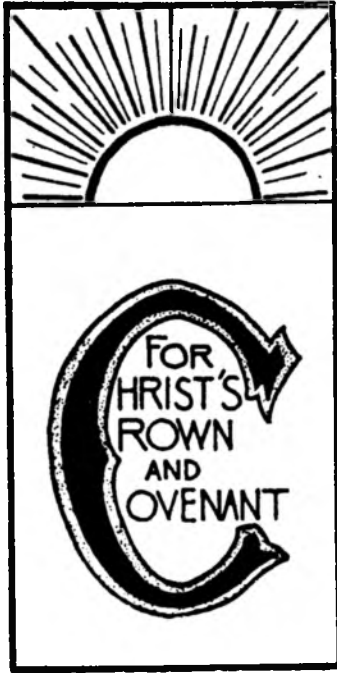

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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**BLUE
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Is Jesus Really God?

By J. G. Vos

A "liberal" clergyman was asked whether he believed in the divinity of Christ. "Of course," he replied; "for if I didn't believe in the divinity of Christ I could not believe in my own divinity either!" A prominent writer of religious education materials said "Jesus was the first man who ever dared to be divine." Someone else says that there is a spark of divinity in every human being, but Jesus has more divinity in him than anyone else has. Still another person goes even further and says "God" is another name for the totality of the universe, or all that exists, therefore in a sense everything is divine, so Jesus must be divine too. Along this line, the poet Swinburne wrote about "the dust that is God."

None of these people really believes in the divinity (more properly, the deity) of Jesus Christ. They are all using the term without accepting the real meaning of the term. Probably none of them really believes in God in the Christian sense. They believe that "God" is just a name for the universe, or for the sense of moral values in the human personality, or for the totality of human hopes and longings. Because they have such a poor idea of God, they can speak of the "divinity" of Jesus without really saying very much.

When the Bible speaks of Jesus Christ as "God" or "the Son of God", we must realize that the background of this is the Biblical idea of God — the idea expressed in the Shorter Catechism (No. 4) which affirms that "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth," adding that "there is but one only, the living and true God." In the Bible the teaching that Christ is divine means that Jesus is none other than the being defined in these absolute terms.

That Jesus Christ is human goes without saying. But the most important truth about Jesus is that He is God. He is the infinite Being who created the universe and who holds it in existence from moment to moment. This is wondrously brought out in the opening verses of the Gospel of John: "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" — John 1:1-3; note the capitalized "W" on "Word" — this "Word" is a Person, not a thing — THE Person who created everything, and controls everything.

The Andromeda Galaxy (formerly called a nebula) is the nearest of the great spiral galaxies in outer space. It is the only one that can ever be seen with the naked eye, without a telescope. You have to know exactly where and when to look, and the conditions have to be

exactly right, and then you can see a little hazy whiteness in the sky. That is the Andromeda Galaxy. It is two million (yes, two million) light years away from this earth, and getting farther all the time. Light travels, you know, at 186,000 miles a second, and a light year is the distance it travels, at that speed, in a year. You would have to travel at the speed of light for over two million years to reach this galaxy. It contains billions of suns as large as our sun. It is so vast that it takes light, at 186,000 miles a second, about 100,000 years to get from one end of the galaxy to the other. And this is the nearest of the spiral galaxies. Beyond it there are vaster ones, so distant that they can only be observed with great reflecting telescopes like that on Mount Palomar, California.

Now come back to John 1:1-3. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Do you begin to grasp how great Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, really is? This is the Being who, wonder of wonders, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). This is the Being who was born of the Virgin Mary, and laid in a manger in Bethlehem — the Person who only had to speak a word, and the vast spiral galaxies of space came into being. This is the real truth of the divinity or deity of Jesus Christ.

Did you ever stand on the shore of the ocean and look out toward the horizon? The water stretches as far as you can see. It seems to be endless. Yet you know that thousands of miles across that water, there is the continent of Europe, or the continent of Asia. But you can only see the shore you are standing on and the water stretching out to the horizon that marks the limit of your vision. Jesus Christ is like that, only even vaster. For the ocean, after all, has a limit. It has its dimensions; it is not infinite. But Jesus Christ is the shoreless ocean of deity. We have seen one side of this mysterious Being — we have seen the divine Being manifested in human flesh in history. But He is without limits. No human being has ever really seen the other side. Jesus Christ is so great and vast that only God the Father and the Holy Spirit have ever really seen the other side. This is taught by Jesus in His wonderful words in Matthew 11:27, where He says, "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father."

Does someone say it is hard to believe in this kind of Jesus? Yes, it may be hard, but this Christ is the real Christ — He is the Christ of the Scriptures, and He is our real Saviour for eternity. The toned-down ideas of Christ cited in the opening paragraph of this article are not only unreal — they are not worth believing in. The real Christ is eternally worth believing in.

—The Goal Post

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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Studies in the Book of Revelation

LESSON 54

THE TWO WITNESSES, THEIR TESTIMONY, DEATH AND VICTORY. Revelation 11, Continued

Jeremiah was called to be a prophet (Jer. 1:10) and told that part of his work would be to root out, pull down, destroy and throw down. Does this mean that he was to be a revolutionary activist going around the country throwing bombs and setting fire to government buildings? Certainly not. The prophet deals in the spoken word. He throws no bombs himself. He predicts what will happen if the people do not repent, and when they do not repent, it finally happens. God sends judgment upon them. They seal their own doom by their negative reaction to the message of God's ordained witness calling a wicked world to repentance, and when this message is rejected, it finally brings divine judgment on the world. In all history no nation has seriously persecuted the Jews or the Christian Church but they have come under the judgment of God for it, and if still impenitent, have perished in the end. This wrath of God is real and it watches over His people and His cause in this "post-Christian" apostate world. "He that touches you touches the apple of his eye." God vindicates His servants. The servants do the witnessing, and God executes the vengeance. People oppose the Church because it pronounces them guilty sinners, and this touches their pride. They cannot stand it. They react by persecuting the Church, and then the Lord reacts by visiting calamities upon the Christ-rejecting world.

These two witnesses in Revelation 11 are compared to Moses and Elijah, although there are some differences. They have power to shut heaven that there shall be no rain, to turn waters to blood, to bring plagues. This immediately calls to mind the career of Moses in Egypt and that of Elijah at the time of Ahab and Jezebel. Obviously it was God who withheld the rain. But Moses and Elijah as God's true servants bore their witness. Their testimony and prayers brought calamity upon the world. God sends these calamities because the world does not repent, but continues to oppose his witnesses, the true church.

Now next we meet the beast from the bottomless pit. And this is in verse 7. This is the first time it appears in this book, at any rate by the name "the beast." The

Greek word means the wild beast. This is no mere bunny rabbit or sheep or goat or something. Think of a man-eating tiger, a furious wild beast; that's the meaning of this Greek word for this beast here. This beast as in chapter 13 is said to come to make war against the saints and witnesses and to overcome them, defeat them and even kill them. Now the powerful missionary testimony of the church will be silenced if the two witnesses can be killed. Satan attacks the church two ways, by external persecution and internal division, heresy and hypocrisy. The second is more effective in destroying the church than the first. Many sections of the nominal church today are comparatively useless and ineffective. You could say of them as Jesus said about a particular person, "Let the dead bury their dead." There's no witness. Now I can tell you there are churches that have the name of Christian churches, but gospel Christianity isn't there. And this is increasingly true, I'm afraid, in our own day. Now this attack is certainly not going to exterminate the church. Jesus said that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against his church. However, there have been times of relative defeat. Great weakness, unfaithfulness, and hypocrisy, when Jesus predicted iniquity will abound and the love of the majority or the many will wax cold. Now shortly before the coming of the judgment of Christ's second coming, if we understand this chapter aright, the church as a witnessing body will be largely silenced and defeated: "killed." This is welcomed by the world great glee and holiday spirit; chapter 11 verse 10. But the world's glee is premature. After three and a half days, a brief season, a little while, life comes back into these two witnesses. This would seem to indicate, and here we tread with caution, to predict a mighty revival in the true church and its witness and missionary work before the second coming of Christ, maybe a little bit before. Now it is brought to the verge of the Lord's second coming. The church is called to heaven, verse 12, their enemies beheld them, it was no secret capture; it was seen, and the same hour, verse 13, terrible things happened, earthquakes, hail, and men were frightened and gave glory to God in heaven. This does not mean they really were converted but they knuckled down and gave glory to God at this point.

And we're told here this is the second of three woes and the third is quickly to come. We've mentioned before, chapter 8 verse 13 and chapter 9 verse 12. Now the remaining part of this chapter in verse 15 . . . "And the seventh angel sounded and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou has taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament (or covenant) and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. . ." Two points about the Greek text of this chapter should be noted. In the first place, in verse 15, "the kingdoms," the most authentic Greek manuscripts have this in singular, "the kingdom." So it is the kingdom of this world has become our Lord's Kingdom here not meaning a particular kingdom, like France or Belgium, but the kingship over the world, it's singular, "has become that of our Lord." And then further on, verse 17, "We give thee thanks O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come." The "art to come," this third item there, is not in the best Greek manuscripts, which have only "wast and art." you see this pictures Christ as already having come here. This is at the time of his coming to judgment, so you can no longer say "which is to come" as you could have before this.

Now the seventh angel trumpets and now final judgment is introduced. And the kingdom or sovereignty of God and His Christ is mentioned here, and notice here it is to last not a thousand years nor ten thousand or a million, but forever and ever. This is in the end of verse 15. He shall reign for ever and ever. This is in contrast to the forty two months and again in contrast to the three and a half days. The twenty four elders give an anthem of praise to God. The second coming and the judgment, I take it, according to Scripture, are simultaneous or nearly so. Maybe you could slip a razor blade between the two but not separated by centuries or ages of time. So the statement of the judgment comes here in verse 18 right after the statement that the Lord has taken his great power and has

reigned. This judgment brings terror and wrath to the wicked and unspeakable joy and comfort to the saints . . . And last of all we have the vision of a reconciled God. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant." In the Old Testament the ark of the Covenant stood for the mercy of God. Above the tables of the law which the people had broken, here are the cherubim and the mercy seat above this to symbolize the presence of God in the place where blood has been sprinkled as an atonement for sin. God reconciled by the shedding of the blood of a suitable and accepted substitute, Christ the Lamb of God. And the Lord said, Exodus 25:20, "There I will meet with thee and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat." "When I see the blood I will pass over you." Exodus 12:13. The ark is the symbol of God's throne, this means peace and joy and comfort to the saints and wrath and judgment to the wicked. So this vision of the ark speaks to us as peace and comfort, the kindly face of a reconciled God whom we read is like unto a Father to his children, so the Lord sees them that fear Him and so on. This is immediately followed by these terrible things that frighten the wicked; the lightning, the voices, thunderings, and earthquakes, and the hail. I don't know anybody here ever been through an earthquake besides me. I went through a small one; it didn't kill anybody, but it sure scares you. When the earth starts to bob up and down, this is absolutely terrifying and there's nothing you can do about it. This shows people that after all they are helpless. Even the government can't do anything bout earthquakes; and so it is terrifying. The difference of the power of God and the helplessness of man. Now here we are at the verge of the end of the world. Obviously at the end of this 11th chapter it speaks of the time of the dead to be judged and the rewards to be handed out to the people of God. And yet it's only half way through the book of Revelation; this is the end of chapter 11 and there are 22 chapters. So we're halfway through the book but clear through the history of the world here, from one angle or viewpoint. Now the book doesn't end here although if it had ended here and we had never heard of the remaining 11 chapters, we should feel surely that this book was complete and had come to a proper stopping place. But we see this is not the case, and it starts in again in chapter 12 and goes over the same period between Christ's first and second coming from a somewhat different point of view and again later brings us down to the real appearing and coming of Christ. Now I commend it to you; and please remember what I said: I present all this with diffidence; beware of the person who knows it all and that person is certainly not myself.

LESSON 55

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON. Revelation 12.

This brings us to the second major part of the book of Revelation. This book is neatly divisible, in spite of the complications, into two halves of 11 chapters each.

One to eleven, and twelve to 22. And this covers the same ground, that is, the same span of history, over again as the first part. From a different point of view, or

partly different point of view, however. The scene here is as in the first part, the final victory of Christ and his church over their enemies. The first 11 chapters deal more with the external or outward struggles; the conflict that is visible through the eyes of people who are living in this world, and chapter 12 to 22 starts in again with the same period from Christ's first coming to His second coming but from the standpoint of the deeper background. We should realize that the conflict between the church and the world has been going on ever since the day that Cain killed Abel, but that is only the outward manifestation of a more deep and intense conflict behind the scenes. You see the outward manifestation, but the real conflict is in the spiritual realm and sort of bubbles over into the physical and visible realm that we live in. This is seen all through the Bible, especially for example in the history of Moses and the plagues in Egypt. Here surely Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt represent the power in the world that is against God, and the people of Israel are the covenant people of God, so this conflict is Israel versus Egypt. On the other hand you could also say it is Moses versus Pharaoh. They're the ones that have the altercations and the summit conferences, Moses versus Pharaoh. But behind that it is the God of Israel versus the demonic powers, in that case represented by the idols and false gods of Egypt. So we read for example in Exodus chapter 12, the chapter where the passover is executed: "Against all the gods of Egypt, will I execute judgment: I am the Lord." Ex. 12:12. Now of course the gods of Egypt were only idols and were not real; they were false but, you see, behind them, although they were not what the Egyptians believed them to be, behind is the power of Satan; and the gods of Egypt were sort of a communist front organization that Satan was using to attack the people of God at that time. Incidentally in those ten plagues, everyone of them was a bull's eye hit on target against some feature of the pagan idolatry that existed in Egypt. They worshipped the Nile river; the water became like blood, undrinkable for a while, they worshipped the sun and they had a plague of darkness, and so on down the line. So this was really a conflict of the two gods in the spiritual realm, and only on the surface of Moses and Israel against the Pharaoh and the Egyptians. And so on all through history you could say. Dr. Hendriksen in his book works this out through many pages in detail, and how Satan has always been trying to attack that part of the human race that is crucial to God's plan. This is seen again and again; he mentions for example Athaliah, who rose up and slew all the seed royal, the heirs to the throne of David. That is, she intended to and thought she had, but she missed it by one, Joash from whom Jesus is descended. You can see that Satan is trying to cancel out the plan of God. If Athaliah who was motivated by her own proud and selfish ambitions and crazy hunger for power had succeeded, how could the promise have come true that Christ would be of the seed of David? So that crisis is past, and so on through crisis after crisis, and the last of these you see right after the birth of Jesus, when King Herod sent his soldiers to kill all the male in-

fants in and near Bethlehem in the hope of killing the one who was said to be born to be the king of the Jews. This again failed because Jesus was not there. Mary and Joseph had taken him to Egypt, but you see the design of Satan to exterminate the particular person or people on whom the redemptive promise of God especially depended.

Now starting with chapter 12 here we have the major enemy of God and his cause introduced. These are the actors in a drama here, in the first place the dragon, chapter 12 verse 3, a great red dragon. Chapter 13 verse 1, the wild beast out of the sea; this word is not the word for a domestic animal, like an ox or a horse; it is a wild beast like a man-eating tiger or lion. The wild beast out of the sea, and in 13, verse 11 the second beast that rises out of the earth and does the bidding of the first beast. The first is taken to be a political figure and the second one a religious and cultural figure. Now finally the men that had received the mark of the beast, chapter 13, verse 6, who are therefore brainwashed and dominated and controlled and manipulated by this anti-Christian world power because they had the mark of the beast, verse 16. Now chapter 12 starts out with the birth of Christ, and the judgment day comes in chapter 14 verse 14 where one like the Son of man, with a sharp sickle in his hand said the time has come to reap the earth; then it starts out again. But this covers the whole period between the birth of Jesus Christ and His second advent.

Now we begin here with a great wonder in heaven. In this book of wonders, here's a great wonder; this evidently caused John to open his eyes in astonishment as he saw a great wonder in heaven. Did you ever see a woman dressed like this, clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars? Obviously a vision and symbol in symbolic language, but quite a description! The sun, moon and twelve stars, you remember the dream that Joseph had when he was a lad before he was kidnapped and sold into Egypt, and one of those dreams was that the sun and the moon and eleven stars would come and bow down to him. The 11 there stood for the other 11 sons of his father Jacob, of course, and the sun and the moon for his father and his mother. Now this has similarities to that, but surely is not to be completely identified with it: clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. The number 12 occurs repeatedly in this book; you remember the 24 elders, we see that was 12 and 12, the 12 tribes or patriarchs of Israel, and the 12 apostles, so it would stand for the covenant people of God, the Old Testament system and the new, 24 elders that are mentioned here. This woman is taken to be the body of the covenant people of God on earth, and at the beginning of this chapter it is the Old Testament Israel; this is suggested by the 12 stars. These people alone among the peoples of the ancient world had the true sunlight of the valid knowledge of God, so that may be what the sun stands for here; the moon under her feet is a second-

dary light reflecting the sun but this may stand for the fact that Israel uniquely had the knowledge of God. "He hath not dealt so with any nation," Psalm 147:20. So this is the covenant people of God from the Old Testament. Now notice this dragon before we come back to the woman, this is an amazing dragon, a mammoth dragon. This dragon is so big that he can swish his tail and wipe out a third of the stars out of the sky; and that's a bulldozer among dragons, and a jet plane, and you name it. This of course is not literal, this is symbolic language, but it is calculated to impress us with the seriousness, and the greatness, and the power of this enemy of God's people. And this dragon is not to be taken lightly, he is no mere trifling and incidental enemy of Christianity; he is the main source and motivating power of the opposition here. Now it says that this woman was with child, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. This I think refers to the fact that the purpose of the people of Israel in the Old Testament was to give birth to the Messiah. You may call the first promise in the Bible Genesis 3:15; it was spoken to the serpent who is the same as the dragon, of course, but the message does not concern primarily the serpent; it concerns Christ and his people. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise (or wound) his heel." Here we are told that there will be somebody called the seed of the woman and he will be in a bitter, irreconcilable conflict and opposition to the dragon, or the devil, "I will put enmity"—God puts it there, it has to be there, this cannot be resolved, no mediator is going to settle this one, between the woman and the dragon, the seed of the woman and the seed of the dragon or serpent. Now you can take the seed of the woman in that mysterious but wonderful promise in Genesis 3:15 to mean all the part of the human race that are on the side of God but also more specifically, the seed of the woman which is Jesus Christ, descended from Eve, and of course born eventually of the Virgin Mary, a member of the human race. Now this was a child that was to be born.

Next we read about this dragon appearing to try to damage or destroy the child that will be born. In verse 3, another great wonder in heaven, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. It's possible, maybe, to work out some of this symbolism but I think we'll leave it till later; it may refer to a succession of worldly rulers that are contrary to God, possibly to part of the succession of the pagan Roman Empire. But the important thing here is the terrible nature of this dragon, seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns. "Horn" in the Bible is always a symbol of power; ten horns make a complete number. This is terrifying and frightening power that is against the woman that is taken to be the Old Testament covenant people of God or Israel who were living through their history, moving toward a goal and a climax, and that climax came in Bethlehem on the night when Jesus was born; that's the target point of Old Testament history. We don't study the Old Testament primarily for moral lessons,

although there are many of them, but primarily because this is the foundation that God gives for the coming of his Son into the world, and the Old Testament moves in this direction with progress toward that goal and this comes to pass in Bethlehem when Jesus is born. But all history had looked forward to the seed of the woman who will destroy the serpent, to the manger in Bethlehem, a long sweep of Old Testament history. Now this dragon appears, his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them down to the earth; a terrifying figure; have you ever seen anything like this? But this one here is a vision induced by the Holy Spirit that John sees; and he is ready to devour the child as soon as it is born, this is the climax of any number of attempts in Old Testament history to destroy the seed from whom Christ would be descended. I mentioned Athaliah the daughter of Jezebel, who was worse than her mother; Jezebel killed other people's grandchildren; Athaliah killed her own. Another case would be the book of Esther, where this wicked man Haman finally gets the decree that all the Jews in the Persian Empire are to be slain. Even Adolph Hitler wasn't quite as extreme as that. All the Jews in the Persian Empire, from India to Ethiopia, to be slain, and those that do the killing can have the property of these Jews for their trouble. If this had succeeded the dragon would have won right there, and God's plan to redeem the world by the coming of the seed of the woman would have gone down with the people from whom the seed of the woman was to have been descended. All would have failed, and that is the real import of the book of Esther; in the Bible we see the amazing providence of God by which this wicked anti-Jewish genocide was ended and dropped in its tracks, so that the promise could come true. Now Satan never gives up. He tries one thing after another like that. In the Maccabean period, between the Old Testament and the New, about 150 or 200 B.C. the Seleucids, a Greek dynasty with its capital at Antioch in Syria, had it in for the Jews and tried to exterminate the Jewish religion and the people. The rite of circumcision, commanded by the law of Moses, was forbidden on penalty of death. And where this had been administered to babies as the law commanded the babies were strapped onto the backs of their mothers and cast over a cliff to their death, mother and baby together. Others were boiled in oil. The book of Hebrews tells something of some of the things mentioned here that people were subjected to during that period. As related by Josephus, a Jewish woman had seven sons who were successively put to death by being put in a cauldron of oil that was heated so hot that finally they died, and she ordered them one after the other not to deny their faith, and none of them did, and when they were all dead they did it to her too. And this campaign caused some awful consequences to the Jewish people; not in the Bible, this is after the close of the Old Testament, but we have historic information about it from reliable sources. Now again behind the scenes Satan is stirring up this fury and murder of wrath against that particular part of the people. Why wasn't Satan getting the people of China or India boiled in oil? Well, they don't matter to him, you see, it was the people from whom the seed of the woman would be descended.

Now so he wants to devour this child. Now the last of these attempts by Satan was when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The wise men came from the east and followed the star in the heaven, and knew the meaning of it in some way, and they came to worship him, with precious gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They inquire of Herod, "Where is he that is born the King of the Jews?" Herod asks the scribes, Where does it say in scripture that the Christ shall be born? They found it in the prophet of Micah. All right, gentlemen, it's Bethlehem, six miles to the south; so they go, but Herod said, Come back and bring me word; I'll come and worship him, too. And this of course was spoken insincerely, in attempt to destroy the child. And they are warned by God in a dream and they make a detour and go back home without reporting to Herod. He was furious, of course, when he realized that they had double-crossed him. He sent his military forces to slay the infants of Bethlehem, which is what is referred to in that great prophecy in Jeremiah, "a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refused to be comforted because they were not." (Jer. 31:15) But Jesus had not been killed. I take it this is the dragon

trying to kill this child as soon as it was born, and he failed. The child that is born is a man-child, who is destined (verse 5) to rule all nations with a rod of iron.

This of course is none other than Jesus Christ: he is the one that will rule all nations with an almighty rule, those who do not submit willingly will have to submit because of force, a rod of iron.

Now this child is caught up to God and to his throne. This obviously means the ascension of Jesus. Satan may have thought that he finished God's plan and won the game when he had Christ crucified, but Satan is never intelligent enough, not quite, and this was part of God's plan too, and then Christ who had been crucified, by the plan of God but also by the malice of Satan and wicked men, is raised from the dead and ascended up into heaven beyond the reach of the dragon. You can't do anything to Jesus Christ after he's caught up to God at the throne of God, so Jesus from his ascension had re-entered the state of exaltation and glory, and Satan cannot touch him anymore, or even attempt to. Now, caught up to God and His throne.

LESSON 56

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON. Revelation 12, Cont.

It says after this the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her a thousand two hundred and three score days. The center of the earliest Christianity was Jerusalem. You could say that from one angle the message or story of the book of Acts was how the center of Christianity got moved from Jerusalem to Rome, and how Christianity from being mostly a Jewish movement came to be largely a Gentile movement. The Romans had it in for the Jews; terrible things happened there twice, in A.D. 70 and again in A.D. 135; their city was destroyed with horrible bloodshed and atrocities and devastation; but you see Christianity was moved far and wide by that time and destroying Jerusalem and whatever they could do in that little patch of real estate could not destroy the Christian faith, for God had prepared a place in the wilderness where they would nourish and feed her a thousand two hundred and threescore days. This if you figure it out is the same figure as forty-two months or three and a half years, and this is understood to mean from the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ to the second coming and the judgment. This is contrasted with a short time, three and a half days, that are mentioned, and with one day, the day of judgment that comes later. This goes on to say now, that the dragon was unable to eat the manchild, that is Christ, and the woman had fled to the wilderness. The woman is no longer simply the people of Israel; rather, the covenant people of God of every origin and ethnic background, in other words, the church. And if you are a Reformed Christian in your understanding of Christian truth Israel is the church in the Old Testament, and the church is the Israel of the New Testament. Dispensation-

alism has as one of its axioms, Israel is Israel and the church is the church; a sharp distinction, an antithesis between the two. According to traditional Christian theology the relation between Israel and the church is complementary not antithetical; the church is the New Testament Israel, Paul tells us in Ephesians 1, you have been brought into the commonwealth of Israel, you haven't become Jews but members of the commonwealth of Israel. And so the Israel of the Old Testament is the church of that day, the church today is the Israel of this day, the real Israel which has a right to be called Israel, not the Jews but those who have faith like Abraham had.

Now a thousand two hundred and threescore days, that is, for the entire Christian era, the church is protected; not immune to attack but also it cannot be destroyed. As Jesus said, "On this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Constantly or almost always under attack in one place or another, and sometimes in many places, but never really destroyed as a world-wide body of people. Now, three and a half years, this recalls immediately an event in the Old Testament, the time of Elijah, when because of the extreme wickedness of the people of Israel, the time of Ahab, you remember, God sent a drought that lasted three and a half years. Elijah went to Ahab and said "As the Lord God of Israel liveth in whose presence I stand, there shall not be rain or dew until I give the word." This of course was not Elijah's own idea; he didn't say this himself to make it come true, but God was speaking through him. Three and a half years, they've had some long dry spells in the Holy Land but

that I suppose is maybe the longest on record. Perhaps worse than our dust bowl years sometime back in our Western states. Three and a half years, because of sin and rebellion against God, but you remember that during that time when Elijah thought he was the only one left that loved and served and believed in the true God, he said "I, I alone am left and they're trying to kill me." The Lord told him he was mistaken there were seven thousand in Israel that had not bowed to the knee to Baal nor kissed his image; so there was a nucleus, perhaps mostly common folks. Elijah did not know their name and address, but God knew them. And so you could say that through this whole era of church history even when Satan has persecuted the church the worst and sometimes he seems to obliterate it, it always remains a nucleus through this three and a half years, during the whole period of Christian history. North Africa, Morocco, right across to Egypt—this area was once dotted with Christian churches; in the time of St. Augustine, 400 A.D., there were hundreds, I suppose, of Christian churches across there. Today there is hardly a one, and what there are have been established in recent years by present day or modern missionaries. Christianity was wiped out of North Africa but you see it wasn't wiped out of everywhere. Now it says she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there. There were always some places where persecution was not going on. Ireland, having a time today of course, but Ireland was never a part of the Roman Empire, and it escaped, well Christianity was introduced there perhaps about the year 400; it escaped not only Roman persecution that was really over anyhow by then but the Barbarian invasions and so forth for the most part; the little island of Ireland was a beacon light of Christian truth in the Middle Ages when Germany, France and so forth were practically swamped with paganism in the Dark Ages, and yet Ireland had the light of the gospel. You see this is a place that God had reserved for his saints. Now it says that after the man-child was caught up to the throne of God the woman was able to fly to places of safety where Satan was not able really to destroy the church; then it says there was war in heaven. Now of course you realize this is figura-

tive language. They don't fight in heaven with machine guns. Martin Luther once tried to hit the devil by throwing an ink well at him; it burst on the opposite wall, in Eastern Germany; I understand they're still showing the ink blot. Now let me tell you that doesn't bother Satan for one minute. Ink doesn't bother him unless it's used to publish books that write about Christianity, in that case it does bother him, not otherwise. And when it says war in heaven this is a spiritual conflict, real enough, all right, but not what we ordinarily think of as war with soldiers, drills, and marching against each other or anything like that. Michael an archangel is named here; this word means, "Who is like God?" Michael is mentioned a couple other places in the Bible, evidently a very high ranking and powerful servant of God. Michael is mentioned in the book of Daniel. And the dragon fighting against the angels of Michael, Christ's forces, let's say, against the dragon and his forces, and prevailed not. He is not able to win a battle in the court of heaven, and is cast out. Now Dr. Pieters explains this, he says don't take this literally as if it referred to a real battle scene; it's a conflict alright, but Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. And before the crucifixion of Christ and his resurrection God's administration was a scandal. God was forgiving people's sins and the devil was saying you haven't got any right to forgive that person's sins, he's guilty. But after the crucifixion and resurrection and ascension of Christ, Jesus could say, What's he guilty of? all the devil could mention, Jesus could say, Allright I died for that sin and rose again, that's cancelled off the record. And so the devil has no standing ground anymore to accuse the saints. Any sin that you have committed or I have committed, Christ atones for it and the devil is left without any inch of ground to stand on or anything to say. Martin Luther in his more tense moments had an altercation with the devil or it seemed so to him; I'm not sure just what he really saw, but he said the devil told him, "Luther you aren't fit to be a preacher of the gospel, you are guilty of such and such sin, there they are on the list." And Luther wrote down at the bottom of it "He has taken away the writing that was against us having nailed it to his cross." That cancelled Satan out. (Col. 2:13, 14)

LESSON 57

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON. Revelation 12, Cont.

We did not quite finish Chapter 12 last time, and we should take a look at the end of that chapter. We noted the woman that was given the great wings of the eagle and flew across the sky to the wilderness to a place of refuge where she would be cared for and nourished for a time, and times and half a time from the destructive power of the serpent. She stands for the Christian church, or the covenant people of God, Old Testament and New, and this indicates to us that however fierce persecution became or becomes in some places, that one way that God has of preserving his church in the world is to provide some place where it can survive the attack.

Not the same everywhere, not the same at all times, but there are places of refuge. I mentioned before when most of Europe was thrown in the dark ages and almost reverted to paganism again, Ireland was a beacon light for gospel truth. Ireland was never a part of the Roman Empire, though of course Ireland has its troubles today. But through the early centuries it was one of the main centers of pure Bible Christianity; so this would be an example of the wilderness to which the woman was able to escape from the wrath of the devil or the serpent that is mentioned there. Now when the serpent found out that he couldn't completely destroy the Christian

church or the body of people on earth in a Covenant relation to God, we read that he tries another method. It has been noted, and this can be checked out from many places in the Bible, that Satan has two basic methods of attacking the church. The first is persecution by power, political and other powers, persecution; like the Roman Empire that attempted to exterminate Christianity by force. Now this failed. He could never completely extinguish Christianity by force. As Tertulian said, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. So Satan reverts to a second method, and this is internal trouble inside the church, heresy, error, false doctrine; there are Christian cults and isms, and apostasy from the truth, internal dissension, defection, back of which is none other than the sinister mind of Satan. Now this in general, will succeed even when persecution fails. Christians under persecution are more likely to be driven into a more steadfast and deeper faith and look into the face of God with earnest prayer. But when internal trouble gets inside the church, then you've got problems. The church becomes weak, divided, cancelled out, especially in the early centuries after the persecution of the Roman Empire failed. And finally even the Roman Empire became partly Christianized; at least it ceased to be a persecuting power. But then there was a flood of heresy that almost swamped Christianity and almost ruined it. It was almost submerged in the troubles of heresy which if they had prevailed would have cancelled out the real and vital and essential truths of Christianity. And for a long time it looked as if it were touch and go in this conflict. Now, it says here in verse 15, "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood." The flood here is a symbolic reference to the flood of false ideas, false cults, false heresies that attacked the church in the early centuries, and have been ever since, but especially during that formative and early period. Notice, of course, it is from Satan. If you take this literally it becomes completely absurd. This woman is flying across the sky with the wings of the eagle, and this dragon is on the ground, and he is trying to pump up enough water to drown her while she is flying in the sky. This is self-contradictory if you want to take it literally. But if you understand the most probable meaning here, the woman is the church, who is protected by God and is given a place of refuge and escape, and this is in spite of the devil who is trying every way he can. If he can't destroy Christianity by having Christians thrown to the lions, he will try to destroy them by making them become heretics or unbelievers. He will try to dilute Christianity. If you can't destroy it with a sword you can dilute it with a flood of false doctrines. So Satan is trying to cause the woman and the church to be carried away by the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. It is not clear precisely what this means, or pre-

cisely what the metaphor or figure of speech is here, but certainly this indicates that the attempt to destroy Christianity in that way failed. The earth helped the woman; perhaps this means that Christianity is spreading more widely over the world, that it is able to get a broader base over the world and while it was attacked in one place, it was more secure from the Herods, and the heresies and the cults and sects in some other place. Or that as time passed these things cancelled each other out and slowly became forgotten. I had a Mormon and a Jehovah's Witness in my classes at Geneva. I can think of nothing nicer than a debate against each other, to see what would happen. So you could say that heresies cancel each other out; they all disagree. And this is one thing that in the end shows them not to be true, the truth is one, the heresies are many. There are more of them than Heinz' 57 varieties of pickles. And if this is the case they certainly can't all be true. This may well be the meaning of "the earth swallowed up the flood." "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." His attempt to neutralize or cancel out Christianity as an organism, a body of people, and a going concern in the world has failed. He has only been able to trouble Christianity, not to exterminate it, so he devotes his attention to individual believers, the remnant of her seed, wherever he can find one. Those who are faithful to Jesus Christ and keep the commandments of God and the testimony or gospel of Jesus Christ, Satan has it in for them. If the devil never bothers you you are either a very great saint perfectly ready for heaven or else you're not a Christian at all. On the other hand, if a person is never bothered by Satan, probably there is no reason for Satan to bother him. A minister who was preaching here, had spoken about the chastening of God upon his children, and a lady said, "It isn't true; God never chastens me." So he opened up the Bible and read her a verse out of Hebrews, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." She was very mad but he was only reading a verse out of scripture to make her think about what she had said, for her own good later on. Now Satan attacks those who have a vital faith in Jesus Christ. He doesn't bother with dead churches and nominal Christians that haven't got anything; why should he? They're no harm to him, but the Christian who is a witness for Christ, who knows the Lord, who is born again, who has the life, who is going to go to heaven, this is the man or woman Satan gets after. What is mentioned here at the end of chapter 12 continues; there's no end to this; as long as Christians are in the world and Satan is active in the world, we should not expect that in a few years we can get Satan cooled off so he won't bother us anymore; there's no such promise in Scripture; this is going to continue while we are in this world and the devil is still free to carry on a limited program.

LESSON 58
THE TWO BEASTS. Revelation 13.

This chapter of course is highly mysterious and the interpretations given are highly diverse. And please don't expect that you can settle all problems when you go home today and can say "I understand this perfectly; I know exactly what everything in this chapter means," because you won't. But there's one thing I'm sure of: we can get much truth out of this that will help us in our Christian life. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea." There is a question about "I stood;" the more authentic Greek manuscripts have "he stood upon the sand of the sea," referring back to the dragon mentioned in chapter 12, verse 17, the last verse of the previous chapter, "he stood upon the sand of the sea." "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw as like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads, as if it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given unto him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword shall be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." (13:1-10). Now there is enough mystery in those 10 verses to take us more than 10 Sabbaths, no doubt. But let us see what we can do with any of this.

Let's say either the dragon stood upon the sand of the sea, or John stood upon the sand of the sea. Then it would be "I saw the beast rising up out of the sea." Now there are two words for "beast" in the Greek New Testament, one is in the English Bible translated "beast" or more properly translated "living creature." And these can be harmless animals like a sheep or a cow, and also these were the four "living creatures," spirit beings or angel beings; then the other word is the word *therion*—this is a ferocious destructive untamable wild animal, like a wild boar or a tiger, a ferocious animal that is a destructive threat to human life. And that is the word that is used here. So this ought to be called "the wild

monster," not just "the beast;" a wild beast which arose out of the sea. Now we've mentioned before the beast coming out of the bottomless pit, in chapter 11 verse 7, "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them," and so on. I take it there they're the same, or if not, very closely related, as shown by the word "beast," the idea of rising up in the one case from hell in the other case from the sea, but also by their activity of making war with the saints; so if these are not two ways of describing an identical figure they are at any rate very closely related. Now rising up out of the sea in the Bible and especially in the book of Revelation is a symbol for the nations of the world. You know world politics is like a lake always in a state of change and it never gets settled. Can you remember any time in your lifetime when world politics was stable? It's always being reshuffled. At one place it says in the Bible the wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest. See Revelation 17, verse 15. "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore (or the harlot) sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," so you see the waters are a symbol for the rising up of political nations and kingdoms of the world. Also, notice this beast rises out of the sea; when we get further on, in verse 11, another beast rises up out of the earth. So here are two tools of Satan, enemies of Christianity, the first beast and the second beast, one rises out of the sea and is primarily a political figure, the other rises out of earth and is a cultural being and religious figure. The second beast is understood to be this thing, later mentioned in other chapters as the false prophet. You can check that out and see they are certainly the same, so there's the wild beast from the sea, he is the political power of the world that is used against Christianity, and there's the beast out of the earth. First, he isn't wild at all, he looks tame but he does the work of the first beast; and then a third tool of Satan is mentioned, Babylon or the scarlet woman, the harlot. This stands for seduction, so Satan now has anti-Christian persecution, a political power, anti-Christian religion, a counterfeit of Christianity, and anti-Christian seduction. For the world has such a pull that it pulls people in the wrong direction and they leave their connection with Jesus Christ. Now this first beast, this wild beast from the sea, has seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns crowns and on his heads the name of blasphemy. In the first place let's look back a minute to chapter 12, verse 3. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." It is the same set up, a dragon with seven heads and ten horns. Now that one we understood to be Satan or the devil, and this one here in chapter 13 is the devil's agent, the devil let's say working through somebody. Jesus said to Peter once, "Get thee behind me, Satan," Peter wasn't really Satan but he was speaking Satan's piece on that occasion. And so seven heads and ten horns identify Satan in chapter

12, verse 3. And chapter 17, verse 10, shows that the seven heads stand for a succession of world powers which were opposed to Christianity. There are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. Evidently the seven heads stand for a succession of world powers that are opposed to Christianity. In Daniel chapter 7 we have four beasts, each of them has some of the features of this terrible beast in Revelation 13, but here in Revelation you could say the whole four are combined into one, the four beasts of Daniel 7 have gotten compressed here, they're drawn up into one figure here with seven heads and ten horns. Now this beast has seven heads and ten horns and ten crowns (on the horns, not on the heads) and on the heads the name of blasphemy. The fact that the crowns are on the horns and not on the heads indicates the horns here stand for particular political governments that are doing Satan's work, the seven heads maybe show the source of the power which is from Satan, the figure mentioned in chapter 12, you would think the crowns would be on their heads, but they aren't; they are on the horns. Imagine wearing a crown on a horn. The horn in the Bible is the symbol of power, both good and bad, either one. Spoken about God's saints, and about wicked people, the horn is the symbol of power.

And so you could say these figures here stand for world political leaders that hate Jesus Christ and have crowned power, but the power comes from behind the scenes, from the dragon that has the seven heads. Now the horns are the anti-Christian government. You know that government is an institution of God, and according to Paul in Romans 13 it is the minister of God to do us good. But this can become so apostate and corrupt and demonized that it becomes the tool of Satan. What is intended originally as a proper institution, blessing the people from God, government that attains justice and so forth, can become a tool of Satan, and this is what becomes of some of them. When the government slaughters the saints, it is the work of the dragon, not of Jesus Christ. Now one of these heads John saw as if it were wounded to death and the deadly wound was healed and all the world wondered after the beast. This is very obscure and difficult to figure out. Dr. Hendriksen suggests the following: that Nero was the first emperor that persecuted the Christians at all seriously, and he did terribly; Paul was beheaded under Nero, and then later Nero committed suicide, and it looked as if persecution was over; this emperor possibly was out of his mind, but he committed suicide, and for the time being persecution stopped, so this would be one of these heads receiving a deadly wound.

LESSON 59

THE TWO BEASTS. Revelation 13, Cont.

But this didn't last; later on under Domitian who was emperor when John wrote the book of Revelation and after that there were fierce and cruel persecutions of Christianity, so you could say the deadly wound that the persecuting power had received was healed, and the persecution was resumed, and all the world marvelled at what was going on. Now that's a possible meaning of this. I should add here that there are various interpretations of this first beast; the one that holds that this is basically the pope or the papacy of the Roman Church runs into serious difficulty on two counts. One is that the second beast here is a religious and cultural figure, and the first beast was a political figure. The Roman Catholic church of course is by profession a religion or religious institution, and so the second beast or the false prophet stands for anti-Christian religion, let's say, rather than the first beast. The second is that this beast here is predicted to gain not only victory over the Christians but absolute domination over them, so that the saints are overcome, vs. 7 of chapter 13, it was given to him, permitted by God, that is, to make war with the saints and to overcome them. Now the Catholic church has done some bad things, but it has never come anywhere near overcoming the saints, in such a total way as is described here. And also, power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations. Now whatever the future may be, Roman Catholicism never came near obtaining that goal there. World power over the whole world, of course it never achieved any such claim or supremacy as that, so it hardly fits the pic-

ture. Now Dr. Pieters holds that the beast here is the pagan Roman empire; that holds to the idea that the head that was wounded and then healed refers to the suicide of Nero and the rise later of a persecuting emperor, but this holds as the basic meaning, this first beast, or the wild beast out of the sea, is the pagan persecuting Roman Empire which for 250 years tried to destroy Christianity with bloodshed. Now that is one interpretation. Another is of course the futurist view held by the Scofield Bible and numerous others, that this refers to some particular dictator or wicked enemy of Christianity, yet to appear on the scene of history. In the past a good number of men have been nominated for this including the Kaiser during World War I, and Stalin, Hitler, among others, none of whom is really big enough to put these shoes on. And so it's still to come, a single figure who will rule the world and oppose Christianity. Now I will not say this cannot mean a single figure coming in the future, and the reason for this is, there seem to be certain other places in the New Testament that predict such a future man of sin, son of perdition, who will be destroyed by the brightness of the Lord at his coming; Paul says this in II Thessalonians. On the other hand Hendriksen says more validly here that this beast is anti-Christian persecuting political power whenever and wherever it appears in history, right down the line. Assyria, Babylon, Rome and all the others. This is the persecuting political power of the world manipulated by Satan whenever and wherever, so that this is not just something that happens

once only at a particular time but this is 42 months, this coincides with the Christian dispensation, from the first coming of Christ to the second coming, this thing happens repeatedly. Now you see they're not mutually exclusive, the fact that this can be repeatedly fulfilled in various persecuting powers in different times and places does not rule out the fact that it can have an ultimate fulfillment in a single figure. This is the nature of Biblical prophecy; it can have multiple fulfillment. You could put a screen up here, and put a slide projector in the middle of the room, and put a slide in and see the picture on the screen. If you have the projector right up in front of the screen you'll have a small picture but very bright the farther back you go, the bigger the picture gets. You can even get so far back that the picture falls off the screen and fills the entire front part of the room, but it's the same picture. Now this can seem like God's judgment on the world. The flood was a fulfillment of this, when fire and brimstone came down and destroyed the whole city. Again you could say the destruction of Jerusalem, once by the Babylonians and twice by the Romans. It's a fulfillment of this, this is judgment, but this does not rule out that there's a future judgment that will be like all of these only more so, that will be the ultimate fulfillment. So you can say that in this world there have been many beasts, that have done the devil's work in this world and have attacked Christianity and God and blasphemed against everything high and holy; this does not rule out that there can be a single figure yet to come who will be the absolute and ultimate fulfillment of this. Of course we must speak with caution and reserve and not get ourselves into the position of the writer who said to the Lord, "Lord, you have double-crossed me." This we should avoid if possible. Now notice here in verse 6. He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. Our government yet in this country does not blaspheme the name of God. How about the government of Soviet Russia and Communist China, do they blaspheme the name of God? Yes, there are no doubts about it. Christianity is openly opposed by the government as superstition. So this is typical at least not of our country today. Christianity is still pretty influential here, but not in some parts of the world, they blaspheme it. And even in this country, wicked people are becoming bolder in the things they dare to say against Christianity and against God, bolder. And the conflict is becoming sharpened up and intensified between real biblical Christianity and anti-Christianity in its many forms. More obviously in opposition and conflict as time passes. Things that people would hardly have dared to say in their hearts and minds and a hundred years ago they publish in books today. Now it says it was given to him, that is permitted by God, to attack and make war with the saints and to overcome them and have dominion over all kindreds, and tongues and nations. I think there is a future fulfillment of this that will wrap up all the previous ones. And now if you were in East Berlin, you could risk your life trying to get to West Berlin to freedom. What would you do if there wasn't

any West Berlin? If one man can control all of East and West Germany but also all of the world, you'd have to fly to the moon to get away from it and they'd probably catch you there. You see if an anti-Christian world government can get control over all people, nations and tongues and kindreds, then there's no place to flee to, no place to hide, then you are cornered like a fox in a fox hunt, no place to hide. You either deny Jesus Christ or you get killed, one or the other. And of course it's a great mercy of God that he's kept us from coming to such a thing yet in this kind of sin that we Americans live in. And it goes on to say that all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, they give divine honor to this hellish, anti-Christian government, and perhaps a future anti-Christian particular government, but it gets or he gets the worship that should belong to God only. This is statism, worshipping the state and deifying it as if it were God. This is essentially the awful thing that was permitted by Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese Fascists before World War II. It is also the sin that is being committed by the communist countries of the world, where instead of worshipping the true God and Jesus Christ they worship humanity in the mass as the object of worship. What do you live for? They live for the communist states. In either China or Russia you cannot teach your own children Christian religion without danger of being put into prison; it is a crime to teach your own children the Christian faith, the children that God has given you. This is something like the beast here in Revelation: and they that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, he is the propaganda figure, everybody falls for this, they climb on the bandwagon here, except those whose names are written in the Book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (and more rightly maybe it means written from the foundation of the world in the book of life, the book of life of the Lamb slain; of course it doesn't really matter which way you take it) but those who are real Christians who are the elect of God and who are the believers and who know Jesus Christ, they are not going to worship this. They're not going to worship him, and they'll resist it and maybe even to the point of death. The Russian Revolution was in 1917. Fifty and more years of bitter persecution of Christianity, has this eliminated Christianity from the country of Russia? God knows the number that have paid with their lives for their testimony and others have suffered terribly, families broken up all sorts of terrible things, but Christianity is still living there.

Those who are really united to Jesus Christ in the eternal and elected salvation of God are not going to worship the beast. Finally the comfort of the saints. How would you feel if you had to live through this kind of thing, greatly curbed and softened in our country where Christianity is still influential, but suppose you had to live in a country where anti-Christianity was naked and unsheathed, how would you feel? I think you will feel awful, you would live in fear and you would wonder if God still loved you and why does He let all this happen to us anyhow? This would be very hard on your faith, you would be under a tension constantly.

But there is a word of comfort here for those that need it. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. Just remember, these people that are doing this are going to go to hell. Consider that option. He that takes the sword is going to be killed by the sword, he that leads into captivity is going to go into captivity, the person who puts Christians into concentration camps, well he's going to

go to God's great concentration camp but it will be forever, that's hell. And this is comfort, and you realize that after all God is certainly going to win the victory and have the last word, and it is not the wild beast out of the sea that is going to have the final outcome of victory.

LESSON 60

THE TWO BEASTS. Revelation 13, Cont.

Now we had the first beast in chapter 13, verse 1, and noted that the Greek word for beast here does not mean simply an animal, this means a very dangerous and ferocious, destructive wild beast; *therion*, a word that you would use of a wild boar or man-eating tiger or any dangerous and fierce wild animal. The first beast rose out of the sea, chapter 13, verse 1; this is a common figure in the Bible for the nations of the world and so used in the book of Revelation; we noted in one place that specifically states this, and there are many other places in the Bible. So the first beast is a political figure, in the sphere of government or mis-government, but in the political sphere. And one of his heads was wounded unto death, and the deadly wound was healed, which caused great astonishment. There is of course no absolute certainty as to what the fulfillment of all this is, but the commonest and probably correct interpretation of this is that these heads mean a series of Roman emperors in the pagan Roman period; that the head that was wounded unto death was Nero, the great persecutor, who committed suicide. And this looked as though the Christians were going to get a better break; Nero certainly didn't do anything to them after he committed suicide, anyway. And the next two or three emperors in between there were mild and did not seem particularly harmful against Christians. And then there rose Domitian, who was the emperor when John wrote this book at the turn of the first century. He was a very bitter enemy and persecutor of Christianity. The rise of Domitian and the series of emperors following him which reinstated the regime of martyrdom and persecution would be the healing of the deadly wound. Now this is commonly accepted as the immediate reference to this strange series of statements. On the other hand there is no need to limit it to this; you can say this has a broader significance also; the meaning is always the same but the fulfillment can be multiple. Every time that a persecuting power for some reason leaves off persecuting, Christians have a better break for a while. This is not permanent, and persecution returns. We are living under a high degree of religious liberty in this country. Our forefathers did not always have it so, especially in the old world. And so persecution, although it is intermittent and the beast that persecutes can be stopped sometimes, still later on in some form it is resumed. This could be in widening circles and in increasing intensity through the Christian era and toward the time of the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ. Now that's the first beast; his name is blasphemy; he is abso-

lutely against God and against Jesus Christ, a power to be feared and to be escaped from if we can. There is nothing kind or nice about this first beast.

Now the second beast, verse 11, another beast, and the same Greek word *therion*. This means a wild beast coming up out of the earth, one comes from the sea, the other from the earth. And in the Bible this is also an image or a symbol, the nations of the world considered in a civilized and cultural aspect, not the nations as restless, striving war-like political powers, but the nations of the world in their cultural aspects that seem in a way to pull them together for some human goal. The second beast comes out of the earth. We might look at a reference or two here; one is in the Epistle of James, to the kind of wisdom that is described as earthly, James chapter 3:15: "This wisdom which descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish," and then in Philippians, chapter 3:19: "the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." This is the opposite of that which is godly and right and holy, earthly things which come from no higher source than the corrupted body of humanity. The sinful mass of humanity in its collective aspects, the earth; the sea, referring it to as a political conflict of nations striving for supremacy, earthly things. Now this second beast is not terrible like the first beast, but looks like a lamb; he has two horns like a young male lamb might have but these are little horns suitable for a lamb; he doesn't have the ferocious aspects of the first beast that had all those terrible characteristics that you saw at the beginning of the chapter. He looks like a lamb; he seems therefore to be innocent and harmless, and sings a nice soft tune, but when he speaks he speaks the piece of the first beast. He had two horns like a lamb but he spake as a dragon, so this second beast speaks the propaganda line of the first beast, but he is dressed up to look mild and innocent and harmless. Jesus warned us against people that come that are robed in sheep's clothing, who even appear to be religious and kind and harmless, but they are wolves, they try to destroy the true church of God. Now this one is commonly identified with the figure mentioned later in the book, the false prophet, in chapter 16, verse 13. "Three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet." This is Satan's trinity here, if you will, we have the dragon, which is the devil

of course, the beast (the first beast that is, at the beginning of 13), and now the false prophet, the second beast. And another mention is in chapter 19, verse 20: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and then that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." There's a further reference in the 20th chapter, so the second beast is equatable, back and forth, with the false prophet, and this also indicates the sphere of his activity; he is a cultural and religious leader who claims to be a prophet, but is a false prophet. One therefore who operates in the realm of ideas. He is in the realm of people's thinking and mental and thought patterns. And in this sphere he does the work of the first beast, deceiving people of this world who are falling in line with the program of the first beast. Now he co-operates completely in carrying out the plans and policies of the first beast; you notice this in Revelation 13: 12 where it says he made people to worship the first beast. Only the God of the Bible, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is worthy of our supreme devotion. And when anybody puts God in second or a lower place and gives his supreme allegiance to anyone or anything else, that is his god or his idol and he is an idolater. So here we have the worship of the first beast. Now it is possible that this originally meant one of the Roman emperors or a series of them; they certainly demanded this; the Christians were thrown to the lions and burned alive and otherwise killed because they would not put incense on a coal of charcoal in front of the image of

Caesar and say "Caesar is Lord." They wouldn't do it; those that did it escaped with their lives but those that didn't were sentenced to death. So it is possible this is the original reference of this. However when you ask what does that really mean, this is the worship of the state or government. This is revived in our own time, that is, those of us who are older here; I guess several here can remember when Hitler and Mussolini were in power. But the essence of the wickedness of the Hitler and Mussolini and in Japan the Tojo regime was this absolute tie-in with the state, by which the state, the totalitarian state, demanded the supreme loyalty of the people, above their God. Supreme devotion. Somebody in Japan, a leader, said, "You can be a Christian, and that's your religion, but Shinto is a super-religion, this demands your loyalty above that which you give to Jesus Christ." Now the wickedness of the Nazis and the Fascists in Italy and in Japan was not merely their inhuman cruelty, the terrible things that they did to the Jews and to many that were not Jews, but that they put the state headed up by the leader, Hitler or Mussolini or Hirohito the emperor, above the place of God, and this is the essence of what we have here, whatever particular form it may take. Now let me ask you is this kind of idolatry dead today? People are still filing past the embalmed remains of Lenin in the Kremlin. They've got them under red lights and under glass for people to observe. You see in China pictures of Comrade Mao all over the place, twenty of them in a row. What is this but lifting a man up to be the supreme object of people's faith and admiration and devotion? This is man-worship. This is the essence of what we have here.

LESSON 61

THE TWO BEASTS. Revelation 13, Cont.

