

# The Presbyterian GUARDIAN

J. GRESHAM MACHEN • EDITOR 1936-1937

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*My profession of faith is simply that I know nothing of a Christ who is presented to us in a human book containing errors, but know only a Christ presented in a divine book, the Bible, which is true from beginning to end. I know nothing of a Christ who possibly was and probably was not born of a virgin, but only a Christ who was truly conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary.*

*I know nothing of a Christ who possibly did and possibly did not work miracles, but only a Christ who said to the wind and the waves with the voice of the Sovereign Maker and Ruler of all nature, "Peace, be still." I know nothing of a Christ who possibly did and possibly did not die as my substitute on the cross, but know only a Christ who took upon Himself the just punishment of my sins, and died there in my stead to make me right with the holy God.*

—J. Gresham Machen

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“Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth.”



NEVER let it be said that the Youth Center is behind the times! Remember Judy Ward from last month? Well, on her birthday, January 13th, her engagement to Frederick C. Metzger was announced. Bud is a yeoman, second class, USNR, stationed in Buffalo, N. Y. He was New Jersey Machen League president before Judy was elected to office. Best of everything to you both!

Doesn't this month's picture make you feel like shoveling snow (or mowing lawns) to earn your tuition for the Christian University? Why don't you? There's no time like the present to begin.

A grand letter came from Omaha, Nebr. I'm glad you like the Youth Center. An answer is on its way to you now but, in addition, here's an idea for you and others. You asked what young people could do to stimulate their society and also to assist in the work of Christ. The Christian University will need books, books, BOOKS! Why not canvass the church people, and others, too, for books to send? Before you send them in, submit a list with the author, title, and date of publication to the Rev. Edwin H. Rian, Christian University Association, Philadelphia 17, Pa. Tell them about the University and impress upon them the importance of their cooperation. If you don't know much about it yourself, see the GUARDIAN issue of December 10, 1944. We can't all donate a thousand dollars to the University, but we can do this.

Still speaking of books, you can add one to your own library. How? By winning the contest that's coming next month. Don't miss it. See you then!

*Norma R. Ellis*

Director, The GUARDIAN  
Youth Center

### Intimate Glimpses

IN TWO or three years, scenes like this one will be commonplace in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania. This picture was taken at the Main Hall on the magnificent grounds purchased from the world-famous P.A.B. Widener Estate by the Christian University Association of America.

This building contains fifty-four bedrooms, a marble swimming pool, an auditorium seating five hundred persons—I could go on indefinitely!



But you'd have to see it to appreciate it! The best part of it is that in every department, every activity, God will be honored. This will be the only Christian University in the United States!

Pictured from left to right are Edward Woolley and Marilyn Stonehouse (both of the Calvary Church, Philadelphia, Pa.) and Jane Schull and Ruth Hamilton (both of the Calvary Church, Willow Grove, Pa.). They are only posing now, but they are undoubtedly hoping that they'll be there some day as students. At present they are all taking the academic course in high school.

### “Ever Learning”

EDUCATION is to some people like a bad habit—when it gets in their blood they cannot resist it! On and on they go in their study, piling up degree after degree. Such people are referred to in II Timothy 3:7 as “ever learning.” This pursuit of knowledge is an excellent thing, of course. It is sorely needed in all fields of endeavor in order that progress be made.

But Paul goes on, “ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Without God men can and do learn much. But they do not learn *the truth*. The truth is only in God. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” we read in Psalm 11:10. Without the fear of the Lord, without a reverence for His Word, men, with all their degrees, cannot even begin to have real wisdom.

This means that education without God is meaningless. All education to be meaningful must be God-centered. In history and science classes, God's works of creation and providence must be emphasized. In literature classes the Bible must take its place as the finest of literary works. In every class God's presence must be felt. Because we live in a democracy in which persons of many beliefs live side by side, this cannot occur in public schools. That is why we should all pray for the establishment of Christian schools of all levels—from kindergarten through college and on into graduate work!

#### “Think on these things . . .”

1. Is it possible to be neutral regarding God in school subjects?
2. What can young people do to further the cause of Christian education?
3. Why should Christians strive to be well educated in subjects other than religion?

# God Transcendent

SERMON

A Sermon by the REV. J. GRESHAM MACHEN, D.D., Litt.D.

First Preached in the First Presbyterian Church of Princeton, N. J., on October 21, 1923

"It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isa. 40:22).

THE fortieth chapter of Isaiah in the King James Version is one of the noblest pieces of prose in the English language. The simplest means are employed in the production of the effect; common, homely English words are used; and some of the grandest sentences are written in words of one syllable. After the lapse of three centuries there is nothing strange or archaic in the language of this chapter; the words are those that form our common English speech in the twentieth century just as in 1611. But if the materials used are simple, the total effect is sublime. There is in this chapter a rhythm that never degenerates into metre, a combination of simplicity with grandeur, which uplifts the soul. It is quite impossible, the wondering reader will say, for prose style ever to attain heights greater than these.

The marvel is that the truly English beauty of the King James Version is attained without any of that freedom—not to say license—in translation which modern translators pronounce necessary. The original in this version is followed with admirable closeness; paraphrase is eschewed; and yet the result is an English masterpiece. The fortieth chapter of Isaiah in the Authorized Version is a masterpiece not because it is a new work—as some of our recent alleged translations of the Bible really are—but because it has reproduced faithfully both letter and spirit of the majestic original. The author of this chapter was a true poet.

That fact may well cause the devout reader to rejoice. The central worth of the Bible does not indeed depend upon literary form; the Bible is the "best seller" not because it is a collection of inspiring literature but because it records facts. It is valuable primarily because it records the facts about God, about the lost condition of man, and about that mighty divine

act—prepared for in all the long dealings of God with His people in Old Testament times—which took place outside the walls of Jerusalem nineteen hundred years ago when the guilt of sin was washed away and a new face, for believers, was put upon the world. If the Bible does not really record facts, then its literary beauty, though it may save it from utter oblivion, will succeed only in preserving a taste for it among a few select souls; and the love and veneration of the race, which it now possesses, will certainly be destroyed. The Christian religion is no mere form of mysticism, but is founded upon a body of facts; the facts are recorded in the Bible; and if the supposed facts were not facts at all, then Christianity and the Bible would certainly sink into a common ruin.

Nevertheless, though the primary importance of the Bible is found in its recording of facts, the way in which the facts are recorded is by no means a matter of indifference. A bald, dry record of the history of redemption might possibly have convinced the mind—though even that, because of subtle moral factors involved, may be doubtful—but it would at any rate never have touched the heart. As it is, God has been very good; He has spoken to us in gracious fashion; He has condescended to persuade where He might have spoken only in a tone of cold command. He has condescended to win our hearts by the variety and beauty of His Book. In the Bible there is that which meets every need of man, which answers to every mood, which speaks to every heart. No one who comes to this feast need go empty away; and there are times in every life when even the least considered of the things that the Bible contains are just what is needed by the soul. So there is a place in the nurture of the Christian life, among other things, for the majestic poetry of Isaiah.

The fortieth chapter of Isaiah was written by a prophet who revealed the truth; but the prophet was also a poet. And this poet—unlike some poets whose worth lies altogether in the

music of the form and not at all in the matter—this poet had a great theme. The theme is the living God. The prophet celebrates especially the awful transcendence of God, the awful separateness between God and the world. The God of Isaiah is not the rather pathetic finite god of Mr. H. G. Wells—not a god who works merely in and with striving humanity—but the sovereign king. "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" And this sovereign Person is Lord not only of mankind but also of all nature. He is very different from what modern men are accustomed to call, by a perversion of a great truth, the "immanent" God. He pervades all, but He also transcends all, and He has never abandoned His freedom in the presence of the things that He has made. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." This is the very pinnacle of natural religion; the heavens here indeed declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. The living God, according to Isaiah, is revealed through the things that He has made.

Natural religion—the revelation of God through nature—is by no means dead. Recently I listened to an interesting lecture by a famous man of science. The lecturer traced the progress of scientific investigation and pointed out, if I remember aright, its material benefits. But then he paused to speak of another product of the scientific spirit; the true scientist, he said, is brought face to face at last with the ultimate mystery and at

that point he becomes a religious man. There is endless diversity in the world; but the progress of investigation has revealed the electron; and the electrons, said he, are all alike—they are machine-made. And their marvelous likeness reveals the existence of a mystery into which man cannot penetrate; in truly religious awe the man of science stands at length before a curtain that is never lifted, a mystery that rebukes all pride.

