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The Christian and the Church

"They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." — ACTS 2:41-42.

Perhaps you have heard it said often that you don't have to go to church and join a church to be a Christian. This is true enough, as we can learn from the thief that was converted on the cross. But it is hard to understand what good reason any one can have for making as much of it as some do.

When it comes to the saving of our souls, church membership and attendance can be neither a substitute nor a supplement to the work of Christ, for there are no deficiencies in his performance of the task which he alone could undertake. We can be saved only relying on him alone. And to substitute for this trust or to add to it any expressions of self-sufficiency, however pious, is a denial of the Gospel that shows the absence of a true and saving faith.

But all too often the people most anxious to stress that we don't have to be related to the church to be Christians seem to have another matter in mind. They want to justify their neglect or even their contempt of the church, at the same time that they want to be taken for Christians. But is their attitude an evidence of saving faith?

It would be hard for us to pass judgment upon every case. But the kindest thing that seems possible to say is that a Christian can speak in this spirit only out of great confusion and ignorance of the things of God.

The church is the project and possession of Christ: "I will build my church." She is made up of Christ's people as living stones. And her officers, her ordinances, her discipline, her mission are all the appointment of Christ, who is himself her Head, her Lord, her Husband. And he is present in her assemblies to receive the worship of his people and to bless them. Why should anyone want to ignore and forsake the church?

God's people honor the things of God. Therefore Christians honor the church with their presence, their prayers, and their possessions. Gladly they submit to the command not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is, but to consider one another to provoke one another unto love and good works.

The church is no storehouse of God's grace to which we must come or be forever lost. But she is our nursing mother. There is something wrong when those who profess to be children of God despise the nurture God provides in her fellowship.

Christ alone can build the church. But he has chosen to do some of the building through his people. We are fellow-laborers with him. And the church edifies herself in love according to the contribution of every member (Ephesians 4). It is ingratitude for the divine condescension not to take our place in the church. And it is a shameful lack of consideration for the best interests of those whom we should call brothers in Christ. To forsake the church is therefore to violate the most basic rules of morality: to love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves.

It is strange that so many of those who turn away from the church seem to do so because they think they see hypocrites in her midst. She is not good enough for them; they are too good to associate with her.

Evidently they do not look closely enough at themselves. Their own hypocrisy is not hard for anyone else to see. There are hypocrites in their professional circles, but they do not give up their profession. There are hypocrites in their political party, but they stick with it. There are hypocrites in their families, but they don't disown them. Their country is full of hypocrites, but they don't leave. If hypocrites really disturb their sensitive souls, they should go and hide in the desert. In fact, shouldn't they really commit suicide? The world is crowded with hypocrites! Such a man seems too good to live with the rest of us. But usually they only seem to want to leave the church. Evidently they have not escaped the plague either.

You don't have to join and attend church to be a Christian. But if you

are a Christian, you usually do—and like it. It is the call of the word of God. And it is the work of the Spirit. It is pretty hard to stay away with God's approval. This was true in the days of the Apostles. It is no different now.

HENRY P. TAVARES

Westminster Alumni in Northern Jersey Organize

A GATHERING OF THE ALUMNI of Westminster Theological Seminary residing in northern New Jersey was held at the Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Paterson on Friday, November 16. Some fifty persons attended. The guest speaker for the occasion was Professor Paul Woolley of the Seminary.

The group decided to organize as a regular chapter of the Westminster Alumni Association. Officers elected were the Rev. Eugene Bradford, President, the Rev. Joseph Holbrook of Westwood, Vice-President, and the Rev. Raymond Commeret of Fair Lawn, Secretary. A regular charter and by-laws are to be adopted. This is the first formal "chapter" of Westminster Alumni to be established, and may serve as a pattern for alumni in other areas.

Preliminary plans were announced for a series of lectures to be held in the spring, with Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse of the Seminary speaking on the subject of "Biblical Eschatology." The lectures are to be delivered in March and April, at places and on dates to be announced later.

Price of Westminster Journal Increased

THE SUBSCRIPTION PRICE of the Westminster Theological Journal, published twice a year by the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, has been increased, beginning with the fall issue of this year, to \$2 per year, or \$1 per copy. The most recent issue contains two articles, one by Professor Meredith Kline on the identity of the HA-BI-ru, an ancient people sometimes understood to be the people of Israel, and the other by Professor John Murray, a continuation of a study on the imputation of Adam's sin.

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Christmas and Missions

The Whole Word to the Whole World by the Whole Church

BY LESLIE W. SLOAT

OUR CONCERN WITH the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King must be far different from a merely natural interest in the birth of an infant. It must be far different too from a curious interest in the birth of even such an unusual infant as Jesus was.

For the thing of importance about this child was that which He had come to accomplish in the world. His birth, miraculous as it was, wonderful as it was, attains significance because this was the Saviour of the world who was born in Bethlehem. And He was born into the world in order that He might be the Saviour of the world. And any proper attention to the wonder of His birth must bear fruit in a concern for the salvation of the world. Christmas, in other words, is inescapably tied up with the world mission of the Christian Church. We are giving a true regard to the birth of Christ if we give true attention to the task of bringing men everywhere to know and trust Him as Saviour.

To put this in concise form, we may say that 1) the purpose of God the Father Almighty in sending His only begotten Son into this world was that the world through Him might be saved. 2) The purpose of the Son of God in accepting an incarnate birth, life, death and resurrection in history was that the world through Him might be saved. And 3) the purpose of the Father and the Son in giving the Holy Spirit to dwell in the church and work in the world was that the world might be saved.

This eternal purpose of the triune God will certainly be brought to pass. But we also recognize that as God has decreed the accomplishment of His purpose, so He has ordained the means by which it shall be accomplished.

It is here that you and I come in. For the means God has ordained for the saving of the world does not involve a ministry of angels, but a preaching by men; it does not envision

thunderings and lightnings from Sinai, but the thrusts of the sharp two-edged sword of Scripture; it does not anticipate an immediate divine intervention in history, but the long slow process of telling men the good news of Jesus Christ; it calls for no new opening of the portals of heaven, but for a faithful opening of the pages of the heavenly book.

To put it more simply, the eternal triune God has ordained that his purpose of saving the world shall be accomplished in connection with the preaching of the gospel. It pleased God through the foolishness of the preaching to save those that believe.

Now with reference to this preaching of the gospel, whereby the Church's concern for the birth of Christ should be truly manifest, three things are to be said. It is to be a preaching of the whole gospel. It is to be a preaching to the whole world. And it is to be a preaching by the whole Church.

The Whole Gospel

When we say that there is to be a preaching of the whole gospel, we mean that the whole Word of God is to be the content of the message. This we say as over against those who claim that the world can be saved by no preaching of the gospel, or by a defective or partial preaching of the gospel.

There are those today who simply do not believe that Christianity is true, or that it has anything to offer the world. Atheism, Materialism, Communism — they all reject the realities which Christianity proclaims. We do not need to spend time at this point. Concern with these will not save the world.

Then there are those today who have a defective view as to what the gospel is. Among these are the unbelieving Liberals, the men who think they are to pick and choose from among those things written of Christ elements which have some sort of abiding value and which are therefore worth repeating. These people have little concern with whether Christ was or was not born of a virgin, whether He did or did not

work miracles, whether He did or did not rise from the grave on the third day. These people prefer to proclaim a de-supernaturalized Christ, whose significance lies in some of the desirable moral precepts he taught and in some elements in the pattern of conduct he exhibited. But such a preaching is not a preaching of the whole gospel, of the whole Word God has given. Such a preaching is not that which God has ordained for the saving of the world.

Again there are those who have a defective view of the Gospel, in that they consider the written Word of God as merely a human sign post pointing in some mysterious fashion to a reality beyond it. The sign post — the Scriptures — are in no sense without error. Scripture is full of human errors. We cannot accept it as valid in itself. But in some strange way, as we read Scripture, we have a sense of being carried beyond the Word to an undefinable reality, a reality which could not possibly be adequately presented in written words, even if those words were true.

But a vague and shadowy experience is no gospel, and a word without truth is also without authority. A preaching based on such an attitude toward the Word of God is no fulfillment of the divine program. It will never save the world.

