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THE MESSAGE OF GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER

GOOD FRIDAY and Easter have a single message—the message of salvation by the acts of Jesus Christ. The Christ of the cross and the Christ of the empty tomb are one Christ with one purpose, the redemption of His people. Unless we see the grand unity of these acts and the singleness of the message of the crucified and risen Saviour, the message which is the only hope of lost men, we shall certainly miss the meaning of Christianity. Our meditation in this season should remind us that we ought *always* to contemplate Christ as our crucified and risen Saviour and Lord, and should cause us to rededicate ourselves to the *perennial* task of witnessing to Him who, through His death on the cross and resurrection on the third day, has placed on our lips the good tidings of salvation.

The spirit of our age puts a great gulf between Good Friday and Easter. A money-mad, self-seeking world, increasingly commercializing and prostituting the sacred things to its own advantage, has set the pace. And a worldly church, conforming to the spirit of our age, is rapidly turning Easter into a festival of springtime and fashion. Good Friday is quite a different matter. As a symbol of the coldness and restraints of winter apparently it serves principally as a background on which the warmth and freedom of the new season may appear in sharp relief.

THE INFLUENCE OF MODERNISM

The modern theology has greatly contributed towards this sad end, for it distinguishes ultimately between two Christs—the Christ of the cross and the Christ of Easter. This distinction is necessary because of its denial of the historical character of the resurrection on the third day, and this denial in turn is rooted in the philosophy that

will not allow that miracles ever happen. Modernism agrees with us when we affirm that Christ really died; it parts company when it affirms that He did not really rise from the dead. The real Jesus of history, according to this view, may be fully explained as a child of His Jewish fathers and of His times, a mere man who was born and who died as other men are born and die. But heredity and environment cannot account for a resurrection. So, on this view, the Christ of Nazareth and of Golgotha is not the Christ of the Easter faith. Only the first Christ is historical; the second is the product of mythology. The stories of His miraculous birth and of His resurrection are legends which arose through the imagination of those who came to believe that He was more than a man.

We can derive small comfort indeed from the Modernist's recognition of the historical character of Christ's death. In failing to accompany us to the empty tomb on Easter morning, he forfeits his right to watch with us on Friday afternoon. For the death of Christ as an historical event has lost its precious meaning for us apart from the fact that He who went to the cross could not be holden of death. The meaning of the cross is no longer properly redemptive, as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God, if the resurrection never occurred. We may contemplate the death of Christ as that of a mere man, as the Modernist does, and be stirred by it as a symbol of self-sacrifice or discover in it a philosophy of suffering. But as sinners who are guilty and estranged from God we need far more than the story of the death of a great and good man—we need the gospel of redeeming grace through the crucified and risen Saviour.

MODERNISM AND THE RESURRECTION

Our dissatisfaction with the Modernist's preaching on

Easter morning is perhaps even greater than with his meditations during Passion Week. His denial of the resurrection in the same body in which He suffered might appear to leave him speechless. We would that he were speechless. But instead he glibly talks about the glory of a faith which can be indifferent to historical facts. He abandons the historical foundation of the empty tomb and of the appearances during the forty days after the passion, or says that these facts do not matter. But he is satisfied that *somehow* the disciples came to believe that Jesus still lived, that God was in His heaven, and immortality would be their portion too. The witnesses of the resurrection, he holds, may all have been mistaken in supposing that they had seen Jesus in the same body in which He had suffered, but their faith was a glorious faith in a life which is victorious over death, and we must imitate their faith. And, he frequently reminds us, Christianity is not a matter of history or doctrine, but only a matter of life which needs to be rekindled.

It is because religion in our times has come to be interpreted as having nothing essentially to do with history that the Modernist still talks on Easter morning. Why movements like Barthianism and Buchmanism have so much in common with the prevailing Modernism of our day also finds its explanation in their ultimate indifference to the historical basis of Christianity in the saving acts of Christ. The superstructure that each tries to build may vary in appearance; they all agree that Christianity remains as before even if the historical foundation crumbles, or becomes uncertain.

From the point of view of a humble believer in the Word of God, all preaching of hope and immortality and eternal life is vain unless Christ was truly raised from the dead. For these boons are not attained simply through the influence of one personality upon another. They may be attained by men who are without hope in the world and who are dead in trespasses and sins only through Jesus Christ who came into the world to provide a full and free salvation through His death and resurrection. Accordingly, any talk of faith in Christ apart from a proclamation of the great historical facts of redemption is a deception and a sham. The preacher who is true to the Bible, on the other hand, comes on Easter morning with a true message of hope and eternal life because His message of Good Friday and of Easter are one and the same. He will set forth the resurrection as God's seal upon His purposes of grace in the cross of Christ.

THE EARLIEST MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY

Clearly the earliest preaching of Christianity, the preaching which made Christianity a world religion, united these two facts in the closest possible way in the very heart of its message. The apostle Paul sums up the

gospel which he held in common with the other apostles, the gospel which the Corinthians had received and by which they had been saved:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (I Cor. 15: 1ff.).

And in his Epistle to the Romans Paul expounds the Gospel of God concerning His Son "who was delivered for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification":

It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

The word of faith which we preach: because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (Rom. 1: 1ff.; 4: 25; 8: 34f.; 10: 8f.).

In the passage quoted from I Corinthians Paul shows his agreement with the other apostles, and all of the records bear out this fact. Peter's preaching is characterized by the same declaration of the redemptive facts of Christ's death and resurrection:

Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead . . . He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins (Acts 4: 10ff.; 5: 30ff. Cf. Acts 2: 14-39; 3: 13-26; 10: 36-43; 13: 17-41; I Peter 1: 18ff.; 3: 18ff.).

Nor is the testimony which the Gospels give to Christ of a different kind. Not only did Jesus Himself join these two great acts in the most intimate possible fashion before the events occurred, but He also explained their significance afterward:

Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify; and the third day He shall be raised up. . . . The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Then opened He their minds that they might understand the Scriptures, and He said unto them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Matt. 20: 18f., 28; Luke 24: 45ff.).

And the Gospels as a whole, by their absorption with the story of His passion and resurrection, show that they too are a proclamation of the gospel of the crucified and risen Saviour.

For historic Christianity, which is nothing if it is not

a religion of redemption—the God-given way of redemption—the Modernist substitutes a religion in which Christ serves merely as a teacher who gives us a new insight into God's character, and into the nature of man as belonging to a universal brotherhood. But only as the cross is seen as an integral and central fact in God's redemptive plan, and the resurrection as His seal upon the crucifixion as a work of grace, do we attain to the true perspective of Christianity. The cross and the resurrection are divine, redemptive acts, bound together through one divine purpose and accomplished by one divine person.

On the Mount of Transfiguration the Christ of Good

Friday and of Easter Sunday appeared to a few of the disciples, and the divine word of approval contemplated both the cross and the resurrection: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him!" If we claim that we have heard Him, we must see Him as the beloved Son of God, whose redemptive death, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem, was well-pleasing to the Father. And since He is the beloved Son of God, we must hearken to His divine commandments, and carry out His great commission in the power of His death and resurrection. There is neither hope nor power in any other message than in the single message of Good Friday and Easter.

"He is Risen as He Said!"

By the REV. ROBERT STRONG

Pastor of the Calvary Presbyterian Church of Willow Grove, Penna.



Mr. Strong

OUR Christian faith flatly contradicts many widely accepted sayings and near-proverbs. One that is particularly objectionable suggests itself at this season. Often have we heard flippant unbelievers say that man does not know what—if anything—is on the other side of death because no one has ever come back from the beyond to tell about it. To a Christian this statement is either a most deliberate evasion or a most ignorant blunder. Does not Easter stand in the calendar perpetually to remind us that the veil of death has been as surely rent in twain as was the veil of the temple in that hour when Jesus yielded up His spirit on the cross? Death is still a fearsome enemy; but it is a once-conquered enemy, and its final defeat is now a certainty. That clause of the Apostles' Creed, "The third day He rose again from the dead," is no mere empty symbol but reminds us that truly our Saviour "hath abolished [hath made of none effect] death and brought life and immortality to light."

