

# The Presbyterian GUARDIAN

J. GRESHAM MACHEN • EDITOR 1936-1937

**Training for the  
Ministry**

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**Incomprehensibility  
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**Glory of the  
Christian Church**

R. B. Kuiper

•

**Guardian News  
Commentator**



*The view of God which the Bible presents is the view which philosophers call "theism" – that is, it is the view which holds that there is a personal God who is Creator and Ruler of the world. That is the view which Jesus presents with particular clearness, and that is the view which the Bible presents as a whole.*

—J. Gresham Machen



**April 10, 1948**

VOL. 17, NO. 7



Your FAMILY ALTAR

Daily Bible Readings

Week of April 12 (Continued)

Friday ..... I Corinthians 12:1-13  
 Saturday ..... I Corinthians 12:14-31  
 Sunday ..... I Corinthians 13

Questions for Sabbath Meditation

1. Why did Korah and Dathan rebel against the leadership of Moses and Aaron?
2. How was Moses to show the congregation of Israel that God had made him the leader of Israel?
3. Why did Haman hate Mordecai?
4. What is the best gift that we may covet? Are any members of the church unimportant?

Envy

As this is being written men are thinking of the suffering of Jesus Christ at the hands of the scribes and Pharisees. Those men hated and envied him. His power to capture the hearts of men dismayed and perplexed them. His humility put them to shame. He did not seek the uppermost seat in the synagogue, and yet the people of His day had to admit that no man had ever spoken as He did. The rulers of the Jews coveted His gifts but were unwilling to pay the price of discipleship. They would not be subject to His authority.

Had the Jews of that day loved the Saviour envy would have had no place in their thoughts. Rather would they have rejoiced in His kingship over them. When we submit our minds and hearts to God's Word—the word of Christ, our Prophet—we need not envy either the prosperity of the wicked or the success of the godly. The ungodly shall be cast down into destruction. So we should not envy the fatness of the wicked which brings only death.

Likewise, there is no room in the Christian's heart for envious regard of those who are successful in God's kingdom. God is using them according

to His plan. To each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is given a place of activity in the kingdom. Paul tells us that no part of the body is unimportant. Each stone is made to fit in its proper place in the spiritual temple of the Lord.

When the Scriptures command, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Hebrews 13:17), grudging submission is not acceptable. Whomsoever God puts in a place of authority in His kingdom is to rule according to His Word. And when God's children respect authority in the kingdom, they respect Jesus Christ. "Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another." (Galatians 5:26) "Love envieth not."

Week of April 19

Monday ..... Psalm 27  
 Tuesday ..... Psalm 34:1-10  
 Wednesday ..... Psalm 34:11-22  
 Thursday ..... Psalm 106:1-15  
 Friday ..... Ezekiel 22:17-31  
 Saturday ..... Mark 4:21-29  
 Sunday ..... John 7:1-13

Questions for Sabbath Meditation

1. Why did people who believed that Jesus was a good man not speak openly about Him?
2. Memorize Psalm 106:3. May the Christian ever do evil that good may come?
3. May the Christian keep silent when evil is perpetrated?
4. What do you think of Reuben's allowing his brother Joseph to be left in the pit? Was it a mistake? Explain.

Compromise

A weakness of sinful human nature is blindness to the consequences of compromise with sin. It is quite easy for us to reason ourselves into a course of action that will not require us to take a stand against evil. Perhaps we shall even gain in the end if we make only a small concession for the moment. But the choices we make at these forks in the road of life evidence

either a strong or a weak character.

Uppermost in our minds should be a love for God. Compromise with sin displeases God. That should be enough to restrain us from dallying with sin. Each day let us cry, "I delight to do thy will, O God." But there is also a practical consideration. The only shortcut to spiritual victory is the narrow road of Christ's commandments. Hesitancy to follow Christ and His Word produces more temporizing, and eventually we have lost the battle to Satan. But "each victory will help you some other to win."

Reuben permitted his brothers to place Joseph in a pit hoping that later he might deliver his father's beloved to him, but Reuben never saw that come to pass. God overruled this conspiracy, but Reuben's sin remained. "To him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Kidnapping was as bad as murder. Ministers and church members who keep silent when unbelief flourishes hoping for occasion to preach the gospel deceive themselves. They are conceding the battle to Satan. Goliath will not be killed except by the David who is equipped with God's weapons and ready to use them when the enemy speaks defiantly.

This week, child of God, face the world with assurance that your Saviour will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, and in that confidence make no bargains for the moment with sin. There is always time to do good, but never time to do evil. In the words of Tryon Edwards "Compromise is but the sacrifice of one right or good in the hope of retaining another,—too often ending in the loss of both."

Week of April 26

Monday ..... Job 11  
 Tuesday ..... Job 12:1-11  
 Wednesday ..... Job 12:12-25  
 Thursday ..... James 3  
 Friday ..... I Corinthians 3:11-23

A Prayer Suggestion

Pray for the young people's society in your own church and for the Machen League work in your presbytery.

LEROY B. OLIVER

The Presbyterian Guardian is published semi-monthly from September to July, inclusive, and monthly in August by The Presbyterian Guardian Publishing Corporation, 728 Schaff Building, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia, Pa., at the following rates, payable in advance, for either old or new subscribers in any part of the world, postage prepaid: \$2.00 per year; \$1.00 for five months; five or more copies either to separate addresses or in a package to one address, \$1.50 each per year; 10c per single copy. Entered as second class matter March 4, 1937, at the Post Office at Philadelphia, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

## The Presbyterian GUARDIAN

1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Pa.

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## Whither Religious Education?

**T**HE Supreme Court decision in the Champaign School case, reported and evaluated in our March 25th number, raises urgent questions as to the future of religious education in America.

If the decision had been restricted to the narrow question of the constitutionality of the form of released-time religious education which has been practised in Champaign, Illinois, the matter would not be one of deep practical concern to us who believe that free Christian schools supply the only satisfactory answer to the problem. As THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN has stated in the past, the released-time program at its best fails distressingly to reckon with the claims of Christ upon the whole of our life; and at its worst, and perhaps all too commonly, it has served to propagate Modernism or a vague conception of religion broad enough to embrace the varying viewpoints of the entire community.

Even sponsors of the released-time approach may be encouraged by some language employed in the opinions to believe that this system may be conserved if only certain features are eliminated. At any rate, allowance is made for a "dismissed time" plan, where the element of compulsion is unmistakably absent. The decision bears most pointedly against any plan where it may be judged that "the state's compulsory education system . . . assists and is integrated with the program of religious instruction carried on by separate religious sects", and on this point we do

not see how the decision may fairly be challenged.

In the opinions that support the decision, however, there are elements which are to be deplored. The opinion of Mr. Justice Black, in affirming that "the First Amendment has erected a wall between Church and State which must be kept high and impregnable", applies this principle so drastically as to suggest that out-and-out secularism must be maintained in the public schools. The appellant in the case, Mrs. Vashti McCollum, an avowed atheist, petitioned not only an end to released-time education, but also a ban on every form of teaching which suggests or recognizes that there is a God. She also demanded that all teaching of the Scriptures be prohibited. Mr. Justice Jackson, concurring with the decision of the court, but making various reservations in a separate opinion, observed pointedly that "this Court is directing the Illinois courts generally to sustain plaintiff's complaint without exception of any of these grounds of complaint, without discriminating between them and without laying down any standards to define the limits of the effect of our decision". The Court may be understood widely, accordingly, as implying that the separation of Church and State demands the enthronement of atheism in public education.