Many questions, naturally, remained as I listened in my utterly ignorant mind. I might have asked, had I been so bold, how the lecturer knew that the electrons are all alike, and if they are all alike how from them has come the endless diversity of the world. But I was sure at least that the conclusion was right. There is an ultimate mystery before which the knowledge of the wisest men is dumb. The presence of that mystery is revealed to different men in different ways. Certainly it is not obscured one whit by modern achievements, for the widening of the circle of human knowledge only increases the periphery of dreadful contact with the unknown. And even within the little circle of knowledge, mystery touches us at a thousand points. There is an aspect ever of the simplest things that is just as mysterious as those problems of electrons or quanta with which contemporary science is bold enough to deal. The modern scientist is humble and aghast in the presence of the electrons, and that is well. But Isaiah had really just as much scientific right to be humble as he contemplated in his way the starry spheres. There is nothing in modern science that has invalidated but everything that has confirmed his words: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." Now as then the man who really thinks will stand in awe before God. We can never get away from natural religion. It is confirmed by modern science; it is confirmed and enriched by the Bible; and it is confirmed by

the example of our Lord.

But is that all? The mighty prophet who wrote the words that we have read did not think that it was all. He did not content himself with standing in awe before God; but he claimed this mighty God as his. He added to the realm of nature the realm of grace. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" There is the God of mystery before whom men might well stand forever in silent fear. But that mighty ruler of the world to the prophet was also the covenant God of Israel; He was a God who had loved, His people and whom His people could love. Hear what is said of this terrible God (can it be the same?): "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." This goes far beyond all natural religion; in all the realm of nature there is little hint of this; this is revelation and revelation alone.

And can we do without it? Can we really be content with the awful mystery that nature presupposes if it does not reveal? Natural religion is indeed not to be despised. Well may lesser men emulate the example of the scientist who stands in humble awe before the dreadful curtain that veils the being of God. The awe of the true man of science is an emotion not to be despised. But can we bear to stand even before that curtain? Are we worthy even to contemplate afar that mystery that explains the world? We have offended even against nature's laws; we are unclean. Not for us the uplifting emotion of awe that is man's highest glory! We are unworthy to lift our eyes unto God; we can only grovel in the filthy sty which our baseness is making of the world.

But as we shrink in guilty fear from these high things, God has put forth His hand to draw us near. He has not concealed from us the uncleanness of our sin; He has confirmed in letters

of flame the condemnation of our hearts.

But He has conquered sin and guilt by an act of love. He has come in the person of the Son and borne our guilt; God's love has cast out fear. Isaiah had not seen the Saviour with the bodily eye; but being true prophet he saw Him with the eye of faith. There is in the Bible a grand continuity in the economy of grace. God's gracious dealings with His people of old were an anticipation of the coming of the Lord. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; saith your God"—these words with which our chapter begins are fulfilled and completed in Christ.

So the dreadful curtain has been lifted. It has been lifted by a revelation which is the explanation of an act. Only a look has been granted beyond, but the look is sufficient to give life. And what is revealed in those mysterious depths beyond the veil? Something that nature could never tell. The heart of the Eternal, it is found, is most wonderfully kind. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." The gracious revelation can never destroy our sense of mystery in the presence of God; the Lord who is our shepherd is also the dreadful ruler of all nature whose counsel none can tell. But the curtain has been drawn gently aside. But to whom has a look been granted beyond? Here is the wonder of our religion; here is the strange condescension of God. Not only to the wise and the mighty has a look been granted, not only as a reward for those who by the greatness of their knowledge and their diligence in research can lift themselves above details to philosophic contemplation of the mystery of the whole, but to plain people whom wise men despise. It is not man's way but God's way. "I thank thee, O Father," the Saviour said, "Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."



"One cannot address the world in the name of Jesus by preaching what the world already knows by itself or by the Readers' Digest."—LÖWITZ

# The Study of the Bible

BIBLE STUDY

The Substance of an Address Delivered to  
the Westminster Bible Circle on January 9, 1945

By the REV. JOHN MURRAY  
Professor of Systematic Theology in  
Westminster Theological Seminary

I TAKE it for granted that we all believe the Bible to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. I take it for granted that we all read the Bible with regularity. What I am going to plead for, however, is concentrated, sustained, devoted study of the Bible, the kind of study that is not fulfilled by the perfunctory reading of some passages each day. The set periods of family worship are not, of course, by any means to be disparaged. This is a highly necessary and most fruitful exercise. The influence for good exerted by honoring God's Word in this way is incalculable for all concerned. Indeed, the minimal use of the Bible in this way has often left an indelible impression for good. And furthermore, the set periods of family worship may become the occasions for very concentrated and systematic study of the Bible.

But what I am going to stress is the necessity for diligent and persevering searching of the Scriptures, study whereby we shall turn and turn again the pages of Scripture, the study of prolonged thought and meditation by which our hearts and minds may become soaked with the truth of the Bible and by which the deepest springs of thought, feeling and action may be stirred and directed, the study by which the Word of God will grip us, bind us, hold us, pull us, drive us, raise us up from the dunghill, bring us down from our high conceits and make us its bondservants in all of thought, life and conduct.

The Word of God is a great deep; the commandment is exceeding broad; and so we cannot by merely occasional, hurried and perfunctory use of it understand its meaning and power.

Sustained and diligent study of the Bible is indispensable for several reasons. I am going to mention three of these.

I. The Bible is God's Word, the revealed counsel of God. It is possible for us to develop a certain kind of familiarity with the Bible so that we fail to appreciate the marvel of God's favor and mercy and wisdom in giving

it to us. We need to stop and consider what hopeless darkness, misery and confusion would be ours if we did not possess the Bible—we would be without God and without hope in the world, endlessly stumbling over our own vain imaginings with respect to God, with respect to His will for us and with respect to our own nature, origin and destiny. The Bible is the infallible revelation to us of the truth regarding God Himself, regarding the world in which we live and regarding ourselves. It reveals God's mind and will for us; it declares the way of salvation; it discloses the knowledge that is eternal life. The secrets of God's mind and purpose, secrets which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, have been laid open to us, the things that concern God's glory, and our highest interests against all the issues of life and death, of time and eternity.

If Winston Churchill wrote a book disclosing to us in his own masterly style a great many of the secrets with respect to this war, secrets which for various reasons must now be concealed, I suppose that we would all be impatient until we should be able to read it. Very likely we would devour its contents. But how trivial in comparison are the secrets hidden in Churchill's mind! The eternal God, of whose plan all history is the unfolding, has let us in on the secrets of His mind and purpose. The mystery hid from ages and generations, the things which prophets and righteous men desired to see but did not see, God has revealed to us upon whom the ends of the ages have come. He has not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth. His will is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

If we truly appreciate the mystery of God's grace and wisdom, we shall study the Bible as one who has found great spoil. The very nature and content of the Bible as God's Word will compel our most earnest application to it.

II. We must study the Bible with all diligence and persistence if we are really to know and understand its

truth. It is perfectly true and an unspeakable mercy that a certain simplicity characterizes the Bible. We cannot read it with some measure of intelligent attention without getting its great central message. The things necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation are clearly propounded in Scripture, and he that runs may read. But no Christian should be satisfied with the bare minimum of knowledge necessary for salvation. It is, indeed, to be lamented that the life of many earnest Christians is based upon a fragmentary, piecemeal knowledge of Scripture teaching. Their knowledge is what may be called "block-knowledge," consisting of a series of rather loosely related and disconnected items, and in their thinking these items are not brought into any coherent or coordinated relation to one another.

The Bible revelation should never be compared to a pile of blocks, even should we think of these as blocks of the finest granite, well-shaped and masterfully hewn, arranged in the most symmetrical order. The Bible is an organism; its unity is organic. It is not a compilation of isolated and unrelated divine oracles. The Bible is something that grew over a period of some fifteen centuries. It grew by a process of divine revelation and inspiration. At sundry times and in divers manners God progressively revealed Himself and His will until in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.

Our knowledge of the Bible, if it is to be really adequate, must be knowledge of the Bible as it is and must reflect this organic character, not knowledge of the piecemeal or block variety but knowledge of the vital organic unity that belongs to the Bible. We must understand that the whole Bible stands together and that the fibres of organic connection run through the whole Bible connecting one part with every other part and every one truth with every other truth.

