband, to whom both God and man look for the direction of the domestic affairs. It is the husband who takes the initiative in establishing the union by his proposal for marriage; it is he who sustains it by his financial support; and it is he who must direct it according to Biblical requirements. The Scriptures are too definite to permit of any other interpretation; and when the ceremony asks the bride to pledge herself 'to love, honor, and obey', this promise is in direct conformity with Heaven's ideal for the highest married happiness." (*For Better, not for Worse: A Manual of Christian Matrimony*, page 459. Copyright 1939 by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Quoted by permission).

In the chapter from which the above quotation is taken, Dr. Maier presents a very interesting and Scriptural discussion of the various aspects of this subject (pages 453-466 of the book). He shows how Christianity has brought real benefits to women far beyond any other religion in the world, but also how the modern feminist or "woman's rights" movement goes far beyond what the Bible warrants and is rooted in modern infidel rebellion against the authority and law of God. The chapter contains many effective illustrations, and can be recommended to anyone seeking a sane and Scriptural discussion of this subject.

#### Questions:

1. What truth is parallel to the truth that Christ is the Head of the Church?
2. What did Dr. R. J. George say about the constitution of the family?
3. What Bible teaching lies back of Paul's statements about marriage in Eph. 5?
4. What is the common idea about the family in modern unbelieving circles?
5. What deeper revolt lies back of the modern objection to Paul's teaching that wives should be subject to their own husbands?
6. What are the limits to the obedience which wives should render to their husbands, according to the Bible?
7. What was the belief of the late Dr. Walter Maier regarding the pledge "to love, honor, and obey" in the marriage ceremony?
8. What are some of the real benefits that Christianity has brought to women, in contrast to conditions existing under other religions?
9. Is the modern feminist or "woman's rights" movement in accord with the teachings of the Bible?

(To be continued)

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## 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 manager of this magazine.

**THE ROMANCE OF DOOR BELLS**, by Eugene D. Dolloff. The Judson Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 1951, pp. 195. \$2.50.

The author of this book is a Baptist pastor

in New Bedford, Mass. In the foreword he states that after reviewing a list of more than 200 books for ministers, he found that there was not one dealing with parish-wide pastoral visitation. It was in answer to that need that this book was

written. It is the writer's conviction that the reason for neglect in this field is because pastoral calling has come to be considered of little importance. The book presents the need for pastoral work and various techniques which may be followed in accomplishing it.

The doorbell presents the preacher with at least a potential spiritual adventure. It is the trail which leads to, and frequently permits one to share, the very heart throbs of the people who live in the house to which it is attached. Bishop William C. Martin is quoted as saying, "A vast amount of scorn has been released upon the alleged waste of time that is spent in ringing doorbells where there are so many more important things to be done. All this is a cheap effort to justify laziness or indifference and is not worthy of the Protestant ministry, or the possibility for good which intelligent, unceasing pastoral calling holds today."

The author states that he is often sought to advise churches which have become dissatisfied with their pastors, and in cases where the pastors are responsible for the dissatisfaction, the reason most generally advanced is the neglect of pastoral visitation. This book is not mere theory but is a presentation of the author's many years of experience in this field. Any success which he has achieved, he largely attributes to the great amount of pastoral work which he has done. There are few ministers who could boast of having made so many calls, on so many different classes of people. Some of the subjects covered are: Finding Time to Call, When Calls Should be Made, Hospital Calls, Calling on Shut-ins, Doing the Work of an Evangelist, and Points of Etiquette in Pastoral Calling. Not all the suggestions that are made can be followed, nor can we agree with everything that has been written. For example, we do not approve of administering communion privately.

One cannot read this book without being pricked in the heart because of his own neglect in this field. It is to be highly commended to every pastor.

—John O. Edgar

**THE SILENCE OF GOD**, by Robert Anderson.  
Kregel Publications, 525 Eastern Ave., S. E., Grand  
Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 232, \$2.00.

In this work of 13 chapters and an appendix of 11 extensive notes Sir Robert Anderson tackles the problem of human suffering. Why should God be silent to the pleas for help of His suffering people? The book seems to have been called forth by the Armenian persecutions in the last generation.

The author is a champion of the truth of the infallible Word of God, in reply to such men as Paley, John Stuart Mill and F. C. Baur. His first approach to the problem is to show that miracles are not the essential stamp of divine approval upon

the servant of God, nor the vindication of the Christian faith. Such approval and vindication is to be found in the Scriptures themselves. The author ably challenges the infidel and higher critical denials of miracles, and the false position held by many Christians that success is a sign of divine favor and failure or misfortune a sign of divine disapproval.

The second approach is that the main feature of the present age of the Gospel is the reconciliation of man to God through the cross, the extension of grace that men may repent. Few accept it, because "the god of this age" blinds the minds of men to believe "THE lie" that Jesus is not the Son of God (note 7, pp. 186-189). God is silent because He is giving men the opportunity to repent; judgment is inconsistent with grace, for it would close the opportunity for repentance. This section presents a clear-cut Gospel of grace through the reconciliation of the cross.

Though the work is in places stimulating, refreshing and gratifying, it presents some serious weaknesses in argument in places, and is full of arbitrary interpretations of Scripture. The author concedes too readily that "God has not spoken for 2000 years," and that this silence drives men to infidelity and atheism (pp. 7, 10, 11, 15, etc.). Is it impossible for the believer to see the hand of God in any of the events of history since the close of the Acts of the Apostles? To insist on the other hand that any summary judgment of the wicked would be inconsistent with His gracious will that men repent, is to deny that men may sin away their day of grace (1 John 5:16).

Miracles are found unnecessary today because they were intended to prove to the Jews the continuity of revelation in Christ with the Old Testament, not to convert the Gentiles. In arriving at this conclusion a "Pentecostal Dispensation" is created extending from Pentecost to Acts 28; this is a transitional period in which the Jews rejected a second opportunity to accept the Kingdom, so that the Gospel was taken from them and given to the Gentiles. Is there no end to the creation of dispensations?

God then revealed to Paul a new Gospel not found earlier in the Scriptures, which he gives to us in the Epistle to the Romans (16:25). This "mystery" now made clear for the first time is said to be the doctrine of reconciliation. "The great truth of Reconciliation will be sought for in vain in the Old Testament Scriptures" (p. 114). Anything could hardly be farther from the truth.

Some common dispensational views expressed in this book are: the distinction between Israel and the Church, the Christian and "the disciple of the kingdom"; Christ used parables to veil His message rather than to make it plain (p. 55); Christ's "official attitude" today is "one of rest" (p. 143). Though the author speaks of the

sovereignty of God, this has no relation to the redemption of particular men (p. 116).

—E. Clark Copeland

**EDUCATION IN CYPRUS**, by Wilbur W. Weir. Published by the author, c/o American Academy, Larnaca, Cyprus. 1952, pp. 312. \$3.50 postpaid.

This is a book on comparative education. The subtitle explains the subject of the book in these words: "Some Theories and Practices In Education In The Island of Cyprus Since 1878."

While the main subject is "Education in Cyprus," the reader soon discovers that the author deals with the subject of education in general. This makes the book of value even to those who are not especially interested in the Near East and its educational problems.

First, we are introduced by Mr. Weir to the island and its people. There are about 450,000 people living in this Eastern Mediterranean island, 80% being Greek, a little over 15% Turks, and the remainder some minorities from the mainland, Jews, and British people.

Cyprus had been for three centuries under the rule of the Ottoman Turks before it came under the control of the British in 1887. Very little had been done in the field of education; the Turks were mainly interested in providing some religious training for the future Moslem priests. The Greeks did some work for the education of their children, yet the majority of the people of Cyprus were illiterate. From this book we learn that the Covenanters began their mission work in 1888, and soon most of their work was done through the medium of schools. An Academy for boys was founded around 1909, and another for the girls in 1922.

The attention of the reader is directed to the several factors which influence and try to shape the theories and practices of education in the Island. Some of these are purely local: they stem from the difference in race and religion and the change of rulers in the land. Others come from outside the Island, and soon mingle with the former factors, in shaping the educational policies. Since the beginning of the British occupation, the Government has appointed a Director of Education. His role was first the supervision of the governmental aids which were granted to the schools of the Greeks, Turks and the other minorities. In later years, the Director of Education has acquired more power in the framing of educational programmes of all the schools that are helped by the Department of Education.