The opinion of Mr. Justice Frankfurter lends further support to the ascendancy of secularism by developing the theory that the public school is to be regarded as necessary to secure and maintain a democratic society. The public school is said to be "designed to serve as perhaps the most powerful agency for promoting cohesion among a heterogeneous democratic people", and to be "at once the symbol of our democracy and the most pervasive means of promoting our common destiny". On this view, the public school appears to be conceived of as an agency existing for the sake of the state, and designed to achieve a common pattern of life. This evaluation of the public school is dangerous. In stressing state control, it allows insufficiently for a proper influence of the separate communities upon local institutions. And in emphasizing cohesion, it does not guard a proper diversity and liberty. Of perhaps even greater moment, the question arises how, on this conception of the mission of the public school, men will not ultimately draw the conclusion

that private and parochial schools are to be condemned as undemocratic and divisive. Socialized education, wholly subservient to state control, rather than being an agency of democracy, will thus become an instrument of tyranny.

These tendencies to sanction a wholly secularistic, and even atheistic, socialized public education are to be vigorously opposed. They are to be opposed because of their anti-Christian character, and not less so because the learned justices may not be aware of the full thrust of their own positions. They are also to be opposed as destructive of justice and liberty as these are guaranteed under the Constitution.

To sum up the provisions of the Constitution as establishing the separation of Church and State, and to make this formula a rule of thumb for deciding broad issues of policy affecting religion, oversimplifies the situation and opens the door to serious abuses. This over-simplification appears particularly when the religious sphere is identified with the Church and the secular is regarded as that of the State. The religious sphere, in the nature of the case, is more embracing than the ecclesiastical. Religion worthy of the name is interwoven with secular affairs, and will demand recognition as a ruling and integrating principle. The Constitution guarantees religious liberty, and prohibits the establishment of religion, but we believe that these provisions are far from supporting the proposition that public education must be godless, secularized education.

In this situation it is fitting that the State should recognize its own limited role in the sphere of education. It should constantly keep in view the fact that this activity does not belong to the State as an absolute right. In providing education for the community, when this responsibility is not undertaken by parents, the State may not favor or support any particular religious organization or faith. But it must also avoid the establishment of the religion of atheism and secularism.

N. B. S.

## The Marshall Plan

**T**HE new approach to foreign relations, marked by the passage of the Marshall Plan cannot but have a far-reaching effect upon religious liberty throughout the world.

With the humanitarian purposes of the Marshall Plan none can quarrel. The Plan, regardless of its other purposes, can be defended upon this account alone. Millions are starving throughout the world, and it is clearly the duty of those who have so great an abundance to share their bounties with those who are so much less fortunate. As a stop-gap measure it has the support of nearly all Americans, and ex-president Hoover's endorsement of it removed it as far as possible from partisan politics.

But the permanent effects of the Marshall Plan are indeed problematical. Its purpose is not to promote religious liberty—this will simply prove to be an inevitable by-product of any success the Plan may have. It is admitted by all that the Marshall Plan is not only an humanitarian fund, but a huge fund to be used for propaganda throughout the world. It is a bold attempt to stop the spread of Communism in Europe, and, to a lesser extent, in Asia. Its purposes are worthy of examination.

You can't change people's ideas simply by giving them bread. Bribes may buy votes, but they will not change minds. To be sure, giving bread may be an expression of Christian love, and when it is that it should commend Christianity to those who receive it. When thus given it should tend to change people's minds about Christianity. Many of those who are tempted to Communism have come into close contact with a most decadent type of Christianity, and need to have its practical outworkings demonstrated to them. But the giving of bread, in itself, is not necessarily a good act, and does not necessarily commend the giver to the recipient. Our use of relief to the needy as a political weapon may vitiate its permanent effectiveness. While we shy away from assisting millions of Displaced Persons whose political influence is nil, thoughtful Europeans who observe the working

of the Marshall Plan cannot but wonder whether, after all, we really do have a proper humanitarian motive in our relief measures. The giving of bread, even from wrong motives may temporarily deter men and women from vot-

ing the wrong way, but it will not serve to prove to them the superiority of a Christian civilization over a Communist one.

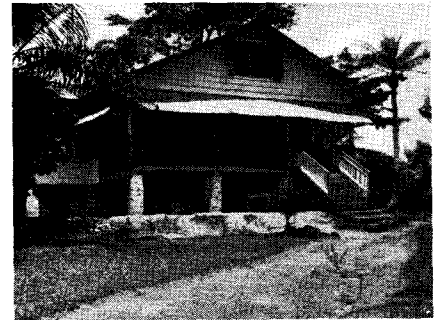
In the long run the stopping of Com-  
(See "Marshall Plan", page 108)

## Scenes from Liberia

### Dr. Welmers Sends Us Some Pictures

**D**R. William E. Welmers, Orthodox Presbyterian minister who has been conducting language work at the American Lutheran Mission in Sanoyea, Liberia, has sent us some pictures of the country, a few of which we present here. Readers who have access to the *National Geographical Magazine* will be interested in an article in the February, 1948, number on Liberia. The article includes a number of colored pictures of Monrovia and the area near which Dr. Welmers has been working. Some of the pictures are very similar to ones Dr. Welmers sent.

These pictures give just a little idea of what life is like on one—and perhaps on many—of the mission fields of the world.



**The Welmers' home** in Sanoyea. One of the few frame houses in interior Liberia, it was built more than 25 years ago. All the lumber is from within a radius of three miles. In houses like this one is liable to encounter a piece of beautiful mahogany in a screen frame.

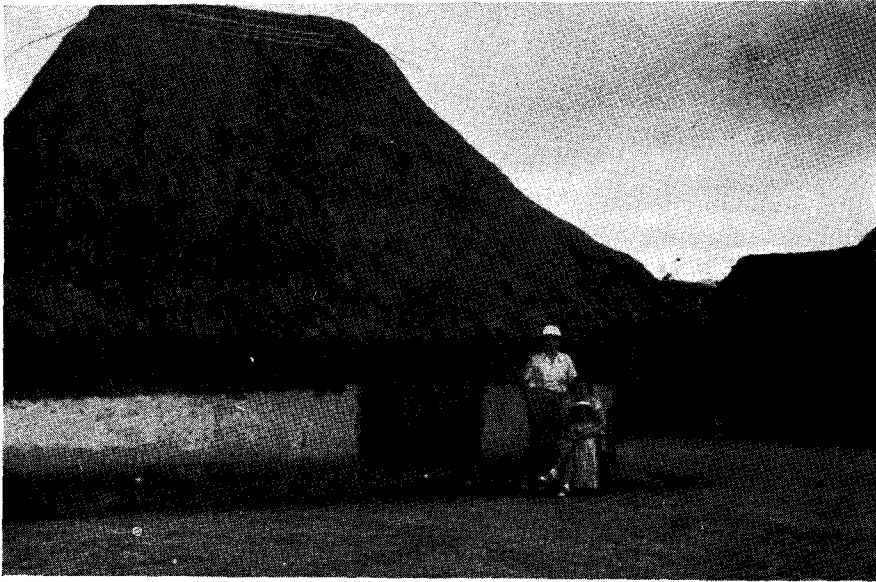


**The Lutheran Mission** in Liberia started at this lonely spot on the St. Paul River, about 20 miles inland, with a school for the children of freed slaves.

Shown are a boy's dormitory and a missionary's residence. The endless variety of trees is one of the greatest beauties of Liberia.

#### STRIKE CONTINUES

Although partial settlements of some sort seem to have been reached elsewhere, the strike in the printing business in Philadelphia continues. We shall skip the April 25th issue, and make the May 10th issue slightly larger.



**A typical native house** in Totota. From here the path leaves for Sanoyea. Dr. and Mrs. Welmers spent a night here, and since then Mrs. Welmers and son Bob have not seen a car, an electric light, or running water. The houses

are built around a framework of poles tied with vines. Brown clay is plastered between and around the sticks, and white clay rubbed on afterward. In spite of termites, such buildings can stand for ten years or more.

**On his third birthday,** son Bob was given the chief's robe. It is not much more than a piece of cloth with a hole in it. The cloth is heavy cotton, which was grown, picked, combed, spun, dyed and woven locally.



