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## Christian Realism

By the REV. LESLIE W. SLOAT

**A** SHORT time ago we saw in a newspaper the picture of a house. Or rather, it had been a house—now it was only the second story. The first story had been stolen. The house was in the poorer section of town and unoccupied. Apparently neighborhood vagabonds had torn away the first floor piece by piece to use as firewood, and there the second story remained, with nothing under it, supported only by its attachment to the houses on either side of it in the row.

This is an excellent illustration of what has been happening to Christianity of late. The second story may be likened to the moral and spiritual benefits, the fruitage in life and conduct, of Christianity. The first floor, then, is like the basic realities of Christian truth, the root and foundation from which all else proceeds.

In our day there is a tendency—and more than a tendency—to justify the Christian religion on the basis of its ethical fruitage in the life of the individual and the state. We do not object to this in its proper place. But unfortunately the matter has reached the point where this fruitage is presented as itself Christianity. Christianity consists, so we are told, merely of the high ideals of conduct, and of the striving of the individual to realize these ideals. All the rest which we commonly associate with traditional orthodoxy is all right if we want to keep it, but it is not necessary, and if we wish to be up to date it may well be cast aside. We are told that real Christianity, or the realism of Christianity, is the practice of goodness and truth and beauty and justice and honesty which are so desirable among men

and for which we should strive with all our powers.

But the second story of that house stayed up, you remember, only because it was supported by houses on each side. And this foundationless Christianity continues to exist only through the accidental support it receives from the common morality of our civilization. By itself it would quickly fall in pieces, as it has fallen in many places of the earth. It is important, therefore, that we look to the foundations of our faith, to the realities which are absolutely basic in Christianity and without which all else is much like smoke waiting to be dispersed by the first strong wind.

The first reality with which we are confronted in our Christian faith is the reality of God. Have you ever sat back and just faced the simple, straightforward, inescapable fact that God exists? Yes, He does! We take Him too much for granted, even we who claim to believe in Him. He is not an idol made by men's hands, nor an idea fashioned by men's minds, nor even a definition in the Shorter Catechism. He is a really existing, spiritual Being. He knows and sees and understands. He is far greater than you or I, or than the universe about us. He is also entirely different from these. None of them could exist were it not for Him. He brought all things into being, and He continues to have oversight of them. Yet He is not to be identified with what He has made. He is distinct from them. In and of and by Himself, *He exists!*

We feel it necessary to stress the truth of this. It is the basic and primary reality of our Christian faith,

yet it is not always admitted.

Recently a book was published under the title, "Is God Emeritus." A minister, you recall, becomes emeritus when he grows too old for active service but still receives respect and a small salary from his former congregation. Is God then emeritus? We have not read this book, but a brief review of it declares, "The answer to the title is 'yes' wherever God is identified with outworn patterns of thought or transcendental orthodoxies. . . . Substitute gods take the place of the emeritus God, *e.g.*, gods of business, success, culture, nationalism, and the like. The other answer is 'no' wherever the term 'God' squares with the religious feeling compatible with the new scientific culture. . . . The term 'God' represents what we know as a cosmic tendency to produce personalities and the categories applicable to them—which also is real Christianity" (*sic*). Apparently the author of this book thinks we should believe in God, but not that we should believe in the existence of God.

This distinction between believing in God and believing that God exists is not new. Did not the writer of the letter to the Hebrews say that one who would believe in God must believe that He is. . . ?

It is a notable fact, which has often been remarked upon, that the Bible nowhere attempts to prove the existence of God. Everywhere this is assumed. When the book opens we find our starting point the beginning of the world. God is already on the scene. And when Moses meets his Maker at the burning bush and asks His name, the reply comes, "I AM THAT I AM." Absolute, self-sufficient, self-conscious existence is of the very essence of the nature of God. He is real.