On the other hand there are those who believe the Scriptures to be true, but who consider that just select parts, particular doctrines, or limited areas of the Scripture are what is to be proclaimed to the world. But it is not the program of God to save the world by a part of His Word. Christ commanded His disciples to teach all things whatsoever he had commanded them. It is the whole Word that is to be proclaimed.

And the whole Word must begin with the very triune God Himself of whom the Word speaks. For it is He who will save the world. His true and proper relation to the world, as Creator and sovereign Ruler must be made clear. A God who is not the sovereign creator and ruler is no god. And a world not subject to a sovereign God cannot be saved by that God.

The preaching of the whole Word of God must be also a preaching of both the holiness and the love of God. Only as the full tragedy and misery of

man's sinfulness is understood will the sufferings of Christ as He bore the guilt of that sin and satisfied the divine justice be appreciated. And only as the love of God is seen in the giving of His Son for this purpose, will the human heart be moved to tears of confession and repentance. And when He is presented as the only Saviour, as the perfect Saviour, and as the One who saves to the uttermost, then may men see that it is through faith alone in Him alone that salvation is received.

There is much more that could be mentioned in this connection, — the present position of Christ in glory, His coming again in judgment — the eternal kingdom — these all must have their place in any preaching of the whole gospel. But our point is that it is the whole gospel that is to be preached. God may indeed be pleased to use a partial preaching of the Gospel, but we have no right to expect Him to do so. He asks of us, that a man be faithful.

To the Whole World

And this gospel must first be preached in all the world for a witness to all creatures, and then shall the end come.

The gospel is for the whole world. In glory there will be those of every nation and tongue and tribe and kingdom. To all of them the gospel must be preached.

The world is first of all an area of geographical extent. There are five major continents and there are the islands of the sea. There are over eighty distinct national groups divided by specific boundaries. It is no doubt true that in some measure the gospel has penetrated most of these areas. But that it has been heard by most of the people in these areas is something else again.

For the world is a world of people living in the various nations and countries. There are men and women and children. There are people of black skins and red skins and yellow skins and brown skins and white skins. There are people speaking over a thousand different languages and dialects. There are people who are relatively civilized and who show a reasonable tolerance toward their neighbors. And there are people who are relatively uncivilized, and who at the slightest provocation plunge a spear in their neighbor's back — witness five missionaries recently in South America.

But all of these together make up the field which is the world, where the seed which is the Word must be sown. That the task must be carried out step by step is apparent. That it must be carried out is also apparent. And we may comment that as in the providence of God through technological development we have been made more directly aware of the other peoples of the world and the world has in a manner of speaking been reduced in size, so also in the providence of God through those same technological developments new and more efficient methods are available for the reaching of people with the Gospel.

It is apparent that the work of missions is a work of both home and foreign endeavor. The gospel is for Main Street and for the safari trail. We must bring the Word to the neighbor next door and to the Saho tribesman in the mountains of Eritrea. We must have all the world in view.

We also know that there are adherents of many different religions in the world. There are Moslems with their Allah, their Mohammed and their Koran, Buddhists with their ikons, Hindus, Taoists, Shrine or Ancestor worshippers of the orient, nature worshippers of Africa, and those of America who bow down to the golden calf. The field is the world. But there is one God, and one Gospel, and that Gospel must be preached in all the world.

We may say a word about races. Whatever our personal attitude toward social fellowship with other races, or toward economic, political or educational co-mingling of the races, this is true, that the gospel must be preached to those of all races, — to all men whatever their race. We fail to serve our God according to His Word if because of race we corral certain groups of people and refuse to include them in that world where the gospel must be preached.

Does the whole world seem like too big a place for the preaching of the gospel? Are we overwhelmed at the thought of the task? We have God's own promise of help as we try to meet the requirement. And Christ has promised to be with us as we engage in this program — even unto the end of the world.

By the Whole Church

But one thing that helps us not to be overwhelmed by despair as we consider the immensity of the task, is that

it is the task of the whole church. The eternal God has enlisted every single believer to membership in His missions committee, for the Church as such is in its basic nature an evangelistic agency.

Of course the Church as we see it manifest in the world consists of many different denominations, each with different interpretations or emphases relating to the Word. It may seem difficult for us to think of the whole Church as engaged in the task of bringing the whole Word to the whole World.

But we must remember that there is a unity in the midst of this ecclesiastical diversity. We confess one holy catholic Church. All who truly believe in Christ as Saviour and Lord are united to Him as members of His spiritual body, and hence also are united to one another in a spiritual union which is no less real because it is spiritual. And so, though we speak of many churches, our Lord is building His Church, and He is building only one Church.

And it is the task of the whole Church that we are considering. And we may express the hope that as the whole Church in all its parts engages in an endeavor to bring the whole Word to the whole World, this very interest in the mission endeavor will serve as a mighty uniting force. For after all, there is one Lord, and there is one Word, and there is one Spirit. And it would be strange indeed if a real devotion to the one Word under the one Lord did not bring about by the working of the one Spirit a greater measure of oneness in the body itself.

We would of course insist that that unity in the body of Christ may not be sought on any least common denominator basis. It will not be attained by ignoring those aspects of the Word on which we are divided, but rather by facing our obligation to accept and be true to the whole Word. For the Church's warfare is total. And her weapon is the whole Word. The Sword of the Word is not blunt, but sharp and two edged, and we must not be afraid to use both edges and to lay on mightily.

When we say that the task is the task of the whole Church, we must view the Church not only in its entirety in the large sense, but also in its entirety in the smaller sense. The task involves every denomination, every local congregation, every member of every local

congregation. It involves men and women, boys and girls, old men and infants. And this means you, whoever, wherever you are.

And as God has ordained that it is the task of the whole Church to bring His whole Word to the whole of His world, so He has ordained that you too have a part in that program. Where you can actively engage in bringing that Word directly to men and women about you, you are to be so engaged. Where you can take steps to bring others under the hearing of the gospel, as it is preached in your church regularly, that is part of the task. Where you can make use of the printed page or of other instruments of communication, to cause men and women to hear the gospel, that also you must do. Also you must remember that your very lives as they are watched from week to week will be a testimony — either for the Word or against it — and you are to see that your lives are a testimony for the Word.

Where you cannot personally engage in direct missionary activity — and this is all missionary activity — there are ways by which you can support and encourage others who are doing it elsewhere on your behalf. To this end the church through appointed agencies enables individuals to go forth with the seed to far places of the earth.

And here too it asks for your support, in prayer that God will bless and prosper their endeavors, and in material help that they may be able to do the work without anxiety and care of a material nature. In the work of distant missions too every member of every local church is personally involved, for this is one means of carrying out the task God has given us.

We started out talking about Christmas and missions, but this has been mostly about missions. Yet that is not strange. For as we said, Christ was born in Bethlehem, in order that in His incarnate experience He might become the Saviour of the world. So by being concerned about the saving of the world we are most truly honoring the birth of the Saviour. In other words, the very best Christmas celebration in which we can take part, is to bend our efforts, day in and day out, year in and year out, toward the goal of having the whole of God's Word come to the whole of God's world through the collective and individual activities of the whole of God's Church.

Such a celebration of the birthday of the King will in the purpose of God also hasten the coming of the birthday of the Kingdom of Glory, which is the ultimate hope of all for whom the Child of Bethlehem is Saviour and Lord.

BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD CAN ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD. John 3:3, 6.

To be regenerated is to be born again, to be born from above, to be born of God. Natural or physical birth is not sufficient for entrance into God's kingdom. Jesus said that except a person be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). Regeneration is the work of the Spirit of God, and only the Spirit of God (John 1:13).

Many Christians confuse regeneration with conversion and use the terms for the same thing. But regeneration is an act of God alone, while conversion is the human response growing out of what God has done. Regeneration is the new birth, and God alone gives the new birth. A man cannot beget himself, he must be begotten. A man cannot cause himself to be born again (John 3:8; James 1:18). God alone gives the new birth, and that without the help of man. Those regenerated are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God. (John 1:13).

Since regeneration is the work of God alone, and men are altogether passive in it, it is no more difficult for God to regenerate infant sinners than for him to regenerate adult sinners. Nowhere in Scripture are we told that conversion is necessary for entrance into heaven. If it were, then infants would necessarily be excluded from heaven. But we do read that regeneration is necessary for entrance into heaven, into eternal life (John 3). Infants no less than adults must be cleansed by the regenerating power of God before they can enter heaven.