Don't think for one minute this is dead in the world. Deep in the sinful human heart, it comes out again and again. It may come in the future in some form even worse than the world has known in the past. Now, this second beast here, this false prophet, represents anti-Christian apostate religion; the kind of religion that has no testimony against a government that is anti-Christian and persecutes Christianity. Now I'm not talking about the United States government; thank God we still have a high degree of civil and religious liberty in this country. But what we have here in Revelation 13 isn't a government that protects our freedom; here is a government that is putting the screws on Christians while the religious establishments support it. It has no voice in witness against it; it seems to hope for it; and this beast like a hand and glove supports the program of the first beast. There was of course something like this in the Middle Ages when the church condemned heretics and turned them over to the civil power to be burned at the stake; they were somewhat working together, but this is perhaps even more complete and extreme than that. This second beast we read has power to do great wonders and work miracles. Some of the commentators have held that no man could work miracles and do won-

ders like this, therefore this must be a piece of conjuring or trickery. And a number of other things of this kind may be done by trickery or psychological deception. Now I do not think so. This is not described here as a piece of clever performance. He does great wonders and a little further it speaks of miracles. And I would like to call attention to two other places among several mentioned in the Bible. Mark 13, the words of Jesus about this kind of thing. Mark 13:23, "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed; behold, I have foretold you all things." That's in the words of Jesus. And in Second Thessalonians 2 verses 3-12: now I'll read this section because it is one place that convinces me that the two beasts in Revelation are not merely two systems, but will be headed up eventually in two particular persons. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except here come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I told

you these things? And ye know now what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:" (In other words the beast will be destroyed at the time of the Second Coming of Christ, by the second coming); "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Now I take it great wonders does not necessarily mean a false miracle or counterfeit miracles. This means real wonders perpetrated to promote a lie. Remember about the Egyptians who attempted to duplicate the plagues that came by the word of Moses, and were able to do about two or three and then they said "this is the finger of God," and then they had to quit; they couldn't go the rest of the way. Some have thought that this was done by trickery of some kind and possibly it was to the Egyptians, but it didn't fool Moses. But on the other hand where Jesus speaks of lying wonders which will deceive everybody except the elect, this would seem to be something more than mere trickery. If it was mere trickery there are plenty of smart people in this world who are not elect who could still figure it out and find out where the catch was in it. So this would seem to be a kind of demonic supernaturalism here. Satan, of course again with the permission of God (he couldn't do anything without it) but enabling a man to perform what appear to be miracles to give credit a system which is a lie. It is warned in the Old Testament about the man who prophesies that you do not necessarily accept him because of that. You have to test him as to the moral goodness of his message and whether it rings true with what you know to be the divine revelation. Therefore there may be such a thing as miracles of a Satanic origin, which are not really done by the power of God. The real miracles in the Bible are all done to witness to the truth, and to promote the truth. Now here is totalitarian religion put in for anti-Christian world tyranny. And this heads up in universal man-worship or Satan worship which absolutely ties in with the state, enforced and promoted by organized apostate religion. Now you can see tell-tale signs on the horizon today. Dr. Carl Henry preached a year or two ago at Geneva College and said, "The barbarians are coming, we can hear them in the wind," but each time he cited a phenomenon in our contemporary life that is in the direction of the kind of thing we read about here. In other words if you think the world is getting more and more Christian and more and more favorable to the true gospel of Jesus Christ and His word, you are looking only at the surface of things. He cited the terrible things going on in the Western world where Satanic revolt and rebellion are

rising against God and the things of God. It was rather terrifying, although I think that some of our students found it repetitious.

There is a mark of the beast. This is the mark of the first beast, but it is put there by the second beast, the mark of the beast; notice the contrast with the seal that God's children have received. The children of God, the true body of the people of God have received a seal. This identifies them as belonging to God and marks them as this special possession and under His special protection. The reference here is possibly to the practice of branding cattle. The brand on cattle shows who owns this calf or animal. And so the seal and the mark, they both have this identifying function, although there's a difference between a seal and a mark. A seal implies protection and care and love and covenant benefits, and the mark simply identifies a person like the number on the back of the jacket of a convict. Or maybe a fingerprint or something like this. Now the mark is placed in the forehead or in their hand. It fits everyone somewhere. The work of the mind, the work of the hands. Without the mark of the beast economic survival becomes impossible. Nobody can buy or sell without compromising with the system of the beast. Now I do not think this means a specific mark like the blue eagle of the NRA in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's day which was confidently affirmed by some Christians to be the mark of the beast. Fiddlesticks. It wasn't important enough. It's long forgotten. And this probably is nothing so obvious as something stamped on their forehead or on the palm of their hand; there's more of a symbolic meaning here, but what this means is that if you want a job and to be able to earn money and support and care for your family, you come to terms with the beast. And his demands are that you do not object to his program, you compromise yourself at the very least by keeping still, and probably much more than that, you have to actively cooperate with this system or life becomes virtually impossible. Of course God could enable people to live, but this is the system that these people are going to be faced with. What a price to pay for being a Christian!

Now finally we have here the mysterious number and an explicit challenge to try to figure it out if we can. "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast;" so it isn't presumptuous to try and figure this out, we are challenged to do so right there in the sacred text. Now somebody said there are six hundred and sixty six explanations of what this number means. Irenaeus, the second generation from the apostle John—John, Polycarp, Irenaeus. Irenaeus supposedly in a direct pipeline with the teachings of the apostle John, did not know the meaning of this number of the beast. He did not claim to know what it might be. There are two general ideas about this that are held. One is that this is a number spelling letters of the alphabet. Now both the Greeks and the Romans and the Jews used letters of the alphabet for numbers, and you can make out a name by figuring out the numerical value

by the letters of the alphabet. The trouble is this has yielded the names of Napoleon Bonaparte and Nero Caesar and a number of others. So it isn't conclusive. This is one understanding, which requires a good bit of alphabetic juggling to make it come out right; the experts have worked on this and have come up with the number of Nero and Caesar; the name of Nero has one slight letter misspelled in it, and a numerical value of 666. Some of the early manuscripts, not the most important ones and only a few, had 616 instead of 666, and again there are some interesting names if you figure them out according to that system. Now the other type of the interpretation of this, you notice that I present this with great diffidence, is that this is not intended to spell out a name, that this is a number of a man or in Greek, the number of man. This has no definite article, a man and man are the same thing in Greek. So the number of a man or the number of man as distinguished from the number of God. So here is anti-Christian humanism crystallized into a world system that is pressing the life out of world Christianity or trying to. Seven is the perfect number and 3 the divine number in Scripture; the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, this is three; and seven as you know from many places in the Bible stands for perfection, and in Scripture we read of the seven spirits of God, the seven golden candlesticks and so on, so a triple seven would be the number of the perfections of the true God, 777. And 666 falls short on every count, here is the number of man; 6 never gets to be seven; it isn't 7, and it never will be, and so 666 would be man's counterfeit of God's plan and God's system, humanism in place of Christianity. That is easier to believe than this juggling of letters to get the name of Nero, Caesar, and I should add they had a myth in the

first century that Nero was dead but would come back from death, a myth of the resurrection of Nero, that he would come back from Carthage by way of India to fight against Rome. But Nero committed suicide; I believe it was in 68 or 69 A.D., and it was a common belief among the people in the Roman Empire that Nero was coming back, and so there is a common desire on the part of liberal commentators to hold that this means Nero Caesar. And the fact that he never did come back doesn't bother them; they don't believe in the Bible anyhow. They don't believe it is inspired and really a revelation from God; they think John was a man who dreamed this up, and so it means Nero Caesar and of course he didn't come. Now I think we should be very hesitant to claim we know the real meaning of this number 666. The one I gave as second, that is the number of man as distinguished from God, seems to me to have the least difficulties and to be the most plausible; and I think I am inclined to say that both of these beasts represent in the first place a long system that was going on even when John wrote this book and long before that too, against God, this deification of man, you see, but also headed up in two particular people that will be destroyed at the time of Christ's second coming. II Thessalonians 2 seems to say that, the Lord will destroy him with the brightness of his coming, and the masculine and personal pronoun him, not it but him. And in the same way in Revelation the beast and the false prophet are captured and put in the lake of fire which is hell. And how do you put a system into hell? It says they are dropped into the lake of fire and there they will be from that day forever and ever. It seems to refer to the destiny and damnation of a human or humans who are arch-enemies of God.

LESSON 62

THE REDEEMED ON MOUNT ZION. Revelation 14:1-8

Now this chapter opens with a vision of a Lamb, and that can only be Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, on Mount Zion, and he is followed by a hundred and forty and four thousand people, 144,000 who have his Father's name written in their foreheads. The Lamb of course is a very familiar figure for Christ. The 144,000 calls us back quite a way to chapter 7, verse 4 rather "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." And when we were back there studying chapter 7, I explained that as almost certainly meaning the total number of the elect of God, the redeemed regarded as a definite number, this is not the literal tribes of Israel; if it were, the list of the tribes would be complete but as a matter of fact, part are omitted and part are repeated, in the list of the tribes. So this is the elect or redeemed of God, a definite number. Now certainly in chapter 14, the hundred and forty four thousand is to be understood as having the same meaning, this is surely the same body of people again. And it says they are on Mount Zion; this of course would not be the literal mountain in Jerusalem. If you are familiar at all with the topography

of Jerusalem, Mount Zion isn't really very big and I doubt if you could pack 144,000 people on it and give them six square inches apiece. It is not anywhere near that large; it is rather small and within the overall city of Jerusalem, but famous of course for its religious symbolism and its historical associations. But as a mountain, we have some in Pennsylvania that are larger than that. This is the heavenly Jerusalem, the anti-type or fulfillment, the spiritual counterpart of the literal mountain in Jerusalem. And this is mentioned in the book of Hebrews, chapter 12, verse 22, "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," and so on. So this is heaven, of which Jerusalem on earth was a mere symbol, a stand-in; the true Jerusalem is not located in Palestine, but in the transcendent realm where God manifests his glory, and this is what is seen in the vision here by John, the writer of this book. Now he sees the 144,000 and he sees that they have his Father's name written in their foreheads. The name in 14:1 is surely the same as the seal that is mentioned in chapter 7 verses 3 and 4. When we were in chapter 7 you remember that John mentioned the 144,000. Verse

3, "Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." Now sealing is different from marking. Sealing indicates special ownership and propriety. Sealed with the seal of God is designated and certified as especially belonging to God, His special possession and under His care and provision and protection. And so here his name is written, this is a different way, I take it, of saying the same thing. The meaning of the seal is the name of God and everything that that stands for, written on the foreheads of these people. Surely they don't have a seal and a name, but these are two ways of saying the same thing. The name is the seal, the seal is the name, and this is contrasted with the mark. Notice chapter 14, verse 9, "f any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand." And back in chapter 13 verse 16, "He causeth (the second beast) all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, on in their foreheads." So you have either the seal of God or the mark of the beast, you're on one side or the other. Nobody can be neutral in the great, historic conflict of life, you're either on God's side or you're on the side of the enemies of God. It is impossible to be neutral between the two. Jesus said, "He that is not with me or for me is against me." And merely to attempt to be neutral automatically lines a person up with the other side, you see. So here we have those who have the seal and the name of God, the Father, on them marking them as specially His, over against those who have the mark, not called a seal, a mark, the mark of the beast on the forehead or on the hand. I take it the forehead stands for all those ways of activity and earning a living by which you use your brain, and the hand, manual work or technical activity, if they're together the whole economic and technical life of man. You have to have the mark of the beast or you're in trouble, but those who have the seal of God don't have the mark of the beast, they'd rather risk the trouble and endure the persecution and suffering even to giving their life as martyrs if it comes to that, rather than getting the mark of the beast by a sinful compromise. Now here you see the basic antithesis; this is a major thing of the Bible, it runs through from Genesis chapter 3 to the end of the book of Revelation. And there

in Genesis 3, right after Adam and Eve sinned, God said to the serpent, (the message is not to the serpent, it is for us,) "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." I will put enmity, that is, implacable irreconcilable opposition, and God says, I will put it there; this doesn't just happen. Neither is it the result of foolish actions of people, God put it there, it has to be. There must be conflicts between God and anti-God, there has to be conflict between right and wrong, and if you will, God and the devil. And this continues until finally someone called the seed of the woman will appear who will put the serpent out of business completely. On the other hand the seed of the woman is Jesus Christ, descended from Eve, and born of Mary. He suffered through this injury. He was crucified, dead and buried and he rose again the third day, to live forever and ever, while the serpent goes into the bottomless pit. Now that's the theme that is worked out through the rest of the Scripture, the great conflict between God and the devil, between God and anti-God, the church and the world, light and darkness, right and wrong. **Robinson Crusoe**, is an interesting novel by Daniel Defoe; when he wrote it the book had a strong Christian emphasis, but after his death his publishers figured they could make more money by editing that out and they did, and it is only recently that you can buy **Robinson Crusoe** republished with the Christian emphasis put back in the way the author wrote it. At any rate Robinson Crusoe's man Friday was being instructed in a little bit of basic Christian truth, and asked Robinson Crusoe, who was stronger, God or the devil? God is stronger, much stronger than the devil. Next question, Robinson Crusoe, why doesn't God kill the devil? Well, Robinson Crusoe said God is going to put him in a bottomless pit, where he'll be kept forever and never bother anybody again. Then Friday asked, why doesn't God put him in there right this afternoon? Robinson Crusoe was unable to answer and neither can I except to say that here we have the purpose of God to allow the devil to do some things although his doom is sealed. And the bottomless pit is his destination, and Scripture certainly teaches it. Now this is the antithesis, the seed of the woman versus the seed of the serpent.

(To be continued)

Toronto and the Reformed Faith

A Comparison of published statements of leading figures in the AACS/ICS/WEDGE movement with statements of recognized Reformed Confessional Standards

Compiled by J. G. Vos

"The Bible is not to be read as a collection of propositional statements about God and man that we can memorize and master. Neither does it contain general truths that we could possibly consider apart from their meaning for our own lives, nor does it contain moral applications that tell us how to live the good life. . ." (Arnold H. DeGraaff in *Understanding The Scriptures*, page 21).

Reformed Standards versus Dr. DeGraaf

"The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience." (Westminster Larger Catechism, 3).

"The Scriptures make known what God is, the persons in the Godhead, his decrees, and the execution of his decrees." (Westminster Larger Catechism, 6).

"The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man" (Westminster Larger Catechism, 5). (Also Westminster Shorter Catechism, 3).

"The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him." (Westminster Shorter Catechism, 2).

"All the books of the Old and New Testaments, and these only, are given by inspiration of God; they contain a complete system of faith, and a perfect rule for our direction in all the duties of life. . ." (Reformed Presbyterian Declaration and Testimony, III.4).

"The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; . ." (Westminster Confession of Faith, I.6).

"We believe that these Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein." (Belgic Confession of Faith, Article VII).

"For since it is forbidden to add unto or take away anything from the Word of God, it does thereby evidently appear that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects." (The Belgic Confession of Faith, VII).

"In the Scriptures God has given to His Church His testimony. Being inspired, infallible, complete and invariable, they contain the authoritative revelation of His Mind and Will." (Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, p. 7).

The "Mystery" of the Holy Spirit

A Brief Analysis of Recent Manifestations of the "Tongues" Movement

By the Rev. Kenneth G. Smith

The first encounter the writer experienced with "speaking in tongues" occurred about years ago. Since that time there has been, with the growth of the Pentecostal denominations and now much more recently through several large traditional Protestant branches, an evident surge of interest in the person and work of the Holy Spirit, no doubt spurred on by alleged manifestations of the charismatic gifts mentioned in I Corinthians 12-14. Even news magazines have featured articles describing these "mysterious" happenings along with a host of religious period-

icals; and to be sure not all scholars are agreed on what to make of it.

As with any so-called "movement," analysis must be carefully made in the light of scripture after examining the facts; and even then, as the writer feels about the present phenomenon, it may be difficult as well as premature to assess the benefits which some report. We must therefore guard against unscriptural skepticism, as it says in Proverbs 18:13, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame un-

to him." And at the same time, we must avoid the gullibility causing many to go astray for lack of scriptural evaluation.

Whereas it remains yet too early to determine the value of the present movement, and/or at least this writer does not wish to go on record in this area, there appear to be certain evident problems which we should recognize. As Christians we should understand the nature of this movement. We must not be passive; for not only do we owe this to intellectual honesty, but there are those in our Reformed circles whose heads are beginning to be turned toward this movement, and in some cases they are adopting the concepts which underlie it. The following appear to the writer as significant danger points in the movement.

The tendency to divide unscripturally between Christ and the Spirit. While serving as a pastor, I discussed fully with a member who had experienced this 'tongues' phenomenon why she felt this particular experience of the Spirit was necessary. Her reply was to quote from John 1:12 indicating that ". . . as many as received him (Christ), to them gave he power (authority) to become the sons of God. . ." Then turning to Romans 8:14 she read, "For as many as ~~are led by the Spirit of God~~, they are the sons of God." In other words she reasoned that upon receiving Christ one was given the "right" to become a child of God, but that the real blessing did not happen until he was baptized of the Spirit.

Upon hearing the testimony of others, including that of Harold Bredeson, Reformed Church of America leader in the movement, there is in common the idea that prior to this 'experience' they were Christians, but — The insidious implication lies in the inference that Christ is not adequate. There had to be a "baptism" of the Spirit.

Now what does the Scripture say about this dichotomy? In Colossians 2:9,10 Paul writes "For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him (Christ), which is the head of all principality and power." According to the Bible, if one has Christ, he is complete, not inadequate. In Romans 8:9 scripture records, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And when one takes this with Colossians 1:27 where Paul says, ". . . Christ in you, the hope of glory," it becomes evident that to have Christ is to have the Spirit. And vice versa. Add to this the clear statement in John 16:13 and we discover that Jesus said of the Spirit, ". . . he shall not speak of himself." Let it be said it is possible to be in a meeting where much is said about the Spirit, but where the attitude and environment may make one question if the "Holy" Spirit is present. On the other hand, let it be said with

equal vigour that where Christ is preached and loved, there is the Spirit! Those who seem so intent on giving honor to third person of the Trinity, should remember that God has decreed His Son as the One whose name is above every name. It is dangerous to act as though Christ is insufficient! The blessings of the covenant are bound up with the Mediator of that covenant, even Christ. To depreciate the Son of God under any pretense is blasphemous.

The underlying concept of the "second blessing." This danger point follows closely the first, but nonetheless requires separate consideration. "The movement" indicates that the "baptism" of the Spirit usually follows one's conversion at some subsequent time and can only be experienced by complete surrender. Willingness to hear coming from one's own mouth unintelligible gibberish is sometimes used as a "test" of one's surrender. Testimony also seems to build on the presupposition that one can accept Christ as Saviour, but not as Lord. The "lordship" of Christ implies surrender, but this seems to come in this subsequent experience of the "baptism." Speaking in "tongues" generally is considered the initial evidence of the "baptism."

What does Scripture say? In II Corinthians 5:17 we read "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature. . ." Note here the transformation in the converted man. Couple this with Luke 14:33 where Christ spells out the cost of being His disciple: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Obviously there is a radical change in one truly converted if this characterizes the attitude of the true disciple. Again in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus indicates the nature of conversion when He compares respectively the wide and narrow doors to destruction and life. What is the point to all this? Simply this: our day is not a day when this "costly grace" is preached. Generally the gospel is presented as a doctrine which can easily be accepted. "All you have to do is simply . . ." we hear. Thus many respond with an "easy believism" which neither saves nor satisfies. Hence, because so many have not experienced true faith, even after their "decision" they must keep looking for something to "change the life." It is the writer's opinion that many seeking this "second blessing" do so because they have never heard, nor accepted, the full-orbed gospel which requires absolute surrender to a sovereign God. Therefore, the statement coined is true: "No one ever found the 'second blessing' who had found the 'first,' but many have found the 'first' while looking for the 'second.'" This no doubt represents at least in part the alleged benefits from this movement, viz. some are finding the first blessing. There is no Christianity without surrender to Christ!

The tendency to confound terminology. Now

before indicting those connected with this movement, let it be said that all of us have tended to be slipshod in our use of theological terms. However, regardless of the theological circle, choice of words and precise definition are necessary both to the comprehension and the communication of knowledge. Where this shows itself in the present movement largely centers in the use of such terms as "baptism" and "filling" of the Holy Spirit. The "baptism" represents this experience when the Holy Spirit comes upon a person, or as some say "when one receives the 'power,' " the initial evidence of which reveals itself in "speaking in tongues." So also the term "filling" is used. Generally "speaking in tongues" evidences this "filling."

Scripture does not seem confusing on these terms. Consider Galatians 3: 26, 27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Note here "baptism" unmistakably refers to the conversion experience. Compare this with I Corinthians 12:13. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body — and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Here again becoming a part of the "body of Christ," the church, is identified with the Spirit's baptism. Understand therefore that in Scripture the term "baptism" can in no way be defined as a 'second' experience. It refers to the initial experience of being united to Christ.

The term "filling" as used in Ephesians 5:18 means "under the control" of the Spirit as contrasted with being under the control of intoxicants. If being "drunk" with the Spirit is inferred, there is no scripture that warrants the implication that there is a similarity in the physical and emotional activity of persons under the respective control of the Spirit and liquor. That this "filling" evidences itself in "speaking in tongues" necessarily loses foundation in Acts 4:31 where the record says ". . . they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Tongues are not mentioned.

The term "fruit" of the Spirit deserves at least a passing comment here; for again it would seem that if the Spirit is present, His "fruit" would evidence it. Now His "fruit" is this: ". . . love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. . ." Galatians 5:22,23. To insist one must seek a manifestation of "tongues" as initial evidence of the Spirit's presence seems to eclipse this simple, yet again, life-changing, fruit.

Add one other point which often seems to be obscured. In I Corinthians 12:11, the scripture says, "But all these (gifts) worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." Whether one believes these charismatic gifts were limited to the apostolic age and their immediate descendants, as argued by Warfield, or whether he believes they are still

manifest, one thing is clear: a sovereign Spirit rules in their distribution. No human inducement is required. And obviously everyone in the Christian family does not receive the same gifts. How then can the "baptism" so-called be set down as the required experience the first evidence of which is tongue-speaking? Where does sovereignty fit into this?

The mystical nature of the movement, discounting theology and exalting experience. Living in a culture that continues to grow more and more man-centered and existential in philosophy, we who believe in the objective revelation of scripture find difficulty in maintaining our balance. It is not surprising then to find some evangelical Christians overstating their aversion to "dry" theology in favor of vibrant Christian living. There is no basic tension between theology and spiritual vibrancy. In fact, there cannot be one without the other. The following earmarks of the movement under discussion represent gross deviations from scriptural teaching seen in their attempt to gain this "experience."

1. In receiving the "gifts" (I Cor. 12:7-11) one does not use his mind. So states a book in the writer's library sub-titled A TEXTBOOK ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS. Generally in the present day movement the same inference is made regarding solid, intellectual faith, viz. this has nothing to do with receiving the gifts. In fact, you should not try to use your mind in this regard.

That this concept is both dangerous and unscriptural can be seen in I John 4:1, ". . . believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." How can one "try" the spirits without using his mind? Paul's pointed injunction, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," demands use of mental faculties. Jesus included the "mind" when describing how one should love the Lord his God. (Luke 10:27)

2. In claiming immediate revelation, the scriptures are not consulted. Now this criticism must be defined; for whereas the idea does not infer a disbelief in the infallible nature of the word of God, the point is that on many occasions persons indicate "just knowing" this or that in their experience, apart from scripture. For example, in his testimony, Bredeson tells of trying to witness to a woman on a bus, of having been rebuffed, and "upon looking into her eyes I knew she was demon-possessed." Apparently there was no doubt in his mind as he drew his conclusion. Even skilled phychiarists of a Christian bent might be a little more reluctant to state conclusively the woman's problem, but not Bredeson. He "Just knew."

That the Spirit leads in making judgments need not be debated. But John 14:26 identifies the teaching of the Spirit with "...whatsoever I (Christ) have said unto you." John 16:13 also

says of the Spirit that "...he will guide you into all truth...", which can hardly be construed as leading apart from God's written revelation. The Christian is guided by the Spirit as he studies the word so that when judgments are made, he can have reasonable assurance that his judgments are correct. Yet, as a sinner he often makes mistaken judgments, which God overrules as sovereign, and which keep the Christian humble and seeking more understanding of the word.

3. In creating an inner circle of those who "have" versus those who "have not" an unscriptural division is caused. The writer again refers to his experience in this regard, for on many occasions he has witnessed an attitude of pity as it were for those not having experienced this phenomenon. But more objectively the movement itself by its very nature produces a group who have had this experience, and a "fellowship" is often built around it.

Let it be said plainly that the real division described in scripture is not between those having experienced the so-called "baptism" and those not having spoken in tongues, but rather between the "sheep and the goats," between those who are true believers and those who are hypocrites. Read Matthew 7:15-20 where Christ warns of false prophets. He submits the "fruits" of their life as evidence of their real nature, not their ability to do "miracles." And as for the attitude of pity for those who "have not," Isaiah 65:5 indicates how God countenances a "holier than thou" attitude. It is like smoke in His nostrils!

4. In believing "signs" to be "proofs", the true basis of judgment is discounted. When observing one person "under the power" and experiencing her pleadings that I too might come under it, I was very conscious that she was undergoing some kind of "experience." Later in quiet discussion after having explained my refusal to cooperate because of lack of scriptural reason as to why I should covet this power, the woman said, "But what about my experience?"

Now this is a critical question. What about this experience? As the writer said then, he repeats. We do not deny the experience. But where is the scriptural proof that this experience is the "filling," the "baptism", or anything else caused by the HOLY SPIRIT? Here is the rub. Read Carroll Stegall's MODERN TONGUES AND HEALING MOVEMENT and it is evident that this whole phenomenon could be explained psychologically. We do not draw this conclusion, but we certainly object to labelling this ipso facto the Holy Spirit's activity. Scripture just does not warrant it. In fact a study of Matthew 24:24 in its context should cause any Christian to distrust any "sign" not clearly supported by God's Word.

The source of the movement. It is no new

phenomenon we are considering, for there have been upsurges of this ever since it apparently died out with the decrease of those directly fellowshiping with the apostles. During past decades the Pentecostal churches have maintained their commitment to these concepts, but it should be noted that they are Arminian in their orientation. The most recent surge has stemmed from liberal circles, or at least from those leaning in that direction. The Seminaries where this has been showing itself, much to the embarrassment of many of their administrators, are neo-orthodox, and as such tend to lay a rather good foundation, as does Arminianism, for such subjectivism. These two circles are certainly seldom categorized together, but in this regard they are not strange bed-fellows. That this latter group are looking for more than neo-orthodoxy has given them no doubt underlies this quest for this experience; and many of the traditional protestant churches having lost their vitality years ago have persons in them who long after something more. There does not seem to be a "rediscovery of Spiritual truth" behind this; for if this were the case, we might also expect the Spirit to be inclining at least some to the the great doctrines of sovereignty, depravity, etc. so evidently taught in Scripture. We must pray He will! So far at least there seems little evidence of this.

In this regard Hebrews 13:7 "Remember them . . . who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow . . ." and Jude 3 ". . . contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" challenge us to see what the giants of the faith in church history have said to us about this phenomenon. Significantly enough, they are almost silent.

In conclusion let it be repeated that as Christians we should understand the nature of this movement. Consideration of the above problems does not in any sense answer all the questions surrounding the charismatic gifts, nor is this the intent of this analysis. In fact, the movement probably reveals that we do not know what we believe about this subject. A larger and more significant question looms, viz. how can those Christians committed to the Reformed faith witness a greater demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power in our times. Both of these questions require attention; but suffice it to say here that the answers to both lie in the same general area. That solution is a deeper study of the Word of God, with prayer for God's guidance. There is no short-cut to spirituality. Apart from biblical knowledge we can hardly expect great demonstrations of the power of the Spirit of Truth. Peter's injunction to Christians who were experiencing all kinds of cross-fire from various groups seems therefore most fitting. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To HIM be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Some Noteworthy Quotations

WHERE THERE IS MUCH DESIRE to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making.

—John Milton

ALL THE PARTS of man's nature have suffered each their own peculiar injury by the catastrophe of the Fall, but it is those parts that have more immediately to do with God and His revealed will that have suffered most. And no part has suffered such a shock and hurt as the will. It is now by nature and in every unregenerate man turned away from God, and in bondage to sin and evil. It is not that man would do good, would return to God if he could; it is not that he cannot, he **WILL not**. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." There was no hand holding them back, no cord binding them but the bands of their evil will. This is what is meant when learned divines treat of the bondage and inability of the will.

—Alexander Whyte

GOD WILL NOT BE HONORED with exceptions, nor will He allow us to cut off from His law what is less pleasing to us. It is not said of a part of the law, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

—John Calvin

A MAN IS SPOTTED though he have only one

stain; a cup is broken, if only the top be broken; one disease will make a man sick; and there are a hundred ways to wander in, but only one to life and immortality.

—Jeremy Taylor

THE SOLIDARITY OF THE LAW is such, that it does not admit of being broken in one point, and yet not in the whole.

—Henry Alford

THE KINGDOM OF GOD among men is nothing else than a restoration to a happy life; or, in other words, it is true and everlasting happiness.

—John Calvin

THE BEGINNING OF TRUE NOBILITY comes when a man ceases to be interested in the judgment of men, and becomes interested in the judgment of God.

—J. Gresham Machen

OPEN COMMUNION logically leads to open church membership, and a church membership open to all, without reference to the qualifications required in Scripture, or without examination on the part of the church as to the existence of these qualifications in those who unite with it, is virtually an identification of the church with the world, and, without protest from Scripturally constituted bodies, would finally result in its actual extinction.

—Augustus Hopkins Strong

The Death Of Death

By J. G. Vos

"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.

The Puritan John Owen entitled a book, "The Death of Death in the Death of Christ." Christ's death fully atoned for sin, therefore He could not remain dead. On the third day He rose with new life and power. A Chinese inquirer asked a missionary: "That story in the Bible about Jesus rising from the dead — is that really true or is it just a story?" This missionary was a liberal in theology, so he replied, "If you believe it is true, it is true for you; if I believe it is true, it is true for me, but the important question is, Are you following the ethical ideals of Jesus." This kind of double talk abounds on every hand today. Over against all such attitudes the Bible affirms that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact of history as truly as the crucifixion was a fact of history.

Christ has crashed the barrier of death. He has overcome the reality and power of this terrible last enemy of mankind. The horror and abnormality of death, its apparent destruction of all human hopes and

values, has been canceled by the One who passed through that dark portal and returned clothed with the life of immortality. He rose in the same body that was nailed to the cross; the print of the nails was still visible. Yet that body was changed and could never again suffer or die. He is the One whom death could not hold — the once dead but now forever deathless One, with "the power of an indissoluble life" (Heb. 7:16, Greek).

Christ's resurrection is our ultimate ground of optimism. If this be true, nothing else really matters in comparison with it. If it be true, the ultimate issues of life and of the universe can only be favorable to the one who is in vital union with Christ. If this be true, our future is held in the hands of Him who has conquered our final enemy — death. If this be true, all else must eventually be adjusted to it.

During World War II a liberal minister preached on the question, "What would Hitler do with Jesus?" But a Bible-believing minister reproved him, saying that the real question is rather, "What will Jesus do with Hitler?" Jesus Christ, and not the evil men of this world, will have the absolute last word, and it will mean eternal peace and victory for His own. We have the key facing

death without fear, and this really includes victory over all our lesser fears.

So Jesus, vibrant with the power of immortality, says to His fearful disciples "All hail!" (Matt. 28:9). This means "Rejoice!". In the next verse He says "Be not afraid." What is your relationship to this Person who

has crashed the dark barrier of death? The most important question for every person in the world is "What is my relationship to Jesus Christ?" There are various possibilities — opposition, unbelief, indifference, formal assent, or true faith in and commitment to Him. Has the Christ of history become the Christ of experience in your heart and life?

Religious Terms Defined

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.

SACRAMENTS. "A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers." (Shorter Catechism, 92).

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 naturalistic, worldly and self-satisfied.

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

SALVATION. The work of God by which the elect are delivered from sin and suffering and restored to the enjoyment of God's favor in fulness of life, righteousness and blessedness. 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, is used to describe that work of God, through the mediation of Christ, 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." (Shorter Catechism, 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, and desperately wicked, utterly contrary to God, and of great but strictly limited power.

SATISFACTION OF CHRIST. Christ's offering up of Himself as a sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God in the stead of each of His elect, so that they can and shall be reconciled to God. Also called Vicarious Atonement and Substitutionary Atonement.

SAVIOUR. One who saves. In the general sense a saviour is anyone who saves from any evil or danger (I Kings 13:5; Neh. 9:27). In the general sense God is called "the Saviour of all men" (I Timothy 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.

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here does not imply approval of its entire contents. Purchase books from your book dealer or from the publishers. Do not send orders for books to Blue Banner Faith and Life.

THE TRIVIALIZATION OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, by John R. Fry. Harper and Row, New York, 1975, pp. 85. \$5.95.

This book by a minister of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. seeks to answer the question why that large denomination is "in a steady decline in membership, tithing, purpose, direction and organization" (dust jacket). In essence his answer is that the concept of "reconciliation," the key word in the *Confession of 1967*, is the basic cause. He holds that under the plea of up-dating the denomination's basic confessional standard, the organization was drastically changed until the church today is managed by an elite bureaucracy while the historical organization of the church (sessions, presbyteries, synods, general assembly) remains relatively lifeless and formal. "Reconciliation" is the word which he holds has changed the church from a gospel and missionary body to a political and social pressure group manipulated by the few at the top of the structure.

The author is obviously a theological liberal. He seems to have no concern for the basic faith of historic Christianity. He regards the orthodox minority in the denomination with a lofty scorn, calling them "a small contingent of Presbyterians whose ability to shout very loudly makes them appear to be an army" (p. 72). Again, he speaks of the orthodox minority as a "certain vociferous cell of Presbyterians who fundamentally want to repeal the twentieth century—as a prelude to reinstating the Bible as the verbally inspired and utterly inerrant Word of God, and that as a prelude to preaching the plain Word to lost sinners. . ." (p. 72). His basic theological orientation seems to be Neo-orthodox or Barthian, and his objection to the *Confession of 1967* seems to be not so much to its content as to the use that has been made of it. The bureaucracy at the top has gone too far, and has lost the confidence of the membership of the denomination, according to Dr. Fry. The limit was reached when the denomination's Council on Church and Race donated \$10,000 to Angela Davis' defense fund, in the name of "reconciliation."

This rash act was followed by a marked decline in financial contributions on the part of the membership. The bureaucracy is now desperately calling for more money.

In the reviewer's opinion, Dr. Fry's remark about some people wanting to "repeal the twentieth century"

is quite uncalled for. The theological road has divided, certainly, but J. Gresham Machen, Robert Dick Wilson, Oswald T. Allis, Westminster Theological Seminary, the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, the Banner of Truth Trust, the growing renewed interest in Calvinism or the Reformed Faith, are all part of the twentieth century. Liberalism and Neo-orthodoxy, though today dominant in the United Presbyterian Church, have no monopoly on the twentieth century.

Dr. Fry, in this reviewer's opinion, has not dug deep enough. The twentieth century is conceived by him is the real problem. Dr. Fry is certainly himself part of the problem. The falling away from the historic Christian faith in the United Presbyterian Church did not begin with the *Confession of 1967*. It began at the turn of the century, just a few years after the notorious Briggs trial. It became open and bold with the Auburn Affirmation in the nineteen twenties. The present reviewer left the denomination in 1926 because of developing conditions in it, and has never regretted the move in the half-century that has followed. The *Confession of 1967*, which replaced the *Westminster Confession* as the denomination's working standard, is openly and explicitly Barthian or Neo-orthodox in its basic concepts (authority, Scripture, sin, redemption, destiny). The growth of a top-heavy bureaucracy is a result of a long-continued theological defection, not the cause of it. When the true Gospel of God's plan of redemption became silent, excessive top-heavy planning and organization came in to fill the void. The United Presbyterian Church needs much more than to curb its super-bureaucracy. It needs to get back to its true faith as set forth in the *Westminster Confession* and as professed by the church when no one could call it "trivialized."

—J.G. Vos

REINCARNATION, EDGAR CAYCE AND THE BIBLE, by Philip J. Swihart. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill., Box 4, 60515. 1975, paperback, pocket size, pp. 60. \$1.25.

Do you have a second-hand, third-hand or nth-hand soul? If the doctrine of reincarnation is true, you certainly do. This bizarre belief originated, apparently, in India, and is very ancient. It would seem on the very face of it to be utterly incompatible with Christianity. Yet in this age of strange sects and cults, there are many professed Christians who claim to believe in re-incarnation.

This booklet by a professional psychologist who is also an evangelical Christian recounts the strange story of Edgar Cayce, promote of "Christian" reincarnation, and proceeds to demonstrate the incompatibility of this belief, in point after point, with Biblical Christianity.

If you have a friend or acquaintance who is being trapped by this snare of the devil, give him this book. The Holy Spirit may use it to prevent his eternal ruin and bring about his eternal salvation. —J. G. Vos

GENESIS: A STUDY GUIDE, by Leon J. Wood. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, pp. 152, paperback, \$1.95.

An excellent elementary study guide on the Book of Genesis by an author who really believes in the Bible, including its plenary inspiration and inerrancy. This book excels in presenting Biblical truth plainly, clearly, and concisely. Suitable for student and church groups and any type of study classes. The reviewer takes issue with one statement only (page 71), where the author states that the absolute fulfillment of God's promise of the land to Abraham must wait for fulfillment for "the millennial day to come, when Christ will be King of His people. The reviewer believes that a good case can be made out for the fulfillment in the time of Solomon and again during the reign of Jeroboam the Second.

—J. G. Vos

BUILDING POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPTS, by Donald W. Felker. Burgess Publishing Co., Minneapolis, Minn. 1974, paperback, pp. 135. No price stated.

We find in Luke 10:27 that our Lord tells us, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

Nevertheless the Christian community has often been lax in observing the third, but equally essential and overlooked part of our Lord's statement of the law, "you shall love yourself." Perhaps this is because we do not know how to assist people to love themselves. We have often taught our children Bible content and catechism, but have frequently neglected to reinforce their positive self-concepts so that they cannot in God's grace love themselves.

Donald W. Felker, Ph.D., a dedicated Christian educator and psychologist, has written **Building Positive Self-Concepts**, a book which supplies the principles and the pragmatics of building the self-love of our children.

All pastors should read the first two chapters for their own edification and the remaining four to pass on to those who teach in their Christian education programs. All parents should read the book to encourage giving to their children what few in their generation received—self-confidence.

Dr. Felker, a professor of educational psychology at Purdue University, who has taught at Indiana University and the University of Maryland at College Park, is the author of many articles for professional journals. His research interests are in the development and enhancement of self-concept in children. In this book he points

out how we receive our concept of who we are from significant others. He describes the environment that generates positive self-concept, and prescribes the use of "five keys to better self-concept" as the method of helping others grow in self-respect. The five keys are: (1) Adults, praise yourselves; (2) Help children to evaluate realistically; (3) Teach children to set reasonable goals; (4) Teach children to praise themselves; (5) Teach children to praise others.

Dr. Felker draws sensible conclusions from solid research (much of it his own) and makes helpful, practical applications to the process of shaping positive self-concepts.

This book affords a bonus of a critical insight into the contemporary mystery of adolescence. Dr. Felker has the problems of the young so well analyzed that he gives good, practical suggestions to the teacher and counselor of teenagers.

Building Positive Self-Concepts is a "must" for Christian parents, pastors, and teachers. Its principles put to prayerful use will strengthen and enrich the fellowship of the entire Christian community. —Paul Holland

THE STILL HOUR, by Austin Phelps. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013. 1975, pp. 91. \$1.65.

Banner of Truth Trust has reprinted another fine work making it readily available for public use. This is not a modern and easy view of the Biblical aspect of prayer. The author starts this study of prayer with the hindrances of prayer; the first four chapters are: 1) Absence of God in Prayer, 2) Unhallowed Prayer, 3) Romance in Prayer and 4) Distrust in Prayer. What the author finally settles on for his main and central emphasis is the aid of the Holy Spirit and that it should be Christ-centered if it is to be a Christian prayer, in the same sense that we are redeemed through Christ and it is only through Him we are saved; it is the same with prayer; we as sinful human beings cannot approach God, but through Christ.

This book is recommended highly for those looking for a deep spiritual study of prayer. —Samuel Sterrett

THE LIVES OF PHILIP AND MATTHEW HENRY, by J. B. Williams. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013. 1975, pp. 811. \$11.95.

Christians today are very lacking of knowledge about church history. There is very little time spent teaching and relating to the younger generations what the generations before have done. Yet from our fathers we can learn much. This is shown in the life of Matthew Henry, he is better known than his father Philip Henry, yet he obtained much wealth and spiritual knowledge from his father.

Philip Henry suffered much, a Dissenter of the Act of Conformity in 1622, he spent much time out of the ministry and was persecuted during the time of the Clarendon Code was strictly enforced. Still he was well-known for his godly life and wisdom.

Matthew Henry is well-known for his commentary on the Bible. George Whitefield says of its influence upon his life: "Henry's Exposition were of admirable use to lead me into all Gospel truths. . .How sweetly did my hours in private glide away in reading and praying over his comments upon the Scriptures. . . the fire I then felt again kindles in my soul." To read his life story is enough to encourage those who are thinking of going into the ministry.

This volume is very heartily recommended to all.

—Samuel Sterrett

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, by John Bunyan. pp. 554, 1974. \$9.95. THE HOLY WAR, by John Bunyan. pp. 454, 1975. \$8.95. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pennsylvania 17880.

When reading Bunyan, one sees an example of a truly Biblical life. Spurgeon has written that you can "read anything of his, and you will see that it is almost like reading the Bible itself. He studied our Authorised Version. . .he had read it till his whole being was saturated with Scripture. . .Prick him anywhere; and you will find that his blood is BIBLINE, the very essence of the Bible flows from him. He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his soul is full of the Word of God."

Both of these books are reprints of two of Bunyan's most famous works. They both have the same format; the type is very large, clear and easy to read and they also have explanatory notes to help the reader understand the symbolism that Bunyan uses.

To talk at length about these two books would be a waste of space, these books are well-known and loved by Christians around the world. For those who have not read *The Holy War*, I beg with you to get it this very day. The ignorance and folly of man is shown in the folly of trusting anyone else but Jesus Christ.

If anyone is looking for a fine gift, these are highly recommended.

—Samuel Sterrett

THE WORKS OF JONATHAN EDWARDS, The Banner of Truth Trust, 3 Murrayfield Road, Edinburgh, P.O. Box 652, Carlisle, Penn. 17013. Volume I, pp. 691, 1974 \$19.95, Volume II, pp. 969, 1974 \$19.95.

The Banner of Truth Trust is to be commended for the reprinting of this 1834 edition of Jonathan Edwards's work. For those who are familiar with Edwards, they will not miss this opportunity to buy these two volumes. Edwards has been called the "theologian of the revival." In Volume one Edwards has many

articles and two major works that deal with the Great Awakening that present for all to read many of the true signs of those souls that are born again. In Volume two there are 62 sermons of Edwards presenting the power of the Word of God when truly and faithfully expounded.

To save money, Banner has reprinted this with the same small print that was used in the 1834 edition, and this could make for difficult reading for those with poor eyes. Yet these books are heartily recommended for those looking for a few gold nuggets. —Samuel Sterrett

FAITH AND LIFE, by B. B. Warfield. The Banner of Truth Trust. 3 Murrayfield Road, Edinburgh. P.O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013. 1974. Paperback, pp. 458. \$3.50.

Faith and Life is a collection of some of Warfield's Sabbath afternoon addresses to his students at Princeton Seminary. These addresses were a tradition which Dr. Warfield continued for the purpose of familiarizing and expounding Scripture passages to his students. He does not limit his choice of passages, drawing from all sections of the Bible. He deals with topics that help the young man who is preparing for the ministry. Dr. Warfield presents the need for a truly Spiritual life; the work of the Spirit in all of life. Also the devotion to Christ needed by all.

This reviewer heartily commends to all "students of Christ" this volume by Dr. Warfield. —Samuel Sterrett

A BOOK OF COMFORT FOR THOSE IN SICKNESS, by P.B. Power. The Banner of Truth Trust. P. O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013. 1975. pp. 100, \$1.65.

This work is another reprint that Banner has become well-noted for. The sub-title is a little misleading, *A Book of Comfort for Those in Sickness*. Some people would think only of physical illness and not of illness as the result of the fall of mankind. The first four chapters deal with seeking comfort and what the Evil one does to prevent Christians coming to a right knowledge of God and the peace and comfort He has for us. The last chapter deals with our attitude toward death. We should not be upset and gloomy about our coming death. Instead, we should have comfort knowing that we will be going to our Heavenly Father, our Father who has watched over us and provided all our needs. We should have comfort knowing that we are departing from this world to spend eternity with Jesus Christ.

This work is very highly recommended.

—Samuel Sterrett

THE DOCTRINES OF ELECTION AND JUSTIFICATION, by Arthur W. Pink. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1975. pp. 252. \$6.95.

In my short life, I have been involved in many discussions that have been related to the doctrine of election. In presenting my arguments I have turned to various passages that tell of God's choosing His people to spend eternity with Him, but they have come back with presentation of the free will of man. To attempt to show that both sides are true is a very difficult job. When I was reading this book, I saw presented a very good and logical apologetic for the Reformed position. Mr. Pink has answered most of the questions that are asked. I really appreciated the many quotes from the many classic sources.

I would recommend this book to anyone who needs help on either doctrine. —Samuel Sterrett

THE CHRISTIAN'S GREAT INTEREST, by William Guthrie. Free Presbyterian Publications, 10 Beaufort Road, Inverness, Scotland. 1975, reprint of 1658. Paperback, pp. 207. 30 pence.

This publication is a reprinting of a book originally published in 1658, the reprint being issued in conjunction with the Banner of Truth Trust. It is a work that was written to answer questions concerning salvation and the assurances of salvation. Guthrie presents the argument that (1) there is a need of salvation; (2) there can be a knowledge of true assurance; (3) what are and are not the signs of salvation and assurance. The author's style of writing reflects the language and etymon of his time, which could be a problem for some readers. Still this work would be very profitable for anyone who has questions about his union with Christ. In a time when it is not fashionable to believe in the Christ of the Bible, this book is a very welcome reprinting.

—Samuel Sterrett

J. C. RYLE: A SELF-PORTRAIT, edited by Peter Toon. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880. 1975, pp. 102, \$4.95.

Today more and more Christians are discovering a great wealth of old truths in the works of Bishop Ryle, but many know little or nothing about his background. They read him and are thankful for finding his books, but still they don't know why he believed and defended the evangelical school of thought until the time of his death.

This work will provide some of that information. Most of this was written by Ryle to be a means of providing advice for his children. He shows certain attitudes of his time—an emphasis on social class and marrying into the right class. What is helpful is the relating of his childhood and early religious experience, along with his first

pastorate. This work is recommended for those people interested in the influences that shaped Bishop Ryle's life.

—Samuel Sterrett

GENESIS AND EARLY MAN, by Arthur C. Custance. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, pp. 331. \$8.95.

This book is a strong plea for Biblical creationism versus the currently dominant evolutionism. The author's approach is anthropological, and in the main his argument is very convincing. Some of the matters treated are: fossil remains of early man and the record of Genesis; primitive cultures; the intelligence of paleolithic (ice-age) man; the supposed evolution of the human skull; and a fascinating discussion of the origin of language, under the title "Who Taught Adam to Speak?"

The author shows to what a tremendous extent the evolutionary view of man is a matter of faith, based on unproved assumptions, rather than "proved fact" established by observed and testable phenomena.

The book effectively demonstrates that there is no evidence that man has increased in intelligence since his origin. The so-called "primitive" societies which have existed and still exist in some parts of the world are explainable as products of retrogression or deterioration, as the author shows.

In the reviewer's opinion the author does less than justice to the radiocarbon or carbon-14 method of dating ancient organic remains. The fact that it has in some cases proved unreliable does not mean that it is always or necessarily so. Within certain limits it has been shown to be basically reliable. The book would be greatly improved by the addition of an index. Lacking one, the book is somewhat cumbersome to use. If you want to see where Gordon Childe, Seton Lloyd, Kathleen Kenyon, or Grahame Clark are quoted or referred to, there is no way but to read the book from cover to cover.

—J. G. Vos

SCRIPTURE MEMORY 101, by John W. Alexander. Inter-Varsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1975, pp. 30, paper cover, pocket size. 25 cents.

A practical guide to a method of memorizing Scripture. Many good suggestions are offered. The benefits of Scripture memorization are brought out. Recommended.

—J. G. Vos

RESOLUTIONS OF A SAINTLY SCHOLAR, by Jonathan Edwards, with Introduction by Robert E. Coleman. Dept. of Evangelism, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky 40390. 1974, pp. 48, paper cover, pocket size. 35 cents.

A brief introduction to Jonathan Edwards, in Edwards' own words. Jonathan Edwards has justly been

called America's greatest theologian. It is equally true that he was an outstanding preacher and evangelist. He lived through the Great Awakening, the greatest revival this country has ever known. Heartily recommended.

—J. G. Vos

ONE WAY TO GOD? by Brian Maiden. Inter-Varsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1974, pp. 45, paper cover, pocket size. 25 cents.

This booklet shows that Jesus Christ is the one and only Way of salvation. Biblical Christianity is compared to other systems and its uniqueness convincingly shown. Give this to your friend who says that all religions are ways to God.

—J. G. Vos

TODAY IS ALL YOU HAVE, by Overton Stephens, M. D. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, reprint of 1971. Pp. 160, paper cover. \$1.75.

By a Christian medical doctor, this book comes from a lifetime of Christian experience, and gives much sound and practical counsel on how to maintain good health, have a serene mental and emotional balance, enjoy living and please God while doing it. The style is anecdotal and colloquial, the reading easy. Not a textbook on Systematic Theology, but it contains much helpful material for Christians, both young and old, new and mature.

—J. G. Vos

GETTING INTO GOD, by D. Stuart Briscoe. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, pp. 156, paper cover. \$1.50.

Sub-titled "Practical Guidelines to the Christian Life," this little book deals largely with prayer and witnessing. Much practical counsel on ways of witnessing and winning souls for the Lord.

—J. G. Vos

NO FINAL CONFLICT, by Francis A. Schaeffer. Inter-Varsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1975, pp. 48, paper cover. \$1.25.

The sub-title of this booklet is "The Bible Without Error in all that it Affirms." By "No Final Conflict," the author means that there cannot be ultimate conflict or contradiction between truth revealed in Scripture and truth discovered by valid scientific research. The author holds that genealogy does not demonstrate particular chronology in the Bible. He holds that the human race may be much older than Ussher's chronology allows for. At the same time he insists on the historical character and direct creation of Adam and Eve,

and the reality of the Fall as a definite event in space and time. Theistic evolution is shown to be an untenable position for those who believe in a historical Adam and Eve and a historical Fall. The possibility of a "mature" or "grown-up" creation is considered and allowed for. The booklet is recommended to our readers.

—J.G. Vos

WORD IN DEED: THEOLOGICAL THEMES IN EVANGELISM, by Gabriel Fackre. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 49502. 1975, pp. 109, paperback, pocket size. \$1.95.

The theological orientation of this book is Neo-orthodox. The Holy Spirit is referred to as "it" (p. 49). The author speaks of "the Genesis saga" (p. 88). He seems to place Scripture, tradition and "involvement" on a par as authority: "The pursuit of Christian truth is in this world always a journey, not arrival. We are on the right track when we have together Bible, church, and experience. . . The articulation of it in a given time and place by the best lights of Scripture, tradition, and involvement, is more than a private venture, more than just my story." "The story comes to us as our story, that tale which is revealed to us through Scripture, tradition, and human experience . . ." (p. 51).

This is Barthianism or neo-orthodoxy, not the historic Christian faith. The Christian believer is not merely seeking the truth; he already has the truth in Christ. Christians are what Karl Barth scornfully called the *beati possidentes* ("blessed possessors").

On page 89 the author speaks of "A long theological tradition from Augustine through Kierkegaard to Reinhold Niebuhr." This reviewer does not believe that there is such a thing as a theological tradition including these three men. The author is professor of theology at Andover Newton Theological School. Not recommended.

—J. G. Vos

PLAIN TALK ON MARK, by Manfred George Gutzke. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, pp. 192, paperback. \$2.95.

A simple, readable, and understandable exposition of the Gospel of Mark. The author was formerly professor in Columbia Theological Seminary, and has for several years been a radio speaker in the program "The Bible for You." The viewpoint is evangelical, the teaching helpful. The author comments on Mark 16:9-20 without mentioning the question that exists as to the genuineness of this passage as part of the original text of Mark.

—J. G. Vos

Contributions Received

The following contributions have been received since our last issue went to press:

August, 1975. No. 2817, \$25.00. No. 2818, \$6.00.

October, 1975. No. 2819, \$12.00. No. 2820, \$20.00. No. 2821, (5 pounds Sterling), \$10.15.

November, 1975. No. 2822, \$100.00.

Later contributions will be acknowledged in our next issue. Without such generous contributions as these it

would hardly be possible to continue publishing the magazine, as subscriptions and sales of back issues and reprints provide only about half of the amount needed. We are trying to resist the tide of inflation by not raising our subscription rates. Many thanks to all who have helped. Your contributions are deductible from your Federal taxable income if you live in the United States.

J. G. Vos, Manager
3408 Seventh Avenue
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We are out of copies of the Syllabus on Old Testament History. If and when it is again available, we shall inform our readers. Much of the same content was published some years back in the magazine. We may be able to provide it in the form of back issues. Write for information if interested.

Back issues of recent years, and some of earlier years, are available at 50 cents per issue, postpaid. For some earlier years only used copies are available.

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Selections from the Poems of Christina G. Rossetti

"The Love of Christ which Passeth Knowledge"
I bore with thee long weary days and nights,
Through many pangs of heart, through many tears;
I bore with thee, thy hardness, coldness, slights,
For three and thirty years.

Who else had dared for thee what I have dared?
I plunged the depth most deep from bliss above,
I not my flesh, I not My spirit spared:
Give thou Me love for love.

For thee I thirsted in the daily drouth,
For thee I trembled in the nightly frost:
Much sweeter thou than honey to My mouth:
Why wilt thou still be lost?

I bore thee on My shoulders and rejoiced:
Men only marked upon My shoulders borne
The branding cross; and shouted hungry-voiced,
Or wagged their heads in scorn.

Thee did nails grave upon My hands, thy name
Did thorns for frontlets stamp between Mine eyes:
I, Holy One, put on thy guilt and shame;
I, God, Priest, Sacrifice.

A thief upon my right hand and my left;
Six hours alone, athirst, in misery;
At length in death one smote My heart and cleft
A hiding place for thee.

Nailed to the racking cross, than bed of down
More dear, whereon to stretch Myself and sleep:
So did I win a kingdom,—share My crown;
A harvest.—come and reap.

A Better Resurrection

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
My heart within me like a stone
Is numbed too much for hopes or fears;
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimmed with grief
No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf:
O Jesus, quicken me.

My life is like a faded leaf,
My harvest dwindled to a husk;
Truly my life is void and brief

And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud or greenness can I see:
Yet rise it shall—the sap of Spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul
Or cordial in the searching cold;
Cast in the fire the perished thing,
Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for Him my King:
O Jesus, drink of me.

From House to Home

Therefore, O friend, I would not if I might
Rebuild my house of lies, wherein I joyed
One time to dwell; my soul shall walk in white
Cast down but not destroyed.

Therefore in patience I possess my soul;
Yea, therefore as a flint I set my face,
To pluck down, to build up again the whole.
But in a distant place.

These thorns are sharp, yet I can tread on them;
This cup is loathsome, yet He makes it sweet:
My face is steadfast toward Jerusalem,
My heart remembers it.

I lift the hanging hands, the feeble knees,
I, precious more than seven times molten gold,
Until the day when from His storehouses
God shall bring new and old;

Beauty for ashes, oil of joy for grief,
Garment of praise for spirit of heaviness:
Although today I fade as doth a leaf,
I languish and grow less.

Although today He prunes my twigs with pain,
Yet doth His blood nourish and warm my root:
Tomorrow I shall put forth buds again,
And clothe myself with fruit.

Although today I walk in tedious ways,
Today His staff is turned into a rod,
Yet will I wait for Him the appointed days
And stay upon my God.