Two theories and their practices are fighting for the control of the schools of Cyprus. The author calls the first, the Classical theory, and the second, the New School theory. The Greek leaders of the Island, backed by the Greek Orthodox Church, aim at keeping the fires of Greek national-

ism burning within the hearts of the youth of Cyprus. To achieve this end, they would like to see a heavy classical programme adopted and carried out throughout the Greek schools of the land —be they the ones aided and controlled by the Government, or the privately owned Greek schools. This explains the opposition that these leaders have to any changes in emphasis, since any shift would mean less contact with the past —the glorious history of the Hellenistic world. Changes in the philosophy of education in Britain have made some impressions on the colonial educational policies, but on the whole, these changes have been slower and less drastic than the ones which occurred in the United States. Mr. Weir believes that the present-day aim of the British is to provide adequate training for the children of the Island, which will enable them to help their country meet the demands of the modern world.

Undoubtedly, the readers of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** are interested in the role that is played by the Academies of Larnaca and Nicosia in this educational struggle. From the Greek Classicists' point of view, these schools are regarded as more practical and thus belong to the New School party. This will not be strange to understand, since the Academies are influenced a great deal by what goes on in the fields of education in America. Yet this is not our primary interest, and so we ask: what are these schools accomplishing regarding the sole purpose of missions in non-Christian and non-Protestant lands? The aim of the Covenanter Church was and must still be the faithful preaching of the Gospel, and the organization of Reformed Presbyterian churches in the fields of the Near East and the Far East.

In the 19th century, it was found that mission schools afforded the best media or means for evangelism. This is a fact which cannot be denied. Almost all Protestants of the Near East have come to embrace the Evangelical faith through these schools. Cyprus is nominally a Christian country, but the Greek Orthodox Church does not bear the necessary marks of the true Church—in spite of the term "Orthodox" which is attached to its name. This church has lost its spiritual leadership, it lives in the glorious past of the great Ecumenical Councils of early Christianity and has not had any reform similar to the one which occurred in the Western Church. Almost all intelligent or educated Cypriots regard her as their political champion, and not much more. In such an environment, our mission schools work and try to give the students the opportunity of hearing the claims of Christ, the simple and clear teachings of the Reformation. According to the book, there is a special emphasis on the importance of the "personal religious experience." There are the usual Bible courses on week-days which are still offered in almost all mission schools throughout the Near East. The Sabbath services are attended

by all boarder students as well as by some day students.

We are thankful to Mr. Weir's frankness concerning the influence of Modernism, which he calls Secularism, on the mission schools. He tells us that these schools have not escaped the influence of Secularism which has almost achieved a victory in many American state schools. This is brought forth through the work of those teachers who are either unaware or unappreciative of the implications of the historic Christian faith. Their attitude to the Bible and to its principles is governed by a philosophy of utilitarianism. Text-books have served as another channel for the invasion of Modernism, which give to the student a non-Christian view of the world, of man and of God. Mr. Weir thinks that this is almost inevitable, since "the mission schools using American text-books cannot escape this influence."

"Education in Cyprus" appears in a time when the current educational philosophies have been tested on a large scale, and for a sufficient period of time in order to prove their deficiency, and their failure to reach the aims which they set as their goals. Many voices among parents as well as educators have been raised against the whole-hearted acceptance of Deweyism by the schools of America—here and overseas. Mr. Weir shows how a merely technical or classical training fails to make the personality which education—when properly understood—is expected to create. The general attitude of the student who has been brought up in these schools can be expressed in these words which are quoted from the book: "Do not tell me what I should do; tell me how to do more efficiently what I want to do."

After reading this book, every Christian who realizes the great importance and role of education, cannot but feel a little uneasy about the whole subject. How is it that the Christian Church at large has been tolerating, and in part advocating, these Modernistic theories of education, without examining them in the light of the Word of God? I think this book should make us come to the firm decision that we cannot any more afford to be indifferent or apathetic regarding this whole subject. If we have failed in the past to develop a definite Christian philosophy on which to base a Christian theory of education, it is time that we wake up and start doing something about it. We cannot expect our children to grow up and remain faithful to the Christian faith, when we compare the time they spend in day-schools with their secular and un-Christian philosophy, to the limited amount of Christian training, on Sabbath days.

The book is recommended, not only to those who are interested in education on mission fields, but to all who think and believe that our future depends to a large degree on what our children are taught in schools. It contains several statistics and information on the history, geography, political

and educational life of the Island of Cyprus. The book will be of special help to those who are to decide on the future of our mission work in the Near East.

It is hoped that this book, and other similar ones, will awaken the interest of Christians, and that the day will soon come when they will realize their God-appointed responsibilities in the education of their children. Our Dutch brethren, both in the United States and in Holland, have done a remarkable work in this field. There is no reason why other Reformed people should not follow in the same line. For until education in America is converted to Christianity, it will be in vain to expect any real and lasting revival. The first Reformation came out of the universities of Europe; the second Reformation—which we hope is not far away—must also come out of the same centers of learning and leadership.

—Bassam M. Madany

SERMONS AND OUTLINES FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS (Symposium). Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 100. \$1.75.

Fourteen sermons, some of them condensed but none long, with four other sermon themes and texts, have been chosen for special days—New Year's Day, Palm Sunday, Labor Day, and others—from great preachers of a past generation. In the judgment of this reviewer, these sermons must not represent by any means the best work of these men. For instance, it would seem from Stalker's manner of speech, that his sermon might have been taken down stenographically. He says, concerning a certain Scripture which he quotes, "I think it is in the Psalms." The worth of this volume is apt to be found in the suggestiveness of the themes and texts, rather than in the actual sermons.

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS, by F. B. Meyer (reprint). Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 261. \$2.50.

The statement of the Preface is correct, that this is a devotional, not a critical or exegetical, commentary. Mr. Meyer's books breathe an intimate fellowship with God, and have been popular with Bible-believing people for three generations. It is the author's estimate, concerning this volume, that it "more completely than any single one besides, contains the essence of the messages with which (he was) entrusted." Mr. Meyer was a Baptist and dispensationalist but it is rarely that his exposition reflects these tenets of his faith. While seeking to avoid controversial discussion he gives richly of his own understanding of "this . . . tenderest of all the Epistles."

Where Paul speaks of being in prison, Meyer

says, "If the Master has put you as a light on the cellar stair, never desert that post because it is lonely and distasteful, and because the opportunity of service comes rarely. To be found doing your duty at the unexpected moment, when His footfall is heard along the corridor, will be a reward for years of patient waiting."

When commenting on Paul's admission that he had not as yet attained, Meyer says, "It is important never to allow the imperfect and second-best to pass unconfessed. Too often we have done it, whispering: 'Yes, I have failed, let it pass'; instead of confessing to God and man, and crying: 'Never more; I will be Christlike, I will be pure with the purity of Jesus. . .'"

There are frequent appeals to the imminence of the return of Christ as ground for faithfulness and hope, which is typical of those who believe in the premillennial return of our Lord.

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

**REFORMED STANDARDS OF UNITY, WITH INTRODUCTION BY LEROY NIXON.** Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952, pp. 119. \$1.25.

No one can fully appreciate the great doctrinal standards which have come down to us from the Protestant Reformation without knowing something of the holy providence which brought about their production. It is therefore ideal to have bound together in a single volume the texts of certain historic standards of faith as well as a survey of their historical background. **Reformed Standards of Unity** conforms to this ideal; the texts being those of the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of the Synod of Dort, and the 21 page Introduction being an excellent account of the formulation of these documents.

In the Introduction, Mr. Nixon states that "as a symbol of the Calvinistic system of doctrine the Belgic Confession compares favorably with the more famous Westminster Confession" (p. 19). An actual collation of the texts of these two Confessions, however, reveals numerous dissimilarities. The Westminster Confession of Faith was formulated some 80 years later than the earliest form of the Belgic Confession. Hence it is to be expected that it should be a somewhat fuller and more specific statement of belief than the latter. In fact, a number of matters included in the Westminster Confession do not appear in the Belgic Confession (the Law of God, Adoption, Perseverance, religious worship, the Sabbath, synods and councils). Other matters set forth with careful definition in the Westminster Confession appear only incidentally in the Belgic Confession (e.g., free will, effectual calling). Still other doctrines, explicit in the Westminster Confession, are present in the Belgic Confession only by implication (e.g., Christian liberty, repentance and the Covenant of Grace. All the

elements which later went into the construction of the covenant doctrine are present in the Belgic Confession, but the doctrine itself was not yet fully developed. See Berkhof, **Systematic Theology**, Chapter IV, A).