Christians who have been accustomed to think of conversion and regeneration as the same thing, may have had difficulty with the above, but when the Scriptural distinction between the two is understood, the difficulty passes away.

3. INFANTS NEED THE NEW BIRTH, OR REGENERATION.

They need it because they are sinful, because that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

4. INFANTS ARE INCLUDED IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

The Covenant of grace which was intimated to Eve (Genesis 3:15), announced to Abraham (Gen. 17:1-16), and fulfilled in Christ (Gal. 3:7, 8, 14-16, 29) includes the children of

Why We Should Baptize Infants

BY C. HERBERT OLIVER

IN ORDER TO ANSWER the question as to why the children of believers should be baptized, we must look to the teaching of the Word of God, our only infallible rule of faith and practice. What follows is an attempt to show what the Word teaches on this important subject.

1. INFANTS ARE SINFUL, Psalm 51:5; Job 14:4.

This fact is clearly taught in the Bible. The whole human race, infants not excepted, is sinful and under God's just condemnation. Sin entered the world through one man, Adam; and his disobedience brought sin and death

to the whole human race (Romans 5:12-19). Sin is not only an act, but also a state or condition. Though infants may not do acts of sin, yet they are in a state of sinfulness (Ps. 51:5) and acts of sin grow out of the state of sin. The penalty of sin is death (Gen. 2:17) and infants die just as adults die. If they bear the penalty of sin, they must certainly be sinners. If infants are not sinners then circumcision and baptism would carry no meaning for them. But if they are sinners, then circumcision had, and baptism has, real meaning for them.

2. ONLY SINNERS REGENERATED

those who believe. When this covenant was made with Abraham the sign was circumcision (Gen. 17:10). That sign signified spiritual cleansing and renewal (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25-6; Romans 2:29; 4:11; Phil. 3:3).

So important was this sign in God's sight that those who were not circumcized were to be cut off (Gen. 17:14). God instructed Abraham to circumcise Isaac at 8 days. The infant was not required to have an intelligent understanding of the meaning of the sacrament.

The work which Christ accomplished on the cross is called the new covenant, in contrast to the old covenant of the law. The new covenant is what God promised Abraham, what Abraham believed, what circumcision signified, and what Baptism now signifies. (Col. 2:11-2).

Now let us face this important question. The covenant with Abraham included infants; the law (old covenant) even included infants; the new covenant is a better covenant than the old covenant and much more universal (Heb. 8:6). When and how were infants excluded from the blessings of the new covenant? There is not a passage in Scripture which remotely suggests that infants are no longer included in the covenant of grace. For the spiritual blessings of the new covenant are identical with the spiritual blessings which God promised to Abraham (Rom. 4; Gal. 3.)

The blessings of the new covenant are signified in baptism now, as they were signified in circumcision in the old dispensation. Baptism and circumcision signify the same thing (Col. 2:11-12), for those who have been baptized into Christ are said to have been "circumcised with his circumcision." And if infants are not to be baptized, there should be a clear command to this effect. But there is not one. The children of the covenant should therefore receive the sign of the covenant, in the new dispensation as well as in the old. And the sign of the covenant in this dispensation is baptism (Matt. 28:19).

Though all Christians may not believe that their children should be baptized, they do believe that their children who die in infancy go to heaven. This is only saying that the blessings of the covenant, eternal life, fellowship with God, belong to those

children if they die in infancy. If children then can have the blessings of the covenant, why may they not have that which signifies those blessings? Can we rightly claim the blessing for them,

while we withhold the sign of the blessing? The baptism of infants is a matter of obedience on the part of believing parents, and to obey is better than sacrifice.

The Problem of Christian Unity (2)

BY CARL REITSMA

IN THE FIRST part of this article, published in November, Mr. Reitsma, pastor of Immanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church of West Collingswood, N. J. traced the background and history of the ecumenical movement. He found a weakness in the church council program, that there was not adequate concern for truth. A Reformed church must seek a union program based on truth and fulfilled in love.

Having this as our aim the church councils mentioned are unacceptable because each has focused its attention upon the dividedness of the church rather than upon the sinful error which lies at the bottom of these divisions. Of course, the non-Christian inclusiveness of the World Council makes it absolutely objectionable. But the damaging thing about the evangelical councils as well, is that they surrender important doctrines with the exception of a few "fundamentals" to indifference.

Ecumenists, both modernist and evangelical, have not faced the fact of error that is basic to the multiple division of churches, and for this reason the council movement is doomed to failure. Even if it produces union, it can never produce unity because the walls of sinful error are not being torn down. Doctrinal indifference is the mark of our times. If we are to be constructive in this matter of unity, we must insist from the beginning that the truth is important. Any program which begins by assuming that contradictory doctrines are equally valid is simply evading the issue of true unity. There must be unity upon the deity of Christ, for example, but no less upon the extent of His atonement. Indifference to truth is based upon the idea that truth itself cannot be absolute and permanent, but changes with the times.

This explains much current dislike for theology and the false substitute of personal loyalty to Christ.

The modern American liberal is not voicing disagreement with us on doctrine. He just doesn't think doctrine is worthwhile talking about. American and Swiss churchmen at the first World Council Assembly were embarrassed by the assumption on the part of many Europeans that doctrine made any difference at all. To the American, church union is quite simply an organizational problem involving denominational consolidation. The Bible and theology according to this view belong not to the basis of the church, the basis of which is solely the person of Christ, but rather belong to the fellowship of the church in which area even the most conflicting of views are transcended by love.

The late Charles Clayton Morrison, former editor of the "Christian Century" championed this formal kind of union in his book, "The Unfinished Reformation." He said, "There can be no unity of Christ's people so long as the Bible is given a place beside Christ in the constitution of His church. To invest it with such authority results inevitably in the obscuration of Christ's own authority, and also in the continued multiplication of sectarian churches. The Bible, so used is the great divider of the church." Here is a plea for an inoffensive Jesus, a silent savior whom all men everywhere can affirm without the surrender of any personal views. "Jesus" is the cry, but not His Word. It is most saddening of all to hear evangelicals unwittingly take their cues from modernists and echo "no creed, but Christ" . . . Jesus may not be separated from his absolute, exclusive, authoritarian, and soul satisfying Word. He said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and
(See "Reitsma," p. 173)

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Bible Presbyterians at the Crossroads

AS REPORTED in our news columns, a division has developed among Bible Presbyterians which has crystallized in the meeting of two Synods about the end of November, one in Collingswood, New Jersey, the other in Columbus, Ohio. For the time being, at any rate, each is likely to be known as the Bible Presbyterian Church since each group claims to possess the right to the name and to be the legal and moral continuance of that denomination as it has existed since 1937. Thus there are two denominations rather than one.

Our concern with these developments is by no means that of a merely curious bystander. For the travail of one manifestation of the Christian church must arouse at least the sympathetic interest of another. To those bodies which bear the name Presbyterian and Reformed, the fortunes, whether good or ill, of others who apply such designations to themselves is of even more pressing concern. Among such Presbyterian bodies the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has some unique reasons for taking earnest account of these developments. One such reason is that our denomination

and the Bible Presbyterian movement had a common origin in the great struggle in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. which culminated in the year 1936. Another reason of perhaps even greater moment is that the Bible Presbyterian Synod came into being in 1937 by way of a separation from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. This separation, or schism as it has been commonly regarded in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, led to such a sharp parting of the ways that for nearly twenty years Bible Presbyterians and Orthodox Presbyterians had very little contact or cooperation. If, however, as now appears, far-reaching developments are taking place among the Bible Presbyterians, if fresh appraisals have been made and are being made of basic principles as they relate to the evaluation of past history and of present calling, it may well be that a new era is at hand. There would seem to be the distinct possibility of the emergence of an atmosphere in which there may be considerably greater understanding and sympathy than has heretofore been present and perhaps even a drawing together in fruitful fellowship and action.

Although little publicity has been given to the controversy as it developed, the chief issues at stake have become widely known. Among these issues there is perhaps none that has been more basic than that which concerns the doctrine of the church and in particular the nature of the government which is to be exercised by the church. Our own impression is that from the beginning there have been certain tensions within this movement resulting from the fact that it has been Presbyterian in name and tradition, and no doubt in certain provisions of its form of government, and yet that there has been a strong accent upon independency. However that may be, there can be no doubt that such tension became more and more acute as two sharply differentiated points of view came to expression. As time went on there appears to have been an increasing number of persons who came to feel that the Bible Presbyterian Synod was, to say the least, a denomination which assigned so little authority and responsibility for the life and work of the church to the Synod itself that unless certain reforms could be instituted it could hardly with propriety claim the name Presbyterian.