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

Volume 31

April-June, 1976

Number 2

Studies in the Book of Revelation

LESSON 63

THE SONG OF THE 144,000, Revelation 14:1-20

The next question we might look at is, is the scene in Revelation 14 supposed to be on earth or in heaven? And the commentators can't agree on this. On the other hand I will give my vote that this is in heaven, in contrast to the terrible things in chapter 13, which are certainly on this earth, that the beast and the false prophet are putting marks on people, and preventing people from buying or selling, and putting people to death for their Christian faith; that will surely take place on this earth. And here in this chapter we find a tremendous contrast, here is peace and harmony and joy and love and all these wonderful things. And the conflict on earth is regarded as way out down below someplace; the scene here is truly in heaven, as is brought out here in verse 4: "I heard a voice in heaven," and then again in verse 3, it is before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders that these things happened. This is obviously therefore a scene in heaven similar to what we've had a number of times before in the book of Revelation. Chapter 14 pictures the church as redeemed and in heavenly glory in contrast to the terrible things that are going on on earth pictured in chapter 13. Now remember it's a vision and these don't follow consecutively, the one after the other. The terrible things have been going on in this world and have been for a long time and in our own day. And meanwhile there is also the beauty and peace and joy and victory in heaven, and those who have entered into it. And we see this suggested in this chapter, verse 14 of chapter 14, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them". . . Obviously speaking of the rest and repose and comfort of heaven in contrast to what they had to go through when living on this earth. Now this scene in heaven. The first thing you notice here is music, the voice of music, and it is the voice of many waters, and a great thunder like the voice of harpers. Now I don't play the harp and I don't suppose many of you play the harp, not yet anyway. But it is considered a sweet form of music. I like to listen to broadcasts and recordings of Hawaiian guitar music. You realize I know absolutely nothing about music. However, I enjoy listening to some kinds of music and Hawaiian guitar music really does

something for me. I love to hear that. And harp music is said to be something like that. David was called the sweet singer of Israel; he played the harp as he sang. This music is strong and overwhelming, powerful like a great waterfall, a great peal of thunder and at the same time sweet like a harp. Strong and sweet, the music of heaven. You can only read about it; when you get there it will thrill you. Well, this music is symbolic of course of the peace and the harmony and the beauty and the joy of heaven. And nobody could learn that song except the 144,000. You can't buy a record with it on, you have to sing it. And you can't sing it until you learn it, and you can't learn it unless you're one of those that has a right to learn it and is in a position to learn it, and that means the elect of God. How do you learn this song? This is a song of salvation. And you learn it by experiencing salvation. The person who is saved, who has come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, he is one of these 144,000 who has the seal of God in his forehead and he is one of those spoken of here as in heaven singing this song, having learned it through the experience that he went through coming out of dark into light and out of sin into divine grace, and he is a saved person and a Christian; he is one of the redeemed. Now verse 4 could be easily misunderstood. These are they which are the 144,000 which were not defiled because they are virgins. All through the Middle Ages through the Christian era there was a false idea around in the church that sex is wicked and marriage is defiling. And if you're really serious about being a Christian you take a vow of celibacy and become either a monk or a nun and never marry. St. Jerome, a good man who did some good things, said, "Men who have such relations with their wives are insulting their wives." This kind of a warped and twisted viewpoint was dominant until the start of the Reformation. It is certainly not found in the Bible. In the Bible sex is not treated as sinful, adultery is sinful, fornication is sinful, but sex is not treated as sinful. It's part of human life that God created to be used rightly and for His glory. And presently while some people may be called to be celibate, if somebody is going to be a missionary to the headhunters of Borneo, I would advise him not to get married and take his

wife and children with him to the headhunters of Borneo; this could be an unwise sort of a thing to do; it would be much better for him to be single and much more free and independent for him to do the things he has to do. But ordinarily the rule that God made is that it's not good for the man to be alone, I will make him a helper for him; and marriage is an ordinance of God to be used rightly according to the ordinance of God, and is not sinful. So this cannot be a reference here to sex relation. And if taken literally you would miss the proper meaning of it. There are very few commentators that have taken this literally, Henry Alford is one, but most of them say that this cannot be the meaning here. This idea that sex is sinful is foreign to the Bible, and this cannot be what this means. This refers not to godly sex relations in marriage, but it refers to fornication or adultery, especially the spiritual adultery, which is a common figure in the Bible. God is the husband of Israel, and when they go to worship false gods and idols, this is a kind of spiritual adultery, they are breaking their covenant and their marriage vows to God by worshipping false gods and idols. And this theme goes clear through the Bible, you find this over and over again in the Old Testament and also in the New. Now here in this chapter that we are dealing with, notice that the last verse that we read says that Babylon is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Now I take it here the reference is to spiritual adultery. It is falling for and yielding to the seductive wiles of Babylon. That's why the word fornication comes in here, an idolatrous devotion to the anti-God world system. And these 144,000 while they may have felt this temptation, have been enabled by grace to overcome this, so that Babylon has tried to seduce them but has failed to win them away from Jesus Christ. Now recall for a minute who the church's and Christians's great enemies are in the book of Revelation. There are four of them, and they appear with slightly different names here and there, but over and over again, these same four enemies. The first is the dragon, or Satan, and it doesn't require any argument to prove that he is an enemy of the church and the Christian people. Second, there's the beast, the wild beast out of the sea in Revelation 13, that takes up the meaning in general of an anti-Christian government; oppressors, anti-Christian persecuting government; totalitarianism, dictatorship, communism and fascism, you name it, they all fit this pattern. Wicked government, the beast. Third, the false prophet, or the second beast of Revelation 13, later called the false prophet. Anti-Christian religion, culture and education. The intellectual cultural and social sphere. Anti-Christian, presenting a rival system to that of God and Jesus Christ; and finally Babylon the great harlot, representing anti-Christian seduction. The powerful pull of the world that tries to pull people away by its attraction. As we come to a later chapter, chapter 18, it describes the multiple supermarket of Babylon, the wares that are offered to people, anything to appeal to them one way or another to try to draw them away from Jesus Christ.

The powerful pull of the world. Now there's an old hymn; we don't sing it in church, but I'd like to recall a line or two of it here. "Tell me the same old story, when you have cause to fear that this world's empty glory is costing me too dear. . . Yes, and when that world's glory is dawning on my soul, tell me the same old story, Christ Jesus makes thee whole." This world's empty glory is costing me too dear. There are some that will be taken captive by the beast, and some by the false prophet, and untold millions by Babylon the harlot who seduces them, by this world's empty glory so that something other than God becomes the center of their life. Now that I take it is the meaning of this here, the fourth verse. And it speaks of them as virgins as they have been enabled by grace to resist the seductions of Babylon. Babylon has not been able to sell them a bill of goods and draw them away from God, or from Jesus Christ. Now it also says they are first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. The interpretations of this are many. This is Jewish Christians, or this is a special class of Christians, all of which must be wrong because you see first fruits redeemed from among men. First fruits—not selected from among other Christians but from among men. That is, the first fruits is a class from among the total population of the world. Men, people as people have the mark of the beast, one way or another, but the first fruits, the 144,000 they have the name and seal of God. And so they are especially God's provision. Now this is brought out for us in the Old Testament in quite a number of places, but we might look at this one, Numbers chapter 18, the Law of the first fruits for the Old Testament people of Israel, verses 12 and 13. "And all the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine and of the wheat, the first fruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, shall be thine; them have I given thee. And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the Lord shall be thine; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it." Now the first fruits of the harvest, whatever it was, wheat or barley, was meant for God. And after the first fruits had been properly consecrated and given to God as an offering, then the People of Israel could use what was left. So this idea is dealt with here in Revelation. The first fruits of humanity are the elect and redeemed, the 144,000 those who have the seal of God in their foreheads, who belong to him. And the rest of humanity, they are left in their sin have in one way or another taken the mark of the beast. Now it says they are without guile, without fault; and in their mouths is found no guile. Do you have to be perfect to get to heaven? Now when you get to heaven you will be without fault before the throne of God and in your mouth will be no guile. This doesn't mean you never had any fault or never had any guile or never said anything you shouldn't have said. There's only been one person in history that never sinned, and that was Jesus Christ. The greatest saints and heroes in the Bible, the Bible pictures their sins, Abraham told some lies, Noah got drunk, etc. But you see they have been redeemed from this and it will be just as if they have never done anything wrong.

LESSON 64

THE SONG OF THE 144,000, continued, Revelation 14:1-20

Justified means “just as if I’d.” It means God says you’re justified—the supreme court of the universe says you’re perfect. That past record, you cross off, it doesn’t count anymore, just as if I’d never sinned and never done wrong. So when these people are spoken of here being in the great victory of heaven, they are without fault before the throne of God, and in their mouth is found no guile; they were not this way by nature, nobody is, except Jesus, but they have become this way by the saving grace of God. Now to finish quickly here. Verses 6 and 7, another angel flies in the midst of heaven delivering a special delivery message to the people of this world, you’d better repent while you can still do it. You’d better repent: it is addressed to everyone, to people of the world, every nation and kindred, and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, this is no gentle suggestion, this is a loud crying call to repent. “Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come”: the judgment of God which will be according to truth is imminent. It isn’t going to be postponed forever. It is going to come and here we have this symbolic representation of this, the people of the world are told they’d better repent, and turn back to God and worship the one who is really worthy of worship, who created heaven and earth and the seas and the fountains of waters and so on. And then last of all, in verse 8 here, Babylon is fallen; there’s much more about the fall of Babylon later in this book; of course the overall view of interpretation of this suggests how you understand this meaning. Those who hold that Babylon is the Roman Catholic church will be unable to share the view that I’m putting out here about what Babylon stands for. I think that, I don’t intend to become a Roman Catholic or anything, but I think that Babylon is a broader conflict than that. It stands for one of the four great enemies of Christ and his church, it stands for seduction, the attractiveness, the pull, and the glitter and the glamour of this world’s glory. And this is going to crash with a terrible crash, and we’ll read about it in chapter 18, the commerce and the trade and the wealth and the buildup and everything that was all based on human achievement and glory without God, and God doesn’t even get counted in at all; all is going to crash in ruin, and this is spoken of in the past tense as something that is bound to happen, as Isaiah speaks of in chapter 53, written 700 years before the birth of Jesus, he speaks of his crucifixion and burial in the past tense, as if it had already happened, and so in the purpose of God it will be an absolute certainty.

Now we covered the first 8 verses of this chapter, and we noted that the dragon, which is Satan of course, or the devil, has three allies that he has enlisted in his service to do his wicked work in this world. The beast, the false prophet, and Babylon. That is the first beast, the wild beast out of the sea, the first of his allies; the second is the second beast out of the earth, later called

the false prophet in Revelation, and thirdly, Babylon the great city with its wonderful things; standing for first, anti-Christian government persecuting and anti-God government. Second, an anti-God cultural, educational, and religious world-view or system. The second beast or the false prophet from the earth you see, works right along with the first beast and does his work for him. And finally Babylon, which is taken to stand for anti-Christian seduction. The pull of the world I mentioned this world’s empty glory, which is costing me too dear. And you read later the description of Babylon in chapter 17 and 18 where Babylon is destroyed and the emphasis is on the wealth and the luxury and the glitter and the pomp and the splendor of a thousand kinds of consumer goods and so forth. They love it too much, and so they sell their souls to get it. Now here we have a preview of the fall of Babylon in the last verse, the fall of Babylon as decreed by God and spoken of therefore as if it had already happened, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. This is spiritual adultery. This is giving your love and your devotion and your affection to the world instead of to God; that’s Babylon. Now here in this I want to call attention to one phrase in verse 6, “Them that dwell on the earth, every nation, kindred, tongue and people.” In the Greek this is them that sit on the earth. It isn’t simply inhabitants or dwellers; the word means to sit down. Those that sit on the earth. Now you know somebody comes to your house to sell you something and they stand at the door. But if they get inside and sit down they’re likely to stay quite a while. Jehovah’s Witnesses, or the Mormons, if you let them in and they sit down, they’re going to be there a while and make themselves feel quite at home. And this indicates those who are satisfied with the world system as it is in its darkness and unbelief. To sit on the earth. Lot moved to Sodom; that righteous man, you know, a nephew of Abraham, who vexed his righteous soul from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked, but he never vexed it quite enough to move away from there. He sat down in Sodom and bought him a house. Now this word I take it is suggestive of that here. This warning here is to those that not just dwell on the earth; that includes Christians, too; but those who sit on the earth, that is those who are settled. And settled down in their complacent acceptance of a world-system that is really against God. And in verse 9, the third angel. I get mixed up with the angels in this chapter, and I think this is part of the apparatus of the drama here. You don’t need to find the theological meaning for each separate angel. But just to run down these angels a little bit here, verse 6, another angel, and then verse 8, another angel, and then in verse 9, the third angel, and you get down to verse 17, another angel, and then verse 18 another angel. So this could confuse you a little; however, I don’t think each of these

angels stands for some distinct theological or religious idea; these are ways of introducing God's warnings and his announcements to this world, or to the people of the world whether Christians or others. The third angel here, verse 9, announces the inevitable doom of those who worship the beast. These who sit in the world, those who identify with and are satisfied with a world-system that at best leaves God out and is against God. This is the announcement. The third angel; anybody that is at peace with and comes to terms with and plays the game of the beast and gets his mark who is settled in this, his doom is announced to be at hand. Those who are attached to the world with an idolatrous attachment are going to perish with the world. Now you know Paul the apostle at one place in his epistles speaks of covetousness, which is idolatry. What is covetousness? You are wanting so much that God hasn't given you that it destroys your peace of mind, that you might even do something that's wrong to try and get it. That's coveting. Paul says that was the commandment that punctured his self-righteousness and slew him. So he came to see himself as a sinner. Now covetousness he says is idolatry. The person who is so in love with this world, with its things and benefits and its improvements that you simply have to have those things is an idolater. He is giving his supreme devotion in life to something other than God. The idolatrous love of the world, that involves setting your heart on it. Jesus said "Set your affection on things above; where your treasure is there your heart will be also." Somebody said, "You know you can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead." This is possible; you can send it on ahead but you can't take it with you. Now it says here that those who are identified with the beast and Babylon and so on shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation and so on. Without mixture. Unmixed, undiluted. Now the word wrath is out of fashion in religious circles today. Jonathan Edwards back in the middle of the 1700's still had the courage to preach a sermon on "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." And the Holy Spirit used it to get people converted. You don't hear many sermons about the wrath of God, which is supposed to be an outmoded idea that has been replaced by the idea of the love of God. Now I think we should realize this is part of what's the matter with modern religion. It has a one-sided view of God that does not do justice to his righteousness and his holiness. The Bible speaks many times of the wrath of God, wrath. This does not mean what we mean about getting mad, petulant loss of temper. God could not possibly do that. This refers to an absolutely holy reaction against that which is the opposite of God's holiness. Now God can do anything that's in the sphere of power but he cannot deny himself. And if God did not react with righteous indignation and rejection against sin and wickedness, he would not be God. This is part of being God, this is inseparable from the nature of God. Therefore, God's wrath is part of his nature. It is a deliberate, unavoidable, determined reaction of God, against the opposite of his holiness. The wrath of God. And this is spoken of in the

Bible as coordinated with the love of God. God is a God of wrath and also a God of love, and you cannot leave out either of those, neither can you treat them as if one of those was a subdivision of the other. The New England theology of a hundred years ago or a little more, tried to make the wrath of God an application of His love, and held that God is only love. Only love, therefore the only reason God ever punishes anybody is because He loves them. Now a parent disciplines a child out of love, but God can see and punishes people out of justice and you cannot reconcile the idea of hell or eternal punishment with the idea that God is nothing but love. These are equally ultimate; it is as true to say that God is the God of wrath as God is the God of love. Now I think we can sort this out a little further in our minds. It says without mixture. There is no such thing in this world as the wrath of God without mixture. There is always a door of mercy alongside of it. You name the wickedest person you can think of; that person still has working in him some flickers and remains at least of the knowledge of goodness and of God. It's called common grace, if you wish, which is apart from the salvation from God; in this world God's wrath and his love come upon everybody, including us Christians. The wrath of God and the love of God, and in the world to come people will be separated out, and they will be finished products and there will be heaven where there is no wrath, and there will be hell where there is no love, and everything will be separated out, but you see in this world they are still mixed up, so you can say here's a wicked man, he isn't a Christian, a great sinner. Still it is true in this world that God loves this person, but also is angry with him. God is angry with the wicked everyday, and as for us Christians of course God loves us, but it is also true that God is righteously displeased with our sins and that's just another way of saying he's angry or his wrath rests upon us, or his displeasure on account of our sins. Now look in the case of a person who is going to go to heaven, who is one of God's elect or one of God's children, in this present life love and wrath both rest upon him, but the wrath is going to be temporary and the love is going to be eternal. And he will reach the place where there's only love and no wrath, there's nothing left in him for God to be displeased with, you see. On the other hand a wicked person who is going to hell in the end while he is still alive in this world there is a true sense in which you could say the love of God rests upon him. God is still pleading with him to repent and also of course the wrath of God rests on him on account of his sins. But he's going to hell in the end, and when he gets there he will find that the wrath is eternal and the love was temporary. The love might have been eternal but he rejected it, the love was temporary and the wrath will be eternal. So it will be without mixture. In this world nobody is absolutely wicked. Total depravity doesn't mean anybody is as wicked as he could become. It means there's no part of him that isn't damaged by sin. And there is nobody who couldn't become worse, there's nobody in this world who is as bad as he will be when he gets to hell.

LESSON 65
THE SONG OF THE 144,000, continued, Revelation 14:1-20

You see in this world it's always with mixture, there's wrath but there's always a prospect of mercy with it. A good thing for us that it's so, too. But in eternity, which we have pictured here in vision, these people who have chosen Babylon and the beast and the anti-God system and loved it; that's what they wanted and what they decided and chose and lived with and sat down in, and in the end the wrath of God is going to come upon them without mixture. Just wrath and no love. Now when the judgment day comes, the day of grace will be passed, people will be objects of wrath only. In heaven there is no wrath, and in hell there's nothing but wrath. Now the terribleness of hell is pictured here in symbolic language. Hell is the fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and therefore this fire could hardly mean literal fire like you could start by lighting a match. This however does not mean that it isn't something unspeakably dreadful. When we say that hell, and heaven too, are described in symbolic language this is not intended to draw out and remove the reality from it, but only to say that human language can't express what the real reality will be. Similarly the Bible has a hard time describing heaven for us. It describes it first in negatives, no death, no pain, no sin; all these things won't be in heaven; and then when it comes to the positive side it has to fall back on metaphors: streets of gold, gates of pearl, and so forth, all of this metaphorical or figurative language, meaning that beauty and the joy and the peace of heaven will be beyond the power of human words in this life describe. Now this isn't about heaven here; this is about hell. The terribleness is pictured in figures of speech or symbols, fire and brimstone, and they shall suffer and not rest day or night, chapter 14 verse 11, forever and ever. I remember hearing Dr. Clarence Macartney once preach on hell. Macartney was a faithful man, and he preached on it on the radio from Philadelphia. And he said he did not preach on this subject from choice or because he enjoyed doing this but because he felt it his duty as a Christian minister to preach what the Bible teaches about hell. It was a moving and powerful sermon, I can assure you; all his sermons were. But you see it's not a popular subject, it isn't a pleasant subject, it's something we don't like even to think about, and yet it is scriptural; there it is in the Word of God. Dr. Macartney didn't invent it, and neither did I; it's in the inspired Word of Scripture. The subject is not popular but it is true.

This is followed here by the justice of this judgment. It says they shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. Now don't take that too literally; this doesn't mean that Jesus and the holy angels have a grandstand seat to watch the sufferings of the damned and lost in hell; but this implies that the judgment is so obviously and transparently righteous and just that Christ and the holy angels cannot do anything else than approve of it. It is just, and it is necessary because of the justice of

God; that is, I take it, the meaning of this. The idea that some people have expressed that they couldn't ever be happy in heaven if they knew there was anybody in the other place, is not a Scriptural idea. Christ and the holy angels here are pictured as joining in with approval, in the eternal punishment of the wicked in hell. Now in C. S. Lewis' book, *Till We Have Faces*, Orual, Queen of Glome, had a vision of the Lord and rejected it; once more she sees him in a mysterious vision, towering above her. And she said, "He looked on me with a look of measureless rejection," that seemed to banish me from his presence to the very ends of the earth; that anything would have been more endurable than the look on His face. The only beauty there is and yet measureless rejection. Now that matches up with the words of Jesus who said in the Gospel of Matthew, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Now notice 14, verse 12, Here is the patience of the saints. Not meaning that the saints can take pleasure in the damnation of the wicked but they can take comfort when they think of the eternal outcomes of life. You can take some comfort from the fact that if you are in Christ, you're going to heaven, and all your troubles are going to come to an end and be followed by eternal glory, joy and comfort in the presence of God. And those who today scorn and scoff at Christians and persecute them and treat them unjustly are going to hell, and not because we're going to send them there, but because God is going to send them there. And this we are told is the patience of the saints. This can fortify a person to endure pretty nearly anything in this present life. When you stop and think, what is the outcome going to be, what is this going to be when we see the finished product. Did I tell you in this class about my little story about how they weave carpets in China? Well, this is an illustration from real life; they make some beautiful rugs, or at least they used to, and the weavers sat on a long bench before an upright loom somewhat like a quilting frame, only it's bigger. You come in and watch them, they're weaving different colored yarn in and out and in and out, and it looks absolutely confused, with no beauty or order to it. But if anybody would say that they would forget two things; in the first place, the carpet isn't finished yet, and in the second place they're looking at what's going to be the underside. You have to walk around the loom to the other side to see what will be the surface side when it's finished, and that certainly has a pattern, you can even begin to see it before it's finished. But it isn't finished yet. Who pronounces judgment on an artist's work before the artist has finished his work? Here we are halfway through in the grass roots of history and it's hard for us to see the righteousness of some things that God does, partly because it isn't finished yet. And when we look back on it from the vantage point of eternity and see this present life and world history as a finished

product, we are going to say as Abraham Lincoln said in quoting from Scripture, the Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. We are told, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit. You see it's just been talking about the awfulness of hell; now on the other hand those who go to heaven are blessed. And they have a state of rest from their labors, because they die in the Lord. And their works do follow them, that last verse, and it not absolutely clear; there is some difference of opinion about what that means but probably the works that they did that God by his grace enabled them to do, the good works in this life are not simply lost or forgotten but God will remember those and they will get their reward for those when the awards are given out; their works do follow them. To the Christian, death is not what the world thinks it is. It brings relief and rest and comfort at last, and finally a reward for works done in the name of Christ. Now verse 14, a white cloud; white here surely stands for holiness, the holiness of God which is the common meaning of it in the Bible, and clouds are judgment. So here is righteous judgment coming like a white cloud. And then it says one sat on the cloud like unto the Son of man. This is a title which Jesus habitually used for himself and this is often misunderstood. I have heard sermons that say Jesus is not only the son of God but also the son of man, making this a correlative with Son of God, one being His divinity and the other His humanity. Now that's a very attractive and a very neat little formula; the only trouble is it doesn't ring true to the usage of this in Scripture. The connections of this title, Son of Man, are not with Christ's lowly state of humiliation, but with his glory at the judgment day. This is almost certainly taken by Jesus from the book of Daniel chapter 7 verse 13. Daniel saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven; you notice the allusion to the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of Days; this would be God the Father, of course, and they

brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, and all people, nations, and languages shall serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. The associations of this are with Christ's glory and not with his humiliation. And it has something like the meaning of the phrase "the second Adam." Adam was the representative man who was placed by God in a test situation and failed, and then Christ comes again as the second Adam and picks it up and succeeds, and thereby achieves this reward of glory and so on. Now this raises the further question, why did Jesus use this? It was a title known by the Jews in Jesus' day as the title of the Messiah. Son of man. They got it out of Daniel and other places in the Old Testament, but this was not the common one; the common title for the Messiah among the Jews of Jesus' day which was "Son of David." And Jesus avoided it, not quite but almost exclusively. And we can only surmise why, but probably because in Jesus' day this title "Son of David" had collected to itself a whole complex of political associations. When the Jews of Jesus' day said "Son of David" they thought of a nationalistic and political leader who would make their country politically independent and great again in a nationalistic and worldly sense. And of course this was not what Jesus came to do, at least not right then, and so to avoid the images that this title "Son of David" called up with the people of his day Jesus usually avoided it. Of course this was their mistake, but all the same when they heard "Son of David" this is what they thought of. Even the twelve disciples had this idea for a while, apparently. So Jesus apparently with deliberation avoided this title and used the other term "Son of man" which did not have any of these military and nationalistic ideas about their conditions right then and there connected with it. Now, this one is the second Adam, then, or the Messiah, Christ.

LESSON 66

REVELATION CHAPTER 14, continued

And he had a gold crown. There were two Greek words for crown, stephanos and diadem. This is the stephanos, the victor's crown. This is what winners of the Olympic games in ancient Greece used to get, the stephanos, a crown or garland of victory. This is followed by a description here of a double harvest of the earth. This is somewhat confusing; it speaks of an angel speaking to the "Son of man" here, Thrust in thy sharp sickle and reap the earth. And then a little later it speaks of another angel also having a sharp sickle and reaping the earth. So you have a double scene of the judgment day here at the end of this chapter. A double harvest of the earth, and I don't know if I can remove the difficulty from this completely, but what seems to be the idea here is that while the judgment here in the Bible is a single event or complex of events happening at one time, in visions such as this they

can be spread out. You see sometimes a picture of an automobile engine exploded out, so that all the parts are a distance away from each other and you can figure out how they work. An exploded diagram. But in the same way the judgment here, as in many places in the Bible, is spoken of as a single event, but here sort of taken apart a little bit. And we have first the judgment of Christians, the first fruits, the real people of God, and then of the wicked, spoken of. This doesn't mean a thousand years between them, or anything like that at all, it probably has nothing to do with time; this is in order to clear the idea for us. Now it says here in verse 15 the time for the harvest of the earth is ripe. God has a timetable and it is being followed, and it's going to be followed and when the time comes things are going to happen. And time is ripe, God has His timetable. Now the second part of this judgment, 18-20, evidently con-

cerns the wicked, not Christians. The great winepress, the human race, and the grapes are the individual unbelievers, and the second angel here with the sharp sickle reaps the harvest of the grapes and they are put into the great winepress of the wrath of God. In Palestine this was a small operation I believe, they put these grapes in a vat or container and somebody (I hope they washed their feet before they went in) went in their barefeet and walked around and tramped and tramped and this squeezed the juice out of the grapes, and this finally ran out of the little drain at the side of the container. This one spoken of here is a tremendous winepress, there never was one in Palestine as big as this one, and they used horses to tread out of the grapes of this one here. So it's being trodden out by horses, the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, that is outside. When Jesus was crucified, and he was put outside, his enemies were inside, so when the judgment comes in the real holy city of Jerusalem God's children are going to be inside and the wicked are going to be on the outside. We read another place, the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Sixteen hundred furlongs. Four is the number of the earth, and ten is the number of completeness and sixteen hundred is four times four times ten times ten. This means the absolute and definitive and complete and final eternal judgment of God.

REVELATION CHAPTER 15

Chapter 14 at the end brought us down to the wind-up of world history at the judgment day. The winepress trodden and the wrath of God and so forth, the earth reaped with a sickle. Now chapters 15 and 16 which really are a unit and go together, go back and give another series of events which chronologically must parallel those that have gone before. If you think back a little bit over what we have studied in the book of Revelation, chapters 5, 6 and 7 were the seven seals. This was followed by chapters 8-11 which were the seven trumpets, announcing judgments on a world that rejects Christ and persecutes Christians. And chapters 12-14, the deeper conflict behind the scenes as well as openly in the world. Here you see not simply Roman emperors or other rulers mistreating Christians or rejecting the gospel, but here is the real source of the trouble. The dragon, which

is the devil, and his three helpers or allies, the beast, the false prophet and Babylon. Anti-Christian and humanistic government, anti-Christian and sub-Christian culture and religion and education, and the seductive pull of this world's empty glory. These are the helpers of the dragon and they do his dirty work in this world, and this was in chapters 12-14. Now in 15 and 16 comes a new series of seven bowls of God's wrath. The King James version says seven vials, which is quite misleading. You know you go get a doctor's prescription and he says go and get it filled and you get 30 little pills or capsules in a little plastic thing you can stick in your pocket, that's a vial. And it holds about two tablespoons of something, the capacity isn't very impressive, of course it depends on what's in it or what it may do to you. But bowls, these are not just some little trifle of God's wrath, these are a big heavy load of it being poured out on people and the world, and the word should be translated bowls instead of vials. Now impenitence hardens people and brings greater wrath upon them. Nobody ever is brought face to face with his responsibility to God and the gospel of Christ and remains the same afterwards. We are either softened or we are further hardened. We are either brought closer to God or we are hardened and become more confirmed in sin and wickedness. And of course people who do not repent and they do not believe, and do not become Christians, and are not born again of the Holy Spirit, the confrontation with God either in the form of grace or judgment only hardens them, they become increasingly resistant. So impenitence long continued brings these people greater wrath from God. Now here we have introduced, it says the seven last plagues; notice that word last. Verse 1 here, seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God. That is last until the absolute wrath comes, the end of world history at the judgment day. This is the last that God has to visit upon the wicked people, until the absolute visitation which will cast them into hell. The seven last plagues. This is emphasized here, these are the last and they will fill up, the wrath of God. Everything before this was partial and there was some hope of repentance left, but here we find what God is doing and constantly does and will do to that large portion of humanity that has passed the point of no return and only rejects His gospel, His Son and His love and His grace.

LESSON 67

THE SEVEN ANGELS WITH THE LAST PLAGUES, Revelation 15

Chapter 14 verse 20 brings us to the judgment day, and if you turn ahead a little and get to the end of chapter 16 you have this same thing happening again. It goes through a series of things here, and comes again to a scene of final judgment. Chapter 16, verse 17, the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air: and there was a loud voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. It is finished. And this is followed by terrifying phenomena, one thing after another

here; the scene is obviously a figurative or metaphorical picturing of the ultimate judgment of God. Now, the trumpets that we had before, chapters 8-11, warned, and bowls are poured out. A trumpet is not in itself simply a visitation of a punishment or wrath upon people; it is also a warning. The trumpet is blown to warn people, you can see that many times in the Bible, in the Old Testament and the New. Trumpets warn and bowls are poured out. There's nothing in the way of warning

about a bowl or something being poured out or something being poured out on somebody. Bowls are poured out. Now I take it, following Dr. Hendriksen and others, that chapters 15 and 16 parallel the different series that we have had before. This is called the principle of progressive parallelism, or recapitulation; the book goes back over the same ground again, first the seven seals and the seven trumpets and now the seven bowls. And, still, according to Hendriksen, this applies more closely and more obviously, although not more truly, to the latter part of world history, as the end of things finally approaches. That is, it becomes increasingly visible in the world, and evident that this is how the world really is, and is going to be as Christ's second coming draws nearer. But it applies also, so he holds, and I think correctly and soundly, to the entire period from the crucifixion of Christ to the end of the world.

There is a comparison that we might note between the beginning of this chapter and the beginning of chapter 12. At the beginning of chapter 12, verse 1, it says, There appeared a great wonder in heaven. This was the radiant woman and her child. The woman is the covenant people of God, and the child, Jesus, a great wonder in heaven. And then chapter 12 verse 3, there appeared another wonder in heaven, this is the great red dragon, the enemy of the radiant woman and her child. So there were two great wonders in heaven that John saw. Now the third, at the beginning of chapter 15: I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous. Marvellous of course means a wonder, so this is practically saying the same thing, in English at least, in slightly different words. So this is the third wonderful sign in heaven. This also would seem to indicate that this chapter 15, and 16 which follows it, goes back and parallels chapters 12-14 that we just finished with. Now seven angels are introduced here. I don't think you can single these out and say what each of them stands for particularly, at least not yet. When we get into chapter 16 this can be done somewhat. Seven angels having the seven plagues which will fill up the wrath of God against a world that is against Him.

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire. Now you realize this is in a vision, glass mixed with fire. Did you ever see anything like that? Well, if you've been to the Corning glass works factory in Corning, New York, you may have seen something like this. Glass mixed with fire. I've seen something like this at the Corning Glass Works, but I don't think Revelation 15 is talking about the Corning company, though. But what does it mean? Of course in the first place you realize this is a vision. It isn't something seen in real life. And secondly it is a vision in symbolic form. This doesn't mean real glass and it doesn't mean real fire, but it stands for something. Glass mingled with fire. This is usually taken to mean that the fire stands for the destructive power of the judgments of God, their consuming power. We read in Scripture, Our God is a consuming fire. Those who reject his love finally come into his wrath. It is a consuming fire that destroys. And

glass is transparent. So here you have the consuming fire of God's judgment, mixed with something transparent, namely glass, which would be taken to mean, that the rightness, the justice and the righteousness of God's judgments will become increasingly and fully manifest. Now we live in a world that denies that God is just. That does not see the judgment of God in the things that are happening in the world, and either tries to explain them by chance or by lack of proper organization between nations or something like this, and does not see the hand of God and his righteous judgment in the calamities that come. Our forefathers were better able to see God's hand in the world. Abraham Lincoln at the time of the Civil War, made that famous statement about the bloodshed that was going to be involved, and finally said the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. That was Abraham Lincoln. But today we take it up in the security council of the United Nations, and don't say anything about the judgments of God being true and righteous altogether. We have gotten into a humanistic way of thinking. Like transparent glass, the outcome is going to be that even the wicked people will see God is righteous and God is just and they are wrong and God is right. The righteousness of God will be made manifest. In the end every knee will bow and every tongue confess that God is God, and that what he has done is right.

Now, those who have gained the victory over the beast and his whole system, stand on this sea or this lake of glass mingled with fire. They have gotten beyond all the troubles and hardships and afflictions and slanders of this world, and have gained the eternal victory, and here they are standing on this. They have gained the victory over the beast, over his image, over his mark and over the number of his name, in other words over the whole system that is against God in the world. Whenever and however and wherever it manifests itself, this system that sets man up against God and tries to be humanly independent or Satanically independent and puts God on the sidelines, these people have gained a victory over this, by grace, of course, not by their own achievements, but by the grace and love and mercy of God, they have gained the eternal victory over anti-Christian humanism and all its manifestations. I take it that is the reason for mentioning not merely the beast but his mark, and the number and the image, all mentioned here. The whole thing taken as a system that is anti-God in this world. These have gained the victory over this. And it says that they have harps of God, not just harps, but harps of God. And what's the difference between a harp and a harp of God? A harp is a harp, isn't it, a musical instrument; but harps of God, why should this little phrase "of God" be added in here? Perhaps to emphasize that these harps are not their own and what they have to say and do and their function in this drama in the book of Revelation is none of their own doing; it is from God. So the righteousness of God that they are celebrating with these harps is after all of God; it's no credit to man.

LESSON 68

THE SEVEN ANGELS WITH THE LAST PLAGUES, continued, Revelation 15:3-8

The harps of God are emphasized, in other words the God-centered character of this; and they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb. Now, what is the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb? You notice in the first place how careful, John, the writer of this, is to speak of Moses as the servant of God. This victory is the victory of the Son of God, the Lamb, not of Moses. Moses is only a servant; he did what God sent him to do and spoke what God sent him to speak, but none of the power was in Moses. This scene here strongly reminds us of the confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh over and over again back in the book of Exodus. God saved His people who were helpless to help themselves. That's what happened at the Exodus, and after it was over Moses composed a song and celebrated it; it is found in Exodus, chapter 15, verse 1. . . "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Now that was the song of Moses, which was all about what God had done. Not about what the Israelites had done, which was a pretty poor business on the whole, but it was about what God had done. And God gets the credit, and the glory redounds to his name, to God; that's the song of Moses. This also recalls the beginning of the ten Commandments: "I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." You notice the emphasis there; Israel was in a position to be a free people and start to keep the commandments of God only because of God by His almighty power had brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You have been in Egypt, or else maybe you're still there; Egypt stands for the domain of sin over people in the Bible. Maybe you've never been to the banks of the Nile or seen the sphinx or the pyramids, except in pictures, but if you are a sinner without Christ you're still living in the land of Egypt as the Bible uses the term. And if you are a Christian and in Jesus Christ, then you can say, God is the Lord who has delivered me and brought me out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And it was done by the power of God. The Israelites never could have done it themselves. An abject and motley collection of slaves, used to doing what the Egyptians told them to do. Now, this is a type of the redemption of Christ; the Bible so treats it. You see Egypt stands for sin, the Exodus under the leadership of Moses by the power of God with the ten plagues that fell on the land of Egypt stands for God's judgments on the wicked and his grace and deliverance to his own people; and the outcome, they got into the land of Canaan, the promised land, and there received an inheritance. All of this was on the earthly level, it was the literal land of Egypt that they got out of. They crossed the literal Red Sea where the Suez Canal is today, and got into the land of Palestine where the Israelis are running their country today. But this is a type,

an illustration of an idea on a lower plane which will be later realized in history sometime on a higher plane and in a fuller way. You have a type and an anti-type. Anti-type is what corresponds to or completes the type. And the redemption of God's people from Egypt is the type, and Moses is a type of Christ, Moses was a stand-in for Christ there, as their leader and redeemer out of Egypt, and the anti-type is Jesus Christ himself. The real and final redemption of God's people, from not just Pharaoh king of Egypt, but from the dragon and the beast and the mark of the beast and the whole business, the whole system that is contrary to God.

The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. I think highly of Moses. I have said many times to classes in Geneva: I will defend this proposition if called upon to do so, that the world owes more to Moses than to all the Greek philosophers put together. Even apart from religion, the world owes more to Moses than to all the Greek philosophers put together. Of course, Moses' function in the religious system of the Bible is the main thing. This man towers above the Old Testament like a lone pine tree on a mountain top. There's nobody like Moses in the Old Testament. And God spoke to him face to face as He did not to anyone else. This man is a spiritual giant, and while he was a sinner as we are, with his faults and his failings, he is considered to be a type or pre-view of Jesus Christ who is the Lamb. So we have here the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, and notice the care with which John calls Moses a servant; he isn't one of the main characters here. Now it is Christ that really wins the victory. These people singing their song of Moses and of the Lamb give all the credit to God. Verse 3. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Now are we Christians ever tempted to question the justice of God? And the fairness of God? Do we ever complain that God isn't treating us right? We should have had a better break than what we got? Did you ever talk like that yourselves? Alright, when we get to the point where these people who have gained the victory are, we won't be complaining objecting against the justice of God anymore. We will say like they said, "Just and true are thy ways, thou king of Saints." The justice of God will be acknowledged and we will see it and realize it and be convinced of it, and no longer doubt it or question it. Now, it says all nations, verse 4, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." In the end, before or at the time when God's work is finished it is going to be manifest, that what has happened in the world, especially the calamity and the evils that have happened, are the hand of God. And that back of them is moral law, these are not chances or coincidences or unfortunate growing pains of humanity, but that this hand of God is guided

by consideration of what is right and wrong. Moral law is going to be manifested. Now, throughout human history, these things have happened, and they are increasingly happening today, and man cannot prevent them. They come, and they will come anyway. There are some things that are obviously beyond human control. Is that right? You can try to build a building that an earthquake shock won't knock over; the tallest man-made structure in the world is a television antenna in Tokyo; the Japanese are very proud of it; nobody can live there, it's just a steel tower for a television antenna, but they also keep their fingers crossed, and hope that an earthquake will not change it from vertical to horizontal some day, as indeed might happen. Some things we recognize are beyond human control; still the unbelieving world attributes them to chance, and does not see in them the providence or the hand of God.

The next thing we see here: "I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." This reverts back to the scenery and the imagery of the tabernacle made by the people of Israel in the wilderness after they got out of Egypt. You know they had plenty of time, and practically no appointments to keep except funerals to go to, many of them; but among other things, they used much of the costly material that they had collected on leaving Egypt, gold and fine ribbon and so on to build this tabernacle for God, according to instructions given by God to Moses. And you recall the tabernacle is quite different from anything we would think of as a church. I don't think you'd call it a church if you had to stand outside in the street during the entire service, and only the preacher, and a couple of elders could go in. You would hardly think of a church like that. The tabernacle was like that. The people stood outside, and only the priests went in, and it was rectangular, two rooms, one of which was twice as big as the other; the smaller room was the holy of holies or the most holy place; its length, width and height were equal, and that was cut off from the other part by a heavy veil like a very heavy velvet stage curtain or something like that. And into the part behind that only the high priest was allowed to enter, and he only on one day of the year, and in there was kept the ark of the covenant. This gold covered box, a little less than two feet long, it wasn't very big, but in this were the original tablets of the Ten Commandments, and Aaron's rod that budded and a pot of manna that had been saved as a historical exhibit; and above it the cherubim with their wings spread representing the throne of God; here is the throne of God among his people, peacefully dwelling among them, on the basis of a blood sacrifice to cancel sin, that God had accepted. The high priest dared not go in there without the blood of the sacrifice which he took in and sprinkled on the mercy seat, another object that was in that inner room. And we read that the glory of God filled the place, some supernatural light. But anyway, without the blood he could not go in there, so this represents God reconciled to his people, on the basis of an atonement which was satisfactory, so that he could live peacefully among them without being moved to wrath against them on ac-

count of their sins. Now, that is the symbolism of the Old Testament tabernacle. Solomon's temple was built on the same plan but all the dimensions were doubled, so it was twice as large but still on the same plan. The people stood outside, the high priest representing Christ of course went in and sprinkled the blood and then he came out again and pronounced a blessing upon the people, and sin is atoned for, and this is acted out in pagan form in the tabernacle; it is the heart of the Old Testament religion; you see without shedding the blood, there is no remission. And here in this vision in Revelation, the tabernacle is seen in heaven. It isn't the same one of course, this is a vision here, but he sees a tabernacle like the one that was in Moses' day, in his vision in heaven, and it is open. This is where the ark and the mercy seat would be in the Old Testament tabernacle. This is open, in the Old Testament it was always kept closed. Now it is opened, and what could have been the fountainhead of forgiving love and mercy is opened and it is shown that it produces only wrath and judgment on the impenitent in the end. Now, we face God either as our Saviour or as our judge. Those who will not have Jesus Christ as their Saviour are going to have Him in the end as their judge. There is no neutral territory or middle ground between the two, we either have Christ as Saviour or we have Christ as judge. And here we have a scheme where salvation has been rejected by the people spoken of here, not by Christians of course, but by wicked people. Did you ever hear of anybody sinning away their day of grace? Is there such a thing as doing this? What does the Bible mean by the so-called unpardonable sin? I don't think that phrase occurs in Scripture but what is commonly described in that way. This is resisting the Holy Spirit and the gospel past the point of no return. God finally punishes sin by letting the sinner alone. And when he is let alone he only becomes more so. God hardened Pharaoh's heart not by cutting it open and pouring cement in, but by letting him alone. Withholding further influences of the Holy Spirit, and he became hardened more and more. Why do these space capsules we shoot toward the moon keep moving? Those things keep on going because there's nothing up there to stop them. Once they get out of the earth's gravitational sphere they don't need any power except just an occasional little kick to get the course straight. They keep on going because there's nothing up there to stop them. Well, a sinner who has been abandoned by the Holy Spirit, it doesn't take anything special to keep him from getting worse and worse. But certainly there is such a thing, and certainly Scripture pictures the world scene as looked at from one angle. The wicked people of the world as increasingly hardening themselves against the mercy of God and against his judgment. The tabernacle and the ark of the covenant are here seen open and the mercy seat invisible and yet the world doesn't believe it and the world does not want it. Now it says, these angels, in verse 6, the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, you recall the ten plagues that were visited on the land of Egypt which was visited because of hardened impenitence. Pharaoh's heart was hardened; it says God

hardened his heart but before that it says Pharaoh hardened his own heart; Pharaoh started the hardening process. Now notice angels are spirits but if you're going to see them in a vision, they have to have some kind of appearance that you can see. So John sees these seven angels clothed in pure and white linen. This stands for moral purity and righteousness. And girded with golden girdles, and they're given seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who liveth forever and ever. Dr. Hendriksen comments in the first place that the bowls are made of gold. This indicates they are of God and used in His service, gold being the most precious and the finest of materials for this kind of thing. Seven bowls made of gold. Secondly, they are full of the wrath of God, not half full or three quarters full but completely full: this is the ultimate. This is where God is finally pouring it out on a world that rejects him; and thirdly, who liveth for ever and ever. So the ultimate is eternal punishment. Now every time a hardened sinner who has rejected God all his life dies and goes to hell you could say he comes in for the bowl full of the wrath of God who liveth for ever and ever. The fact is that God lives for ever and ever, the God of eternal salvation and the God of eternal wrath. Now it says also, the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power. This occurs repeatedly in the Old Testament. Not smoke made by burning leaves in your backyard or something like this, but from the power of God; it is a form of theophany. You recall the Israelites as they were in the act of escaping from Egypt were pursued by the Egyptians, and they panicked for a while, but there was the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. This was a theophany. It indicates the presence and at the same time concealed the presence of God. There's nothing here to satisfy curiosity or prying eyes; and on the other hand, it convinced the believing Israelites that God was with them, he had not left them on their own. To the

Egyptians it was an impenetrable smoke screen, that they couldn't see past, and to the Israelites it was a faint or a radiant glow indicating the presence of God. And when they were in their worst panic the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire moved around from being in front of them to being behind them so it was between their camp and the Egyptians. So that the manifestation of God, you could say, was between them and danger. This cloud or smoke, which I think is the same thing, indicated the absolute presence of God on behalf of his people. Still later when Solomon dedicated the temple, the glory of God and this cloud filled the temple and for a while the priests couldn't even go in. So you read here, the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power; this indicates the activity and presence and power of God and nobody was able to enter the temple. Hendriksen draws an inference from this; I'm not completely convinced of it, but I'll pass it on to you, that this indicates you see the priests went in there to intercede for the people, they went in there to pray for the people, that God would forgive them, and so on, and here nobody entered the temple, while these plagues are going on; that this means a point of no return has been passed, that intercession is no longer possible, that repentance is no longer possible, that these people are only under judgment because of their rejection of God. Three times God said to Jeremiah to stop praying for the people of Judah. Now let me tell you, when anyone gets to the point where God tells one of his servants to quit praying for him, he is in a bad way. I don't really think God wanted Jeremiah to quit praying; I think this is a way of emphasizing the terrible seriousness of the situation. But here nobody even entered the tabernacle. No priest went in there to pray for anybody; it is only judgment and not grace at this point.

LESSON 69

THE BOWLS OF WRATH Poured OUT, Revelation 16

There are several things in this chapter that we could note in particular. I put a general theme for this chapter on the blackboard there, the seven bowls of God's righteous wrath poured out on a wicked, impenitent and unbelieving world. Toward the end of this chapter comes this fascinating question, at least to me, What is the battle of Armageddon, and when is it fought? Now one thing we should notice to begin with here, is the finality of these plagues and their totality. These things that are mentioned in here; in chapter 15, verse 1, it says these seven angels had the seven last plagues, the last, for in them is filled up the wrath of God; and then again in chapter 16 we read in verse 17, "there came a great voice of the temple of heaven from the throne saying, It is done." So there's a note of something being finished here, a finality. Also we read in chapter 16, verse 3, the sea and the waters became as blood and every living soul died in the sea. There was a similar prediction in an earlier part of the book and it said one third of those perished, in different categories of things, but one third.

But here everything. So here is the climax, this is the windup, this is where the unfinished business all gets finished, short of the judgment day and ending in it at the end of this chapter where we read of a scene which is surely a symbolic representation of the final judgment of God upon this world. Now also the things that happen in this chapter, all of which are unspeakably dreadful and terrible, come upon the wicked. You notice in verse 2, of chapter 16, it is a grievous sore, and so on, on those who have the mark of the beast, and upon those that worship his image, and while the same things may happen outwardly to Christians, the meaning of it and the intention of it in the mind of God and the real outcome of it is different for a Christian from a wicked person. There may be an airplane crash and everyone on board it gets killed, and some of these people who are killed are Christians and they go to heaven, and on others it is God's way of hurling them into hell, and finally telling them that their time is up and they've outlived their opportunity to repent, so the wrath that

is spoken of here to be understood as only coming on the wicked or non-Christians. If Christians ever suffer any of the pain or trouble of any of these things, it is not because God is angry with them or because they are objects of God's wrath, but because God is using this way to do them good in the end. All things work together for good for them that love God and are called according to his purpose. It seems to me that Paul wrote that in Romans chapter 8, verse 28, All things work together for good to them that love God, even though they may get drawn in to some of the calamities that the world suffers because the world is suffering wrath, still there is no wrath for a Christian. Christ cancelled out the wrath when he suffered and died for us on the cross. Now, with this introduction, one thing we may start with is the striking similarity of some of these judgments to some of the plagues in Egypt. Not completely identical, but very obviously reminiscent of the plagues in Egypt at the time of Moses. Notice here the waters become blood (verse 4). I don't suppose that the water in Moses' day became blood that the blood bank would accept; this is unlikely. But it looked like blood and was undrinkable or unusable for a while, and so here we read of the waters becoming blood. Secondly in the second verse here a great grievous sore comes upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and one of the plagues in Egypt was the plague of boils or ulcers that came upon the people and was a judgment or affliction sent by God; and then again in verse 10, there's a judgment of darkness here, the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast and his kingdom was full of darkness. And there was of course a plague of darkness in Egypt. If you recall in the early chapters of Exodus, in the land of Goshen where the people of Israel were there was light. Now don't ask me to explain it, Immanuel Velikovsky can explain it; I'm not sure of his explanations though. You know the trouble with him is he's not really a Bible-believing evangelical Christian, he's a scientific researcher, but in his book "Worlds in Collision" and then another one later, he claims that he can explain this plague of darkness in Egypt by astronomical events, a comet and so forth, a number of things. It's quite fascinating and the fact that some of the professors and authors that I know of are against him, increases his standing in my opinion. However, the whole thing, of course, is miraculous. God is the author of this; the people of Israel had the light, the people of Egypt had darkness. Again you see the distinction between God's people and the world that is coming under judgment here. Now, another idea; rather than taking this verse by verse I shall try to bring out the leading ideas. The judgments of God do not by themselves bring people to repentance. Twice in this chapter it says, verse 9, they repented not to give him glory. And again in verse 11, they repented not of their deeds, and the same thing is implied in later chapters, but these two verses state it right out specifically, they repented not, to give God glory and to turn from their wicked ways or from their deeds. Now you see this is true to life; we see this all the time. The judgments of God do not bring people to repent, on the contrary, the

wicked person who comes under the judgment of God which ought to lead him to repentance, blasphemes the name of God, and this again is a keynote of this chapter. Verse 9, they blasphemed the name of God, which had power over these plagues; verse 11, blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and again near the end, verse 21, men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for the plague thereof was exceeding great. This is the reaction of the unsaved and the unregenerated, the natural man who is in his sinful condition, to the judgments of God which are calculated to bring people face to face with moral reality. But there are those who will not be brought face to face with it. I have quoted C. S. Lewis to you before and I'll quote him again. God speaks to people in three ways. Conscience is God's whisper, Scripture is God's voice, and calamity is God's shout. And there's hardly anything but calamity in this chapter, one calamity after another. God is shouting the world down, and the shout is, repent before it is forever too late to repent; and the result? Of course there are Christians who take God seriously, but the result on the part of the people described in this chapter is hardening, blasphemy and continued impenitence. And we see this in the world today, this was true not only when John wrote this chapter way back there on the island of Patmos, but today. Calamity hits the world, and what do people say? They either say it was chance or it is the forces of nature. The city of Wilkes-Barre and that region, the Wyoming Valley of the Upper Susquehanna, the North branch of it, got hit so hard by Hurricane Agnes that it will take them years and years before they can recover. But who says this was an act of God? I took photos of a lot of the damage, not in the Wilkes-Barre area, but other northern counties in the state last summer; terrible. Just incalculable damage. But where do you see in newspapers or magazines or government announcements or in the media like radio or television, any recognition that God had anything to do with that, or that it could in any way be a judgment of God upon the wickedness of America? You take note of Hurricane Agnes, and say it will take a federal program to come up with so and so many billions, God bless America, land that I love. And who recognizes the righteousness of God in connection with a thing like that? And that's just one calamity that has hit our country in our own time. But this is the shout of God to the world, and in our own day and in our modern unbelief we no longer see the hand of God in calamity. And therefore we are shutting our ears, I don't mean this class is, I mean the American people in the modern world are, to what God has to say to them. The Lord is known by the judgments that he executes, as we read in one of the Psalms, but people say everytime a judgment happens, well, nature is going berserk, or it was an accident or a chance or something like this, one of these unpredictable freaks. Men no longer get the message, you see, that God has to speak about it. It's attributed to a blind and impersonal force that we cannot call us into account. And this is part of the evil of the modern secular view of the world that is becoming

so increasingly dominant in our time. We don't deny of course that the forces of nature have something to do with earthquakes and hurricanes. But who made nature? Who is back of nature? Is nature just an it or is it a he, who is back of it? And if God created nature and ultimately in his own way from behind the scenes controls it, then these calamities have something to say to people. And a world view which leaves God completely out of account, like somebody said, no psychologist believes in God excepts on Sundays and those are off the record and don't count; that's in Anthony Standen's little book, *Science is a Sacred Cow*. This is the kind of a view, you see, that you might just as well plug both your ears, as far as hearing the words of God as to what is happening. And that's the way the modern world is. So while trying to sort out the natural cause of calamity, people forget that behind the cause there is a reason for the calamity. Now you can say, Abraham Lincoln died because a bullet went through his head. That's the physiological cause of Lincoln's death, that would go in the coroner's report. But that doesn't explain the death of Lincoln. You have to give the reason, why

did anybody want to assassinate him? And this involves many other inquiries; there's a reason that is deeper than the cause. That is, if you believe in God there's a reason back of these things and you haven't explained it when you have simply explained the cause any more than the flood in Wilkes-Barre which was said to be caused by high water. You could equally well say the high water was caused by the flood. Now, I'm sure that there are many natural explanations to this, but God is behind nature, it does ultimately what He wants it to do, and therefore what was the reason for Hurricane Agnes or any other catastrophe that you want to mention?

Now the conflict between God and rebellious sinful humanity moves on toward its climax. This chapter indicates this. These things get more severe, and finally come to a head, and finally Babylon is stricken into pieces, it simply collapses before the people's eyes and you can see the same thing in the days of Moses, in the plagues of Egypt. Here are these plagues, there were ten of them; God put a pressure on Egypt; he said, "against all the gods of Egypt will execute judgment: I am the Lord."