The Canons of Dort are an expanded statement of the classic Five Calvinistic Canons, viz., unconditional election, limited atonement, total depravity, efficacious grace and the perseverance of the saints. It is unfortunate that the Canons of Dort appear in **Reformed Standards of Unity** in an abridged form, as held by the Reformed Church in America. This abridgement omits the Preface and Conclusion, the rejection of opposite errors and the Sentence against the Remonstrants.

What appears to be inconsistent in this omission is the fact that the subscription of the historic standards as required by the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America of all ministers and professors of theology states that "we reject all errors which are contrary thereto" and "we will exert ourselves to keep the Church free from all such errors"; yet they have eliminated the specific statements concerning the very errors they promise to reject and oppose.

The Church is called upon, in bearing witness to the truth, to maintain a testimony against the world. The testimony which the Church holds out to the world is to have a negative as well as a positive aspect. In faithfully fulfilling her commission as the "pillar and ground of the truth," the visible Church must maintain a vigilant stand against errors which are contrary to the truth she endeavors to proclaim (Mark 6:11; Acts 20:29-31; 26:16,18; 1 Cor. 1:19; Gal. 1:8,9; 2:5,11; 1 Tim. 5:20).

No Church is ever justified in receding "from a more clear and particular testimony to a more general and evasive one" (**Reformed Presbyterian Testimony**, XXXIII,3; emphasis mine). What the Church needs is a more exact formulation of its doctrines against heresies as they appear in every new form, and a fuller statement of Biblical truth. Dr. B. B. Warfield makes this point clear when he says that science seeks not less but more specific knowledge of its subject. "In any progressive science, the amount of departure from accepted truth which is possible to the sound thinker becomes thus ever less and less, in proportion as investigation and study result in the progressive establishment of an ever increasing number of facts. The physician who would bring back today the medicine of Galen would be no more mad than the theologian who would revive the theology of Clement of Alexandria" (**Studies in Theology**, p. 78).

One of the possible implications of the title of the volume under present discussion is that all of the Reformed Churches founded historically in The Netherlands might be in some fashion united, at least in their testimony, solely on the basis of the three traditional creeds. But a re-

duction of the historic standards of the Church is representative of a retrogressive testimony which cannot constitute a Scriptural basis of unity among the Reformed Churches. It is evident that the judgment concerning these formularies differs in the various church bodies. The Rev. Henry J. Evenhouse, Secretary of the Christian Reformed Board of Missions, says, "The Reformed Church in America conceives of them as general guides whereas we in our Church look upon them as a solemn directive for theological thinking" (in a personal letter to this writer, quoted by permission). Moreover, the testimony of the Christian Reformed Church is not coterminous with these three standards, but extends beyond their boundaries to include numerous crucial points of difference between herself and the Reformed Church in America. And although these differences are sometimes minimized by members of the latter, they are not generally minimized by members of the Christian Reformed Church.

Schism in the Church of Christ cannot be healed by that which brought it about in the first place; and true unity can be attained only as the Church in its corporate witness "holds fast the form of sound words" as revealed in the Scriptures.

—Joseph A. Hill

**AN EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. MATTHEW,** by Alfred Plummer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1953, pp. xlvi, 451. \$5.00.

This volume is a reprint of a standard commentary on Matthew which was originally published in 1910. Written by a believing, orthodox scholar of great learning, it constitutes a valuable help in the study of the Gospel of Matthew. The author does not by-pass difficult problems, as some writers tend to do, but faces them squarely. He often gives very informative summaries of the opinions of other scholars, representing various viewpoints, and follows these where necessary by his own criticisms.

It is obviously impossible, in the space available here, to give a really adequate review of a commentary of nearly 500 pages. Really to do justice to it would require the citation and appraisal of many passages. This being impossible, we shall limit our review to a general description and evaluation of the work.

The author devotes 46 pages of his Preface, Bibliography, and Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew. The Introduction discusses the authorship, sources, plan Christology, and date of the Gospel, and also the question of the relation of "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" to this Gospel. This is followed by the Commentary proper, occupying 439 pages. This divides the contents of the Gospel into seven sections, starting

with "The Birth and Infancy of the Messiah" and ending with "The Passion, Death, and Resurrection." The last ten pages of the book are indexes: (1) General Index; (2) Index of Greek words.

While the scholarly study of the Gospels presupposes a knowledge of New Testament Greek, the present volume can be read, and much knowledge obtained from it, by one who knows no Greek, because in almost all cases where Greek words appear, they are accompanied by the English equivalent. In fact, the author usually uses the English first, followed by the original Greek in parenthesis.

The author ably defends the historical character of the virgin birth of our Lord, His miracles, and His resurrection. We shall quote a brief paragraph:

"To those who believe that Jesus Christ was what He claimed to be, that is, to those who believe in the Incarnation, there is no difficulty about miracles. They are the natural works of a supernatural Person. If He was not supernatural, then difficulty arises. But in that case we tear up the New Testament, and the history of the Christian Church becomes inexplicable" (p. 122).

This is not a book for light "inspirational" reading in odd moments of relaxation. It is a scholarly and serious study of God's Word. Those who earnestly seek for something more satisfying than the obvious and superficial will find this commentary a gold mine.

—J. G. Vos

**COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE,** by Norval Geldenhuys. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1952, pp. 685. \$6.00.

This new commentary on the Gospel of Luke by an able South African scholar has been highly recommended. The text of the Gospel is given in the English Revised Version (of 1881). The exposition is based however on the original Greek text, as represented by Nestle's latest edition. Where Nestle's text differs from the "Received Text" the author explains, in footnotes, why Nestle's text is to be preferred as more accurate.

The author holds the orthodox view of the inerrancy of Scripture and the supernatural character of Christianity, including the deity of our Lord. His approach to the sacred text is always one of reverence and faith. But it is also scholarly and discerning, and profound without being obscure. Those who can read Greek and have a knowledge of theology and Biblical criticism will not find this book shallow or superficial, yet the serious "lay" Christian of ordinary education can easily read it and get great benefit from it. The author often draws practical lessons and applications from his exposition of the text. For

example, the following is his practical application of the history of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10):

"Whosoever accepts Jesus whole-heartedly in his life and becomes personally acquainted with Him receives real salvation, a salvation which brings about an effective and practical revolution in his life, inwardly and outwardly. When Jesus comes into a person's life, and gains authority there, selfishness and dishonesty are irresistibly eradicated" (p. 471).

This commentary is a remarkable combination of real scholarship and clear, simple, practical exposition. The book is beautifully printed and bound. Those who love the Word of God will not be disappointed in it.

—J. G. Vos

**COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS**, by F. W. Grosheide. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1953, pp. 415. \$5.00.

By way of introducing the learned author of this commentary on First Corinthians, we shall quote from the Foreword by Dr. N. B. Stonehouse, General Editor of the New International Commentary on the New Testament:

"Due to the circumstance that a large part of his voluminous writings have been published in the language of his own country, the author is not as well-known in the English-speaking world as he deserves to be. Since 1912 he has been a professor in the theological faculty of the Free University of Amsterdam, and is rounding out a distinguished record of forty years of service there after a period of five years as a pastor. He is the author of several scholarly volumes on the New Testament, including no fewer than six commentaries in the 14-volume learned **Kommentaar op het Nieuwe Testament**, of which he was the initial sponsor. His literary activity includes also scores of articles contributed to encyclopedias, symposiums and journals, including the Evangelical Quarterly. For many years he has been president of the Bible Society of the Netherlands and has participated actively in the preparation of a modern translation of the New Testament which has won wide favor in that country. . . In the midst of all his scholarly activity, Dr. Grosheide has found time to be an active churchman and is known especially for his interest in evangelization. The Epistle to the Corinthians serves admirably, therefore, to utilize the ripe scholarship and the practical sensitivity of this distinguished theologian."

The Scripture text used in this commentary is that of the American Revised Version (1901). The text is printed in full for the sake of readers who do not read Greek, but the exposition is based on the Greek text.

This is probably the most noteworthy commentary on 1 Corinthians since that of Charles

Hodge was issued nearly 100 years ago. This is a difficult Epistle, involving many problems of interpretation. The author faces these seriously. He is very careful never to go beyond what the sacred text warrants; when he is unable to answer a question, he does not hesitate to say so. For example, in speaking about the supernatural gift of tongues, after saying that this constituted "a miraculous spiritual language that had its own sounds," he adds in a footnote: "More than once expositors have contended that this miraculous language was the language spoken in Paradise. We do not deny the plausibility of such a view but maintain that it cannot be proved from the words of Paul but goes beyond them. Paul does not speak about the nature of the sounds" (pp. 288, 289).