When we appreciate this feature of Scripture and as we engage in concentrated study of one passage, our minds will course back and forth through the whole Bible along the lines which connect that passage with the rest of Scripture, lines which illumine for us the meaning of that particular passage and show the closely-knit organic unity of the whole of Scripture. It is in this way that the Bible will consist for us not in a string of texts to be used simply at random and on what we deem the appropriate occasions, but rather in an organic unit that throbs with life. Each detail of our knowledge and faith will find its place in a body of knowledge that has the same coherent, systematic and closely organized character. What might appear to us to be rather incidental and unimportant details will, on sounder and more intelligent reflection, become replete with meaning. Genesis 50:1, for example, will not be simply an incident to be read and slurred over. There we read that when Jacob died "Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him." It might appear that this is but an interesting example of oriental sentimentalism, scarcely worthy of the maturity and restraint that should characterize strong and self-controlled men. Indeed, there are people who think that it is not a mark of Christian grace to show sorrow and tears at the death of our loved ones. They would aver that Christian character will be emotionally unmoved in such situations. Well, such an attitude may be magnificent stoicism but it is not Christianity. When we read Genesis 50:1 with true insight, we shall see that it is in line with the example of our Lord when He wept at the grave of Lazarus and in line with the devout emotion of the New Testament saints. "And devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation over him" (Acts 8:2). Joseph's conduct now was in complete harmony with that virile integrity and competence of which his whole life is so conspicuous an example.

III. Painstaking study of the Bible is indispensable to our own thought and practice. Life is very complex and we are constantly beset with baffling questions. New situations daily confront us. If the situations are not entirely new, old situations take on new color and new settings. We need to

know anew what is the right thing to think and what is the right thing to do. If we are to meet these situations, we must be armed with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, and we must be equipped with such knowledge of the Word that we shall derive from it the needed direction and strength.

Indolence is one of our greatest temptations. We are in constant danger of becoming static in our thinking. Perhaps we have a well-rounded and competent knowledge of the Christian faith. Perhaps we have learned the Shorter Catechism or the Heidelberg Catechism. Perchance we have digested some good textbook in theology. All of this is excellent. I know of no compendium of Christian truth that is more excellent than the Shorter Catechism, and what an inestimable reservoir of truth we possess if our memories are stored with and our minds established in the masterly definitions of that treasure of Christian literature. The blessings for the kingdom of God accruing from such catechetical knowledge are incalculable, and the day of judgment alone will declare them all. We do well to peruse our great catechisms and creeds and textbooks and not be carried away by the pedagogical mush to which we are in these days subjected.

But if we rely upon such a reservoir of knowledge we are in a dangerous and slippery position. Thought and life are too complex to be adequately met by any such reservoir. The means God has provided for every exigency that may arise is the Word of God itself. The demand of the multiform situations in which we are placed in our thinking and in our life are met only by the multiform wisdom deposited in the holy Scriptures. However much assistance we may derive from formulations and expositions of Scripture truth—and it is not only impoverishing but God-dishonoring to disparage and neglect these—yet, after all, the Bible is the only sufficient rule of faith and life as well as the only infallible rule. We must betake ourselves anew, day by day, with humble and submissive minds to the law and to the testimony so that our minds may be illumined, replenished, refreshed, renewed and reinvigorated by the pure light that shines in the pages of God's inerrant Word. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."

We may be loyal to a certain tradition, let us even say a good tradition, and yet be quite petrified and superstitious in our loyalty, if we have no higher norm or appeal than the traditions of the fathers. Our devotion to a tradition is wholesome only when we recognize in that tradition, not the authority of the fathers, but the authority of God's Word. Apart from the recognition of divine authority, all our religious devotion is abomination in the sight of God. It is to the Thessalonians that Paul wrote, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." And we can find added meaning in the exhortation when we read of the Bereans that they were "more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Hence the necessity of constant grounding of our convictions, of our devotion and of our conduct in the Word of God.

It was Jesus who said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The truth is the perfect law of liberty and God's Word is truth. It might seem to us that law and liberty are incoherent. For law binds and liberty makes free. But if we know anything of God's way we know that the free men of Christ Jesus are the bond-servants of Christ. The liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free is the freedom that is constituted by and consists in bondservice to God's Word.

In all our study and application of the Word of God, we must appreciate a divinely-fixed coordination. It is that of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." God has not left us to our own resources in the study of His Word. There is the never-failing promise and the ever-present ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is the author of the Word and it is His peculiar prerogative to illumine the Scripture and to seal its truth upon our hearts. These are the two pillars of faith and life—the whole organism of Scripture revelation and the promise of the Spirit to guide us into all the truth. The Spirit honors and seals His own Word and the Word assures us that "if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

# Calvary

TRAVELOGUE

## "Walks In and About Jerusalem"—PART 3

AND when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him" (Luke 23:33a). From early childhood, there has been formed in our minds the idea that somewhere outside the city of Jerusalem there is a hill called Calvary. Perhaps, too, the words of the hymn have influenced us far more than we realize.

"There is a green hill far away,  
Without a city wall

Where the dear Lord was crucified  
Who died to save us all."

Our impression that Calvary is outside the city is correct, for the Bible declares that "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). It is with this in mind that we come to Jerusalem. Calvary, we believe, must certainly be without the wall. It is with impatient anticipation in our hearts that we go forth to visit Golgotha.

### Where Is Calvary?

It is perfectly true that a tomb, north of the city, is often pointed out as the true tomb of Jesus. General Gordon, who visited Jerusalem in 1882, believed this to be Golgotha, and the place has come to be called Gordon's Calvary. The situation is attractive. Here is a pleasant garden and a tomb carved from the rock. However, there is no real evidence to indicate that this is the spot where our Lord was buried. I am inclined to think, indeed, that on the contrary the evidence is against this location.

Where, then, is Calvary to be found? Inside the present walls of Jerusalem stands a great church, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, one of the most interesting buildings upon the face of the earth. This Christian church is in the hands of Moslem guards. Can this building stand on the site of Christ's death and burial?

### Church History

Let us briefly review some church history.<sup>1</sup> One of the early bishops of the Christian church, Eusebius of

Cæsarea, records a tradition to the effect that during the life of Constantine the tomb of Christ was discovered. In 336 A.D. two churches were consecrated at the site; one, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which consisted merely of a rotunda in the center of which was the tomb, and the other, a Basilica dedicated to the Sign of the Cross.

In 614 the invading Persians destroyed these churches. Shortly afterwards, however, three new buildings were erected: a Church of the Cross, a Church of Calvary, and a Church of the Resurrection, and from time to time additions and improvements were made to these buildings. However, they suffered greatly due to fire and the Moslems. In 1055 we hear of another church and by the beginning of the twelfth century the Crusaders had erected a large building in the Romanesque style which included all the supposedly sacred sites.

Even this great structure, some portions of which remain to the present day, suffered acts of destruction. It was continuously repaired until in 1719 a great part of the church was rebuilt. So it stood until 1808 when it was severely damaged by fire. Largely due to the efforts of the Greek Church, the building was re-erected in 1810 and the dome of the structure was repaired in 1868. Such is its checkered history!

It is this great church which is pointed out to the present-day visitor to Palestine as the building which covers the sites both of Calvary and of the tomb. And there are tombs here which do go back to a great antiquity. However, is this the true Calvary?

The first question which arises in the visitor's mind is, "Why is this building inside the city wall?" The answer to the problem is not difficult. The present walls of Jerusalem were not in existence at Christ's time, but were erected many centuries later. At

By the REV. EDWARD J. YOUNG

Assistant Professor of Old Testament  
in Westminster Theological Seminary

the time of Christ the present site of the church may very well have been outside the city. We do not know the exact course of the wall during the time when our Lord was upon earth. I am inclined to think that the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre may indeed have been outside the city during our Lord's life.

### The Bible's Silence

However, even if there were no question about the direction of the city wall, it does not follow that we today are in a position to identify Calvary. The Bible says very little about the exact location of Christ's death in relation to the city. Christ died and was buried outside of Jerusalem. That much seems to be clear (Matt. 28:11; Heb. 13:12). But the Bible does not tell whether Golgotha was to the north, east, south or west of the city. Nor does it relate how far Golgotha was from Jerusalem. The Bible apparently considered such a detail to be unnecessary. The Bible is more concerned to stress what took place at Calvary than to point out where Calvary is to be found.

When we look at the early church, the same appears to be true. There is not a word in the Bible or in the writings of the early fathers to indicate that the tomb of Christ was regarded as a shrine. So far as we know, the apostles did not meet there for worship. The apostles were very emphatic in their preaching concerning what had taken place at Calvary, but they seem to exhibit little concern about Calvary's location.