One of the ways in which an effort for reform was undertaken was to try to modify the constitution of the American Council of Christian Churches so as to make it more truly representative of the constituent churches and accountable to these churches in their official capacity. Such efforts were resisted, however, not only within The American Council in general, but also on the part of many leaders in the Bible Presbyterian Synod. Eventually, at a Synod which met in St. Louis earlier this year, the Synod withdrew from membership in the American Council as well as the International Council, which appeared to be dominated by the same independentist point of view.

Meanwhile the leaders of the other point of view contended that the Bible Presbyterian form of Presbyterianism placed a very basic accent upon the independence of the churches and assigned exceedingly little authority to the Synod. In the context of this controversy they even developed the extraordinary theory that American Presbyterianism in its purest form gave priority to independent agencies rather than those subject to ecclesiastical control. In connection with the enunciation of this point of view an Independent Board for Presbyterian Home Missions was established. And since this party was in substantial control of other independent agencies such as the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, Faith Theological Seminary and Shelton College, it proceeded to consolidate its position by eliminating from the membership of the trustees controlling these institutions some of the most effective spokesmen for greater ecclesiastical responsibility and forced the resignation, or otherwise concluded the services, of a number of the most prominent persons subject to their authority. Another remarkable development, which strongly accentuated the place assigned to independency, was the formation of an Association of Bible Presbyterian Churches with a view to permitting the continuance of membership in the American Council and the International Council after the St. Louis Synod had terminated membership of the Church at large in these organizations. Before these issues came to a complete showdown at Faith Theological Seminary, several of the leading professors resigned, and they to-

gether with others who, as members of college faculties, had opposed some of these tendencies in the Church, established the Covenant College and Theological Seminary which opened its doors this past Fall in St. Louis.

Although, accordingly, the issue concerning the Church and Church government was one of the most basic, there were others that came to be regarded as perhaps equally fundamental. One of these concerned the application of the principles of separation from unbelief. This is reflected in that portion of the Columbus resolution quoted in our news columns which states that "while we affirm and maintain unyielding loyalty to the doctrine of the purity of the visible church, we repudiate that extreme separatism which ignores our responsibility to demonstrate the love of God toward our Christian brethren as the distinguishing mark of our discipleship." Another issue that has been felt by many to be one of profound significance is the ethical one whether Christian standards of truthfulness have been maintained. This is reflected in that portion of the Columbus resolution which reads that "this Synod, recognizes its responsibility to contend for the faith, repudiates that fundamentalism which, while giving lip service to a militant defense of Biblical truth, in practice dishonors the Lord by something less than strict adherence to truth." We mention these other issues, not now to undertake an evaluation of them, but to point up the profound differences which have developed among Bible Presbyterians.

The present situation, at least to a certain degree, is one of transition. The lines are not finally drawn so far as loyalties of congregations and of certain ministers are concerned. In particular the foreign missions situation is still rather unsettled in view especially of the fact that as many as 63 missionaries, about two-thirds of the total number of missionaries under the Independent Board, have been members of the Bible Presbyterian Church. It appears now that a very large proportion of the Bible Presbyterian missionaries are more basically sympathetic with the Columbus Synod than with the Collingswood Synod. But it is too early to say whether they will continue to serve under the Independent Board. And it is highly significant that the Columbus Synod, as indi-

cated by the resolutions which have been published in our report, have set up a church committee with broad powers and have made certain strong representations to the Independent Board. Unless all signs fail, accordingly, it appears at this writing that more and more foreign missionaries in the one body will likely serve in the future under their own church committee.

It would appear also that the body whose activities center largely in St. Louis will now pass through a time of critical self-appraisal and evaluation. Considering the movement of thought and action within this group it appears likely that they will be concerned, as consistently as possible, to work out the implications of their commitment to the Reformed Faith and Presbyterian church government. The fact that they have charged their Committee on Fraternal Relations "with further efforts to cement friendly relations with other Bible believing groups, especially the Reformed Presbyterian Church (General Synod), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the Christian Reformed Church" is but one evidence that in the future this group wishes to be and to be known as a distinctively Reformed church. We sincerely hope and pray that these and other measures may be completely successful for there would then be a distinct strengthening of the testimony and life of churches worthy of the name Reformed.

We regard it as a particularly hopeful sign that this body is taking serious account of the question as to what its relationship should be with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We are also grateful for the fact that, in the resolution partially quoted above, it went on record "as regretting the severity and bitterness of the division of 1937" and that it urged its Committee "further to explore avenues of mutual friendship and cooperation." As we who are Orthodox Presbyterian consider this important question we may be reminded that apparently only two of the 73 ministers taking part in the Columbus Synod were involved in the separation of 1937. Moreover, in our judgment, the question of where we stand as churches in the year 1956, and how we are concerned to face our responsibility as churches of Christ in the future, is of more basic significance than that of assessing blame for the

separation of 1937. On the other hand, however, we hope that this Bible Presbyterian Synod will also give earnest consideration to the question of origins. Only as the issues which led to the separation are re-evaluated will there be any serious possibility of understanding the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Moreover, no church can adequately identify itself before the world unless it gives an account of its specific origin, and this at the present time seems to us to require some reference, not only to reasons why Bible Presbyterians are not Presbyterians in the U.S.A., but also why they are not Orthodox Presbyterians.

On the other hand, especially in the light of such developments as have been hastily reviewed here, we do not believe that we as Orthodox Presbyterians may rightly contemplate these developments in a kind of stoic detachment of spirit. We may be thankful as we take account of many encouraging features in the development of this movement. We may be truly thankful that evidently an atmosphere has developed wherein, for the first time in nearly two decades, it would appear to be distinctly possible to discuss our differences in a friendly and largely objective spirit. It is likely that, if and when such discussions take place, some of the alleged differences will be shown to be of little or no significance. Other differences of far greater magnitude may indeed appear to be grounded in fact. But in such a context we shall be able to address ourselves sincerely and prayerfully to the question as to what our Lord and King, as He guides His people by His word, would require of us. Shall we not on our part do all that we can to foster genuine understanding and the utmost Christian sympathy in order that, whatever practical results may ensue, we shall prove to be faithful to His commands concerning His Church?

N. B. S.

Wade Sails for Guam

THE REV. EDWIN L. WADE, Orthodox Presbyterian minister who is to serve as a missionary under the financial auspices of the De Wolfe group of the Protestant Reformed Church, sailed on December 1 to take up his work on Guam. His address will be c/o "Challenge of Faith," P.O. Box 1489, Agaña, Guam, M. I.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church News

Bangor, Me.

The Rev. Clarence W. Duff, missionary to Eritrea, was the guest speaker at the annual Harvest dinner of Pilgrim Church. An added attraction on this occasion was the "mitten tree," a Christmas tree hung with mittens which were later sent to Korea for distribution as needed.

Schenectady, N. Y.

On November 1 the congregation of Calvary Church held a fellowship supper and a special service at its 18th anniversary observance of entering the Orthodox Presbyterian denomination. The Rev. Clarence Duff, on a tour of New York and New England churches, was guest speaker. The Women's Missionary Society has packed ten boxes of used clothing for the Korean mission and six for the Indian mission in Wisconsin. On Thanksgiving Day the congregation joined with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Duaneburg for a joint Thanksgiving service, conducted by the Rev. Harry Meiners of the Duaneburg church, brother of the pastor of Calvary. On November 12 a Parent-Teacher Forum was held at the church, for Sunday school teachers and parents of their pupils. Handwork done in the classes was on display, and the teachers had the opportunity of explaining the goals in the Sunday school work.

Pittsboro, N. J.

Recent improvements to the building of Faith Church include a tile floor in the basement, set by the men of the congregation, and the installation of folding curtains to divide off Sunday school rooms. A drive is under way to secure funds for the purchase of ground adjacent to the church property, to be used for expansion.

Silver Spring, Md.

The Rev. Robley J. Johnston was guest speaker for the annual Sunday School Teachers' banquet of Knox Church November 9. Professor John Murray of Westminster Seminary was guest preacher at the Thanksgiving Day service. Preliminary plans are under consideration for the enlargement of the church building.