**Six weeks after** their arrival in Sanoyea, the Welmers received their final load of goods. The barrel was carried by two teams of four men each. The curious natives gathered around to see the unpacking. Son Bob's wind-up train caused the greatest interest. In the background is the church building. A member of the congregation,

who works at the Firestone Rubber Plantation, recently donated a complete 300-watt electric light plant to the church. This will then be the first electrically lighted building in interior Liberia. Located just inside the town, the church building is a symbol of the gospel that must some day dominate the Liberian people.

### Professor Murray on Leave

**T**HE Rev. John Murray, professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, left the United States March 12th aboard the liner Queen Elizabeth. He will spend the summer months visiting his native country of Scotland. He is expected to return to this country in the fall, in time for the opening of classes at the Seminary in September.

### Andrews to Return on Furlough

**T**HE Rev. Egbert W. Andrews, Orthodox Presbyterian missionary in China, expects to return to America on furlough early in the summer. The Rev. Henry W. Coray, who formerly served as a missionary in China and who is now pastor of the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of San Francisco, expects to go to China to help with the work during Mr. Andrews' furlough. This arrangement will be put in effect as soon as a supply for Mr. Coray's church can be secured.

# Training for the Ministry at Westminster Theological Seminary

*Preparing Men to Preach the Gospel  
Requires a Balance of Scholarship,  
Evangelical Fervor, and Piety*

WE present here the text of a pamphlet recently prepared to acquaint prospective ministerial students with the character of the training given at Westminster Theological Seminary. We believe it will be of interest to our readers, not only to students. It was written by the Rev. Edmund P. Clowney.

NO criterion is as important in fixing the measure of a preacher's value as his adherence to the Word of God. The Christian preacher does not come to offer his own sage counsel but to herald the only saving message of the only saving God. His power and effectiveness lie basically not in his eloquence nor even in his consecration. Though he were an angel from heaven, and preached another gospel he would be anathema. It is the gospel, not the preacher, that is the power of God unto salvation.

No criterion is as important in assessing the value of a seminary as the loyalty of its testimony to the Word of God. In this respect Westminster has a glorious history. With unbelief firmly established in the major American denominations, many seminaries once orthodox have formed some working alliance with Modernism, either in its rationalistic forms or in the more recent irrationalistic rejection of the gospel, characteristic of Barthianism. Westminster owes its very existence, under God, to the courageous resolution of a group of scholars on the faculty of Princeton Seminary, who determined to continue teaching the infallible Word without compromise. These men, Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, Dr. J. Gresham Machen, Dr. Oswald T. Allis, and Dr. Cornelius VanTil, refused to continue teaching at Princeton when that venerable institution was reorganized in 1929 in response to pressure from the powerful Modernist

faction in the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. Instead they associated themselves with other competent scholars in founding Westminster Seminary, an independent institution dedicated to the training of men who would be humble heralds of the whole counsel of God.

This crusading zeal for the truth is still the stamp of Westminster Seminary. It appears in the penetrating analysis of contemporary error contained in the Seminary curriculum. The underlying philosophical fallacies of non-Christian and pseudo-Christian thought are exposed in the department of apologetics, and contrasted with the system of Biblical thought, as that is presented through Biblical and Systematic theology. In contrast to the current practice of salvaging piecemeal elements of anti-Christian systems and patching these together in a makeshift defense of Christianity that is more an apology than an apologetic, Westminster presents divine truth as resting upon its own foundations. The Word of God endures forever, triumphant over the most profound reasonings of infidels and the wildest conceits of heretics.

But Westminster does much more than prepare a man to refute those who attack or pervert Scripture. The thrust of Westminster training, is to immerse a student in the whole system of Biblical truth so that a growing mastery of the teachings of the Bible may be accompanied by a growing love of them in their harmony and power. Orthodoxy that means only denominational traditionalism is not orthodox. But the orthodoxy that treasures the "pattern of sound words" laid down by the apostle is ever established and increased before the open Bible. The spiritual refreshment at Westminster lies in the rediscovery in our day of the glories of those central teachings of Scripture which have been known to

history as the Reformed faith, Calvinism, Augustinianism, Paulinism, or, more simply, consistent Biblical Christianity. The soundness which Westminster seeks to give to the gospel-preaching minister is not a static orthodoxy, but the burning challenge of whole-souled faith.

## Evangelism

Your task as a minister is not only to guard that good deposit of God, the gospel (II Tim. 1:14), but also to carry that gospel, so far as you can, to all men. Present day evangelism requires far more than the ability to preach evangelistic sermons, though it demands that ability too, in a higher degree. In the last generation most Americans had a general knowledge of the Christian gospel. A single sermon, drawing on that knowledge, and challenging to decision, was commonly the means, humanly speaking, of conversion.

Today the situation is quite different. Not only has the teaching of the truth been silenced in a great number of our churches, but a pagan school curriculum and secularism in daily life have produced a generation which, like the Athenian hearers of Paul, must be instructed in the rudiments of the Christian doctrine of God before it can grasp the fact of His wrath or the counsel of His mercy. Today's evangelism must be teaching evangelism, throwing great emphasis on personal work. If the reign of paganism is to be broken, it must also be child evangelism. Since the Great Commission commands the teaching of all the words of Christ to the world, evangelism must include the task of instructing Christians more perfectly in the way of life, and of delivering the sheep of Christ from the hand of false shepherds of the flock.

When you realize that, with the world the field, this task is as extensive

as it is intensive, you may well cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Westminster's department of practical theology does not profess to supply an answer to advance to all the problems that will confront you as an evangelistic pastor. But it does undertake to lay upon your conscience the full weight of the responsibility that is yours, and to put before you the principles of Biblical evangelism and Christian education, placing in your hands the most important practical skills which this phase of your calling demands. That theory may become practice, the Seminary year includes a prolonged summer recess; summer experience in ministerial work applies what you have learned, and opens a wider channel for future learning.

The reputation for scholarship is a social asset for a professional man. Some ministers have even succumbed to the lure of a mail-order Ph.D. supplied, for sufficient cash consideration, from institutions of mythical scholastic standing. The true minister of the gospel needs the insights, not the trappings, of scholarship. His ministry will be enriched and widened by his knowledge of his fellowmen, in the past and present, and by his reverent tracing of the hand of the Almighty in nature and history.

But his compelling reason for scholarship is that he takes the Word of God seriously, and since it is his primary duty to proclaim that Word, he must before everything else be a trained student of the Scriptures.

The focus of the devout scholarship of the true workman in the Word is his weekly sermon preparation. All his knowledge of God's general revelation, all his grasp of science, history, art and culture should form a background for his thinking as he works on his sermons. But all this is only background. The Christian minister has one proper sermon source, the inspired Word of God.

Nothing will be of greater importance in setting the measure of your ministry than the way in which your sermons are prepared. The American pulpit has crumbled away. Even much Fundamentalist preaching is at once hackneyed and sensational, while modernist preaching is often hopelessly vague and has been increasingly diminished in favor of liturgy. This crippling of preaching springs from a

common cause, neglect of the Word of God. It is not strange that the Modernist pushes the pulpit to the side of the church, and the Bible off the pulpit. He is a humanist, and not in sympathy with the gospel of God's grace. But it is sadly surprising to find Christian ministers of evangelical conviction neglecting serious Bible study to ride the hobbies of sensation-mongers and to engage in superficial and even flippant preaching, which is more interested in catchy titles, alliterative outlines, and bizarre ideas, than in soberly expounding what the Scriptures teach. What has lamed their sermon preparation?

There are two basic approaches to sermon preparation, reflecting two methods of training for the ministry. The difference lies exactly in the matter of scholarship. One approach to sermonizing seeks to complete an attractive sermon as soon as possible, working directly, quickly and superficially from the English Bible. The other approach begins with a patient analysis of the text in the original Greek or Hebrew; a painstaking etymological study of all the important words in the text, a careful consideration of the grammar, and an evaluation of the variant readings. Having achieved a precise and clear translation, it proceeds to an exegesis of the meaning of the text, consulting the history of its interpretation by Christian scholars through the centuries. Such consecrated scholarship will emerge not with a lesson from the text, or one based on a misunderstanding of the text, but with the central lesson, the main thrust of the text, and it will be the Bible that will be presented to the people, not merely thoughts suggested by the Bible, or loosely related to it. Only this method will guarantee that perpetual freshness of content and approach in sermons, that growing depth of grasp and joy of understanding which only God's Word can supply, and for which the current book-review of the Liberal and the froth of the sensationalist are poor substitutes indeed.