It would be possible to dwell long upon this fact. Once we come to grips with it, everything else loses meaning except as it is related to it. We can well see how the Psalmist could meditate upon Him and His will day and night. But there is another reality which, for us, is no less important than this first one. Again it is a thing generally, though not always, assumed. And again it is a thing to which little thought is normally given. It is the fact that human beings exist—you exist, I exist. Yes, we do! Believe it

or not!

This fact is most important. Whatever else may be true of the world about us, however many other beings there may be, this much is certain: There are two beings who exist. One is God; the other is yourself.

Now where two such beings exist, both self-conscious persons, there must be a relationship between them. In this case there is. You individually and personally are related to God. God is related to you. We cannot emphasize too much that this is a real, intimate, personal affair. God does not look on you as merely a minute portion of the human race, or as merely a dust speck in the cosmos. He looks upon you as just what you are—YOU. And you should not look upon God as a mere idea, a vague notion back of which there is probably something. You must look upon God also for just what He is—GOD.

God and myself—these are for me the two basic realities which confront me in Christianity. The two are related. Of course, in that relationship, the one is original and the other is created. One is infinite, the other limited; one is unchangeable and eternal, the other changeable, temporal, conditioned. The one is the source and standard of all moral ideals, the other the morally accountable person who must live up to the standards.

Once we grasp this truth we are

overwhelmed by a virtual flood of associated truths. There is the holiness and perfection of God, and the absoluteness of His moral law. There is the reality of our personal responsibility to Him. Responsibility means little when that to which we must render account is vague and undefined. But when we must come face to face with the eternal, holy, omnipotent Person, responsibility means a very great deal indeed.

Then there is the reality of sin and guilt. It is no small thing to transgress the unchangeable laws of the all-seeing God, and it is no small thing to be guilty before Him. This guilt is real. Remember, He is not an idea. He is a Person. He is creator and governor of the world. The destiny of your immortal soul is in His hand. It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

There is also the reality of judgment and of eternal punishment. Some pseudo-Christian religions deny the existence of hell. Our Lord Jesus did not deny it. He rather affirmed it in the most solemn words. And He even suggested a description of it in one of His parables. A writer has said of Jonathan Edwards that he made hell so real you could find it on the map. We may not know where hell is, but we do know on God's authority that it is. And we also know on the same authority that sinners are destined to spend an eternity of punishment there, the just sentence of the true and holy God.

The reality of these things concerns you and me with dreadful seriousness, for we are the sinners, we are the guilty ones. We do well to be afraid. Jesus said we should be afraid; He said we should fear Him "that hath power to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Now we can appreciate and rejoice in other realities which confront us in Christianity. There is the reality of God's love and mercy. It is personal, this love. And its reality stands out the more when we consider also the redeeming work of Christ which it prompted. This is real too. The death of Christ was not merely an illustration of the supreme sacrifice of love. There at the cross the punishment of God was meted out against sin upon the One who represented sin-

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# An Open Door in New England

By the REV. CHARLES E. STANTON

THE Reformed Faith is very precious to those who have embraced it. It is steel-reinforced. It has an inner strength by which it stands unweakened through the centuries in a world sorely beset by a deadly spiritual conflict, while other theologies rise, fall, and molder in the dust. This is a world in which the finite man must grapple with infinitude, and discover in a changing world those things which, being eternal, do not change. In such a world there have been some who, by the grace of God, have achieved distinguishing success. Not only have their eyes been opened to discover God's Word as the Truth, but they also have been led by faithful teachers into the full enjoyment of the fruit of the labors of all the most gifted and godly of the saints; in short, they have been led into the full enjoyment of the Reformed Faith.