LESSON 70

GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS, continued, Revelation 16

Incidentally it has been shown that every one of these plagues in Egypt was a bullseye hit on target of some feature of the idolatrous religion of Egypt. So it's not only Moses versus Pharaoh, and Israel versus the Egyptians, but God versus the false religion of Egypt, and of course, Satan was back of that. Now some of them were relatively mild, the disease of the cattle, and so forth, that hit them in their financial resources and so on, but the plagues move on and finally come to the tenth one, the death of the first-born. This hit Egypt where it really hurt, the death of the first-born, from Pharaoh down to the lowliest citizen of Egypt. And so it moved to a climax and the outcome of this was God in his almighty power brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, across the Red Sea into freedom, and victory, and it is celebrated there in the song of Moses. So the plagues moved toward a climax which results in a real showdown, and God is the victor, and the anti-God forces suffer an utter and dismal defeat. Now, this is true here in verses 12-16 of this chapter; we have the climax of all these bowls of wrath coming in what is called the battle of that great day of God almighty, that's in verse 14, the battle of Armageddon. And this hard fact, Armageddon is a place, it should be spelled Har-megiddo. This is the Greek spelling you have here. Har means mountain, and Megiddon is a place. On the coast of Palestine it goes up in a long gentle curve and then there's a bump on the coast. That's where Mount Carmel sticks out into the sea. And below that is the Kishon River that flows westward. And in this Carmel range there's one place where there's a low pass and you can get across that, and that's the pass of Megiddo. There was a city called the Pass of Megiddo; this was a saddle on the mountain,

a comparatively low spot, where you could get across, and the highway from Egypt to Babylon went across there. Across the pass of Megiddo, and this was a spot that was fought over and fought over countless times in ancient times. Many times in the Bible history and many times before that no doubt. A relatively small army at the pass of Megiddo could hold it against a much bigger force if they got there first. And so it was disputed and fought over and was a key strong point in the defense of the land of Canaan or Palestine. Har-megiddo or Armageddon is the mountain of Megiddo. The first place when this is described as a battle scene in the Bible is in the book of Judges. And this gives a clue, maybe, to the meaning of this in Revelation. I take it, the battle of Armageddon is not a great battle that's going to be fought between Soviet Russia and Eastern Germany or anything like that, but this is a battle if ever in history things get absolutely desperate for God's people, and then God in some amazing way delivers them from it. The storm that wrecked the Spanish Armada and saved the British Isles for a pure form of Christianity, you could say was comparable to the battle of Armageddon. Now this is Judges chapter 5, verses 19 and 20. Jabin king of Canaan, and Sisera his chief of staff, had an armored division, 900 chariots of iron, and the poor Israelites did not have any chariots at all, not even wooden ones; they went on foot to fight this army that had 900 chariots of iron. And they were helpless, Israel was helpless against Jabin King of Canaan, he was about to crush them, and finally the prophetess Deborah and her colleague Barak, fought the army of Sisera and Jabin, and defeated them utterly. This was the impossible, the unpredictable, the unbelievable, but it happened, and God did it. And we

read here Judges 5:19-22, "The kings came and fought; then fought the kings of Canaan in Taahach by the waters of Megiddo: they took no gain of money. They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength. Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the prancings, the prancings of their mighty ones." This was unbelievable, and yet it happened by the power of God. And we are even told that of the army of Sisera and Jabin in chapter 4 of Judges, verse 3, "And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." And verse 16 of chapter 4, "But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles; and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left." Now this is an amazing victory snatched out of the jaws of an apparently inevitable and utter defeat. And Israel never forgot it. Armageddon. This is what God did when things were really desperate. And so let's say this is the climax in Revelation here, not a literal battle to be fought by armies with guns against each other, but this is the battle between God's people and the anti-God forces that are crushing them. And this has happened time and again in history. I think, however, we can say that this is also accumulating and moving toward a climax and an even greater fulfillment in the future. Just as Christ can come many times and in many ways to some people but he is coming someday visibly in the clouds of heaven in person to execute judgment, so that conflict between Christianity and anti-Christianity is coming to a head. Now, whenever God's people have been in desperate states, and God has amazingly saved them, there's Armageddon. And yet the book of Revelation seems to predict a future repeat of this conflict on a greater and more final scale. And Hendriksen calls attention to several places that we might look at: chapter 11, verses 7-11, this is Satan's little season where he will do his utmost and will try to defeat the cause of God, but he will fail. And here's where the two witnesses were slain. And all the people all over the earth were making a holiday over this and so forth, giving gifts to one another, verse 10, because these two prophets had tormented them dwelt on the earth. But after three and a half days life came into them and they ascended into heaven and their enemies were helpless to prevent it. Now this would be where Satan had a little field day there, when people are sending gifts to each other. But it doesn't last very long, described here as three and a half days. Just a little season. Another place that it seems to be mentioned or something very similar to it, chapter 19 of this book that we haven't got to yet, from verse 11, "and I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him (Christ) was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a

vesture dipped in blood; (not his own blood, but the blood of his enemies) and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses," and so on. And in verse 15, "he shall smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." This is followed by the description of the utter defeat of the anti-God forces, the banquet at which the people will eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of captains and so forth, indicating the utter collapse and defeat of their kingdom. And again, in chapter 20, verse 3, "And after that he must be loosed a little season"; chapter 20 verse 7 "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" (I take it, the church) and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

Now that was the verse I was thinking of, chapter 20 verse 8. Now we should notice in the first place it is a mistake to think as some people think the battle of Armageddon will be a literal battle fought with machine guns and hand grenades in the valley of the Kishon river, at the base of Mount Carmel in Palestine. This kind of literalism is foreign to the whole treatment of things in the book of Revelation. The battle of Deborah and Barak was a literal battle and that was where it was done. But here in the book of Revelation this is surely much deeper and broader than simply a military conflict. This is a conflict of two kinds of people, with two world-views and two philosophies of life and two allegiances, God and Satan, or God and anti-God. Now we should notice here in chapter 16 the real source of this conflict; verses 13 and 14 of chapter 16, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Frogs were used here as something repulsive and unclean. This is something that's repulsive and something that's evil, you see. And they're represented here as unclean spirits out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. Satan and his two allies. And these are what stir the nations of the world and the people of the world up in their opposition to God. Whether you're talking about literal war, or about the battle for men's souls and for the ideas in thinking, the evil does not start from humanity; it comes from a deeper and farther away source, it comes straight from hell. And this is the real source of the conflict, therefore all types of people that patch up humanity's troubles by better organization and the United Nations and all kinds of things like this are bound to fail; they do not recognize the real source of the trouble, which is Satanic

and hellish. And you cannot cure this by bringing a better form of organization. There are people in England and in France who are absolutely sure that if we would just sit down and talk things over with the North Vietnamese we'd have the Vietnam war settled. It's not lack of understanding; I'm not pronouncing any judgments about the Vietnam war, but the trouble in there is deeper and is from Satan and from Hell.

Now Christians are warned here, Watch, I come as a thief; that's Jesus speaking, the outcome is an absolute one, It is done. It is finished. This recalls Jesus speaking on the cross just before he died, "It is finished," one word in Greek, Tetelestai. Also notice the catastrophic nature of the climax here: it speaks of this earthquake as the greatest earthquake there ever was, there's never been one as great as this. I don't think it means a literal earthquake either, but the catastrophic nature of it, God's judgment on this anti-God world is not a slow and gentle process, this is going on with increasing energy and finally it will blow up in their faces. This is indicated by the kind of language used here, the utter devastation of this earthquake, Babylon, the whole anti-God system, just falls to pieces, collapses. Hail stones of over a hundred pounds each and so forth come out of heaven, that is, from God. Now, we will close with this comment, the chapter brings out here the absolutely righteous nature of what God does. When people really become Christians and are born again they recognize that what God does is right. And this is shown all through the Scripture. Psalm 19 verse 9, quoted by Abraham Lincoln: "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" Romans 2 verse 2, "the judgment of God is according to truth against them that do such things." This is the lesson that the modern world absolutely

refuses to learn and to listen to, and yet it is true. Man is not independent of God but is under the moral government of God and will have to answer for how he lives. Now this chapter is full of terrible things; it could almost be a nightmare; but remember, it's wrath to the world and comfort to the saints. And the important question to us is, which side of that line am I on? Am I among those who are going to be involved in Babylon, when this world system blows up, or am I among the saints whom none of this can really hurt or touch?

Question on whether the battle of Armageddon: Is this a literal military conflict?

In chapter 16, verse 12, the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates and the water thereof was dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. We passed by this verse and did not note it, but it is worth noting. The great river Euphrates and the water thereof was dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. Now no army has to have the water of the river dried up in order to get past that place; even at the time when John on Patmos wrote the book of Revelation, armies could get past the river Euphrates without any difficulty even though there was no bridge as there are some places today; they had no trouble getting across the river Euphrates. And therefore when it says the water was dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared, this is in itself a signal to tell us this whole business is not intended to be taken literally. The kings and armies who proceed to battles today are not deterred by even the greatest and widest river that there is in the world.

LESSON 71

THE MYSTERY OF BABYLON THE GREAT, Revelation 17

Just to get oriented a little bit, chapters 15 and 16 tell us what happens to those who receive the mark of the beast, their ultimate outcome. Chapter 17 starts telling what happens to Babylon, to the seaborne wild beast, and to the second beast or the false prophet. Also the nature and mystery of Babylon, the great harlot or seducer of the people. And chapter 18 tells the inevitable complete and irrevocable character of Babylon's fall. And chapter 19 tells of rejoicing in heaven because of the overthrow of Babylon, and describes the marriage feast or wedding feast of the Lamb. Also in chapter 19 the rider on the white horse is the achiever of this great victory. So this will give us a bird's eye view of where we are, chapter 17. One of the seven angels which had the seven vials talked with me saying unto me, Come hither, and so on. One of the seven angels that had the seven vials or bowls of God's wrath, which contain the seven last plagues that we already noted something about. Now this should be tied in with chapter 21 verse 9 near the end of the book: "And

there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me saying "Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." (Notice the similarity.) Here in chapter 17 one of the seven angels with the seven bowls of the last plagues, says I will show you the judgment of the great seducer. And in Revelation chapter 21 one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls with the seven last plagues says come here and I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. Now this is related, of course, and the combination of 17, verse 1, and 21, verse 9, certainly indicates that this is a message of visions of woe for the wicked and of weal of benefit and welfare for the saints.

This angel talked to John both in chapter 17 and in chapter 21, about opposite subjects, you see, and he'll show John in this deep vision God's judgment on Babylon, the great seducer of people. 17, verse 3 He carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness. This is compar-

able for the statement way back in the beginning of the book, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day; this refers to an abnormal or heightened state of consciousness, in which he loses awareness of his earthly location and becomes aware of things in the spiritual dimension. He carried me away in the spirit—that is, as controlled by, and led by the Holy Spirit to see certain things that ordinarily people with their normal eyesight couldn't see. He carried John away in the spirit into the wilderness, and here he sees a woman on a scarlet beast and this beast has seven heads and ten horns filled with names of blasphemy. Now did we read anything like that anytime before in the book of Revelation? There's plenty in this chapter that baffles me after studying it very thoroughly, I still am not sure about what some of this means, but part of it is quite obvious, and this ties in with the chapter 12 verse 3 and chapter 13, verse 1: "And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." And chapter 13, verse 1, "And he stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." Now obviously these verses are shown by the substantial identity of the language used to be closely related. This is therefore tied in with what we read in chapter 12, and in chapter 13. This scarlet beast, the dragon, is called the one that has the seven heads and the ten horns; and then in chapter 13, the beast.

Now the dragon is Satan and the beast is persecuting anti-Christian world government in all its phases and all its history. Which, however, is so closely identified with Satan, the dragon, that the same thing could be said about both of them, seven heads and ten horns, and so also here. Seven heads and ten horns and full of names of blasphemy. Speaking against the real truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now 17:4, the appearance of this woman. You recall that in chapter 12 John has seen in a vision the radiant woman. Clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and 12 stars, standing surely for the true covenant people of God. She gives birth to the man-child who shall rule all nations with a rod of iron, who was caught up to the throne of God; obviously that's Christ's ascension 40 days after his crucifixion. The radiant woman of chapter 12 is the true bride of Christ, the true covenant people of God, and here we have the counterfeit, the great harlot, not the bride, but the harlot, the great seducer, the great imitator and counterfeit and supplanter, and she is described here, and the amazing thing is that partly she looks the same. Now you have the emphasis upon her appearance here. Chapter 17, verse 4, the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, costly, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, that word decked in Greek is gilded with gold, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Now, this is her appearance. And it later says upon her forehead is a name written; Dr. Hendriksen says it is implied here, this wasn't just

written on her forehead but on a band or something that went around her head, and this held the title of this name here. This identifies her. Mystery, meaning here don't take it for the literal Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates river. Mystery, this is Babylon in a mystic form here. But the real idea of Babylon stands for her though, Mystery, Babylon the great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Now this woman is plainly Babylon, there's no doubt about it, it's written on her forehead, and that's her name. But what does Babylon represent? Now, throughout this part of the book of Revelation, Babylon is called the great harlot; it isn't a nice word, but the Bible uses it and I don't know how we can discuss this without using this term. The great harlot. 17 verse 1, the great whore, the great harlot, the seducer and counterfeit of the bride of the Lamb. This word in Greek is *porne*, where we get the word pornography, and pornographic. This Babylon is never called *moichalis*, which means adulteress; she is always called *porne*. Now in the Old Testament when the people of Israel worshipped God and Baal and other gods, they were said to be committing adultery against God, who was their husband; you see Jehovah is the husband of Israel, Israel is the wife or the bride of God of Jehovah and of Christ. But the word "adulteress" is never used of Babylon and therefore Babylon is always called *porne*, or the harlot. **She never was the Lamb's wife and cannot be the apostate church.** Dr. Hendriksen argues this convincingly in his book, but we don't need to take up all the details of his argument on this. Babylon is described not in terms of false religious ideas, but in terms of commerce, business, worldly luxury, wealth, pleasures, riches, and this kind of thing. Therefore the idea that the false or apostate church, or particularly the Roman Catholic Church which had its course during the Middle Ages is Babylon does not fit the connection. Babylon is never called the adulteress always called the harlot. Now Babylon is all that tempts and seduces people away from God. Babylon of old on the Euphrates river way back in olden times was a worldly and pleasure-mad city, as Rome became later. Babylon in Revelation is described as a great industrial and commercial and business complex, a metropolis. The world in the bad sense, regarded as the center of civilization and industry and business which would be legitimate in itself, but is used to seduce believers away from God. Now I John chapter 2 verse 16, you see also written by the Apostle John, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world." That's the idea of what Babylon stands for. The world as a system that seduces people and captivates them and leads them away from God and his love and his service. Now the next verse here in first John, "the world passeth and the lust away thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever" is carved on the tombstone of the great evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, in Northfield, Mass., and there I have seen it.

But you see the world and its seductions are powerful, influential, appealing but they don't abide forever, and the people who pick up with this and fall for it, also don't abide forever; the world passeth away and the lust thereof. And glamour and glitter and the appeal and the drawing power of the world considered as a system that wins people away from God. Now Babylon is viewed here as present and past and future. We read here "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." That word "admiration" is a most unfortunate mistranslation in the King James version. When you admire something do you approve of it? John saw this scarlet woman and he wondered with great admiration; is he admiring her? Well, surely not, and the word in Greek here is simply wonder, I wondered with great wonder. And in the next verse, the angel says, "Wherefore didst thou marvel?" And this is the same identical word used twice in the previous verse. Wonder; why does he wonder; I'll explain it to you, he says. Now why does John wonder? Presumably because the appearance of this woman on the scarlet colored beast partly resembles the radiant woman of chapter twelve, and he wondered, could it be that she has changed from how she was pictured and described in chapter twelve to this awful condition that we see here in chapter seventeen? So he is baffled by it, and this doesn't mean admired her, speaking as if she's really pretty fine and beautiful, but rather he is utterly baffled, and wonders how this can be explained and what this means and represents and

stands for here. Now Dr. Hendriksen in his book says, Babylon is viewed as past, and present and future; the form of Babylon changes from century to century and from age to age in world history, but the essential nature of Babylon never changes. It is always the same. So we read here in verse 7, the angel says, I'll explain all this to you. I'll tell you the mystery, that is the code, the secret explanation of this woman who has the beast she is riding on with seven heads and ten horns. "The beast that thou sawest was and is not. And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition, and all they that dwell on the earth shall wonder whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was and is not and yet is. Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Now, the sea-borne beast, the wild beast out of the sea which we read of first in chapter 13, verses 1 and 2, stands for the entire persecution movement throughout history. Past, present and future, and the harlot or Babylon represents the world as the power of seduction, past, present and future, throughout history. Babylon as the world existed certainly in John's time, and in times before that, and in times after that and today, to the present day when we live. Now this is shown by chapter 17, verse 9 and verse 18. Here is the mind which hath wisdom, please note wisdom, this is a suggestion here that this matter is not clear in itself, it requires God-given wisdom to figure it out and understand it.

(To be continued)

The Growth of the Kingdom of God

By Surrendra Gangadean

The Reverend J. G. Vos believes that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan grow side by side until the end according to the parable of the wheat and the tares. The former is not going to conquer the latter in this age. As a matter of fact things are going to get worse, for Antichrist and his armies are yet to appear and his appearance "will indicate to watchful Christians that the Lord's coming is very near" (p. 12, *Blue Banner* July-September, 1974). Contrary to this I believe that the kingdom of God is now growing to its fullness, displacing Satan's kingdom. The nations will be converted to Christ through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom before he returns. Many Reformed Christians today would side with Rev. Vos's amillennial view. Few consider post-millennialism seriously. Is this difference important and if so which view, if either, is correct?

Some say the whole issue is not too important because the future has little bearing on what we ought to do. Expectation does not or need not affect program. But

this is true only if we can live effectively with split personalities, so that we may try to disciple the nations while expecting to fail or expecting the church to decline further. What happens in fact is that our program is adjusted to our expectation. Soon we begin to say we are to witness to the nations not disciple the nations. We seek personal salvation not the reconciliation of all things to Christ. And where we don't succeed we say this age is an age of conflict, not one of conquest; after all evil men and seducers are getting worse. We can't live very long with split personalities. Expectation affects program. They are organically one.

Some say the issue is not too important because it does not affect salvation. And salvation is the important thing. This view is especially harmful because under the feeling of piety it robs God of his glory. It is man-centered not God-centered. It makes salvation the end rather than the means to the end. It leads men into the fundamentalist camp which selects out certain doctrines as important because necessary for salvation rather

than saying all scripture is necessary if we are to be thoroughly equipped for every good work by which God is glorified (II Tim. 3:16). If all scripture is necessary then scripture about our expectation is necessary and therefore important.

Some say the issue is not too important because it is not too clear, and, it is not too clear because if it were the church would have been able to agree on it. But the church has had to fight for every "clear" doctrine, including the deity of Christ. When the pastor-teachers who are supposed to lead the saints into the unity of the faith adopt this skeptical stance it is a virtual surrender. Especially so when the skeptical stance is taken without being aware of the works of previous pastor-teachers on the subject. Arminians live as if the synod of Dort never occurred. Kierkegaard wrote on the incarnation as if the council of Chalcedon never occurred. This is distressing. The same is true in eschatology. We have a special obligation to look closely at the earlier post-millennial arguments and answer them before adopting a new position. But this has not been done. Arguments used against post-millennialism have usually been against secondary points or against straw men or just question-begging or special pleading.

Some who say the doctrine of the kingdom is central in scripture say eschatology is not too important. But the kingdom is an eschatological kingdom. Dispensationalists, pre-mils, a-mils and post-mils all have differing views on the nature, the goal and the growth of the kingdom. Eschatology and the doctrine of the kingdom are inseparable. And if the one is important so is the other. When we realize how the Jewish expectation led to the rejection of Christ, how Roman Catholic expectation led to empire-building and how current evangelical expectation led to cultural retreat we should conclude that our expectation is crucially important. The church will continue to perish until we recover the vision of the kingdom by which God's glory is made known.

While my reasoning here is directed against Dr. Vos's view some will say that unless you can deal with other views your words have no weight since you both may be wrong. I will try to speak to this. Dispensationalists like C. I. Scofield or Hal Lindsey say the kingdom is not present or spiritual but future and Jewish (literally from Jerusalem). Some pre-millennialists like G. E. Ladd and J. O. Buswell attempt to maintain the kingdom is present and future but seem to put the greater emphasis on the future rule from Jerusalem coming suddenly with Christ's return. If it can be shown the kingdom is present and spiritual then dispensationalism is not true. And if the kingdom is present, spiritual and growing to its fullness then pre-millennialism is mistaken. Some amillennialists may say that the kingdom is present and spiritual but how far it will grow is an open question. If it can be shown that the kingdom will grow to its fullness this objection will be answered. Furthermore, if it can be shown that the

kingdom of God cannot grow without displacing Satan's kingdom then one of the major pillars of Mr. Vos's argument will be destroyed. And if this notion of growth is unequivocal whereas his interpretation of certain passages as speaking of increasing evil or side by side growth can be interpreted consistently with the concept of growth then his position will have no support at all. Because of the limitation of space the arguments can be stated here only in a very compact form.

First of all, the kingdom is in spiritual reality not the type and shadow of the Old Testament economy. The tabernacle and priestly ministry were an example and shadow of heavenly things (Heb. 8:1-5). So were the sacrifices (Heb. 10:1). So were the observing of times and the festivals (Col. 2:17). They spoke of the person and work of Christ. When Christ came these were fulfilled. So also was the life of Israel a type (I Cor. 10:6, 11). They were promised a land that flowed with milk and honey. When future blessings were promised they were promised in material terms, things to eat and to drink and houses (Isaiah 65:21, 22; 66:10-12). But the kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17). Christ said seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things (meat and drink) shall be added (Matt. 6:33). The promised land of milk and honey (of meat and drink) is not the kingdom of God but is a shadow and type of the kingdom. Old Testament warfare in possessing and keeping the land is likewise typical. While they fought with a carnal sword we fight with spiritual weapons (I Cor. 10:4-5, Eph. 6:17). Rev. 19:15, 21 is not a carnal warfare but a spiritual one. The sword that proceeds from the mouth is the word of God. The battle is pictured in Old Testament terminology because their warfare was typical of our spiritual warfare. Once the typical nature of the whole Old Testament economy is seen we are in a position to properly translate unfulfilled prophecy. The rebuilding of the tabernacle of David is seen in the gentiles coming to Christ (Acts 15:13-18). (See O. T. Allis **Prophecy and the Church** for a critique of Dispensational application of the rebuilding exclusively to the future pp. 145-150). Only special pleading can hold out for a double fulfillment, here, one spiritual and the other literal or carnal, or one typical and the other anti-typical.

Secondly, the kingdom is present. Being present and being spiritual are mutually entailing. If it is present then it is spiritual and if it is spiritual then it is present. Although we have argued for its spiritual character above we shall argue independently and not by implication for its presence. Scofield says we are in the church age and the kingdom is still future. But all those who are born again are in the kingdom (John 3:3, 5). The Gentiles at Colossae were in the kingdom (Col. 1:13) not merely in the church. The kingdom was not withdrawn but was being preached throughout the book of Acts: to the Samaritans (8:12); to the Gentiles in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (14:22); to the Jews at

Ephesus (19:8); to the Gentiles at Ephesus (20:24, 25); to the Jews at Rome (28:23); to the Gentiles at Rome (28:31). The Thessalonians were in the kingdom (I Thess. 2:12). Dispensationalists who deny the kingdom is present must preach another gospel than Paul's and if so they invite the anathema he pronounced upon themselves.

Thirdly, the kingdom is growing from a small beginning. In the parable of the mustard seed the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches (Matt. 13:32, 32 NIV). Or again the kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough (Matt. 13:33). It is impossible to get around the notion of the kingdom as a growing entity starting from a small beginning. The dispensational and pre-mil kingdom does not grow; it comes in one fell swoop. Again, the stone in Daniel's dream (Dan. 2:35,44) that breaks up the image grows; it "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Also, Christ is now ruling (I Cor. 15:25,26) and will continue to rule until all his enemies be made his footstool, the last enemy to be destroyed is death. The subjugation of his enemies is now taking place. It is a continuous and progressive activity and will continue until the last enemy remains. Christ wars through the church; believers wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers (Eph. 6). The last enemy, death, is destroyed by the personal return of Christ when the dead are resurrected.

Fourthly, the kingdom is growing to its fullness. In each of the above references the growth continues to its natural end. The seed grows to a tree. it is not cut off as a sapling. The leaven leavens the whole lump, not just a part. The stone grows till it fills the whole earth, its natural end. Christ's rule continues until all his enemies be made his footstool. In each case the end is reached by the process now in operation. The growth is not an indefinite growth but a growth until it reaches its end. If we want to get an idea of what the growth of Christ's Kingdom to its fullness might mean we can consider the kingdom of Satan at its fullness in the days of Noah or in the days of Christ. The whole world was in darkness. When Christ's kingdom grows to its fullness the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.

The growth of the kingdom is throughout history, not the personal maturity of believers in each age. It is a common fallacy to take the growth of the part for the growth of the whole. If every believer in Paul's day or in our day were mature it would not mean that the kingdom was mature. Again, the growth is not a simply numerical increase of believers throughout all time although it is true that the end will come when the last elect is effectually called. The error here is in identify-

ing the kingdom with the invisible church rather than with the visible church as the Westminster Confession rightly does (WCF XXV, Sect. 2). If it were the former then just one believer may be on earth when the kingdom would have reached its fullness. But the effect of growth is cumulative in the present. The mustard tree is fully present at the end of its growth.

Mr. Vos has made a distinction between relative and absolute fulfillment of prophecy. He applies this distinction to the prophecy that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea (p. 34). He uses this distinction to refer this prophecy to eternity and not to history. This allows him to maintain a relative fulfillment of it in history without having to commit himself to the nations being converted to Christ. Since he believes that the signs preceding the second coming of Christ "were of such a nature that they might all appear in any one generation of the world's history" (p. 13), a relative fulfillment of this prophecy could have occurred in Paul's day or in our day. This means that the mustard seed, leaven, stone, etc., that is, the kingdom, could have grown to fullness in Paul's day even with less than one or five per cent of the world's population as Christians. The mistake here is to confuse relative and absolute fulfillment of prophecy with relative and absolute fullness of knowledge. The darkness did cover the earth (Isa. 60:2) without each and every person being in darkness. So the knowledge of God may cover the earth without each and every person being converted. The extent of knowledge (every one or nearly all), the depth of knowledge (compare Calvin and a new convert), the manner of the knowledge (everyone knowing without everyone believing, as in some churches), the scope of knowledge (every thought showing forth the glory of God) must be considered before concluding this prophecy can't have a fulfillment in history. While relative fulfillment may occur with one percent converted, relative fullness of the knowledge of God would be much closer to one hundred per cent.

It may be that Mr. Vos feels constrained to adopt the position he does because of his interpretation of the parable of the wheat and tares (p. 19). He says "the field is not the church but the world" and, "according to this parable, the population of the world will be mixed, or righteous and wicked persons throughout the present age . . ." He believes this parable to be "decisive against post-millennialism which . . . presupposes the conversion of practically the entire population of the world. . ." He takes the tares to be non-Christians in general, not non-Christians in the visible church who "profess the true religion" but do not really believe it. There is an ambiguity here in the term 'world.' Is it the earth or is it the ungodly world? If it is the earth then the church is planted world-wide. After the wheat is planted tares are sown among the wheat. The tares resemble the wheat, making their appearance as tares when wheat and tares bring forth fruit. It is by their fruits that we can recognize false prophets as such. For the place of church discipline here I find Calvin's exposition

of this parable very sensible. This interpretation makes a lot of sense and is perfectly compatible with the belief that "practically the entire population of the earth" will be converted. If the field is the world of non-Christians then the wheat is sown beside or among the tares and the question "from whence then hath it tares?" would be nonsensical. This parable is not decisive at all against the conversion of the world as Mr. Vos says. It is possible for everyone to be in the visible church, i.e., profess the true religion, without denying the tares grow beside the wheat till the end.

Once it is granted that the kingdom of God grows to its fullness it should be plain that this involves the conversion of the nations. Since the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan contend for the same human hearts and for expression in the same spheres of culture one cannot increase without the other decreasing. It should be reiterated that the kingdom of God spoken of here is his visible church, sometimes called the kingdom of grace (S. C. q. 102) and not his rule over the remainder of the creation, sometimes called the kingdom of his power (L. C. q. 191). Christ's kingdom of grace is spoken of as having universal sway: Ps. 2:8; 22:27; 72:7-11, 17, 19; 86:9; 110:1; Isaiah 2:2, 3; Amos 9:11, 12; Acts 2:34, 35; 15:17; etc. Since Mr. Vos has often espoused his father Geerhardus Vos's position, mention should be made of how the latter treats I Cor. 15:25, 26. In *The Pauline Eschatology* he says "the progressive subjugation of enemies moves in the superterrestrial sphere of the world of spirits so that it can scarcely be counted among the prognostics of the approaching crisis; it consists of happenings unobservable by men" (p. 91). We cannot agree that this conquest is unobservable by men at least as far as its results are concerned. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil which are very manifest here on earth. To think that the enemies are being conquered with men continuing in sin is incongruous. Furthermore the enemies are not being destroyed by Christ apart from the church but by Christ through the church. We pull down by spiritual weapons everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:4, 5). We wrestle against the rulers of the darkness when we contend with men even as they fight against God when they fight with us (Acts 5:39).

Mr. Vos has argued for evil increasing in the world, referring much of Matthew 24 literally to the future (see p. 17 no. 3 and p. 11 no. 3 on signs immediately preceding the second coming). He notes J. Marcellus Kik's exposition of Matthew 24 but cites Rev. Kuschke Jr. for an alternative reading. Mr. Kik has responded to Mr. Kuschke's reading (*Eschatology of Victory*, p. 65), but Mr. Vos has not noted this in his remarks here. It is also left unclear which line of argument he wishes to take, whether parts of Matthew 24 refer primarily to the destruction of Jerusalem and others primarily to the second coming (in which case he does not specify here which parts refer to which event) or whether

the whole of Matthew 24 applies to both events, to one as type, to the other as anti-type. Until these omissions are corrected I believe Mr. Kik's exposition is still valid. In passing it should be noted that Mr. Kik who was an ardent advocate of post-millennialism did not regard the millennium as still future but refers it to the period between the two comings. In this he represents the view of others who believe that this age is one of conquest and victory not merely one of conflict (see above p. 205). Mr. Vos likewise speaks of the man of sin and of the Antichrist. We fail to find any attempt to rebut B. B. Warfield's discussion of these subjects (*Selected Shorter Writings* ed. J. E. Meeter, Vol. 1, p. 356 and *Biblical and Theological Studies* ed. S. G. Craig, pp. 463-475). For him they did not conflict with the post-millennialism which he advocated.

Mr. Vos has argued against post-millennialism that in putting Christ's coming after a long period of time it removes the reason for watchfulness (p. 17). However, he himself grants that Christ won't come until the gospel is preached in the whole world for a testimony (p. 12). The argument carries no weight therefore. Furthermore watchfulness is not tied to the second coming only or primarily. Loraine Boettner has pointed out eight senses of the coming of Christ (*The Millennium* pp. 248-263) some for which believers in every age must be watchful.

Mr. Vos has argued that "post-millennialism represents the kingdom of God as coming gradually through the operation of forces now at work in the world whereas the Scriptures represent it as coming in its final form suddenly and at a definite time, the second coming of Christ" (p. 17). The argument is based on a non-sequitur which fails to notice that post-millennialism distinguishes between the kingdom of grace which comes by growing gradually and the kingdom of glory which comes suddenly by the return of Christ. This failure is the basis of several of the criticisms brought against post-millennialism. For example, "post-millennialism teaches a kingdom in which men are still in their natural bodies and still capable of committing sin" (p. 17). This is true because post-millennialists recognize both the kingdom of grace in which believers now live and the kingdom of glory which is the consummated state of the kingdom of grace. They pray "that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened." (S. C. q. 102). They do not identify the kingdom of God with the kingdom of glory only. Mr. Vos says "even if every individual in the whole world could be converted to Christianity, and every human institution "Christianized," still the final kingdom of God would not be here. . ." (p. 25). I am not sure against whom this argument is directed since no person is quoted as saying so. But post-millennialists do look for the world as such being converted to Christ and every human institution being Christianized before the kingdom of grace is consummated by the return of Christ and the destruction of all remaining sin, curse and death.

Editorial Note

The foregoing article by Professor Gangadean presents a viewpoint and interpretation of Biblical prophecy which differs in some respects from that held by myself as Editor of *Blue Banner Faith and Life*. During the past thirty years of publication of the magazine we have endeavored to present the view which we believe to be most in harmony with the Scriptures taken as a whole, and most in harmony with the official standards of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, especially the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and its accompanying Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

Although *Blue Banner Faith and Life* is an organ, not a forum, and the Editor has the right to decide what the contents shall be, subject of course to the jurisdiction of the church's Synod, nevertheless, as a courtesy to Professor Gangadean, we are publishing his article, exactly as he submitted it, without any changes whatever.

At the same time, we wish to call attention to material previously published in this magazine which asserts and expounds "the growth of the kingdom of God" within history, prior to the consummation. We refer our readers who are interested in this matter to the following materials published in previous issues of *Blue Banner Faith and Life*:

July-September 1974, Lessons on pages 6-32

July-September 1974, article, *Prophecy, Time and Eternity*, pages 32-36

October-December 1971, Lessons on pages 172-177.

January-March 1972, Lessons on pages 12-16.

The last two items were also published in January-March 1961, pages 43-48 and April-June 1961, pages 83-96.

April-June 1949, pages 74-76 and October-December

1957, pages 183-186, on the question in *The Larger Catechism* (No. 191), "What do we pray for in the second petition?"

Reviews of books on related aspects of the general subject:

Geerhardus Vos, *The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church*, April-June 1973, page 84.

Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium*, October-December 1958, page 192

G. B. Fletcher, *The Millennium*, April-June 1950, page 87.

Jonathan Edwards, *The Millennium*, October-December 1967, page 203.

J. Marcellus Kik, *An Eschatology of Victory*, October-December 1973, page 151.

J. Marcellus Kik, *Matthew Twenty-four: An Exposition*, October-December 1949, pages 182-183.

Our principal concern has been to emphasize the truth that nothing prior to the time "when that which is perfect is come" (I Cor. 13:10) can be the ultimate and absolute object of Christian hope. That there has been, is now and will be a growth of the kingdom of God within history we fully believe. But we must remember that "That last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:26), and until that glorious consummation takes place, the world will continue to have within it sin, sickness, and death. Therefore the Kingdom which grows within history is a preliminary form of the Kingdom, not the ultimate, absolute and perfect form, therefore it cannot legitimately be the ultimate object of Christian hope.

—Editor

Toronto and the Reformed Faith

A Comparison of published statements of leading figures in the AACCS/ICS/Wedge movement with statements of recognized Reformed Confessional Standards

Compiled by J. G. Vos

"If the student's insight exceeds that of the teacher the student possesses authority and power should be on his side."

"Among the rebels are some of the best students. They are the best students if they demand power because they rebel against the system of non-education and demand education."

"We can certainly expect the phenomenon of student power in our Christian high schools, and even more so, in our Christian colleges."

(From Dr. Peter Schouls, *Insight, Authority and Power*, pages 41, 43, and 44).

Reformed Standards versus Dr. Schouls

"The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals." (The Westminster Shorter Catechism, 64).

"The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior. . . willing obedience to their lawful commands and coun-

sels; due submission to their corrections. . ." (The Westminster Larger Catechism, 127).

"The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections. . ." (The Westminster Larger Catechism, 128).

"What does God require in the fifth commandment?
A. That I show all honor, love and fidelity to my father and mother, and to all in authority over me; submit myself with due obedience to their good instruction and correction; and also to bear patiently with their weaknesses and shortcomings, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand." (The Heidelberg Catechism, 104. Lord's Day XXXIX).

"Children are bound to honour and obey their parents in the Lord. All relationships within the family must be subject to the lordship of Christ."

(Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, Chapter VI, page 34)

(To be continued)

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here does not imply approval of its entire contents. Purchase books from your book dealer or from the publishers. Do not send orders for books to Blue Banner Faith and Life.

JUDGES AND A PERMISSIVE SOCIETY, by John E. Hunter, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, pp. 127, paperback, \$1.50.

This book has almost fallen from heaven it is so spiritual and delightful. Nothing but the highest praises can be accorded to it. It is a historical character study of the Old Testament book in the finest Christian, evangelical exegesis. And it is a heart-stirring story—far better than certain popular "paraphrases" or other story books.

One is driven to say: "Thank you, Lord" for men like Hunter!
—Robert More, Jr.

PEEP OF DAY: THE CHILD'S CLASSIC. Free Presbyterian Publications, Inverness, Scotland. Reprint, 1971, pp. 168, paperback. 45 pence.

This reprint (1888) of an unknown writer is a manual for indoctrinating children in, first, a few fundamental teachings and, second, in the gist of the four gospel accounts. It is simply, but touchingly, given in narrative and then poetically worded.

A few statements show its British origin and in an older time though these are few and not objectionable.

There appear to be a couple of misprints and a couple of "scientific" errors (butterflies don't have tiny feathers; eagles are not the highest or strongest flying birds).

This is a valuable tool for child evangelism and for nurturing one's own covenant child in the faith of his forefathers.
—Robert More, Jr.

A THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, by Lawrence Richards. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1975, pp. 324. \$8.95.

Dr. Richards has presented to us "a" theology of Christian education but note he has not attempted to present "the" theology of Christian education. It is an explanatory text—not one for those eager for a closed system, a system that presents "the" answer. Because of its explanatory form it can be seen that the book wasn't written for the status quo element of Christendom, it goes from the traditional formal educational processes to an emphasis on the informal.

Although he brings out that the major part of Christian education should take place outside of the classroom, he writes this text because of the need for the building of a sound Christian education system in the local church. The book argues for two vital things. First, that we recognize the inadequacy of what we have been thinking of as education. And secondly, that we see the total life of the church and its every interaction as the real educational experience of the believer.

I believe this text could be of use to laymen, Sabbath School teachers, or anyone wishing to understand more about the biblical warrant for Christian education. The summaries at the close of each chapter and the diagrams at the beginning of each help make each chapter a lesson in itself to children or adults. —John W. Seth

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE. Leon Morris, W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 49502. 350 pp., \$3.45 (paper).

This commentary is one in the series by Tyndale. On the cover page the statement is made: "A concise, workable Tool for Laymen, Teachers and Ministers." This well describes this volume, it is a useable book and the Sabbath school teacher or worker will not let dust gather on this work.

Mr. Morris is an ordained clergyman in the Church of England. He has provided an introduction of some 47 pages in which he deals with the authorship, date, etc. This is most helpful. An analysis of the Gospel is provided and then the commentary itself. At the close of the Commentary a table of parallel passages is provided.

Mr. Morris has used many sources to give us this commentary. —C. Sterrett

AMBASSADORS OF ARMSTRONGISM, by Paul N. Benware. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 07110. 1975, pp. 178, paperback, \$3.75.

This is a deep but satisfying work written for the "serious" student of religion. The author presents patently Biblical views and also much enlightenment concerning this fast-growing cult. He fairly treats the

"orthodoxy" confessed by the cult but effectively scores its heterodoxy (if not heresy). Good footnotes and bibliography provide opportunity for further study. The book appears to be a mite expensive—it does, however, provide a vast amount of Christian insight. —Robert More, Jr.

JOURNEY WITH DAVID BRAINERD, by Richard A. Hasler, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1975, pp. 120, paperback. \$2.50

This was a nobly intended, but (somewhat) miserably performed book. The subject was noble—he was the pioneer Indian, Presbyterian, missionary in colonial America. Though felled by TB when still young, his evangelical fruit (especially writings) profoundly influenced North American Christianity.

Its misery is due to the editor (and his method). He seems to be a "modernist" and Brainerd apparently became the same. A method of "selection" conduces to the editor's designs too. Brainerd's words, however, are Biblically stimulating—see chapters 6, 30, and 40 especially. —Robert More, Jr.

SO MANY VERSIONS? TWENTIETH CENTURY ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE by Sakae Kubo and Walter Specht. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 49506, 1975, 244 pages, \$2.95 paper.

In an age when we are faced with many translations and paraphrases of the Bible, this book may provide the oasis in the midst of a desert of confusion. It covers all of the major versions plus some minor publications; excellently written, with no apparent axe to grind. The author's criteria for a good translation include (1) "the underlying text from which the translation is made," (2) "accuracy in translation," and (3) "the quality of its English." A must for all pastors, highly recommended. —Richard N. Olson

NO PAT ANSWERS, by Eugenia Price. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, paperback, pp. 145. \$1.50.

The well-known Christian author Eugenia Price deals helpfully with such matters as disappointment, grief, watching our loved ones suffer, doubt, and "the One Answer." —J. G. Vos

HELP, I'M A PARENT, by Bruce Narramore. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1976, paperback, reprint of 1972, pp. 174. \$2.95.

This book by a well-known Christian psychologist deals with the difficulties and problems faced by Christian parents in this "post-Christian" age. Among other things the author defends the use of corporal punishment (spanking) when needed; however, he asserts that it must be motivated by love, not anger, and must

draw a fine line between being so mild as to be ineffective, and so extreme as to injure the child or cause extreme resentment. Much other practical counsel for Christian parents.
—J. G. Vos

I WANT TO ENJOY MY CHILDREN: A HANDBOOK ON PARENTHOOD, by Henry Brandt and Phil Landrum. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 49506. 1975, paperback, pp. 184. \$2.95.

Much practical counsel on family discipline and child rearing. Stresses the fact that both parents must agree on requirements and situations. Shows that parental authority, rightly exercised, gives children a sense of security.
—J. G. Vos

BEAUTY CARE FOR THE EYES, by Leroy Koopman. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, paperback, pp. 133. \$1.50.

The reference to the eyes in the title is purely metaphorical. The book deals with the spiritual problems of Christians and suggests ways to handle and overcome them. Much practical counsel. Theology is evangelical.
—J. G. Vos

WINE OF GOD: THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS IN ALL TRUTH, by Kurt Koch. Christian Evangelism Publications, 747 81st Avenue, Chomedey, Laval, Montreal, Canada. In U.S.A., P. O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich., 49501. 1974, Paperback, pp. 167. \$1.50.

Deals with revival in Indonesia, Taiwan, Solomon Islands and India. The controversy surrounding, especially, the reported amazing revival in Indonesia is dealt with at some length. Much material about missionary work in so-called "primitive" tribes. —J. G. Vos

MS. MEANS MYSELF, by Gladys Hunt. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1972, paperback, pp. 145. \$1.50.

A biblically oriented and documented view of women's role and fulfillment in contrast to the unscriptural demands of the secular "women's liberation" movement, sub-titled "Being a Woman in an Uneasy World."
—J. G. Vos

SOME WAYS OF GOD, by C. Stacey Woods. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1975, paperback, pp. 131. \$2.95.

The author summons Christians to be a "different" and holy people in an age and culture where this is extremely difficult to do. Well suited to the contemporary situation.
—J. G. Vos

THE SENSATION OF BEING SOMEBODY, by Maurice E. Wagner. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, pp. 251, hardbound, \$6.95.

Subtitle is: "Building an Adequate Self-Concept." Deals among many other things, with depression, inferiority feelings, sex roles, problem children and problem parents, how parental discipline can be effective and yet loving. God's sovereignty confused with His power, page 153 (but clear elsewhere). —J. G. Vos

IF I DIE AT THIRTY, by Meg Woodson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, hardbound, pp. 166, \$4.95.

"A rare and unforgettable glimpse into a young girl's mind as she faces the reality of her own death" (dust jacket). Much Christian truth, encouragement, and comfort in the face of what the world calls absolute tragedy.
—J. G. Vos

PAUL, AN OUTLINE OF HIS THEOLOGY, by Herman Ridderbos. Translated by John Richard DeWitt. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. pp. 587, 1975. \$12.95.

Herman Ridderbos was for many years Professor of New Testament Studies at the Theological School of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands in Kampen. As one of Europe's foremost scholars, he has presented herewith a comprehensive and carefully detailed survey of Pauline theology that is securely anchored in the Biblical text and drawn up with frequent reference to a vast scholarly literature expounding Paul's writings.

As one who stands solidly within the Reformed tradition, Professor Ridderbos is concerned to lay bare the underlying habits of mind which have led to radical distortions of the structure of Paul's preaching and doctrine. Paul is truly interpreted, Ridderbos affirms repeatedly, when his proclamation of salvation is understood in eschatological rather than in merely existential categories (e.g., as Bultmann has done). Paul's proclamation of salvation is grounded in the fundamental notion that the advent of Jesus Christ means a breakthrough of the new aeon and that Christ's death and resurrection constitute the center and starting point of God's fulfilling and consummating activity. This fulfillment-in-Christ thus has a redemptive-historical significance which is determinative for Paul's theology as a whole, and it is in terms of eschatological fulfillment that we should comprehend all the fundamental structures of Paul's theology, Ridderbos insists.

With the redemptive-historical motif (fulfillment-in-Christ) as a key, Ridderbos interprets Paul's doctrines of sin and the law, righteousness and justification, the new life and obedience of believers, and all other Pauline teachings.

It is characteristic of Paul to think of reconciliation and justification and sanctification as effected by means of incorporation into Christ, and for Paul this means

that it is the church that has entered the new aeon and exemplifies the new creation. The individual believer has his new life in Christ because he is a member of the body of Christ, the church. In stressing the corporate-ness of salvation, Ridderbos has avoided both the "fundamentalist" tendency of both evangelical theology and the exclusively existentialistic interpretations of neo-orthodox theology.

Ridderbos's book has been enthusiastically endorsed by a number of scholars of note; even Ernst Kasemann, whose writings have come under Ridderbos's critical scrutiny, has stated: "It offers extraordinary insights and information and presents an interpretation of Pauline theology that should be carefully considered and thoroughly discussed." —Joseph A. Hill

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JAMES HENLEY THORNWELL, B. M. Palmer. Banner of Truth Trust, 1974, 614 pp. \$10.95 (cl)

This beautifully produced volume on "the great man of the South," is one of the most priceless gems of Christian biography. It is a full and fascinating account of one of the most brilliant Presbyterians of all time and yet of a humble believer who sought only to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Palmer's prose is deliciously wordy in the Victorian manner and supplies a most appropriate matrix for Thornwell's own letters. To the modern reader, unaccustomed to the leisurely pace of 19th century style, the book seems to drag at first, but what a delight it becomes when, after a chapter or so, one becomes acclimated!

This volume touches on the principal issues which Thornwell faced in his day—issues dealt with at great length in the four-volume set of his "Collected Writings" published by the Banner of Truth in 1975. Thus in quick succession we read about the New School-Old School Controversy which wracked American Presbyterianism in the early part of the nineteenth century; the debate about Church Boards; the Elder question; and the matter of "Romish" baptism." In all these—and on other issues—Thornwell's powerful mind needs to be heard at the present day. The publication of his works after a long period in oblivion is a blessing to the Christian Church of the first magnitude. It is to be hoped that the truths he so ably expounded in the Southern Presbyterian Church of his day, may, through his posthumous ministry, have free course and be glorified in faithful Presbyterian remnants of today—and far beyond that, in the Churches at large. —Gordon J. Keddie

THE REASON WHY. Robert Laidlaw. Zondervan Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 49506. 1975. 47 pp. 60c (p).

This is an attractive reprint of the famous tract written by a New Zealand businessman for his employees.

The tone is sweetly evangelical, but the approach taken is seriously defective and could be productive of considerable confusion in those who read it uncritically. As with many evangelical tracts and sermons, too much depends on argument by analogy through anecdotes and illustration and too little on solid exegesis. Illustration is not the same thing as exposition! The underlying Arminianism of the tract only becomes really obtrusive in the appeal for "decision" at the end. That "decision" is to be "clinched" by signing a card which declares one's acceptance of Jesus.

That this tract seeks to glorify Christ is not in question; that many have been blessed through the truth it does declare is not doubted; but the fact remains that it is not consistently and faithfully biblical and it cannot be used by those who take seriously the claims of the Scripture with respect to doctrinal purity.

Lest we appear merely negative, let us add this thought; when will Calvinistic businessmen write and/or distribute sound Reformed tracts to their employees? Laidlaw's tract is 16 million ahead of the next Calvinist—and, Arminianism and all—it rises up to rebuke the Calvinists who are content to let the Arminians gather in the elect! —Gordon J. Keddie

I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS, by George Eldon Ladd. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 49502, 156 pages, 1975, \$2.95 paper.

"But this again is a delusion if Jesus is not risen. The New Testament knows nothing about the persistence of Jesus' personality apart from the resurrection of the body. Neither does the New Testament know the 'resurrection of the spirit' to heaven such as that found in Enoch. If his body is mouldering in a Palestinian tomb, he cannot be the exalted Lord; (pp. 146-147)". In this one statement we find the author's own position concerning the resurrection of Christ. For the author, a search for the body of Jesus would be a search in vain. This book is highly recommended for an adult study class or personal edification in that it is an in-depth study, scholarly, complete, and yet simple. —Richard N. Olson

I PLEDGE YOU MY TROTH, James H. Olthius, New York, Harper and Row, 1975, 148 pp., \$7.95 (away too much).

The problems of personal relationships, particularly marital and family, that have made counselling a popular profession—in some cases, a seductive and lucrative craft—are the stuff about which *I Pledge You My Troth* has been composed. And the very proliferation of books on such subjects being marketed, many of them written from a Christian point of view, attest the sense of need in our society.

The subtitle is "A Christian View of Marriage, Fami-

ly, Friendship." From the "loneliness is awful" malady, suffered by many in our congested cities and countryside from the wrestlings of the feminist stirrings of the country and from the instability of something over half of all marriages, the author appeals to the victims to seek and find in "troth"—derived from "truth", and meaning a pledge of fidelity, faithfulness—a remedy for loneliness and brokenness.

There is much worthwhile emphasis given to faithfulness, openness, forgiveness, being devoted to Christ's kingdom, not so much to purity of heart and life, humility, fear of God and of God's forgiveness, and love of God. The Christianity of the past is often lumped with society in general and chalked up largely as a failure in this whole area. "Since the Fall, man has been desperately afraid of recognizing that a woman is his equal. . . Therefore, he has consistently tried to reduce her to something less than himself. . ." (p. 14) "The record of the Christian Church is equally bad (when compared with primitive tribal peoples) and certainly less excusable." (p. 15) ". . . in North America, . . . husbands and wives usually live under the constant fear of losing each other." (p. 21)

Such statements as ". . . there are no biblical grounds for divorce," (p. 67) and, "In a real sense, there is no such thing as premarital intercourse," (p. 54) would require much more scriptural reasoning, even to commend them for helpful discussion, than the casual treatment given. Troth is almost substituted for marriage. What pastor counsellor has not had a boy and girl declare before him their deep love, their troth, unwilling to hear of some down-to-earth considerations regarding their proposed union, and then to see the troth break down in a matter of months? And by broadening "adultery" to cover all the ways in which marital breakdown may occur (p. 62), then suggesting that the only right and kind solution for a "dead marriage" is divorce (pp. 49, 57, 65), a door is opened that ignores "the corruption of man (which) is apt to study unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage." (Confession of Faith, XXIV, 6)

No one denies that there are marriages that suffer and come far short of the joyful and mutual delight of the partners in each other that marriage ought to provide, but this playing fast and loose with the words of Scripture is not going to remedy the situation, any more than does Fletcher's deliberate pitting of "love" against Scripture. When Olthius comes to discuss abortion, he doesn't even mention Scripture.

There are needed rebukes that are humbling to the Christian, here, for the discerning—and affluent—reader, but this discussion comes far short of laying out biblical guidelines.

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

THE LIFE AND LABOURS OF ASAH EL NETTLETON, by Bennet Tyler and Andrew Bonar. The Banner

of Truth Trust, P. O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. 1975, pp. 454, hardbound. \$8.50.

In this day and age, very little is known about Asahel Nettleton, yet he was one of the leading figures in the American churches during the early to mid-1800s. He was known as a great evangelist, and was mightily used by the Holy Spirit in revivals throughout the New England area. The major cause of his obscurity was his conflict over the "new measures" of evangelism, as typified by the methods of Charles G. Finney. Finney advocated a "getting up" or "coming forward" type of evangelism. Dr. Nettleton, on the other hand, did not see the job of an evangelist as being one of "producing Christians". Nettleton stressed that the evangelist was to preach the Gospel, the claims and demands of God, the duties of sinners and the necessity of having the distinguishing evidences of regeneration. This conflict is still present within the Church of Christ today. There is a need to examine this issue and see what the Bible teaches. This book may be helpful in answering the question.

—Samuel Sterrett

PSALMS, by W. S. Plumer. The Banner of Truth Trust, P. O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pa., 17013. 1975, reprint of 1867, pp. 1211. \$18.95.

The Banner of Truth Trust has published another fine commentary in their Geneva series of commentaries. This commentary is a republication of an 1867 edition by a Southern Presbyterian minister who spent the last ten years of his life as a professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, South Carolina.

This is not a "simple, devotional exposition" of the Psalms which is aimed at stirring the heart alone. At the same time, it is not so entrenched in scholarship that it is concerned with the exercising of the mind and forgets the heart. Dr. Plumer causes the reader to follow him as he digs deeper in search of the finest gems.

Dr. Plumer uses a threefold method: (1) He gives some introductory comments of each Psalm, in which he considers the authorship and time-setting of the Psalm. (2) A critical examination of the text. It is during this examination that Dr. Plumer states some of the opinions of the great theologians and expositors of past ages. (3) Following the critical examination Plumer gives a list of doctrinal and practical remarks for the Christian to meditate upon and apply to his heart.

This is a critical commentary, and in these days of easy and quick answers it will require much patience and energy to read this work. Yet it will be of benefit to those Christians who have a great desire to learn and meditate upon God's Word.

—Samuel Sterrett

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, by C. R. Vaughan. The Banner of Truth Trust, P. O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. 1975, pp. 415. \$8.95.

There have been many questions asked in recent years about "the gifts of the Holy Spirit." There have been books written telling us how to get these gifts, or avoid these gifts. They argue that the Church today is in possession of these "miraculous gifts" of the Apostolic era. In view of the controversy about this issue, it seems very appropriate that the Banner of Truth Trust would publish this book by Vaughan, **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**.

Dr. Vaughan does not accept the notion of the "miraculous gifts" of the Apostolic Age as a "second blessing" upon those Christians who seek after spiritual gifts. These gifts have not been a treasure that because of the dead spiritual condition of the Church have been lost and are now being re-discovered. Dr. Vaughan presents a picture of the gift of the Spirit in the believer the moment that the Spirit awakens the consciousness of the sinner and brings the sinner to turn from death unto life. The gift of the Spirit is His leading a Christian in the way of salvation, conforming his life to the life of Christ in the process of sanctification. To sum up the content of this book in one sentence, the gift of the Spirit is His work of Regeneration and sanctification.

—Samuel Sterrett

I and II THESSALONIANS, by Geoffrey B. Wilson. The Banner of Truth Trust, P. O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pa., 17013. 1975. pp. 124. \$1.65.

The Rev. Geoffrey B. Wilson, pastor of the Birkby Baptist Church, Huddersfield, has published his sixth commentary in the series on the New Testament Epistles. The Epistles to the Thessalonians are probably Paul's most neglected Epistles. But they deal with a subject that should be the great hope and prayer of all Christians: the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. Wilson's exposition is in a style that is very clear and easily read. He calls it "a digest of Reformed comment". He explains that in his Preface: "My aim in this series is to simplify and condense the thought of the great commentators on the Epistles for the benefit of a wider circle of readers. . .".

This reviewer recommends this commentary to all Christians.