About three hundred years passed before the supposed tomb of Christ was discovered. Three hundred years is a long time and much can happen during it. Jerusalem had been razed in 70 A.D. by the Roman armies of Titus and a great slaughter of the Jews took place. The Temple also was destroyed. In 130 the Emperor Hadrian erected a town on the site of the ancient city, which bore the name Aelia Capitolina. The Jews revolted in 132, and were prohibited

<sup>1</sup> In writing this brief sketch, I have leaned very heavily upon Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria*, Leipzig, 1912, pp. 35-37.

even from setting foot within the city. From this time on until the day of Constantine little is known about Jerusalem. During this long time there is, so far as I know, no mention of the location of the tomb of Christ.

### A Syrian Legend

It was not until the time of Constantine that the Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem. At this time also interest in the tomb of Christ appears and legends concerning the discovery of the cross begin to arise. There are several variations of these legends, and one of the most interesting of them has been preserved in the Syriac language. At Westminster Theological Seminary students sometimes ask for a course in the Syriac language. In the Syriac class this story of the finding of the cross is usually read. Briefly, it is this.

The empress Protonice, wife of Claudius Caesar, having been converted to Christianity, desired to visit Jerusalem, and departed, taking her two sons and one daughter with her. At Jerusalem she was welcomed by James, who was the leader of the church that had been built there. From James she specifically requested that she might see Golgotha, the wood of the cross, and the tomb. James, however, told her that these things were in the hands of the Jews and the Jews did not permit the Christians to see them.

This enraged Protonice, and she immediately summoned the rulers of the Jews, demanding that the Christians be permitted to worship at Golgotha. Then she herself set out to visit the tomb and there three crosses were found, but which one was Christ's there was no way of telling.

At this instant, the young daughter of Protonice fell down dead. The queen prayed, and her elder son offered a suggestion which was immediately carried out. The corpse was touched by each of the three crosses. When the "true" cross touched her, she immediately came to life. So, the cross of Christ was "discovered."

### Lack of Certainty

Where did Christ die? Where was Golgotha? Is there no means of knowing the identity of the place where our salvation was accomplished? The answer is that we do not know with certainty the exact location of Golgotha. It was outside the city wall—

that is all we know. The present Church of the Holy Sepulchre may be built on the site of Golgotha—it may not be. We do not know. And this is as it should be.

Upon one visit to this church I was taken to task by some young Greek priests because I would not positively affirm that here was Golgotha. These young priests appeared to be far more interested in where Golgotha was than in what had taken place there.

That is a great danger. It is the danger of superstition. It is the danger of going beyond the teaching of the Bible, of wanting to know more than God has seen fit to reveal. The Bible does not locate Golgotha. But the Bible very explicitly does tell what occurred at Golgotha. There our great High Priest, the Messiah, the eternal Son of God, offered up a sacrifice, even His own body, that He might satisfy the holy justice of an offended God. There He died in the stead of His people. There He sealed our pardon with His blood. That we may know, and that we may believe. And to know and believe that is infinitely more important than to know the precise location of the spot where these things took place.

### Success Story

**T**HIRTY-SEVEN GUARDIAN subscriptions in a church of sixty-three members is something of a record. Moreover, these are not gift subscriptions to servicemen nor are they the result of the generosity of a few individuals or a church organization. They are, for the most part, subscriptions from the families which make up the constituency of the church.

That church is the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Omaha, Nebraska, and the amazing total of the GUARDIAN subscriptions is due to the tireless efforts of one member—Miss Louise P. Salmon, the GUARDIAN's "club secretary" in Omaha. Here is her "success story," in the words of the pastor of the church, the Rev. Reginald Voorhees:

"How did she do it? She did it first by believing that the GUARDIAN ought to be in the homes of those who were members or who were interested in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. That conviction supplied the great impetus—to place the GUARDIAN in the hands of men and women who needed it.

"Then she prayed. She told me that before she phoned to ask someone to take the GUARDIAN, she would make it a matter of prayer. She felt that she could conscientiously ask the Lord's help in this work. It was of such a sort as to lead men and women to a better knowledge of Him and so He would surely bless it.

"In the third place, she took time. She told me that it has taken hours and hours to secure these subscribers. Though a busy woman, Miss Salmon was willing to devote this time because she considered the work of securing readers for the GUARDIAN more important in the light of eternity than duties of a more secular nature.

"In the fourth place, she was persistent. A refusal did not mean to her that the issue was closed. If Miss Salmon felt that there was a real and strong reason for a particular individual or family to have the GUARDIAN in the home, she would go back and try again.

"In the fifth place, she was quick to see an opening and to seize an opportunity. When, on last Sunday morning, I gave a little talk on the GUARDIAN from the pulpit, Miss Salmon corralled several prospects after church and managed to persuade six more to subscribe.

"I hope her fine example can be used to stir up some of the larger churches and to shame them into more subscribers. Miss Salmon has received such joy in the accomplishment of this work and I am sure that others would too. I can say as a pastor that it is a splendid feeling to know that so large a proportion of the families in the church will be reading THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN."

The GUARDIAN, too, would like to express publicly its gratitude to Miss Salmon for her splendid achievement and for the fine example she has set for the rest of the church.

Five subscriptions are all that are needed to initiate a club of GUARDIAN subscribers. These five, and all later additions to the club, are paid for at the rate of \$1.25 a year, instead of the individual subscription rate of two dollars. One individual, however, must act as club secretary and all new and renewal subscriptions must be submitted through him. For further information about the GUARDIAN's club plan, address THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Pa.

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EDITORIAL

**Dr. Machen's  
Sermons**

**I**N OFFERING our readers a series of hitherto unpublished sermons of J. Gresham Machen, we confess to a measure of excitement. And we believe that our readers will share that feeling with us.

Because of all that Dr. Machen's life has meant to us, we have an extraordinary interest in what he did and said. Through his published writings—not to dwell now on our cherished memories — we fondly call to mind the heroic days of his life. And now we are to have added to our store still other sources of knowledge of his thought and action. Since these sermons were not prepared for publication, they might not seem to compare in value with other utterances that have become familiar to us. Nevertheless, for the very reason that they were not prepared for formal publication but to be preached, and because they were preached, most of them time and again, they contribute in a unique way to our knowledge of his dynamic career. They will serve to fill out the portrait that we treasure, the portrait of one who valiantly and powerfully brought the Word of God to the men and women of his generation.

Another reason why we delight in our access to these sermons is that through them Dr. Machen, though no longer present with us, still speaks to us. Not that these sermons will settle our problems of the moment. Not that they constitute a binding authority. Dr. Machen was the last person in the world to expect acceptance of his point of view merely because he expressed it. He was too

utterly humble for that. Nevertheless, his word, when he lived, carried immense weight and often decisive weight in argument and deliberation. This was so because his thought was constantly so well-informed, so reasonable, so balanced, so lucidly expressed, that it quickly brought conviction. Hence, these sermons from the past may well serve to meet many of our needs today.

The estimates of Dr. Machen's ability as a preacher have varied. Sermons are no doubt judged according to different standards by different people. In 1924 Henry VanDyke dissented so thoroughly from the message of Dr. Machen in the First Presbyterian Church of Princeton that he publicly attacked his preaching as a travesty of the gospel! But thousands of humbler folk have given thanks to God for his unwearied proclamation of the whole counsel of God. And, to mention only one formal aspect of his preaching, he was, in our judgment, a great preacher because he profoundly stirred the minds and hearts of his hearers. An attitude of neutrality was out of the question when one heard him preach. While some were offended at his message and at his insistence that that message was decisive for all of life, others through his word found salvation, confirmation of their faith, and a powerful stimulus to be faithful to the high challenge that had been offered to them.

A printed sermon perhaps never is as effective as one that is spoken. That is certainly true of Dr. Machen's sermons. Yet his preaching was so free of the orator's tricks, so simple and unaffected, that it does not share the common fate of the printed sermon

when we see it in cold type. For his preaching was never a shallow or hollow assembly of words. His printed sermons continue to move us deeply because the message was not contrived to adorn the messenger but the messenger was the mere instrument for heralding forth the Word of God.  
—N. B. S.

**Universal  
Military Training**

**C**HRISTIAN people are being called upon to face a new question of profound significance for the life of our nation. Shall we as a nation institute a program of universal military training for our youth? If this were a purely political measure, we should refrain from speaking about it in this journal. Since, however, it is fraught with deep religious and moral meaning, we believe that Christians ought to face it in the light of all the facts and on the basis of Christian principles.