The author's method is to take up sections of a few verses each, comment on them verse by verse, and to give a summarizing paragraph at the end of the study of each section. This makes it very easy to consult the commentary and to grasp the author's thought. The whole is written in a very clear and readable style. As many things in 1 Corinthians are highly relevant to present-day conditions, this commentary will prove a valuable addition to the library of any minister or theological student. And it is not at all beyond the capacity of other church members of ordinary education.

The book is very well printed and attractively bound. In looking through it, this reviewer noted only three typographical errors: on page 221, "Meriba" should be "Meribah"; on page 332, "The secrets of his hearts" should be "The secrets of his heart"; on page 376, "the fact that Paul does separate soul and body" apparently should be "the fact that Paul does not separate soul and body."

—J. G. Vos

**THE SPREADING FLAME: THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY**, by F. F. Bruce. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1953, pp. 543. \$5.00.

This volume on church history by Professor F. F. Bruce, Head of the Department of Biblical History and Literature of the University of Sheffield, England, is really three books in one. These three books were originally published in separate volumes in England, but have now been reproduced in a single volume by the photolithoprint process. The three books are: (1) **The Dawn of Christianity** (The story of the infant Church to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70); (2) **The Growing Day** (From A. D. 70 to the accession of Constantine, A.D. 313); (3) **Light in the West** (Christianity in Rome after Constantine, and its spread to Britain and the English-speaking world).

This is truly a remarkable book. The reviewer read it hour after hour, fascinated by the

sheer interest of the story it tells. For Professor Bruce knows how to make church history live. There is nothing dry or dusty about it; there is not one dull page in the whole volume. Some books on church history are little better than a rehash of what has been written many times before; this book is different. It presents the product of real scholarship in a highly original way, with a great deal of "human interest." Added to this is the author's sly, dry humor which appears here and there and makes the volume even more readable.

The whole book is noteworthy, but in the judgment of this reviewer the third part (*Light in the West*) is the most noteworthy. Especially the part dealing with early Celtic Christianity in Britain and Ireland is remarkable, presenting as it

does many facts not available elsewhere to the ordinary reader. In many books on church history this part of the subject is practically a blank. Professor Bruce shows that in reality there was a flourishing church life in Britain and Ireland during the early centuries, before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons—even in Scotland, "beyond the Roman wall."

We do not agree with every statement of the author by any means. But the things we object to are mere minor details in what is certainly an excellent and valuable book. This book is worthy of a wide circulation, and should enable many to gain a better knowledge of the story of early Christianity.

—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.

**Publications of Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich.**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH: SEVEN SERMONS ON ISAIAH 53, by John Calvin. 1953, pp. 133. \$2.00.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA, by Herman N. Ridderbos. 1953, pp. 238. \$3.50.

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION, by James Orr. 1953, pp. 224. \$3.00.

### **Publications of Other Firms**

CHRISTIANITY AND EXISTENTIALISM, by

J. M. Spier. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 525 Locust St., Philadelphia 6, Pa. 1953, pp. 140. \$3.00.

TOWARD A REFORMED PHILOSOPHY, by William Young. Piet Hein Publishers, 1300 West Butler St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952, pp. 157. \$2.50.

DIVORCE, by John Murray. Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Belvidere Road, Phillipsburg, N. J. 1953, pp. 117. \$2.50.

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY: JOHN, VOLUME I, by William Hendriksen. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1953, pp. 250. \$4.50.

## **Someone I Love**

Someone I love went home, one day —  
Went home to God. He did not say  
How long He would be gone, nor when  
He would be coming back again.  
I only know that He has gone  
To make a place for me. Some dawn  
Or evening light, He'll come for me!

Till then there is a task that He  
Has set for me — His last command,  
To preach the Word! O heart and hand,  
Be consecrated to His cause;  
Spend strength and purse and store, nor pause  
Until that wondrous prize is won:  
His tender words: "Belov'd, well done!"

(Author unknown)

# *The Blessedness of All Those Whose Trust Is in the Lord*

## *1. Kept by the Power of God--Psalm Three*

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

Psalm Two closes with the words, **Blessed** are all they who take refuge in Him," that is, in Jehovah and Jehovah's Anointed, in Christ, the Son of God, to whom, by covenant, the nations are given for His inheritance; made subject to His rule by Jehovah's decree. Their judgment is committed to Him. Blessing is commanded for all who fear and trust and obey Him, who willingly yield themselves to the decree that they be His people and He be their God.

The Old Testament form of the blessing commanded is three-fold, to be pronounced by the high priest (Num. 6:22-27), singling out each individual particularly, "The Lord bless thee, and **keep** thee; the Lord make his face shine on thee, and be **gracious** to thee; the Lord lift up his face upon thee, and give thee **peace**. And they shall put my **name** upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." He will bless them with the blessings of **protection**; with the blessings of His manifold **grace**; and with the blessings of **peace**. Great blessings indeed, and comprehensive of all that is good for man. Realization of them brings a song to the heart and lips.

Psalms Three and Four constitute a pair of such songs, connected by similar wording and breathing the same deep consciousness of God's nearness and favor, His power and faithfulness.

The heading of Psalm Three is, "A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son." It was perhaps David's sorest, bitterest experience, the most terrifying crisis of his career. Though he knew better, he had sown the wind and was reaping the whirlwind in his own house and kingdom. Ignominiously he ran away from his house, his throne, and his city. It seemed as if all the promises of God had failed. Yet, of Jehovah he was able to say, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Out of the depths he cried. God heard and graciously delivered him, for He said, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness: I will not lie unto David: his seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me."

Yet in the Psalm itself there is not a word to tie it to the person or time of David. It is truly "the word of Christ," for all who know the fellowship of His sufferings, and the security of His refuge.

The Psalms were written for the people of God of all time, that in the midst of the conflict with evil they may not forget their omnipotent and ever-faithful God, but in Him may win victory and peace.

The blessing of **protection** comes first, for without that, there can be no enjoyment of other grace and peace. Back of all the mercy and goodness of God is His power, His self-sufficiency, His absolute sovereignty. He cannot be hindered by another's opposition, nor by the lack of another's help. "Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isa. 14:24). Because of this, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"; "no evil shall befall thee," nothing contrary to the perfect will and gracious purpose of God.

When the Great High Priest had come, and was about to offer the sacrifice of Himself, once for all, He made intercession "for those whom thou hast given me," in these words, "Holy Father, **keep** them in thy name. . . . While I was with them I **kept** them in thy name which thou hast given me, and I **guarded** them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. . . . I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst **keep** them from the evil. . . . that they may all be one; even as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us."

Interceding thus, according to the Father's will, He secured protection for all who put their trust in Him. As man, Jesus needed protection for Himself, when alone He met the subtlety of Satan; when forsaken by all His friends He faced the angry mob, the traitor, the false witnesses, corrupt and prejudiced courts, and the cruelty of beasts in men's clothing. He faced them with calm, unshaken confidence. He avoided every trap. They condemned Him without a cause. By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God He was crucified and slain, but the resurrection and its sequel prove that in doing the will of God He had the protection of God.

Psalm Three is the song of one who, having taken refuge in God, enjoys the blessedness of God's protection; he rests in the security of God's almighty, never-failing care; kept by the power

of God according to the promise of God, even in the midst of hostile forces seen and unseen.

Having taken refuge in the Lord, the Christian immediately finds himself surrounded by enemies —many more than he had ever known before.

**"Jehovah, how are mine enemies increased! Many are they that rise up against me. Many are they that say of my soul, There is no help for him in God"** (vss. 1,2).

They are nations and peoples raging against God and against Christ, vainly supposing that they can throw off the authority of Him that is enthroned in the heavens (Psalm 2:1). Enemies of God, they are the enemies of my soul. They rise against me because I am on the Lord's side. To be the friend of God is to have the enmity of the world. He who avoids the conflict is trying to save himself. But the shadow of the Almighty lies over the battlefield. They can kill the body, but there is no more that they can do.