—Samuel Sterrett

CHRISTIAN MISSION IN THE MODERN WORLD, by John R. W. Stott. Intersity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1975 pp. 128, \$2.95.

Today more than ever, we need to see our relationship with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ and His command to proclaim the wonderful news of salvation. This is the personal commitment and love from which Dr. Stott addresses himself. Yet today there are two views of evangelism: 1) The "traditional" view which concentrates on the verbal proclamation and the total rejection of society (this leads to a withdrawing from the world). 2) The "standard ecumenical" viewpoint which concentrates almost solely upon social welfare. Dr. Stott after presenting these two views says that we need a "more balanced and more Biblical way of defining the mission of the Church, and of relating to one another the evangelistic and social responsibilities of the people of God." (p. 20) This is done by a careful defining of five terms: Missions, Evangelism, Dialogue, Salvation, and Conversion.

This work is one that will challenge all Christians to re-think and meditate upon the command to spread the Gospel to all peoples and in seeking to discover the power of the Holy Spirit in evangelism.

—Samuel Sterrett

FIRST PETER (two volume set), by John Brown. Banner of Truth Trust, P. O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. Vol. I, pp. 577. Vol. II, pp. 650, 1975, reprint. \$18.95 for the two-volume set.

The Banner of Truth has always maintained a standard of publishing the finest works and reprints, that uphold the doctrines of Reformed or Evangelical Calvinism. In an age in which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is presented in a watered-down version, it is almost like a refreshing breath of spring air to see works of this nature published.

This reviewer found that the breaking down of the chapters of the First Epistle of Peter into topical paragraphs made for interesting reading. One of the reasons for this arrangement was that the material was first presented to Dr. Brown's congregation. This review will close with C. H. Spurgeon's opinion of this work: "It affords us a grammatical interpretation, together with an exposition, at once exegetical, doctrinal, and practical. It is a standard work."

—Samuel Sterrett

Religious Terms Defined

SCEPTIC or SKEPTIC. 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.)

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 scorners 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.

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. The personal, visible, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth, in like manner as He ascended, which will take place at the Last Day, and will put a sudden stop to the age-long process of human history.

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 specifically exercised in connection with the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:28).

SELF-EXISTENCE OF GOD. The truth that God exists of himself, independently of all other beings, without a cause, without an origin, and without a purpose outside of himself. (The same truth is sometimes expressed by saying that God is a self-contained Being.)

SELFISHNESS. One of the forms or manifestations of

sin, by which a person seeks to please himself without regard to the needs or rights of others. It is sometimes stated that selfishness is the essence of sin, but this is an error. The essence of sin is not selfishness, but enmity to God. An act may be unselfish, and yet sinful, as for example when someone gives his life as a martyr for a false religion.

SEMIPELAGIANISM. A Theological system of the Middle Ages, essentially the same as the Arminianism of the present day. Semipelagianism taught: 1. That what God does toward saving any, He does equally for all. 2) That Christ died for all men. 3. That man, before receiving divine grace, can have faith in Christ and holy desires. 4. That man's free will, by which he accepts divine grace, has not been rendered impotent by sin. This system is properly called Cassianism, after Cassian, its promoter.

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.

SIN. "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." (S. C. 14)

SLANDER. Uttering false speeches against our neighbor, to the prejudice of his fame, safety, welfare; and that out of malignity, vanity, rashness, ill nature or bad design. (Buck's Theological Dictionary)

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March, 1976. No. 2928, \$5.00.

Later contributions will be acknowledged in our next issue. Without such generous contributions as these it would be hardly possible to continue publishing the magazine, as subscriptions and sales of back issues and reprints provide only about half of the amount needed. We are trying to resist the tide of inflation by not raising our subscription rates. Many thanks to all who have helped. Your contributions are deductible from your Federal taxable income if you live in the United States.

J. G. Vos, Manager
3408 Seventh Avenue
Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010
U.S.A.

Special Announcements

The following two items are included here for the purpose of informing our readers of the availability of two publications of great importance, which deal with issues being keenly debated today. These are not to be regarded as advertisements. **Blue Banner Faith and Life** accepts no advertising. What follows is published here because we want our readers to know about these two items and where to get them. —Editor

Abortion: How does God's Word regard the unborn child?

An examination of the relevant Biblical passages in an attempt to determine how the unborn child is regarded. The study is made on the background of the Biblical prohibition, "You shall not kill," and on the basis for that prohibition that man is made in God's image. Passages in the Old Testament and also the Lukan passage regarding the incarnation of Jesus are considered. The conclusion is drawn that the Bible regards the unborn child as a human made in God's image and therefore that the prohibition against taking the life of another in the light of this consideration prohibits abortion.

Available from
Dr. George W. Knight, III
Covenant Theological Seminary
12330 Conway Road
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@25c per copy, plus 13c postage,
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The Role Relation of Man and Woman and the Teaching/Ruling Functions in the Church

The purpose is to determine from the passages that purport to deal with the issue the teaching and its bases. The fundamental equality of man and woman as made in the image of God is the foundational background upon which the specific passages, I Tim. 2:11-15; I Cor. 11:1-16 and I Cor. 14:33b (34)-38, are considered. I Tim. 2:11-15 indicates that women may not teach or have authority over men in the life of the church. The reasons given by Paul are that woman was created from man and thus this establishes that man is to be the head over woman (I Tim. 2:13; I Cor. 11:3, 7-10, 14:34). The significance of the Fall (I Tim. 2:14), the uniform practice of the churches based on the creation order (cf. I Cor. 14:33, 36) and, finally, therefore his own apostolic statement as the commandment of the Lord (I Cor. 14:37; I Tim. 2:12), Paul argues that the headship of the man over woman is analogous to God over Christ (I Cor. 11:3) which shows how he can affirm both their equality and the woman's submission to man. The arguments are seen to be foundational, i.e., creation order establishing the role between man and woman; they are recognized as the ground for the relationship in the marriage realm and not culturally relative. The conclusion is that men should exercise the headship positions in the church as in the home, recognizing however that diaconal functions are open to women in the church.

Available from
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St. Louis, Missouri 63141
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Enoch Walked With God

We know that Enoch walked with God;
A man of faith was he;
How close to God he must have been!
He did not die, we see.
Perhaps one day his steps were slow
And God said tenderly:
"We're closer to My House than yours;
Come now, go home with Me!"

—Esther Belle Heins

Four Little Words

Four little words of prayer to God
Sometimes are hard to say;
"Thy will be done," comes haltingly
When self gets in the way.
As we surrender—then we claim;
When turning loose—we take;
Our yielding gives warm peace and joy
As self's cold chains we break.

(poem suggested by **The Cycle of Prayer**, by Ralph A. Herring)

—Esther Belle Heins



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The River of Salvation

(Based on Ezekiel 47)

By J. G. Vos

In distant Babylon brought low
Ezekiel saw the waters flow
Forth from beneath the Temple broad,
Ev'n from the altar of his God.

Jerusalem was far away,
And yet he saw it clear as day.
In vision then the holy man
Stood watching as the waters ran.

Eastward he saw the waters run;
Forth from the city gate, and on
And on they flowed, and yet increased,
And further flowed, and never ceased.

A thousand cubits on they ran,
And through them forth there went a man,
Who led the priestly seer on,
Whose vision had but just begun.

To ankle depth, to knees, to waist,
Three thousand cubits soon were passed;
Another thousand, and the flood
Became a river deep and broad.

Too deep for any man to wade—
Waters to swim in God had made.
And all this mighty flood of water
Flowed from the Temple and the altar.

Then standing on the river's bank
The seer noted rank on rank
Of growing trees that fringed the river,
Both on the one side and the other.

The seer's guide then spoke to him,
And told the prospect of the stream:
"This river, flowing toward the east,
Waters the desert, and at last

"It flows into the great Salt Sea,
In which no living thing can be;
And by the river's wondrous feat
The briny water shall be sweet.

"And where the mystic river flows,
What once was dead both lives and grows.
Where once no life could be at all,
The fish shall teem, both great and small.

"And all along, upon the shore,
The fishers stand, to catch and store
Fish of all kinds, exceeding many,
Where formerly there were not any.

"Yet not all places shall be healed
By this great river, God-revealed:
The marshes and each miry place
Shall still remain devoid of grace.

"But all along the river's flow
On either bank the trees shall grow,
Whose fruit shall be for food of men,
And leaves for healing medicine.

"Arising from its Temple-source
It shall bring life through all its course;
For, flowing from that altar-place,
It is the river of God's grace."

O seer in far Babylon
Of long ago, thy work is done!
Thy vision is a revelation
Of the divinely-wrought salvation.

And from thy vision we have learned
This truth: salvation is not earned,
But is a gift of God's free grace
Which puts all boasting out of place.

Nor does it come by pow'r of man,
But by God's great eternal plan,
According to His own election,
To bring His people to perfection.

And from the river's origin—
The altar. remedy for sin—
We, who are sinners, realize
Salvation is by sacrifice:

The sacrifice of One who laid
His own life down, and fully paid,
By shedding His own precious blood,
The awful debt His people owed.

Oh, may that river yet increase
Through all the earth, and never cease,
Till God's elect in every nation
Are brought to their ordained salvation.

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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Studies in the Book of Revelation

(Continued from last issue)

LESSON 72

THE MYSTERY OF BABYLON, continued. Revelation 17

Revelation 17:9. This is highly baffling. Great Christian scholars who believe in the Bible as the Word of God are baffled by it, and of all things I am baffled by it; please don't think I claim to know all the answers. I hope we can get something out of this, though, that will help us in our Christian life and witness.

Now, the mind that hath wisdom; it requires a God-given wisdom to figure this out at all. A person who isn't a Christian will think it means nothing. It's just a sort of confusion of images and figures. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. Now this is an obvious reference to the ancient city of Rome. Rome was built on seven hills. Today the hills are eroded off and the valleys partly filled in but you can still see it in a map of Rome; they identify the seven hills that Rome is built on. And it says here seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, which is to say that this is identified with ancient Rome, and similarly a little further down in verse 18 of this chapter, "the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Obviously again, a reference to Rome, that held a world empire for a long time; it ran from the Euphrates river to southern Scotland. Rudyard Kipling in one of his poems describes the Roman wall across the island of Britain, and here's a row of Roman forts down there; to the north of here is uncivilized territory, the barbarians, but south of this the Roman civilization all landscaped out and everything. He describes two Roman soldiers getting up at early dawn and playing reveille on bugles or trumpets and they worship Mithras. A false religion which was a serious rival of early Christianity, it was very popular in the Roman army. But in Rudyard Kipling's poem he shouts, "Mithras, god of the morning, our trumpets waken the wall; Rome is above the nations, but thou art over all." Now this is worshipping an idol of course, that's Mithraism; but Rome is above the nations; right or wrong Rome was above the nations, and so you read here, that great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth. Now, this does not mean that this is limited to ancient Rome. Rome as a great metropolis and city, faded away during the Middle Ages until it became a

relatively lightly populated and insignificant place, and probably Rome in the time of Nero, had a population greater than the city of Rome even today, or as great. But this is the form of Babylon in John's day, and this is the clearest look you have in the book of Revelation that he is dealing with Rome. You realize this was a tricky and touchy subject for John to mention even by a veiled allusion such as this. People who were out to get and persecute Christians could come upon this and call this treason against Caesar, to say a thing like this. He doesn't come out therefore and say Rome. It's no use getting yourself in trouble needlessly if it isn't required out of loyalty to Christ. But against this veiled sort of allusion or suggestion, to us the meaning is unmistakable: this stands for Rome. Now not the Roman Catholic system or papal Rome as it was in the Middle Ages, but pagan Rome as it was in John's day, a great city described as a center of wealth, pleasure, luxury, vice and wickedness.

Now the harlot always stands close to the bride. You notice two verses, 21:9, and 17:1, the judgment of Babylon that is described and alluded to in this chapter; when does it happen? Has this happened already, is there a once for all affair or is it something that can be repeated, or is it still in the future? And of course opinions may differ on this, but according to the scholars that I'm trying to follow here, Babylon's judgment is continuous and historical, over and over again, but reaches a climax finally in the future just before Christ's second coming. It has happened over and over again. Now, there was a great fire in Rome in the time of Nero, untold wealth and luxury, and untold provision for the pursuit of pleasure, perished in the flames. The story is that Nero got on the roof of his palace and fiddled while Rome burned. This is doubted by historians, but Nero blamed it on the Christians, that they had set fire to Rome, which of course was a false charge, just to get it off of himself. And that Nero had set the fire to see a real blaze; he was probably unbalanced mentally; but tremendous wealth and luxury perished in the flames as well as probably tens of thousands of people went down in the fire. This would be, you see, in the providence of God one in-

stance of the righteous judgment of God on this city which was such a center of everything in this world that is against God. Now, later on Rome was attacked by the barbarian tribes and sacked by the Vandals and the other tribes that attacked Rome and repeatedly the city that had been the mistress and ruler of the kingdoms of the world suffered defeat and went down into ashes and looting. So here would be a repeated judgment on the Babylon of those times. So over and over through history, but reaching a climax perhaps, at least according to Dr. Hendriksen's over-all interpretation of this book, before the time of Christ's second coming. Now notice the picture of the woman clothed in purple and scarlet, the garments of royalty; 17:4, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls; here is elegance and wealth and luxury, ostentatious luxury, featured without limit here, and in her hand a golden cup. Now if somebody offered you a golden cup you'd expect to get something pretty good, to drink out of a golden cup. At the college you go to buy a glass of milk, juice or coca cola, 15 cents, and if you get it in a paper cup which holds a little more than a glass does, 2 cents extra for the paper cup. So you don't expect to get anything out of the ordinary to drink out of a paper cup. You go to a picnic and have tomato juice maybe or soda pop, or milk, out of a paper cup, ordinary things that people drink. But if somebody would offer you a golden cup made of solid gold you'd wonder, what are they giving me to drink out of this, surely this doesn't contain pepsi-cola, this must have something important in it. So this is the appeal of Babylon to show their desires and their longings for thirst and pleasure and satisfaction, here comes the woman dressed in purple and scarlet, and she hands you a golden cup. The world's promised pleasures and joy and satisfaction and fulfillment and all this represented by the nature of this golden cup. So if somebody takes it to drink it expecting a real satisfaction, what do they find? It's filled with filth, abominations and filthiness of her fornications; everything that is against God; now Hendriksen suggests here the sex magazines for sale on our newsstands, this is a very obvious example. But he says take your own risk. The things that the world offers, that promise satisfaction and do not satisfy. But they really draw a person away from God. Now is Babylon offering a golden cup to people today? You know advertising used to be to put the seller in touch with the buyer. If you had a haywagon for sale, you put it in Poor Richard's Almanac and the fellow who needs a haywagon can go and ask you how much you want for it, or whatever the item might be. Potatoes maybe. But today advertising, not entirely so, but largely is devoted to making things very glamorous and appealing, and to creating a desire for something that people really do not need. The idea of such an appeal is that it creates a desire, and it creates a discontent with what people have today. Could a Christian be a reader of commercials on the radio under present-day conditions? That's an interesting question. I suppose there are Christians who are. I remember in Kansas we used to listen to WIBW from Topeka, our best radio station. And here was a commercial

that told about Bayer aspirin, the best there is, it works wonders you know, and 15 minutes later there was the same voice, unmistakably the same voice, telling about St. Joseph's aspirin, and it doesn't work wonders, but no kind works faster than St. Joseph's. And the same way with Folger's coffee and Maxwell House. Folger's coffee really hits the spot, and Maxwell House on the other hand is good to the last drop. But all of this is intended to make you want something different from what you have or from what you haven't got, that maybe you oughtn't to want it so badly as all that. The glamor and the appeal and the glitter. And the person who is not a Christian and doesn't know Jesus Christ is just absolutely hypnotized and just enticed by all this. Does modern advertising sort of brainwash people? I see it does, Mr., you're nodding assent there. Well, is there more than one way of doing this? I heard of a woman saying to her husband, "George you ought to see the mink coat that Walter Jones bought for his wife this week." Now why does a woman say that to her husband? And you know there are women who kill their husbands slowly, by slow murder, by their expensive taste in clothes, cars, houses and so forth. You know, wear them to the bone. And there are men who forget all about God and go out into this world, and they're in the rat race of business, not because they really need more money, but because this is the thing that has them hypnotized and they can't stop, they've got to go on and on until they finally die of a heart attack at age 55, maybe, or something like this. But, that is the appeal of Babylon, money and the things that money will buy far beyond what we really need. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not opposed to our enjoying the products of modern invention and technology. I'm not telling you if you have a television set to take it out of your house. But what is your attitude toward what you see on that? Does that really idolatrous appeal get you? or can you turn it off and say, well I'm a Christian and I have Christ and I'm satisfied and I don't need to have the very most expensive and latest and so forth that we see and hear over the radio and TV. This is the appeal by which people are led away from God. Now I said on a previous Sabbath there are hundreds that are drawn away from God by the first beast, the wild beast out of the sea, and maybe thousands by the second beast, the false prophet, the second beast out of the earth that stands for sub-Christian and anti-Christian religion and culture, and untold millions that are drawn away from God by Babylon, the seductive power of the world considered as a godless system of pleasure and luxury and enjoyment; this is Babylon. Allright, the golden cup that appeals so strongly to people, and yet when they get it it doesn't satisfy, it leaves a bad taste in your mouth, and it is filled with evil and abomination. Now notice the woman rides the beast. The world as center of persecution and the world as center of seduction work closely together, these are in agreement. These work closely together, so the woman here, the great harlot, the counterfeit of the bride, is spoken of as riding on the beast with the seven heads and the ten

horns. Here are two phases of the anti-Christian system in the world, and they are in harmony; they work together in this way.

Now let us notice one thing in the Old Testament. John was obviously thoroughly familiar with the Old Testament; much of the imagery in Revelation is taken from much of the imagery in the Old Testament. The history of Balak. You recall Balak king of Moab was terribly afraid he would be attacked and conquered by the people of Israel under Moses; this was when Moses was still living. The Israelites were forbidden to fight the Moabites, because they were kin of the Moabites. They were to fight the Canaanites or the Amorites. But there were three little kingdoms there that they were forbidden to fight unless attacked. The Ammonites, the Moabites and the Edomites. The Edomites descended from Esau, the Ammonites and Moabites both descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew; therefore these are their kin, slightly removed. And at the time of Moses however their whole world-view and ideology and religion was opposed to that of Israel. Now the people of Israel carefully had made a complete detour around the kingdom of Moab to avoid conflict. And after that they went on up more towards the Sea of Galilee and back again and conquered Sihon King of the Amorites and Og King of Bashan, the man who had the 13-foot bedstead, they killed Og and took the bedstead, and then they came back, and now as you see there is the river there between them and here's the kingdom of Moab. And Balak king of Moab is afraid that they will attack him, although there's no reason for this; it's carefully avoided. And he figures, I can't fight them, there's too many of them. He can't fight them, look what happened to the Egyptians. So instead he engages Balaam the soothsayer and fortune teller and general dabbler in the occult and the forbidden, to come and put a hex on them. Put a magic spell on them, a curse. And offers to pay him handsomely. Balaam finally comes, and the curse he comes to pronounce turns out to be a blessing. There's a whole series of marvelous prophecies, a wicked man but evidently God spoke to him on this occasion. And finally this failed; Balak refuses to pay for this kind of service. Quite understandably. Pay him for blessing my enemies, certainly not. So then Balaam starts to go home, but he tells Balak, the reason you can't do anything to these people is they're holy people and their God is among them; that's why you can't get anything on them. Balak, I'll tell you a secret way to do it. You get them involved in wholesale wrongdoing, and their God will turn against them, and Balak, that will give you your chance. This is in Numbers 31:16 and 25:1 and 2; instigated this way by Balaam, the Moabites put on an idol-worshipping and fornication festival, with all the evil and uncleanness of the fertility cults of that part of the world. And the people of Israel are invited to come in and participate in this. And a whole lot of them did. This was followed by a war in which Balaam was captured and Moses let him tell his story and then said, You're a war criminal and you must be put to

death. But Balaam comes down in Scripture in the first place as the man who will do anything for money that's his god, and secondly the man who taught Balak to use seduction where military action wouldn't work to seduce the people of Israel; now I'll read these two verses and then we'll stop. Numbers 34:16. "And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespasses against the Lord in the matter of Peor (fertility festival) and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord." And then in Numbers 25:1 and 2.. "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods." Now this is what Balaam had put Balak up to, and the people did eat and bow down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. Now what is our attitude toward Babylon? Babylon is very much alive today. Ancient pagan Rome has gone down in ruins. Something quite different from the city of Rome today, and Babylon on the Euphrates, they have to dig under ground to find the ruins of it. All these forms of anti-Christian seduction are past, you see, and yet Babylon is present, in the world today. And if you have eyes to see you can see it, and the world is so hypnotized that they fall for it, like the children in the old story following the pied piper, they don't realize they are being enticed away from God. What is our attitude? Is it compromise or is it separation? Confusion or understanding of what the real issue is, and complacency or witness? I remember one of my professors, Dr. R.B. Kuiper in Westminster Seminary said, "If you are completely comfortable in the company of people to whom Jesus Christ means nothing, there is something wrong with your Christianity." It doesn't mean you shouldn't have anything to do with them, but if you feel completely comfortable in the social fellowship of people that aren't Christians, and perhaps prefer that to the company of the saints you should question, am I really saved and do I really love God?

I think in order to be sure to have time to deal somewhat adequately with this, I'll read this myself instead of reading it responsively, and then we'll take it up. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet: but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall

give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is the Lord of lords, and the King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen and faithful. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the

whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

LESSON 73

THE MYSTERY OF BABYLON. Rev. 17, cont'd.

Now next to the section of the 20th chapter which deals with the much-debated question of the thousand years, this is perhaps the most difficult single section in the book of Revelation; after much trying to figure it out, I am still considerably baffled by parts of this. Partly because the symbolism which the writer, the Apostle John, uses fluctuates from one thing to another, he sort of shifts gears with a fluid gearshift that doesn't tell you it's shifting gears as it goes along here; so this requires some figuring out. Now notice at the beginning of verse 9, "Here is the mind that hath wisdom." This is a little notation here that what is about to come is difficult and complicated and not superficially obvious, but requires pondering and careful consideration to understand it, it is not as simple as A-B-C. This does not mean that we cannot get benefits from it, neither does it mean we cannot understand it substantially, for surely we can; with the help of the Holy Spirit it is possible to understand, not everything in Scripture, but what we need. Now here is the mind that hath wisdom. Next we are told here the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, that's in verse 9, and at the end of this chapter, in verse 18, the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. Now first of all this cannot be other than a reference to the city and empire of Rome. In the first place, obviously so, and it would require the most ingenious distortion to make it mean anything else. It does not mean that this means only the Roman Empire and the city of Rome. But this is what it starts with. This is the take-off point here for this moonshot of the inspired writer in this chapter. The city of Rome is not named by the word Rome, of course; John had no wish to have anybody arrested that might be found with a copy of this book in their hands; but still it is obviously intended to mean Rome. Now not the Rome of today, and presumably not primarily at least the papal Rome of the Middle Ages, but the pagan Rome of John's day, the Roman Empire as a World power that tried for a long time to destroy the Christian church and Christianity. The seven mountains on which the seducer or the harlot sits. Now verse 8 at the beginning speaks of the beast, that John had seen, which was and is not and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit into perdition; this causes all except the real saints and elect of God to wonder with great wonderment, verse 8. This refers presumably not to an individual but to the Roman Empire or in a broader sense the world government that persecutes God's people which have a time of quiet and then

it comes back to life and gets active against the saints again. The beast that was and is not and is going to come out of the bottomless pit ends up in hell or perdition.

Now this does not refer primarily to Nero, but we should take note of the myth of Nero revived that was current in the world of the Apostle John. This of course is not a true idea but it was common all over the world of John's day. Nero, who probably committed suicide about the year 68, of course a hater of Christians and under whom Paul was beheaded; the story got around that Nero although dead was coming back from the dead at a future time and would collect an army off the border of India somewhere and make war against the Roman empire and fight against it. "Nero revived." And this story was held by millions of people; how it got started and how they could explain this and believe it we don't know. But undoubtedly this was also in the minds of some early Christians, although of course the Bible doesn't say and it isn't true that Nero would really come back, and as a matter of fact he never did. John however was truly aware of this story about Nero, dead but to come back as a world figure and power again and he uses this as a kind of vehicle to teach Christian truth, which is not really about Nero at all. But he uses this as a sort of conveyor belt or vehicle to teach Christian ideas here. And the future anti-Christ, I take it the ultimate embodiment of evil, will not be Nero in person, but will be a future sinister character like Nero, sort of a second Nero.

And this I think, we should take up. I want to call your attention to a parallel in the Bible about somebody else that seems to warrant this kind of interpretation here. Now let's go back to the Old Testament, at the end of it, in Malachi chapter 4 verse 5, the next to the last verse of the Old Testament. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Now you take that literally just on faith to say Elijah is coming back. He did of course appear with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration for a few minutes, but that's not apparently what this speaks of. It speaks of him coming back and the next verse, the last verse in the Old Testament, he carries on an evangelistic campaign, "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." So the Old Testament ends with a prediction that Elijah will come back and his activity will be

such as to produce a spiritual revival. The heart of the fathers turned to the children and the heart of the children turned to the fathers and the curse of God averted. Now you might say surely that means Elijah himself is coming back. But when you turn to the New Testament, let's take a look first of all to the gospel according to Luke, chapter 1, this is where the angel Gabriel is talking to Zacharias the priest, the father of John the Baptist, and chapter 1, it speaks of the birth of John from verse 15: "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, (that's simply the Greek spelling of Elijah) to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, an obvious allusion to that verse in Malachi, turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." So here Zacharias is told that his son who is to be born will go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah and will fulfill that prophecy back there in Malachi. Now a third reference, there are two or three places where it could be looked up, Matthew chapter 17 is one of them, and the other is in Mark, chapter 17, verses 10-13: "And His disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they know him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." Now when the Old Testament predicts that Elijah will come back before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord this does not mean Elijah in person; as explained by these references in the New Testament and the words of Jesus himself, it is John the Baptist that this is all about. But he comes in the spirit and power of Elijah, so you can say John is the second Elijah. He's another Elijah. He does in his day what the original Elijah did by the help of God in his day, to turn people back to the Lord from their idols and their false belief and sin. So the Bible uses this method of handling things, Elijah will come back but it is not Elijah in person; he's in heaven; but it is John the Baptist who comes in the spirit and power of Elijah and is like Elijah, so you can say he is a second Elijah. Now in the same way, let's say the book of Revelation handles this and alludes quite obviously to this Nero myth about Nero coming back. The future culmination of the power of evil after all its fluxes and transformation, I take it will finally be an individual person and this will not be Nero. Neither will he reign over the Roman Empire, which is long dead and gone into ashes. But a kind of second Nero. You could say he's going to out-Nero Nero maybe, he'll come like the Nero of old in his bitter hatred of Christianity and of God and will do similar things, the fulfillment of evil. Now this does not mean of course that John really believes the current popular story about

Nero coming back from the dead. He merely uses this as a take-off point and then predicts what is really going to happen in the counsel of God.

Now this popular Nero myth is used by John with another idea from the Old Testament. And that it is slaying by God of the chaos monster called Leviathan. It corresponds to the beast here on which the woman, this seducer, sits and rides. And we might note that many verses might be looked up on this; Isaiah chapter 27, verse 1, "In that day shall the Lord with his sore, and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan the crooked serpent: and shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." Now what do you suppose that means, and how is that related to what we've been studying here in the book of Revelation? Quite obviously John of course knew that and furthermore had it in mind, leviathan. There was an ancient Babylonian myth (which is pure nonsense) of conflicts between Marduk the god of Babylon and the chaos monster, and they have pictures that show it, it's quite a scene, but this is pure mythology. Marduk, called Merodach in the Old Testament, slew the chaos monster. But this idea of the true God destroying the monster of evil in the world occurs in the Old Testament and the monster is called leviathan. Now you won't find Leviathan in the zoo. If they had had a zoo in Jerusalem in Isaiah's day they might have had big monster there or a crocodile or a hippopotamus, but anyway leviathan stands here for a spiritual idea. Leviathan is the Old Testament equivalent to the beast of the book of Revelation, the beast that the woman rides on. In the Old Testament it means the nations that were bitterly hostile to and destructive of Israel, the covenant people of God. And first of all Egypt. When you find Egypt called Rahab that has nothing to do with Rahab of Jericho; this is a name for Egypt as the power of evil. The house of bondage of slavery and the power of evil that afflicted and persecuted and tried to destroy God's people; and similarly leviathan, first of all is Egypt, and then later the Assyrians and the Babylonians and the Persians and the whole line of them down in the Old Testament. These powerful empires against which Israel or Judah were physically defenseless, which tried to crush the life out of them, motivated by sinister motivations from Satan from behind the scenes, trying to crush the life out of Israel, that's leviathan, and it says there in that day the Lord will punish and destroy with his sword leviathan the crooked serpent and slay the dragon that is in the sea, this is the same kind of thing that is spoken of when it speaks of Jesus Christ making war with the beast and his cohorts and overcoming them. Now John has used these two symbols, this is what makes this chapter so hard to understand. He's got them sort of blended in, the idea of leviathan or the monster that is against God's people being destroyed, and the Nero myth. The beast that is spoken of throughout here is the power of evil which manifests itself throughout history in the wicked empires, one after the other. And in John's day it is no longer Babylon or the Persians or Assyria anymore or Egypt but the Roman

empire. Now if you read the book of Acts you notice that in the early period of Christianity it was the Jews that persecuted the church and the Romans that protected it; clear through to the end of the book of Acts it is the Romans that protected Christianity. Paul would have been assassinated half a dozen times if the Jews had had their way, but the Romans protected him with forms of legal procedure and so on. The book of Acts ends up with Paul imprisoned in Rome but the evidence indicates he was acquitted and released and later arrested a second time and that on a charge of treason, probably, and the prison epistles, Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians and Philemon were written during his second imprisonment; that time the Romans were persecuting him. But all through the book of Acts it is the Jews that persecute Christianity, the Romans with their structure of law and order that protect him. And Paul was therefore right that the civil government is a minister of God to men for good. To reward them that do good and to punish them that do evil. Now you could say that all during that length of time, although there was such a thing as the Roman Empire, it was not really persecuting Christianity. Nero was the first that did anything really important along that line. And even after Nero it all subsided and there were a number of emperors in there that didn't seem to bother with persecuting Christianity. Then when John was writing this book, a change was just coming in; Domitian was the emperor and he was a vicious hater of Christians and of Christianity and a bitter persecutor of them. Just at the turn of the century, in the 90's to the 100's, in there. And after that persecution continued off and on very bitterly for over 200 years, commonly rated as ten great persecutions, finally ending with Constantine who decreed religious toleration, and even after that there was a little flare up under the next emperor, Julian the Apostate, but it didn't last very long. So you could say that the beast represented in John's day by the Roman empire is not as yet a persecuting power; it was lying low. It was, it had a history but in John's day and up till then it hadn't been doing anything very much significantly against Christianity, so it had been lying low. It was more or less dormant, but soon it is to wake up and arise, so John writes and this is implied in what he writes here and manifests itself in furious wickedness, and this will be a succession of Nero-like persecutors and finally, in my humble judgment which may or may not be correct, a future anti-Christ who will out-Nero Nero, who will be the ultimate embodiment and incarnation of everything that is sinful, evil, wicked, against God and therefore he will be the ultimate Nero. Now the beast that was and is not had an existence as an evil and anti-God power before; you see it was, way back there, there was Egypt, and the Aramaeans and then the Assyrians that brought untold destruction on God's people, that was truly unprecedented. It's one thing to kill your enemy while a battle is going on, it's another thing to take your captured enemy and skin him alive. Or impale him on a sharp spike and leave him to die; he'll be suffering agony for about ten days. This is what the Assyrians did; the mere mention of their name drove mortal terror down

the people's backs, cold shivers. That was the Assyrians. Surely the chaos monster and the beast and the leviathan of that time. Now, they pass and then comes the Neo-Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar which in turn persecuted God's people. It passed, and was replaced by the Neo-Persian empire, which at first was not so bad but later became also oppressive. And this in turn was knocked out by Alexander the Great and his successor the Seleucid empire of Antioch of Syria, again with unbelievable cruelty with people boiled in oil, women and their babies tied to their backs and hurled over a cliff to their death and so forth. An image of Jupiter put up in the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, and the whole place sprayed with pork soup to desecrate it. A hog sacrificed on the altar of burnt offering in the temple of the Lord, that's what happened under Antiochus Epiphanes. Now all of this was long gone by when John wrote the book of Revelation, but you could say that these were always. Just go back and read the Old Testament and you could call it leviathan, call it the beast that was, but in John's day it was not; everything was quiet on Patmos. He was in prison because he was a Christian but he wasn't killed, and it was no real massacre of Christians going on at that time. But this is going to change and there will be a future outcome. Now another verse in Isaiah, chapter 51, verse 9. One thing you notice in the book of Revelation is that John must have been very much at home in the Old Testament, he must have been a very thorough student of it. Isaiah 51:9, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord, awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?" The Old Testament counterpart of what you have here in Revelation chapter 17, the dragon of Rahab in Egypt. Now the Roman Empire has come out of the abyss of quietness and sort of a sleepy situation and will persecute Christians but finally it will go into perdition. Neither leviathan of the Old Testament nor Rome in John's day can triumph over God and Jesus Christ and His church. Verse 11 of chapter 17 relates this to the mysterious Nero figure, the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goes into perdition. Now when I first read that I was completely baffled with it, somebody had to be talking through his hat here, the eighth and is of the seven, and goes into perdition. Seven kings and here's one that's called the eight and yet he's said to be one of the seven and he goes to hell; at least that's one thing that understandable about it. His outcome or his end. Now, I'll read you a quote from the New Bible Commentary of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, "The full possession by Rome of the characteristics of the chaos monster can be only when it incarnates itself in the returned Nero." Now that doesn't mean Nero himself, it means the second Nero, like John the Baptist was the second Elijah. "This demonic king shall fully share the nature of the power of evil that their victory can be delineated in the same terms; it is the beast incarnate. Such a fearful manifestation of supernatural power ceases all on earth to wonder except those names that are written in the book of life," verse 8, that's the end of that quote. Now

the seven heads we are told represent seven kings, and to John the number 7 is obviously a number of completeness, although sometimes in the Bible the number 10 stands for completeness. And this is true in China today; a woman in the South China mission said God has 10 sons; when she was asked how many sons God had she said 10, obviously intending to give a perfect answer. But John uses seven as a symbol of completeness. And he says of these kings in verse 10, five have fallen, that is the majority have passed, the line of Roman emperors no doubt here, one is still in existence, one is, this would probably be Domitian or the emperor that was reigning when John wrote this, and another will reign, the seventh, but when he comes, he'll continue a little while, the end of verse 10. Verse 11, the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth and is of the seven and goeth into perdition. Now first of all he must continue a little while. This recalls the very beginning of the book of Revelation, chapter 1, verse 3, "the time is at hand," and surely we realize God's timetable is different from ours, and in God's reckoning it is a short time, in our reckoning it may seem like a long time, but he must continue a little while, comparatively in God's reckoning a little, or short time. Now after the last human emperor, the beast will reveal itself, perhaps a long time after, in all its bestial character. The beast, verse 8, that was and is not, is the age-long power of evil, he will show himself as the eighth king but not in reality an eighth, because he will manifest himself in the form of one of the seven. Now people differ of course in interpretation of this. I think this is a future anti-Christ, he will be an eighth but in a way you can't call him an eighth, he's just like the seven and yet he is called here the eighth. Now the beast does not mean this future person but the whole empire or the evil that makes it evil like it is, which incarnates itself in the eighth king. The beast is the eighth king, not Nero himself; was and is not refers to the empire or the anti-Christian world power, whatever it is, Egypt, Assyria, Rome, Babylon or whatever. When however the beast is said to come out of the abyss the emphasis seems to be on the person who is the embodiment of evil. Now the 10 kings, verse 12 and 13, are confederate with anti-Christ. "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet: but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." The new Bible commentary suggests that these may be rulers of satellite states, in alliance with the main power, or governors of provinces; in any case their ultimate state is stated in verse 14, the Lamb shall overcome them, they will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them. And also it is stated that they give their power and strength unto the beast, they are in agreement with him and to do what he wants to have done. And the lamb shall overcome them, verse 14, until the words of God shall be fulfilled, that's in verse 17, a little further down. Now the waters, verse 15, which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. This is a very common Bible metaphor for the nations of the world, the waters. The wicked are like the troubled

sea, which cannot rest; water casts up mire and dirt. Did you ever think what the newspapers would be without politics to discuss, and it's like the weather, you know, it never comes to an end. Today's politics and international fiascos and so forth produce tomorrow, and history is like this, it's a chain reaction that's been going on since Adam and Eve sinned against God. And the waters are the endless restlessness of humanity in its collective capacity as a symbol for the nations of the world. The waters over which Rome ruled in John's day.

Now verse 16 here, the 10 horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. This is very baffling, it seems to speak of the anti-Christian ruler turning against the anti-Christian city, the beast will hate the harlot and destroy her, and eat her flesh, and so forth. You know this sounds very strange to us, Satan is divided against Satan here, his kingdom can't stand. However, you have to remember back of this is the overruling providence of God; the language here is drawn by John certainly from the book of Ezekiel, and this we should take a brief look at, Ezekiel 23, where the prophet Ezekiel shows how God uses one wicked power after another to chastise his people Israel on account of their sins. Ezekiel 23:25-29, "And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: and shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire. They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes, and take away thy fair jewels. Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more. For thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand of them from whom thy mind is alienated: And they shall deal with thee hatefully, and shall take away all thy labor, and shall leave thee naked and bare; and the nakedness of thy whoredom shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms." Now that is Ezekiel, and he talks there, God speaking through him, the Holy Spirit of course, how the nations of the world were permitted to punish the Jews or Israel because of their spiritual unfaithfulness to Jehovah, to God. That is the language which John has borrowed here in the book of Revelation to speak about the 10 kings and so forth turning against this wicked city, or the great seducer, the great harlot. There's no explanation given in Revelation here as to why the anti-Christian rulers turned against the anti-Christian city. We should realize, however, that God has time and again done this in history. He uses one wicked power to punish another one. He allows Assyria to afflict the people of Israel up to a time limit and then Assyria's time has come and then another wicked power equally against God or even more so jumps on the Assyrians and destroys them, so this is

true to life, it shows how God has allowed one anti-Christian power to attack and destroy another, back in history and no doubt in the future also.

Now three or four practical lessons from this, so that we will not simply be thinking about horns and so forth, but what it means to us in our own day, a little bit. And the first is the reality of evil power, the terrible reality of evil power in the world. Here we have evil concentrated and aimed against God's church and people, and to minimize it is blindness and folly. To dream that the world in its sinful condition, which we are told is endlessly against God, can really become friendly and helpful to God's cause, is a baseless dream. It is true that by God's common grace evil is restrained and a limit put to it, but that doesn't convert anybody nor does it change the inner nature of evil which is enmity against God. Secondly, God is the Lord of the past, present and future, everything, even the most terrible things, are under his control; he permits evil to rage, but only until the words of God shall be fulfilled, verse 17b. Nothing surprises God, nothing prevents the realization of his eternal counsel. Verse 17, God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, so these wicked men and wicked powers who are bent upon their own sinister and evil and terrible purposes, after all God is permitting this and is in a deeper dimension overruling this and making it to work out a plan. Just as when Joseph's brothers sold him into Egypt it was a crime, they hated him, it was all for a sin, of course, and yet Joseph later said, "It was not you that sent me hither, but God, to save much people alive." God has his purpose and the wicked nations of this world willy nilly, in spite of themselves, only fulfill it.

Now, "until the words of God shall be fulfilled," therefore world evil, terrible as it is, and real, is not beyond control, it is not like an automobile racing down a hill with no driver behind the steering wheel; God is in control even over the most sinister portions of evil, and he says to wicked men and wicked nations and

wicked forces, "Thus far thou shalt come but no farther." That ought to comfort us a little bit. Jesus Christ's ultimate victory shall be complete, verse 14. Whatever power wicked rulers and empires may have, Christ's power is infinitely greater and there can be no question about the outcome, that's in 14. Evil does and can become self destructive; here the 10 horns of the beast destroy the harlot, verse 16; this is mysterious but real. Hatred is the power that, once unleashed, you can't get it back where it was before. It can be under control but once let it loose and it breeds and increases and dominates people more and more, hatred. And once hatred is released we can see it turn against the allies as well as against the enemies, and God allows this and overrules it. God in the past has used one wicked power to punish and destroy another, as I said a little bit ago; you can trace it through the Old Testament; each empire was more powerful than the preceding one, and each in turn destroyed the preceding one only to be destroyed later by another rising empire.

Now finally, what should our attitude be? In today's world situation in view of Revelation chapter 17, we should have, in the first place, a realistic awareness of the reality of evil. People who are not Christians can not be brought to favor and promote the kingdom of God. Evil is real and the world is filled with it, and people who do not know Jesus Christ personally are dominated by it; and if it is asleep for a while in our time it will wake up again, just as it did after John's day. We should have a realistic awareness of the reality of evil and at the same time be confident and have comfort because this evil system is going to go into perdition, its end is decreed and it's going to go into perdition; the Greek word means destruction, the utter ruin and disillusion for the people involved in it; it means hell, and in the end Christ and his church will surely triumph, and this gives us our comfort; the long range future belongs surely to Jesus Christ; even the present he is absolutely in control of.

LESSON 74 THE OBITUARY OF BABYLON. Revelation 18

This is a long chapter, but it does not involve the difficulties of interpretation that some of the other chapters we have dealt with have. I consider chapter 17 very difficult to understand, but this is clear enough. And I have given it a title here: the Obituary of Babylon; this is a poem but hardly a lament, because the man that wrote it wasn't sorry that Babylon was dead, he was glad. But the obituary: Babylon, the great world system of seduction, or as it says the final outcome of addiction to the world as a way of life and a philosophy of life. Now because of the comparative length of this chapter we'll see if we can do it better taking it up a short section at a time. Babylon, the first two verses of Revelation chapter 18. "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great

power, and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Now Babylon, this angel says in the vision that John saw and heard, that Babylon the great is fallen; here we live in 1976 A.D. and Babylon is still evidently going strong in the world. How could John writing back in the year 100 say Babylon is fallen? Well, this is a device or a way of speaking that occurs often in Bible prophecy. Things that are still future are spoken of in the past tense because they're absolutely certain to happen in the plan of God. Isaiah 53 describes the sufferings of Christ partly in the past tense and speaks of his being led as

a lamb to the slaughter and so forth, although it was still hundreds of years in the future, when Isaiah wrote the words, so this is the prophetic way sometimes of some great event of declaring it to have happened when it is still future, because it is certain. Now the emphasis here is on utter ruin of Babylon. We take Babylon not to be simply one particular city; of course originally it was a literal city on the banks of the Euphrates river, it was the city that dominated the world for a time under Nebuchadnezzar and others, but that is far in the background. Babylon is the world system, one of the devil's main tools or allies; you recall Satan, the great red dragon, then those that do his work in this world; there is the wild beast out of the sea, anti-Christian and persecuting government, the second beast on the false prophet as he is also called, sub-Christian and anti-Christian religion, culture and education, and art and science, all this realm of the mind, and then a third ally of the dragon is Babylon the great harlot that seduces the souls of men and dangles before them luxury and wealth and pleasure and so gets them away from God, and Babylon has slain its countless millions who have been drawn away from God and finally been drawn not merely into physical death, but the second death, because they loved the world with an idolatrous love. Now Babylon is spoken of as coming to utter ruin, it is so ruined that it's called a habitation of the devil, of evil spirits, a hiding place of every foul spirit, a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. John uses language here, birds that feed on dead animals, for example, vultures; these are unclean and hateful birds, according to the Bible system. I don't think we consider them very nice either, and yet even these considered Babylon a prison, Babylon is not even good enough for them, and so Babylon is utterly ruined, even the violent and foul, finally come to think of Babylon as absolutely destroyed and worthless, so the glory of the world turns sour and bitter in the end to those who have loved this world too much. Now that's the first two verses.

Verse 3. "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." The reason or the explanation for Babylon's fall is that this was a judgment, Babylon did not simply deteriorate or go to pieces, but this is retribution from God; all nations of the world were seduced and corrupted by Babylon, this evil system which has many names but only one nature, the lure of luxury. Now Paul the apostle in one place in his epistles speaks of covetousness which is idolatry; idolatry of course is giving your supreme devotion to that which is not God, maybe an idol made of gold or silver; we say of some people they worship the almighty dollar. I don't think the dollar is considered almighty anymore, but people worship the almighty dollar. But anything that we want most and set our heart on is not worthy of this, it is not God, this is idolatry; you don't have to bow down in a heathen temple to be an idolater, you can be one right here in America. Now "covetousness which is

idolatry." You see covetousness is forbidden in the tenth commandment "thou shalt not covet"; this is wanting something so much that it becomes the ruling passion of your life and you will even do something that is wrong in order to get it. Something that God has not given to you that you also cannot get by lawful means. Now to save up your money and to buy a home or a car or something isn't covetousness, but if you can't sleep nights because the lady down the street has a better winter coat than you have, well I hope we're not like this, but there are people that are in this world, who can never be satisfied. There's a verse in Ecclesiastes, we were just studying it in college: "The sight of the eyes is better than the wandering of the desire." To enjoy what you have and can get legitimately and lawfully is better than always being dissatisfied and wanting something else that is beyond, the roving around and daydreaming about something that God has not given you and that you cannot get by lawful efforts. This does not mean you have to be like the hermit out in the forest that had a little shack and the roof leaked, and he couldn't fix the roof when it was raining and when the sun shone he didn't need to fix the roof. So the roof never got fixed. Now this is just not meaning when we say Christians ought not to love the world that we should become do-less and not care about the things that we can legitimately have, but the idolatrous love of them, the addiction to them, an idolatrous love of the world or addiction to the world. Now we'll read one little section from I Timothy in connection with this. I Timothy chapter 6, verses 9 and 10: "They that will be rich," (not they that are rich, they that want to be rich) "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil," (it should be translated, the love of money is a root of all evil, a root, the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil) "which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Now next we have in verse 4, the call to the people of God to separate themselves from Babylon and what Babylon stands for: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The call to separate ourselves from a system that is a rival of God, in men's thinking and in their affections, and in their world-view. Now there are a number of verses, this whole chapter is clearly and strongly reminiscent of the Old Testament. And practically the same thing as we just read in that verse. If you've got a pencil in hand and are noting anything down, note Isaiah 48:20, Jeremiah 50:8, and Jeremiah 51:45. All three of these speak of the ancient Babylon on the Euphrates. It begins to have certain ideas in it, and to separate from Babylon. Now I'll read one from the New Testament, II Corinthians chapter 6, verses 14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what commun-

ion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The call to Christian people to separate from what Babylon stands for is always timely and relevant. It was in John's day, it was in Jeremiah's day and it is now, today. This does not mean to become an ascetic and withdraw from the world as God's creation. Like the hermit that I mentioned a little bit ago. You see, "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. The world and they that dwell therein." You can view the world rightly as what God has created and given to us to use and to enjoy and to be stewards of. But when the world becomes the rival of God and virtually an object of religious worship, then it is something to separate from. Now, to come out of Babylon doesn't mean to get in a space capsule and get out of the world. Neither does it mean to get yourself a little cabin in the middle of the Sahara desert or to get away from it all, like some monks used to do way back in the Middle Ages, to get away from it all, physically. But they found out they'd taken it all with them in their heads. The temptations were worse than when they lived with other people in a big city. But it means to reject Babylon's philosophy, or attitude toward the world. It means holding of a Christian world-view that regards the world rightly as a Christian should, in contrast to how wicked people regard the world. Now stewardship, not materialistic affluence, should be our aim. It is not money, but love of money that is the problem, not the world itself but the world as a system dominated by an anti-God philosophy of life, it's an addiction to the world or an idolatrous love of the world. Now, 5-8, Babylon's iniquities are not forgotten, as is might appear to weary and discouraged saints, 5-8. "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Now judgment you see is postponed, but not cancelled. Again almost everything said here can be found in the Old Testament. The sins of Sodom mounted up to heaven, and so the sins of Babylon. And these iniquities cry out loud for divine retribution. And it is postponed and time goes on and people say God is dead, and think there will not be a judgment. When Paul reasoned of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come Felix

trembled. This has been called Paul before Felix; it ought to be called Felix before Paul. Felix trembled when Paul spoke of judgment to come. Because that rang a bell, he was a judge, but you see, he could not stand the judgment to come, the judgment of God. Now it says here, double it or double according to her works. Does this mean that Babylon is going to be punished twice as much as she deserves? It deserves so much penalty and it's going to get double the amount, that's what it seems to say, isn't it? Now of course this cannot be and this is not the real meaning of it. This is a scripture usage and it means that the punishment will be the exact counterpart of the evil-doing, the double is the counterpart, it's that which matches the sin, it's the equivalent. So double to her the double, in other words pay Babylon what she really ought to be paid, and so Babylon's sins are mentioned, how much she has lived deliciously and so forth, and so much torment and sorrow give her; the penalty will exactly fit the crime; that's the meaning of this strange usage of the word double here. Now from 9-20 we have a three-fold lamentation over the fall of Babylon. By three different classes of people.

Is it right to be happy because somebody is dead? I'll call your attention to one verse in the Old Testament in II Chronicles 23:21. You know people think that Jezebel was the wickedest woman in the Old Testament. I question this, I would like to nominate her daughter, Athaliah, as the champion in wickedness, who was like her mother only much more so. She killed her own grandchildren, a terrible person, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, II Chronicles chapter 23:21. Finally Athaliah this wicked woman was overthrown and slain in a revolution or coup by the high priest, a true man of God. Athaliah was slain; true to family form, like her mother she perished in the driveway. She was running to get away from Jehoiada's men from the temple to the palace. And she almost made it, but they slew her just outside of the palace, and here's the final comment: "And all the people of the land rejoiced: and the city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword." How would you like that on your tombstone, Everybody was happy when I was dead? This is what is said, everybody was happy that Athaliah was dead. Now there are some wicked people and some wicked systems of which we can rightly rejoice when God finally takes them and puts his judgment upon them.

Who mourns for Babylon in this chapter in Revelation, verses 9 and 10? In the first place, kings and rulers. "The kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning. Standing afar off for the fear of her torment saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgment come." Then secondly the merchants in the commercial world. You know it isn't sinful to be a merchant, it isn't sinful to operate a department store. You might ask though who is gladdest about the Christmas season; the Jewish-

owned department stores to whom Jesus Christ means nothing at all; Christmas means money in the bank for many of those people. Now the commercial world. I'm not talking about legitimate business, of course, it's part of life in which we have to participate. But this idolatrous never satisfied building up of immense wealth, which is so characteristic of the economy of our country and of our time, not that we are afflicted with too much of this wealth but there are those who are of course. Those who have the greatest profit out of Babylon cry the loudest when Babylon falls, and you have an amazing picture here of the consumer goods that are destroyed in the fall of Babylon. Everything that you can think of that is exotic and precious and valuable and costly and elegant right down to slaves and souls of men, everything that can be bought and that can be sold. Alas, alas, that great city, in one hour shall thy riches become no more. Now that's the merchants and the commercial world. From verse 11: "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more." The fall of Babylon as described here wrecks the economy and there's no more profit for those that have gone hog-wild looking for profit; the whole business has col-

lapsed, and then it gives a picture. Now this is an insight into the luxury living of the people in the Roman world of John's day. John didn't live like this, neither did the early Christians, but they saw this kind of thing in front of their eyes, in Rome more especially than in other places; merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, vessels of ivory, vessels of precious wood, brass, iron, marble, cinnamon, odors (that's perfume), ointments, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, beasts, sheep, horses, chariots, and slaves and souls of men. The fruits that thy soul lusted after. This is how the fall of Babylon drags down with it those who have loved Babylon and who have made this their life. They get dragged down in the fall.

Now the third class of people that lament the fall of Babylon are the navigators, ship masters and everybody that trades by sea. 17b, 18 and 19: "And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea," and so forth, all that were made rich and all that had ships in the sea made rich by reason of her costliness, for in one hour is she made desolate. They too are drawn in to the fall of Babylon, and ruin also comes over them at Babylon's fall.

LESSON 75

THE OBITUARY OF BABYLON, cont'd. Revelation 18

Now all of these people that are mentioned here these are not the saints, these are not God's children, these are the world, kings, rulers, the mighty multimillionaires of this world, the shipping magnates, the great international commercial concerns that pile up wealth, who profited and trafficked with Babylon and were closely identified with Babylon as a world-system: they lament, this is going to collapse over their heads someday. And this is certainly sure to happen.

Verse 20, on the other hand while all these people lament and mourn the fall of Babylon the saints rejoice: "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets: for God hath avenged you on her." Justice is done at last, God's name and God's word and God's honor, and God's people vindicated at last. This rejoicing over the fall and collapse of the wicked world-system is not wrong. Now we're told in the Bible not to avenge ourselves. Paul said, "Dearly beloved avenge not yourselves, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." We're not to take matters in our own hands about getting even with people. God will do it, commit thy way unto the Lord, vengeance is mine, "I will repay saith the Lord." On the other hand when God goes into action, and the thing that history has waited for ages of time finally happens, this is ground for rejoicing. The saints could not lament this unless they were like the kings and rulers that are mentioned; unless they themselves were tied up in Babylon. If a saint loves God and God's kingdom he cannot but rejoice over what is going to happen to Babylon.