When we give ourselves to meditation upon the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ the wonderful thing should seem, not so much that to His dead body life was restored, as that He, the Lord of life, should have died at all. That such a one as He could

die, there is the marvel. In a certain sense the disciples expressed our own natural feeling when they protested at the teaching that He should die. They, of course, wanted Him to attain a present earthly dominion, and so the thought of His death was a repugnant one; with us it is amazement that so pure a being should defile Himself with death for the sake of sinners, and so we react with awe to the Biblical teaching that it became Him to suffer. We gain understanding in part from that saying of our Lord's: "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Thus the death of Jesus was wholly voluntary. Freely He laid down His life as a ransom price for many held slaves under sin.

But it was absolutely impossible that He should be long held by death. It was absolutely necessary that He should rise from the dead. The mourning, disheartened, hopeless disciples did not see this. They did not then recognize that the Old Testament had foretold the Messiah's certain resurrection. Hid to them was the significance of Psalm 16: 10: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Forgotten in the excess of their grief was the Lord's mysterious promise to raise in three days the temple of His body when it should be

destroyed. Forgotten was His clear prophetic statement that the third day after His sufferings He should rise again. Forgotten was the way in which on three occasions—in the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, in the raising of the daughter of Jairus, in the raising of Lazarus—He had shown Himself to be the very Lord of life.

To us it must appear a most fortunate providence that the disciples of Jesus were so cast down by their Lord's death and were so forgetful of the promises of His resurrection. For the fact furnishes the basis for one of the strongest proofs of the historic actuality of Christ's resurrection. It faces the disbeliever in the resurrection account with the problem of explaining the change which occurred in the attitude of the disciples some few days after the crucifixion. Before they had been fearful, sad, hopeless. Suddenly they became fearless preachers, joyful believers, men inspired by a deathless hope. The difference was made in them, every true Christian holds, by the appearance on several extended occasions of the risen Lord. By showing His riven hands and feet and side He convinced them that it was indisputably He, the crucified, now in the very body of His suffering living again.

Some enemies of the faith have sought a way of escape from this conclusion by saying that the disciples

experienced hallucinations of Jesus' presence, so that the idea was thus conveyed to them that though absent from them in body His spirit still lived on, in some strange way having the ability to comfort and bless His followers. This we know is the conception of the resurrection held by many Modernists. Recently it found embodiment in a serial story offered in one of the Sunday School papers published by the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The story was an offensive parallel in a modern setting to the life of Christ. The final chapter by clear implication made out of the resurrection of Jesus nothing more than a wistful, fleeting, ethereal impression of His survival in the world beyond, received by certain spiritually sensitive persons in the company of Christ's followers.

This and all other forms of the vision theory of the resurrection of Jesus are shattered by the consideration that nothing less than the literal raising of Christ's body and His actual appearance to the disciples can adequately account for the transformation of attitude which occurred in them. Even leaving out of account such additional evidences as the failure of the Jews to produce the body of Jesus when His disciples declared that He had risen from the dead; the honest and self-sacrificing character of the witnesses to the resurrection; the triumphant history of the Christian church, explainable only on the basis of Christ's resurrection; the conversion of the fiercely monotheistic Saul into the Christ-worshiping Paul—even without these evidences we may rest with all confidence upon this foundation fact of our faith that Christ is risen indeed.

It was a wonderful privilege which two of the resurrection witnesses had that first Easter day. Still burdened by the memory of the awful death their Master had suffered, hardly daring to believe the things reported of an empty tomb, a vision of angels, a risen Saviour, Cleopas and his friend were walking toward Emmaus communing together of these strange matters. "And Jesus himself drew near and went with them." The record of the conversation that followed and of how Jesus made Himself known to them in the familiar act of breaking bread is one of the most beautiful

sections in the Bible. One can almost hear the tones in which Cleopas said, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" May it now be suggested that this incident in a sense offers a pattern for present-day Christian experience? Christ does not come to us in the flesh, but He is our risen Lord too. He still speaks to His own by

His Word and by His Spirit that indwells them. He still holds communion with His followers, and so the day of the burning heart can still be with us. Certainly the appeal of the Easter season is not alone that we should stanchly maintain that the Saviour is risen, but that also we should enter anew and more deeply into the blessed and offered fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What Westminster Seminary Means to Me

By the REV. EVERETT C. DEVELDE

Pastor of the Trinity Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio
Member of the Class of 1930, Westminster Seminary

WHEN my thoughts turn to Westminster Seminary, from which it was my privilege to graduate some years ago, the feeling within me takes much the form of Paul's statement to the Philippian Church, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

After spending two years at Princeton Seminary that institution suddenly lost its attraction to me, when several of the professors resigned due to the reorganization imposed on Princeton by the General Assembly of 1929. That meant that Princeton was to follow the inclusive policy, and also she had, in my opinion, lost her most valuable teachers. When word came, while at a summer preaching station in Nova Scotia, that a new seminary would be formed in Philadelphia which would stand uncompromisingly for the truth of the Bible and the principles of the Reformed Faith, I made one of the most important decisions in my life. I wrote asking that my name be included in the list of prospective students for the senior class, although the seminary as yet had no definite location or campus.

To leave Princeton meant a break with the prestige of an old established and much honored institution, and a separation from many friends there. It meant the scorn of many churchmen. We did not know whether we would be received by churches after our graduation or not. It meant the exchange of the natural beauty and most delightful surroundings of Princeton, the ivy-covered walls and the intellectual atmosphere of this

university town, for a downtown city location in the midst of commercialism, worldliness, and soot, without a blade of grass to serve as a campus. Well do I remember the day we packed our books and belongings into our Ford and rolled away from Princeton for Philadelphia.

The change that was made, however, has meant infinitely more to me than anything that it cost. I have never regretted leaving Princeton to take my last year at Westminster. Rather have I been very thankful to God for leading me in this way. The year that I spent at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia stands out as one of the richest and most fruitful years in my life thus far. Perhaps no single year will ever mean quite as much to me in its bearing upon my course of life and growth in grace. My only regret is that all three of my seminary years were not spent at Westminster, for I realize that I missed much that I might have gained had I not been born quite so soon. I almost envy the young men who now are privileged to take their whole course of study at the institution which meant so much to me in that one year I was there.

The benefits that I received from my Westminster training did not come from any contact with high churchmen and secretaries, nor from those especially gifted in oratory and popularity, nor from any outside source, nor from the enchantment of historic surroundings. The benefits did come directly from the teaching and the example of the faculty and from the

fellowship I enjoyed with other students at Westminster.

The faculty at Westminster Seminary imparted to me a knowledge of the Scriptures for which I will always be thankful. Their exegesis of the Word, their bringing forth of Biblical principles, and their defense of the Christian faith were ruggedly sound and solid. While we had many interesting discussions in our classes, our teachers always held our respect by their Christian scholarship in the presentation of their views. They had good reasons and good proof for the doctrines and views they set forth.

The reverence with which the Bible was handled and with which prayer was made by the faculty was a blessing to me which definitely deepened my own practices of meditation. This reverence was carried over into a deep-seated and wholesome regard for God's commandments and requirements of us. The Westminster teaching and influence is just the reverse of careless Christian living and Antinomianism. Our understanding of sanctification was clarified, and we were encouraged definitely to be separated from sin and to be completely obedient to God's will. I had received a high conception of the Christian life from home and college training. With the help of instruction and example by faculty and students at Westminster Seminary my Christian life became more firmly grounded and the impetus to do God's will became much stronger.

Though seven years have passed since we were in the seminary the spiritual fellowship with my classmates and others has not ceased. It was definitely constructive to my faith and life to be associated with other students who were devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ. Young men cannot be looking for large churches, comfortable salaries, or pulpit fame when they come to Westminster, for the institution cannot hold out any of these things to its graduates. Consequently the type of young men who go to Westminster are the kind that love the Lord more than anything else, and are in accord with the principles and objectives of the seminary in contending earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. They are the kind who put the gospel first, and trust that God will add all

temporal things to them in proportion to their need. The spirit of enterprise and zealous activity which pervaded the student body in its service to Christ was impressed upon me when I was among them, and this attitude has been growing upon me ever since.

The supreme place which faculty and students alike gave to the truth has not only been a blessing received from my Westminster associations, but it has determined my course relative to the great doctrinal issues that we have faced in our churches in recent years, leading up to and including the formation of The Presbyterian Church of America. The members of the faculty have not simply stood for the truth of God's Word in theory, but they have stood for it also in practice. In presbyteries, in general assemblies, before the church and world at large they have stood for this. Consequently, when we studied in the classroom we knew that

they spoke from conviction, and we too became convinced. What I learned at Westminster Seminary about the value of the truth, as related to peace and unity and temporal needs or any other thing, has guided me to my present happy place in the new church.