We feel compelled to warn against the perils inherent in the plan which is being advocated vigorously in these days. Before stating the reasons for this warning, however, it is expedient to indicate what our stand does not involve.

In the first place, our position does not involve a readiness to become a fellow-traveler with the pacifists. The pacifism of our times, by and large, has been quite unchristian. And it has contributed in no small measure to the situation which produced the present catastrophe.

Moreover, we are not arguing for a return to the isolationism of the past. That the world is one is a lesson which experience has thrust upon us. But this truth is also rooted deeply in the Scriptures. No nation, on Christian principles, can allow that it is sufficient unto itself or that it has no responsibility for others. Accordingly, we are far from opposing every proper effort which may be made to enable us to maintain our security and to fulfill our international obligations.

There are, nevertheless, serious reasons for regarding the present proposals with anxiety. Our first reason is that this program would involve an enormous increase in the control of the state over the lives of its citizens. In a time of war, one may

**Andrews' Address**

**C**ORRESPONDENCE for the Rev. Egbert W. Andrews should be addressed as follows: Egbert W. Andrews, C/o Base Censor, APO 627, C/o Postmaster, New York, N. Y. This is the latest address for Mr. Andrews and supersedes the one published in the Guardian of January 10th.

justify the concentration of vast emergency powers in the government. But we cannot consider with equanimity the perpetuation of such a state of affairs after the war. If we are realistic, indeed, we shall recognize that we shall never again see "the good old days." But that does not imply that we dare resign ourselves to a perpetual emergency. And, above all, Christians are compelled to resist every tendency in the direction of statism. Few will deny that statism, which means virtually the deification of the state, has become one of the most catastrophic evils of our times. Where the state has been regarded as an end in itself, liberty has died and all that is noble has been ruthlessly trampled under foot.

Is it far-fetched to speak of a tendency towards statism in this connection? By no means. The fact is that President Roosevelt, when he first urged universal military training several weeks ago, indicated that it would be a proper measure for the reason that the citizen should consider it a quite normal thing to give up a year of his life to the service of his country. No doubt the president also has military considerations in view. But it is highly significant that he made no effort on that occasion to justify the program by appeal to military necessity. He seemed content to appeal to the philosophy that the service of the state is an end in itself. And this is of the essence of statism.

A second principal reason for expressing concern is the consideration of the likely effects of a year of military training upon our youth. In support of the proposed legislation it is being said that it "would strengthen the home discipline and self-control of the younger generation." Perhaps military discipline is beneficial to some young men. On the whole, however, in our judgment, universal military conscription would be far from salutary. Army discipline is, indeed, advantageous as well as necessary for one purpose, namely, the waging of war. But we earnestly challenge the claim that its benefits are transferrable to other spheres of life. Conversations with many Christian young men and women now in the armed forces have confirmed our impression that the rigors of military discipline all too frequently become the prelude to shocking excesses when restraints are lifted. But even if military discipline may not

be held partially responsible for the intemperance of our day, we are compelled to conclude that a year of governmental regimentation of this kind would generally be harmful both for Christian living and for a soundly democratic development of society.

High spiritual attainment, indeed, is not to be realized through external controls. Nor will religion and morality flourish in a cloistered kind of existence. On the other hand, however, no responsible Christian parent will be indifferent to the environment of his children. And we must insist that a year of military life under rigid government control would be far from providing a normal and healthy environment for our sons. Least of all, then, should we be asked to support the contemplated program because it would prove a splendid experience for the young men themselves.

Those who advocate military training for all should be required to prove that our national security cannot be maintained, nor our responsibilities fulfilled, by any other means. Any program of military training that may be planned should leave our young men as free to live a normal life as possible. It is not enough that the program be efficient. There are higher interests even than efficiency! At the very least, any program that deserves the support of Christian people must not ride rough-shod over the inherent spiritual and moral issues.

—N. B. S.

### Alumni Homecoming Well Attended

THE annual alumni homecoming exercises at Westminster Seminary were held on the afternoon and evening of Tuesday, February 6th, and were attended by an interested group of members and friends of the Alumni Association. Following a meeting of the executive committee, about twenty-five alumni heard Dr. Edward J. Young, Assistant Professor of Old Testament, discuss various methods of interpretation of four passages in Isaiah, with a view to encouraging more preaching from the Old Testament.

Preceding the dinner hour there was time for informal fellowship and discussion, and after the meal four alumni brought brief greetings and told of their present work. They were

Dr. Donald K. Blackie, Southern Presbyterian minister of Newport News, Va.; the Rev. Victor Bucci of the Inter-Collegiate Gospel Fellowship; Chaplain John Wistar Betzold; and the Rev. Edwin H. Rian of the Christian University Association. There were about sixty-five persons at the dinner.

The evening meeting was addressed by the Rev. Edward Heerema, spiritual advisor of the Christian Sanatorium, Midland Park, N. J., who discussed "Covenant Nurture and Healthy Emotions." In the training of children, he said, discipline and emotional security are equally necessary for the promoting of healthy emotions. True love tempered with discipline, and right discipline tempered with love, form a pattern not found on the human level but in the divine sovereignty and perfect love of a covenant God. The covenant of grace is then an instrument by which the children of believers are enabled to grow under the beneficent ministrations of sovereignty and love.

## Your Family Altar

### From the Cradle to the Grave

#### IV. ADULTHOOD

#### C. Civil Responsibility

MARCH 5TH. DEUT. 19:11-21 (15)\*

LET us turn our thoughts today to the responsibility which each has toward his government. From this and similar passages, we learn that law and order is established by God. He requireth the weighing of justice; hearing and judging the causes of the people; the punishment of evildoers and the exoneration of the innocent. Government, like the home and church, is a divinely-ordained institution.

6TH. I TIM. 1:1-11 (9)

As the moral law is to a large extent the basis of civil regulations, so this passage would teach us the purpose of the law. "The terrors of the law may be of use to tie the hands and restrain the tongues of wicked persons." Civil and moral law is a guide to the righteous but a sharp goad to sinners. By the law we learn respect and honor for our neighbors,

\* Verses printed in the headings in parentheses are to be memorized.

expressed by love. While the citizen is saved from the penalty of the civil law by obeying it, the sinner is saved only by faith in the glorious gospel of God's beloved Son.

7TH. EX. 18:13-27 (16)

Higher and lower courts, superior and lesser offices and officers are recognized. By good inference we are taught that each has his own duty to perform, his responsibility to a superior officer and ultimately his responsibility to God. To these men we may appeal for justice. They should be held in respect by all men. Consequently they should so order their lives and their offices as to deserve the honor that has been given them.

8TH. DEUT. 1:9-18 (17)

When Moses set men to be judges in Israel, he gave them directions as to how they should fulfill their duties. Righteousness should mark their decisions. Impartiality should be their rule. The stranger should receive as full a hearing as the brother. The poor and weak must be heard as justly as the strong and rich. Threats, bribes and power should in no way sway their decisions.

9TH. DEUT. 16:9-22 (19)

Immediately following the instructions for keeping the three great feasts, God reminds Israel to maintain justice in the land. To the law-keepers God directs this word, that they shall not wrest justice. The intent of the law, not its loopholes, is to be the basis of each decision. "That which is altogether just shalt thou follow" is the positive admonition given to us in the Scripture.

10TH. DEUT. 17 (18, 19)

Two thoughts are before us in this chapter: (1) No cause may be judged without the testimony of two or more witnesses. These persons must be so sure, that they are willing to carry out the penalty upon the one against whom they give their voice. (2) The ruler or judge may not use his office to his personal advantage but should keep the law of God before him so that neither pride nor disobedience will cause his downfall.

11TH. JER. 22:1-9 (2)

It is not out of the way in our day to observe one clause in this portion, "Deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor." By all lawful means—and these include federal officers

and the armed forces—injustices should be corrected. But how much greater glory when those who are spoiled by the evil one are delivered out of Satan's hands by the power of the gospel!

12TH. MATT. 22:15-22 (21b)

Can we not learn the lesson God has here for us in the simple thought that, as Cæsar made the coins of the realm, so tax-tribute is our lawful duty? And that which follows is as true! God hath made us, hence we belong unto Him and should give ourselves fully in faith and service. As the citizen has a proper duty toward the state, so does the creature toward the Creator, and the Christian toward his Lord and Saviour.