Nottingham, Pa.

The evangelistic services at Bethany Church in October, with the Rev. Roy Oliver as guest preacher, were well

attended and profitable. The annual Father-Son dinner was held on November 9, with the Rev. Albert G. Edwards of Crescent Park, N. J., as speaker. His subject was, "Advantages and disadvantages of being a missionary's son."

Middletown, Penna.

Over fifty women of Calvary church attended the Missionary Society gathering on November 15, when Mrs. Clarence Duff was the guest speaker. Mr. Duff was guest of the church on December 2. The Session has completed its fall visitation of members of the church. The Senior Machen League has been featuring a teacher-training course under the direction of the Rev. Robert S. Marsden.

Harrisville, Pa.

A new Sunday evening Bible Study hour for young people of Faith and New Hope churches has been instituted, the meetings being held at Faith Church. In conjunction with this program, catechetical material published by the Committee on Christian Education has been distributed to homes, for at home study by the children.

Valdosta, Ga.

Mrs. John P. Clelland, wife of the pastor of Westminster Church, has returned from the hospital where she underwent needed surgery. The Rev. and Mrs. Clarence W. Duff were at the church recently, in the course of a tour of the southern congregations.

Waterloo, Iowa

A Junior Bible League at First Church has resumed activities under the sponsorship of Mrs. Vincent Scorsone. Robert Roskamp is the president. The pastor of First Church, the Rev. Oscar Holkeboer, has been in poor health recently and has been hospitalized twice. James Singbusch, a deacon of the church, was united in marriage in October to Miss Kay Kortenhoeven of the Evergreen Park, Ill. church. The newlyweds are living in Waterloo.

Sunnyvale, Calif.

Thirty-two persons were officially received into the charter membership of the Sunnyvale Church. There are also twenty-three covenant children, making a total initial membership for the church of 55. Mr. John Stevens has been elected a ruling elder.

San Francisco, Calif.

The Rev. Edwards E. Elliott, pastor of First Church, has accepted a call to undertake the work at Garden

Grove, near Los Angeles. He plans to leave San Francisco about the middle of December. The Rev. Henry Coray has been appointed Moderator of First Church. Mr. Richard Lewis, to whom Covenant Church of Berkeley issued a call, has been licensed by the Presbytery of California. The Rev. Lionel Brown of Covenant Church, San Francisco, is Moderator of the Berkeley Church.

Whittier, Calif.

The Rev. Dwight Poundstone of Beverly Church, Los Angeles, has been asked by the denomination's Committee on Home Missions to assume the work at Whittier, an extension work originally sponsored by the First Church of Long Beach. The Rev. Robert Nicholas, who formerly served the Whittier field, is now in charge of extension work at La Habra and Torrance.

Bachman Called to Kirkwood, Pa.

THE REV. LESTER R. BACHMAN, pastor of Gethsemane Church, Philadelphia, has been called to the pastorate of the Kirkwood, Pa., Church. Mr. Bachman plans to remain at Gethsemane until the end of December, and to move to Kirkwood early in January. The Rev. Raymond Commeret was formerly pastor of Kirkwood.

Philadelphia Presbytery Receives Two Ministers

AT THE REGULAR FALL MEETING of the Presbytery of Philadelphia held in Nottingham, Pa., November 20, two ministers from other denominations were received into the presbytery. The Rev. George G. Weeber, until recently pastor of the First Reformed Church of Philadelphia was accepted on his own application following appropriate examinations. Likewise the Rev. William McDowell, a graduate of Westminster Seminary in 1955, and until recently a resident of Ontario, Canada, was received on application. Both men are available for call to pastoral service. Neither had a specific place of work, but they wished to be associated with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

In another action, the Presbytery received a communication from a congregation in Maitland, Florida, applying to be received. A committee of

four members of Presbytery was appointed to confer further with the congregation, and if the way seems clear to visit the congregation for the purpose of determining matters relative to their reception.

Korea Mission Facing Difficulties

RECENT REPORTS FROM KOREA have indicated that missionaries in that country are encountering difficulties due to the rapidly rising cost of living. It is reported that on the basis of a 1947-49 level, while the cost of living in America has gone up some 117 per cent, the cost of living in Korea has gone up over 2,000 per cent. The acuteness of the problem raised by such a development is obvious. The secretary of the Foreign Missions Committee has authorized a temporary cost of living adjustment, pending action by the Committee to meet the situation. It has also been pointed out that in view of the high costs of purchase in Korea, it is desirable to send goods rather than money to the missionaries there. Their APO address is good until January 10.

The Rev. and Mrs. Boyce Spooner, newly appointed missionaries, arrived in Korea about the first of November, and have been fixing up the house which will be their home in Pusan. One daughter was left in Japan, where she is attending the school which Mary Hunt also attends.

Ohio Presbyterial

THE FALL MEETING of the Women's Presbyterial of Ohio Presbytery was held at New Hope Church, Branchton, Pa., on October 27. About 35 delegates from churches of the presbytery attended. At the business session arrangements were made for securing and maintaining closer contact with the mission fields. A committee was appointed to consider and report on a plan to have each of the churches of the presbytery consider one of the foreign mission fields as their own, for remembrance at Christmas time. It was also decided to purchase a roll of recorder tape, to be sent to a foreign mission field, where missionaries would record a message. The tape would then be returned for use at a later Presbyterial meeting.

At the afternoon session a panel discussion on the theme, "The Orthodox Presbyterian Church Reaches Out," was held. Taking part were Mrs. Wendell Rockey of Grove City, Mrs. J. E. Atwell of Harrisville, and Mrs. June Lyness of Covenant Church, Pittsburgh.

In the evening, following a prayer circle, the Rev. Clarence W. Duff spoke of the mission work in Eritrea, and showed colored slides of the work being done there by Orthodox Presbyterian missionaries.

Special music for the meeting was provided by Miss Audrey Denny, who is kindergarten teacher in the Christian school in Wilkensburg, Pa. The offering was forwarded to the Committee on Foreign Missions.

Christian Education Work All in Philadelphia

AS OF NOVEMBER 1 all operations of the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church were moved to the Philadelphia headquarters of the Committee, 727 Schaff Building, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Pa. In particular this means that inquiries, orders and payments are no longer to be sent or handled through the Rev. Lewis Grotenhuis, Phillipsburg, N. J., who for a number of years was the publications Secretary of the Committee. Mr. Grotenhuis will continue to handle book and magazine orders, which the Committee does not handle.

Valdosta, Ga., Church Has Christmas Program

"CHRISTMAS IN OCTOBER," an annual missionary program of Westminster Church, Valdosta, Ga., was held during the Sunday school hour on October 28. The purpose of this program is to display the gifts which are to be sent to the children of Orthodox Presbyterian missionaries on the foreign field. Christmas carols were sung, and the children presented a little play in which some of the gifts were shown. All departments of the Sunday school participated. "Christmas in October" is held annually on the last Sunday in that month.



Sunday School Pupils of Westminster Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Valdosta, Ga., who held "Christmas in October" program

Hymnal Committee Endeavoring to Complete Task

THE HYMNAL COMMITTEE of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church reports that it is working unusually hard to complete its task and to have the new hymnal published at the earliest possible time. There are a large number of tedious details yet to be completed, and the Committee has sub-committees working on many of them.

The selection of hymns is virtually complete, with but a few of those suggested yet to be considered, and the number now stands at about 715. The precise text of the Psalter Readings has been adopted, and this one element of the hymnal is now about ready for the printer. Many details concerning the exact wording of some hymns, and the exact musical accompaniment have yet to be settled. Appropriate "Amen" endings must be prepared for a number of hymns, and the titles of some of the tunes that either have no common titles or for which there are varying titles must be adopted.

Much work—several hundred man-hours—has already gone into indexing the book, and in selecting an appropriate Scripture text for each hymn. The main classification of all the hymns has been arrived at, and several sub-committees are working at a comprehensive subject index. Much work has also been done on the difficult problem of securing permission to use hymns which are still under copyright. In this matter a copyright lawyer will have to be engaged, and hundreds of letters will have to be written. The mere matter of discovering the whereabouts of those who hold copyrights presents a problem!