Reformed Theology is the greatest blessing of mankind during the six thousand or more years of man's pilgrimage here upon earth. Painstaking toil in reproducing the text of the Bible accurately, fidelity to its teachings even at the cost of life, tireless and ceaseless searching into its meaning through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit—these things are a part of the cost which godly men who have gone before have paid, and by which the Reformed Faith has been made available to us. But the fruit of their toil has been well worth their efforts. For the harvest of the ages draws on apace and, as that day draws nearer and iniquity increases, the redeemed find themselves sorely in need of the whole counsel of God as they press forward in their relentless conflict against the rulers of the darkness of this world. And because the redeemed are set to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, we who have entered into the enlightenment and comfort of the Reformed Faith regard it as our duty to propagate with unflagging zeal that Reformed Faith among those who know it not.

For this purpose Mrs. Stanton and I are laboring here in New England under The Committee for the Propagation of the Reformed Faith in New England. We began our work at Canaan, Maine, where, during the sum-

mer months of the three previous years, men appointed by the committee had been laboring.

One of the first questions which comes into a person's mind regarding a missionary work like this is, "Has it been worthwhile?"; and perhaps this question has come to no one so searchingly as to ourselves. No one but God knows just how worthwhile this work has or has not been, but we are thoroughly convinced that it has been worthwhile. I shall give some of the facts upon which this conviction is founded. One of the commonest faults of journalism is exaggeration and often, in describing mission work, facts, figures, and illustrations are cited which lead to wrong impressions. I shall endeavor to select illustrations which accurately represent the total situation, considering an understatement regarding the work more commendable than an overstatement.

The impression that this work gave at first was that it would not be worthwhile—not, at least, for a very long time. For Canaan, according to its own testimony, is especially characterized by a dislike for such theology as that of the old *New England Primer* where we read, "In Adam's fall we sinned all." This first impression was strengthened by an incident which occurred shortly after my arrival a year ago last May. It was the Sabbath before Memorial Day. The Sons of the Veterans and Auxiliary were to attend morning worship in a body. Instructions had been given as to the kind of patriotic address they desired. It was an occasion much to be remembered. The instructions went unheeded and the sermon was highly unsatisfactory. And when the time came for the evening service not a single person appeared. That night was a sleepless one for us, and utterably miserable. There were some slight evidences of repentance the next day.

There is a sequel to this story. One year later the Sons of the Veterans and Auxiliary attended morning worship in a body but no instructions regarding the sermon were this time given previously. Much satisfaction with the sermon was expressed and, in addition to the offering that Sab-

bath, the Sons of the Veterans voted a special appropriation.

Daily Vacation Bible School was the next definite item on the program for that summer, and its coming was gladly welcomed as something into which to throw one's energies besides the Sabbath worship services with their attendance of a half-dozen or ten. And so the round-up began. Up hill and down dale the bicycle and I went, until a call had been made in every home in the township and a list made of all the children who were at all interested, as well as of all older persons who would drive or help in any way. And then another call was made at these homes for final arrangements.

With the assistance of Ross MacKay, who was in New England that summer for this purpose, the Daily Vacation Bible School proved very satisfactory, with a record average attendance of sixty-nine for the eight days. We were encouraged because we felt that the children had responded well to our presentation to them of Scripture, and we knew many had heard the gospel for the first time. The townspeople were pleased that so small a village should distinguish itself by such good attendance at Daily Vacation Bible School. Attendance at worship services improved.

A few weeks after arriving in Canaan, we began to hold a Sabbath evening worship service in a schoolhouse five miles east of Canaan and about the same distance from any other village. This work was begun through a contact made at a wedding reception, so that obedience to Paul's command to rejoice with those who rejoice proved profitable in an unexpected way. At these services we had an average attendance of from fifteen to twenty, mostly children and young people. They showed very good interest. This work had attracted our attention, not for its possibilities of future development, but simply as an opportunity to reach a small group with the gospel message, most of whom had not heard the gospel before. Later, when we began our work in St. Albans, we had to discontinue these services at the schoolhouse, but we continue to keep in contact with

those who showed the most interest.

After Daily Vacation Bible School we took our own vacation at our homes in Ohio and Michigan. Those were happy weeks and Maine seemed far away. But there were boys and girls in Maine who through us had just begun to hear the gospel. They had shown a desire to learn more. And so we turned toward Maine again to complete the task which God had given us to do there, however brief or prolonged the completion of that task might be.