13TH. ROM. 13 (1)

Proper submission to lawful authority in the state is in actuality rightful submission to God. For the powers of the magistrates, including capital punishment, are delegated to them by God for the maintenance of peace and order that the obedient citizen may live in safety and the evildoer may be apprehended and punished. Pray that our judges may deal justly in our own courts and our rulers in the courts that shall try the war criminals.

14TH. I TIM. 2 (5)

Several instructions are given us to direct us in our attitude toward the powers that be. We are to pray for them—for their welfare and the welfare of their nations. Though they may not be Christians, yet we are to pray for them to the end that we may live a peaceable and quiet life. Christian charity and prayer reaches to all men. Let us not forget to pray also for the salvation of our rulers, that they may come unto the knowledge of the truth.

15TH. I PET. 2:11-25 (24)

Godly submission to those in authority, even though they may perversely exercise their power, has its great example in the One who became our sin-bearer. God has given them their authority and will not long let them pervert it. The glory of God is revealed by those who for His sake suffer wrongfully. Slanderers of the faith are silenced when Christians submit to the ordinances of the law. Pray with thanksgiving for blessings received as citizens of no mean country.

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16TH. I COR. 6:1-8 (8)

While governments are given to maintain justice among men, there is a higher law governing Christians. Public lawsuits are to be avoided by brethren in the Lord. Rather, if a difference arises, let a Christian brother arbitrate it. If this fails, the offended party ought rather to suffer the injustice than resort to the law. Reproach is often brought on Christianity when a brother would maintain his rights at any cost.

17TH. I SAM. 14:36-46 (6b)

In this story of Saul and Jonathan, there is a little lesson we ought to take to heart. Injustices are often performed in the name of law and order. When such occur and come to our knowledge, we are bound to oppose the injustice and to see that the sentence is changed. Our law-makers, elected by us, are not infallible. Therefore we should be alert and willing to do our duty before God when occasion arises.

18TH. DAN. 3:13-25 (17, 18)

There is a further obligation that rests upon the Christian's shoulders. It is to preserve purity of worship against all opposition, civil or religious. The three Hebrew children, slaves in the Babylonian court, found it necessary to disobey the king to keep from idolatry. This they did with faith in God's power to release, if it was His good pleasure, and if not, with willingness to die rather than dishonor God.

19TH. ACTS 5:17-32 (29)

Practically all the martyrs of the Christian church have died because this sentence has been burned into their hearts and consciences: "We ought to obey God rather than men." The Scriptures everywhere exhort us to yield obedience to those in authority, but the Scripture is just as clear that, when men's words oppose God's revelation, our obedience must always be to God.

—HENRY D. PHILLIPS

# The Precious Pearl

DOCTRINE

A Meditation on Matthew 13:45, 46

By the REV. LAWRENCE B. GILMORE, Th.D.

Stated Supply of the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati

THE parable of the pearl of great price is the companion-piece to the parable of the hid treasure. These parables show the preciousness of the messianic kingdom to the individual believer. As Matthew Henry says, "The dream is thus doubled, for the thing is certain" (cf. Gen. 41:32). The parable of the pearl, however, sets forth not only the supreme value but also the uniqueness and transcendent beauty of the kingdom. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matt. 13:45, 46).

## Two Interpretations

Against the traditional view there is another view held by a few commentators in times past and by a good many Bible teachers of the present. According to this other view, the merchant is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is seeking goodly pearls, objects of kingly adornment. He finds a pearl of great price, namely the church of the elect, and He purchases the church with His own blood that He may present it to Himself glorious and spotless (Eph. 5:25-27). To support this interpretation, it is objected against the traditional view that man cannot be regarded as the seeker, since the sinner flees from, rather than seeks, God, whereas the Lord Jesus came to seek and to save (Luke 19:10). It is further objected that man cannot be represented as selling all to buy the salvation provided in the kingdom, for man has nothing of value to sell and, anyway, salvation cannot be purchased, since it is the free gift of God.

In order rightly to evaluate this newer view, we shall have to keep it in mind while we note the related Scripture passages, and while we make a detailed study of the traditional view.

## Origin and Structure of Pearls

Pearls are jewels comparable in value to the best diamonds, emeralds

and rubies. Pearls, however, are not mined in the earth, but are formed by molluscs—small sea animals with a soft body protected by a shell. A pearl may be defined in scientific terms as a lustrous calcareous concretion, composed chiefly of calcium carbonate, deposited around a central nucleus in successive filmy layers of a nacrous or mother-of-pearl substance, with animal membrane interposed. Pearl-oysters and mussels, abalones and some other molluscs produce pearls. These pearl-bearing molluscs are brought up from the ocean-bed by pearl-divers.

The outer layers of the shell are largely of a horny substance, and the inner layers are crystalline calcium carbonate, laid on smoothly and called mother-of-pearl. The shell is lined by the membranous "mantle," which secretes both the horny and the crystalline layers.

If any foreign body, like a grain of sand, an undeveloped egg, a parasite, or any artificially-placed object, finds lodgment between the mantle and the shell, the crystalline deposit secreted by the mantle envelops it. The foreign body, like a cinder getting into one's eye, acts as an irritant, and stimulates secretion at that point. The foreign body, now covered by the carbonate of lime, may be rolled about by slight contractions of the mantle; thus it remains free from sticking to the shell, and so gains symmetry. Such a free formation becomes a detached pearl. If spherical, it is the most valuable kind.

The pearl has a peculiar beauty beyond mere mother-of-pearl. The mantle, working at its own shell, lays its nacre in flowing layers on a flat, still surface, thus forming mother-of-pearl. But in this form the hardened nacre, though iridescent due to microscopic corrugations, has no gem quality and is used only for inexpensive ornaments, buttons, and souvenirs. The mantle, however, when working on a foreign body, has to apply the nacre in patches. As the irritant moves with each movement of the mollusc's body, a microscopic lap is left between

the edge of one patch and the edge of the next. The patches, or laminae, are like shingles on an exceedingly tiny rounded roof. Looking at a pearl, one therefore looks into the edges of the shingling laminae, and sees the light waves reflected from varying depths and split into colors by minute prisms within the nacre. The deeper the nacre is, the richer the possibilities of these effects of light. The pearl has beauty which the dealer calls "orient," that is, the pearl's total quality of lustre, depth, texture, and color.

## Value of Pearls

While the ancients did not of course understand the origin and structure of pearls as revealed by modern biology, yet from times centuries before Christ pearls were highly esteemed, and unbelievable sums were given for single specimens, perfect of their kind. Pliny (about 23 to 79 A.D.) in his *Historia Naturalis*, Lib. IX, c. 35, says: "The richest merchandise of all, and the most sovereign commodity throughout the whole world, are these pearls." The great desirability of pearls is reflected also in these lines from Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, Act II, Scene 2, comparing Helen of Troy to a pearl:

"Why, she is a pearl,  
Whose price hath launch'd above a  
thousand ships,  
And turn'd crown'd kings to mer-  
chants."

The high value placed on pearls in antiquity continues in the present. George Frederick Kunz and Charles Hugh Stevenson in their monumental work, *The Book of the Pearl* (1908), tell of single pearls suitable for rings, and costing from five to thirty thousand dollars; pendant pearls valued at from five to one hundred thousand dollars; single pearl necklaces costing from one to five hundred thousand dollars; and tiaras priced at from ten to one hundred thousand dollars (pages 442, 443).

Pearls are soft, easily scratched and marred, and are liable to decay and to damage by acid. They do not begin to have the enduring qualities of dia-

monds. Besides, the value of pearls is decreased by any faults in color or irregularities in shape. Therefore the pearl merchant must be skilful and wary, or he will have a lower value imposed on him in place of the best.

Like other jewels, pearls have the advantage of being wealth that is easily transportable. They are also not quickly noticed, and are readily convertible into whatever money may be required. So their value is enhanced by being contained in such small objects.

### Pearls in the Bible

There is no certain reference to pearls in the Old Testament, for the word translated pearl in Job 28:18, Authorized Version, probably means crystal. There are several New Testament references in addition to our parable: (1) literal: pearls as adornment of women—I Timothy 2:9; Revelation 17:4; as merchandise—Revelation 18:11; as the material of the gates of the Heavenly City—Revelation 21:21; (2) figurative: Matthew 7:6, where our Lord says: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and rend you."

Our Lord's comparison of pearls to precious truth suits well the traditional interpretation of our parable, since the kingdom comes to us as a kingdom of truth (John 18:36-38), and this truth is of such transcendent value and beauty as to be earnestly sought and reverently guarded.