Westminster's firm conviction is that scholarship is not simply an ornament but an essential to the ministry, if it is to be a ministry of the Word. Mark well the mature scholarship of the Westminster Seminary faculty, the intensive training by Westminster's curriculum, where Greek and Hebrew are required, and form the basis of all

the courses in Bible, Theology, and Homiletics. With a sound theological education, in the real sense of that term, available, what excuse can one who is preparing to be a workman in the Word give for choosing an easier second best?

### Piety

Without the dimensions of piety all the work of the ministry becomes as sounding brass. In its inward aspects, piety is a dimension measurable only by our Master, but piety also has its outward manifestation in godly living, and men, like trees, may be judged by their fruits.

The pious man, in the Biblical sense, is one who is indwelt by the Spirit of God, who is thereby Spiritual, and whose life manifests the fruits of the Spirit. The instrument by which the Spirit sanctifies to the production of true piety is the Word. We grow in piety as we hear the Word of God and do it.

Westminster training brings a great blessing and a great challenge to the spiritual life of a child of God. Its rich diet of spiritual truth has overwhelmed many a student at first. He has seen misconceptions and misunderstandings of the Word of God melt away, and has been startled at the implications for his personal life of God's penetrating Word. In some cases periods of intense struggle have followed, as students have wrestled with the question of whether, having heard the Word of God, they will also do it. But, by the blessing of God's grace, most of those struggles have been the path to greater blessing. The deep sympathy and humble piety of the servants of the Lord who form the faculty have been used of God to this end. Few graduates indeed are without rich memories of the daily worship periods under these men of God, the student prayer meetings, and informal gatherings for prayer and praise.

Not only does Westminster's teaching advance spiritual life by holding up the Scriptural standards of godliness and unsheathing the two-edged sword of the sanctifying Word. It nurtures subjective piety by emphasizing with manifold repetition and cumulative stress the precious doctrines of the pure grace of God. The Reformed Faith humbles man and exalts God. Because its life-breath is the knowledge that

salvation is all of the Lord, it is instinct with passionate worship which dissolves both the diseased familiarity of the pietist and the boastful presumption of the unbeliever with the cry, "Soli Deo Gloria".

### Balance

A final measure of your ministry is not so much a dimension in itself as a relation among dimensions. Your character and work as a minister will be far more than a collection of separate characteristics. True soundness, evangelism, scholarship, and piety all imply a balance of knowledge and life in consecrated service, a balance which must be sought throughout your ministry. Strong, healthy preaching requires balance; teaching children, doing personal work with teen-agers, instructing indifferent adults demand balance; and the minister needs balance not only to reach others, but to continue himself in the face of ridicule, vexing disillusionments, and major crises.

Balance implies integration: a consistent and stable life and world view. Students from all parts of this country, from Canada, China, Korea, Japan, Western and Central Europe; from Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Mennonite, Congregational, Independent and other backgrounds have found at Westminster this priceless gift, the system of truth which the Bible teaches. They have come to recognize that the Christian may rejoice in all that is good in the world of God's creation, and see His gracious hand prevailing in the beauty and nobleness that may still be traced in the works of fallen men; at the same time they have come to realize as never before the totality of human depravity, and the sovereignty of divine mercy. A faculty of united faith, composed not of one or two outstanding scholars, but balanced in its scholarship, has unfolded this truth from God's Word, defended it, applied it, traced its history through the centuries, and charged these men to carry to this generation the eternal gospel of the crucified, risen, sovereign Savior.

The balance, the zeal, the soberness of the ministers of this gospel is as madness to the world, to whom the message of the cross is ridiculous folly, but this foolishness that we preach remains the power of the Sovereign God. God grant you His Spirit to preach it in fearless purity and truth!

## A Reformed Bible Institute

### Grand Rapids School Provides Training for Lay Workers

**A**s part of its service to its readers, THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN from time to time presents information concerning activities of a Reformed character in areas other than those of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We are glad to be able to introduce our readers to the work of the Reformed Bible Institute in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Though independent of church control, it is supported largely by the Christian Reformed denomination. We have no hesitation in commending it to our readers.

**S**IXTY-FIVE students representing four denominations are enrolled in the Reformed Bible Institute day school and over 200 are taking courses through its Correspondence school program. The Institute, occupying buildings on or near Lakeside Drive in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is thus performing a real service in training lay workers for useful activity in Kingdom causes.

The Reformed Bible Institute day school opened its doors in January, 1940. For several years previously there had been an evening school in Roseland, Chicago. The Committee in charge of the Chicago work decided in 1938 to organize along the lines of the Christian School Societies, and undertook to expand its work. A group in Grand Rapids became interested, and the organization of the day school there followed.

In addition to the day school program, with its concentrated three year course, the Grand Rapids Institute also has an evening school two days a week, and the program of correspondence courses already mentioned.

The purpose of the Reformed Bible Institute is to provide such systematic Christian training as is not provided elsewhere in Reformed church circles. Whether one wishes only to increase his own personal knowledge of the Bible and the principles of Reformed thought, or whether he wishes to equip himself for spiritual and intellectual leadership in Christian service, for Sunday school teaching, or for various types of mission work, the Reformed Bible Institute stands ready to help him.

The courses of study offered at the Institute are placed in five classifications. These are Bible and doctrine, Church and Religions, Missions and Evangelism, Music, and Self-Expression. The faculty consists of the Rev. D. H. Walters, chairman, and the Misses Johanna Timmer, Nella Mierop and Katie J. Gunnink. Part time instruction in special subjects is given by several ministers and other qualified teachers, and there are additional lectures by members of the faculty of Calvin Seminary.

Students admitted to the day school must be at least 18 years of age, unless they are graduates of a regular high school and give evidence of spiritual maturity and stability. There is no tuition charge, but the student must arrange to meet the regular living costs through work in the community or in some way approved by the Institute.

Fifty students have already graduated from the Institute in six classes. All who so desired have found ample opportunities for work. Usually there are more opportunities for work than can be accepted.

In view of the unfortunate tendency among most Bible Institutes to ride "theological hobbies", and to place great emphasis on eschatological theories which, if not downright erroneous, are at least highly dubious, the existence of a Reformed Bible Institute, where the teaching is integrated in the Calvinistic system of truth, is something in which all lovers of the Reformed faith can find joy and encouragement. The Reformed Bible Institute gives students a chance to "major" in the Bible, and to study sound principles of interpreting and applying its teaching in the work of the church and the world.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for a time conducted an evening Bible school three nights a week. This program was terminated during the war when transportation became very difficult. There seems to have been no opportunity to resume the program since the end of the war. Some of the local congregations have devoted one



evening a week to classes of a type that one might get in an Institute. But there has been no real Bible school.

Until such time as the church is able to establish its own school, the Reformed Bible Institute of Grand Rapids seems to offer a partial solution to the problem of how to provide satisfactory training for lay workers. Already two members of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church have taken work at the Day School. And even if the possibility of actual residence study

seems not to exist, the correspondence courses are available at a low cost.

The governing of the Institute is in the hands of a board of twenty members. Dr. H. J. Kuiper of Calvin College is president. Mr. Mark Fakkema is the secretary. Among the members is Professor C. VanTil of Westminster Theological Seminary.

Information concerning the school may be obtained by writing to the Reformed Bible Institute, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

## The Incomprehensibility of God

### A Review of a Committee Report

By ARTHUR W. KUSCHKE, JR.