We had told the people we were coming back. They were skeptical. Never in their lifetimes had worship services been held all through the winter, and no one seemed to feel that there was any need of a change. Upon our return we were greeted with the question, "How do you think you are going to heat that church? It can't be done." But it was done. A twelve-year-old girl volunteered the information that her daddy had said I could cut some wood on his farm for the church. It took about fourteen cords of small gray birch to heat the church and our home. I cut it and sawed most of it into stove wood by hand alone.

Before our vacation we had been inquiring into the possibilities of holding worship services in Cornville, a township without any village, twelve miles northwest of Canaan. Cornville is listed among Maine's unchurched communities. No services, except Pentecostal meetings, had been held there for years, and some said those were worse than nothing.

We began to hold worship services there on Sabbath afternoons. The attendance has averaged about twenty. They have responded unusually well to the preaching of the gospel. Several of the young people have professed faith in Christ for the first time this past year. One of these, Bradford Thurston, has shown remarkable spiritual development.

Young people's meetings in Cornville are occasions of prolonged discussions about the Bible. The doctrine of election came up one night.

"I can't see it that way," said a young married woman with a Baptist background.

"I don't see anything hard about that to understand at all," responded Miles, who reads his Bible daily and attends worship services faithfully. "God chooses us; then we decide to choose Him."

"I see how it is," said Myron, recently graduated from high school, "We have to have the Holy Spirit in our hearts before we can begin to become Christians."

One night, after young people's meeting at Bradford's house, which is quite far back in the woods, I started for home on the bicycle, which had no light. It was a dark night, so that one could just make out an opening through the trees as an indication of the place where the road was. It was nine miles home by the back road and twelve miles by the road past the church building. Both were dirt roads and wet in the swampy sections. I decided to take the back road. But it happens that the back road runs through a forest which extends many miles and which is a favorite haunt of bob-cats. I was at once told, fully and seriously, of the fact that bob-cats have been known to jump down on men after dark in that vicinity. I took the other road home.

During the winter we stopped at the doctor's office in Hartland. I was asked to disclose our identity. "I thought you looked like a preacher," the doctor said; "we need one in this community." We invisibly pricked up our ears. By the first of June arrangements had been made whereby I was to start preaching in St. Albans, three miles north of Hartland, in addition to preaching at Canaan and Cornville. There were many aspects of the St. Albans field which made it appear, from the beginning, to be a more promising field than either Canaan or Cornville. St. Albans township has a population slightly in excess of one thousand, Canaan of seven hundred, and Cornville of five hundred—and none have any religious instruction except ours.

Soon it was July and time for Daily Vacation Bible School again. But it was going to be more difficult this year because a baby had just come to

our home and now there would be only one of us to teach. Then our first real disappointment came. There was much work to be done: typing, picture-making, hectographing, grading and lessons to prepare, besides housework and a baby to care for; and Mrs. Stanton, who helped too soon, was back in bed again with severe pain and illness from which she has not yet fully recovered.

The school was again successful, however, with an average attendance during the ten days of seventy-two. The children showed real progress in their study of the Bible. So attentive had been my class of boys and girls in the eighth grade or over, that the close of the school left me with the feeling that the teaching of that class was the most profitable task I had undertaken.

Then the question of a Daily Vacation Bible School at St. Albans came up. They had never had one, and they wanted one; but when it came to making concrete plans the project seemed so difficult that those who were interested decided we should give it up. But we did not give it up. A score and a half of dubious students and some of the teachers appeared the first day, but by the end of the week the school was in full swing and the attendance had doubled. The average attendance for the ten days was fifty-six. They did not respond quite so well as the children in Canaan, but we attributed this to the fact that it was all so entirely new. The success of the Daily Vacation Bible School was an important factor in winning the support of the community at a time when the Methodist Church was again beginning to make a strong bid for this field.