Some people would not appreciate the kingdom. They would be like the cock in Aesop's fable of the cock and the pearl: A cock was once strutting up and down in the farmyard among the hens when he espied something shining amid the straw. Rooting it out, he found it to be a pearl that by some chance had been lost in the yard. "You may be a treasure," said the cock, "to men that prize you, but for me I would rather have a single barley-corn than a pack of pearls." The appended moral is: Precious things are for those that can prize them.

### Analysis of Our Parable

First we see a merchant, not a huckster but a dealer on the grand scale, seeking, according to the usual manner of his life, for goodly pearls (Greek, *margaritai*). He aimed high.

And his quest was earnest and systematic. He was like the Ethiopian eunuch in the eighth chapter of Acts earnestly desiring to understand Isaiah 53. He was also like the God-fearers in the Roman empire who found in the preaching of the apostles the answer to their longings as they had read the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. He resembled Justin Martyr in the second Christian century, finding in Christ and His redemption the final truth, after searching vainly through the pagan philosophies. He could also be compared to John Bunyan, seeking earnestly for salvation and finding it in God's grace in Christ.

The pearl merchant must venture as far as the Persian Gulf or India, for only less valuable pearls could be obtained from the Red Sea. The Indian fisheries were the main source of supply, and Syrian, Arab and Jewish merchants were the chief dealers. Like the man who found the hid treasure, the pearl merchant was not supposed to be over-scrupulous, and was looked on askance by the religiously minded (Sirach, xxvi:29). But he was a great example of earnest and sacrificial seeking. To him our Saviour's word applied: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7, 8).

So we behold the merchant suddenly coming upon the one solitary, unique, precious pearl. The spiritual merchant, likewise, seeking after blessedness generally, comes upon the supreme embodiment of blessedness, namely, the messianic kingdom. He is the man who had long sought but had not come to the light. Suddenly, through God's grace, he finds the kingdom, but only as an answer to prayer. Through God's grace also the spiritual merchant is able to discriminate and choose and receive the true value. In the kingdom he also finds Christ the King, who unites in Himself all qualities of excellence, beauty and worth. For the monarch is the representative of the kingdom's wealth and glory (John 1:16; Col. 1:10; 2:3). In Christ are not only the riches of His divine person, but also those of His saving work for us on the cross, paying His precious blood as the price of our redemption. He secures

the kingdom for us, therefore, and it becomes our heavenly inheritance.

Finally we see our merchant sacrificing all lesser values to gain the noblest one. The hid treasure illustrates the valuable use of the kingdom; the pearl indicates the kingdom's intrinsic value and pure beauty. For in the ancient East the pearl was regarded as the most precious of all possessions, the mere contemplation of which was delightful, while the actual ownership of it was an enduring source of happiness. So our merchant starts with no delay. He sells all he has without reservation. He purchases at once the precious pearl. The spiritual merchant likewise joyfully surrenders every earthly treasure for the kingdom, for he knows it surpasses all other values.

Just as we found concerning the use of the ideas of buying and selling in relation to the hid treasure, so here we need have no difficulty in the statement that the merchant sold all he had to buy the pearl of great price. Such spiritual transactions are common in Scripture (Isa. 55:1, 2; Prov.

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23:23; Matt. 25:9, 10; Rev. 3:18). It is in line with such passages that James Russell Lowell in his *The Vision of Sir Launfal* warns us against being cheated in our own spiritual dealings:

"At the devil's booth are all things sold,  
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;

For a cap and bells our lives we pay,  
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking;

'Tis heaven alone that is given away,  
'Tis only God may be had for the asking;

No price is set on the lavish summer;  
June may be had by the poorest comer."

The believer accordingly does not think of buying or earning his salvation. He buys it only in the figurative sense that, in receiving Christ's grace through faith, he renounces all else.

#### The Application to Us

(1) We must ask ourselves if we really seek the best, as our Saviour directed us: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). We must seek not only the good but also the best. Aims innocent in themselves may interfere with higher aims. We must ask, Is my aim the highest aim? Is the good I seek the highest good? We must not depend on finding the pearl by chance, though the man found the hid treasure, as we say, by accident. We must seek. In God's Word we have all jewels evaluated, and the precious pearl described. The Word teaches us to discriminate.

(2) Therefore we must next ask if we are manifesting discrimination in our choices so as to recognize and secure the precious pearl? Such spiritual insight is what Paul desired for his Philippian Christians: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Jesus Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:9-11). To this end we must be in the habit of thinking about things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, full of virtue, and worthy of praise (Phil. 4:8).

(3) Finally, our faith must be so venturesome as to sacrifice all for the best. The Galilean fishermen were willing to abandon their boats and nets to follow Christ. Saul of Tarsus gave up his system of legal righteousness to gain Christ's perfect righteousness. To gain the perfect pearl we must forsake each lesser value, as well as each hindering or sinful attachment. It was her failure to renounce Lancelot in order to be loyal to King Arthur that reduced Queen Guinevere to abject and bitter grief as the king took final leave of her in the abbey:

"It was my duty to have loved the highest;

It surely was my profit had I known;  
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.

We needs must love the highest  
when we see it."

(Tennyson, *The Idylls of the King*)

(4) When we gain Christ's king-

dom, we gain all that is best, just as the merchant found the beauty and value of all pearls in the one pearl of great price. Those who seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness will find all needed things added (Matt. 6:33). As our Lord also said, "And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life" (Matt. 19:29). Whatever we lose in order to reach the highest good in Christ will be in mysterious ways given back to us. It will come in divine reality, now and in eternity, along with such joys and insights as the natural man cannot imagine. As Sir Thomas Browne said long ago in his *Christian Morals*, (1682), III, xi: "To enjoy true happiness, we must travel into a very far country, and even out of ourselves, for the Pearl we seek for is to be found not in the *Indian*, but in the *Empyrean Ocean*" (that is, in Heaven).

## Orthodox Presbyterian Church News

NEWS

### Presbytery of California

**WESTMINSTER Church, Los Angeles:** Dr. James B. Brown, presbytery's missionary to the Pacific Northwest, visited the church on the last Sunday of the old year. The church supports the work of Dr. Brown and the Rev. Bruce F. Hunt and maintains a keen interest in the entire missionary program. . . . On February 1st the Rev. Russell D. Piper and the pastor, the Rev. Robert B. Brown, held services in Roscoe, California, in an underchurched section of fifteen thousand people. . . . On February 4th a union service was held at Los Angeles' Grace Church to hear Chaplain Donald C. Graham. . . . A recent offering of \$137 boosted the building fund to \$1600.

**Beverly Church, Los Angeles:** Recent missionary speakers have been the Rev. Newton Kapp and Miss Betty Russ, both of Africa, and Dr. Brown of the presbytery's home missions field. . . . The Women's Guild held its annual Experience Luncheon on February 2nd, with the Rev. Henry W. Coray as the guest speaker. The luncheon derives its name not from any un-Reformed emphasis but from the custom of having each

woman tell her "experience" in earning the dollar that she donates at that time. . . . At the last communion service two communicant members were received and their covenant child baptized.

**First Church, Long Beach:** A grand piano has been purchased for the chapel. A new defense project is developing almost under the shadow of the building and more than five hundred new homes are under construction. . . . The Sunday school recently established a new record of one hundred twenty-one scholars. Mr. Paul Lovik has begun a week-day "Story Hour" for children at the church, and interest in it has been steadily increasing.

**Covenant Church, Berkeley:** Due to the believing prayers of the members of the church, attendance has increased, souls have been saved and a goodly number have been added to the church. Self-support in the near future is the present goal of the prayers and efforts of the members.

**First Church, San Francisco:** Four communicant members were received and one covenant child baptized at the January communion service. . . . Recent visitors, on their way to the

Pacific Northwest, were Dr. and Mrs. James B. Brown. . . . Work on the new building is progressing well and the congregation hopes to be worshipping there by the end of February.

#### Presbytery of the Dakotas

**C**ALVARY Church, Volga, S. D.: The annual Harvest Festival was held last fall and sponsored by the Ladies' Aid. An offering of \$240 was received at that time. . . . Mr. Louis E. Knowles has recently arrived to serve as stated supply of the church, and he and Mrs. Knowles were given a generous food shower, including many home canned fruits and vegetables. . . . A men's Bible club was organized at a banquet on January 19th. . . . Two communicant members were received at the January communion service, which was conducted by the Rev. Melvin B. Nonhof. . . . A recently organized choir is now aiding in the services each Sunday. . . . During January more than \$265 in special offerings for missions have been received, of which \$200 was given by an unknown donor.