ONE of the subjects which has been under discussion in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for a number of years is the doctrine of the Incomprehensibility of God. The next General Assembly will have before it the report of a committee dealing with this subject. Since the report is being sent in advance to commissioners to the Assembly, we are glad to be able to present this review of it, prepared by the chairman of the committee, the Rev. Arthur W. Kuschke, Jr., who is Librarian at Westminster Theological Seminary.

WHAT the Bible tells us about God goes to the very heart of theology. The divine perfections are vital matters for our faith. And so as The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has concerned itself in the past five years with the doctrine of God's incomprehensibility, it has been dealing with an essential truth, one that is of urgent practical importance for our life and thought.

A duly elected committee is now ready to report to the 15th General Assembly upon the doctrine of God's incomprehensibility as taught in the Bible and our standards. The report on this and other doctrines is being sent out through the mails to commissioners.

As for the contents of that part of the report which concerns God's incomprehensibility, there is first of all a study of the doctrine of the early Reformed theologians and of the Westminster standards. Then follows "Scriptural Doctrine", with the exegesis of many passages. Third, there is a

"formulation of the doctrine of God's incomprehensibility" in nine points. Next the basic documents of the recent debate are evaluated. There is also an appendix giving the views of certain theologians of the last eighty years.

There is no need in this article to study the sections of the report in order. But the gist of the report may be stated briefly.

#### What Incomprehensibility Is

To put the matter very simply, when we speak of God's incomprehensibility, we mean that God cannot be exhaustively understood by the minds of His creatures.

Is that to say that sure and certain knowledge of God is impossible? By no means. We are not shut off from knowing God. But to know God is one thing, and every Christian knows God. But to know God exhaustively is something else, something that is impossible for any mere creatures. Our knowledge does not have to be comprehensive in order to be true.

Knowledge of the true God is necessary to salvation. We must know God in order to have eternal life, says Jesus: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent". In Christ we have real knowledge of the true God Himself. We are not deceived; we are in touch with Him who is the Truth. Our knowledge of God is sure, and yea and amen in Christ Jesus. This is the assurance of the gospel, and this is essential to our faith.

However in knowing God we do not know Him exhaustively. In all our believing knowledge of Him we do not understand Him completely and comprehensively. The reason simply is, that He is the Lord God, the Creator, and we are only His creatures. Our minds are too small, just because they are creaturely minds, to take God in. He is exalted above us to the very heaven of heavens. The awful gulf that separates His being as Creator from our being as creatures is a gulf that cannot be bridged; we are creatures and we never shall be more than creatures. God is the Creator and can never be less. And just because He is highly exalted above us, we can worship and glorify Him forever. This also is essential to our faith. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable" (Psalm 145:3). And blessed be His "glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise" (Nehemiah 9:5).

#### The Special Point That Has Been Debated

God as God surpasses the comprehension of created intellects, in all His perfections and ways. The incomprehensibility of God's *knowledge*, however, is the special problem that has been debated in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. It was upon this point that such documents as the *Complaint* and the *Answer* turned their attention. But, the report of the committee finds, there have been certain misunderstandings of the basic issue. For example, because the *Complaint* used various expressions that were misleading, the *Answer* understood the *Complaint* to mean that man cannot know the same object, or the same truth, that God knows. Certainly this would be wrong, and as the *Answer* says, it would be skeptical. It would be saying that there is one kind of "truth" for God and another kind of "truth" for man. Man could never know the real truth.

But according to the report, the *Complaint*, when carefully studied, does not mean that there are two kinds, or two levels, of truth. "The *Complaint* does insist upon two levels but it is made plain that the two levels are not two levels of truth but two levels of knowledge . . ." It is not the *truth* which the *Complaint* insists must be different for God and man, but the

knowledge of the truth. God's knowledge of any truth is divine knowledge. Our knowledge of the same truth is human knowledge. The truth is the same; but between the divine knowledge and the human knowledge is just the same gulf that separates the divine and the human. This is the "central argument of the *Complaint*", with which the report agrees. As for the *Answer*, the report says that it is not yet clear whether the *Answer* holds to this "qualitative distinction between God's knowledge and man's knowledge even in respect of those very truths known to man". So the report concludes that "it is highly necessary that those who have signed the *Answer* assure the Church" that they hold to this distinction. On the other hand, the report calls upon the signers of the *Complaint* to express regret for the use of certain expressions which were interpreted as skeptical.

### The Importance of This Doctrine

It is of first-rate practical importance, in the study of the Bible, for us to recognize the incomprehensibility of God's knowledge. Otherwise we might suppose that we can understand any truth fully just because God reveals it. We might forget that we are only men. The mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, for example, cannot be penetrated by our logic. We can know the doctrine, and we can know the Triune God; and the highest exercise of the human intellect is the knowledge of the incomprehensible God. And yet we do not find out the Almighty unto perfection. There are other mysteries of the Word, such as that of the divine decrees. Does God expect us to comprehend them? If so, our knowledge of those mysteries would equal God's knowledge of them; but we cannot equal God in anything.

Only thou art holy;

There is none beside thee

Perfect in power, in love and purity.

There is none equal with God in power, love or purity; there is none equal with God in knowledge. We cannot equal God in any exercise of His power or love, and we cannot equal Him in any exercise of His knowledge. The kind of knowledge which is in God is perfect and divine, and therefore of a different kind from ours. As David says, "Such knowledge is too

wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Psalm 139:6).

In studying the Bible, then, it is well to admit that our minds are not capable of solving all its mysteries. Everything in Scripture is for our learning, and we are to search it with our intellectual powers. But the Bible itself warns us that we are not expected to shape everything in it to the pattern of our minds. Our reason does not sit in authority over God's Word. We are rather to receive the Word "with faith and love", as the Catechism says. For clearly we can never unravel the mystery of God. According to the report, God's incomprehensibility "is an absolute incomprehensibility. The formulations of unsearchability do not allow us to suppose that God's greatness is merely temporarily beyond our grasp, or that our sin has clouded what would otherwise be an adequate knowledge of his nature. It is the greatness, the sovereignty, the deity of God which is unsearchable, and that unsearchability must remain for all creatures so long as he is the Great Jehovah, the Sovereign El Shaddai, the Lord God."

### It is Not Only That God Knows More

God knows everything, and we know little. "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! When I count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake I am still with thee" (Psalm 139:17-18). But in heaven redeemed man will have perfect knowledge in his narrow sphere, as God has perfect knowledge in the divine sphere: "Now I know in part, but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known", says Paul in I Corinthians 13:12. Of this passage the report says, "Even in heaven man remains a creature. His understanding will always remain that of a creature. In the perfection of his creaturely knowledge in heaven, he will realize as never before the transcendence of God." And "the more we know of him, the more we are confronted with the measureless vastness of his glory, the infinite perfection of his being, and the transcendence of his counsels."

No matter how many truths we learn, then, our knowledge will always be on a lower level than God's. We say this precisely because the difference in (See "Kuschke", page 108)

## Los Angeles Church Starts Building Program

THE Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles, of which the Rev. Robert H. Graham is pastor, has determined to proceed with a building expansion program. At a meeting on March 7th, the members and friends of the Church voted to undertake the program, and pledged or gave over \$2400. as a sign of their earnestness in the matter.

Grace Church is now unable to care adequately for its growing Sunday school. Fifty or more children crowd each Sunday into three small rooms in the present structure, and it is impossible for the teachers to do satisfactory work. Plans call for an addition to the present building in the form of a regular auditorium for worship. Such a building would not only provide more space, but will serve to attract visitors from the community.

## Miss Healy to Eritrea

MISS FRANCES HEALY, whose appointment to foreign missionary service as an evangelistic nurse was reported in our last issue, will be sent to Eritrea to assist in the work of the Ghinda station, where the Rev. and Mrs. Clarence W. Duff are located. The announcement, from the office of the Committee on Foreign Missions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, did not state when she would depart, but she will undoubtedly leave as soon as the way is clear.