Now verses 21-23, the finality and totality of Baby-

lon's fall. Here John uses the most drastic and decisive language: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." A great millstone; you know how big these things were, about three feet wide; six donkeys would walk around and turn it; they were of two or three tons maybe, very heavy, this was no little handful of stone, this was a great millstone. Dropped not on the ground where somebody could dig it up again, but into sea. It's been dropped in the sea, for the last time and no more, and found no more at all. "And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for they merchants were the great men of the earth; and by thy sorceries, (literally magic) were all nations deceived." Now all the things that made people go after Babylon and yield to the seductions of Babylon are going to crash and fail and get ruined. And even (you notice here this language is also quoted from the Old Testament) you notice the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; no more love relationships, everything turns bitter and turns to ashes and ruins, and those who have set their heart on what isn't worthy of having your heart set on is going to be ashes in their mouth in the end. What would the world be without love and without beauty

and without music and these things here? But you see the thing that makes all these things lovely and gives them their really satisfying character is the fact that you are right with God. I tell my students in Geneva, "Listen, they say you can't have any fun if you're a Christian, no fun. You don't even know what fun is until you're a Christian. When you're a Christian ice cream tastes better and the sky is bluer and the grass is greener." Now ice cream doesn't really taste better but you can enjoy it with a clear conscience. And so with all the other lawful satisfactions and pleasures in life, only the Christian can really enjoy these because he isn't haunted all the time by the threat of judgment and of a guilty conscience. And you see the world that turns against God, symbolized here by Babylon: it loses in the end the very things that it uses, to use the drastic figure here, that it committed fornication after, its lusting for the world's pleasures. It loses them in the end. They've turned sour, they've turned bitter and finally they do not satisfy and the whole business collapses. And even the relationships of love, and community and fellowship, symbolized here by the bridegroom and the bride, they go, Babylon is without them. And so we could say Babylon finally becomes practically like hell. And in C. S. Lewis' book *The Great Divorce*, he pictures hell as a dirty smoky and rainy town where it always rains, it's always smoky and filthy and the houses are about five miles apart. Nobody can stand to live nearer anybody than about five miles in hell. They get on each other's nerves; there's no community in hell, nobody likes anybody in hell. This Irishman that is on a hunger strike, did he die yet? Well he said, "I'll see you in hell." I'm not sure who he was talking to but that's what he said, "I'll see you in hell before I give up." And his wife said she approved of this. In hell there is no joy, all these things are gone; hell is ashes, hell is an endless useless memento of what might have been, and what need not have turned out the way it did. Now the final verse or thought here, Babylon's utmost sin is she slew the saints. The last verse in the chapter. "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Now of course there have been Christian martyrs who were literally killed by kings and rulers associated with Babylon. But I think this means more than that, not merely those who actually lost their physical life, because of something about Babylon. But Babylon who entices people away from God, so that they forfeited the opportunity and

entrance into eternal life and go down into eternal death. Babylon has slain millions with blood, prophets and saints; she hasn't got the prophets and saints into hell; she can't but tries to do it; and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Now before we leave I have three thoughts here: in the first place, recognize what Babylon is today, you won't find it on the banks of the Euphrates river. Where is Babylon today? Babylon today like the kingdom of God is all around us. Do you recognize it when you see it? You realize what Babylon means and what is about Babylon that is contrary to Christian thinking and living. And secondly realize the absolute certainty of Babylon's doom. This system that rejects God and puts the world in place of God and competes for people's affection, is not going on and on and on. I can remember a billboard along the highway just before the great depression in the 1930's, "Forward America," in great big letters, "nothing can stop the U.S." A month later the stock market crashed, and people got up in the morning and found their millions were reduced to nothing, the banks closed and you remember that back in the early 1930's. Now the world system has within it the doom of death, it's going to fail and crash, and nothing that science and technology and human ingenuity and international politics can do is going to keep it from ultimately coming under the retributive justice of God. And thirdly, separate from the sins of Babylon: "come ye out of her my people, that ye partake not of her sins and receive not of her plagues." You don't have to leave your home and go out to the desert somewhere, you can live right in Beaver Falls or New Brighton and separate from the sins of Babylon, it can be done, if you understand what Babylon means, and how God is calling you to live a life of Christian stewardship and devotion, and faith and love and worship right in the world that we live in. He hasn't put us on the banks of the Euphrates, He put us on the banks of the Beaver. But God is calling to us to live the kind of life that is the opposite of what Babylon stands for. This we can't do just by lifting ourselves up by our bootstraps and making good resolutions, but we can approach it by the grace of God. Those who are inseparably attached to Babylon are going to perish with Babylon. Those who have come out from Babylon and reflect in their lives opposite philosophy of life, they are the saints and the victory of the eternal future is promised unto them.

(To be continued)

Toronto and the Reformed Faith

A Comparison of published statements of leading figures in the AACS/ICS/WEDGE movement with statements of recognized Reformed Confessional Standards

Compiled by J. G. Vos

"As an act of believing, of calling upon and confessing the Name of the Lord, the celebration of our redemption through communion should not be surrounded by a lot of explanations and self-examinations. These teachings may have been necessary at the time of the Reformation, now they stand in the way of the celebration. With regard to the practice of self-examination a week before communion, it must be said that it has served to distort the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Officially rejecting Arminianism, we have endorsed it in practice through the custom of self-examination which throws the believer back upon his fallible believing."
—Dr. Arnold DeGraaff in *Will All the King's Men . . .*, pages 104-105.

Reformed Standards versus Dr. DeGraaff

"Therefore no one ought to come to this table without having previously rightly examined himself, lest by eating and drinking of this bread and cup he eat and drink judgment to himself."—The Belgic Confession of Faith, Article XXXV.

"Before going to the Lord's Table, we should think solemnly of the sacrament, and question our hearts as to our faith in Christ, our love to Him, our love to one another, and our hatred of sin, and we should attend with the brethren the public services of preparation for the solemnization of this holy and precious Communion."—Summary of the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Article XIII.

"It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves, of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves."—Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 97.

"They that receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ; of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance, love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer."
—The Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. 171.

". . . previous preparation, by humiliation for sin, self-examination, and abstraction from the world, is proper for those who make this special, public and social profession of their union with Christ, and love to him."—Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, Chapter XXV, Section 4.

(To be continued)

Religious Terms Defined

SOCINIANISM. A heresy founded by two Italian theologians, Laelius Socinus and his nephew Faustus Socinus, in the Reformation period. Socinianism was quite similar to the Liberalism or Modernism of the present day, denying the Deity of Jesus Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the imputed righteousness of Christ, original sin and predestination, and teaching that salvation is a matter of following the example of Jesus Christ. This heresy flourished especially in Poland in the 16th century.

SORROW FOR SIN. True sorrow for sin, or godly sorrow, is that contrition produced by the special work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, which leads to real and hearty repentance and to salvation. It is a sorrow, not

merely for the consequences or penalty of sin, but for the sin itself, as something hateful and contrary to the holiness of God. Godly sorrow is distinguished from mere remorse, or "the sorrow that worketh death," which does not spring from the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, and does not lead to salvation.

SOUL. That element of the human personality which is not composed of material substance, which cannot die, which makes man different from the animals, and which is especially the seat of the image of God in man. The soul is also called the spirit and the mind, with variations of emphasis on its various characteristics.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. God's absolute unques-

tionable, unchallengeable right and power to deal with, determine and dispose all His creatures as seems good in His sight. By the sovereignty of God is meant not merely that God possesses this power and right in the abstract, or potentially, but that He actually determines and controls all that ever comes to pass, in all matters both great and small, throughout the entire created universe.

SPIRITUAL DEATH. Separation from the favor of God, and subjection to His wrath.

SPIRITUAL MAN. A man who is indwelt by, and controlled by, the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Holy Trinity. The very common notion that the spiritual man is a man in whom the human spirit controls the rest of the personality is false and unscriptural. In Paul's Epistles, from which the term "spiritual man" is derived, the word "spiritual" refers to the Spirit of God, not to the spirit of man. In the Bible "spiritual" does not mean "religious" or "devotional," as many people wrongly suppose.

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

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

SUPEREROGATION, WORKS OF. The Roman Catholic concept of good works performed over and above what it is one's duty to do. It is held that many "saints" in the history of the Church have done much more good than what God required of them, and that Christians today may do the same. This whole notion is false and unscriptural. When Christians have done their utmost they still fall far short of what God required of them.

SYNERGISM. A heresy of the Reformation period which held that the salvation of sinners is partly accomplished by divine power and partly by human power. The term literally means "working together." Synergism is opposed to Monergism, which holds that the salvation of sinners is accomplished by divine power alone, sinful man having no power of his own to will or to do what is spiritually good.

(To be continued)

Contributions Received

The following contributions have been received since our last issue went to press:

March, 1976. No. 2929, \$5.00. No. 2930, \$10.00. No. 2931, \$5.00. No. 2932, \$4.00. No. 2933, \$50.00. No. 2934, \$15.00. No. 2935, \$162.88.

April, 1976. No. 2936, \$10.00. No. 2937, .50. No. 2938, \$5.00. No. 2939, \$5.00.

May, 1976. No. 2940, \$20.00. No. 2941, \$15.00. No. 2942, \$25.00. No. 2943, \$7.50. No. 2944, \$20.00.

Later contributions will be acknowledged in our next

issue. Without such generous contributions as these, it would hardly be possible to continue publishing the magazine, as subscriptions and sales of back issues and reprints provide only about half of the amount needed. We are trying to resist the tide of inflation by not raising our subscription rates. Many thanks to all who have helped. Your contributions are deductible from your Federal taxable income if you live in the United States.

J. G. Vos, Manager
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U.S.A.

Circulation of Our Last Issue

Some of our readers may be interested to know how many copies of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** are circulated and where they go. The following are the figures for the April-June 1976 issue (Volume 31 No. 2).

Total circulation 1421 copies. Mailed under Second Class permit from Lookout Mountain, Tennessee: 1378 copies. Mailed (later) from Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, 43 copies.

Distribution by countries was as follows: U.S.A., 895. Foreign countries, 526, distributed as follows:

Scotland, 97. Canada, 77. Australia, 74. England and Wales, 70. Northern Ireland, 57. Japan, 33. New Zealand, 15. Cyprus, 15. South Africa, 14. Korea, 13. India, 11. Ceylon, 10. Netherlands, 5. Singapore, 4. Syria, 3. Sweden, 3. Peru, 3. Republic of China (Taiwan), 3. Rhodesia, 3. France, 2. Greece, 2. Lebanon, 2. Ethiopia, 2. Eire, 1. Germany, 1. Indonesia, 1. Brazil, 1. Costa Rica, 1. Egypt, 1. Switzerland, 1. New Guinea, 1. Nigeria, 1. Total to foreign countries, 526.

The Sinfulness of Raffles and "Chances"

By J. G. Vos

It is a common practice to "raffle" some article by selling "chances" and giving the article to the person holding the "lucky number". The raffle is simply a form of gambling and is certainly sinful. Many Christians fail to realize this, and have participated in raffles without realizing that they were doing wrong.

The fact that the article raffled is not of great value, and that the "chances" cost only a few cents each, does not change the principle that is involved, nor make it right to participate. If it is sinful to gamble for thousands of dollars at roulette, it is also sinful to raffle a \$1 box of candy for "chances" sold at 5 cents each. If anyone can tell the difference in value TO GOD between \$1 and \$1,000, he may be able to tell the difference in sinfulness between "taking a chance" on winning \$1 and "taking a chance" on winning \$1,000.

All gambling is sinful because it is an attempt to gain something without giving an adequate value in return. The fact that the parties agree to this transaction does not make it right, any more than the fact that two men agree to fight a duel makes it right for one of them to kill the other. An agreement to do something that is wrong is itself wrong. Gambling stands in the same relation to stealing that dueling does to murder. If the gambler wins, he is a thief; if he loses, he is guilty of having wasted his Lord's property.

Moreover, gambling is IRREVERENT, because it attributes to "chance" what is really the providence of God. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. 16:33). There is really no such thing as "chance". What men call "chance" is simply that which cannot be humanly predicted or calculated or controlled. In reality God's providence controls every event, even the smallest, that ever comes to pass. If a coin is flipped, it is not "chance" but GOD that decides whether it turns out to be "heads" or "tails". In every raffle, it is not "chance" but GOD that really determines who shall have the "lucky number". When Christian people participate in a raffle, they are really asking God to give them success in getting something from others without giving an adequate value in return.

Christian people who participate in raffles or any other form of gambling are guilty either of atheism or of irreverence. If they believe that the outcome of the raffle depends on "chance", then they are guilty of atheism (see "The Larger Catechism", end of answer to Q. 105). On the other hand, if they believe that the outcome of the raffle depends on GOD, then they are guilty of a form of irreverence, for they are trying to use God's

providence to enable them to gain by other people's loss.

The Christian, having consecrated his life to serving God, may never stoop to the world's level of trying to USE God. We should understand that this is wicked, and should leave all forms of gambling strictly alone.

The "punch board" is another very common form of gambling. In principle it is identical with the raffle. No Christian should ever purchase punch board "chances". To do so is to sin against God.

At the present time we are witnessing in America a wave of merchants using "chance tickets" as a form of publicity or advertising. Customers who purchase merchandise above a certain value (commonly \$1) are given a numbered "chance ticket" by the salesman. The person who has the "lucky number" when the drawing is held may win a new automobile, a washing machine, a radio set or television receiver, or some other "prize". Some Christian people justify participation in such schemes on the ground that they are not required to pay out any money to obtain the "chance ticket"—it is given them without charge because the merchant appreciates their patronage. This, however, is a very flimsy argument to justify participation in such a drawing. The "chance ticket" is paid for, of course, by the purchaser of merchandise. It is not paid for directly, by an additional payment, but the payment is included in the cost of the merchandise. The merchant must contribute his share to the cost of the prizes which are given at the drawing, and this money comes, of course, from the profits on sales to his customers. If the amount which the merchant contributes to the fund comes to 1% of the value of merchandise sold, then one cent out of each \$1 purchase really goes to pay for a lottery or raffle ticket. The person who wins a prize wins at the loss of others who have purchased goods but do not win a prize. If it were not for the "chance ticket" scheme, all the merchandise could have been sold 1% cheaper without interfering with the merchant's legitimate profit. By this system of "chance tickets" a few gain articles of value by the small but real losses of a great many people.

Many a faithful pastor has been shocked to find members of his congregation participating in gambling schemes with no apparent qualms of conscience, or consciousness of doing anything wrong. Many a spiritual Christian has been scandalized and grieved by seeing fellow-Christians engage in such practices, apparently without ever having given so much as a thought to the question of whether it is right or wrong. And who shall say how much the Holy Spirit is grieved by such par-

ticipation in sinful practices on the part of Christian people (Eph. 4:30), or how much the spiritual revival of the Church is hindered by it?

Gambling is a practice that is sinful in itself, and therefore always forbidden by the law of God. Even if it were not sinful in itself—which of course it is—consideration for the feelings of other Christians should not be callously brushed aside as seems often to be the case today. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Rom. 14:21). Do we care more for material gain than we do for a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men? (Acts 24:16). Do we Christians of today lack the

courage to say "NO" when the easy and popular thing is to say "Yes" or to say nothing at all? How can we talk about revival and pray for revival when we are not willing to separate ourselves from the sins of the world? If and when real revival comes—not merely emotional revival, but real, deep, spiritual revival—one of its effects will certainly be to restore sensitivity to the conscience of church members who are today living a life of compromise with the sins of the world. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7,8).

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***Steadfast Toward Jerusalem* ***

By Christina G. Rossetti

These thorns are sharp, yet I can tread on them;
 This cup is loathsome, yet He makes it sweet:
 My face is steadfast toward Jerusalem,
 My heart remembers it.

I lift the hanging hands, the feeble knees—
 I, precious more than seven times molten gold—
 Until the day when from His storehouses
 God shall bring new and old;

Beauty for ashes, oil of joy for grief,
 Garment of praise for spirit of heaviness:
 Although today I fade as doth a leaf,
 I languish and grow less.

Although today He prunes my twigs with pain,
 Yet doth His blood nourish and warm my root:
 Tomorrow I shall put forth buds again,
 And clothe myself with fruit.

Although today I walk in tedious ways,
 Today His staff is turned into a rod,
 Yet will I wait for Him the appointed days
 And stay upon my God.

*The last five stanzas of the poem entitled "From House to Home"

Blessed Assurance

By Esther Belle Heins

We thank our God that through the night
 We sleep beneath His wing,
 To His most secret place we go,
 The sanctum of a King!
 Those knowing God abide with Him,
 And need not fear to die;
 They know there is prepared for them
 A dwelling place on High.
 His angels guard in all our ways;
 Keep watch both day and night;
 His shadow is our resting place,
 His Presence is our Light.

(Suggested by Psalm 91)

Thoughts by the Sea

By Esther Belle Heins

The sea has moods as people do;
 We see it sulky, proud,
 Unfriendly, prone to brood, it seems;
 Then angry, lashing, loud!
 But there are times the sunbeams dance
 Upon its happy face;
 Great vessels sail in wondrous peace;
 We feel God's smile, His grace.
 Just so His children yield to gloom,
 Are sometimes sullen too;
 They lash in anger at a friend
 When pride they can't subdue.
 As Jesus spoke unto the waves
 And gave them calm, great peace—
 He can speak to the restless sould
 That all their turmoil cease;
 But we must keep our eyes on Christ
 In utter faith, if we
 Would have Him close as Peter had
 When he, too, walked the sea.

Some Noteworthy Quotations

THEOLOGY is taught by God, teaches of God and leads to God.

— Thomas Aquinas

TO BOW before the sovereign will of God is one of the great secrets of peace and happiness.

— Arthur W. Pink

THE SUPERFICIAL WORK of many of the professional evangelists of the last fifty years is largely responsible for the erroneous views now current upon the bondage of the natural man, encouraged by the laziness of those in the pew in their failure to "prove all things (1 Thess. 5:21). The average evangelical pulpit conveys the impression that it lies wholly in the power of the sinner whether or not he shall be saved.

— Arthur W. Pink

A SPIRITUAL MIND has something of the nature of the sensitive plant: a holy shrinking from the touch of evil.

— Richard Cecil

THERE IS A WANT in the human mind which nothing but the Atonement can satisfy, though it may be a stumbling-block to the Jew, and foolishness to the Greek.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

LET US NOT FOLLOW those preachers who are not friends to the cross. Let us have no fellowship with those who have no fellowship with Christ. Preachers who have caught the spirit of the age are of the world, and the world loves its own; but we must disown them. Let us not be distressed by the offense of the cross, even when it comes upon us with bitterest scorn. Let us look for it and accept it as a token that we are in the right.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

THERE IS MUCH ADO to get Lot out of Sodom, to get Israel out of Egypt. It is no easy matter to get a man out of the state of corruption.

— Richard Sibbes

REMEMBER, O my soul, the fig-tree was charged, not with bearing noxious fruit, but no fruit.

— Thomas Fuller

SINS OF COMMISSION are usual punish-

ments for sins of omission. He that leaves a duty may soon be left to commit a crime.

— William Gurnall

SOME TALK that the devil hath a cloven foot; but whatever the devil's foot be, to be sure his sons have a cloven heart: one half for God, the other half for sin; one half for Christ, the other half for this present world. God hath a corner in it, and the rest is for sin and the devil.

— Richard Alleine

A MAN at his wit's end is not at his faith's end.

— Matthew Henry

WHO IS THE MOST miserable man on earth, and whither shall we go to seek him? Not to the tavern; not to the theatre; not even to the brothel; but to the church! That man, who has sat, Sabbath after Sabbath, under the awakening and affecting calls of the gospel, and has hardened his heart against these calls, he is the man whose condition is the most desperate of all others. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell."

— Richard Cecil

SOLOMON BIDS US "buy the truth." but doth not tell us what it must cost, because we must get it though it be never so dear. We must love it both shining and scorching. Every parcel of truth is precious as the filing of gold; we must either live with it, or die for it.

— Thomas Brooks

HE THAT IS OUT of the Church is without the teaching, the holy worship, the prayers and the discipline of the Church, and is out of the way where the Spirit doth come, and out of the society which Christ is specially related to, for He is the Saviour of the body; and if we leave His hospital we cannot expect the presence and help of the physician. Nor will He be a pilot to them who forsake His ship, nor a captain to them who separate from His army. Out of this ark there is nothing but a deluge, and no place of rest or safety for the soul.

—Richard Baxter

What Does It Mean to Abstain from All Appearance of Evil?

By J. G. Vos

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" — 1 Thess. 5:21, 22. How often this text has been quoted by someone in an effort to prove that it is a Christian's duty to abstain from some particular form of conduct which cannot be definitely proved to be wrong. This verse affords a classic example of the harm done by an incorrect translation of a text of Scripture — an incorrect translation which has led countless people into a false idea.

This text, in the form in which it is translated in the King James Version, has been quoted times without number in confident support of the notion that it is a Christian's duty to abstain, not only from what is really evil, but also from whatever may have the mere semblance or superficial appearance of being evil, even though not really evil. According to this idea, the text is a divine command to abstain from whatever may in any resemble evil, or seem like evil.

This interpretation of the text is frequently used in the effort to prove that it is the Christian's duty to abstain from various pleasures and recreations which are not really sinful or evil, but which may in some respect resemble other actions which are really evil, and thus may have the "appearance" or semblance of evil to some people.

It has been seriously stated that Christians should refrain from drinking the common soft drink called root beer, because it has the word "beer" in its name. It was stated that root beer is not really evil, but it has the appearance of evil, therefore the Christian should let it alone.

A minister once refused to allow pictures of the foreign missionary work of his own church to be shown on the screen on a weekday evening in the church building of the congregation of which he was pastor. He admitted that to show pictures of the church's missionary work was not evil, but he held that it was "a show," therefore it had the appearance of evil, and should be avoided.

In Pennsylvania there exists an old-fashioned sect of Christians called the Amish Mennonites. These folk will not use automobiles, but stick to their old horse buggies instead. Of course an automobile is not sinful any more than a horse and buggy is sinful. But many wicked and wordly people drive automobiles, so to the Amish this has the appearance of evil, and they abstain from cars and use buggies. There have

been sects that held that it is wrong for men to wear neckties because this involves the appearance of evil. Many other examples might be cited.

The error involved in the wrong interpretation of this text is not a slight or unimportant one. Though the things the Christian is urged to avoid are often trivial, the error involved is not trivial. For this error clouds and obscures the clear distinction between good and evil — it blurs the basic distinction between right and wrong.

The Bible plainly and emphatically teaches that it is the Christian's duty to abstain from evil, that is, from what is wrong, from what is forbidden by the moral law of God. But according to the interpretation of 1 Thess. 5:22 which is under discussion, it is also the Christian's duty to abstain from innumerable things which are not really evil, wrong or sinful, but which may have the mere semblance or superficial appearance of being evil. This must inevitably entangle the conscience in a net from which escape will be all but impossible. The natural result will be one or the other of two things.

Either the conscience will become hardened to all moral questions, since the real evil and the merely seeming evil have been lumped together as equally to be avoided; or the conscience will become morbidly sensitive, so that the person will come to have conscientious scruples about a great host of matters which are not really moral problems at all, and he will forfeit all his peace of mind, become tense and inhibited, and lose most of his usefulness for service in God's Kingdom.

The Reformer John Calvin in his classic chapter on Christian Liberty in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Book III Chapter XIX) illustrates this latter tendency by a man who feels that a Christian should not indulge in the luxury of having fine linen napkins on his table, so he substitutes cheaper cotton ones. But his mind is still not easy, and he wonders whether he should allow himself this extravagance. Finally he decides that the true path of Christian duty is to avoid the use of any kind of napkins whatever. Calvin rightly describes this state of mind as the conscience becoming entangled in maze or labyrinth from which escape will be all but impossible. He adds that Christ's redemption is intended to set the Christian free from endless preoccupation with such doubts and scruples.

There is a story of a man who wondered whether his white shirt, which had been worn one day, was still clean enough to wear a second day. Accordingly he asked his wife to look it over and decide. She however declined to examine the garment, merely saying "If it is doubtful it is dirty." This maxim, "If it is doubtful it is dirty," has been applied to the Christian's moral decisions in a very improper way. It has been alleged that anything about which one has a doubt is therefore to be regarded as sinful and to be abstained from. This is an improper conclusion because it fails to recognize that the feeling of doubt may come from either of two different sources. It may come from something about the "shirt"—the matter or practice under consideration — or it may come from the inhibited state of mind of the person concerned; he may be a person of a doubting temperament who tends to have scruples about all sorts of things which the normal Christian regards as innocent.

It is true that Scripture teaches that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23), and it is always wrong to act against conscience by doing something about which we have a doubt. But the question we are discussing concerns how the Christian who has doubts or scruples should deal with them. As long as he has doubts he should not embolden himself to do that which he questions. But this does not mean that he is simply to say "This is doubtful, therefore it is dirty" and thereupon drop the matter. Rather, the serious Christian will strive to think more deeply in the light of God's Word, asking himself "Are my doubts about this matter occasioned by something inherent in the matter itself, or do they perhaps rise from my own spiritual immaturity which prevents me from discerning clearly between good and evil?" (Hebrews 5:14). Even in the case of the mooted shirt, instead of taking the easy way of saying "If it is doubtful it is dirty," one should rather take the shirt to a window or under a good electric light and have a closer look at it. It may be that the shirt is not really dirty at all, and will be perfectly satisfactory for another day's wear. It is even possible that it is my sinful vanity about my personal appearance that causes me to toss a really clean shirt into the laundry basket. On the other hand, close inspection in a good light may show that the shirt is indeed dirty and I should be ashamed to wear it. In other words, the Scriptural admonition to avoid that concerning which we have doubts does not at all imply that we are to rest in our doubts or scruples without any serious investigation of them or effort to have them resolved.

The error of the King James Version's translation of 1 Thess. 5:22 consists in two points.

(1) Verse 22 is made a new and separate

sentence, whereas it should be regarded as a part of the same sentence as verse 21.

(2) The Greek noun *eidōs* should not be translated by the English word "appearance," for this English word is ambiguous and may mean the mere semblance or superficial resemblance to something.

Nestle's Greek text and practically all modern translations punctuate the text so as to make verse 22 part of the same sentence as verse 21. In the ancient Greek manuscripts there are no punctuation marks and not even any spaces between the words. Parchment was costly and they economized by running all the words together. So modern editors in preparing the Greek text for printing have to figure out as best they can where one sentence stops and the next one begins. Of the translations I have checked, only the King James Version makes verse 22 a new and separate sentence. The others make verse 22 a continuation of the same sentence as verse 21.

The second mistakes of the King James Version concerns the translation of a Greek word. This word is a noun, *eidōs*, which occurs five times in the Greek New Testament. It is translated once by "appearance," once by "fashion," once by "sight," and twice by "shape." The references are as follows. The words printed in bold-faced type are the words used to translate the Greek noun *eidōs*:

1 Thess. 5:22, "Abstain from all **appearance** of evil."

Luke 9:29, "And as he prayed, the **fashion** of his countenance was altered."

2 Cor. 5:7; "For we walk by faith, not by **sight**."

Luke 3:22, "And the Holy Ghost descended in a **bodily shape** like a dove."

John 5:27, "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his **shape**."

According to Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, which is a standard authority on the meaning of Greek words, the noun *eidōs* means, first, the external appearance, form, figure, shape, of something; secondly, form or kind. Thayer adds that in Greek writers the word *eidōs* means *species* as distinguished from *genus*.

Henry Alford comments on 1 Thess. 5:22 that this verse cannot possibly be translated as it is in the King James Version, for the word *eidōs* never has the meaning of the mere semblance of something. Alford adds that Paul is only cautioning his readers to distinguish and hold fast that which is good, and to reject what is evil.

Here are some of the modern translations of this text:

American Revised Version (1901), "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil."

Revised Standard Version, "Test everything; hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil."

Twentieth Century New Testament, "Bring everything to the test; cling to what is good; shun every form of evil."

Henry Alford in his commentary suggests as the best translation, "Abstain from every species of evil," with a possible alternative translation of "Abstain from every form of evil."

It will be noted that all of these recent translations use the word "form" instead of "appearance" as the translation of the Greek word *eidos*.

It is clear that verses 21 and 22 are a unit and properly constitute a single sentence. First there is a general command: "Prove all things" or "Bring everything to the test." The result of bringing everything to the test will be the division of things into two classes, namely, good and evil.

Therefore the command to "Prove all things" is followed by a specific command concerning the Christian's duty with regard to each of these two classes. With regard to what is found to be good, the Christian is to hold it fast. With regard to every form of evil, the Christian is to abstain from it.

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

It may be remarked that our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles certainly did not seek to avoid the appearance of evil as this expression is often understood today. Jesus wrought miracles of healing on the Sabbath which certainly had the appearance of evil to the Pharisees. His disciples ate the ears of grain as they passed through the fields on the Sabbath day, which had the appearance of evil to the Jews, but Jesus defended their action as legitimate. Jesus' disciples were criticized for eating a meal without having washed their hands thus violating the tradition of the rabbis. This had the appearance of evil to the Jews. But Jesus rejected this claim and said that to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a person. Instead of deferring to people's erroneous ideas of evil, Jesus said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

Finally, we should take the most conscientious care to avoid whatever is really evil, as the text commands us to do: "Abstain from every form of evil." On the other hand, we should never judge or criticize our fellow Christians because they do something which seems to us to have the mere semblance or superficial "appearance" of evil. If what they are doing is really evil, and can be demonstrated to be such, we should talk seriously with them about it and show them from God's Word that what they are doing is wrong. But if it is a case of the mere semblance of evil, we should strictly avoid meddling with the conscience of our fellow Christians. They are responsible to God, not to us. And 1 Thess. 5:22, rightly understood, gives no support whatever to the common notion that Christians are required to avoid the mere semblance of evil.

Criticism of fellow Christians for doing something which is not really evil, and concerning which they are acting in good conscience, is really a grievous wrong. "Who are thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Romans 14:4).

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here does not imply approval of its entire contents. Purchase books from your book dealer or from the publishers. Do not send orders for books to Blue Banner Faith and Life.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM JAY, ed. by George Redford and John Angell James. The Banner of

Truth Trust, P.O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013. 1974, 586 pp, \$7.95.

For lovers of autobiographies of outstanding Christian men and women here is one you will delight yourself by reading! William Jay of Bath lived 85 years and grew through the ministries of Wesley and Sprugeon. It is said

that he was trained by a follower of Whitefield which explains his Calvinistic stance. One reason for reading this work is to learn how it is that a Pastor is able to spend some sixty years in one pastorate—quite different than what we are used to today! With the words of Spurgeon in closing this book is recommended highly, “O for more Jays. We would give some two or three dozen of the general run of doctors of divinity for one such a Master in Israel as William Jay of Bath.” Read why this is so!

—Bruce R. Backensto

JOHN CALVIN'S SERMONS ON EPHESIANS, by John Calvin. The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013. First published in French 1562 and by Banner in 1973. 705 pp. \$9.95.

What more can be said favorably about a man like John Calvin? Many have the impression that he was a staunch, dry, lifeless theologian who sat in an ivory tower coldly deciding on a rigid systematic theology. This is so far from the truth! The warm heart of a Christian man and pastor is easily seen and felt while reading these sermons. The Christian world would indeed be blessed if more of Calvin's sermons could be printed. Forty-eight sermons on the book of Ephesians and it does not seem like too many! Read them and learn why men like John Knox and John Cotton could find no better reading except the Bible itself in their latter years than the sermons of John Calvin. John Cotton says, “Because I love to sweeten my mouth with a piece of Calvin before I go to sleep,” that is why I keep his sermons by the bedside.

—Bruce R. Backensto

A GUIDE TO PREACHING, by R. E. O. White. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49502. 1973, pbk. 244 pp. \$3.95.

The author clearly states that this “primer is for aspirants, not for experts.” (p/vii) An experienced preacher is not the focal point of this book. The student or “lay preachers” are being instructed primarily through the efforts of the book. However, if even one who is experienced in preaching were to read this book he would certainly find something worth his time! The book is easily read being divided into three main sections: The Aim, The Technique, and The Continuing Disciplines. It is the purpose of the author to set forth “insights and guidelines” to help students “progress.” Thus the book is not to be seen as an end in itself but a means toward an end—the end being the ability to “. . . utter what is precious, and not what is worthless,” thus “you shall be as my mouth.” (Jer. 15:19, RSV)

—Bruce R. Backensto

THE SYMBOL, by R. C. Sproul. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company. 1973, pbk., 160 pp. \$2.95. Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 07110.

Sproul wrote this book as a response to the urgings of

college students who wanted something through which they would be able to have a handle on the basic tenets of classical Christianity. In order to fulfill that goal Sproul took the Apostles' Creed and expounded it with the student's education in mind. Therefore, this book is only to be seen as “an introduction to theological questions” and nothing more! As that it is quite helpful and very valuable. One would do well to give such a book to a high school graduate or college student with the prayer that the Lord would use this tool in the further instruction of their hearts for service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

—Bruce R. Backensto

WHICH WAY TO SCHOOL?, by Philip May. Lion Publishing, 29-33 Lower Kings Road, Berkhamsted, Herts, England. 1972, 148 pp, pbk, \$3.95.

This is a book which seeks to call parents to the responsibility of seeing their children well educated, without a preoccupation with quantity and means to ends, but with regards to the ends to which a child is to be educated. The author wrote a previous book entitled, **MORAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOL**, which without a doubt serves as a basis for much of what May says in this book!

Proverbs 22:6 is a basic text from which May would lead the reader into some observations of present day education, its wants and weaknesses. This leads May into a defense of the need for standards, values, beliefs, and many other “religious” concerns which need to appear in education but just do not in many “public schools.”

Many parents, as well as Christian teachers would gain much from reading this book. There are times when one tends to become “bogged down” in what on the surface seems to be trite, however, the overall effect of the book is very edifying and beneficial.

—Bruce R. Backensto

THE CHALLENGE OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES, by Kenneth G. Howkins. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1972, pbk., 150 pp, \$2.50.

Are you a student “caught” on a secular campus with all kinds of “foreign” ideas being thrown at you from teachers who seem to be tearing down everything you believe? Here is “the book for you.” Maybe not quite, but this is a good introduction into the various types of “religious” people one will encounter on a secular campus, or even, to some extent, on a “christian” campus. Howkins seems to show how a person with one set of presuppositions is able to learn and profit from a person whose presuppositions are entirely different. Can a person of one persuasion learn and profit from a course being taught by one who is at odds with the student's own faith? Howkins says that one may and should learn!

After reading this book the Christian will certainly appreciate the validity of his own position as a Christian and be better able to handle different opinions hope-

fully; not only those of non-Christians but even of Christians!

—Bruce R. Backensto

JESUS THE DISCIPLE MAKER, by Ada Lum. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1974, pbk., 48 pp, \$1.25.

This is a small, 48-page, Bible study published by Inter-Varsity. There are eight lessons with three sections in each lesson. The first section is a meditation on a section of John 17. The second section is a passage from some other Gospel account dealing somewhat with the same thought as expressed in the meditation on John 17. Questions are asked which aim at having the reader list the facts found in the verse, then state the significance of those facts with respect to their own life. The final section is entitled "Thinking Out Loud" and lists several discussion questions.

This work would be good for group studies. Start a group and use it. Of course, find it sold where you need not pay the full \$1.25!

—Bruce R. Backensto

SHEPHERDING GOD'S FLOCK and THE CHRISTIAN COUNSELOR'S CASEBOOK, by Jay E. Adams. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1974. Pbk., 156 pp. and 213 pp, \$3.75 and \$3.50.

By now the counselling style and technique of Jay Adams need no introduction! Here are two excellent works which begin to show that some of the initial statements and ideas of Adams have been "tested" and for the most part "won"! There are not three volumes of **SHEPHERDING GOD'S FLOCK** of which this is the first one. This first volume has the Scriptural concern of a man like Richard Baxter (**REFORMED PASTOR**) and some of the "practical" tips of a man like R. J. George (a three volume work produced by a Reformed Presbyterian NA pastor and professor). Every pastor ought to read at least this first volume as it sets forth the various responsibilities of a pastor's daily life in a warm and Biblical manner.

THE CHRISTIAN COUNSELOR'S CASEBOOK is just that. This is a workbook to be used in conjunction with **COMPETENT TO COUNSEL** and **THE CHRISTIAN COUNSELOR'S MANUAL**. Actual cases are recorded with questions given to help one "get into" the problem solving side of counselling.

Both books are well worth the money and time to read. Here is a Reformed man who is seeking to study the Scriptures for principles of "how to" in pastoral and counselling situations.

—Bruce R. Backensto

TOWARD A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE, A Chalcedon Study. Edited by Elizabeth Fellersen. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, P.O. Box 185, Nutley, New Jersey 07110. 1972, pbk., 43 pp.

Five excellent articles appear in this edited work of

Elizabeth Fellersen. Two of the articles were written by Rousas J. Rushdoony (**The Doctrine of Man and The Doctrine of Marriage**), two by Lawrence R. Eyres (**The World's Most Notable Home Builders and A Heritage for Our Covenant Children**) and the final article is by Joel H. Nederhood (**The Glory of God in Creation**). There is one point which is held by Rushdoony which seems to militate against Acts 10 and other such passages. In his second article Rushdoony says, "Moreover, if she is to be 'a help as before him,' a mirror, there must be a common cultural background. This militates against marriages across cultures and across races where there is no common culture or association possible." (p. 15) Without going into details let it simply be pointed out that ALL Christians of whatever race or culture are to recreate on this earth the type of culture our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ would have over which His feet would rest. Therefore, the initial non-Christian cultural and racial differences would be erased through Christ. It is true that the color of skin would not change, nor maybe even the accent, however, the hearts would be yoked to the same yoke being pulled by the same King and Redeemer who sees no difference between races and cultures in His kingdom!

The book is highly recommended for pastors doing pre-marriage counselling and for young people contemplating marriage.

—Bruce R. Backensto

STUDY GUIDE—HOW TO GIVE AWAY YOUR FAITH, by Paul E. Little. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1972, pbk., 48 pp, \$.95.

Have you read Paul Little's book **HOW TO GIVE AWAY YOUR FAITH**? Did you give it away? No doubt many people have read the book individually, yet they have found it "impossible" to really carry out many of the principles set forth in the book. This is why the **GUIDE** was published. Little's book would best be used in a group and this **GUIDE** seeks to help the group work through the book together. When done in a group—the **CHURCH GROUP**—each person will have the help of the body of believers for support and discussion. Don't buy everything Little says but what you do **USE!**

—Bruce R. Backensto

THE DEATH OF CHRIST. A treatise which answers the question: "Did Christ die only for the elect?" by Norman F. Douty. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pennsylvania 17880. 1972, 120 pp., \$3.95.

On the inside flap of the cover of the book the reader is told that Douty is a retired Baptist minister who is to be viewed as standing within the circle of Calvinistic preachers. However, the claim is that one may be considered within the Reformed circles and hold to the view of the atonement which Douty has because "John Calvin himself certainly did not teach a rigid doctrine of limited atonement." One can see what Douty's answer is to the question proposed in the title! Douty holds that one may preserve the doctrine of eternal election and believe that

advocating a general redemption by the death of Christ is consistently biblical. Such men as John Owen (THE DEATH OF DEATH) and John Murray (REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED AND APPLIED) are in Douty's thinking "hyper-Calvinists." Douty's view is expressed this way, "I hold that Christ, by His death, so dealt with human sin that a righteous way was opened for God to receive into his favour the totality of the human race." (p. 11) In order to clearly understand Douty's position there is more that needs to be quoted. "I do not mean that all men will be saved by virtue of the cross, nor that the salvation of souls is made to rest, ultimately, upon their own decision. Because of their depravity, men will not, of themselves, believe in Christ; but God, in grace, induces some to do so, while, in righteousness, He leaves the rest to persist in their perversity. So although the provision of atonement is unlimited, yet the application of it is limited—but limited by the sinner himself, not by God."

Only one question for Mr. Douty, please. If the application of the atonement is unlimited toward some (the elect) and under the grace of God to bestow, then why is it that the sinner (the non-elect) controls the lack of the application of God's grace through the atonement of His Son? God loved us while we were yet sinners! Loved "us" while we were sinners! Who is the "us"? God loved "us" so much that He sent His Son to die for "US"! The answer to the question proposed in the title ought to be that Jesus died for the elect unto their salvation and not the answer given by Douty.

The book is, however, recommended for those who have read John Murray, John Owen and even John Calvin! Decide for yourself if Calvin and Murray agree!

—Bruce R. Backensto

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, Free Presbyterian Publications, 160 Pitt St., Glasgow C2, Scotland. 1973, 438 pp, hardback.

Based on the original manuscript by Cornelius Burges, written in 1646, edited by Dr. S. W. Carruthers; this edition is in clear readable print. The Scripture proofs are written out for both the Confession and the catechisms. This volume also contains, 'The Sum of Saving Knowledge, The Directory of Public Worship, the national covenants, and the Directory for Family Worship.

This book ought to be in every Christian home to instruct the doctrinally wandering Christian people in a systematic fashion. Being agreeable to and founded upon the Scriptures, one grieves that most Christians do not even have a grasp on the doctrine and concomitant life style as expressed in the Shorter Catechism, which was written for children and those of weaker capacity.

—Robert Miller

THE SINGER, by Calvin Miller. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1975, 151 pp., paperback, \$3.95.

This poetic narrative is a powerful analogy of the life,

death and resurrection of Christ, and His effect upon three specific individuals. As an analogy, it succeeds in portraying the freeing power of Christ as He creates new men. But, as in the case of all analogies, this narrative does not entirely represent the gospel account. The fact that a continuing believing covenant community existed at Christ's birth is overlooked, and therefore the song of the Singer had not been completely lost on earth. Secondly, Christ knew his divine as well as human nature before His baptism by John. And thirdly, one has no sense of the church as a body being established by Christ, one sees only individuals.

However, realizing that it is an analogy, this book is recommended for its literary beauty (uneven quality); and the powerful poetic description of conversion and the effect of the Holy Spirit's work in men.

—Robert Miller

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE, by Lester DeKoster. Baker Book House Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1975, 83 pp., paperback, \$1.45.

This book is written to encourage the believer to become a doer of the word and not a hearer only. In keeping with this aim, the author has given many helpful guides in reading Scripture as a whole, and how not to use God's word in vain.

However, by attempting to correct a deficiency in much of today's Christian living this book tends to emphasize works for salvation. Here and there the doctrines of salvation by grace through faith occur, only to be made of no effect by following comments.

The evolutionist-creationist controversy is dismissed by saying Scripture is not clear on the issue. Romans 5 amply professes an historical Adam as well as an historical Christ. Deny the historicity of the first Adam—you deny also the historicity of the Second Adam, paralleled in the epistle.

Despite the fine quality of the author's other writings; the emphasis of this book on works, and its limiting the scope of Scripture regarding science cause me to be unable to recommend it—especially for new Christians from a works-righteousness background.

—Robert Miller

THE CLOCK WORK IMAGE, by Donald MacKay. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1974, 112 pp., \$2.25.

This book is recommended for its insights which help the Christian evaluate the findings and usefulness of science.

For example, many Christians tend to make the error of proscribing certain areas from study by scientists; however, any area is game for study; it is by his methodology that the scientist limits himself. As an electric billboard will be described differently yet accurately by an electrician and an advertising executive; so also will the universe be described differently by the scientists and the theologian.

Another point emphasized is that "Scientific laws do

not prescribe what must happen; they describe what has happened." Arguments would be eliminated at base if people would realize that God did not issue scientific laws; rather scientific laws describe how God usually operates. Therefore, the God who at every moment is sustaining the universe can not be said to "intervene" or to "break His own laws" when He works miracles.

One area where the book is weak is in regard to Genesis and the theory of evolution. The author places the argument between philosophical evolution and Christianity rather than the actual theory as proposed by scientists. However, the Christian argument lies also with the very so-called "facts" of evolution as well as the morally devastating philosophy behind it. The scientific theory itself questions the historical authority of Scripture both in Genesis 1-11 and Romans 5.

This book causes me to wonder whether a Christian can be a scientist as defined by the author. If methodology requires a certain view point that necessarily is different from the theological viewpoint, perhaps the scientist who is Christian must take a wholistic outlook for the sake of truth. Is not the main difference between Christian and non-Christian knowledge the ability and necessity of integrating all knowledge through Jesus Christ as He has revealed Himself, Mankind, and the Universe in the Scriptures?

—Robert Miller

THE UNIVERSE NEXT DOOR: a basic world view catalog by James W. Sire. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1976, 239 pp., \$4.25.

The title of this book is confusing, at first. It makes you wonder for a minute: "What is the universe next door?" "Is this a science-fiction novel?" Then your attention is caught by the sub-title, "a basic world view catalog." Now what is a "world view"? The author gives a definition that follows: "A set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic make up of our world" (p. 17).

You may now be wondering why this book was written or what its purpose is. The author gives his explanation on the inside cover: "I am convinced that for a person to be fully conscious intellectually he should not only be able to detect the world views of others but be aware of his own—why it is his and why in the light of so many options it is true."

This reviewer recommends this book. It should challenge the reader to think-out his world view and make him a better witness for Christ.

—Samuel Sterrett

THE PURITAN HOPE, by Iain Murray: The Banner of Truth, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pa. 17013. 1976, 301 pp. \$2.50.

This is a reprint in paperback of the book that was first published in hardback in 1971, because of its being printed in this less expensive form it should have a wide circulation.

It should be noted that the author holds a post-

millennial view of Christ's Second Coming. There are four reasons why this reviewer cannot accept this teaching of our Lord's Return: 1. We don't know the time or the hour of His Return; but to assume that Christ will not come for 1000 years (after a future millennium) would give us no reason to be watchful for His Return. 2. It presents the kingdom of God coming gradually, whereas the Bible presents it as coming in its final form suddenly. 3. Post-millennialism ignores the prophecies of the increase of evil and wickedness in this present age. 4. The kingdom of Post-millennialism, being before the resurrection, is bound to be imperfect and marred by sin and suffering. (For a more complete study of Christ's Second Coming look up "The End of the Ages" in the July-September, 1974 BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE). Yet, it is not essential to accept this position to appreciate this work. This is very much a study of Puritan theology, the history of revivals and the history of missionary outreach. It has as its main theme that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring about revivals. This is a message that should be of great cheer in this age of despair and should inspire hope for the continuing spread of the Gospel throughout the world. The hope that carried the Puritans out into the world was the knowledge that Christ had been given all authority in Heaven and on earth. At times, this is what the modern Church has forgotten.

This reviewer recommends this book and prays that it will both humble and inspire the readers of it to do more to spread the Gospel throughout the land.

—Samuel Sterrett

SHEPHERDING GOD'S FLOCK, Vol. II, "Pastoral Counseling" by Jay E. Adams. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley, New Jersey 07110. 1975, 155 pp, paperback, \$3.75.

Dr. Adams follows Vol. I, "The Pastoral Life," with this work on "Pastoral Counseling." He writes on a very practical level, the level that pastors need to relate to people with.

This work brings out how many pastors have been influenced by nonchristian presuppositions in counseling. Adams looks at Carl Rogers, Sigmund Freud, and B. F. Skinner, then goes on to tell us in an objective fashion a Christian response to their methods. He does not attempt to lay the blueprint for every pastor but just lay the background so the pastor is equipped for every situation.

The pastoral counselor Adams wishes to present us with is best described by himself in these words:

"First and foremost he will have an unshakeable confidence in the power of the Spirit working through His Word to solve the nonorganic problems of living caused by the eventual failure of sinful living patterns into which men drift. Secondly, he will use the Scriptures in counseling in a practical fashion that at the same time exalts Christ and meets human needs. He will not give out passages like prescriptions or dispense platitudes like pills. Rather, he will use (and teach his counselees to use) the Bible in a plain and practical manner that en-

ables them to see how God has provided solutions to their problems. Thirdly, he will have a humble confidence, acknowledging that any benefit accruing from his counseling is ultimately attributable to the work of God and not to himself. Yet, at the same time he will strive continually to improve his knowledge and technique, recognizing that God ordinarily works through human agency. When he does not understand a problem, he will honestly admit it, but he also will search the Scriptures to discover the answers that previously eluded him."

The book is well outlined with exercises at the end of each chapter for the student or pastor. It can be highly recommended for the seminary student, pastor, or layman who desires to be more effective in counseling.

—John Seth

DEUTERONOMY: AN INTRODUCTION AND

COMMENTARY, by J. A. Thompson. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1975, 320 pp., \$7.95.

This commentary is another from the Tyndale series of commentaries. It provides a very handy, up-to-date commentary that is very useful for the layman. In the Introduction the following items are discussed: structure, date, cultural background and theology. The most controversial of these is the question of the date and authorship of the Book of Deuteronomy. Dr. Thompson presents all sides of the argument. In his conclusion he states that it is a very difficult problem that cannot be answered at this time. His position is that the heart of this material is Mosaic, but that it was compiled into this form at a later date. In spite of this, the exegesis is good. This reviewer does recommend this commentary.

—Samuel Sterrett



**BLUE
BANNER
FAITH
AND
LIFE**

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OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1976

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THE COVENANT BANNER

By George Paulin

Blow softly, ye breezes, by mountain and moor,
 O'er the graves of the Covenant men;
 By the muirland and flood that were red with their
 blood,
 Can ye waft the old watchwords again?
 "For Scotland and Christ" the breezes of old
 O'er the wilds of the Westland bore,
 From the Lugar and Nith to the Lothian Frith,
 And the German Ocean's shore.
 And where'er they blew, a prayer was breathed,
 And a holy Psalm was sung;
 And hands were clasped and the banners grasped,
 When the Covenant watchword rung.
 O for the brave true hearts of old.
 That bled when the banner perished!
 O for the Faith that was strong in death—
 The Faith that our fathers cherished!
 The banner might fall, but the spirit lived,
 And liveth for evermore;
 And Scotland claims, as her noblest names,
 The Covenant men of yore.

FROM "LAYS OF THE KIRK AND COVENANT"

By Harriet S. Menteth

<p>Ah! the eye is sick with seeing; Ah! the heart is faint with fear. Clouds athwart the horizon fleeing, Harbingers of tempest near! God hath laid to sleep his chosen; Who the mighty shall withstand? And the tide of faith seems frozen In the winter of the land! For a space it darkens, darkens, Hope and promise in the tomb! But the Lord looks down and hearkens: Sobs of prayer amid the gloom! "Nay, my people—not forsaken, Though afflicted sore thou art. Of my strength thy hold is taken; Thy fresh springs are in my heart! From the deep vault of the prison; From the lone isle of the sea; From thy banished ones hath risen</p>	<p>An accepted voice to me! Chosen in affliction's waters, Chosen 'neath the oppressor's rod, I have sealed thy sons and daughters In a covenant with God! Pass thou on, a sign and wonder, As my nation was of yore; In the secret place of thunder I have land thy help in store! Quit thy hold of earthly favor; Touch not the accursed thing! Monarchs must abhor thy savor While they set at naught thy King! Part not—halve not thine allegiance, Till I come to claim mine own; In the woe of thine obedience Bear my Cross and guard my Crown. All its thorns in thy true sight, Transfigured into beams of light!"</p>
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"Blessed whoso loveth Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thee. For he alone loses none dear to him,
to whom all are dear in Him who cannot be lost."
—Augustine

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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NUMBER 4

Studies in the Book of Revelation

(Continued from last issue)

LESSON 76

THE MARRIAGE FEAST OF THE LAMB, Revelation 19

Now, to get oriented here, last Sabbath we took up Chapter 18. Chapter 18 was the obituary, on this earth, of course, of Babylong, the great seducer. A lament over Babylon from the standpoint of those who loved Babylon, how they lamented, the kings and the sea captains and so forth. In Chapter 19:1-10 we have the response in heaven to this great victory, as seen and heard by John in inspired vision. In Chapter 19:11-21, the second part of this chapter, the victory over the wild beast and the false prophet. You see Satan's allies are getting ticked off here one by one. Babylon, not in the second part of this chapter, the first beast, and the false prophet or the second beast, anti-Christian persecuting government and anti-Christian culture, education, science and religion. Then, in chapter 20 the victory over the final enemy, the dragon, which is Satan. Now that brings us into Chapter 20, and then 21 and 22 are kind of a finale to the book describing among other things the glory of the eternal state of God's people. Now 19:1-10, is the rejoicing in heaven over the fall of Babylon in earth. And it starts out by saying, John heard a great voice of much people in heaven. He's on the island of Patmos, experiencing this vision but what he heard was in heaven, saying Alleluia. This, I should point out, is the Greek spelling of the Hebrew word Hallelujah. Hallelujah, Jah is the shortening of Jehovah, it means the Lord or Jehovah, the covenant God of grace and salvation, Hallelu is Hebrew of praise ye, and they don't put that H on in Greek, the Greeks are touchy about that kind of thing, so they left the H off, so it's Alleluia instead of Hallelujah. Obviously the same word. And this word occurs in the New Testament only in this chapter here; the idea of course occurs many places, but Hallelujah or Alleluia, as far as I know is found only in Revelation chapter 19, and here it occurs a number of times, verse 1, verse 3, verse 4, and again in verse 6; and verse 5, "Praise our God," which is similar in content. Praise ye the Lord. Now I'd like to put in there just for emphasis, we often hear this word Hallelujah used in a profane manner today. If the Pittsburgh Pirates win the world series somebody is going to say Hallelujah. Now I don't know if that's really grounds for praising the Lord or not, although some people might think so. But it is used or misused in

an expression of approval over just about anything. And Hallelujah means "Praise ye the Lord," and ought never to be used except reverently and when we mean what the word means, and not for just any little thing. And I'd like to speak someday, when we finish all 66 books of the Bible in here, on minced oaths and profanity among Christians. You know the devil can't quite get you and me to use the world's kind of profanity, we don't go around shouting damn and hell all the time; some people can't talk without using those words; they really can't; they scarcely know they do it. But the devil gets Christians to approximate this. And so people say darn instead of damn and they say heck instead of hell, and they say Jeepers instead of Jesus, and Cripes instead of Christ and so on down the line; there's a whole line of them, and maybe often done thoughtlessly, and not realizing the real nature of this. But these are minced oaths according to the vocabulary of our forefathers. A kind of profanity that Christian people use, but Jesus said let your speech be yea yea and nay nay; if you mean yes say yes and if you mean no say no, but you don't have to put any hecks and dams in there to reinforce it. There was a girl working in a hardware store and a man came in and said he wanted two pounds of damn shingle nails. And she said "What kind did you say?" "Damn shingle nails." "Sir, we don't sell that kind, all we've got is plain and galvanized." The devil gets people to use these on the principle of familiarity breeding contempt. He can get people to talk about hell 47 times a day; once they get over thinking there's anything very awful or terrible or dangerous about going to hell. And damn refers to the judgment day, the judgment of God, it comes from the word meaning to condemn. And people by using these words where they don't mean anything get a contempt for and a lack of serious thinking of the realities that these words originally stand for. And so we should clean up our speech. I preached a sermon once on profanity, out west, and it was the only one I've ever preached on any subject that the young people came around and wanted to hear it again. I had given samples of all the different kinds and explained what each one had meant, and I said to myself, why are you preaching on this if you don't make it plain enough

for them to get the point? So they came around and wanted to hear it again. When I hear a Geneva professor say "Good heavens," I am a little shocked and you should be too. And when somebody else says "My stars," he hasn't got any stars, they aren't his, they belong to God. And so forth, "goodness gracious," these are attributes of God which ought to be words, in the ultimate sense of course, used for God only, people can be good or gracious only as reflections of the goodness and the grace of God. You know people don't think. But Christian people ought to be a little bit irritated or shocked when you hear that kind of language. And it is so common today that except among the more serious type of Christian it's almost universal. And this is something that should bother us a little bit; if you can be completely comfortable when you hear this kind of language being used, you should be bothered by it a little.

Well, we'll leave that but just notice how Hallelujah has a meaning that is not simply a piece of filler for a space in a conversation. We used to have a little card in a rack called Ten Reasons Why I Swear, and it said on it; The first reason is, It pleases mother so much, the second reason is, It shows what a good education I have and what a fine broad vocabulary and so on, and the tenth one, it is my way of honoring God who said "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." And on the back was a quote from George Washington addressed to his troops to clean up their vocabulary.