Eventually the issue came to a head regarding the question of whether St. Albans should go in again with the Methodist Church at Hartland, as it had formerly done, or have us move to St. Albans and continue the work. There was much discussion and considerable feeling was aroused. I thought of withdrawing, but felt that to do so would be to evade my duty.

At last the decision was made. We were to move to St. Albans. Many of our friends in Canaan were offended when we moved, so that the attendance there fell off sharply. It was painful to us to see that so much of the attendance had been from loyalty to us rather than from loyalty to God's Word.

### New England

**G**IFTS for the work of the Committee for the Propagation of the Reformed Faith in New England may be sent to Dr. William P. Green, Treasurer, 96 Chester Pike, Collingdale, Pa.

St. Albans was definitely a more promising field. The work among the young people there has been especially encouraging. Our St. Albans Young People's Society meets every Monday night. The attendance has averaged about thirty and at times has been over fifty. We have an hour of Bible study, after which our newly-organized choir practices and the others enjoy a social hour. We have been studying Romans, and on a recent test over the first eight chapters the students did very well. Quite a number of these young people attend church regularly as well as Sabbath school, which has only recently been reestablished.

One of the highlights of our activities in the Young People's Society was a visit paid us by the Rev. Burton L. Goddard, at which time we assembled our three young people's societies at one place, with a total of over a hundred, and were shown pictures of the Deerwander Lodge Bible Conference. The young people were enthusiastic. We keep the thought of this Bible conference constantly before them as something to which to look forward. We regard it as a vital factor in this work. We spend much of our time with the young people, playing with them, entertaining them in our home and teaching them. We feel that it is largely in them that hope lies for the future development of this work.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us and opened the way before us. But there are many difficulties. We have no assurance that the work in any of these places can be permanently established. Yet good has the way been in which God has led us and precious has been the privilege of proclaiming the gospel among these people. And the door by which we entered upon this labor is still open.

### Editorial Council Change

It is with regret that we announce that Mr. Murray Forst Thompson has resigned from the Editorial Council of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN. The pressure of his professional duties has made it impossible for Mr. Thompson to continue to serve on the council. THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN takes this opportunity to thank him for his invaluable assistance to the magazine during the past three years.

## On Interpreting Prophecy

The Fifth Article in a Series of Studies in Prophecy

By the REV. EDWARD J. YOUNG

Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary

OUR previous study of prophecy\* has brought us to the point where we may now formulate the first rule whereby one must be guided who would interpret prophecy aright. This rule is as follows: "Since the Old Testament stands in relation to the New as preparation to accomplishment and prophecy to fulfillment, and since the prophets were men of the Old Testament dispensation, it therefore follows that the words of the prophets are to be interpreted only in the light of the teaching of the New Testament."

This is not a rule which has been imposed upon prophecy by man. Rather, it is derived from the Word of God itself. The second rule for the interpretation of prophecy follows naturally upon the first. It may be stated thus: "Since, in the language of prophecy there is likely to be a certain amount of obscurity and ambiguity, the language of prophecy, therefore, cannot be treated as detailed history written in advance. To determine whether a given prophecy is to be interpreted in a literal or a figurative sense, one must await the fulfillment of the prophecy in question."

This rule also is not imposed upon the Bible by man, but is clearly deducible from the Word of God itself. It will be the purpose of the present article to point out that such is indeed the case.

In the first place, it must be determined whether one is in fact justified in saying that the language of prophecy "contains a certain amount of obscurity and ambiguity." When God rebuked Miriam and Aaron for criticizing Moses, He announced to them the distinction which existed between Moses and the true prophets, a distinction which would be made prominent by the manner of revelation vouchsafed to each (Num. 12: 1-8). To Moses God would reveal Himself plainly, even face to face. Furthermore, in His utterances to Moses the Lord would not employ dark sayings. The word which is translated in our

Bibles by dark speeches means riddles or enigmatic sayings. We may safely assert, therefore, that God's revelation to Moses would be plain and direct.