## Alumni Banquet Planned

PLANS are being made for the annual Alumni Banquet of the Alumni Association of Westminster Seminary. The banquet is to be held at the Central Y.M.C.A. in Philadelphia, on the evening of May 11th. Cards for making reservations will be sent to alumni of the institution, and reservations should be made through the alumni.

## The Glory of the Christian Church

By the REV. PROFESSOR R. B. KUIPER

### VII

#### Unity Obscured by Division

THE spiritual unity of Christ's church is an undeniable reality. The church is the communion of believers, and Scripture teaches emphatically that believers collectively have one Head, one Spirit, one faith and one baptism, and that together they constitute one body, even the body of Christ.

Nothing can destroy this spiritual unity. Not even the apparently hopeless division of the church into almost countless sects and denominations destroys it. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the present division of the church does greatly obscure its unity. And that is a sad fact. It gives rise to the question whether the church is not in sacred duty bound to put forth a concerted effort to remedy this evil.

In the main there are three attitudes to that question. They may be called *extreme denominationalism*, *extreme unionism*, and *realistic idealism*. The first two of these will be discussed now, the third will be considered presently.

#### Extreme Denominationalism

A great many Christians are of the opinion that the spiritual unity of believers is the only thing that matters and that their organizational unity is of little or no account. Some go so far as to regard organizational *disunity* as a virtue rather than a vice.

This view is especially prevalent among the followers of John Nelson Darby, such as the Plymouth Brethren, and among the followers of C. I. Scofield, commonly known as Modern Dispensationalists. Characteristic of them is a considerable disrespect for the organized church and a consequent lack of concern for its unity.

As might be expected, those of this school are ready to found new denominations for the most insignificant reasons. The Reverend A. cannot see that Scripture teaches the secret rapture of believers. Elder B is not only convinced that this tenet is Scriptural, but he makes it a hobby. If he can get a fol-

lowing, he will not hesitate to start a new church on that issue. Pastor C is known on occasion to smoke a cigar. Sister D is cock-sure that smoking is sin. Her conscience will give her no rest unless she stirs up a rumpus. If the outcome is a split in the church, what of it? Briefly put, extreme denominationalism makes the blunder of identifying multiformity with denominationalism.

Perhaps the most striking manifestation of extreme denominationalism is the so-called undenominational church. Its members will vow that they have no use for any denomination and that they condemn all denominations, but the fact is that they would carry denominationalism to the *n*-th degree, for they want every particular church, every single congregation, to be a denomination by and unto itself.

That such denominationalism is far removed from the pattern of the apostolic church is evident. In the days of the apostles all particular churches were united in one Christian church, and denominations were entirely out of the question. The fifteenth chapter of Acts tells us that certain problems which plagued the Gentile churches were considered by the apostles, together with the elders of the mother-church at Jerusalem, and that their decisions were binding on all the churches. It is indeed a far cry from the teaching of Acts fifteen to the undenominational church.

It is just as evident that extreme denominationalism puts the spiritual unity of the Christian church under a very opaque bushel and thus detracts in no small measure from its glory. And that is exceedingly sinful.

The conclusion is warranted that this attitude toward division within the church of Christ deserves unqualified condemnation.

#### Extreme Unionism

The opposite pole from extreme denominationalism is extreme unionism. It is advocated by the Roman Catholic Church and by most modernist churches of our day.

Rome takes the position, not merely that there ought to be but one church, but that there actually is but one church. That one church is, of course, the Romish church itself. All other churches so called are utterly unworthy of that name. They should repent of their departure from the true church and forthwith return to it. If they will do that, the mother of all believers stands ready to embrace them and press them to her wounded heart.

The modernist plea for union, while hardly less urgent than the Romish plea, is differently motivated. Back of the Romish plea lies the preposterous assumption that Rome has a monopoly of the truth; behind the modernist plea lurks the flippant notion that doctrinal differences among denominations are negligible, that doctrines, in fact, do not greatly matter. Indifference to truth is one of the most outstanding characteristics of the self-styled ecumenical movements of our day. Forgetting theological dissension that is behind, the churches should merge, we are told, for a united campaign to do away with social injustice and to evangelize the world.

The folly of that sort of reasoning is both great and obvious. According to the Word of God the church of Christ is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is custodian and defender of the truth. It follows that the truth is far too great a price for the church to pay for organizational unity. If it should attain to perfect organizational unity at that price, it would only have succeeded in destroying itself. For the church is where the truth is, and the church which sells such truths as the Deity of Christ and the satisfaction of divine justice by His sacrificial and substitutionary death on the cross has been transformed into a synagogue of Satan.

The modernist ecumenical movement would unite the church of Christ by annihilating it.

Revelation thirteen informs us that all that dwell upon the earth whose names are not written in the Lamb's

book of life will worship the beast that has risen out of the sea (Rev. 13:8). It is altogether likely that the fulfilment of that prophecy has several stages, but beyond all doubt the final stage will be the religious unification of practically the entire human race under Antichrist. That the vaunting but Christ-denying ecumenicism of our day is contributing to the hastening of that event, must be set down as a distinct possibility.

\* \* \*

Neither extreme denominationalism nor extreme unionism has a remedy for division within the church of Christ. The former has no interest in a remedy and would let the disease run wild. The latter offers a remedy that is more fatal by far than the disease. Must we conclude that there is no remedy? The answer of *realistic idealism* to that question remains to be presented.

In the meantime it must be remembered that the spiritual unity of the church of Christ, continues a reality. Existing division obscures the church's unity, but does not destroy it. Extreme denominationalism accelerates division and thus obscures the church's unity still more, but cannot destroy it. And extreme unionism spells the destruction of the church, but will never be permitted actually to destroy either it or its unity.

Christ Jesus, the glorious and omnipotent Head of the church at the right hand of God, guarantees its continuity. With the continuity of the church is bound up the continuity of its unity. For unity is of the essence of the Christian church.

### Marshall Plan

(Continued from page 100)

munism must be through the change of ideas of those who might be tempted to be Communists. Communism is a life-and-world view, and in that sense it is a religion. As a religion it is entirely inimical to Christianity. It is based upon a completely naturalistic conception of what is best for man, while Christianity receives its whole concept of the rights of man from revelation. As a false religion Communism must be fought with spiritual weapons, and the only weapon that will prove effective is the weapon of the Truth—the Sword of the Spirit which

is the Word of God.

When we say this we are quite conscious of the danger of identifying Christianity with the status quo or with any current political idealogy. Too often this has been done. Christians must avoid the dual dangers of identifying their Christianity with any particular political idealogy, or of divorcing their Christianity from all political idealogies. If they fall into the first error they lend their political influence to the preservation of the evils which inhere in any political philosophy; if they fall into the latter error they may well hold a political philosophy which is logically destructive of the Christianity which they profess. We must admit that many political philosophies can be held to be compatible with Christianity in this sinful world, but that does not mean that *all* are so compatible. It may be difficult to prove that the Bible approves any particular political theory, but it is not at all difficult to prove that the Bible certainly does not approve the political theory behind Communism. Communism is a political philosophy which is completely at variance with Christianity. As such it presupposes anti-Christian tenets and thus can properly be opposed by the Christian Church. While the Christian Church must not choose between political ideals which can be held within the orb of Christianity, it has the duty of opposing those which are clearly at variance with the basic Christian teachings. It must exercise proper restraint in judging a political philosophy to be anti-Christian, and must do so only on the clearest evidence. But when it comes to Communism, it has that evidence both from its avowed presuppositions and from its well-gathered fruits. Communism can be regarded as a sworn enemy of Christianity, and as such, it must be opposed not only by the state, but by the church as well.