When He was nailed to the cross, they said, "He trusted in God: let him deliver him now, if he will have him" (Matt. 27:43). But they had no eyes to see His glorious deliverance. When it was told them they tried to cover it with lies and with shame, persecuting all who dared to repeat it. To take refuge in Christ is to be in the center of the conflict that still rages about Him. Believers are His witnesses, and when they testify to the truth of His deity, incarnation, atonement for the sin of the world, His resurrection, His present authority and His coming to judge the world, they are mocked and scorned, and so far as possible put out of the way. The modern priests and prophets, the Pharisees and Sadducees, are the open and the secret enemies of the true Christian today, as always. But there is help for him in God; there is security for him in Christ.

**"But THOU, O Jehovah, thou art a shield about me; My glory, and the Lifter up of my head. With my voice to Jehovah I cry, And he answers me from the mountain of his holiness"** (vss. 3,4).

A "shield," warding off attack from any direction, any source. My "glory"; I have no worth, no distinction, no honor, but in Thee. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his strength, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah who exerciseth, judgment and righteousness in the earth" (Jer. 9:23,24). "He who lifts up my head" with courage and strength and defiance of evil, to cry to Him who answers from the mountain of His holiness. "The mountain of His holiness" is where Christ sits (Psalm 2:6). And "Holy is His Name." That by which He makes Himself known, as the One beside whom there is no other, is His holiness. To be kept in His name is to be kept in His holiness, in the righteousness of God which is im-

pregnable and impervious to every device of evil. He who has realization of this has nothing to fear. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26:43).

**"As for me, I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for Jehovah sustains me. I am not afraid of ten thousands of the people That are set Against me round about"** (vss. 5,6).

"laid me down," — not in a warm comfortable bed, that night after he passed over the brook Kidron (1 Sam. 15:23), but on the hard, stony ground, with no roof overhead but the clouds. Nevertheless he slept, and waked, for his Keeper kept watch over His own. "He that keepeth thee will not slumber." "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee."

Freedom from fear does not come by political maneuverings, nor by appeasement of the enemies, as proud men have boasted. It comes only by putting trust in Christ, by faith increasing in the knowledge and experience of His salvation. "Who is a mighty one like unto Thee, O Jehovah? And Thy faithfulness is round about Thee" (Psalm 89:8). At the threat of any danger the believer may call upon Him, confident of present help. Experience brings more and more assurance.

**"Arise, O Jehovah; save me, O my God; For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek; The teeth of the wicked thou hast broken. To Jehovah belongeth the salvation; Upon thy people is thy blessing!"** (vss. 7,8).

The right to call God "my God" is a covenant right, belonging only to those who have entered into God's covenant, the ark of His salvation; those who have taken refuge under the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, and willingly subjected themselves to the standards of God's righteousness. Their enemies, the wicked, are as the beasts, unreasonable and stubborn, upon whom God uses force to drive them back, and to break their power to hurt and destroy.

The singer of this song has had experience of the keeping power and faithfulness of his covenant God, in time of need. David returned to the city of God, realizing that the kingdom was the Lord's, and that it had been kept though he and his people had been unfaithful. He returned with a sad but chastened spirit. His son Absalom was dead. But he had reached a new **assurance of faith** in God. Accordingly he gives his testimony to the world. "To Jehovah belongeth the salvation," the full salvation needed at the moment, from whatever evil or combination of evils, of whatever dimensions, or whatever urgency. "He is able to save unto the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." There is no other salvation.

"There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." But His name is a holy name. His salvation is from sin unto holiness of life.

To this end "Thy blessing is upon thy people," now and always, upon all thy covenant people. It may be chastisement for sin, but it is necessary to keep them from the evil; to keep them in the paths of righteousness. "Behold, he that keepeth Israel will never slumber nor sleep."

This is assurance needed today when the enemies of the Church are so greatly increased. There are so many inside the Church doing their worst by false teaching and traps to make God's people fall into sin. It is time for repentance; for

a return to the city and house of God from which so many have been driven by the enemies of God. It is time to remember our promise to be God's people, and return to a new obedience. It is time for each one of us, individually and together, to pray, "Arise, O Jehovah; save me, O my God." His first great blessing upon His people is protection against sin and temptation. He will not fail us, but will send His answer again from the mountain of His holiness, that we may have a testimony to give to the world, and assurance to sustain us in His truth and righteousness.

(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:

Are we justified in regarding as valid the baptism of a child where neither of the parents makes a profession of religion? If valid, on what Scriptural ground?

### Answer:

There is no Scriptural basis for the baptism of a child neither of whose parents makes a profession of the Christian religion, therefore such baptism cannot be regarded as valid.

Children are not baptized because they are children, as so many suppose, but because they are children of the covenant by virtue of their parents (one or both) being professed parties of God's Covenant of Grace, of which "the promise is to you and to your children." The only basis of infant baptism is the covenant relationship as God established it.

Whether the parents in question had at some time received ritual baptism, or not, they have repudiated the covenant, and have now no promise either for themselves or for their children. Therefore, "it would be a mockery for them to present their child for baptism on the basis of a covenant relationship which they do not acknowledge" (John Murray, in *Christian Baptism*, in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, November 1951, page 33. This valuable work is now published in book form, under the same title, by the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Belvidere Road, Phillipsburg, N. J. \$1.75).

The salvation of the child, however, does not depend on ritual baptism, but on regeneration by the Holy Spirit, evidenced in due time by faith in Christ. God's election of grace stands sure.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no man shall snatch them out of my hand."

—F. D. Frazer

### Question:

Please cite references for refutation of the claim of immersionists based on Rom. 6:4 and 1 Pet. 3:21.

### Answer:

The claim of immersionists based on Rom. 6:4 is that, since baptized persons are "buried with Christ by baptism into His death" (and resurrection), the rite of baptism must be performed by immersion.

But, the spiritual meaning and effect of baptism are variously described in Scripture, without in any case prescribing the manner of administering the symbolic ordinance. In Rom. 6:5,6, where the argument of verses 1-4 (which has nothing at all to do with the mode of baptism) is repeated in other terms, baptized persons are said to be "planted with" and "crucified with Christ." In Gal. 3:27, they are said to have "put on Christ (as a garment); in 1 Cor. 12:13, to have been "baptized into one body" (the body of Christ).

Planted with; crucified with; putting on Christ; incorporated into His body;—these expressions picture operations very different from being "buried with Christ." There is just as much reason for arbitrarily making any one of these expressions prescribe the mode of baptism, as another; i.e., there is no reason at all. The one idea common to them all, and symbolized by them all, is union with Christ, which is the true spiritual meaning of baptism.

"Crucified with Christ" describes union with Christ in His death. "Buried with Christ" describes union with Christ in the interval between His death and His resurrection. In the case of Christ this was important as affording public proof of His death, and later of His resurrection, "according to the Scriptures." It is important for us also that there be public evidence that we are dead to sin, and are walking in newness of life.

Burial is merely the human custom of disposing of dead bodies, different among different peoples, at different times. To this the original word, translated "buried," refers in general, without indicating any particular method.

We know from the Scripture account that Jesus was buried, wrapped in linen cloth with spices, "as the manner of the Jews was to bury" (John 19:40); that His body was laid in a rich man's tomb, or burial chamber (Isa. 53:9 and Matt. 27:57), "quarried in the rock-cliff (or rock-ledge)," as Matt. 27:60 reads literally; a chamber large enough to admit several persons at one time (John 20:6-12), and that could be opened at any time by rolling back a stone from the door of the tomb. The body of Jesus was **not** buried by lowering it into the ground and covering it with earth, as is our custom now. Hence, immersion is **not** a fit emblem of being "buried with Christ."

It seems strange that 1 Pet. 3:21 should be used in support of immersion since the "eight souls" (vs. 20) were saved precisely by **not** being immersed, but by being held out of the water in the ark of God's provision. But some immersionists assert that the words, "baptism doth now save us" teach the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration"; that the outward sign insures the spiritual effect of the thing signified. This is refuted by:

1. The many texts in which salvation is promised to faith alone not to ritual baptism. John 3:16,36; 11:25,26. Acts 16:31. 1 John 5:1; etc.

2. The many texts which show that faith is prerequisite to baptism, not its result. Acts 2:38; 8:37,38; 10:47,48; 11:17; etc. It is a matter of experience that many who have received ritual baptism give no evidence of regeneration. Real faith does not follow. Acts 8:13, 18-23. 1 Tim. 1:19,20; 5:15. 1 John 2:19; etc.