I appreciate to the full the continued ministry of Westminster Seminary. Through the last seven years I have greatly enjoyed and have profited by the fellowship I have had with more recent graduates and students. Not the least of this fellowship is with one of my neighboring Presbyterian Church of America pastors (110 miles away) who is a graduate of the 1936 class. With him, one of the most recent graduates, I, one of the first graduates, have had the fullest kind of understanding and accord, which would seem to indicate that the seminary has been running a straight and steady course since its foundation.

We of The Presbyterian Church of America, moreover, are deeply indebted to Westminster's faithful teaching ministry. About half the number of our ministers who have left large and successful pastorates, in many instances to take up small works at no little sacrifice, are actual graduates of Westminster Seminary. Its faculty members and trustees are prominent in the membership of the church. The seminary, therefore, means much to me as a minister in the new church. I look to it hopefully and confidently for more reapers to go into the harvest field qualified to preach and teach and ready to endure fire if necessary.

May God bless Westminster as she stands for the Trinity, the Bible, salvation by grace alone through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and the other essentials of Christianity and the Reformed faith. The seminary has lost some of its great leaders in the eight years of its existence. May this loss be recompensed by our greater loyalty in prayer and in gifts, by a wider ministry through a larger student body, and a continuation of sincere and earnest faithfulness to God's Word, which is truth. The great need for Westminster-trained men becomes greater all the time, as Modernism continues its victorious sweep of the churches and schools of the land.

"The Christian View of Man"

THIS fascinating series of studies by Dr. J. Gresham Machen has just been released by the publishers. It is a companion volume to "The Christian Faith in the Modern World," and contains the radio addresses delivered by Dr. Machen during the winter of 1935-1936. "The Christian View of Man" is no ponderous theological text-book, filled with obscure and technical language, but a warm and living exposition of Biblical Christianity, couched in simple, understandable words.

Copies of this valuable book may be obtained through the offices of "The Presbyterian Guardian." Why not secure your copy now by mailing \$2.50 in check, money order, cash or stamps, to this office? The book will be sent to you promptly, postpaid.

What Is Amillennialism?

By JOHN MURRAY

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In answer to many requests, particularly from premillennarians, we are publishing this outline of the view which has come to be known as amillennialism. We trust that our readers will bear in mind our editorial policy as outlined in the last issue. Amillennarians, to our knowledge, have never challenged the right, to a place in the ministry and fellowship of a truly Presbyterian church, of those who hold to the other views mentioned in this article.*



Mr. Murray

IN RECENT times there has been a rather insistent demand for a statement of the amillennial view of our Lord's return. In some quarters the notion is current that the amillennial view is a novelty of eschatological belief, perhaps indeed an invention that has had its genesis in Westminster Seminary. This is, of course, a very grave mistake.

It is true that the term "amillennial" may not have been widely used until comparatively recent times. And it is further true that in many of the debates that have been conducted in times past, in this country at least, the amillennial position did not figure to any appreciable extent. But the view that it denotes is no novelty in the Christian Church. From every angle, then, the demand for a statement of the position is wholesome and timely.

Three Views

Among evangelicals there are, broadly speaking, three views with respect to the millennium held today. They are the postmillennial, the premillennial and the amillennial views. The postmillenarian believes that in the history of this world a millennium will precede the coming of the Lord, that is to say, that a protracted period in which truth and righteousness will be dominant and the world virtually a converted world will intervene prior to the advent of the Lord. The premillenarian teaches, on the other hand, that no millennium will precede the

coming of the Lord but that after the Lord's return there will be a millennial reign of righteousness of Christ over this earth. Now the amillennial view, as the name suggests, simply means that the amillenarian does not believe that he can find warrant in Scripture for a millennium either before or after the advent of the Lord. He parts company, therefore, with both the postmillenarian and the premillenarian.

Amillennialism and Postmillennialism

His difference with the postmillenarian is simply that he does not find warrant in Scripture for teaching that there will be a protracted period of universal and all-pervasive prosperity for the church of God prior to the second advent. The amillenarian does not take upon himself to deny but that in the purpose and providence of God there may be a period of unprecedented prosperity for the church of God upon earth prior to the Lord's advent. What he says is that he does not find in Scripture evidence sufficient to warrant his believing in a millennium before the end of the world.

The amillenarian, nevertheless, does believe that certain predicted events must be fulfilled prior to the Lord's advent. He believes, for example, in accordance with the promise of the Lord, that there must first be the preaching of the gospel to all nations (cf. Matt. 24:14). He believes, in accordance with II Thess. 2, that there must also be the appearance of the man of sin and son of perdition whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His advent. And he also believes there will be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Rom. 11 with respect to the conversion of Israel.*

This belief in the occurrence of certain predicted events does not, he thinks, interfere in any way with his watching and waiting for the Lord's return because he finds that our Lord

*There is some difference of opinion among amillennarians with respect to the import of this passage.

and His apostles, who so consistently and insistently enjoined such watching and waiting, at the same time taught that certain well-defined events must occur before the advent. So, if it was not impossible for the disciples of the Lord and the readers of the New Testament to watch and wait, while at the same time believing that certain other events must occur first, it cannot be impossible or inconsistent for us to do the same thing.

The amillenarian, however, does not find warrant for believing that one of those events that must occur before the Lord's advent is a millennium of universal prosperity for the church of God. And so on that particular point he differs from the postmillenarian.

Amillennialism and Premillennialism

The amillenarian *denies* a millennium after the second advent. In this denial he holds common ground with the postmillenarian. The amillenarian, in common with the postmillenarian, teaches that when Christ comes again His coming will signalize the end of the world. Christ comes, he says, to judge the world. At His coming all the dead will be raised and all, both living and dead, judged. The righteous will enter into everlasting life and the wicked will be consigned to everlasting doom. At His coming the heavens and the earth which now are will be burned, and they will give place to the "new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (cf. II Pet. 3:10-13). "The creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). This age will give place to the age to come, the eternal age, when the kingdom of God will have been consummated and when, in the majestic language of the Revelation, it will be true: "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor

crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (21: 3, 4). "And there shall be no more curse but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (22: 3-5).

Now the question might well be asked: Why does the amillenarian deny a millennium after the Lord's return? To give all the reasons would require a book. But in brief his reason is very simple. It is just that he does not believe that the teaching of the New Testament allows such a belief. He says two things: first, that the evidence does not warrant such a belief and, second, that the evidence is opposed to such a belief. He believes that the events which are bound up with the coming of the Lord are of a consummatory character and, therefore, do not comport with an earthly millennium. In other words, he believes that the final judgment and the end of the world so coincide with the coming of the Lord that there is no room left for a millennium after the Lord's return.

We can give now but one example of his argument. It is the passage in II Pet. 3: 4-13. The "coming" of the Lord spoken of in v. 4 is surely synonymous with "the day of the Lord" spoken of in v. 10. Or, at least, they both refer to the same event viewed perhaps from slightly different aspects. But this "day of the Lord" referred to in v. 10 is the day in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements melt with fervent heat. And again this day in which the heavens shall be dissolved and the elements melt with fervent heat is, in v. 12, called "the coming of the day of God." Thus we have the "coming" of the Lord, "the day of the Lord" and "the day of God" as coincident with one another and coincident with the dissolution of the present heavens and earth.*

But in v. 7 of the same chapter

*We are not now attempting to set forth what precisely is involved in the dissolution of the present heavens and earth. We are simply stating the fact in the language of the passage concerned.

we are told that the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store reserved unto fire *unto* the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. And so the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men is also assigned as the day in which the present heavens and earth will be dissolved. We have already found that the dissolution of the present heavens and earth is coincident with "the day of the Lord" and "the day of God." Therefore the "coming" of the Lord, "the day of the Lord," "the day of God," the dissolution of the present heavens and earth, and "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" are all brought into the closest conjunction. In a word, the "coming" of the Lord and what we call the end of the world are brought together. In view of this how can a millennium be intruded between the "coming" of the Lord and the end of the world? The plain import of the passage is against it.

The premillenarian may say: But "the day of the Lord," though it begins with the advent, includes the millennium and the final judgment. It designates, he would say, an extended period inclusive of all these events. The amillenarian replies: What evidence can you, the premillenarian, produce from the New Testament to show that "the day of the Lord" includes such a millennium?* You will not find in the New Testament, the amillenarian says, any such teaching with respect to "the day of the Lord," and so you have no right to impose it upon this passage. In other words, you have no right to make an unwarranted importation to upset the straightforward force of such a passage.