How can we fight this enemy? The Marshall Plan may well be recognized as a practical immediate step which can be taken until a more permanent step can be devised. But it will not *stop* Communism—at best it will arrest its progress temporarily. To stop Communism would mean to change people's minds—to convince them that it is not a true or reasonable philosophy of life. When one reads the staggering amounts mentioned in connection with the Marshall Plan he fails to grasp

their immensity. The figures for one year are in terms of something like fifty dollars for every man, woman, and child in this country. How far would this amount go if it—or a tenth of it—could be put into the spread of the Gospel of Christ as an antidote to Communism? If Christ possessed the hearts of men, then Communism would cease to be a threat. Marshall plans are a stop-gap—it is the duty of Christians really to *stop* Communism through the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. This is one of the effects of Orthodox Presbyterian missions, particularly in Korea and in China where the threat of Communism is so real. The large numbers of young people who are being reached by our few—but our very active—missionaries there are being turned to Christ, and, incidentally, are also being turned from Communism which is the greatest immediate threat to our religious liberties. Dollars contributed to this kind of missionary work will go much farther, and will produce much more permanent effects than the dollars spent on the Marshall Plan.

### Kuschke

(Continued from page 106)

knowledge between God and us is not only a difference in degree, but also a difference in kind. God knows far more, to be sure; but even in His knowledge of *any one truth* we cannot equal Him. "God's knowledge", the report says, "is always on the divine level and possesses the divine qualities that can never attach to ours. God is perfect in knowledge, and this perfection that covers the whole of his knowledge must be applied to his knowledge of every point, however infinitesimally small may be the point which we consider."

But could not God make us able to know any one point with His own divine and perfect knowledge? This question is answered by Isaiah 40:28 "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *There is no searching of His understanding.*" God has given us in the Bible a true revelation of Himself. He does not deceive us. He is such a God that there is no searching of His understanding. He will be the same God forever.

### It is Not Only That God Knows Everything at Once

The way by which God knows is also incomprehensible to us. His knowledge is eternally the same, and all of one piece. But the perfection and exhaustiveness that cover the whole of His knowledge *must be applied to His knowledge of every point*, no matter what point we consider. Each of His judgments is to us a great deep. In Romans 11:33, "the wisdom and knowledge of God, without reservation or qualification, are said to possess inexhaustive wealth, or, in other words, to be unfathomable. His judgments are said to be such that they cannot be searched out . . . His ways cannot be traced out; they are *inexplorable*." So

the report interprets Paul's utterance of praise, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" There is in God's judgments and ways "a quality of divinity, as judgments and ways of the infinite and transcendent God, which makes human comprehension impossible." In His knowledge of every point, God is God alone. And wondering at the divine knowledge of any truth, we find ourselves on the verge of an infinite abyss. O depth! Our weak vision cannot penetrate. O depth! "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven;

what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know?"

### Philadelphia Presbyterial

THE Spring meeting of the Presbyterian Auxiliary of Philadelphia Presbytery will be held at the Bethany Orthodox Presbyterian Church on April 29th. The morning program features an address by Professor Edward J. Young, representing the Committee on Christian Education. In the afternoon the Rev. George J. Willis will be the speaker. Letters from foreign missionaries will be read. All women of the Presbytery are invited to attend.

### THE DOCTRINE OF GOD'S INCOMPREHENSIBILITY

*The formulation of the doctrine contained in the Committee report.*

I. Incomprehensibility is not an attribute essential to the being and knowledge of God; His being and perfection are not incomprehensible to Himself. This attribute has respect only to the relation of God's being and perfection to created reality. In this sense it is a relative attribute.

II. Incomprehensibility expresses the relation of the being and perfection of God to created rational intelligence and has relevance or meaning only as we contemplate the finite understanding.

III. Though incomprehensibility is, in the sense defined, a relative attribute and though it is only within the sphere of finite intelligence that it has meaning, nevertheless incomprehensibility springs from and rests upon the transcendent uniqueness and distinctness that belong to God in virtue of His own essential being and perfection.

IV. Incomprehensibility does not mean that God is inapprehensible or unknowable. It presupposes, rather, knowledge of God on the part of rational creatures. And this knowledge presupposes creation in the divine image and divine revelation. It is, therefore, only within the sphere of rational intelligence confronted with divine revelation that the incompre-

hensibility of God has relevance or meaning.

V. Incomprehensibility means that within that sphere of revelation and of rational intelligence finite creatures cannot have a complete, or exhaustive, or comprehensive or "adequate" knowledge of God. We cannot search or find out God to perfection. All-penetrating examination or understanding always completely escapes human capacity.

VI. In this sense God is absolutely incomprehensible. He is not more or less incomprehensible as He is more or less known. There is always an essential disproportion between the infinite transcendence of the being and perfection of God on the one hand, and the capacity of finite intelligence, on the other. And this transcendence is not simply temporarily beyond the finite grasp; God's greatness is essentially and eternally unsearchable.

VII. God is incomprehensible not only in His essential being and intradivine relations; He is also incomprehensible even in His self-revelation. Yet no created thing is incomprehensible. All creaturely knowledge, whether of the creature or of the Creator, is limited. But it is a specific limitation of creaturely knowledge of God which is referred to by the term "incomprehensible".

VIII. Like all His other perfections, God's knowledge and understanding are incomprehensible. He knows Himself and all things in a way that is

unique and exclusive and with all-penetrating fullness and exhaustiveness that are never predicable of finite knowledge or understanding. The qualities of divinity inhere in His knowledge and understanding so that His knowledge is too high for us and we cannot attain unto it. By revelation and illumination we may truly know God and have communion with Him. Yet our knowledge is always from the human level, the level of creaturehood. God's knowledge is always on the divine level, and possesses the divine qualities that can never attach to ours. God is perfect in knowledge and this perfection that covers the whole of His knowledge must be applied to His knowledge of every point, however infinitesimally small may be the point which we consider.

IX. The infinite transcendence of God and His consequent incomprehensibility should always constrain in us the profound sense of mystery, awe and reverence. It is at the highest reaches of our apprehension, understanding and contemplation that we are most deeply, gratefully, and adoringly aware of the transcendent and incomprehensible glory of God. It is then that we are most truly conscious that God dwells in light inapproachable and full of glory, and we are constrained to exclaim: "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised: and his greatness is unsearchable" (Psalm 145:3); "Great is our Lord and of great power; His understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5).

# The GUARDIAN NEWS COMMENTATOR

VIEWING THE NEWS FROM THE RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE AND THE RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR PRESS

## Supreme Court Decision Brings Varied Reaction

THE decision of the United States Supreme Court in the Champaign, Ill. religious education program has brought varied reactions from organizations and persons responsible for education throughout the country. The decision, as we reported in the last issue, was that the program in Champaign violated the Constitution of the United States. Although the religious teachers were not paid by the school, and the program was directed by the local council of religious education, yet the fact that the school building was used, and that classes were held during school hours were deemed sufficient to cause the procedure to be outlawed.

In Champaign itself the classes were continued for a time. The school had about a month to rearrange its schedule to conform with the court's demands. The school superintendent indicated that the time given to the religious classes would probably be turned over to study hall periods.

Mrs. McCollum, in whose name the suit was instituted, issued a formal statement that "The preeminence of this nation is in large measure due to the complete separation of church and state and the resulting secular public school system. The Supreme Court has, by this decision, safeguarded our public school system from sectarian domination". We do not believe that the preeminence of this nation can historically be traced to secularism, whether in public schools or any place else.

The Champaign Council of Religious Education voted to seek continuance of the religious education program outside of the school buildings, and presumably not on school time. But it declared, "The threat to democracy is

not religion, but the lack of it . . . We challenge the religiously minded people of our community to rally to their churches and to implement with their cooperation and support the paths still open to us to continue our essential task".