3. The many texts that condemn formalism. Matt. 23:25,26; etc. Baptism is called "the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11), implying that baptism continues all that was essential in circumcision. But, "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision (the external rite) availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith working by love" (Gal. 5:6); "but keeping the commandments of God" (1 Cor. 7:19); "but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15). That is, men are not saved by signs or forms or ceremonies, but by the grace of God.

—F. D. Frazer

#### Question:

Is it right to play games involving an element of chance when played simply for recreation or amusement? The games concerned are such as authors, dominoes, monopoly, games which use spinners stopping on a number, and others in which the element of chance is not merely incidental, but determines the outcome of the game.

#### Answer:

By "chance", in general, is meant the result of unknown or unconsidered forces. Together with "luck," it is a word to cover the abysmal void of human ignorance and inability. Of course, we cannot eliminate all elements of uncertainty from anything we do in this world, but to amuse oneself with uncertainties seems infantile or irrational. One reason games of chance are so popular is that they do not require much intelligence.

But, the "spinner," or the roulette wheel, will stop exactly at the number determined by the distribution of its own weight, the initial impulse, air pressure, gravitation, friction, etc. The coin, or each one of the dice, will stop with exactly that side up determined similarly, and by the form and character of the surface on which it falls. It makes no difference what is printed on the cards, or what they are called; it is the shuffling and distribution that determine their place and effect. To these mechanical forces are inevitably added certain spiritual forces, by the players who do some observing, and some thinking, more or less; sometimes innocently, sometimes dishonestly. The whole complex is beyond our ability to comprehend or to trace.

However, when we deal with forces, we deal with God who created and controls all of them for His own purposes. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah" (Prov. 16:33), the omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent God. This statement of the Word of God comprehends the whole matter in question. God is His absolute sovereignty "has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass," not the great things only, but even the smallest. He leaves nothing to "chance."

"Chance" as a real factor is non-existent. There is no mystery to become fascinated with, or to be afraid of. There is no blind god or fickle goddess by the name of "Chance" or "Fortune," to which ignorant men have appealed, built temples, and offered sacrifices, which is only one gross manifestation of the tendency in the sinful human heart to put "chance" along with other "nothings" in the place of God.

Hence, "chance" has no proper place in the thought and activity of the Christian. For him to play with a thing called "chance" is to give it a place and confirm its name, and to suggest to

himself and to others that it is a factor in life. This does not strengthen, but tends to weaken, his trust and dependence on God alone. He makes himself more liable to decide important issues by the flip of a coin, thus dishonoring God, and insulting his own intelligence. This indicates why so many "harmless" games of chance are offered to Christians, and how the sins of Godlessness and irreverence, of carelessness and irresponsibility, have thereby a way to creep into the soul.

Gambling does not depend on the value of the "stakes." They may be nothing more than the empty honor or false superiority of "winning"—winning a loss of time.

The intelligent and faithful Christian will use better means, of which there are plenty, for refreshing and amusing himself and his friends.

The reader is referred to "The Sinfulness of Raffles and Chances," by Editor J. G. Vos, in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, Vol. 5 No. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1950), pp. 154 ff. Also to the Report of the Committee on Discipline on various forms of gambling, in the **Minutes of Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America**, 1951, p. 139.

—F. D. Frazer

**Question:**

What is "will-worship"?

**Answer:**

The term "will-worship" is derived from Col. 2:23. It means worship that is devised according to human desires and preference, instead of having been appointed by God in His Word.

For a full discussion of what is involved in will-worship, the reader is referred to the article **The Scriptural Pattern of Worship**, in our April-June 1952 issue, pages 56-60; also to the October-December 1947 issue, pages 159-166.

**Question:**

Is singing of hymns of human composition in the worship of God will-worship.

**Answer:**

We believe and are convinced on Scriptural grounds that it is. Please read the following references in previous issues of this publication: March 1946, pages 49-50; May 1946, page 80; July-Sept. 1946, page 138; April-June 1947, pages 91-93; Oct.-Dec. 1947, page 164; April-June 1948, pages 83-85; Oct.-Dec. 1952, pages 164-166.

**Question:**

Are not hymns of human composition often the means of people's conversion?

**Answer:**

Please refer to our Oct.-Dec. 1947 issue, pages 177, 178, where this question is fully discussed.

**Question:**

Many Scripture passages seem to imply that the early Christians believed that Christ would return during their life-time. As the writers were inspired, they could not be mistaken. How can this be reconciled with the fact that Christ did not return during their life-time?

**Answer:**

Please refer to our Oct.-Dec. 1947 issue, pages 180-181, where this question is fully discussed.

**Question:**

Paul says in Phil. 3:11, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Was Paul doubting the certainty of his resurrection?

**Answer:**

Please refer to our April-June 1948 issue, page 92, where this question is fully discussed. See also the April-June 1953 issue, page 80.

**Question:**

How could Caiaphas, being a wicked man, utter a true prophecy as is stated in John 11:47-53?

**Answer:**

That Caiaphas was a wicked man, and that he did utter a true prophecy, are facts made clear by the Gospel record. The explanation must be sought in the statement of verse 51: "but being high priest that year, he prophesied. . ." That is, God, in His sovereignty, was pleased to honor and use the office, even though the person holding the office was a wicked man. There are parallels to this in Scripture: the case of Balaam, who prophesied against his will, and that of Saul, who prophesied (1 Sam. 10:9-13) although the total picture of his life and death shows that he did not truly know God. Arthur W. Pink, in his **Exposition of the Gospel of John**, Vol. III, page 73, comments: "What we have in this verse (51) and the one following is the Holy Spirit's parenthetical explanation and amplification upon this saying of the high priest's. Altogether unconscious of the fact, Caiaphas had 'prophesied,' and as 2 Peter 1:20,21 tells us, 'No prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation (i.e. human origination), for the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man.' The instance before us is closely parallel with the case of Balaam in the O.T., who also 'prophesied' against his will."

God is sovereign and can use unregenerate men to accomplish His purposes if He chooses to do so. Ordinarily, of course, prophets are pious men, but there may be some exceptions, as shown above. In the ancient Church, the Donatist sect held that the validity of a minister's official acts, such as baptism, depends on the personal piety of the minister, so that those baptized by an unregenerate minister would in reality be unbaptized.

The Donatist position was strongly opposed by Augustine, and was finally rejected by the Church as heretical. The minister who administers baptism does so as an organ of the Church, not as a private individual; the validity of his ministerial acts depends on his official commission, not on his personal piety. Of course, a minister should be a regenerate and godly man, but the validity of his official acts is not contingent upon his personal piety.

An official of the government might be impeached for improper conduct, but that would not render all his official acts prior to his impeachment null and void. Caiaphas was a bad man, but still he was high priest, and the old dispensation had not yet ended, so God chose to use his words for a higher meaning and purpose than he himself knew.

—J. G. Vos

#### Question:

In John 11:49,50, was Caiaphas a mere robot through whom God spoke in confirming Christ's great mission?

#### Answer:

We believe that Caiaphas was not conscious of uttering any prophecy. He spoke from the standpoint of political expediency, stating that it would be expedient for one man to die for the people, that the whole nation perish not. That is, the political welfare of the people required that Jesus be sacrificed, to avert intervention by the Romans (note verse 48). Thus Caiaphas, being a wicked man, spoke according to his own worldly wisdom. But, unknown to himself, he was controlled and overruled in this speech so that it expressed a deeper meaning, unknown to Caiaphas, a meaning which the Holy Spirit further explains in verses 51 and 52. Caiaphas was not a mere "robot" for he spoke rationally in accordance with his own ideas and motives. He was used by the Holy Spirit without his own knowledge of the fact.

— J. G. Vos

#### Question:

In John 11:47-54, did the Jews believe Caiaphas' prophecy, and if so, was this the reason why they took counsel from that day forth to put Jesus to death?

#### Answer:

There seems to be nothing in the record to indicate that the Jews who heard Caiaphas' statement regarded it as inspired prophecy, or as anything else than what Caiaphas meant it for, that is, a counsel of political expediency. Like Caiaphas, they were not concerned about what was right, or what would please God, but about how to avoid trouble with the Roman authorities (verse 48). Caiaphas gives them some worldly-wise advice, and they take it for just that.

Later on, after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, the words of Caiaphas would no doubt be pondered and discussed in Christian circles. Their deeper, divinely-intended meaning would be discerned by those possessing spiritual insight. And when John came to write his Gospel, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit he included the explanatory statements of verses 51 and 52.