But again the premillenarian may reply: Are we not told in this very passage that the day spoken of is a thousand years (v. 8)? No, answers the amillenarian. We are told in v. 8 that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." This does not define for us the temporal length of "the day of the Lord." It says not that "the

*We have not space to enter into the premillenarian appeal to Rev. 20:1-9, nor into the amillenarian exegesis of this important passage. We do hope that THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN will some day offer its readers an adequate treatment of it.

day of the Lord" is a thousand years. No, not at all, but that *one day* is *with the Lord* as a thousand years. The sentiment is apparent. It is that of Psalm 90: 4: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." The elapse of a thousand years no more interferes with the certainty of His promise than does the brief period of a day. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness." What promise? The promise of His coming.

Amillennialism and the Old Testament

But the objection has been and will be raised: Does not the amillenarian do violence to the prophecies of the Old Testament? Does he not discard the prophecies with respect to the Messianic kingdom and the prophecies which so graphically depict for us a rule of righteousness, peace and glory? The answer is emphatically no.

Many of the prophecies with respect to the Messianic kingdom, he believes, find fulfillment in the reign that Christ exercises now as mediatorial King in virtue of His resurrection and exaltation. For Jesus is now set at God's right hand "far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that to come" (Eph. 1: 21). "God hath highly exalted him, and given him the name that is above every name" (Phil. 2: 9). It was Jesus Himself who said, just prior to His exaltation, "All authority in heaven and on earth hath been given unto me" (Matt. 28: 18). And are we not to regard Peter as affirming the fulfillment of the promise given to David—that of the fruit of his loins He (God) would make one to sit upon his throne—when he says in his Pentecost sermon, "He [David] seeing this beforehand spake of the resurrection of Christ" (Acts 2: 31)? "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made Him, this Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2: 36).

The Old Testament prophecies which portray the perfect rule of righteousness and peace find, the amillenarian believes, their complete and consummate fulfillment in the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (cf.

II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). He recognizes, indeed, that the portraiture is cast in the language of conditions familiar to those to whom the prophecies were given, and he recognizes furthermore that the language is sometimes figurative and symbolic.* But the literary form in which the prophecy is given does not in any way do prejudice to the reality of the prophecy nor to the reality of its fulfillment. The graphic and figurative language of the vision of the new heaven and new earth in Rev. 21, for example, should not prevent us from understanding its significance, nor does it in any way impair the reality of the fulfillment. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband" (v. 2). "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it" (vv. 24-26).

We turn to the book of Isaiah and we find there the Old Testament prophecy that corresponds to the new heavens and the new earth spoken of by Peter and to the vision of the new heaven and new earth in Rev. 21. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. . . . The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 65:17, 18, 25. Cf. Chap. 66:22). When the amillenarian believes that prophetic scenes of righteousness and peace have real and consummate fulfillment in the new heavens and the new earth he is standing on solid Biblical ground. Let it not be said, therefore, that the amillenarian has no place for such Old Testament prophecy. He glories in such prophecy, for it leads him triumphantly within the gates of the new Jerusalem.

*For an able treatment cf. Patrick Fairbairn, *Prophecy*, pp. 155-176.

Amillennialism and the Lord's Return

The notion is apparently widespread that the amillenarian does not believe in or hope for the coming of the Lord, that he does not have the blessed hope. This is a grave error. He believes ardently in the blessed hope because the blessed hope for him is the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, the glorious, visible, personal return of the Lord. He truly does not attach to that an earthly millennium ending in the loosing of Satan and a brief period of apostasy. Oh, no! But is he impoverished by that fact? By no means. He attaches to the blessed hope something very much

greater. He looks for and hastens unto the coming of the Lord as the coming of the day of God when, with the dissolution of the present heavens and earth, he will enter into the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. He looks for the Lord's coming, and that encloses in its bosom the consummation of hope and blessedness, glory unspeakable never again to be marred by the presence of sin or death, never to be dimmed by the assault of the enemy. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:17).

Valiant for Truth

A Meditation on the Eleventh Psalm

By the REV. DAVID FREEMAN



Mr. Freeman

MAN is given to despair when his affairs seem to be hopeless. There are few who trust in God at all times. True faith is that which still hopes in God even when all is lost.

It is easy enough to trust in God when all is well.

What timid and fearful souls there are in the world! At the first sign of danger to their persons they are ready, with the swiftness of a bird, to flee from duty. When the struggle looks hard they abandon the good fight of faith. And at the suggestion of the least pain they are prepared to surrender to the enemy of souls and to silence their testimony for God and His Word.

Timid or Firm

Who has not seen this in the land of the living? Many there are who have shut themselves up in their mountain. Men consider only their earthly well-being and not the cause of God. The reason is they have not identified themselves with God. They abide not in Him and therefore cannot bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Even those whom men have considered strong and mighty in former times often hide in a place out

of the way of battle. There they are inactive. They do neither harm nor good.

To yield to circumstances is to obey the voice of the natural heart, which is a selfish, cowardly and wicked thing. The perverse heart of man asks not what is right in God's sight, but what is safe and to personal advantage. He who thus thinks and acts may be likened to the man who put his hand to the plough and then looked back. Our Lord said of such a one that he is not worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Heavenly or Worldly Wisdom

Human prudence is not the wisdom of God. Even "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." Then why should a soul be unfaithful to heavenly commands and obligations in order to serve some fleshly purpose? It is the path of the highest wisdom to obey when God says, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

In yielding to worldly-wise policies that are based on the fears of men, do not even unbelievers see that such have not faith in God? Do not our actions speak louder than our words? The path of duty is plain when our disobedience causes even unbelievers to wonder at us. If the foundations of truth and honor be destroyed, thus cutting off every hope of security, the

righteous have only one course open to them. They are to take the path that pleases Him and trust Him for the consequences. With boldness they are to face the danger and commit the whole matter to God.

The Trial of Faith

The righteous, for their obedience to the Word of God, and for their refusal to swerve from the narrow way of eternal life, are made the object of attack. So it has ever been. And those who know not sufferings and hardships, and the poisonous venom of the tongues of men, may well wonder if they be among the righteous. The Lord Jesus said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

Now all the sufferings of the children of God for righteousness' sake are for the trial of their faith. The Lord tests the righteous. He puts their piety through the fire of tribulation, not that He might condemn them, but that He might purify them for Himself. God will have nothing unclean to dwell with Him. He is preparing for Himself a people that shall be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. It is in the furnace of affliction that the dross is consumed, and only that remains which can stand the pure eyes of Him with whom we have to do. As Peter says, "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

The wicked will also undergo trial, but it is not the trial of faith for they have not faith. To them calamities will come due to divine displeasure and abhorrence. Fire and brimstone with the devil and his angels will be their portion. If the wicked only knew the wrath that hangs over them! Now, since they shall be swept away in the judgment, why should they be feared by the godly?

The Victory of Faith

It is the joy and comfort of Christians that God has revealed Himself as One to whom the very hairs of their heads are all numbered. His ear is always open to their cry. Their patience and labors of love are known to Him, for He has not set Himself off from the world, but "upholds all things by the word of his power."

Wicked ways do not go by unnoticed and the cries of the righteous do not ascend to heaven unheeded. The godly know that when it is best to send help, their righteous God will speedily do so. He will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that they might be able to bear it.

Helpless, the believer clings to Jesus

only. But he needs no other refuge, for all that he needs in Him he finds. Those who are planted firmly on Christ Jesus are standing on a rock from which they shall never be moved. Only in Him are we safe from condemnation and the eternal pains of hell.

Is your trust stayed on the Saviour, who alone is able to establish and keep you unto the day of judgment?

The Sunday School Lessons

By the REV. EDWARD J. YOUNG

Instructor in Old Testament in Westminster Theological Seminary

April 4th, God, the Creator. Gen. 1:1—2:25.

THIS lesson is the first in a series of studies taken from the Old Testament. The Old Testament is a direct preparation for the New, and much that lies latent within it is brought to light and explained in the New. The Old Testament deals with the history of the chosen line and points to the coming Messiah. Christ is indeed its goal. The Old Testament is the very Word of God, as is the New. The God of whom it speaks is the God of the New. The Messiah to whom it looks forward is the Christ of the New Testament. Hence, the religion presented in the Old is essentially the religion of the New Testament, and its code of ethics the same. "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, I come not to destroy but to fulfill."