Negotiations are underway with several printers for the producing of the hymnal, and numerous styles and prices are being considered. As the Committee informed the general assembly—the cost per copy of a small edition of a hymnal of considerable size will be quite great, and certainly the cost of the production of the hymnal will be well in excess of \$30,000. However, as was pointed out in the General Assembly, on a long term basis the cost per hymnal per year is relatively small, and this, it is felt, will be one of the wisest investments that a congregation could possibly make in the worship of God.

A number of inquiries have come to members of the Committee concerning why greater publicity has not been given, and why a drive is not already in progress to secure the necessary funds. The Committee has been seeking someone with sufficient time and ability to be in charge of such a drive, and it has not felt that a drive could intelligently be undertaken until more definite information as to the exact cost of the hymnal can be made available. The Committee hopes to be able to settle some of these questions at its meeting of December 21st. At that time sufficient progress will have been made on many elements of the work that a rather accurate estimate of the exact size of the book will be possible, and, therefore, an accurate estimate of

the cost will be available.

No firm decision has yet been reached on a name for the new hymnal. Anyone having suggestions concerning this, or any other element of the Committee's work, is urged to communicate very promptly with the Committee through its chairman, the Rev. Robert S. Marsden or through its secretary, the Rev. Arthur W. Kuschke.

Assembly Minutes Available

THE PRINTED *Minutes* of the 23rd General Assembly of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, held in Denver, Colorado, are now available. Copies may be secured from the Committee on Home Missions, 727 Schaff Building, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Pa. The price is \$1.50 per copy.

Book Reviews

These Also Suffer

William Goulooze
Baker, Grand Rapids, 1955, 86 pp.,
\$1.75

In the course of an eleven-year ministry Dr. William Goulooze, now deceased, served two congregations of the Reformed Church in America before assuming the chair of Historical Theology at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. In the nine years before his death his health and strength were slowly dissipated by cancer. During this time of suffering God used His servant to testify through the printed page of the adequacy of His grace. *These Also Suffer* is one of the books written as a result.

The book consists of ten chapters, each dealing with the particular experience of contemporary Christians who have been through the school of suffering. Each has contributed his story to Dr. Goulooze at his request as the result of his contact with them. Though having suffering in common with the rest, there is a surprising versatility in the individual affliction experienced and the triumph gained through it. The chapter title contains the theme around which the story unfolds. For instance, chapter III, "Renewed Strength," is the testimony of a young woman in her battle with polio; chapter V, "Close to God," is the story of heartrending personal

tragedy for a mother of four; chapter IX, "Blessings of Blindness," as the title reveals, concerns the trial of blindness, etc. Each experience presents a triumph that is an admirable testimony to the sufficiency of the grace and the resiliency of the faith the Lord grants His people as they find their strength in Him.

Dr. Philip E. Howard, Jr., president of *The Sunday School Times*, has in chapter VI summarized his experience thus, "the most important thing I have learned from affliction is the value of the Bible. The reading and studying of the Bible have given me the greatest and most lasting inspiration. This has been my life and my strength" (p. 51).

In the final chapter, Dr. Goulooze, by means of an imaginary interview, sets forth the Apostle Paul's philosophy of suffering and triumph for the Lord as given from passages in his epistles.

This book should prove helpful, not only for those in the deep waters of affliction, but for any who wish to gain a deeper insight and appreciation of this particular means by which the Lord perfects His people. In combination with each story are lessons which the experience has taught the sufferer together with the pertinent listing of appropriate Scripture passages.

The publisher's job of printing is

the usually good one done by Baker House. However, the book is somewhat unnecessarily padded by having the pages of opening chapters two-thirds blank, thus adding in the course of ten chapters another seven pages to the book. This is a feature intended, no doubt, to increase the small size of the book, but one which does little to justify the higher purchase price added thereby.

RAYMOND O. ZORN

By *Grace Alone*

Herman Kuiper

Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, \$2.50

In 1955 there appeared two books dealing with the order of salvation — *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* by Professor John Murray of Westminster Theological Seminary and *By Grace Alone* by Dr. Herman Kuiper of Calvin Theological Seminary. The former writer approaches his subject from the standpoint of the Westminster Standards, while the latter approaches the same subject from the standpoint of the Heidelberg Catechism. Nevertheless, both are remarkable in their agreement with Scripture and with each other. While the former is intensely scholarly, the latter is intensely practical, and both together present to the Christian reader a well-rounded treatment of the whole doctrine of salvation.

The present review of *By Grace Alone* is given with the assurance that its readers will greatly benefit from its pages. In an age when salvation is so frequently presented as a decision of man, it is heart-warming and comforting indeed to hear the Scripture truth reaffirmed that salvation has its origin in the eternal counsel of God, and that it becomes real only through the wonderful grace of God.

In chapter one the author gives a brief history of the doctrine of the way of salvation, evaluating the Romish, Lutheran, Arminian and Reformed points of view. The ultimate basis of salvation is set forth in chapter two. Here we see that Christ is the fountain of salvation, and that the ultimate basis of salvation lies in eternity "in the Counsel of Redemption framed before the foundation of the world." Dr. Kuiper next proceeds to the order of salvation proper, beginning with vocation, regeneration and mystical union. Faith and conversion form the subject matter of the fourth chapter. Here the

author reveals the very essence of saving faith, distinguishing it from faiths that do not save.

The great doctrine of justification is dealt with in chapter five. The Scripture teaching that justification is a judicial act of God is clearly set forth and defended, much to the comfort of all who rejoice in the perfect righteousness of Christ. Those more accustomed to thinking of adoption as an act of God separate from justification in the order of salvation will not find it difficult to go along with Dr. Kuiper's presentation of adoption as an objective fruit of justification.

Especially instructive is the chapter on sanctification in which the author clarifies the doctrine of sanctification, distinguishing it from justification. The Romish tendency to identify the two is evaluated, together with the modern tendency to exalt sanctification at the expense of justification. Sanctification is not seen in right perspective when we neglect or disparage the great truths involved in justification. The scriptural way to promote the sanctified life is to dig deep into the truths of the marvellous grace of God displayed in justification. This and this alone provides the right incentive to sanctification and there is no real appreciation of sanctification where justification is depreciated.

In the light of the many passages of Scripture urging Christians to endure to the end, the reviewer is much happier with the expression "perseverance of the saints," rather than "preservation of the saints."

This book is rightly entitled *By Grace Alone*, for each chapter brings home the wonderful truth that every element of our salvation proceeds from the abundant storehouse of God's grace.

C. HERBERT OLIVER

New Testament Commentary: Exposition of I and II Thessalonians

William Hendriksen:

Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.
1955. vii, 214. \$4.50.

Writing a commentary on one book of the Bible is imposing enough in itself, but when one man undertakes to produce a New Testament Commentary single-handedly he has assumed a tremendous task. That is just what Dr. Hendriksen has set out to do, the present volume being the third in the series to appear.

This is really a good commentary. It is scholarly, up-to-date, loyal to the Word of God, Reformed in viewpoint, and conscientious in attempting to give a satisfying exposition of every verse in Paul's Thessalonian epistles. All too frequently one picks up a commentary with the hope of finding help on a difficult passage, only to be disappointed with vague generalities or careful skirting of problems. Such a criticism cannot justly be made of Hendriksen.

This volume has many appealing features. For one thing, it is well bound. Its format is very attractive. The type in which it is set is just about the most pleasing and readable the reviewer has seen in a commentary. It must also be said, however, that the author himself has contributed in a large way to the readability of his work, for he has written in a clear and simple style which laymen should have very little difficulty in following. In fact, it is altogether likely that, once having begun, the reader will become as absorbed in this book as in a novel that cannot be put down.

The arrangement of the contents is distinctive. Preceding each chapter or major section of the text is a summary of the passage in outline form. Then the exposition proper is given, featuring the author's own translation. Following the exposition is a synthesis of the principal divisions of the text just expounded, enabling the reader in a most helpful way to grasp and clinch for himself the prominent thoughts and teaching of the passage.

Dr. Hendriksen's exposition of I Thessalonians 4:13-18 is both sensible and clear. If studied thoughtfully it should serve as a much-needed antidote for certain varieties of dispensationalist rapture theology. Indeed, it should even convince dispensationalists that they may not appeal to this passage in support of their peculiar views — assuming, of course, that their genuine concern is to hear and attend to what the Scriptures teach.