— J. G. Vos

#### Question:

In **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, July-September 1948, page 130 (Question Box) it is affirmed that many of the Jews present at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41) were already true, saved believers under the old dispensation, so that at Pentecost they were not converted from sin to God, but from the old dispensation to the new (by accepting Jesus as the Messiah). How can this be reconciled with Peter's charge in Acts 2:23,36 that they were murderers of the Messiah?

#### Answer:

1. It is not maintained, of course, that all of the three thousand persons added to the Church at Pentecost had been true, saved believers under the old dispensation, but only that many of them may have been such. Salvation did not start with Pentecost; it started with the revelation of the Covenant of Grace, immediately after the fall of man (Gen. 3:15). Under the influence of Darby-Scofield Dispensationalism, many people fail to do justice to the essential unity and continuity of the New Testament with the Old. See the **Westminster Confession of Faith**, VII. 5,6. Salvation under the old dispensation of the Covenant of Grace was essentially the same as it is under the new dispensation of that Covenant. Therefore the fact that a Jew or Jewish proselyte became a Christian cannot be regarded as necessarily implying conversion from sin to God, or passing from death unto life.

2. It is of course different today. No Jew living today has lived part of his life under the old dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, for that old dispensation ended with our Lord's crucifixion, as witness the rent veil of the temple. Any Jew who becomes a Christian today, like any Gentile who becomes a Christian, must necessarily pass from spiritual death to spiritual life. We must remember that the period at and immediately after Pentecost had a special and altogether unique character. The train of God's covenant people was being switched from the track of the old dispensation to the track of the new dispensation. In Acts chapter 2 and the chapters immediately following this shifting was in process. For a time multitudes accepted Jesus as the Messiah, were baptized, and entered the Church. Then this mass influx of Jews into the Church stopped, and has never been repeated. When Paul wrote his epistles, Jews were won to Christ the hard way, by ones and twos and little groups. It seems reasonable to conclude that soon after Pentecost

the great majority, if not all, of the Jews who had been true believers under the old dispensation accepted Christ, leaving behind them in Judaism the unregenerate part of the nation, who became hardened and bitter in their opposition to the Church.

3. Peter's charge that his hearers were the murderers of the Messiah does not imply that these people **individually and personally** were responsible for the crucifixion of Christ, but only that by reason of their identification with the Jewish nation they could not disclaim responsibility for the crucifixion. Jesus was crucified by the official action of the Jewish nation, not merely by a crowd of individuals. Acts 3:17 shows that many bore a share in the guilt of the crucifixion who yet were ignorant of the nature and enormity of their crime. Compare the prayer of Jesus in Luke 23:34, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Did they not know they were crucifying a man? And did they not very likely know that they were unjustly crucifying an innocent man? Yet these Roman soldiers could hardly know that Jesus was the Messiah; and, after all, they were only obeying their orders. So Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them." Does this imply that these soldiers were totally absolved of guilt in connection with the crucifixion of Jesus? We believe the meaning is that these soldiers were not to be held **personally** responsible for the death of Jesus; the mere fact that they drove nails through His hands and feet was not

to make them more responsible than others who were not so directly involved.

If we raise the question of who was guilty of the crime of the crucifixion, we must answer that this crime was primarily the act of the **Jewish nation as such**, which implies that no one identified with the Jewish nation (except such as positively dissented from and opposed the deed; note Luke 23:51) could be regarded as free from this primary responsibility and its attendant guilt. In this corporate sense of identification with the Jewish nation, Peter's hearers at Pentecost were indeed the murderers of the Messiah. This does not necessarily imply, however, that all of them had approved of the deed, or were directly involved in it.

Next to the Jewish nation, the Roman Empire as such was guilty of the crucifixion. Pilate acted not as a private individual, but as an official of the Empire. And if we inquire further, in reality every Christian is guilty of the crucifixion. It was really our sins that nailed Jesus to the cross. If it had not been for the sins of God's elect, there would have been no crucifixion. No believer can claim that he had no share in the guilt of murdering the Prince of Life.

We believe, therefore, that it is a reasonable conclusion that Peter's charge in Acts 2:23, 36 is not incompatible with the fact that many of his hearers may have been true, saved believers under the old dispensation of the Covenant of Grace.

— J. G. Vos

## *The Covenant-Idea in Scripture*

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

(Continued from last issue)

### 9. The Covenant of Grace (continued)

The promise, furthermore, involves God's "bringing many sons unto glory." The One Pre-eminent Son of God is their Leader, the Author and Captain of their salvation. Since all have one Father, though not in the same sense as He, yet "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." He became partaker with them of flesh and blood, "that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," and "that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:8-18).

Those whom He calls "My brethren" are they who "do the will of my Father who is in heaven," "those who believe that thou didst send me." They do so, not by the life of the flesh received

by ordinary generation, but by the new life of the spirit received "through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Tit. 3:5).

Thus the promise, wrapped up in the sentence of judgment, of strife and blood, toil and pain, shines through with the glory of the love of God revealing riches of grace that surpass those of the first covenant, offering to sinners under sentence of death a new hope of life. It shall henceforth be ever known, by pre-eminence, as THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

The first covenant, the Covenant of Works, being of the word and law of the eternal, unchangeable God, remains in force. The new covenant confirms the promise of life "according to the election of grace," revealing a separation of mankind into two classes. It is a development of the original covenant meeting the changed condition of man brought about by his sin, "to

the end that the purpose of God according to election may stand." The new covenant has a Mediator and Surety who has satisfied all the demands of the old by His payment of the penalty of death, and has fulfilled all conditions of righteousness for those who believe and obey the Word of God. "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 2:31). God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the just claim of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:3,4). But all who will not accept God's new offer of life, the Covenant of Grace, remain under the Covenant of Works with its curse of death unchanged.

God's way of dealing with men for the accomplishment of His purpose is never radically changed. Consequently our only way of dealing with God is on the basis of His covenant revealed in its completeness in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We may not pick and choose among His commands and promises, but accept them as they are given. All the arrangements of His providence are for our life.

**By way of constant reminder**, "Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin, and clothed them." Their own makeshift of fig leaves was useless. God made a covering for them, symbolizing what He had done for them in their desperate need, covering their sin by the obedience unto death of Another, their Substitute, even of "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world," that they might stand before God without shame. Accordingly, for the covering of their bodies, He gave them the covering of another; of one without sin, put to death for them, a substitute.

#### 10. The Guarantee of the Covenant of Grace

That there was complete agreement and cooperation by the Persons of the Godhead in the design and creation of man is plainly indicated by Gen. 1:26,27, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; . . . and God created man in his own image." The pronouns "us" and "our" indicate the Persons of the Godhead; and "he" and "him" exclude all others. God was not making experiments to see what would happen. He predetermined the end as well as the beginning of all His work, and the whole course to that end, the entire history and destiny of mankind.

In the Scriptures, revelation is given of the co-operation of the three Persons in man's creation, redemption, and preparation for a more glorious state. That this cooperation has been and continues according to the terms of a covenant bond is unquestionable.

Jesus spoke of it to His disciples (Luke 22:29), "I dispose by covenant to you, even as my Father disposed by covenant a kingdom to me." This

relates to the promise of the Father to the Son (Psalm 2:8,9. Isa. 42:6; etc.). Again He speaks of the commandment. "The Father who sent me, he hath given me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal; the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:49,50). "This commandment have I received of my Father," namely, that He should lay down His life for His sheep (John 10:18). "And as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do"—spoken as He took the last remaining steps to the cross (John 14:31).

"The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou are a priest forever,—by so much also hath Jesus become Surety of a better covenant (for men) . . . the word of the oath appointeth a Son perfected forever" (Heb. 7:18-28). Here the oath is of the Father to the Son, not to men nor to any human mediator. And the suretyship of Jesus is primarily to the Father in His taking upon Himself to perform the condition upon which the promises of the grace of God were to be given to men (Psalm 40:7-10).

In many places Christ speaks of the Father as "my God"; and the Father speaks of Christ as "my servant," or "my Son," conforming to the usual covenant phrasing, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Jer. 31:33. Deut. 24:12). In the tenth chapter of Hebrews we find this covenant relationship between the Father and the Son appearing in the "new covenant" as foretold in Jeremiah 31. "I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more." This He would do for those "whom he chose in Christ before the foundation of the world. . . having ordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:4-7).