At the very foundation of all that the Old Testament teaches is its conception of God. This conception is wholly different from that found in the literatures of other nations of antiquity. In the Old Testament there is evidence neither of animism nor of polytheism. Rather, we find theism in the highest sense of the word. God is presented in the sharpest distinction from the world which He has created. That which characterizes the Old Testament view of God is the clearness with which it is insisted that God is the Creator.

This high doctrine is found not merely in isolated passages alone, nor is it a mere excrescence. Rather it underlies all that the Old Testament

teaches about God. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number . . . Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding" (Isaiah 40:26, 28). "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).

Thus, according to the Old Testament, God exists independent of His creation. He is truly absolute and self-dependent. To Him there was no beginning and to Him is no end. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalm 90:2). God is presented in the sharpest distinction from the Gods and idols of heathen nations. There is no equal to Him who is over all. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One" (Isaiah 40:25; cf. Deut. 4:15).

The work of creation, however, is related in classic form in the first and second chapters of Genesis. These chapters tell the account of the heavens and the earth. Even a cursory reading of them will show that they are concerned to stress the activity of God in creation and the separateness which exists between God and that which He has created. Many questions arise in our minds as we read,

which are not here answered. Very little is told as to how God created. The first chapter is told in the form of fiat and fulfillment. Thus, God issues a command, which is carried out. Compare, for example, Gen. 1:3, "And God said, Let there be light [the fiat] and there was light [the fulfillment]." The emphasis of the chapter is not upon how God created, but upon the fact that God is the Creator. Constantly there is stressed the creative and formative activity of God. He is said to create, speak, see, divide, call, make, set and bless. Thirty-two times is the word "God" mentioned—the first subject of the Bible.

The first verse of Genesis one is a simple and direct, yet a general and comprehensive, statement of the all-embracing work of creation. It is a statement that is in no wise exhausted by the verses that follow. The purpose of the verse seems to be to give an answer to the question, "What is the beginning of the heaven and the earth?" This question is answered by saying that the beginning of all things is due to a creative act of God. The word "beginning" in verse one is not at all superfluous. In the Hebrew it forms a striking alliteration with the word "created," and serves the purpose of rendering more clearly and forcibly the thought that all things had their beginning in a creative act of God.

It cannot be asserted dogmatically that the first verse in itself teaches a creation out of nothing, but there are considerations which lead one to believe that such is its purpose. Certainly the word which is translated by "create" in our English Bible, is the one best fitted to convey this idea.

The remainder of the chapter focuses its attention upon the creation of the earth and its preparation as a dwelling place for man. Verse two does not carry us back as far as does verse one. However, verse one has already mentioned the earth, and verse two focuses our attention upon the earth in a condition described as "without form and void." How long the earth had been in this condition before God said, "Let there be light," we have no means of knowing. We have no right, however, to assume that this condition which we commonly call "chaos," was necessarily

evil. Over this unformed earth the Spirit of God brooded.

In six successive stages, called days, the earth is brought from the condition of "without form and void" to a point where God said, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). The exact length of the period called a "day" we do not know. That which characterizes the first chapter is its orderly progression. The crowning work of creation was man who was made, not as the beasts of the field, after their kind, but in the image of God. There is indicated also the fact that man is to be ruler over the rest of creation.

Between the first and second chapters there is no contradiction. Rather, whereas chapter one is a general account of the creation of the earth, chapter two is particularistic, focusing upon the creation of man, about which it gives additional information. Especially must be noted the fact that God made man of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, through which act man became a living soul. It is not because he is a living soul that man is distinguished from the remainder of the animate creation. That which distinguishes him is the divine inbreathing. Thus, man is presented as the crown of creation. "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:4, 5). Truly grand yet simple is the account of creation, given to us in Scripture.

April 11th, The Sin of Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:1—4:26.

WHEN God created man, he placed him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it (Gen. 2:15). The earth, with its strength and resources, lay before man. He was indeed monarch of all he surveyed. God had commanded him to fill the earth and to subdue it. Over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth, man was to have the dominion (Gen. 1:28). To man had been given every herb and tree, every beast and fowl. All was at man's disposal for his needs. Not hostile was the earth upon which

man was placed, but adapted to him, a home for him. Thus was man placed upon the earth, that in his mastery of it he might continually show forth the glory of Him who is the Creator.

The second chapter of Genesis tells of a gracious act of God to man. After having placed man in the Garden, God entered into a covenant with him, the terms of which are expressed in Genesis 2:16, 17. A covenant is a contract between two parties. In this case the contracting parties were God, the Creator, and man, the creature. The condition of the covenant was "perfect obedience" upon the part of Adam. Adam was required not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (v. 17). The penalty for disobedience was death (v. 17). This covenant is commonly called the covenant of works, for the outcome depended upon what Adam did. Had he obeyed, the outcome would have been life, the opposite of death. Disobedience would bring death; obedience life. For this reason the covenant is also called the covenant of life.

When this covenant was made Adam stood in a right relationship to God. God was his Creator, and as a creature he owed perfect obedience. The covenant was indeed a period of testing.

The outcome of the covenant we well know. The Catechism asks (Q. 13): "Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?" and answers, "Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God." The account of this fall is given in the third chapter of Genesis. Forceful, indeed, is the first verse of this chapter, for it introduces a creature that has not been mentioned before: the serpent. Through his instrumentality Adam and Eve are caused to break the condition of the covenant of life. The serpent is introduced as being more subtle (literally, more naked) than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. Thus this creature, through whose agency Adam is tempted, is indeed a creature. He does not exist independently of God, but was created by God.

His first question to the woman was misleading (v. 1) in that it implies that God had commanded that which He had not in reality commanded.

"Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (v. 1). This question seems also to imply that God had withheld from Adam and Eve that which was beneficial for them. God's command was really given to test man. The serpent implies that God was merely holding back that which was beneficial. Thus, reflection is cast upon the character of God.

Eve recognizes the falsity of the question. "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden," she says. However, she herself is inaccurate in her reply. "But of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, lest ye die." The Scripture gives no record of God's having commanded Adam and Eve not to touch the tree. His command was, "Thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen. 2:16).

Quick as a flash comes the answer of the serpent, "Ye shall not surely die." This was a direct denial of what God had said, for the devil is a liar, and the father of lies (John 8:44). Possibly in order to bolster up his lie, the serpent casts despite upon the character of God, implying that God was keeping back something that was to be desired. The serpent was appealing to Eve's reason.

The origin of sin is a mystery which God has not been pleased to reveal to us. In a universe which God had pronounced to be "very good" whence can sin arise? We know that God is not the Author of sin, for "God is Light and in him is no darkness at all." For some reason that we cannot understand, God, in His infinite wisdom and knowledge, permitted the existence of sin.

Likewise it is a mystery how a being such as Adam, who was pronounced to be good, could sin. Adam stood in a right relationship to God, it was a relationship of righteousness. How could beings that were upright and holy in nature, as were Adam and Eve, become sinful and depraved? How could the character of Adam change? Insoluble, indeed, is this question which is raised by the presence of sin in the world.

The suggestions of the serpent placed a choice before Eve. The writer confesses his indebtedness to Dr. Cornelius Van Til who first made clear to him the supreme importance of the choice which Eve was called

upon to make. Who was the ultimate interpreter of the universe, God or the serpent? Should Eve continue to trust God in all His gracious statements, depending upon Him as her Creator to watch over her and care for her? Was God really the basic Fact, from whom all other facts derive their significance? Or, should Eve be "reasonable," as the serpent had apparently implied that she should be (Gen. 3:5). Should she set up her own reason as the ultimate standard by which the world in which she lived was to be interpreted? The alternative may be thus stated: Was God the ultimate standard by which to judge of the world or was her own mind the ultimate standard?

Eve followed the suggestion of the serpent. She saw that "the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise" (Gen. 3:6). Eve had begun to rely upon her reason, apart from God. The result was that her depraved character broke forth into overt action. She "took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6). Rationalism entered the world, and depraved humanity has ever since exalted sin-blinded reason to the position of supreme interpreter of the world. Tragic, indeed, are the attempts of sinful men, relying upon sin-blinded reason, to discover whether God exists or not.

The consequences of this sin were far-reaching. Adam and Eve discovered that they were naked. They became ashamed and sought to clothe themselves. Then He who is the supreme Judge, whose Word endureth forever, denounced this act of sin and drove man from the garden. Vivid is the Bible statement, "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24).