Now we'll come back to Revelation here. The emphasis here in these verses if you'll notice is very strongly on God's honor. Babylon has been judged and has come to its destruction and ultimate downfall and the reaction of this in heaven is not what a wonderful benefit for Christian people, although of course it is, but the honor and the glory and the justice of God have been cleared and vindicated at last. God-centered emphasis, this is true of the Bible as a whole, and it is contrary to the dominant spirit in a great deal of modern religion which is humanistically man-centered. You see God is put in the foreground, and the same way in Romans I Paul deals with the religious effects of sin first, but we skip very lightly over the religious effects of sin. Now God and his honor is paramount here, the whole emphasis is God-centered. Justice has been done at last, that's in verse 2. True and righteous are his judgments, he has judged the great harlot or whore who did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

Justice. You know you can hear a hundred discussions on the radio and the press on capital punishment as a penalty for murder. Do you ever hear one that deals with the question of justice? The whole emphasis, I've heard this countless times, is, does this deter other people from committing murder? Well, obviously it deters one person from committing any more murders, but the whole emphasis is on how does this tie in with condi-

tions in human society? Whereas in the Bible the emphasis is on justice, is it right? does the sinner deserve to die? and God said, "Whoso sheddeth blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man." This is God-commanded justice, the missing note today. Everything is man-centered and God's justice gets more or less left out.

The third verse here, Babylon's doom is permanent, beyond repair or any comeback; verse 3, "again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." Now obviously John in Patmos there seeing a vision did not watch it forever and ever; he'd be watching it yet. But in the vision it was made clear to him evidently this is part of the set-up for symbolism here, smoke that goes on forever and ever, therefore it doesn't have an end, therefore Babylon has ended and this ruin is permanent. And Babylon gets knocked out and will never through all eternity make a comeback again to put itself up for a rival for God in the love and affections of people. Then, the church of the Old Testament and that of the New join in a chorus of approval; vs. 4: "The four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia." The four and twenty elders, we know them much earlier in the book of Revelation, 24 almost certainly, well I think we should say confidently surely, meaning the church of the old dispensation represented by the 12 tribes of Israel and the church of the new dispensation, the 12 apostles; this stands for the Old Testament and the New. The entire church of God spanning history from Adam and Eve to the end of the world and the second coming of Christ. In heaven, viewed as a finished product in the glory of heaven, they join in a chorus of approval of what's happened and of what God has done, and say Hallelujah.

Now the fifth verse, "Praise our God, all ye his servants." Vs. 5, "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." The greatest angel, archangel, cherubim, seraphim, and the humblest little child that believes in Jesus, small and great, are called upon to join in this universal applause and chorus of approval of what God has done.

Now I would like to say that one of the signs of genuine conversion is that people quit finding fault with things about God. We quit picking nits in Holy Scripture; the person who is not right with God tends to justify himself and find fault with God; and when we get right with God we say Amen, Hallelujah, God is right and everybody else may have been wrong. Paul says, "Let God be true but every man a liar." God is right, and when a person is really born again of the Holy Spirit he quits picking flaws in the Bible. He will quit saying "the Bible teaches predestination but I don't believe it." He may say "I don't understand it," it's a good thing to say, maybe, but he won't say I don't believe it. And when he knows what God's word says He will say Amen. And in the same way with regard

to God. And people who say if God allows such and such to happen, he isn't just, and they don't want to believe in that kind of a God, and so forth, they are merely showing that they have a heart that is still not reconciled to God. So here you see the church and the whole universe in glory that pictures the universe of God's rational creatures, angels and men and whatever viewing this as a finished business they say, "true and righteous are thy judgments." They join in praise to God, all his servants and all that fear him both small and great. You know King David tried for quite a while to make out that he hadn't committed a sin. And finally when Nathan the prophet faced him with it and said "Thou art the man," I imagine tears ran down David's face; it doesn't say so but I imagine this happened. "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said, "the Lord has put away thy sin, you shall not die." But then David composed that wonderful 51st Psalm; the 32nd Psalm describes how miserable he felt before he confessed that sin, before it was forgiven. The 51st, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." When we justify God and judge ourselves we're on the pathway of moral reality, and truth. And if we justify ourselves and find fault with God and his word and decisions we still need what Nicodemus needed, we need to be born again of the Holy Spirit.

Alright, now then, all small and great, vs. 6, the overwhelming Hallelujah chorus as a voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunderings. Now I suppose we've all been or many of us have been to Niagara Falls sometime or other. Does that waterfall make a bit of noise? Depending on the direction that the wind is blowing you can hear it sometimes miles away. It isn't what it used to be; the water is somewhat polluted but still it's quite a mighty thing, a great impression you get from that. I remember one night on the coast of Manchuria down at the Liaotung Peninsula, on the southern tip of Manchuria. There was a beach there we used to go to to swim sometimes. But one day there was a terrific storm. This is a branch of the Pacific, the Yellow Sea; it comes up in there. One of the places in the world where the tide is the highest of anywhere in the world, because of the configuration of the land on both sides many miles away, of course. But the tide is ordinarily terribly high. Much higher than most places. And here there was a terrific storm, it must have been out in the Pacific somewhere, but almost of hurricane proportions, and I went there and took care to stand on a good high spot. But not too far from the beach, and the breakers came roaring in there about as high as a house, absolutely overwhelming. The crash of that water on the rocky shore. Many feet high, I couldn't measure them, and it was partly dark, but the noise of it was simply terrific. It was overwhelming. Two people standing close together couldn't have heard each other talk with the noise of that terrific storm, that's the noise of many waters. It's overwhelming. Niagara Falls would have been

a poor second to the noise that the Pacific made on the beach that night that I stood there and watched. I'm just glad we were living in a cottage that was some hundreds of feet higher up on the hillside, out back of it. Anyway noise of many waters and a great multitude and mighty thunderings. Are you afraid of thunder? Well, we're not scared of thunder because we live in a scientific age and we know that if you hear thunder you're already safe from being hit by the lightning. The electric discharge is much faster than the airwaves that carry the thunder, so if you can hear the thunder, the lightning has already gone past and hasn't hit you. If the lightning hits you you'll never hear the thunder, but this is scientific expertise and there were times when the nature of lightning and thunder wasn't scientifically known. I know about a woman who was never known to read the Bible except during thunderstorms. She read it during thunderstorms up in the attic, up in her room on the third floor she'd read the Bible during thunderstorms. This kind of religion you get over amazingly quickly when the thunderstorm is over. Now there is something terrifying about thunder, and even our modern scientific knowledge since Benjamin Franklin found out what causes the lightning by having a kite with a key on it or something, and even this hasn't taken the impression away of a terrific thunderstorm. It's one of the most awesome things in the whole world-system, or the world of nature. And here this chorus in heaven is described as a combination of a tremendous number of people, plus the voice of many waters, plus the mighty thundering. Now what could you say more to impress the reader of the book with the loud and forceful and overwhelming nature of this phenomenon here that is going on? And what do they say? "Alleluia; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." This is a tremendous victory that God has won in his program Operation History, and it calls for an overwhelming and thundering response of praise. Now I said a little bit ago that we shouldn't use the word Hallelujah lightly. If we belong to a Pentecostal type of church you would get used to hearing it often said by people during the service; it rattles me a little because I am not used to it. To preach or speak in a church like that and somebody keeps saying "Praise the Lord" or "Hallelujah" or "Amen" or something like this. And I don't think we can say they are wrong in doing this, however sometimes I think it's habit rather than conviction that leads them to do it. And sometimes they put the Hallelujah in at the wrong place. We had an evangelist in Manchuria who used a little bit of this kind of gesture and so forth and one day raised his arms and hand and said "If you don't repent of your sins you'll go to hell, and he meant to point downward, and somebody in the audience said, "Praise the Lord." Now that's all right maybe if you fully realize what you're saying. But sometimes it is said just by habit. A school I taught in the last year or two I was in Manchuria many of the students were like this. I'd get up to lead devotions and they would feel that the preacher needs to be encouraged so they'd let out a constant little bit of comment from the congregation, of approval and calling on

the Lord and praising his name, and if you understand what they mean by this it doesn't affect us quite like it would otherwise. Have any of you been to a church where it's done that way? Allright, this can be very sincere and even if it's somethin we're not accustomed to it's not necessarily wrong, but like all worship it has to be sincere and not merely in habitual form if it's to mean anything.

Allright, now this is reality that we're dealing with here, this is the truth, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. This was always true, omnipotent or almighty, even in the church's darkest hours, God was in control and reigns although it didn't always look like it on this earth. But now in the windup of things here, viewing things as they are when history will be a completed process and like a finished product, what it is going to be like forever, it is fully and openly manifested, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. That is a wonderful thought. That ought to reassure and comfort us when we get nervous about what happens to us or in the world, the wickedness, the false betrayals of people and so on, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The basic fact that should comfort us when we have problems and troubles is just to remember God has not quit. I'm not sure if I've quoted it to you but I'll do it in just a minute: somebody scrawled with chalk on the wall of a subway station in New York, "God is dead—Nietzsche." (Nietzsche was an atheist philosopher.) and the next day somebody had written under there "Nietzsche is dead—God." And that is the more ultimate and basic fact of the two, Nietzsche can be dead, but God is still having the last word.

Now next we have the announcement here in 7 and 9 of the marriage supper of the Lamb. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." This is a common metaphor in the Bible, that the church is the bride of Christ, or Israel is the bride of Jehovah, the wife of Jehovah. It's referred repeatedly in both the Old Testament and the New, using the human marriage relationship as a parable or illustration of the relation between God and His redeemed people. The book of Hosea is largely based on this concept in the Old Testament. All through the Old Testament when the people of Israel went out to worship an idol like Baal, they were said to be committing adultery. Now there were some literal adulteries committed in the temples of idols sometimes, but even if they didn't do that it was still adultery because they were worshipping a different Lord from the real Lord, to whom they were pledged. God, Jehovah is the husband of his people, Israel is the wife of Jehovah, the church, carrying it over into New Testament language, is the bride of Christ. So this, the most binding and closest of human love relationships becomes a vehicle to carry the idea of the relation between the Lord and His church or his people. This goes way back to Adam and Eve where the Lord said, Adam said it, but evidently the Lord said it first, "For this cause shall a man leave

his father and his mother and he shall cleave unto his wife." And here marriage is represented, as, you see, transcending and superseding even the relation of a person to their earthly parent; the relation of parent to child and child to parent ought to be a relation of love, although the love of children to parents isn't exactly the same as the love of parents to their children, we know that, but still this is love, but the relation of husband and wife takes priority over this; A man shall leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife and they two shall be united. So all through the Bible you have this metaphor of relation between God and His church or the redeemed, being that of marriage. Of course it's a metaphor, it isn't literal, but here we have this in Revelation here. The marriage supper of the Lamb. Now you have to know a little bit about Old Testament or let's say Jewish-Hebrew marriage customs. Dr. Hendriksen's book brings it out. I'm surprised to know that he quotes a book that we used in a Bible course in Geneva, **Bible Manners and Customs**. And this brings out that marriage according to Israelite and Old Testament Bible ideas starts with betrothal which is regarded as much more binding than we would consider an engagement. You know an engagement can be broken, you can give back the diamond ring, and the fellow can give her back her photographs and this doesn't break any law; it's breaking hearts but it doesn't break any law. And we think of binding marriage as starting with a marriage license in a marriage ceremony, and the vows are exchanged. But these ancient people, especially the Hebrews or the Jews thought of the betrothal as maybe not quite but almost as binding as marriage. Joseph was betrothed to Mary; they had not yet come together, they weren't married, they were betrothed. And the angel said to Joseph, Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife. He doesn't say your fiancee, but Mary thy wife. Although it was only a betrothal at that stage. So this is betrothal but the parties are pledged you might say to faithfulness, the one to the other during this period of betrothal which is a period of separation until the actual marriage. Then as we see in some of the parables of Jesus like the Ten Virgins for example, the time comes when the bridegroom comes to take the bride to his home; this is the actual marriage. And then this is represented here you see, the church is betrothed to Christ, Israel is betrothed to the Lord, but he's gone to heaven and we're still on this earth, and he's coming again to take us to himself, which is represented by the bridegroom coming back to get the bride. And he takes her to his home. The feasting about a wedding is really something, if any of you parents has your daughter getting married you know this runs into a little bit of money sometimes. Laban's two daughters married Jacob; Jacob only wanted to marry one, he got tricked into marrying the other one, and the feast lasted seven days. How would you like to put on a wedding with food and drink for all comers, the whole population of the area invited, and it lasted seven days? You'd think this would run into some money. You'd thank the Lord you didn't have ten daughters if they get married

this way. But the idea here is the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife made herself ready, now that's what the church is doing now, we are becoming fit for this heavenly marriage ceremony, where the church in perfect holiness and glory will be fit to be, symbolically of course, the bride of Christ. "His wife hath made herself ready." Now do girls when they're ready to get married fuss around a little bit about their clothes and things? This takes some doing. And this is what stands here for the idea of sanctification. We as Christians are already justified, our sins are forgiven, but we are not perfectly holy yet. But we are in process of becoming sanctified, when somebody tells you there are people in the church that are involved in sin, you can tell them in reply, Christians are sinners who are in process of becoming saints or becoming truly holy. This is what the Christian life is, the process of becoming holy as we're going to be forever. So this is what the church is doing, it's getting ready for this eternal marriage.

Now it says, "It was given to her." This is the gift of grace, to be clothed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. We have two kinds of righteousness, first the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us and counted as if it were ours, this is complete, absolute and perfect; somebody said when I was back in seminary, "Justified, means just as if I'd;" the righteousness of Christ counted as if it were ours so that God looks upon us and says "righteous". Not only not guilty but righteous, as if we had always done fully everything we should have done. Now this is not because we are really righteous, but because the righteousness of Christ is credited to our account. And then this is followed by a life-long process of sanctification by which we are enabled by the Holy Spirit through many experiences and many trials and troubles to develop a righteous character so that we are not only righteous in the bookkeeping of heaven but inside our own hearts. Now you can see the difference. Suppose a man is a convict in prison and the Governor of the State gives him a pardon, this opens the prison doors and lets him out, and as far as the penalty of the law is concerned he's in the clear. This does not give him a new heart, and if all he has is a pardon that lets him out of prison he may go straight to Pittsburgh and commit another crime; this could be. So mere justification if we would stop with that would leave us with our sinful hearts. But, you see, there's no such thing for a real Christian as just mere justification. This is accompanied always by a process of sanctification. So we not only have the seamless robe of Christ's righteousness credited to our account, that's what "imputed" means, but we are also enabled increasingly to be clothed in fine linen white and clean, not the righteousness of Christ here, but the righteousness of saints. Now I was preaching in one of our western congregations and preached on this, and brought out the righteousness of saints in this verse, the righteousness of character that we get by sanctification. It takes a

lifetime to get it, and when we see the Lord we'll get it perfectly. Those who are believers at their death, are made perfect in holiness. And at the end of the church service I was standing around shaking hands with people—this wasn't my church; I was only visiting there—and a woman came past and didn't stop at all, she stood around on the side, and said, "Isn't it wonderful that we can be clothed with the perfect righteousness of Christ," and went on out. Just like that. And I said "Yes it is," and if she had stopped a minute I'd have said, that if you are a Christian you will not only be filled with the perfect righteousness of Christ but you will also go on to cultivate the fine linen clean and white that is the righteousness of saints. The righteousness of justification, is not the end, this is the beginning of things for a Christian and we are intended to go on from this and cultivate our Christian character. Now, I want to finish this to verse 10. John was told to write this down, and he was so overwhelmed that he fell at the feet of the angel that told him these things, possibly mistaking this angel for Jesus; I don't know; but he says "I fell at his feet to worship him," and the angel stopped him from doing it. "See thou do it not: I am just like you, I am a fellowservant of God, worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Now that ought to be "the spirit of the prophecy." The real meaning of the whole business, this prophecy, the whole book of Revelation and the whole Bible seeks to call attention not to some angel but to Jesus, it's the testimony of Jesus. And therefore angels may not be worshipped. Now in the Catholic church, maybe they've changed this a little, but in the past time there's been a bit of worshipping angels, and they come up with the subtle distinction of two kinds of worship, *doulia* and *latría*. *Latría* is the worship that is given to God only, and *Doulia* is that which can be given to martyrs and saints and St. Patrick, you know, and others and angels. And this is a hairsplitting distinction. I think you cannot justify it through the Bible. I had a little Catholic catechism that I bought in a Catholic bookstore. I still have it and it's got 15 hymns in the back; eight of them are addressed to the Virgin Mary, and the other seven are addressed to God; and Mary gets the love and the praise in the whole series of these. Well, they have ways of attempting to rationalize this, but they're not very convincing. Jesus, you remember, was tempted to bow down and worship Satan and he said, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." And whatever is the matter with John here? He was overwhelmed by this, I guess, by what he had seen and heard, and this angel sets him right, "See thou do it not"—don't do it, it would be wrong. I'm like you, I'm a servant of the Lord, not the Lord, a servant of the Lord; worship God. So this we should keep in mind. And there are some changes in the Catholic church; I sincerely hope this will be one of the things that they'll rethink, as they surely need to do.

LESSON 77
THE DOOM OF THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET, Revelation 19:11-21

We have had in the past few lessons, the victory of Christ over part of his enemies. First, we had the destruction of Babylon, you recall that the enemies of God and of His kingdom as pictured in this book, are in the first place the dragon, or Satan; then the beast, that is the wild beast out of the sea, standing for anti-Christian persecuting government, and the second beast, standing for anti-Christian or sub-Christian religion, education and culture, the whole realm of the intellectual and spiritual life of man; and then Babylon, standing for anti-Christian seduction, the pull of the world and its attractions drawing people away from God. Now we had the fall of Babylon in chapter 17, and a funeral announcement for Babylon in Chapter 18, and in the beginning of Chapter 19, Babylon has been disposed of in prophetic vision in the book of Revelation. Then today we have the beast and the false prophet or the first beast and the second beast, the anti-Christian government and anti-Christian religion put out of business. This leaves one enemy, the dragon himself, the greatest of all, that is back of the others, and he comes in chapters 20, 21, and 22, which we will still have to take up.

Now in this second part of chapter 19 from verse 11, I've given this a title: **Christ's glorious victory in righteousness and power.** He rules and makes war in righteousness, and on the other hand it is said of him, He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and will rule the nations with a rod of iron. So here you have the combination of righteousness and power. Now that's as it ought to be, of course, but all through world history it has been a rare thing where righteousness and power were on the same side. James Russell Lowell just before the civil war, he was writing about the slavery question, but it can be applied to any kind of evil. He wrote his poem, **The Coming Crisis**; you may be familiar with it. "Right forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne, But that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown, standeth God, within the shadow, keeping watch above his own." Now it has been the rule and not the exception in world history that wrong has been on the throne, and right on the scaffold or truth, if you will. And it has been the exception, when right has been on the throne, running this world in a form of human management and government, and wrong has been dealt with as it ought to be. So all through world history the saints have had a hard time. The powers of this world have generally not been favorable to them; of course in the mercy of God there have been intervals in this and times of blessing and protection, but this world history in the large, from Adam and Eve down to the end of time, to our own day anyhow has been controlled by evil. The powers of greed and hate, and wickedness and injustice have all too often been in the places of influence and power and rule; and the saints have been those who have been called the meek. "Blessed are the

meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Well, the meek haven't inherited very much of the earth yet; this is a promise of God, but "blessed are the meek." They ought to inherit the earth, it ought to belong to them. But you see like the Japanese officer who was quoted just before World War II, when they were getting ready for it, he said, "The Christians say, the meek are going to inherit the earth, but we are the strong and intend to take it by force." Well, of course, that finally came to nothing, but look what it cost to bring it to nothing. Now power has persecuted righteousness, and through history righteousness and power have commonly been separated but here in Revelation 19 in the last part of this chapter we see power and righteousness joined up together in the person of Jesus Christ, and it has been total, ultimate and absolute victory.

Allright, from verse 11-16 we have the vision of the white horse and its rider; 17 and 18 an invitation to a banquet, and I feel it is a rather gruesome banquet, I don't think you'd like to be invited to one like this, to eat the flesh of captains and kings and so forth, but an invitation to a banquet. And in 19-21 the onset and outcome of the great final conflict of Christ versus anti-Christianity, called elsewhere the battle of Armageddon.

Now looking at the first part of these, the vision of the white horse and its rider. When did we have a vision in this book before of a white horse and its rider? Where did we have it? It's in chapter 6, we might look at that. This is the first of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, chapter 6 the first two verses: "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, and one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer." And this is followed by the red horse, and so on. Now one of the reasons for saying that the rider on the white horse in chapter 6 is Christ, is the fact that obviously he can be identified with the rider in chapter 19. Now Christ at His first coming, rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt, a humble beast if there ever was one. You know you don't see any donkeys winning awards in the races or anything like this, it's a humble beast of burden used around the farm, they didn't even use them for long-distance travel. The only instance in the Bible of a donkey taking a long trip was Balaam, and Balaam was a professional non-conformist that didn't go by any of the ordinary rules; he rode a donkey. Other people rode camels, or mules, and horses were used in Bible times almost exclusively for war, not for transport. But Jesus about three or four days before his crucifixion, just before in fact, at the triumphal entry rode into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey colt. And this is in Matthew, and maybe we should look at it, it's in other places too but Matthew, chapter 21, the first 5 verses: "And when they drew

nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them. And brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon," and so forth. Now this was just prior to his crucifixion, it was in Christ's first coming, and he rode into Jerusalem in this way, symbolic of coming on an errand of peace. He came to suffer, to suffer humiliation and anguish, and finally death and burial. And this is symbolized by riding the colt; an ambassador that comes to you for peace does not come riding in on a war horse. He comes in a humble manner. And at Christ's first coming He came in this state of humiliation, low and undergoing the miseries of this life and so forth, and finally the death of the cross, and that was prophesied in the Old Testament; Matthew there quotes the prophecy where this was predicted. Now at Christ's second coming, He will ride on a war horse. This is symbolic of course, but look at the ideas that it stands for, upon a war horse, no donkey's colt anymore, this is a war horse, a white horse, the white standing for purity, righteousness, and this is what he rides on. This is a symbol of his coming to have a final showdown, you might say, and finally to deal effectively and totally with those who have persecuted his people and to show Himself as victory and King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The great Christ of Scripture, in contrast to the little Christ of modern theology. Christ is represented in the Bible both as a Lamb and as a Lion. I had a letter this last week from a lady out west who objected rather violently—she wrote six pages, 8½ by 11, typewritten, single-spaced, objecting to the writings of C.S. Lewis and in particular because in his children's fairytales he had Christ represented as a talking Lion. Well, I'll stay by C.S. Lewis, and I tried to answer it for her. Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the most powerful animal. It's cited in the book of Proverbs, the lion doesn't turn aside for anything—that's the Lion. And Christ is also represented as a Lamb, or you could say Christ riding on a donkey colt, this is the figure of his state of suffering and humiliation, and enduring wrong, and bearing the sins of the world and so on, meekly and passively; whereas Christ's picture of riding a warhorse is comparable to Christ as the Lion, the one who has the power, who turns not aside for any, who accomplishes His will and His will is what is right, and who finally and truly vindicates His people.

Now it is said that on his head were many crowns. And you realize that in the Greek New Testament there are two words for crown, *stephanos*, that's the victor's

crown, like the victors in the Olympic games got a wreath or garland, a victor's crown; and a *diadem*, this is a crown of a ruling monarch, and this is the word here, on His head were many diadems, the symbol of royal power and authority, many diadems. And it says He had a name written that no man knew but he himself. Now people have puzzled, what can that mean? A name written that no man knew but he himself. In the Bible names are not merely labels or tags. They usually have a meaning; you know the Pilgrim Fathers and the early Puritans in New England used to give people names to express an idea, girls they would call *Patience*, or some such name as this and try to find a good name that expressed Christian virtues of one sort or another. In one of the old Philadelphia families, a banker was named *Pennypacker*, quite appropriate I would say. And we, however, usually think of names as simply a label and seldom stop to think what do the names mean. Sometimes I've asked a large class in Geneva if any of the girls present have *Isabel* as a first or second name. I call attention to the fact that it's probably another spelling for the name *Jezebel*, which they maybe wouldn't prefer to be called. But in the Bible names usually have a meaning. You know *Isaiah* the prophet was married and had two sons, and the Lord named these two boys, and gave each of them names so that really each of these was a text for a sermon. The first was *Shear-Jashub*, which means, "a remnant shall return." The second was named *Mahershalal-hash-baz* (*Isaiah* 7:3 and 8:3,18). Somebody comes around and says "Prophet, what's the baby's name?" "Shear-Jashub." "What did you call him that for?" This would give him a chance to bear a witness for God, a remnant that shall return after you go into captivity; it's only a remnant that's going to get back. When the next baby came along and the Lord said name him *Mahershalal-hash-baz*. Probably "hash" for short. "The spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth." There was another text for a sermon. What's the baby's name? Why did you call him that? and *Isaiah* could go on and tell. A name was intended to indicate the true identity and character of a person. And so we read "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe," "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This doesn't merely mean the word "God" or "Lord" or "Jehovah" but that by which God makes himself known and reveals Himself, this is the name of the Lord. So when it says that Christ here had the name that no one knew but he himself. I think we are fairly warranted to understand this to mean that only Jesus Christ himself fully knows what it all means and what it all costs. What he has done to make him the victor in the world conflict here only Jesus and the God the Father and the Holy Spirit fully know. No one knoweth but he himself. We know a little part that has been revealed to us. Now I believe it was *Isaac Newton* who said "I feel like a little child sitting on the seashore of the ocean of truth who has gathered a few grains of sand but beyond me is the vast ocean beyond what I can know," or something like this. And you could say of Jesus Christ, He is so

great that only God the Father has ever seen the other side of Jesus. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father," Matt. 11, "neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." For the name that no one knows is what Jesus Christ and His Heavenly Father know about him and his work beyond what we can know, beyond what we will ever know. What it meant and what it cost is beyond not only human measurement, it's also beyond human comprehension and human imagination. So it is the name that no one knows. Now we're also told that his name is called the Word of God, capital W in the English Bible. This immediately links it up with the first chapter in the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." You notice the identity of the divine persons, and yet

their distinctions. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, for without him was not anything made that was made;" divine attributes attributed to him, works of creation attributed to him. The Word.

Now the Word is the second person of the Trinity and perhaps called the Word because He is the one who most fully reveals God to men. The Word reveals God to us as far as it is possible for us to know God and to know the real truth about God. It is revealed through Christ who is therefore called "the Word of God"; the revealer of God. Now this is something of how great Christ is.

LESSON 78

THE DOOM OF CHRIST'S ENEMIES, Revelation 19:11-21, cont.

Modern theology has a small and inadequate idea of God, clear down to those who say that God is dead. And it has a small and inadequate idea of Christ, thinking of him as merely a good human, a good man, who suffered and did some good things and so on. But the Christ of Scripture is so great, that no human mind can fathom his greatness, only God the Father really knows, and God the Son, what that name really is, and what it means.

Now it says in righteousness he doth judge and make war. In righteousness; the pent up divine wrath against human sin, that has been saved up since the day that Adam and Eve rang the liberty bell and declared their independence of God—this is finally going to burst forth. God will by no means clear the guilty, and judgment postponed is not judgment cancelled. And God has postponed judgment in order that there might be a historical development in which there could be a plan of redemption worked out. If God had carried out his sentence on Adam and Eve right away, then human history would have ended right where it began, and we would not have been, and there would not have been the cross of Christ, nor his resurrection and so forth. But God in order that he might fulfill his promise, the seed of the woman shall destroy the serpent, holds back the pent up turbulent water of wrath and judgment, and so history can run its course and Christ can come and atonement can be made and the gospel can be preached and missionary work done, and the elect gathered in. And then finally what has been deferred all this time will be turned loose upon the world. Now this of course involves the living and the dead. It isn't just the generation living when Christ returns that will be judged for the sins of all previous people, but the dead will also rise and will meet their just retribution and their judgment. In righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Now I think people forget the righteousness of God. God is a being who cannot deny himself, and if God

were to pretend and play a game of make believe with this sinful world, and pretend that people aren't wicked when they are, that they are not in rebellion against him when they are, that they are not breaking all his laws when they do break them all the time, that they are not hardening themselves in their impenitence and lack of confession of sins, God wouldn't be God. He cannot deny himself. And so the judgment that is deferred finally will come. Some years back when the **Saturday Evening Post** was still in business an anti-Communist Chinese had an article in it on catastrophe, on calamity. He said when calamity comes in the form of revolution, when the people can't stand it any longer and finally rise up and revolt against the government that has oppressed them, the longer this is deferred the bigger the blowup when this occurs. He said oppression is a time bomb. The longer it is deferred, the bigger the blowup or explosion when it comes. Now I think that's true according to Scripture. The French revolution is a case of that, the flood of Noah's day was a case of that, and the last judgment will be a case of that. So this will be a terrific outburst when it finally comes.

Now we should realize that the same Christ who is love and mercy to believers, who brings us nothing but joy and peace and good, will be wrath and destruction undescrivable to the wicked of this world, who have had their own way for so long and have scorned and mistreated the saints of God; to them it will be wrath and judgment. Next, we have here this rather gruesome invitation to a banquet. Remember this is symbolic language. And this isn't a literal invitation to participate and attend in a cannibal feast, as you might think by reading the verses, 17 and 18, "And I saw an angel," (in Greek it is **one** angel). "I saw one angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh

of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." Now, you notice it isn't the Christian people of the world that are invited to this banquet here. This is the vultures and wild fowls of the sky that are called to this. And what does this all mean? This certainly indicates the ultimate destruction of the enemies of Jesus Christ. To celebrate the victory of all victories; the language is symbolic but certainly represents utter reality. You know somebody has a collision with their car and it is damaged beyond repair, and they say their car was totalled. Isn't this what this word means, totalled? I didn't know there was such a verb, but I saw it in a paper, a car was totalled. Well, the enemies of Jesus Christ here are described as totalled. And when the vultures get through with them there's nothing left. The Parsee sect of India (and a few of them in Iran where they originally came from) have a very strange belief about disposing of the dead. They will not burn them because fire is sacred and it would contaminate the holy fire to burn the corpses of the dead, and they won't bury them because the earth is sacred and this would contaminate the earth, so they have a problem. They have big round towers near Bombay, India, on a dozen hills or more; they're quite high and quite wide and the top flattens sloping down toward the center, the Towers of Silence. And there they leave the dead and slit their clothes a little bit with a knife, and the vultures are watching for this to happen, and gather in and it's said that in 15 or 20 minutes there's nothing left but a few bones. And these bleach in the sun, and once a month an attendant comes up and sweeps them toward the center where there is a little pit. And so the vultures are ready to eat the dead, you see. This is the imagery here, it's rather horrible, but it is dealing with horrible people, who are guilty of horrible things that they have done in this world.

Now note in the last verses here, 19-21, the great battle against anti-Christianity and its outcome. It is not called here the battle of Armageddon or Harnageddon, the mountain of Megiddo, but is obviously parallel to the previous version of this battle, where the forces that are against Christ, and the forces that are in favor of Christ contend. Now don't think of this as a military conflict similar to General Eisenhower's invasion of Normandy or anything like that. This is in the spiritual and moral sphere, and ideological and political if you will, but it is just as real a conflict as if it were fought with airplanes and bombs and machine guns. The final showdown between Christianity and its opposite. Do you realize that if you get outside of the Covenanter church and a few other fairly small churches, that modern anti-Christianity seems practically to have won the victory today? You go into a large bookstore and look at the books. There isn't one book in a thousand that reflects a Christian world-view. The whole business has gone over the modern humanism and a man-centered view that is in revolt against the authority of God; and the whole modern world, with a few exceptions, you know, is saying with one voice "We will not

have this man to reign over us." That's the situation. Now this isn't going to last forever. There's going to be a showdown and it is sharpening up. In one of C.S. Lewis' books he said, Did you ever notice how things are getting a little sharper all the time? The difference between Christians and non-Christian thought is becoming more accentuated, and more pointed. Things are coming to a head. Whereas in former times, even wicked people said they believed in Christianity. They were not willing to live that way, but that was the going thing, that was the thing to say. You believed in Christianity. But things are coming to a head. And evil is becoming bold today. And I hope the saints are becoming bold too. Well, you have people like Madelyn Murray O'Hare and you have people like Billy Graham, and this is going to get increasingly intense, until Christ finally comes and he's going to write it off and it will be finished.

Now this does not describe the battle. It speaks of the onset and it speaks of the outcome. We might note at this time in II Thessalonians a parallel to this; well, I think it is a parallel which has a bearing on it, II Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 7-10. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, And will all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," and so on.

Now it is disputed among Bible scholars whether the beast and the false prophet mentioned here are two individual persons who will be living when Christ returns. If they are that they are surely not only that. The beast and the false prophet have been in business since early Old Testament times, and are in business today. It is also quite possible that as things head up toward the future finale, there will be individual people who will fully match the description here of the beast and the false prophet, the head of anti-Christian government and the head of anti-Christian and sub-Christian religion and culture. But it isn't necessary to suppose that. You take this as an age-long world movement against God in these two spheres, the sphere of politics and the sphere of culture and religion, and they are utterly defeated. So much so that it is said they are captured and cast alive into hell.

Dr. Hendriksen says this verse does not necessarily prove that this means two particular individual people at the time of Christ's second coming, although it may mean that. But what it does mean is, you see these are the leaders, who have misled and deceived and brainwashed the world's population. These are going to be cast alive into hell and never again outside of hell will there be anti-Christian government, will there be persecution or will there be false religion or an anti-Christian world-view promoted by anybody; only in hell,

not any place else. This I take it is the meaning of these being cast alive into hell. Their influences are going to be utterly cut off and the field cleared for the saints who are to inherit the earth.

Now the rest of the followers of these are slain with the sword, (those who are not Christian believers of course); they also end up in eternal damnation. Now we have had the doom of Babylon, of the beast and of the false prophet, and there remains the great enemy, the dragon himself which we will take up in the following chapter; chapter 20 is a very difficult one; then 21 and finally 22.

And you realize that if we look at the world today you could say that anti-Christianity is dominant. You can no longer keep the belief that Christianity is dominant in the world that we live in today. Just the natural increase of the world's population is increasing the number of non-Christians many times faster than the number of Christians gained through natural birth and

missionary work. And we live in a world that is dominated by anti-Christianity but none of this is forgotten; Jesus Christ is going to come.

One more note before we finally leave. Saul on the road to Damascus with letters in his pockets to the authorities to arrest any Christians he could find, was breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, and fully intending to do that too. And he heard a voice from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The voice didn't say, "Why are you persecuting those poor Christians?" But, "Why persecutest thou me?" What is done to Christian people Jesus Christ counts as if it were done to Himself, and will take action accordingly. And this we should never forget, when we note the injustice that Christians suffer, because it is Jesus Christ that these people are really fighting against and it is Jesus Christ that they will finally have to meet up with when the show-down comes.

LESSON 79

THE FIRST RESURRECTION AND THE THOUSAND YEARS, Revelation 20

This is among the most difficult, debated and controversial passages of the book of Revelation. I think we should not let the difficulty of this and the variety of interpretations of it that are held by various people deprive of us the spiritual benefit and blessing that can come from a study of it. We know in part and we prophesy in part. In the first place in the history of Christianity interpretations of this passage vary widely. You have here the vision of the 1,000 years, followed by the vision of the saints reigning with Christ. During the 1,000 years Satan is in some way bound or limited; that's verses 1-3; and 4, 5, and 6 is the vision of the saints, resurrected and reigning with Christ also a thousand years.

Now just to give you a quick rundown of the various interpretations that have been held of this throughout the history of the church. In the first place, pre-millennial. This means before the millennium. The term millennium is not itself a Bible term, you won't find this in a concordance; however, it is obviously the Latin for this expression "a thousand years." And this view holds that the second coming of Christ will take place and when it does it will be followed by a thousand year kingdom. Pre-millennial, that Christ will come before the millennium or prior to or just before the beginning of a 1,000 year kingdom. More about the differences among those who hold this view in a little bit; they are very great. The post-millennial view holds that what is described here will happen before the second coming of Christ. In other words the second coming of Christ will be after the 1,000 years and other events described here. So post-millennial means that Christ will come after the 1,000 year kingdom, whatever you mean by the thousand years. That is the second. Now in modern-

day Evangelical Christianity the pre-millennial view is overwhelmingly predominant, not quite universally but overwhelmingly, widely held.

Now post-millennialism. This holds substantially that the forces that are now at work in the world, evangelism and missions and Christian education and preaching of the gospel will be successful to the extent that the world will be, not absolutely but largely, converted to Christ, while wicked men and unbelievers will still linger on, but we will have a Christian world; and following this there will be an outbreak of evil spoken of here as Satan's "little season" during which there will be a massive revolt against Christ and His kingdom, followed by the second coming of Christ which will put an end to this kind of opposition, and then there will follow eternity, the new heaven and the new earth. This is orthodox post-millennialism. Let me mention two or three distinguished figures in the history of Christianity that have held this: John Bunyan, the author of **The Pilgrim's Progress**. Also, Loraine Boettner's book, **The Millennium**. Also, recently an American, he is now dead a few years, J. Marcellus Kik of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, I believe; he said to me, "The day is coming when you will be a post-millennialist." And I said, "Well, alright, I won't fight against this but I haven't been convinced yet." And recently a book published by the Banner of Truth Trust in Scotland, **The Putan Hope** by Iain Murray, a very perceptive and thorough-going study of Scripture that represents the post-millennial view of prophecy. This is the idea that there is a great revival yet to come before the second coming of Christ, and that this will be so great and so effective and broad in its scope that the world will be substantially converted to Christianity. Com-

munism will give way to evangelical Christian belief, and so on. It's a little hard to believe but remember you don't get your theology out of **Time Magazine** (I hope). And of all things you don't get it out of **The Reader's Digest** and of all things, all things, all things not out of **McCall's Magazine**. Get your theology out of the Word of God. It is possible that the present ill-fortune and apparent ineffectiveness of Christianity in the world is only temporary, that God has plans for the future still ahead of us, beyond what we can glimpse, which deals with the great revival and conversion of the world before the second coming of Christ. It's a tenable view, and whether it is correct or not does not depend or should not depend on your reading of current events. The fact that present world conditions are pretty anti-Christian should not of itself be decisive against believing in a post-millennial view of prophecy. I don't believe in it, but whatever conclusion you come to, you should base it on Scripture, our only infallible rule of faith and life.

The third view that is held of this, taking the views generically, is called amillennial. This term is a linguistic barbarism. You see the prefix a-, from the Greek language, means not and the second part of this is from the Latin Language. So it's a mixed marriage of words, amillennial, meaning non-millennial. This view holds that what is described here is not a historical development on this earth at all; that really the thousand year reign of Christ is something in the intermediate state in heaven, before the resurrection, and that as far as this world is concerned there are Bible prophecies that predict increasing success for the Gospel of Christ, but you must take alongside of them Bible prophecies that predict the increase of evil. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine, and so on. Many of these, and people who hold the amillennial interpretation hold that post-millennialists have tended to by-pass or treat very lightly the Bible prophecies of the increase of evil, a kind of thing that we have noticed some of in our study of this book. The beast and the false prophet, and so forth, who seem to be disposed of by Christ at His Second Coming, not by the triumph of world evangelism or missions. That is amillennialism. It would hold that for a long period of time Satan has been largely limited in what he can do. That however at the end of this long period, he must be released for "a little season," and that it is possible that we are now on the verge of the beginning of Satan's "little season." We are seeing unbelief and wickedness bold and extreme, and the influence of Christianity and the saints among the educated and intelligent people of this world greatly toned down and restricted. I'll say something about each of these later.

With regard to pre-millennialism, you should realize that there's more than one kind of this. There is what is sometimes called the older and there is the newer. A hundred to a hundred and fifty years ago the German Bengel and British scholar Henry Alford, a godly man,

a member of the church of England who wrote a commentary on the entire New Testament which is still very valuable today; both of these men were pre-millennialists of the old school, who understood this to mean that there will be an earthly kingdom of a thousand years followed at its end by the final coming of Christ and the judgment. Now Alford and Bengel and the old school and European pre-millennialists (British and continental European, mostly) held this without the Jewish features that have attached to pre-millennialism in this country. And this, while I would rate it as an error, is comparatively harmless. The book **The Late Great Planet Earth** represents the American type, very strongly Jewish in its flavor. Now this holds that the Jews are going to rule the world. Dr. Barnhouse of Philadelphia was visiting our mission in Manchuria and I was showing him around, and we went past a store, and I said "That belongs to two American Jews of Russian origin who left Manchuria and came to America long enough to get naturalized and get U.S. passports (of some value in the Orient) and then went back and operated this clothing store. Sterling was their name." And Barnhouse said, "Tell them that the Jews are destined to rule the world. I have won Jew after Jew to Christ by telling them what their future is in Biblical prophecy." Well, I didn't insult Dr. Barnhouse right then and there, but I didn't intend to tell these Jews anything of the kind. What the Jews need is not to be told they're going to rule the world, but to be told that they are guilty sinners and need to shed some tears of repentance, and come to believe in Christ as the true fulfillment of the Passover and the Lamb of God, the Messiah, and not some belief about the prophetic future of the Jews.

This type of belief has come from the Scofield Bible, not exclusively, but from the teaching that is back of the Scofield Bible. The Darby-Scofield view is commonly called dispensationalism. John Nelson Darby was an Englishman who lived in the early 1800s, of the Plymouth Brethren. He had been an Episcopalian and finally left that because he came to disbelieve in the union of church and state. And for awhile he did some amazing missionary work among Roman Catholics in Ireland, it is said they were being converted to Protestantism at the rate of 800 a week, that's really going some. And suddenly he realized that his connection with the church of England was wrong, and he went like the Apostle Paul into Arabia, metaphorically speaking, and retired for a period of years to study the Bible. And when he came out from this he put out the Darby system of dispensationalism which divides the history of the world into seven periods and holds that in each of these God deals with humanity on a basis of a different principle. There is the period of innocence, of conscience, human government, promise, law, grace and finally the kingdom. Holding therefore that there are different principles on which God deals with humanity and even different ways of salvation, that was Darby. He became extremely influential. He wrote over 40 books and was a man of immense learning. He had become one of the founders of the group of Christians known as the Ply-

mouth Brethren. This was taken up in this country by Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, a Southerner, from Texas, I believe. During the Civil War he was an officer in the Confederate Army; that's nothing against him from our standpoint; it's just a fact about his life. An officer in the confederate army and after the Civil War he became a lawyer practicing law in Washington D.C. During this period of his life Scofield was a heavy drinker of alcoholic beverages. It didn't do him any good. And he was finally won to Christ by the persistent personal witness of another lawyer who was a Christian. This man kept at it until Scofield was converted. And Scofield then became a very strong believing evangelical Christian. He also went off to study the Bible by himself for a while. For a time he was pastor of a church in Dallas, Texas, then he got leave from there to write the notes in the Scofield Bible.

The Scofield Bible is simply the King James Bible; it is just the King James text, but at the bottom of the pages, some pages more than half a page of explanatory notes by Scofield. These are also, some of them, not only free from all objection, but of considerable value. Scofield got seven other men to help him get out the Scofield Bible. These men were educated theologians, which Scofield was not. He was a self-made man in theology and had picked it up. He had the wisdom to associate several men with him that were better versed in the history of Christian thinking than he was. The Scofield Bible came out with these notes. Now some of these notes are quite good. On the other hand, many of them are highly opinionated and present his idea of the seven dispensations. It is not completely clear, there is some ambiguity in it, but it seems to say there have been different ways of salvation in different periods of history. He puts a very sharp antithesis between law and grace, and between Israel and the church. It is a maxim of dispensationalism that "Israel is Israel and the church is the church." God has an earthly people and a heavenly people. Israel is the earthly people and the church is the heavenly people. Now this is coupled with further ideas, one of these is that there is no law in the dispensation of grace and there is no grace or wasn't in the dispensation of law. When you accuse a dispensationalist of believing that the Jews in the Old Testament were saved by works they immediately object violently to this, and say that nobody was ever saved but by the blood of Christ. On the other hand the places in the Scofield notes that suggest this idea leave it in unresolved ambiguity, they haven't explained. So that's what the score is, as of now. And the main theme of Scripture then becomes, not God's plan to redeem the elect, the main theme of Scripture is Israel. And the church is a parenthesis in this.

It isn't in the Scofield Bible, but some of their recognized writers say that when Jesus died on the cross the clock of prophecy stopped ticking, and it hasn't ticked a single tick since then, and it will start ticking again at the moment when the church, all Christians

(all born-again Christians) are raptured and caught up out of the world, and God will pick it up where he left off about the year A.D. 30 and will go on with his dealings with Israel. So, the church becomes a parenthesis idea. They also have held that Jesus offered an earthly kingdom to the Jews, but they refused it, and so they crucified him, and so the kingdom has been postponed through the failure of the Jews to accept it. Jesus would if they had really believed in him have set up a kingdom then and there with its capital in Jerusalem. The damage of this is that it represents the church as a temporary phenomenon and it does dishonor to the blood of Christ as the only way of salvation. It isn't only myself, but people with more learning than I have, that have grappled with this, and failed to find it resolved in the Scofield Bible. This book has been extremely influential; millions of copies have been sold. I was in a Christian bookstore in Kansas City and there on the counter was a Scofield Bible, and I asked the lady, "Do you sell very many of these?" she said, "Mr., we sell more of those than any other kind of Bible." The advertising of this, in my opinion, is unethical; it is advertised as a Bible with explanatory notes, published by the Oxford University Press, no less. They do not mention that it is wholly committed to a very debatable scheme of interpretation of Scripture, which is a minority of a minority in the history of Christian thinking. The same is true of the Pilgrim Bible, more recently brought out, which is a Bible for young people along the same lines and teaches the same thing. Now the things that you should realize is that pre-millennialists of the American dispensational or Darby-Scofield variety don't get this out of Revelation 20. Obviously many of those ideas are not found in Revelation chapter 20 at all. They get this out of their interpretation of Old Testament prophecy, and then they come around to Revelation 20 and handle it in terms of what they have already decided about the nature of Bible prophecy and of the future. Now whether you hold a pre-millennial or other interpretation of Revelation chapter 20 really depends on your view of the Old Testament, this is where it comes from. This is true also of post-millennialism. How do you view the prophecies in the Old Testament? They cite passages that speak of an ideal kingdom, and hold that God has promised this to Israel and hold that these must be fulfilled on this earth, and that the millennium of Revelation 20 is the time that they will be fulfilled. Just a capsule answer to this, the promises of the Old Testament are to believers; all the promises to God are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. God promises nothing and never did to the person who is an unbeliever or who is a dis-believer in Jesus Christ, therefore unbelieving Jews like the present Republic of Israel, for example, cannot claim anything on the basis of Old Testament prophecy. The prophecies are addressed to those that are in a vital relationship with Christ. Now the same thing is true of the postmillennial interpretation of this. This is largely based on people's understanding of Old Testament prophecy. The lion shall lie down with the lamb; They shall beat

their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, neither shall they learn war anymore. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Now that's in the Bible and I could quote chapters more, very similar. And of course it's the Word of God and of course it's true, and of course if it's the word of God it's going to be fulfilled, but the ordinary post-millennialists have the unconscious assumption that these things must be fulfilled during world history before the second coming of Christ. This is where the debatable point is. It is the nature of Bible prophecy that it can have a multiple fulfillment and can project out beyond the realm of historical time and to that which is beyond time, namely eternity. This is certainly possible, and so to say that when it says the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, that this has to mean before the second coming of Christ, is to make an unwarranted assertion, it doesn't have to mean that. There are many examples in the Bible of prophecies that speak of things which can only be interpreted of eternity. Dr. Albertus Pieters in his little book entitled *The Seed of Abraham* gives an illustration of this that I think helps some. Prophecy is always given in the Old Testament in terms of conditions that existed when the prophet lived. I don't think there are any prophecies of airplanes but if there are they would be given in terms of chariots or something like that. And he illustrates it this way, they are given in terms of conditions when the prophet lived, but fulfilled in terms of conditions at the time of fulfillment. And he says further many years ago a man had a son that he regarded very highly and he didn't want the boy to smoke so he said "Son, if you don't smoke until you are 21 years old, I'll give you a horse and buggy for a birthday present on your 21st birthday." Now that was back in the days when a horse and buggy had a very definite romantic value. You could date the girls better with a horse and buggy than you could on foot, back in those times. And this lad regarded his father highly but especially he wanted the horse and buggy. So he kept his promise honest and true, fair and square, and never smoked. And on his 21st birthday at breakfast time his father said "You'll find your birthday present out there on the front lawn." So he went out and looked and here was an automobile, what they used to call a touring car. Now you see the promise was made in the horse and buggy era but the fulfillment came in the automobile era. Now Pieters might have said, do you suppose this lad went back in where his father was still finishing breakfast and said, "Dad, you just can't do this to me; horse and buggy means horse and buggy, it doesn't

mean automobile. You promised me that if I wouldn't smoke until I was 21 you'd give me a horse and buggy, and I've kept my side of that deal and look what I get, an automobile. Look here, I believe in the literal interpretation of prophecy, and horse and buggy means horse and buggy. Dad, I want you to take that car back and get me the horse and buggy." Now do you suppose this young lad just turned 21 would reject the automobile and would have preferred the horse and buggy? Would he not have cut a fine figure going out with his best girl on dates in the horse and buggy while everybody else was running around in cars? I can tell you, well, we are all too old for this kind of foolishness, but if anyone wants to win the affections of a girl in this day and age you don't take her out for a buggy ride, you take her out in a car and preferably a really nice one paid for by your parents. Now was that a true fulfillment of the promise? You see if the father had given him the horse and buggy that would not have been a true fulfillment in terms of conditions at the time of the fulfillment. The boy would have been disappointed and would have felt let down if he had gotten the horse and buggy, because between the time when he was 12 years old when that promise was made, and 9 or 10 years later when he was 21, the automobile had not only been invented, but had become general and popular, so the father gave him a car. That's pretty good, I would say, just for not smoking. But he got an automobile. This was a true fulfillment but illustrates the Biblical principle that prophecies are given in terms of conditions at the time of the prophecy and when the prophet lived, but are fulfilled in terms of conditions when they will be fulfilled, whether in this world or that which is to come. And therefore when it speaks about beating your swords into plowshares this does not necessarily mean that when the perfect kingdom age finally comes they will go to blacksmith shops to beat swords. It refers to the absence of war. And similarly you cannot say that it is limited to historical time. This is the unproven assumption in a great deal of speaking. I have heard men in our Synod pound the lectern of the pulpit and say, "The Bible says, Neither shall they learn war anymore, that proves it's going to be a warless world." And I have talked with particular men who said they thought it would come by the United Nations. The United Nations? They can't even keep the little countries from fighting each other. But you see it can be something that goes beyond historical time and deals, in its ultimate fulfillment, with eternity. Heaven is the realm of absolutes, not this world. We are being sanctified and made holy but we will not be perfectly holy until heaven.

LESSON 80 THE THOUSAND YEARS, Revelation 20, cont.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and

for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived

and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

I wonder how many of you read **Time Magazine**? I won't ask you if you read the **Covenanter Witness**, but **Time Magazine**, which is not distinctly Reformed in its viewpoint, and its religion articles are usually not worth much; they're very heavily biased in favor of the very common ecumenicalism and liberalism. But last week's issue that came to our house last Friday has an article under Religion on the second coming of Christ and different views of Revelation chapter 20. Did any of you see it? Well, to my surprise, it's rather accurately written, although there's a point of two I'd touch up in it, but it sets forth the different views of the millennium that are held by Christians, premillennial, post-millennial, and amillennial; also dispensational. And it mentions that interesting book, **The Late Great Planet Earth**, and what this book is like and how many copies have been sold, a million and a half I believe. The article is rather objectively and accurately written. I was quite surprised to see it in **Time Magazine**.

Last week I tried to outline the different views of the thousand year kingdom that are held, premillennial, that Christ will come first and then there will be a thousand year kingdom; post-millennial, that first there will be a thousand year kingdom and after that Christ will come; amillennial, that denies there will be a literal kingdom of a thousand years on this earth.

To this should be added one more that doesn't really deserve to be called a Christian view at all. Pseudo or false post-millennialism. This was very common in the liberal-influenced churches a few years ago and still is somewhat, although they're not quite so optimistic as they used to be. The idea is that the millennium here consists in such things as the increase of social security, better relations between capital and labor, world peace, the United Nations (and before that it was the League of Nations) and various other schemes of human betterment. This was exemplified very explicitly by the liberal journal called **The Christian Century**, published in Chicago; it says there's no reason to suppose Christ will ever come again, literally and visibly; Christ is coming every day to improve relations between industry and the labor unions, and so forth. I'm not sure the relations are improved very much but this is what **The Christian Century** said. This explains away the thousand year kingdom of Christ; you might say it evaporates it into a

general program of what is supposed to be Christian progress, heavily social and man-centered instead of God-centered, thinking chiefly on better race relations and things like this, but something that is brought about by the churches as pressure groups that can influence public opinion and bring about social change, as some of the large denominations are always trying to do. And this ought not to be called post-millennialism. Orthodox post-millennialism held by people like John Bunyan, Benjamin Warfield, Loraine Boettner, Marcellus Kik, among many others, believes in the second coming of Christ; He's coming again on the clouds of heaven in person and in the like manner the disciples saw him ascend into heaven, and when he comes the dead will rise and the world will be judged. Orthodox post-millennialism believes that. But pseudo-post-millennialism is a view that is basically not a Christian view at all; it is a view of human progress, and the affinities of this are not with the Bible but with Charles Darwin. This is Darwinism or the idea of inevitable evolutionary progress. The human race is coming along and getting better and better. Tennyson, a typical child of the 19th century, in his poem **In Memoriam** says, "Move upward, working out the beast, and let the ape and tiger die." Just let the ape and tiger die out of humanity and we'll arrive, or have the millennium. Now the trouble is it isn't the ape and tiger in us that's the matter, it's the man in us that's the matter. The tiger can't commit a sin, it can kill a rabbit and eat it but it can't commit a sin. But it's the man in us, the fallen humanity of Adam and Eve. Pseudo-post-millennialism has brought the name post-millennial into a good deal of bad reputation among Bible-believing Christians. If you say post-millennial they immediately think of this kind of thing, exemplified by **The Christian Century**, and this is virtually a substitution of humanism for Christianity, and this is not what we're talking about at all.