A commentary such as this one by Hendriksen needs to find its place in the Christian home. It ought to occupy a prominent spot on the shelves of church libraries. Its use in a Bible study group or at the mid-week service would carry with it its own reward. Isn't it high time we buried the notion that the reading of commentaries is exclusively an occupation for preachers?

THEODORE J. GEORGIAN

Man of Sorrows

Herman Hoeksema:
Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1956,
129 pp., \$2.00

This book comprises a series of Lenten meditations by the Rev. Herman Hoeksema, pastor and teacher in the Protestant Reformed Church, a denomination formed in 1925 from the Christian Reformed Church. The reader of the book will be helped by an awareness of the author's distinctive doctrinal position on common grace. This position involves a strong emphasis on the total inability of man to respond to the overtures of God's saving grace. Hoeksema's virtual denial of common grace is such an emphasis, this reviewer feels, as when pressed to its logical conclusion does away with the challenge and tension of response forced upon men by the gospel's claims of mercy and grace to the hearer concerned.

Indirectly, this is reflected in *Man of Sorrows* by Hoeksema's consistently declaratory vein in his presentation of the gospel. While admitting the merits of the declarative mood in preaching (the gospel is an *announcement* of glad tidings), the reviewer questions whether it is the fully biblical method. Is there not a definite place for the hortatory mood as that good news in its presentation presses for a response in the hearts of men? (See, for instance, II Corinthians 5:20.)

Thus taking account of Hoeksema's position, *Man of Sorrows* can be read with much spiritual profit. Hoeksema sets forth nine exegetical studies from Isaiah 50 and 53, relating the "Servant of Jehovah" as depicted by Isaiah with the fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The tenth and final chapter, ". . . and Peter," deals with the triumph of the resurrection and forms a fitting conclusion to these studies, since it presents the triumph and vindication of the Servant of the Lord.

Hoeksema's theological grasp is considerable and his presentation of doctrinal themes refreshingly clear and descriptive. In a very few pages, for instance, he sketches in the background and meaning of the concept, "a root out of a dry ground" (Isaiah 53:2) that gives new appreciation to this figure of speech as it applies to Jesus Christ (pp. 53-55).

Throughout the book, Hoeksema makes ready and felicitous relation of

Old Testament prophecy to New Testament fulfilment, radiating a warm faith that is placed four-square upon the inspiration and authority of biblical revelation. Isaiah, with the eagle eye of prophetic revelation, saw the sufferings of Christ and told of His glory. Hoeksema succeeds remarkably in putting this across.

One technical criticism might be stated. Hoeksema follows the American Standard Revised Version of 1901 in translating the Servant of the Lord, "Servant of Jehovah." One could wish that this innovation on the sacred covenant name of God, arising after the Reformation by pronouncing the vowels of the Hebrew "adonai" with the written consonants of the sacred name (YHVH), were discouraged rather than encouraged by its use here. As Genebrard put it, it is "a new, barbarous, fictitious, and irreligious word, that savours strongly of the Jove of the heathen" (quoted on p. 68 of Delitzsch's commentary of Isaiah, Vol. I). A technically proper procedure would be simply to follow the LXX translation of the sacred name which they made KYRIOS, the equivalent in the English language being our highly acceptable "Lord."

The publisher has done a commendable job in the format and printing of the book.

RAYMOND O. ZORN

Reitsma

(Continued from p. 166)

they are life."

The way to unity then is in examining the doctrines and the life of neighboring churches in the light of the supreme, absolute and permanent authority of the Scriptures. While it is true that "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all" (Westminster Confession, I, 7) we do believe that "The entrance of Thy words giveth light." Churches which accept the authority of Scripture and prayerfully study their doctrines in its light will eventually understand the intent of Scripture. To contend that the Bible is not communicative upon doctrinal points of issue is to do violence to the illuminating power of the Spirit who gave it. Whether or not churches will submit themselves to what the Bible does teach is a matter of personal piety and

should not deter us from pressing the claims of Holy Writ.

Because we have the Holy Scriptures as our only infallible, absolute and final authority, it follows that we must regard our own denomination's creed as *provisionally* true. No denomination may claim infallibility for itself over against another. To do so would be to eliminate the possibility of discussion and in addition would be very prejudicial to the uniquely Holy Word of God.

We next ought to decide what is essential to our body of faith and to the life of our church and what is not essential. There is tragic inconsistency on this point in fundamentalism and I fear it is fast overcoming our Reformed churches as well. As long as one is "fundamental," they say, it makes no difference whether he be Baptist, Presbyterian, Independent or Reformed. And still each of these denominations proudly maintains its own particular identity. Pre-millennialism, smoking, and immersion are all thought to warrant individual communion tables and yet these very tables are thrown open to all who believe. Churches that regard each other as "Bible-believing" make no effort to arrive at union with each other but continue to compete in the endless duplication of testimonies to the Gospel in the same communities. This is an intolerable situation which forbids the unbeliever to take either the truth or the church seriously. This kind of inconsistent denominationalism within the evangelical church is sin. The Church must begin to take its own existence and the truth of its doctrines very seriously.

It is high-time that evangelicals stop toying with the unity question by on the one hand joining each other for "union services," hymn sings, and evangelistic rallies while on the other hand doing nothing to remove the barriers which separate our churches. A truly broadminded church will concentrate upon the issues of division and do all within its power to resolve them.

Lest we lose our perspective upon this matter it needs saying that evangelical churches accepting the Scriptures as their infallible standard and Jesus as the only Savior have a great deal in common. This is precisely what makes their unity so pressing and their division so blameworthy. It is the unity and glory of the Godhead which by

the church's unity and glory must be demonstrated to the world. (John 17:21-23) It is this Divine witness which is imperiled by superficial factiousness or by more serious inconsistencies. Churches which name the name of Christ must be one because God is one.

It is tragic to see sound churches take denominationalism for granted. What they are actually doing is reducing the Reformed faith and Biblical doctrines to matters of personal preference. "Baptists for Baptists, Methodists for the Methodists, Reformed for the Reformed." It is being suggested that Reformed Home Missionaries recommend the Baptist Church or even manifestly modernistic Methodist and Congregationalist churches to believers who are mistaken on certain points of doctrine such as election or infant baptism.

This delusion has actually been proposed recently in Reformed circles. There you have it. Denominationalism has almost convinced us to be more Reformed than we are Churches. The truth of the matter is that we should drive to include in Christ's church every confused and mistaken Christian who by life and testimony pledges his allegiance to the Lord and His Word. By the power of prayer, the faithful preaching of the Word and the illumination of the Holy Spirit our brother will eventually understand the meaning of Scripture and he will also be saved from sectarianism. If our doctrine of God's Sovereignty means anything, it means that by patient and prayerful effort in every aspect of the church's ministry the truth will slowly but surely overcome misunderstanding. Let us not be afraid that we shall lose our distinctiveness for our distinctiveness is this: that we be consistently Christian in our life and consistently Scriptural in our doctrine.

A Challenge to the Evangelical Church

There is something that we all can do to promote the unity of Christ's Church. Beginning with self within the local church we should do all in our power to promote harmony and peace by exposing personal sin to the healing rays of Christ's righteousness. There ought to follow an affectionate striving to win others over to obedience to the will of God. And finally there should be a worthy and legitimate church union movement undertaken by local

evangelical churches. We may not rest until all evangelical churches are reduced to one holy and Catholic Church as opposed to what is rapidly becoming one single church of anti-Christ through the unprincipled mobilization of the World Council of Churches.

It is the responsibility of consistories and sessions of neighboring evangelical churches to contact each other to arrange programs of doctrinal discussion between themselves. Such discussion could locate the area of disagreement, weigh its essential character and focus the pronouncements of Scripture upon it until by the guidance of the Holy Spirit and through the exercise of prayer the meaning and intent of the Word be discovered, and unhindered unity result.

It might be argued that such a program is more properly the work of denominational assemblies. At whatever level it is begun it would be welcome, but the practical objection to this is that such discussions should take place in an atmosphere which is calm, deliberate and unhurried. The pressure of hurried sessions, fixed docket, and red tape are uncongenial to doctrinal discussions. Besides, progress in doctrinal agreement that will be truly significant and enduring will involve local church councils and the family in the pew.