Thus sin entered the world. For Adam, the first man, was our representative in the garden. God entered into covenant with him as the first man, the head of the human race. Adam disobeyed the covenant and plunged not only himself but also all his descendants who are born from him by natural generation into an estate of

sin and misery. "Through Adam's fall, we sinned all." But God has entered into a covenant with a second Man, His own eternal Son, and in the fullness of time the second Man, by His active obedience to God's immutable law, and by His substitutionary death upon the cross, delivered all His people from their lost estate. "For the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven" (I Cor. 15:22).

MACHEN MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES PLANS AND APPOINTMENTS

MEETING in Philadelphia on Monday, March 8th, the Machen Memorial Committee laid the groundwork for its campaign to raise the sum of one million dollars for buildings and endowment for Westminster Theological Seminary.

The Rev. Edwin H. Rian, President of the Board of Trustees of the seminary, announced that fifteen persons in various denominations and countries have been requested to serve as captains of campaign teams. These captains, together with the organizations they represent, are as follows:

- Mrs. Frank H. Stevenson of Cincinnati, representing women.
- The Rev. W. J. Grier of Belfast, representing the Irish Evangelical Church.
- The Rev. John Dolfin of Muskegon, Mich., of the Christian Reformed Church.
- The Rev. Thomas E. Welmors of Holland, Mich., of the Reformed Church in America.
- The Rev. J. D. Hutton of Jackson, Miss., of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.
- The Rev. W. D. Reid of Montreal of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.
- The Rev. James Rohrbaugh of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, representing the graduate students of Westminster Seminary.
- The Rev. Samuel J. Allen of Carson, N. D., representing the class of 1930.
- The Rev. A. K. Davison of Vineland, N. J., the class of 1931.
- The Rev. John P. Clelland of Wilmington, Del., the class of 1932.
- The Rev. John H. Skilton of Portland, Me., the class of 1933.
- The Rev. Calvin K. Cummings of Philadelphia, the class of 1934.
- The Rev. Robert L. Atwell of Harrisville, the class of 1935.
- The Rev. Carl Ahlfeldt of Indianapolis, the class of 1936.
- Harvey McArthur of Philadelphia, representing the present student body.

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

By the REV. JOHN H. SKILTON

LESSON 24

What Is Sin?

QUESTION 14. *What is sin?*

ANSWER. *Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.*

QUESTION 15. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

ANSWER. *The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.*

THE Catechism very appropriately, in its section dealing with the specific sin of our first parents, directs our attention to the general question, "What is sin?"

The Law of God

Those who framed the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, in their fidelity to the Scriptures, recognized sin to be a real evil, neither imaginary nor in any way necessary to man's nature, and a definite type of evil, distinct from other evils traceable to it, like illness and death (see Romans 5:12). They represent sin as a "moral evil" related to the law of God: "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." Sin, they would have us realize, involves the failure of moral agents to meet the requirements of a law to which they are rightfully subject, an objective law apart from man and his vain imaginings and unholy purposes—the law of God (read the Confession of Faith, Chapter 19). God's moral perfection is the basis of His law. Being infinitely holy He has established holy requirements of man.

Obviously those requirements must be perfection: "the entire conformity of the moral nature and conduct of a rational creature with the nature and will of God." Without doing violence to His own holiness God could not institute a law requiring less (see Matthew 22:35-39; James 2:10).

The Shorter Catechism makes plain to us that sin consists not only in the commission of acts in violation of the law of God but also in any failure to conform to the law. Sin may consist in not doing as well as in doing. Furthermore, it goes deeper than do-

ing, than our deeds; it is found also in our character, in our fallen nature. Let us review the Sermon on the Mount to see how our Lord teaches that sin consists in more than external acts (Matthew 5-7).

The heart, like a tree, if corrupt produces evil fruit. It is sinful as well as the fruit. And it is sinful even when it is not bearing obvious fruit. Even when not producing overt acts of transgression, our character, our nature, if not conformed to the standards of God, must be considered sinful. Study I John 3:4; Romans 6:12-17; 7:5-24; 8:6, 7; Galatians 5:17; James 1:14, 15; Ephesians 4:18-19; and Jeremiah 17:9.

Guilt and Pollution

The elements of sin are guilt and pollution. Sin evokes the wrath of God and calls for His righteous condemnation; it places guilt on the sinner. Sin also separates the creature, as an offensive, vile, polluted being, from the Creator, perfect in holiness.

The Sin of Adam

The fifteenth question of the Catechism again directs our attention to the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created—their eating the forbidden fruit—the issue or expression of the sin that had strangely entered their souls. We are ever forced to wonder, as we think of their unbelief and rebellion, how sin found lodgment in souls created in God's image. We wonder also how Satan fell from his original estate, and other angels with him. We may also wonder why God has permitted sin; yes, permissibly decreed it, and has created beings who have sinned, and preserves and governs all by the word of His power. But we must, in true reverence, ascribe glory to Him who from eternity has known all things mysterious to us, who does all things well, and who alone can subdue evil.

SUBJECTS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. *If sin were not related to the law of God would it be a real evil?*
2. *Is the moral law subjective?*
3. *Consider the teaching of the Larger Catechism regarding the moral law.*

4. *Is it permissible to violate any type of "law"?*

5. *Is the law of God related to God's nature?*

6. *Must God punish violations of His law? Why?*

7. *What does the law of God require of man? Can we meet its requirements? Is it possible for men to do more than God requires of them? Is it possible for men before or after conversion to live without sin? Look through the Westminster standards for statements on this subject and test them by the Scriptures. Could men rightfully expect rewards even for perfect obedience to the law of God if such obedience were possible?*

8. *Is it possible for us to understand why sin was decreed, why Satan fell, and why Adam sinned?*

9. *What is the supreme end of God's decrees? Of His works of creation and providence? The chief end of man?*

10. *Is sin nothing but selfishness? Is it a physical evil? Is evil eternal? Can good exist without evil? Is there any sin of ignorance? Is sin limited only to our deliberate transgressions?*

11. *Is it proper to dismiss the "smallest" sins lightly?*

LESSON 25

Effects of the Fall

QUESTION 16. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

ANSWER. *The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.*

QUESTION 17. *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

ANSWER. *The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.*

QUESTION 18. *Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate wherinto man fell?*

ANSWER. *The sinfulness of that estate wherinto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.*

Representatives

We noted in our study of the Covenant of Works that Adam stood

in that covenant not only for himself but also for all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation. Since he acted as a "public person" in a representative capacity, "all mankind sinned to him and fell with him in his first transgression" (Larger Catechism 22). Of course, after his first disobedience and the end of his period of probation, Adam ceased to act as a representative whose further sins would be regarded as the sins of his children.

Instances of God's dealing with men and their descendants collectively, on the basis of representation are found frequently in the Scriptures. See Exodus 20:5, 6; 34:6, 7; Numbers 32:17, 18; Psalm 103; and Jeremiah 32:18.

Only foolish men will assail the principle of representation as unjust. We may not understand the manifestations of perfect justice nor the way in which God works out all things for His own glory and the good of His elect; but all who truly reverence the Lord of the whole earth know that whatever He does is perfect. The redeemed of the Lord will find reason for rejoicing in the principle of representation. They will render praise forever and ever to their great God and Saviour because He graciously acted as their representative. They died in Adam but, through no merit of their own, they live in Christ.

Adam's Guilt Imputed

The Westminster Standards teach that the guilt of Adam's first transgression was "imputed" to all his descendants (Confession of Faith, 6:3). By "imputed" is meant "judicially laid to the charge of" or "reckoned to one's account." God laid to the charge of all Adam's children the guilt of his sin, "the just liability to punishment for sin."

The doctrine of the imputation of Adam's guilt rests firmly on Romans 5:12-21. Paul says, in verse 12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned."

This verse undoubtedly teaches that death has passed upon all men because of the sin of Adam that all men sinned in him. Since Adam's descendants did not personally sin in him his guilt must have been laid to their account.

Verses thirteen and fourteen bear out the teaching of verse twelve. In the period between Adam and Moses death reigned. The presence of death can be explained only on the basis of Adam's sin.

The fifteenth verse says that "through the offence of one many died"; the sixteenth, that the "judgment was by one to condemnation"; the seventeenth, that "by one man's offence death reigned by one"; the eighteenth, that by one offence, the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; and the nineteenth verse declares plainly that by one man's disobedience many were "declared to be," "constituted," or "categorized" as sinners.