### Prophetic Revelation

In His communications to true prophets, however, God's revelation would not be plain and direct. To them He would divulge His will in a manner less clear. Since God tells Moses that He will not speak to him in dark speeches, the implication is that He will thus speak to the prophets. Hence it would seem to follow that one method of revelation to the prophets was the employment of dark speeches.

The word which Scripture employs is interesting. It may be translated as riddle, enigmatic or perplexing saying. It has reference to utterances which are obscure and dark and which require interpretation. It also refers to allegory and to figurative sayings. Such utterances might be given to the prophets but they would not be employed in the revelations given to Moses.

To prophets God would also reveal Himself in dreams. The dream is in reality a form or mode of vision. While the dreamer is physically unconscious, an impression is communicated to his mind. There is, of course, an air of mystery here. The external world is shut out, and a vivid picture or symbol is placed before the eye of the prophet.

The case of Daniel may serve as an illustration. Although Daniel apparently did not occupy the office of a prophet, being primarily a statesman, he nevertheless did possess in large measure the prophetic gift. To Daniel came dreams in his sleep, and for our benefit he has related the sum of the matter which was revealed to him in his dreams. He beheld four great beasts arising from the sea, and these beasts represented human empires. Such dreams, therefore, constituted one means by which God in His wisdom chose to communicate His will to the prophets.

Another method was the vision. Here we are dealing with the faculty

\*See THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN for Sept. 25, Oct. 25 and Dec. 10, 1940, and Jan. 10, 1941.

of sight. Seeing is in itself a psychological matter, although the prerequisites of seeing are, in normal cases, physical, namely, the eyes. Apparently, however, there were instances when the prophet was enabled to see without the use of the eyes. Consider Isaiah's vision in the temple. That it was a vision there can be no doubt, for the prophet distinctly says that he saw the Lord (Isa. 6:1). Are we, however, to understand that he saw the Lord with physical eyes? If so, many problems immediately arise which probably cannot be answered in a satisfactory manner. Hence, we should in all likelihood conceive of this vision as one which was seen apart from the physical eyes.

A misunderstanding must here be avoided. Not for an instant do we mean that the vision of which Isaiah speaks was in any sense a projection of his own mind or inner consciousness. In no sense can it be said that this vision is of subjective origin. It was entirely objective. Isaiah did not merely think that he saw the Lord. Rather, he did actually see the Lord. It was a seeing, however, in which the physical eyes were probably not used.

We are in the presence of a great mystery. Very marvelous were the ways in which God chose to reveal Himself to His prophets. We cannot penetrate within the veil fully to understand, but God has told us enough to enable us to say with assurance that God "at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1).

It will be evident that both dream and vision constituted a less plain and less direct method of revelation than did the "mouth to mouth" speaking by which God communicated with Moses. Because, therefore, the means of revelation to the prophets were less immediate and less clear than those given to Moses, we may expect to find evidences of this fact in the very prophecies themselves. As a matter of fact, this is exactly what we do find. Several illustrations will prove this beyond a doubt.

### Ambiguity in Prophecy

One of the earliest prophecies in the Bible is that uttered by Noah in Genesis 9:27. Noah thus prophesies, "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." The

language in which this prophecy is couched is not clear and perspicuous. Indeed, it is not entirely free from ambiguity. When Japheth heard these words it would have been impossible for him to go up and down the land proclaiming that he could demonstrate what the future history of the world would be. This utterance of Noah's well serves to indicate that prophecy is not history written in advance.

Let us examine more closely the language of this prophecy. The first question which strikes us is, Who will dwell in the tents of Shem? What is the subject of the verb "dwell?" Is it God or is it Japheth? We who live in the twentieth century know the answer to the question, but we know the answer only because we have seen the fulfillment of the prophecy in subsequent history and particularly in the appearance of Jesus Christ. We know that it was the intention of the prophecy to teach that God would dwell in the tents of Shem. But this was not at all clear to Japheth. He might very well have thought that he and his descendants were thus to dwell. Grammatically, "Japheth" would serve as the subject of "dwell" as well as would the word "God."