This transaction in the councils of eternity was confirmed on earth in the sight of men when Christ had come and submitted Himself to the baptism of John, saying, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." "Him who knew no sin, he (God the Father) made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." As Christ voluntarily accepted the obligation as Surety, to fulfill all righteousness for men, God, the Father, spoke from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in visible form, empowering His human nature to do all He had covenanted to do. Then, in His institution of the Lord's Supper, Christ gave the cup to His disciples, as the symbol of His own blood, saying "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for many unto remission of sins."

To these could be added many more texts from which it appears that God's way of dealing with man, made in the image of God, is patterned after His way with Himself. We can conceive of no other way so just, effective, and perfect in every detail.

Hence, the Covenant of Grace as offered to men is absolutely guaranteed by the covenanted purpose and decree of God Himself. The fulfillment of its **promise** was assumed by God, the Father; the fulfillment of its **condition**, by God, the Son; the application of its benefits to men by God, the Holy Spirit. Its **oath** is in the name of God Himself, because there is none greater than He. It is all of God, "for the praise of the glory of His grace" bestowed on men, and therefore is made known to men for their faith and obedience by its administration through the successive ages of history.

It is sometimes designated as "**the Covenant of Eternity**" or "**the Covenant of Redemption**" to distinguish it from the successive forms of its administration in time. The name "**Covenant of Grace**" appropriately covers it in its entirety.

(The reader is referred to an excellent course of practical lessons on "**The Covenant of Grace: Its Meaning and Its Implications for the Church, the Family, and the Christian**," by Dr. J. G. Vos, in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, beginning in Vol. 4 No. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1949), p. 152).

### 11. The New Gift of Life

Whatever of life man possesses, at any moment, is the gift of God. Man has no power of himself to get, to give, or even to retain life. So in the midst of the Garden God had caused to grow the **tree of life**, of which man was to eat freely, thus reminding himself of his dependence on God for the maintenance of his life. But by his sin came death. He lost his life. He lost his right to the tree of life, and was driven out of the Garden. "Therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden . . . and he drove out the man." But in the mercy of God, man was driven out with a new promise of a new life; life not by nature, not by law as before established, but by supernatural grace; yet, as goes without saying, still dependent on God for its continuance. "And God placed (caused to dwell permanently) at the east of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and flame of the sword that turneth itself to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:23,24).

The promise was not to all men, but to those who receive the gift of life, "her seed." It was to those who are victorious in the conflict (Rev. 2:7); to those who come out of great tribulation, and have washed their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, to the end that they may have the right to the tree of life" (Rev. 22:14 and 7:14-17).

From consideration of all the Scripture references to "**the cherubim**" we understand them to be ideal, or symbolic, representations of regenerated, sanctified men, actually serving God in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness. So also the "**flame of the sword**" is a symbol; a symbol of God's glittering, two-edged sword. The sword, in Scripture, is the common instrument for execution of judgment. The root of the word translated "flame" means to "set on fire," "burn," "consume." It is used to describe various forms of the judgment of God upon men for their sin (e.g., Deut. 32:22; Joel 1:19; 2:3. Psalm 97:3; Isa. 42:25. Mal. 4:1). Hence "**the flame of the sword turning itself**" represents the ever-burning fire of God's inescapable judgment. The sword is the sword of justice; it has two edges (Rev. 2:12). One edge is for **death**, in case of the sinner who puts not on the covering God provided; who pleads not that his death penalty has already been paid by the Substitute. The other edge is for **life**, in case of the sinner whose death penalty has already been paid by the Substitute. The sword is turned accordingly.

In view of the cherubim — men, each of whom would humbly acknowledge himself chief of sinners; men living, willing and able to do, and actually doing the will of God — the inference is necessary that their judgment of death has been executed, not on themselves, but on their Substitute; they have received the gift of the new life; they are holy, set apart for the service of God, and have access to the tree of life. In short, these two symbols together picture the administration of the Covenant.

They are, as it were, two gate posts marking and guarding the way of the tree of life; the way for sinners back to God's life and peace. The way to the tree of life was not closed arbitrarily. It is open on the east of Paradise where God is, where the sun rises with the promise of a new day. It is open on the ground of the Covenant, at the point where the Covenant is being administered.

Here are the two primary facts of God's new and greater work of Redemption: the fact of life and righteousness made possible and actual for men dead in sin; a new creation of **men sanctified**; and, the fact of **judgment executed** for sin. If either one were lacking the way to God would be closed. If either one were lacking there would be no life and no hope for sinners. But here are the two foundation truths of God's covenanted salvation for men in Christ, by the Holy Spirit, the proclamation of which to all men constitutes the **Gospel**, "**CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED**." For, "God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

The way is made plain and kept open, and the good news about it is heard around the world. The sinner may now return to the blessedness of covenant relationship with God, by the blood and

in the righteousness of his Substitute. "Neither is there salvation in any other." Thus, there is one, but only one way by which a sinner, a man who has transgressed the covenant, may return and enter again into the bond of life and peace with God. In other words, there is one, but only one true religion; one way of being "bound again" in covenant with God, "in the bundle of life"; and that is by entering by the gate, "THE DOOR" which He has provided and plainly marked.

## 12. Separation Within the Covenant

Those who enter the covenant of life are thereby separated from those who remain outside. At the Door of the Covenant there is a parting of the ways for all mankind.

By faith Abel took the way of life. He presented before God a lamb, an appropriate confession of God's sinless Substitute, in Whom he would be found righteous. He brought the lamb slain, an appropriate acknowledgment of God's judgment executed upon the Substitute. God accepted him as righteous (Gen. 4:4. Heb. 11:4). But Cain, on the other hand, refused to acknowledge the righteous judgment of God, and, as the first Modernist, chose to rely on his own righteousness, his own good works. He was not accepted. Cain, therefore, went out from the presence of the Lord, turned from the way of life, abandoning the true religion. Since then, all men have followed either Cain or Abel.

Those who have gone "in the way of Cain" have kept getting farther from God, yet, ever conscious of their need to get back somehow into

right relationship with God, they have tried to satisfy themselves with man devised religions, which without exception reject the covenant of God.

Those who have gone in the way of Abel have entered the covenant of God; they have found God and eternal life in His gracious presence. They have been able to say with Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

By these persons, bound together in the covenant of God, "the people of God," the two primary essentials of the true religion have been kept in view of other men in the fulness of the light of revelation as it came from God, that all might know and accept them by faith. They have testified that Jehovah's eternal throne is founded on RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUDGMENT (Psalm 45:6; 89:14). The symbols, the cherubim, and the flame that consumed the sacrifice, were conspicuous in the Tabernacle in the wilderness, in the First and Second Temple in Jerusalem, and in the ideal Temple of Ezekiel's vision. In the Christian Church, so far as faithful, the same spiritual realities have been kept in their appointed place "by them that preached the gospel by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven," for the Gospel is a gospel of deliverance from the wrath of God through the blood of Jesus Christ, unto holiness, that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

## Announcement

Through the generous contributions of many of our readers, the publication of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** for 1953 has been paid for in full. We thank and praise God for His gracious blessings in this matter, and we wish to express our sincere appreciation to all the friends who have helped make this publication possible by their generous gifts. The present issue completes the eighth year of publication of this magazine. Through these eight years we have constantly experienced the kind providence of God, and we are encouraged to look forward to the future with confidence and hope in Him.

By action of the 1953 Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, **Blue Banner Faith and Life** is now published by the Board of Publication of this Church, with the undersigned as Editor and Manager. This does not mean, however, that the need for voluntary contributions has ceased to exist. The Board expects the need to be met as it has been in the past, namely, by receipts from subscriptions, sales of back issues, and contributions of readers. Numbered receipts are sent for all contributions. Financial reports are submitted to the Board of Publication quarterly.

**Blue Banner Faith and Life** is sent free to many missionaries and Christian leaders in foreign countries. Many of these have sent letters expressing their appreciation of the magazine, and several have sent generous contributions to help with the expenses. It is our intention to keep the subscription rates low, and to continue to send the magazine free to a selected list of missionaries and other Christian leaders, as a Christian service and a testimony to the truth we hold and love. You can share in this wide witness for Bible truth by contributing to the expense of publishing the magazine. Less than half of the amount required is obtained from subscriptions. For the balance we are dependent on contributions. Since starting publication we have received many contributions of 50 cents and \$1, as well as numerous larger ones. All of these, regardless of the amount, are deeply appreciated, and together they have made our continued publication possible.

J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager  
Route 1, Clay Center, Kansas, U.S.A.

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