Forceful as these direct statements are they are rendered even more forceful by the relationship that they sustain in their context to the doctrine of justification. Adam is said to be the figure, the type, of him that was to come (v. 14). As by his disobedience many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of Christ shall many be constituted righteous (v. 19). The righteousness of Christ is imputed to men who have no claim upon it by reason of their own righteousness; the guilt of Adam is imputed to those who did not personally eat of the forbidden tree.

See also I Corinthians 15:21, 22.

Original Sin

It is therefore clear that the fall of Adam brought to men the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin and that all men are justly liable to punishment because of this imputed guilt. Consequent upon the fall and upon guilt there is a want in all men of original righteousness, of the moral image of God.

A grave consequence of the fall, and a just infliction for guilt is the corruption of man's whole nature, or what the Catechism says is "commonly called Original Sin" (Question 18). All men are born with a corrupt nature. This corruption, seated in the whole soul, and affecting the entire man, is not of the substance of the soul or a substance in itself. It renders us opposite to all good and inclined to all evil. It includes both guilt and pollution. This corrupt nature of course expresses itself in actual transgressions; but it is sinful in itself.

Some of the types of Scriptural statements that can be adduced in proof of the doctrine of original sin are the following:

1) All men are regarded as sinners. Although the Bible everywhere declares or implies this truth, a few verses merit special attention: I Kings 8:46; Psalm 130:3; 143:2; Isaiah 53:6; 64:6; Romans 3:10-12, 19, 22, 23; Galatians 3:22; and I John 1:8, 10; 5:19.

2) All men are totally depraved. Through God's grace some men may be better than others and men may not be as evil as they could be if not restrained by God; but "entire sinfulness" can be rightly ascribed to all (see Confession of Faith 16:7). Consider Genesis 6:5, 6; Job 15:14-16; Psalm 51; Proverbs 20:9; Jeremiah 13:23; 17:9; Matthew 7:17-18; John 3:6; 11:25, 26; Romans 8:5-7; I Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-5 and 4:17-18.

3) Sin shows itself at a very early time in the life of children. The human race is born in sin. Consider Genesis 8:21; Job 11:12; 14:4; 15:14-16; Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Proverbs 22:15; and Ephesians 2:3.

4) The very fact that regeneration and redemption are necessary gives support to the doctrine of original sin (see John 3:3, 5; 6:33; and II Corinthians 5:17).

The fall brought mankind into a dark estate of sin. Apart from the grace of God there could be no hope for men.

SUBJECTS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Study the early chapters of Romans for information about man's guilt and pollution.

2. What do the Scriptures teach about the imputation of guilt and of righteousness? Has any sin been imputed to Christ? Has Christ's righteousness been imputed to some?

3. Show from the Scriptures that all men have sinned, that all men are totally depraved, and that sin appears early in the life of children.

4. On the basis of our studies of sin would there appear to be any hope for men in themselves? Could men be saved on the basis of their own righteousness?

5. Read Questions 20 to 38 of the Catechism.

A SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS NEWS

Russia

THE eastern section of Ivanovsk Province, textile center of the Soviet Union located about 250 miles northeast of Moscow, is the scene of a religious revival that has alarmed the Russian Communist Party. The movement has little to do with the Orthodox Church and the type of religion with which it is concerned is fanatical and narrowly sectarian. A correspondent in the newspaper, *Pravda*, official organ of the communists, says that "in this region there is a multitude of sects and religious organizations, many of which have a scanty membership and some actually have only two or three members. But they develop an activity that goes far beyond the functions of a religious cult. Often they carry on anti-Soviet Trotskyist agitation."

The correspondent hints that the guarantee of religious freedom contained in the new Constitution is being abused. He denounces the local communist organization in the province for the poor living conditions there. But it is difficult to determine whether he regards the sects as dangerous because of their religious nature or because they may constitute a cloak for anti-Soviet action.

Clubs, associations, and all other organizations not directly under the supervision of the government have always been a pet phobia of the Soviet. But now, it appears, it is possible to form a new "church" or sect and thus evade the ban on clubs. It is also lamentably true that the Russians, especially in the backward sections like Ivanovsk, have always had a tendency to run after strange idols of a semi-religious character and to mix with their "worship" wild rituals of self-torture, flagellation and orgiastic ceremonies. In a small measure, therefore, the alarm of the communists may, in this instance, be justified.

Quite another matter, however, is the announcement made on March 10th by *Isvestia*, the government newspaper, that there has been "an alarming decline" in the forces organized to stamp out religion in Soviet Russia, and that the resulting situation is "intolerable."

The membership of the League of

Militant Godless has dropped from five million in 1933 to less than two million, and the organization has ceased to exist in many provinces.

Isvestia asserted that clergymen, taking advantage of the new Constitution, were staging a rapid comeback to the extent of preparing their own candidates for the forthcoming Russian elections.

"The masses are no longer satisfied with old methods of anti-religious propaganda or with trite criticism," the newspaper declared. "The masses want comprehensive answers in order to help them understand and explain phenomena which formerly they connected with religion."

France

THE death of the grand old scholar of the Reformed churches of France, Emile Doumergue, at the ripe age of ninety-two, occurred on February 14th.

Dean Doumergue was unquestionably the greatest theological scholar of the true Reformed tradition in France. He was a noble defender of the faith. Learning, clarity of analysis, tenacity of purpose, courage in the face of opposition, all marked his character. He was born at Nîmes in Southern France in 1844. In 1880 he was appointed Professor of Church History in the Reformed Theological Faculty in Montauban and remained a member of that faculty for thirty-nine years until his retirement in 1919.

Dean Doumergue's pen was constantly busy. His greatest service to scholarship was the preparation of the most comprehensive life of John Calvin which we possess. It is the fruit of a tremendous amount of labor. The first volume appeared in 1899 and the work was completed with the publication of the seventh volume in 1927. It is a work worthy of its subject.

Dean Doumergue in his last years became practically blind, but he never ceased to contend for the Biblical faith. He made clear his objection to the proposals for the union of the Reformed churches of France, a union which is now apparently nearing the final stages.

With reference to this union, Pastor H. Bruston has pointed out in a

communication to *Le Christianisme au XXe Siècle* that the union is being consummated on the basis of an accord which leaves out several fundamental elements of the faith. Two of them are facts of gospel history—the virgin birth and the empty tomb. Two of them are evangelical truths, says M. Bruston, the piety of Jesus and His expiatory sacrifice. The answer to this communication which has been given by the president of the Evangelical Reformed Church of France is most unsatisfactory. He mentions the fact that the gospel is reaffirmed by the new Declaration of Faith and that in the gospel are found the *annunciation* and the empty tomb. This, of course, is the customary modernist type of statement. President Rohr also points out that the Commission on Consecration (ordination) of the present Evangelical Reformed Church does not require literal and slavish adherence from its candidates but rather the acceptance of the great principles and facts of Christianity. It is obvious to the observant reader from these statements why the Evangelical Reformed Church has reached its present state.

Germany

ON TUESDAY, March 2nd, Hans Kerrl, Reich Minister for Church Affairs, was publicly accused in an open letter by the confessional church leader, Dr. Otto Dibelius, of attacking and ridiculing fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Dr. Dibelius quoted a recent address of Minister Kerrl in which the Nazi leader said, "Bishop Gallen and Evangelical General Superintendent Zoellner tried to tell me what Christianity is—namely, that it is a recognition of Jesus as the Son of God. That is absurd and irrelevant. In the course of history an Apostles' Creed has been created. That acceptance of this Apostles' Creed should be a sign of a Christian likewise is absurd. God reveals Himself in history. Dogmas are the work of men."

Referring to this portion of the address Dr. Dibelius said, "You have gone further, however. You have demanded that Protestant preaching must change. You said further that priests declare Jesus is a Jew and they talk of the Jew Paul and assert that salvation comes from Jews—that this must cease.

"When you declare Evangelical pastors shall not repeat these things you forbid them to say that which stands in the New Testament.

"We must resist if you attempt to force your opinions on the church. Let the church govern its own affairs in true liberty and independence."

Three days after the appearance of this open letter the Confessional Synod and the Protestant Bishops of Bavaria and Wuerttemberg publicly announced their intention of boycotting any church election in which the government employed the tactics of 1933, that is, a general mobilization of all church taxpayers, regardless of their attitude toward Christianity. They insisted that Chancellor Adolf Hitler had no legal right to call a church election.