Protestants United, the organization formed recently to safeguard the principle of separation of church and state, agreed that the program in Champaign was wrong, but hoped for some means of including religion in the educational program. The Supreme Court decision made it clear, according to this group, that the school had jurisdiction over the students even while they were in the religious classes. The group also expressed doubt that the actual results of released time programs justify the zeal with which they are promoted. It pointed out that holding separate religious classes for distinct groups, as Protestants, Catholics and Jews, really served to dramatize this sectarian difference and to emphasize it. Religion belongs in the public school program, the group claimed, but it should be there as part of the general instruction, and not through special classes which emphasize differences of creed. The schools, not the churches, must do the teaching. In other words, the teaching of religion is to be a matter of education, and not a matter of evangelism or proselytism. Thus does Protestants United promote the modernist idea that there are religious truths of a universal character which it is the duty of the state to propagate through its education program.

Dr. Roy G. Ross, general secretary of the International Council of Religious Education, which has been sponsoring the released time program

throughout the country, issued a statement declaring that the decision of the Court should be adhered to both in letter and spirit. There are some 2 million pupils taking part in released time, and of these, some 40% have the classes in the school buildings. This set-up will have to be discontinued, he said. Dr. Ross further expressed the hope that the churches would seek clarification from the Court of the question of released time programs where classes are outside the school building. He also called for a greater realization of the importance of the religious foundations of American life. "The American people of all religious faiths should be aroused to fuller realization of the trends in our American life which seem to be further crowding religion out of a central place in our culture. If a united stand against these trends can be accomplished, the decision will have served a good purpose."

New York State school officials have decided that religious training on school time, as now practiced in some schools of the state, need not be affected by the Court decision. Such education is generally conducted away from the school buildings. However, a test case is being prepared in Rochester by one Arthur Cromwell, president of the local society of Free Thinkers. It turns out that Mr. Cromwell is the father of Mrs. McCollum of Champaign.

In New York City, the law committee of the School Board concluded that there was nothing in the Court decision that affects the program in City schools. However, the entire Board is giving further consideration to the question.

In Pennsylvania, it was announced that the Penna. Council of Christian Education is working with the State Department of Public Instruction to arrive at a "mutually helpful interpretation of the Supreme Court decision." But in Easton, Pa., two cases already

in the courts are seen as significant. One is a general petition against the released-time program. The other is a case where an individual was refused the right to give religious instruction to his own daughter in his home, at the time other pupils were released for religious instruction in churches. His religious beliefs differ from those of churches where the instruction was given. The school board refused him the privilege of giving private instruction, and his suit is based in part at least upon the claim that the Board thereby assumed the power to determine what religious principles are to be permitted in the released time program.

The Rhode Island state director of education has ruled that religion classes in his state, where pupils take instruction away from the school buildings, will be continued. In many cases, the classes were also held after school hours.

A released-time program tried in the Seattle, Wash., schools for the past year has been discontinued.

The Michigan State department of Public Instruction has ruled that released time classes may not be held in the schools, nor on school time when pupils are under the compulsory attendance law. But the reading of the Bible in the schools, without comment or discussion of a sectarian nature, is still permitted.

While all this was going on, two declarations of interest along another line were issued. The National Committee on a Christian Philosophy of Education, affiliated with the National Association of Evangelicals, was in session in Wheaton, Ill., when the Court decision was announced. The Committee issued a statement that the decision, while prohibiting religious instruction, also "provides a basis for a vigorous protest against atheistic and anti-Christian teaching in public schools . . . If the principles of American democracy so sacredly guard the right to religious disbelief against religious instruction, the right to religious belief has equal claim to protection against the teachings of atheism and unbelief. If religious instruction on a voluntary basis violates the rights of the atheist who is free to absent himself from such instruction, . . . the teaching of naturalism and materialism with their atheistic implications, given in classes Christians are required to attend, violates religious freedom and

constitutes governmental interference with matters of faith."

And in Washington, Dr. Gould Wickey, executive secretary of the United Lutheran Church's Board of Education, declared that the use of public school buildings "for purposes of anti-religious instruction" should be regarded as "just as unconstitutional" as their use for religious purposes.

### Protestant Radio Commission

**A** PROTESTANT Radio Commission, looking toward a unified religious radio ministry, was formed in New York recently. The Commission represents 15 denominations and eight interdenominational agencies. For the time being it will be "anchored" within the Federal Council, but in due course it hopes to become a dominant agency in its own right. Charles P. Taft, president of the Federal Council, is its chairman.

The Commission plans to conduct a research study of religious radio, to provide technical counselling for councils of churches, to sponsor national network religious programs, and to serve as liaison between the churches and the Federal Communications Commission. Eventually the Commission hopes for a merging of all Protestant radio activities.

This looks to us like another bureaucratic agency which will help smother religious radio programs out of tune with its inclusive and anti-Christian conception of Protestantism. Maybe we are wrong, but we foresee the time when groups seeking to conduct religious radio programs of a conservative Christian character will have to overcome the opposition of this agency, along with other agencies.

It appears to us that the only solution to the problems of religious radio, as in the case of education and publication, is for religious groups having a particular view of the Christian faith, to establish and operate their own broadcasting stations. There may be tremendous obstacles to such a program, but it looks like the only real way out. Some religious groups have already seen the handwriting on the wall, and are taking steps to provide their own broadcasting outlets.

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## Education for Tolerance

A bill has been introduced in the New York State Assembly which would require all public and private schools in the state to offer courses in religious and racial tolerance. It is designed to "foster in the children of the state an understanding and appreciation of the contributions made to the growth, culture and development of the United States by the so-called minority peoples." The proposed courses of instruction would be prescribed by the state Board of Regents, all children over eight years of age would be required to take the courses, and if the courses are not given in private schools, the instruction in such schools "shall not be deemed substantially equivalent to instruction given to pupils in the public schools."

We seriously question the qualifications of any state board or bureau to determine what the attitude of its citizens shall be towards minority groups, especially in matters of religion. We doubt that such education would be effective in removing undesirable tensions which admittedly exist in many places. And we fear that such a program would eventually do more harm than good. In so far as we can, let us keep education in our fair land free from bureaucratic and governmental domination, such as characterizes the training of youth behind the iron curtain.

## American Council Plans Convention

FORMER Chancellor Arie Kok, of the Netherlands, chairman of the Foreign Relations department of the American Council of Christian Churches, has prepared a letter which is being distributed by the Council, inviting ministers to attend, and denominations to send representatives to the first meeting of the proposed International Council of Christian Churches, to be held in Amsterdam, August 12-19. The decision to inaugurate such an International Council was made at the ACCC convention in Detroit last October. This gathering will be in opposition to the modernist World Council which meets in Amsterdam a few days later.

It is made clear in the letter being sent out that no denomination repre-

sented at the World Council can expect also to be a voting member of the International Council. However, the hope is expressed that large numbers of individual clergymen may desire to attend for the information and Christian fellowship that will be available.

Meanwhile the American Council is planning its semi-annual convention to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, May 6-9. As the first convention of this Council to be held in the Southeast, and meeting just before the Southern Presbyterian Assembly, it will provide a convenient opportunity for the anti-Federal Council and anti-Church union forces in that denomination to see their wares prominently displayed.

The New Jersey Council of Christian Churches, affiliate of the ACCC, has opened its campaign for the repeal of the state law providing for transportation of pupils at public expense to private and parochial schools. The law, ruled constitutional by the U. S. Supreme Court a year ago, was incorporated into the new state Constitution adopted by referendum last fall.

## Sunrise Over the Ocean

WHEN Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnham delivered the address at the Easter sunrise service on the end of Atlantic City's steel pier, he had some competition. Seven or eight churches from the area had protested his being chosen for the service, claiming that he was heretical in theology and was tinged with un-Americanism. Under the sponsorship of the New Jersey Council of Christian Churches they held a rival service in front of Convention Hall. Speaker for this group was the Rev. John Murray, Bible teacher (No relation to Professor John Murray of Westminster Seminary).

## Idol on the March

CANADA, Spain and Italy are not the only countries that can talk about the triumphal tour of a wooden statue. A 40-inch cedarwood image of the Pilgrim Virgin, Our Lady of Fatima, is traveling across the United States. Every place it stops, according to reports, crowds turn out for parades and public receptions. Thus does Romanism attract attention.

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