Recent evangelistic effort at Bancroft, S. D., met with a good response and some new families have been reached. Similar campaigns have been planned by the Rev. Melvin B. Nonhof for Manchester and Yale. . . . The God's Acre project at Manchester earned about \$100. The interior of the Manchester church has now been completely redecorated. . . . New selective service rulings will take some of the young men of these churches who until now have been deferred because of farm work.

Westminster Church, Hamill, S. D.: The lower school of the Sunday school, which includes all the classes up to the young people's, has given the contents of its birthday bank to the work of Miss Mary Roberts at the Logan-Fontenelle Chapel in Omaha.

Presbytery met in special session at Westminster Church, Hamill, S. D., on January 2nd. The call of Faith Church, Lincoln, Nebr., to Delbert Schowalter, a licentiate, was found in order and sent to the Presbytery of Philadelphia. A complaint was sent up to the general assembly against an action of the Home Missions Committee. The Rev. Reginald Voorhees of Omaha was the speaker at the public worship service in the evening. Orthodox Presbyterian Church and

Logan-Fontenelle Chapel, Omaha: Two communicant members were received at the January communion service. The chapel suffered the loss of one of its most enthusiastic workers when Donald Stanton, who is under care of presbytery, entered Calvin College. . . . A young people's group has been organized at the chapel and a children's Bible hour is being conducted by Miss Mary Roberts.

Aurora Church, Aurora, Nebr.: The family of Lt. Erle Swedberg, whose death in action in Italy was reported in the December 25th GUARDIAN, requested that instead of sending flowers to his memorial service an offering be received and sent to Westminster Seminary as a memorial. This was done, and the seminary has received the memorial gift.

First Church, Denver: One hundred thirty persons attended the annual fellowship supper and business meeting held on January 10th. Reports showed an average increase of twenty-eight in Sunday school attendance and the general income of the church rose from \$3000 in 1943 to \$6000 in 1944. . . . W. E. Stromer and Fred Kurtz were elected as elder and deacon.

#### Presbytery of New Jersey

**C**OVENANT Church, East Orange: On January 7th and 8th the Rev.

Floyd E. Hamilton conducted a Christian Education conference at the church. On January 28th Flight Lieutenant Frank A. Lawrence, Chaplain in the Royal Canadian Air Force, told of his work in the Canadian air service. . . . An interesting series of young people's meetings is being sponsored by Mrs. Richard W. Gray, wife of the pastor. The meetings have depicted the origin and development of Covenant Church and its organization. At one meeting the chairman asked questions of the pastor, the treasurer, a deacon, elder, and trustee, for the purpose of providing a graphic presentation of the duties of these officers.

Calvary Church, Ringoes: Many members and friends of the congregation gathered recently at the church for the annual winter fellowship supper. . . . On February 4th the Rev. Floyd E. Hamilton was guest speaker at the Sunday school and at both worship services. Mr. Hamilton also met with the Sunday school teachers in the afternoon.

Faith Church, Pittsgrove: The newly-completed Sunday school rooms in the basement of the church were dedicated during the Sunday school hour on January 28th. . . . In the absence of the pastor, the Rev. Edward B. Cooper, who was ill, the Rev. Clifford S. Smith of Bridgeton preached on the morning of February 4th, and

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in the evening the Rev. Leslie A. Dunn of Wildwood presented the proposed work of the Boardwalk Gospel Pavilion.

**Grace Church, Trenton:** Despite cold weather, Sunday school attendance on two recent occasions has approached the record by soaring to the sixties. . . . A projector has been purchased for use in the young people's work. . . . The church now sends regularly to the men in the Armed Forces copies of *The Home Evangel* and a form letter giving local news of interest.

**Immanuel Church, West Collingswood:** Meeting at the manse early last month, a number of people interested in Christian education formed themselves into a Christian school society. On that occasion the group was addressed by Dr. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary, and a committee was named to draw up a constitution for presentation to the next meeting of the organization. . . . To stimulate regular, systematic Scripture study, an Immanuel Bible Readers' Covenant has been formed. The present study, planned to run through Easter, is based upon the life of Christ. Day-by-day Scripture readings are designated, and nearly a hundred people have already covenanted to read the selected passages. A good many have expressed enthusiastic interest in this type of united Bible study.

#### Presbytery of New York and New England

**CHURCH of the Covenant, Albany:** More than a hundred new homes have been built in this community by a private concern under government authorization. The congregation and its pastor, the Rev. Herman Petersen, are doing their utmost to reach the families who are moving in, and some noticeable results have been achieved. The church has recently sustained the loss of one of its largest families who were charter members but who have found it necessary to move to another state. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Petersen are rejoicing over the safe arrival of their second child, Susan Kay.

#### Presbytery of Ohio

**COVENANT Church, Indianapolis:** During the absence of the pastor, the Rev. Martin J. Bohn, the pulpit

was supplied on the morning of January 28th by Mr. Maurice R. Rooker, clerk of session, and in the evening by Mr. Brom DeJong, treasurer of the church. . . . Mr. Bohn recently spoke at the annual convention of the Summer Bible School Association in Chester, Pa. . . . A Sunday school attendance contest is in progress between Covenant and Trinity schools. Trinity Sunday school has recently been started by the Covenant church. The contest will close on Easter Sunday.

#### Presbytery of Philadelphia

**ST. Andrew's Church, Baltimore, Md.:** On January 30th the congregation heard Pastor Basil A. Malof, head of the Russian Bible Society. A graduate of Spurgeon's school in London, Malof founded Protestant churches in St. Petersburg (Leningrad) before he was exiled by Czarist Russia. The promise of a new freedom in Russia has spurred him to seek to return there with a million Bibles and a society of missionaries. . . . On February 11th the guest preacher was Mr. John Phillips of the Sudan Interior Mission. Mr. Phillips is a brother of the Rev. Henry D. Phillips of Nottingham. . . . The pastor, the Rev. Edwards E. Elliott, writes that the China Inland Mission school for missionary children has been flown out from Loshan, Szechuan, to Darjeeling, India. Mr. Elliott's sister, Ruth, is a teacher in this school. The two children of his brother-in-law, Vincent Crossett (Westminster '33) also went. The former China Inland Mission school at Chefoo, Shantung, has been taken over by the Japanese.

**Grace Church, Middletown, Del.:** Dr. Cornelius Van Til was guest preacher on Sunday, January 21st, when the congregation observed the seventh anniversary of its founding. . . . Recently the church was enabled to reduce the mortgage on the manse by \$200.

**Knox Church, Silver Spring, Md.:** Two communicant members were received and one covenant child was baptized at the communion service on January 7th. Since August, nine new members have been received, giving Knox Church a present communicant membership of twenty-one and seven covenant children. Sunday evening services were begun on February 4th.

**Mediator Church, Philadelphia:** The pastor of the church, the Rev.

John W. Betzold, is now serving as an army chaplain stationed at Indiantown Gap, Pa. The congregation has asked Mr. Alan Tichenor, a ruling elder of the church and a licentiate of Philadelphia Presbytery, to serve as stated supply, and Mr. Thomas Gregory, a deacon in the congregation and a senior at Westminster Seminary, to do visitation in the community. The Sunday school has made very encouraging progress in members during the fall and winter and is meeting an evangelistic need in the community, since most of the boys and girls are not covenant children.

**Bethany Church, Nottingham:** The pastor, the Rev. Henry D. Phillips, is preaching a number of sermons on the humanity of Christ the Son of God. Ten scenes in the prayer life of Christ will occupy the evening services for two and a half months. . . . Eighteen young people enjoyed the sacred concert and fellowship banquet of the Machen League at Eastlake Church, Wilmington. . . . A community mailing project is being studied by the young people to extend the witness of the gospel to the indifferent and unchurched. . . . A week of missions for the rural schools is planned for the middle of March.

**Covenant Church, Pittsburgh:** At the recent eighth anniversary dinner the young people gave three historical sketches depicting the three different stages of the church's development. Covenant Church was the last church founded directly by Dr. Machen and, although it began with only five people, there is now a membership of sixty-four and the prospect of a fine Colonial brick building as soon as the WPB permits. The sum of \$2500 has been raised in four months toward the building fund.

#### Passports Delayed For Missionaries

**THE** Department of State has not yet issued passports to the missionaries who are scheduled to sail for Eritrea about March 1st! To February 15th over eighty special contributions had been received toward their traveling expenses and there is good hope that the full amount of \$5000 will be received by the time they sail. The missionaries will come to the Philadelphia area as soon as their passports are issued.