An answer to those who proposed the boycott was not long in coming. On March 9th certain "German Christian" extremists were reported to have requested Hitler to order a plebiscite on the question, "Do you as a German desire a confessionless German national church?" Minister Kerrl, through whom the petition was sent, rejected the proposal.

Meanwhile the national church movement, with headquarters in Thuringia, is working furiously to crystallize public sentiment in its favor. It has adopted the slogan, "For Christ and against the Jewish spirit, for freedom of conscience and against spiritual slavery, for church peace and against racially foreign teachings." Citizens are being importuned to attend rallies for discussion of such themes as "The Path to a German Christian National Church," and "A Jew Church or a Church of German Christians."

The dramatic high point in the struggle was reached when the *Fuehrer*, having now lost all confidence in his church minister, stripped Hans Kerrl of his power and ordered the regulations for the coming elections to be drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior. They will probably be issued in Mr. Kerrl's name but he will have had nothing to do with them.

The Ministry of the Interior presented two plans for Hitler's consideration: one is conservative, the other tends toward a radical National Socialist solution. The first plan, drawn up by Counsellor Medicus, would exclude the possibility of any general

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**To the Friends of
Westminster Seminary**

THE legacy which Dr. Machen left to the seminary will not be available for many months. We make this announcement because some may have the mistaken idea that the seminary does not now need funds. The seminary emphatically does need funds. We urge every friend of the institution to continue his regular contributions to the current expenses.

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mobilization of all baptized Protestants and would pave the way for the final separation of church and state after the elections.

The second proposal is the work of Counsellor Stuckart, one time extremist Secretary of State in the Reich Ministry of Culture, but now considerably calmed down. The Stuckart plan would strengthen the position of the National Socialist group (the German Christians) and would provide a certain degree of state control of the church after the elections. Leaders of both the compromising Lutheran Council and the Confessional Synod favor the acceptance of the Medicus plan, while the German Christians approve the Stuckart proposal.

Strangely enough, the Hitler Elite Guard and the Secret Police are now unintentional allies of the Confessional Synod on the issue of the separation of church and state. They hold that the church has already been entirely too much trouble to them and, if it is divorced from the state, it will soon sink in lethargy and eventually the "foreign Christian religion" will die of itself and be replaced by a new heroic ideology.

VERDICT IN SUIT AGAINST COLLINGSWOOD CHURCH IS INDEFINITELY POSTPONED

IN CAMDEN, (N. J.) Chancery Court on March 3rd the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. redoubled its efforts to gain control of the church property of the Collingswood Presbyterian Church. The church, under the leadership of its pastor, the Rev. Carl McIntire, withdrew from that denomination on June 15, 1936, to become an independent church. It has successfully retained possession of the church property since that time. An effort to obtain a temporary injunction against the church last July was unsuccessful, but the bigwigs of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. are sparing no energy or expense in their attempts to oust the Collingswood organization.

The suit was brought in the name of five former members of the congregation who had refused to withdraw with the majority. Since one of the five later dropped out, there are now only four plaintiffs. One of the complainants, J. Ernest Kelly, in the course of his examination at the opening session before Vice Chancellor Francis B. Davis, naïvely asserted that he was the sole member of the Collingswood session and that the pulpit of the church was vacant. Cross-examination disclosed that he, as a "session," had held one meeting (presumably with himself), had held no services, administered no sacraments, attended no meetings of presbytery. Further, he had defended Mr. McIntire against the presbytery in 1935, and had participated in a rally exposing Modernism in the denomination. Mr. Kelly blandly stated that he had later "changed his mind" and now could see no false teaching in the literature of the Boards.

Next witness was Stated Clerk Lewis S. Mudge who, when questioned concerning the church's constitution, responded, "No appeal can be taken from decisions of the General Assembly," and declared pontifically, "No church has a right to secede."

During the cross-examination of one witness counsel for the defense asked a question involving doctrine.

Objection was promptly made by plaintiffs' counsel, but Judge Davis ruled that such evidence would be heard. He added that he would consider only that which he deemed relevant. The following day he ruled that only such evidence as bears the imprint of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. would be admissible.

At the concluding session of the five-day trial Judge Davis directed counsel to file written briefs "at their discretion," because of a heavily crowded docket. This necessarily postpones the verdict indefinitely.

The Collingswood case has been eagerly watched by friend and foe alike, since its final disposition may have an important effect upon similar cases pending in all parts of the country.

TRENTON CHURCH SPONSORS INDEPENDENT BOARD RALLY

AN INDEPENDENT Board Missionary Rally, under the auspices of the Faith Presbyterian Church of Trenton (N. J.) together with the Columbus Church and the Calvary Church of Amwell, was held on Sunday, March 7th, at the home of the new Trenton congregation. About 55 persons gathered to hear three of the most recently appointed missionaries under that Board: Mr. and Mrs. Edward L. Kellogg and Mr. Charles G. Schaufele.

The speakers were enthusiastically received by the congregation, and a liberal offering was contributed to the Independent Board.

Faith Church of Trenton has announced a series of evangelistic services for the week prior to Easter. On Sunday, March 21st, Dr. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary will speak at 2.30 p. m. Speakers at the evening services to be held at 7.30 during the following week are: Tuesday, the Rev. Alexander K. Davison, pastor of the Covenant Church of Vineland; Wednesday, the Rev. Edwin H. Rian, of the Home Missions Committee; Thursday, the Rev. William T. Strong, pastor of the West Collingswood Church; and Friday, the Rev. Charles J. Woodbridge, of the Independent Board. The public is urged to attend all of these evangelistic services.

SPIRITUAL BLESSING MARKS OHIO PRESBYTERY MEETING

UNUSUAL blessing, interest, and information marked the meeting of the Presbytery of Ohio held on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 9th and 10th, in the city of Marion. Ministerial members in attendance were: E. C. DeVelde, Cincinnati; T. H. Mitchell, Youngstown; J. L. Shaw, Newport, Ky.; A. F. Faucette, Cleveland; and C. A. Ahlfeldt, Indianapolis, Ind. Four elders were also present. Arrangements for the meeting were in charge of Mr. Samuel Riccobene, who is under care of presbytery and supplying the pulpit of the Marion congregation.

The business meeting was held on Tuesday afternoon and continued on Wednesday morning. After an examination in theology (in order to set a precedent for future care in such matters) the Rev. A. Franklin Faucette was received into presbytery and his church, The Presbyterian Church of America in Cleveland, was welcomed into full membership. The Providence Presbyterian Church of Youngstown was also admitted, bringing the number of churches in this presbytery up to five.

Devotional services were held in the late afternoon and evening, and the day was closed with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Rich spiritual benefits were felt by all members, and the group plans, in the future, to hold its regular meetings in all cities represented in its membership. In this way every church will share in the blessings of the meetings.

NEW CHURCHES ORGANIZED IN CALIFORNIA AND OHIO

ON JANUARY 25th a group of loyal Presbyterians in Glendale, California, organized the Bethel Presbyterian Church of Glendale, with twelve persons signing the act of association and the application for admission to the Presbytery of California of The Presbyterian Church of America. Four members were chosen to serve as elders.

The Bethel Church was enrolled at the regular meeting of California Presbytery on February 10th, and on Sunday, February 28th, eighteen persons were received as charter members of the new church. The services are in charge of the Rev. E. Lynne Wade, who also supplies the pulpit of the recently organized Highland Park Church. This has made it necessary to hold the Sunday morning service in Glendale at the early hour of 9.45, but in spite of this handicap the average attendance has been approximately thirty persons, with only slightly fewer in the evening.

Through the generosity of a friend the Bethel Church of Glendale is now occupying, rent free, a real chapel which is fully equipped, seating about 100, and located at 330 Mission Road, just off one of the most important traffic arteries in Glendale, with no other churches in the immediate neighborhood.

Ohio

The Rev. A. Franklin Faucette, who a short time ago undertook the direction of the work in Cleveland, Ohio, under the aegis of the Home Missions Committee, reports the organization of The Presbyterian Church of America in Cleveland on Sunday, March 7th. The organizational meeting was held in the Central Y.M.C.A. building, and marks an important step forward in the missionary enterprise of the church. Fifteen have now signed the roll as charter members, and there are prospects of several more in the near future. Two elders have been chosen by the group, and a call to the pastorate of the church was issued to Mr. Faucette.

The church applied for admission to the Presbytery of Ohio meeting at Marion on March 9th.

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