Now then, as we go on with this I would like to point out in the first place the very remarkable parallel between Revelation chapters 11-14 and chapter 20. Here in chapter 20 we have Satan bound; this is followed by a long period, a thousand years or a long period, during which his activities are drastically curbed, during which the church therefore is largely free to go about its commission, followed by a period called Satan's "little season" when he is released, when there will be serious activity against God culminating in a conflict spoken of as the fight of Gog and Magog. I'm almost certain this is the same as the battle of Armageddon previously mentioned, following which Christ will come in glory and will put a stop to this, the dead will rise and the world will be judged. Now that's Revelation 20. And certainly what we make of that and what we understand that to be has something to do with our understanding of the book of Revelation as a whole. It won't do to lift Revelation 20 or even part of that chapter out and just look at it by itself. We have noticed over and again in this book the principle of parallelism. It goes through a series of things, and smack you come up against the second coming of Christ or the end of the world; and

then it starts up again from a different viewpoint, perhaps, or a different angle, but again, a series of things, and ending with the consummation. Now then, I'll call your attention to some of these. In Revelation chapters 11-14. You notice how it parallels in slightly different language what you have in Revelation chapter 20. In the first place Revelation chapter 12, verse 5. "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne," (a reference surely to the ascension of Jesus), "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God"; so the church is protected by God, following the ascension of Christ. Now down in verse 14. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent," from the destructive powers of the serpent or Satan. Now this is Satan curbed or restrained from effectually cancelling out the work of the church following Christ's ascension. Then in chapter 11, verses 2-6 and 12:14, you find this idea of a long period of power of the church away from the face of the serpent, when Satan's influence is curbed; chapter 11, verse 2: "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days (that's the same as 42 months), clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." This speaks of a period here, where the church (I take it, the forty two months, or the two hundred and threescore days is a symbol standing for the entire period between Christ's ascension and his second coming, or nearly the entire period) is able in spite of difficulties to carry out the great commission. These two witnesses make their testimony and nobody is able to stop it until it is finished. Away from the face of the serpent: Satan's influence is curbed. Now then this is followed by a brief period of persecution corresponding to Satan's "little season" in Revelation chapter 20. Notice that in chapter 11, verse 7: "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." And chapter 13, verse 7: "And it was given unto him (the first beast) to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." The power of this sinister and mysterious figure, the beast here, following the two witnesses disappearing from the earth. And this is followed by the one and only second coming of Christ to judgment, Chapter 11, verses 17-

and 18: "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Also chapter 14 verse 14: "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying—Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." The one and only Second coming of Christ, which is for judgment. Now turning to Revelation 20, we'll see parallels between these in a little more detail. In the first place in the first three verses, it speaks of Satan being bound, cast into the abyss, or the bottomless pit, and a great chain put upon him and he is so restrained that he is unable to deceive the nations. Verses 2 and 3, a long period of power and freedom from major persecution of the church on earth. "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

Those who hold the pre-millennial view, not always but usually, take the thousand years literally. A thousand years means a thousand years. But there is good reason for not taking this literally, which I will go into a little later when we get to it. Just to start with, though, 10x10x10 or I think we could say a thousand years I'm moderately confident of this. I mean it is almost certainly intended to be a representation of 10x10x10. Ten, a number of completeness, the church has its age to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations and this will run till its completion, represented by the triple 10 or a thousand. Now more later about reasons for considering this as a symbolic rather than a literal number; but this would refer then to the entire gospel age from the time Jesus gave the great commission when he ascended into heaven in the sight of his disciples, almost until he comes again, or until Satan's so-called "little season."

Now then verses 4-6: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall

reign with him a thousand years." Now while Satan is bound as to his anti-Christian activity on this earth, during that same period of time the souls of the martyrs, and this probably stands for all Christian believers, the martyrs, a representative group here, are reigning with Christ in heaven and are spoken of as living and as having received the first resurrection. Now this is followed again in Revelation 20 by this period of severe persecution, verses 7 and 8: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." A brief period of severe persecution following Satan's release from restraint. He marshals the army of Gog and Magog. Now some pre-millennial and dispensationalist believers have really gone to town on that, and they find names of obscure cities in Siberia and so forth, Gog and Magog.

But Gog and Magog are spoken of in the Old Testament as powers hostile to Israel, way out on the fringe somewhere of Israel's geographical knowledge. But the main thing about Gog and Magog is that they are anti-Christian forces or powers. And I think it is quite idle to try and identify these with different cities in Russia or some other place, this is speculating and it's not very truthful or profitable. But they are gathered here against the Christian church. It probably doesn't mean a military conflict, this is probably an all-out conflict in the realm of spiritual things and intellectual and perhaps political against the church. The same thing as the battle of Armageddon. And then in chapter 20 from verse 11, we have the one and only second coming of Christ and this is his second coming to judgment. A great white throne, and him that sat on it, and so on. Christ's second coming corresponding to that in chapters 11-14. Now coming back to the beginning of Revelation chapter 20. You know those who insist on taking this literally seem to think that they are more pious and more religious and faithful to Scripture than those who do not take it literally. I have heard people say, well occasionally some very ignorant person says, "I take everything in the Bible very literally from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22." Now of course they don't. When Jesus says "I am the door" that certainly doesn't mean he's made of

wood. And there are things in the Bible which you can't take literally. They're obviously not intended to be. So there's another group who modify this who say It's to be taken literally unless it's impossible to be taken literally. If it has to be taken otherwise you can, but otherwise everything is to be taken literally. Now they regard explaining something like the word Zion as meaning the church as tampering with the word of God. Zion means Zion, it's the mountain in Jerusalem where the temple is going to be rebuilt, so they say. There's a very good book on this, I'm sorry to say out of print, but I have some copies of it and the college library has one I believe, **The Future of the Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment** by Martin J. Wynngaarden, once professor of theology in Calvin Seminary. This book deals with how the New Testament handles the prophecies of the Old Testament. This is how you get a key to whether to take things literally or not. How are the Old Testament prophecies generally understood in the New? Here you have the Holy Spirit commenting on his own previous writings. And he shows how prophecy after prophecy when dealing with the subject of the kingdom, is to be taken in a spiritual sense. Zion certainly means the church. Not a little hill or mountain in Jerusalem. And it is so used in the New Testament, and so spoken of: "Ye are come unto Mt. Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem". This book is extremely convincing, the trouble is the people that need it the worst won't read it. But it's extremely convincing in its handling of this subject. Now there are obviously things in the Bible that are intended to be taken literally. When it says that the first people were Adam and Eve, it means the first people were Adam and Eve, and not Mr. and Mrs. Pithecanthropus. And when it says that Saul was the first king of Israel, that's what that means, he was the first king of Israel. And when Jesus was born in Bethlehem; all right, that's the name of the town where Jesus was born. But prophecy concerning the future of the kingdom is not always to be taken literally. Now I take it when it says Christ will come again in person and in bodily form this is to be taken literally as shown in Acts chapter 1, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Words couldn't say it plainer. This is not therefore a mere spiritual return of Christ.

(To be continued)

Toronto and the Reformed Faith

A Comparison of published statements of leading figures in the AACS/ICS/WEDGE movement with statements of recognized Reformed Confessional Standards

Compiled by J. G. Vos

"Our confessions clearly reflect the age-old spiritualizing and narrowing of the Christian life. They lack a clear Kingdom vision. And if this were not enough, they also reflect the theologically conditioned, ecclesiastical controversies of their time of origin. As a result we are greatly in need of a new confession which clearly proclaims the healing power of Christ over all of life."—Dr. Arnold DeGraaff in *Will All the King's Men*. . . , page 107.

Reformed Standards versus Dr. DeGraaff

"The testimony of the Church is progressive, in order to oppose and condemn the novel errors which each period may produce; and every generation is to take care that the truth, as stated and defended by their predecessors, shall be maintained and faithfully transmitted, together with the results of their own contendings, to the succeeding generation."—*Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America*, Chapter XXXIII, Section 2.

"Terms of membership or communion are necessary to a Church. They should cover nothing that Scripture does not enjoin, and should reject no Scriptural truth or practice for which the Church has faithfully contended."—*Summary of the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland*, Chapter XI (page 52).

"The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland believes that in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms Larger and Shorter there is a systematic presentation of the teaching of Holy Scripture. In accordance with this belief the Church requires its members to accept them as its Doctrinal Testimony."—*Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, Doctrinal and Practical*, page 7.

"Wherefore, this Synod of Dort, in the name of the Lord, conjures as many as piously call upon the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ to judge the faith of the Reformed Churches. . . from the public confessions of the Churches themselves, and from this declaration of the orthodox doctrine, confirmed by the unanimous consent of all and each of the members of the whole Synod. Moreover, the Synod warns calumniators themselves to consider the terrible judgment of God which awaits them, for bearing false witness against the confessions of so many churches; for distressing the consciences of the weak; and for laboring to render suspected the society of the truly faithful."—*The Canons of the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619, Concluding Statement*.

"All office-bearers of our Church are required to subscribe to these Canons as well as to the Confession of Faith and to the Heidelberg Catechism."—*Doctrinal Standards of the Christian Reformed Church, 1962*, page 44.

(To be continued)

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here does not imply approval of its entire contents. Purchase books from your book dealer or from the publishers. Do not send orders for books to Blue Banner Faith and Life.

A CRITICAL LEXICON AND CONCORDANCE TO THE ENGLISH AND GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, by Ethelbert W. Bullinger. Zondervan Publishing House. Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506, 1975, pp. 999 + xxxii. \$16.95.

This reference work purports to give every English word of the New Testament in alphabetical order, and under each, the Greek word or words so translated, to-

gether with a list of the passages in which the English word occurs and indicating which Greek word is used in each passage. By comparing such usages and noting various shades of meaning one can gain insight into a passage which otherwise would be overlooked. In John 8:12 for example, Jesus speaks of himself as the "light" (*phos*) of the world, meaning underived, ultimate light, whereas in John 5:35, which speaks of John the Baptist as a "light," the word (*luchnos*) means a hand lamp, a light kindled by another, which burns for a time and then goes out.

The first edition of this work was published in London in 1877; it was held in such high esteem at the

time that an honorary degree was conferred upon its author by the then Archbishop of Canterbury. Ethelbert William Bullinger (1837-1913) was a descendant of Heinrich Bullinger, the Zurich reformer. E.W. was a renowned pastor and scholar, best known perhaps as the originator of an extreme form of dispensationalism (Albert H. Frendt, Jr., "Bullinger, Ethelbert William," *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, II, 214f.).

The English text followed in this lexicon-concordance is that of Bagster's Critical New Testament, which is based upon the 1611 Authorized Version—a fact which tends to limit its present day usefulness due to the declining popularity of that version.

Word studies, as James Barr and others have pointed out, are of little value unless accompanied by other, more substantive hermeneutical procedures, tending as they do to ignore contextual relationships and to remove a passage from its setting. If used with discretion, however, this concordance can serve a useful purpose for the student who is attempting to determine the precise shade of meaning of a given word in the English New Testament. Its superiority to the ordinary concordance is immediately apparent: it treats each Greek word much more extensively and in most cases that this reviewer has checked, more accurately.

—Joseph Hill

WHAT IS THE THOUSAND YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST? by Leonard T. Schalkwyk. Two sermons, each 12 pages, published by the Consistory of the First Christian Reformed Church, P.O. Box 237, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada. Price not stated, but cannot be excessive. First published March 1974.

A Christian Reformed pastor in Canada here presents two sermons on Revelation Chapter 20. They are of high quality, well worth sending for and reading. Rejecting the prevalent premillennial and dispensation interpretations, Pastor Schalkwyk presents an Amillennial or non-millennial view. He shows that Satan was bound when Christ accomplished redemption at His first coming. This is followed by a long period of witnessing, expansion of Christianity, missionary work, and establishment of the Church as an effective servant of God. At the end of this period the restraint will be removed from Satan for "a little season." Persecution will become severe and intense, but when this antichristian activity is at its climax, Christ will appear in glory to destroy His enemies and deliver His saints. This will be followed by the general resurrection, the judgment, and the eternal state. The thousand year reign of Christ is that period during which Satan is restrained and Christianity is largely successful and influential, between the first and the second advent of Christ.

—J.G. Vos

YOUR ECUMENICAL TASK, by K. Schilder. Vonkenberg Study Aids, P.O. Box 783, London, Ontario N6A 4YB, Canada. 1975, paper covered booklet, 15 pages. Price 70 cents. 10% discount on 10 or more copies.

The late Dr. Schilder was connected with the "Liberated" Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. He is best known in the U.S.A. by his three volume trilogy **Christ in His Sufferings** (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.). This work has brought blessing to many. In the present booklet, the term "ecumenical" means "world-wide." The true Church is the holy catholic church (as affirmed in the "Apostles' Creed"), over against sects and heresies, wherever these appear and corrupt the Church.

"The oldest, the original, the 'genuine' ecumenical movement, is not: winning the world numbers for your diviating message, but: winning as many people as possible for God's judgment-laden directive message." ". . . the Bible is full of the ecumenical proclamation of the Great Ecumenical Drama" (p.5). Dr. Schilder sets forth authentic, witness-bearing antithesis-maintaining Christianity over against the humanistic ecumenical movement with its reductionist and inclusivist tendencies. This booklet is an earnest plea for Christian people to think, study, know the truth and witness for it. Quite apart from the divisions and special conditions in the Netherlands, this booklet has a value as a call to unity in confession of the truth and witnessing for it.

—J.G. Vos

INTRODUCING THE PRAYER CELL, by Robert E. Coleman. Christian Outreach, Inc., Box 22037, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33315. 1972 Paperback, 33 pages. Price not stated.

The author is professor of Evangelism in Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky. The booklet, illustrated with catchy cartoons, is an encouragement to Christians to meet together in small groups for united prayer and Bible study. Much Biblical counsel accompanied by earnest entreaty. Booklet has been translated and published in several foreign languages.

—J.G. Vos

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT, by H.C. Heffren. Pocket-size paperback 30 pages, 40 cents. Bible Lovers' Correspondence School, Box 1448, Camrose, Alberta T4V 1X4, Canada.

A sober and searching critique of the "tongues" movement. Those who venture to use "tongues" are earnestly admonished to pay heed to the restrictions stated by the Apostle Paul. The author holds that "tongues" cannot be THE evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

—J.G. Vos

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, by Arthur A. Vogel. The Seabury Press, 815 Second Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017. 1976, hardbound, 106 pages. \$6.95.

Sub-title: "The Mystical Life of Christians." The author is the Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri, U.S.A. He propounds the reality of and need for a truly Christian experience of Mysticism; not anything with pantheistic affinities, but the living power and presence of the Holy Spirit in those who believe in and know Jesus Christ in a vital and personal way. "Our ultimate hope, based on the same power of the resurrection, is that in the future we will fully share the resurrected life Christ now lives in the very glory he now has. But that time has not yet come" (P. 19). This is authentic Christian mysticism.

Our only criticism—and we state it hesitantly—is that the author, like many Anglican writers, seems weak and inadequate in linking up the resurrection of Christ with His substitutory atonement. Our greatest need is always forgiveness which comes from the shedding of the blood of our Substitute. Only when we have that and stand on that certainty, can mystical experience be real, meaningful and effective in our lives.

—J.G. Vos

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE STATE IN REVOLUTIONARY TIMES Report of The Westminster Conference, 1975. Available from the Secretary, Rev. David Bugden, 75 High Street, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE17 2TA, England. 1975, paperback, 110 pages. 70 pence.

This book deals with the question propounded in its title, What is the duty of the Christian to the State in Revolutionary Times. Following a chapter on Luther and Calvin and one on the Anabaptists, The Scottish Covenanters are discussed by the Rev. G.N.M. Collins, of the Free Church of Scotland. This is followed by a chapter on Puritan England. Which in turn is followed by a chapter on "Christian Thought and Action During the American Revolution" and a final chapter, by Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones on "The French Revolution and After." Every one of these chapters is highly informative and worth reading and re-reading.

Luther was extreme in his denunciation of the German peasants. Calvin was more temperate and conceded that there are times and situations when civil rulers may be legitimately disobeyed. The Anabaptists did not want to be violent or subversive, but given their basic principles, they were bound to come into conflict with the ruling powers of "sacralist" Europe.

Dr. Collins clears away many of the unjust charges that have been hurled at the Scottish Covenanters. "They have a message for us still, these 'men of the moss-hags,' these 'outlaws for freedom.' They teach us that submission to God's Word is the only sure prescrip-

tion for national righteousness and prosperity. They assure us that faith in the promise of God will always come to its reward; that the cause of truth, no matter how low it may fall, will surely rise again" (p.57).

David K. Straub brings out the fact that while many American Presbyterians and other Christians strongly supported the American Revolution, the ideology of most of the Revolutionary leaders had deteriorated from the godly Calvinism of the Pilgrims and Puritans to something derived more from John Locke than from the Bible. They spoke of "the laws of nature and of nature's God." This vague deism has left its mark on American life to the present day.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones in discussing "The French Revolution and After" says that "We must be very careful not to give the impression that we are always on the side of the Establishment and the existing authorities" (p.103). In many countries today passive resistance is the only course open to Christians. When the Government tries to interfere with our relationship to God, or worship of God, the time has come for active resistance, cost what it may. "So the Christian is left with this profound pessimism with regard to the present, but with a glorious optimism with regard to the ultimate and the eternal future" (p. 109).

This little book is a treasure-trove of truth and insight. It should be made available in the United States and, indeed, all over the English-speaking world.

—J.G. Vos

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH: WHICH IS IT? by Thomas Witherow. Free Presbyterian Publications, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3, Scotland. 1967, reprint. Paperback, 91 pages. 60 pence or \$2.20.

"An enquiry at the oracles of God as to whether any existing form of church government is of divine right." This reprint of an old book still has a relevant message for the present time. The author canvasses the historical forms of church government, namely Prelacy, Independence and Presbyterianism, and gives a Scriptural verdict for the last.

—J.G. Vos

THE GREEN LETTERS: PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH. by Miles J. Stanford. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, paperback, pocket size, 98 pages. \$1.50.

This book manifests at many points an affinity to the "Victorious Life" type of teaching about sanctification. Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield's volume on **Perfectionism** would be a good corrective. Author Stanford fills the book with multiple quotations from other authors, some of them of doubtful orthodoxy --- Ruth Paxson, Watch-

man Nee, Andrew Murray, F.J. Huegel, Lewis Sperry Chafer, J.N. Darby, James R. McConkey, and a number of others. Those who have read Warfield, or G.I. Williamson on the Westminster Confession of Faith and Shorter Catechism, do not need this book. Those who are not grounded in orthodox Reformed theology, are likely to be led astray by it.

—J.G.Vos

BIBLE STORIES, by Norman Vincent Peale, with colored illustrations by Grabianski. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, reprint, paperback, 248 pages. \$2.25.

The stories are attractively told and the pictures are truly fascinating. The author takes the miracles and historical events of the Bible as literally true. The reviewer finds the teaching about salvation ambiguous, however: "In any case, the stern moral message of this great Book of Genesis is once more reaffirmed, the message that man must beware how he uses the gift of free will that has been given to him. Those who love God and revere Him, like Noah and Abraham, will be saved. Those who reject and disobey Him, like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, will suffer the consequences" (page 43) Alas, we do not stand where Adam stood. We do not get salvation by the right use of free will. Our will is wholly corrupted by sin (Ephesians 2:1-8). The author is also ambiguous about the literal truth of the history of Jonah (pages 149-150). He seems to think that we can learn the lessons of the story without committing ourselves to its historical factuality. On the other hand, the author rings true on the historical factuality of Christ's resurrection.

—J.G. Vos

NUGGETS FROM NUMBERS, by W.G. Heslop. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. 1975, reprint of 1958, paperback, 192 pages. \$2.95.

An occasional doubtful typological interpretation. On the whole, however, the author presents many practical lessons from the Book of Numbers.

—J.G. Vos

EXTRAS FROM EXODUS, by W.G. Heslop. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. 1975 reprint of 1931, paperback, 160 pages. \$2.45.

Many valuable and edifying lessons from the Book of Exodus. As with other books by this author, there is some doubtful typological interpretation: For example, that the gold in the Tabernacle stands for Christ's Deity, and the wood for His humanity. Patrick Fairbairn's **Typology of Scripture** is a standard work on typology. He shows that for something to be labelled a "type,"

something more than similarity or parallelism is required. It must also be shown that Scripture itself intends the typological interpretation. Thus there can be no doubt that Adam was a type of Christ (Romans 5:14). But that the wood used in making the tabernacle stands for Christ's human nature is unproven. Still the book contains much that is helpful.

—J.G. Vos

THE LIFE OF JOHN KNOX, by Thomas M'Crie. Free Presbyterian Publications. 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3, Scotland. 1976, reprint, paperback, 294 pages. One pound 80 pence or U.S. \$7.50.

The reviewer wonders whether the American price of this book, seven dollars and a half, may not be a typographical error -- it is double or even triple the cost of a comparable book published in America. The book is somewhat difficult to read, as it has been reproduced by photo-offset from an earlier printing, and the type is small and not always clear.

M'Crie's **Life of John Knox** is a classic. Knox was one of the first generation of Protestant Reformers, contemporary with Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. His life story is a chronicle of devotion, courage, self-sacrifice, heroism, suffering and finally victory and success. Scotland in particular, and Reformed Christianity throughout the world, owes an immense debt to John Knox. At his funeral it was said, "There lies he who never feared the face of man." This book is recommended heartily to our readers, in spite of its excessive price.

—J.G. Vos

SEARCH FOR NOAH'S ARK, by Kelly L. Segraves. Beta Books, 10857 Valiente Court, San Diego, Calif. 92124, 1975, paperback, pocket size, 128 pages. \$1.45.

Several books have been written in recent years about the search for Noah's Ark. This paperback lists seven such works, on its final page. Noah's ark has not been found, though there is fascinating evidence that something very remarkable has been seen on the heights of Ararat. It is in Turkey but very near the Russian frontier. The Turkish Government has repeatedly prevented more thorough search of the area, presumably because of pressure from Moscow. The present little book is attractively presented with a great many photographs and drawings.

—J.G. Vos

ROYAL BOUNTY, by Frances R. Havergal. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880. 1975, reprint, original publication date not given, paperback, 144 pages.

The sub-title is "Evening Thoughts for the King's

Guests." The author, a well known hymn writer, lived 1836-1879. A book of devotional readings for one month. This reviewer objects to an allegorical use of the Song of Solomon at one point, and to a quotation from the Book of Job (11:17) as a text on "The Bright Side of Growing Older." The speaker in Job 11:17 is Zophar the Naamathite, who is declared at the end of the book, by the Lord Himself, to have spoken wrongly. Quotations from the Book of Job need to be handled carefully —Jobs three friends said a lot of true things while trying to prove their main point, which was certainly untrue. Apart from a few details of this kind, this book is good and edifying.

—J.G.Vos

LESSONS FROM LEVITICUS, by W.G. Heslop. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. 1975, reprint, paperback, 128 pages. \$1.95.

Many plain-spoken, practical lessons on Christian living and holiness, derived from the Book of Leviticus. At some points the author's typology seems doubtful or speculative. The author rightly emphasizes the truth that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

—J.G.Vos

GEMS FROM GENESIS, by W.G. Heslop. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. 1975, reprint of 1940, paperback, 135 pages. \$1.95.

The author is a believer in the inerrancy and authority of Scripture. Here and there the author indulges in what seems to this reviewer fanciful typology; for example, the opening of Adam's side to take a rib for the creation of Eve is treated as a parallel or type of the piercing of Jesus' side by the Roman soldier's spear. (page 43). Another example appears on page 22, where we are told that "Genesis 1 is typical throughout, adding that "It is more than likely that God's Millennial rest will be on the seventh Day or Seventh thousand years of the history of man." In spite of these criticisms, this book contains much truth and can be used with profit.

—J.G. Vos

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE, by Caroline Fry. 1976 reprint of 1844. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880. Pp. 127, paperback, \$3.25.

This book includes a ten page biography of Caroline Fry by Rev. T.S. Dickson, originally published in England in **Gospel Tidings**. The book as a whole is an earnest plea to take Christ as our Example seriously, in the varied experiences of our lives. The author held a high view of Christ and a high view of what it means to live the Christian life.

—J.G. Vos

THE MIND OF JESUS. by J.R. Macduff. 1976, evidently a reprint but date of original publication not stated. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880. Paperback, 70 pages. \$1.95.

A little book of devotional meditations, each quite brief, on how to live a life that reflects "the mind of Jesus." Some headings: "Sympathy," "Fidelity in Rebuke," "Not Retaliation," "Firmness in Temptation." Recommended.

—J.G. Vos

WEEP WITH ME, by Lillian Carris Crowfoot. Cross Roads Publications, 2110 Silver Hill Road, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083. 1975, paperback, pp. 114, \$1.95.

An evangelical missionary to India returns to America, after several years of absence, and is shocked and crushed by the growth of wickedness, immorality, and irreligion in this country. Real life stories are told and it is shown that only by a return to Christian faith and Christian standards can our country escape divine judgement.

J.G. Vos

SINGLE & HUMAN by Ada Lum. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515; 1976, paperback, Pp.82. \$1.95.

Does hope for the single lie only in marriage? This book deals with the joys, trials, opportunities and challenges of being single. How loneliness can be overcome and a joyful and fruitful Christian life attained.

—J.G.Vos

WHAT IS A REAL PERSON? by JoAnne Fields. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1975, paperback, pocket size, 31 pages. 25 cents.

A tract on accepting one's self as a real person, i.e., for what he or she really is, and then coming to know Jesus Christ vitally and living in the will of God.

—J.G. Vos

THE COST OF COMMITMENT, by John White. Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1976, paperback, 89 pages. \$1.95.

"Does Jesus . . . teaching about the cross have meaning only when secret police pound doors at midnight?" The author is a professor of psychiatry. An earnest plea for commitment to Christ regardless of the difficulty or the cost. Recommended.

—J.G. Vos

GO FREE! THE MEANING OF JUSTIFICATION, by Robert M. Horn. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60615. 1976. Paperback, 128 pages. \$2.25. The author is a staff member of the British Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship.

The question of questions is what is our relationship to God. This involves the question of guilt and its forgiveness. Justification is God's remedy for our guilt. This little book sets forth in simple language what Justification by Faith means, and how it is the key to the solution of all our other problems.

—J.G. Vos

A SONG FOR LOVERS, by S. Craig Glickman. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. Paperback, 188 pages. \$3.95.

This is a book on one of the more difficult books of the Old Testament, the Song of Solomon. It includes a new paraphrase and a new translation of the Song of Solomon. Unlike most books on the Song of Solomon, the author does not treat the book as allegory. He takes it literally, as a portrayal of human love between man and woman at its best -- God's ideal for the marriage relationship. The tree-character theory is rejected, and the author holds that there are only two main characters, Solomon and Shulamith, his beloved bride. Incidentally, the author's interpretation of the Song of Solomon is basically the same as that of the present reviewer in *The Holman Study Bible* (1962) and *The Biblical Expositor* (Editor, Carl F.H. Henry) publisher A.J. Holman Company (1960 and 1973). The present volume is recommended both for Christian young people looking forward to marriage, and for couples already married. From the back cover: "The only book of the Bible entirely devoted to love, sex and marriage: the Song of Solomon. It can speak clearly to us today over the din of modern moral chaos. Through an insightful and sensitive reading of the Song of Solomon, S.Craig Glickman presents an open and frank discussion of what God intends romantic love to be."

—J.G. Vos

THE CORINTHIAN CATASTROPHE, by George E. Gardiner. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. 1974, paperback, pocket size, 95 cents.

An earnest plea for Christian maturity on the part of the individual and the church. The Corinthian Christians, in spite of speaking with tongues and other charismatic gifts, were **carnal**, that is immature and deficient in the real grace of the Holy Spirit to sanctify them. The author agrees with Warfield that charismatic gifts ceased with the passing of the apostles. He urges a sober and humble consideration of whether we really have love, the greatest of all gifts. Recommended.

J.G. Vos

MISSION TRENDS NO. 2 EVANGELIZATION, edited by Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P. Published jointly by Paulist Press, 1865 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023, and William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49502.

This is a joint Protestant-Catholic publication. The Paulist Press is an organ of the Paulist Fathers, a Roman Catholic order devoted to seeking to win Protestants to the Roman Catholic faith. The present reviewer considers it a dubious business for Reformed Christians to join hands with Roman Catholics in efforts at world evangelization. We should rather try to get the Roman Catholics themselves converted to the Reformed interpretation of Christianity.

This book is really a symposium. It contains 22 essays of very varying character and quality. The "ecumenical" movement is well represented in the list of authors and topics treated.

What is needed today is missionary effort informed and motivated by the pure Reformed Faith, not the Faith diluted by being unequally yoked to Roman Catholicism and ecumenicism.

—J.G. Vos

CONFIDENCE IN GOD IN TIMES OF DANGER, by Alexander Carson. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880. 1975, obviously a reprint but date of original publication not stated. Paperback, 94 pages. \$1.95.

A study of God's Providence in the Book of Esther. The author holds the canonical character of the Book of Esther, and draws many helpful and practical lessons from the book. Recommended.

—J.G. Vos

PHILIPPIANS: A STUDY GUIDE, by Howard Vos. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. Paperback, 95 pages, \$1.95.

A brief but careful study of Philippians by a well-known evangelical author. The old "kenotic" theory of Phil. 2:6-8 is forthrightly rejected. Literally "emptied himself," but this cannot mean emptied Himself of His deity or divine attributes. Correctly translated in the King James Version, "made himself of no reputation." It means "emptied himself of the insignia of majesty" (p.48). A good and helpful study of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. Recommended.

—J.G. Vos

THE GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE, by June Miller. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1975, hardbound, 180 pages.

"A contemporary look at Mary, the mother of Jesus, and her message for today" (dust jacket). In reacting to the Mariolatry of Roman Catholicism, Protestants tend to neglect what Scripture really teaches about Mary, the mother of our Lord. The present volume seeks to correct this imbalance. The author uses several modern version of the Bible, including, unfortunately, **The Living Bible** which in spite of its extreme popularity at the moment, is not a faithful translation of the Scriptures. (A few years ago it was **The Amplified Bible** that was super-popular; it is used much less today).

The teaching of the present volume is evangelical and helpful. The style is attractive and readable. The author seeks to help Christians to a life of true freedom and without fear.

—J.G. Vos

WHEN GOD SAYS YOU'RE O.K., by Jon Tal Murphree. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1975, paperback, 130 pages. \$2.95.

"A Christian Approach to Transactional Analysis." Most of our readers have probably never heard of "transactional analysis" and may wonder what the term means. The Introduction says: "The most exhilarating experience in the world is to see the transparent joy, the new fulfilment, the repaired human relationships and the changed lives of those who have discovered a quiet and confident relationship with God through Jesus Christ." We object to the use of the term "OK" throughout the book as if it were a real word and not a piece of slang or jargon. Transactional Analysis is a psychological technique. The reviewer is not at all sure that Christianity benefits by being re-stated in psychological terms. The author obviously seeks to present an evangelical view. All the same, there are perils. For example, in treating the subject of "guilt" the author fails to distinguish clearly between **subjective** guilt (the feeling of guilt) and **objective** guilt (guilt recorded in God's record in heaven). Psychology usually deals only in subjective guilt: the Bible and orthodox Christian theology deal in objective guilt (the sinner not only feels guilty, he **IS** guilty in God's sight). The section on "Autonomous Man" (pages 76-79) is confusing to the reviewer who believes that God has foreordained all that comes to pass, including the decisions of the human will.

No doubt there is much that is good and worth-while in this book. But the reader who holds the Reformed Faith as truth will need to read it with caution.

—J.G. Vos

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: AN EXPOSITIONAL COMMENTARY, VOLUME 2, John 5:1-8:59. By James Montgomery Boice. Zondervan publishing house, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1976, pp.410, hardbound. \$9.95.

The author is the pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, where Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse once ministered. The viewpoint is definitely Reformed, and the exposition thorough. It has been said that next to the Epistle to the Romans, the Gospel of John is the most strongly predestinarian book in the Bible. The following is a specimen of the author's work (on John 6:36, 37):

"... God is serious when He proclaims that all who He has chosen shall come . . . Take heart, Christian worker! I do not know why God has chosen to save some through the foolishness of preaching and witnessing, but He has. Moreover, He has promised that all whom He has chosen to save will come. Nothing can stop them - - - not your failures (though you must take heed as to how you live), not even the devil!"(p.171).

John 7:53 through 8:11, about the woman taken in adultery, is not found in the most ancient and authentic Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of John. In some manuscripts it is found at a different place (indicating doubt about it in very early times). Author Boice does not mention the question of the textual genuineness of this passage. He apparently regards it as a genuine part of the Gospel of John. (The question at issue, of course, is not whether the incident is true, nor whether or not Jesus really spoke the words here recorded, but whether this passage (7:53-8:11) is a part of the authentic text of the Gospel of John, and if so, whether it belongs at this point.)

This book is highly recommended to our readers. Not always easy reading, but edifying and helpful.

J.G. Vos

PLAIN TALK ON GENESIS, by Manford G. Gutzke. Zondervan Publishing House, 1975, paperback, 143 pages. \$2.95.

A good popular type brief exposition of the Book of Genesis. The author believes the Bible. He seeks to explain it, not to explain it away. Evolution (both materialistic and "theistic") is rejected and direct creation affirmed. The account of the Fall of man (Genesis 3) is taken literally, as it certainly should be. The Flood is taken literally and shown to be a single instance of the righteous judgment of God on human sin.

—J.G. Vos

SATAN, THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS, by Frederick A. Tatford. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. Reprint of earlier British publication. Date of reprint, 1974. Paperback, 118 pages, pocket size. \$1.95.

The author believes that Satan is a real person, and to

be taken seriously. His treatment of the fall of Satan (prior to his appearance in Genesis chapter 3) includes some ideas that are speculative and can hardly be considered proved by Scripture. The author speaks of "pre-Adamite occupants" of the earth (p.25). Apart from these speculative elements the teaching is the standard orthodox view of Satan, and Christians are strongly warned against his attacks and devices.

J.G. Vos

EARTH'S EARLIEST AGES, by G.H. Pember. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. 1975, reprint of 1942, 332 pages, hard-bound. \$5.95.

The author holds opinions that must be rated as unproved and speculative at best. He holds that there was an indefinite time interval between the first two verses of Genesis, and attempts to support this by references to other parts of the Old Testament. In the reviewer's opinion, this interpretation is unfounded. Such accomplished Old Testament scholars as Oswald T. Allis and Edward J. Young, to mention only two of many, rejected this notion - the idea that the earth "became" waste and void after its creation but prior to the creation of Adam.

There is much good in this book, but it should be read with discernment and compared with standard works such as those of Allis and Young, not to mention Leupold and Calvin. The author rightly warns against trifling with the Satanic influences that are abroad and active in the world of our day.

-J.G. Vos

REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, by Tim LaHaye. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, paperback, 326 pages. \$4.95.

This is a popular type exposition of the Book of Revelation. The author's viewpoint is premillennial and also Arminian. "Not everyone has his name written in the Lamb's Book of Life! One's name is not written in at birth, nor does he have it written in by the sovereign choice of God. A man's name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life because he chooses to ask God to place it there" (p.183). Needless to say, such a statement is unscriptural and incompatible with the Reformed Faith.

A one-page Bibliography at the end of the book is heavily weighted with premillennial and dispensational authors. Loraine Boettner's book on **Roman Catholicism** is listed, but not his book on **The Millennium**. This reviewer has not read all the books listed in the Bibliography, but he failed to note a single author known as an advocate of either the Postmillennial or the Amillennial view. Noted omissions from the Bibliography, which

should certainly have been listed, are Albertus Pieters, **The Lamb, the Woman and the Dragon**; William Hendriksen, **More than Conquerors**; Sir William Ramsay, **The Letters to the Seven Churches**. These three books are highly relevant to the basic interpretation of the Book of Revelation, and should have been listed even though the author no doubt disagrees with them. Not recommended except as a typical specimen of current American premillennial eschatology.

-J.G. Vos

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR? by John R.W. Stott. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1975, paperback, pocket size booklet, 24 pages. 25 cents.

Sub-titled "The Challenge of Christ's Compassion." This is an earnest, though brief, plea to Christians to be serious about imitating Christ's example of compassion for those in trouble or need.

J.G. Vos

EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE MISSION FIELD. BUT ARE AFRAID YOU WON'T LEARN UNTIL YOU GET THERE, by Charles Troutman. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1976, paperback, 114 pages. \$2.95.

Sub-titled "Letters to a Prospective Missionary." Twenty-seven letters, dealing with a wide variety of subjects. Much sound advice to persons contemplating foreign missionary service. It is oriented primarily to missionary work in Latin American countries, where the majority background is Roman Catholicism. The author urges sympathy and patience in dealing with persons with this background. He also brings out the tremendous increase in Pentecostal or "Charismatic" type churches in Latin America. This calls the North American missionary to consider seriously how he will face this situation. The Ecumenical Movement is also considered. Much good counsel is given. However, in the reviewer's opinion, there are some dangers too. A missionary can be so committed to adjustment that he loses sight of truths confessed as Biblical by the Church that sends him, and of which he is a member. Truth does not change with geography. A missionary who is a member of a confessional church must hold that what is true and right and important in Pennsylvania is also true and right and important everywhere. He holds that his Church's confession is Scriptural and therefore universally valid. One can be all things to all men, like the apostle Paul, but he cannot have one faith at home and another faith abroad.

-J.G. Vos

FROM PARENT TO CHILD ABOUT SEX, by Wilson W. Grant, M.D. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1973, paperback, 183 pages. \$1.95.

A Christian medical doctor presents much sound practical counsel about how parents should guide their children concerning sex and related matters. The idea that sex as such is sinful is thoroughly cleared away, and also the current American popular over-emphasis on sex, which amounts almost to making sex a god. There is material on homosexuality, on venereal disease, on dating, and many other related matters. Included is a fifteen-page glossary with definitions of terms, a supplemental reading list, and comprehensive index. Recommended.

—J.G. Vos

MY LOVE MUST WAIT, by David Bentley-Taylor. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1976, paperback, 160 pages. \$2.50.

This is the story of Henry Martyn, 1781-1812, famous missionary to India and Persia. Martyn was a linguistic genius and an amazing example of consecration to the cause of Christ. He loved a young woman whose health prevented her going to the mission field, so Martyn went alone. He died in Persia at the age of 31. A challenging story of devotion and success.

—J.G. Vos

THE JESUS HOPE, by Stephen Travis. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60615. 1976, paperback 128 pages. \$2.25.

This little paperback concerns the Second Coming of Christ. The viewpoint is Amillennial. Christ will come again when the predicted signs have reached their climax. The true nature of the Christian's ultimate hope is emphasized. Date setters and their like are properly shown to be unscriptural. There is a good critique of **The Late Great Planet Earth**, as well as of the Darby-Scofield idea of a "secret rapture." Along with this book's eminently biblical emphasis on the literal reality of Christ's coming again in glory, there is a corresponding emphasis on our duty to apply Christianity in the social, economic and political spheres, without making the outcome of such efforts our ultimate hope, and without deluding ourselves into thinking that complete success can ever be achieved short of the Lord's return. The author rightly says that it is to the honor and glory of God if we can achieve **anything** in applying Christianity to society. This book is eminently Biblical. It is recommended without reservation to readers of **Blue Banner Faith and Life**.

—J.G. Vos

AN OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT WALK—THROUGH by Ralph G. Braun. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1970, paperback, 8½ x 11 inches, 38 pages. \$1.95.

This manual is designed to help the reader conduct

home Bible studies to reach the recently converted and/or unconverted with the Gospel message. The participants in these studies are to be led graphically and rapidly through the theological-historical structure of the Bible.

The author suggests that this history be taught by superimposing the lay-out of the ancient orient and Palestine on a room and designating students as landmarks and then using various hand motions, etc., to "lead" the class through Bible history. The idea is a good one and may prove quite useful to those of reformed persuasion.

Unfortunately, the theology of the book is pronouncedly Arminian, Dispensational, and fundamentalistic. These theological structures so bias the work that before it would be used in a reformed covenantal context major reworking would be required. This reviewer was quite concerned when the author told leaders to assure the students that "this is a factual Bible class" and that he has "no ulterior motives" when it is clearly stated that the ultimate purpose of these studies is "designed for evangelistic outreach among the 'unreachables' and believers who have never understood salvation in its basic elements" (p.1), and "you must have the lost in the class. You can't evangelize the already evangelized" (p.1), "An effective home-Bible class feeds new converts into local Bible-teaching churches" (p.1), "This chapter is designed to bring good people under conviction" (p.33), etc. This reviewer finds the two sentiments of the preceding quotations quite contradictory, and wonders if the author is not suggesting his teachers deceive their students. Furthermore, Braun erroneously states "the Bible has no designation separating the so-called clergy from the laity" (p.1). While it is true that non-ordained believers should be actively involved in evangelistic outreach this does not warrant ignoring the clear biblical distinction between unordained and ordained believers. Braun's concept of faith (p.2) is dangerously close to seeking new revelations from God. "I was asked if it was the will of the Lord for me to eventually be married. The answer was yes. Now, is it the will of the Lord for you to present the gospel to the lost? Yes. Then is it His will for you to have a class as a means of accomplishing this? If the answer is yes then there must be a home where you can teach a class. . ." Another noteworthy weakness of this manual emerges when Braun depicts the old sin nature as part of the Christian's make-up (in spite of Paul's clear teaching that the old man has been crucified with Christ). Also, Braun tells us that the Bible teaches the tripartite concept of man (Body, soul, and spirit - p.37). These problematic themes permeate the entire manual.

L.J. Coppes

I CAME TO SET THE EARTH ON FIRE: A PORTRAIT OF JESUS, by R.T. France. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, ILL. 60515. 1976, paperback, 190 pages. \$2.50.

The author is a missionary in Nigeria. He has written a "life of Jesus" for modern-day readers. It is readable and faithful to the truth of the Scriptures and the supernatural character of Christianity. The literal truth of Christ's miracles is set forth and defended; also the literal truth of His bodily resurrection. The evidence for the resurrection is given at some length, and the arguments against it shown to be futile. A good book to give to those who have pre-conceived views about Jesus which do not ring true to the record in the inspired gospels.

—J.G.Vos

WEEK IN - WEEK OUT: A NEW LOOK AT LITURGICAL PREACHING, by David E. Babin. Seabury Press, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10017. 1976, hardbound, 130 pages. \$7.95.

This is a book on homiletics. Its orientation is Neo-orthodox (page 21). While of limited relevance to the ministry of non-liturgical churches, there is thought-provoking material in this book. We shall send our review copy to the Library of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, for a reference work or specimen of a trend.

—J.G. Vos

SEXY DRESS AND NUDITY -- ARTISTIC OR IMMORAL, by Dor. Groenewegen. Puritian-Reformed Discount Book Service, Inc., Plaza 41, 1319 Newport-Gap Pike, Wilmington, Del. 19804. No date, no price stated. Paperback booklet, 16 pages.

A brief but emphatic trumpet blast against pornography in dress and in the lack of dress. A solemn warning to Christian people to beware of the characteristic sins of the world.

—J.G.Vos

SEE NO EVIL, by T.M. Williams. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1976, paperback, 103 pages. \$1.50.

Sub-title: "Christian Attitudes toward Sex in Art and Entertainment." This little book is an emphatic and convincing denunciation of the evil of pornography in its many forms. Deals with definition of pornography, its effects, attempted defences of it, censorship, and other matters. Recommended.

—J.G. Vos

PICKING UP THE PIECES, by W. Fred Graham, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1975, paperback 232 pages. \$3.95.

"How is one to live as a Christian in a society that reflects only fragmentarily the values of biblical faith?"

(Cover). This is not simple, nor an easy book to read. It speaks of modern American life as "a fragmented society." Secular tendencies are described and evaluated. Among topics considered are "the Jesus Movement," the "counterculture," and a good many others. Part II of the book is entitled "Building a Theology for the Times" — "How to Make a Theology: A Guide to Good Taste" (pp. 137, 138 ff.). To this reviewer the idea of "making a theology" sounds almost blasphemous. We cannot "make" a theology any more than we can "make" a Bible or a God to worship. The Bibliography (3 pages) is heavily slanted in the direction of Neo-orthodoxy and other non-evangelical tendencies. We shall donate our review copy to the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary as a sample of what some scholars call "theology" today.

—J.G. Vos

PLAIN TALK ON HEBREWS, by Manford G. Gutzke. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1976, paperback, 122 pages. \$2.95.

A devotional commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, in simple language and true to the Scripture. The author does not undertake to deal with the mooted questions of who the author was and who the original readers were. Rather, he seeks to apply the principal teachings of the Epistle to the Christian of today.

—J.G. Vos

LOVE YOURSELF, by Walter Trobisch. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1976, paperback, pocket size, 55 pages. \$1.50.

The author clearly shows that to love one's self is a duty commanded in Scripture. Loving one's self is not wrong, as long as it is kept in balance with love to our neighbor and subordinate to love for God. Among other matters he deals with abortion, hostility toward children, hatred of one's body, the consequences of lack of self-love, and depression and helps toward overcoming depression. The sub-title of the book is: Self-acceptance and depression. Recommended.

—J.G. Vos

FAITH, PSYCHOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN MATURITY, by Millard J. Sall. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 49506. 1975, hardbound, 181 pages. \$5.95.

The late C.S. Lewis warned his readers strongly against psychiatrists. He urged people to avoid all psychiatrists unless they are Christians. They will regard your religion as a disease and try to cure you of it. The author of this book, however, is a Christian with excellent Christian and professional credentials. He recognizes the reality of demons and demon possession, but warns against hastily

confusing this condition with ordinary mental illness. He gives extensive criteria for differentiation the two. The author is a licensed clinical psychologist (California).

—J.G. Vos

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH FROM THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Zondervan Bible Publishers of the Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1975, paperback, 162 pages. \$1.95.

The New Testament part of the New International Version has been out for some time. This is the first part of the Old Testament to be published in the new version. This version is being made by over 100 Biblical scholars who are committed strictly to the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible. It is a splendid piece of believing Christian scholarship, and we hope the entire Bible, Old Testament and New, will soon be available in this version. It is not a revision of previous versions, but an entirely new translation from the original Hebrew and Greek text of the Scriptures.

Here is a sample (Isaiah 53:9-11): "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Although it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities."

The print is large, clear and easy to read. Footnotes call attention to significant textual variants in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint. We should thank God for such a splendid work, so attractive, readable, and above all so faithful to the text of Scripture.

—J.G. Vos

HISTORICAL TRANSCENDENCE AND THE REALITY OF GOD, by Ray S. Anderson. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1975, hardbound, 328 pages. \$9.95.

The author is a professor of theology at Westmont College, California, and also serves at Fuller Theological Seminary. This is a very difficult book to read and only professional theologians and advanced theological students will be able to understand it. The author grapples with the meaning of *Kenosis* ("emptying himself") in Philippians chapter 2, and rejects both the old Liberal explanation (that Christ emptied Himself of His deity and incommunicable attributes when he became man) and the traditional orthodox interpretation (that Christ in becoming man emptied himself of the enjoyment and manifestation of His divine glory — "made himself of no reputation"). The author seeks to set forth and vindicate a different interpretation, which has an important

bearing on our doctrine of God. He speaks of "kenotic transcendence." There is a ten-page Bibliography, which leans heavily toward Liberal, radical, neo-orthodox and other kinds of "modern" scholars. In the Index, Dietrich Bonhoeffer gets 47 listings; Karl Barth 40, Augustine 3, Calvin 2, Luther 3, Kierkegaard 7, Cornelius Van Til 0, G.C. Berkouwer 0, Rudolph Bultmann 12, Paul van Buren 10, Immanuel Kant 18, Benjamin B. Warfield 0, Herman Ridderbos 0. It is not hard to discern who author Anderson thinks the great theologians and exegetes of the past and present are.

—J.G. Vos

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION, by David Haddon. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. Pocket size paperback booklet, 30 pages. 25 cents.

This little booklet clearly shows that the current fad "Transcendental Meditation" is basically a pantheistic cult of Hindu origin. The author contrasts it with Biblical Christianity, and warns against being deceived by its errors.

—J.G. Vos

PHILOSOPHY: A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE, by Arthur F. Holmes. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1975, paperback, 54 pages. \$1.95.

Sub-titled "An Introductory Essay." The author is Chairman of the Philosophy Department of Wheaton College, Illinois. The author asks What is Philosophy? What is Christianity? How do the two Relate? and What kinds of Philosophy do Christians Produce? Philosophy is "a momentous undertaking that cannot be ignored and must not be misunderstood . . . Christians face a pagan culture in which varied philosophic forces are at work. Christianity's relationship to philosophy will accordingly depend at least in part on Christianity's relationship to human culture" (p. 17). Dr. Holmes asserts "the primacy of Revelation" and shows that cultural ideas must be conformed to Christian truth, not *vice versa*.

—J.G. Vos

THE DELIGHT OF KINGS, A COMPENDIUM BY A. HAYTER, FROM A HIND LET LOOSE, GEN. 49:21. Published by the author, Anthony Hayter, Free Church Manse, Bower by Wick, Caithness, Scotland. No price. 1975, paperback, 31 pages.

Based upon the Scottish Second Reformation document entitled "A Hind Let Loose," this booklet concerns the Biblical teachings on the subject of civil government. Civil rulers are shown to be servants of God for the good of their people. The murderer must suffer capital punishment — Scripture categorically commands it (Numbers 35:31-33; Proverbs 28:17.) The present-day

attenuation of civil justice can have no other result than to bring the righteous judgements of God on a nation.

—J.G. Vos

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN HISTORIC PRESBYTERIANISM: AN EVANGELICAL ASSESSMENT, by Anthony Dallison. Published by the author, The Manse, Livingston Village, West Lothian, Scotland. 1975, paper, 26 pages. 20 pence.

This pamphlet consists of three addresses to a conference held in Glasgow in May 1975 by Dr. E. Evans (N. Ireland), Rev. Gilbert Evans (Wales) and Rev. Iain Inglis (U.S.A.). The conditions, including orthodoxy or the lack of it, in each of these areas are set forth. Of most interest to Americans will be the lecture by Mr. Inglis (North Augusta, South Carolina). He states reasons why some conservatives did not leave the Southern Presbyterian Church, urges unity of true believers, and concludes by saying that a time can come when we must take a stand at whatever cost.

—J.G. Vos

MOTHER'S CATECHISM, by John Willison. Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G.3, Scotland. No date, paper cover, pocket size, 32 pages. 20 pence or U.S. \$1.00.

The American price for this little pocket size booklet is exorbitant. A booklet of this size published in America would be priced at 15 or 20 cents, possibly at most 25 cents.

The sub-title is "A Preparatory Help for the Young and Ignorant to their easier understanding of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism." Starting out with "Who made you?" (Answer, God), it covers a wide range of the Reformed Faith. We have one criticism: a good many questions are answered simply by "Yes" or "No." This is very unpedagogical. The answer should be a complete statement of truth, even though simple and brief. The reviewer recalls a child, years ago, who was asked if he had learned his catechism for that Sabbath. He replied, "Yes, we have four questions and I know them all." "What are they?" Answer: "In substance, in power and glory, yes and no." When asked what the questions were, he said, "We don't learn the questions; we just learn the answers." This "Mother's Catechism" needs to be revised so that the child's answer is never a mere "yes" or "no".

—J.G. Vos

GOSPEL GLEANINGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G.3, Scotland. 1976, reprint, paper cover, 128 pages. 90 pence or U.S. \$3.80.

The American price of \$3.80 is exorbitant. The booklet is a collection of lessons, stories, poems, quotations from eminent Christians, and other materials, all of high quality and very well suited to children. Recommended.

—J.G. Vos

THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN, by H.C. Heffren. Bible Lovers Correspondence School of the Church of God, Box 1448, Camrose, Alberta T4V 1X4, Canada. 1976, paper cover, 31 pages. 50 cents.

This is not a tract on the inerrancy of Scripture, as the title might seem to indicate, but a critique of modern Darby-Scofield Dispensationalism. The serious errors of the Dispensationalist system are stated and shown to be contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Recommended.

—J.G. Vos

PASTORAL OR CHRISTIAN COUNSELING, by J.S. Hielema. Published by the author at Croningerstraat 31, Surhuisterveen, Friesland, Netherlands, No price, 1975, paper cover, 306 pages.

This is a doctoral dissertation, with the sub-title "A Confrontation with American Pastoral Theology, in particular Seward Hiltner and Jay E. Adams." The author was born in Holland but has lived much of his life in Canada. He is a graduate of Calvin College and Westminster Theological Seminary (1960). At present he is living in Holland.

This book is an examination, comparison and critique of the different views of pastoral counseling represented by Jay Adams of Westminster Seminary and Seward Hiltner of Princeton Seminary. The author is careful to point out that Hiltner is a theological liberal. This book is of necessity somewhat technical, but will be of much interest to pastors and theological students interested in the area of counseling.

Published in the Netherlands, the book is in English, but includes summaries in Dutch, German and French. Recommended for those qualified to deal in this field.

—J.G. Vos

Religious Terms Defined

TABERNACLE. The portable tent sanctuary constructed by the Israelites in the wilderness in the time of Moses, which was used as the center of their religious worship until the Temple was built by Solomon. No structure used for Christian worship should ever be called a tabernacle or a temple, for the typical worship associated with both belonged to the Old Testament period of figures and shadows only.

TALMUD. A collection of Jewish writings, composed after the time of Christ (about A.D. 270-500), constituting an explanation of and commentary on the text of the Old Testament. The Talmud, not the Old Testament, is the real authority of orthodox Jews today.

TARGUMS. A collection of paraphrases of the Hebrew Old Testament in the Aramaic language, made in the third and fourth centuries after Christ. The Targums were read by Jews who could not read Hebrew.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM. That science which, by a methodical comparison of manuscripts, seeks to eliminate errors which have occurred in the process of copying and thus to determine the genuine text of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.

THANKSGIVING. That element of prayer which expresses gratitude to God for his love and mercies.

THEISM. The truth that there is a personal, almighty God, who is the Creator and Ruler of all things, and is Himself distinct from the universe.

THEOLOGY. That science which deals with God, His being, attributes and works. Many people today speak contemptuously of theology, but it is sinful to do so. When people regard theology with contempt, they are regarding the knowledge of God with contempt.

TOLERATION. The act of a government or ruler in permitting something which is not fully approved. Religious toleration differs from religious liberty in that the former is based upon the assumption that the State has jurisdiction over the sphere of religion, whereas the latter is based on the assumption that the State does not have jurisdiction over the sphere of religion. It is therefore a mistake to regard toleration as equivalent to liberty.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY. A term used to describe humanity's sinful corruption of nature, indicating (a) that in the "natural man" there is nothing spiritually good or truly pleasing to God; and (b) that there is no part of our human nature that has not been thoroughly corrupted and spoiled by sin.

TRADITION. Something handed down from generation to generation. In theology, tradition is distinguished from Scripture. For example, we know from Scripture that Paul was an apostle, but the idea that he was beheaded under Nero rests on tradition. Tradition becomes presumptuous and evil when it supplants divine revelation as religious authority (Mark 7:9, 13).

TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD. The truth that God is not only distinct from the universe, but far above, behind and beyond it, and that there is absolutely nothing beyond God. The Bible expresses this by saying that God dwells on high.

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

TRANSLATION. (1) God's act of taking Enoch and Elijah to heaven without their dying (Heb. 11:5). (2) The reproduction of the Bible, or any other writings, in a language different from that in which they were originally written. The product of translation is called a Version.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION. The dogma of the Roman Catholic Church which teaches that in the Lord's Supper the elements of bread and wine are miraculously changed into the real body and blood of Christ, while retaining only the qualities of bread and wine.

TRENT, COUNCIL OF. The Roman Catholic council which met at intervals from 1545 to 1563 to decide the issues raised by the Protestant Reformation. The decrees of the Council of Trent constitute the basic dogma of the Roman Catholic Church today, and mark that body as apostate from Biblical Christianity.

TRINITY OF GOD. The truth that the one God exists in three Persons, the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

TRUTH. That which is in harmony with the nature of God, and is therefore the opposite of falsehood.

TYPE. An embodiment, in an earlier stage of sacred history, in a limited way, of some truth which is embodied in a later stage of sacred history in absolute fullness. The fulfilment of a type is called the antitype (that which corresponds to the type). Thus David was a type of Christ as King; Christ is the antitype of King David.

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