No one can calculate what the results of such a program might be. Agreement in doctrine cannot be forced. It must be cultivated slowly and patiently. The practical spirit of our time is against us. We ought not underestimate the power of pride and the haziness of Christian thinking. We need not expect an easy or early elimination of denominational divisions. But we must begin. We must. For the unity of the church is her witness to the world and the unity of the church is the glory of her Lord.

Bible Presbyterian Church Split

Two Synods Each Claim to be True Succession

FOLLOWING THE ACTION of the 19th Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church which met in St. Louis in April, severing connection with both the American and International Councils of Churches, it has been apparent that the division within the ranks of the church was such that a more formal

division would at some time occur. With the resignation of a number of faculty members from Faith Seminary, and the establishment of Covenant College and Seminary in St. Louis, the division in the church became very certain.

That division has now occurred. Two special Synods have been held, one in Collingswood on November 23-27, and one in Columbus, Ohio, November 26-30. The Collingswood Synod chose Dr. Carl McIntire as its moderator, declared that the 19th Synod (St. Louis) was an illegal Synod, and reunited with the International Council and applied for re-entry into the American Council. The Columbus Synod, claiming to be the continuation of the Bible Presbyterian Church, declared that all ministers who had joined in the Collingswood Synod had in fact joined "another church" and instructed its presbyteries to erase such names from their rolls.

The declaration of the Columbus Synod is as follows:

Whereas the Form of Government, Ch. X, p. 3 declares that the "Synod constitutes the bond of union, peace, correspondence, and mutual confidence among all our churches" and

Whereas in setting up a rival Synod at Collingswood, Dr. McIntire has publicly called upon churches to choose between it and the legal Synod . . . , and

Whereas, a presbytery meeting has been set up in fellowship with this rival Synod competing with the legal Presbytery, the Great Lakes Presbytery, and

Whereas the Synod in Collingswood is not legal because admittedly it has no constitutional continuity with the first nineteen Synods of our Church (See resolution of New Jersey Presbytery adopted October 22, 1956) and

Whereas the procedure of its calling was not in accordance with the Form of Government or Standing Rules in that no previous Synod action was appealed to, nor were the Moderator of the 19th or 18th Synods or the Stated Clerks consulted,

Therefore this pro-re-nata meeting in Columbus, Nov. 27, 1956, declares that all ministers who have joined the Synod held in Collingswood Nov. 23-27, 1956, have in fact joined "another body" in the sense of Chapter VI, p. 3 of our Book of Discipline and therefore it advises the Presbytery of

New Jersey and all our other presbyteries that the names of all ministers who did so join that Collingswood Synod should be erased in accordance with Chapter VI, Par. 3 of our Book of Discipline."

One of the concerns of the Columbus Synod was the welfare of Bible Presbyterian missionaries serving under the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. This agency is controlled by a board the majority of whose members supported the Councils and Dr. McIntire. Following the St. Louis Synod an effort was made by the Board to pressure these missionaries into declaring their personal support of the Councils and of Dr. McIntire.

A large number of these Bible Presbyterian missionaries were not willing to declare themselves in this way, and the Columbus Synod had letters from a number of them on the subject. The Columbus Synod adopted the following statement:

"That we notify the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions of the fact that we have recently received letters from many of the 63 Bible Presbyterian missionaries serving under their care expressing deep concern over recent actions of the Board and some of which express distrust of its leadership. In view of the fact that the Bible Presbyterian church has officially withdrawn from the International Council, while we are in sympathy with those of our missionaries who desire to work with the ICCA affiliates in their respective mission fields, we consider that the Board should not require our missionaries or candidates to state their whole-hearted cooperation with the activities of the ICCA, and that we ask for assurance in writing that the Board will not discriminate in any way against these missionaries who conscientiously feel that they cannot do so."

The Synod also sent a letter of encouragement and commendation to its missionaries serving under the Independent Board.

However, in another action, the Synod voted to set up a permanent Committee on Foreign Missions, of eighteen members in three annual classes. This committee was authorized

to receive and handle funds, to counsel with and examine candidates for foreign mission service, and to further the cause of foreign missions in the church in any way it deemed advisable. Among those elected on this foreign missions committee are W. H. Chisholm and W. Mahlow, who serves as general Secretary of the Independent Board.

Two other actions of the Columbus Synod were of interest. One was the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas a division has taken place in the body of the Bible Presbyterian Church, resulting in the establishment of a new church using the Bible Presbyterian name, and

Whereas there is grave danger of confusion with respect to the testimony of the legal, constitutional Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, and

Whereas we recognize that there exist divergent concepts of the work and fellowship of the Church which explain the breach that has taken place,

Be it resolved that this Synod, recognizing its responsibility to contend for the faith, repudiates that fundamentalism which, while giving lip service to a militant defense of Biblical truth, in practice dishonors the Lord by something less than strict adherence to truth. And also, while we affirm and maintain unyielding loyalty to the doctrine of the purity of the visible church, we repudiate that extreme separatism which ignores our responsibility to demonstrate the love of God toward our Christian brethren as the distinguishing mark of our discipleship. In so declaring our loyalty to these principles of truthfulness and love, we do so with heartsearching confession of our own failure in these regards in the past and we caution ourselves against future transgressions with regard to the dangers which we here cite.

And the other action we quote here concerned the relation of the Church with other churches. It was as follows:

The Synod charge its Committee on Fraternal Relations with further efforts to cement friendly relations with other Bible believing groups, especially the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the Christian Reformed Church, and that we go on record as regretting the severity and bitterness of the division of 1937, and urge our committee further to explore avenues of mutual friendship and cooperation.

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Wheaton College on Inspiration

TEACHERS OF THE BIBLE and Philosophy Department of Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, have recently prepared and distributed a statement setting forth the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture as they understand it. Believing this statement will be of interest to our readers, we are quoting excerpts from it. Our quotations are made, by permission, from the copy of the statement which was published in the December, 1956, issue of *Eternity* magazine, published in Philadelphia by The Evangelical Foundation.

Following an introductory section the statement contains these declarations among others: —

"A true and living orthodoxy, we believe, must never become static. No true orthodoxy lives on the orthodoxy of the past. If we are to remain loyal to the faith of our fathers, we dare not merely repeat their answers to opponents of a generation ago. We must rethink the doctrines of revelation and inspiration for our own generation and must fight on the battle lines as they are drawn today. This, we believe, demands an honest search into the truth of God in humble dependence upon the illumination of the Holy Spirit. . . .

"We believe that when God gave the Bible, He did so in order to give men correct ideas about Himself and their relationship to Him. Since it is manifestly impossible to convey ideas in a book except by employing the written words of some language, the divine inspiration extended to the written words or symbols of Scripture. Verbal inspiration guarantees accordingly that the written words of Scripture convey the thoughts which God wished to communicate and that the thoughts symbolized by these words are all true.

"Although God sometimes revealed truth by dictation, inspiration was not by any mechanical means. Rather, the Spirit of God employed the attention, the investigation, the memory, the imagination, the logic—in a word—all of the faculties of the human

authors of the Bible. God's guidance worked through the free exercise of the authors' historical and theological capabilities. So far from being automata or stenographers, the biblical writers made their own choice of words, expressed themselves in their own style, and revealed in their writings their own particular personalities. The message which the biblical writers proclaimed was decidedly their own. God, however, prepared them, illuminated them, and divinely energized them, so that their prophetic message would be at the same time His divine message to men. . . .

"The conclusive evidence that verbal inspiration is true may be found in the testimony of the God-man, Jesus Christ, and of the divinely accredited apostles of God. . . . (Here follow citations of relevant Scripture passages. Ed.)

"Since the teaching of both Christ and the biblical writers is so unequivocally clear, what they teach ought to settle the matter for the Christian. Some have rejected this appeal to the teachings of Christ and His apostles as circular reasoning. Our Lord, however, has expressly told us to follow His teachings (John 8:13ff and elsewhere); and certainly no circle is involved unless the authority of Christ and His apostles rests in turn upon an acceptance of verbal inspiration. Such is not the case, for our faith in the deity of Christ is grounded rather upon the sum of historical, logical and experiential evidences for the truth of the Christian faith, and in particular upon the immediate testimony of the Holy Spirit to our own spirits that we are truly children of God through faith in Him. Belief in verbal inspiration, therefore, rests ultimately upon these evidences which prove that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God and that the apostles are trustworthy teachers of doctrine. . . ."

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