Suppose that Japheth, upon hearing this prophecy, did come to the conclusion, as he might conceivably have done, that he and his descendants were to dwell in the tents of Shem. A further question immediately appears. What manner of dwelling would this be? Would it be the abject servitude of bondslaves or would it be dwelling in victory by those who would overpower and subdue Shem? Again, it is said that "Canaan shall be his servant." But, we ask, whose servant? Verse 26 does not answer the question, for, as we read it, we ask, Are we to understand that Canaan will be the servant of God or will he be the servant of Shem? The language of the prophecy does not make this clear. To obtain the answer to these questions we must consult the fulfillment of the prophecy in subsequent history.

Consider the famous Messianic prophecy in Genesis 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The language of this prophecy is by no means crystal clear. What is the meaning of "Shiloh?" Is it a proper name? If it is a proper name, is it the subject of the sentence, so that

we may translate, "Until Shiloh come," or is the thought rather "Until he come to Shiloh"? Both these interpretations are possible. Are we, however, sure that Shiloh is a proper name? By no means; it may quite likely be a compound expression meaning "he whose right it is." The language is ambiguous.

Again, consider the announcement made to Rebekah in Genesis 25:23: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." It is the last phrase with which we are now concerned. The original Hebrew reads as follows, "Elder shall serve younger." From the language alone it is impossible to tell whether the meaning is "the elder shall serve the younger," or "the younger shall serve the elder." The language is ambiguous. The only manner in which the true meaning can be ascertained is to consider the fulfillment of the prophecy. This illustration should make abundantly clear the fact that the language of the prophecy cannot be treated as history written in advance.

One of the most interesting prophecies in the Old Testament is Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks. In Daniel 9:27 the statement is made that ". . . he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." It might be added in passing that this Scripture does not teach that anyone will make a covenant. Its force rather is that the provisions of a covenant which has already been made will be made to prevail. The question then arises, Who will confirm the covenant? Many are the answers given to this question.

Most dispensationalists and destructive critics maintain that the reference is to the prince mentioned in verse 26. The word "prince" however is in the genitive case, and does not seem to be suitable. Others have taught that the meaning is, "One week shall confirm a covenant with many." Still others, "A covenant will cause to prevail with many for one week." Each of these translations is possible. The interpretation which probably has found most favor in the Christian church is that which discovers the subject in the Messiah, already mentioned in verse 26. The meaning then is that the Messiah will bring into force the provisions of a covenant for

one week for the benefit of many. To the present writer this seems to be the correct meaning. Our purpose now, however, is not to show why this is so. What we are now concerned to point out is that the language of this prophecy and others is ambiguous.

The four examples mentioned will bear out the contention that the language of prophecy cannot be treated as history written in advance. We should always remember the methods

which God chose to employ in revealing His will unto the prophets. Prophecy was not given to us to enable us to prophesy or that we might know in detail the future history of the world. Those who thus employ it fail utterly to understand it.

Prophecy was given unto us for our learning, that through its study we might be strengthened and comforted. When we see its fulfillment, then and then alone do we possess its proper interpretation.

## The Deformed Faith in New England

By THOMAS R. BIRCH

THE Commission on Evangelism and Devotional Life of the Congregational Christian Churches consists of twenty-seven persons chosen by the General Council of that organization, and is charged with promoting "a program of evangelism and devotional life in the churches." According to pages 24 and 25 of the 1940 *Minutes* of the General Council, the recommendations of this commission were approved by the council. Among those recommendations were these: "To approve the plan to furnish pastors and churches with well-written pamphlets on the basic teachings of the church"; "to approve the following Resolution with reference to the National Christian Mission: Be It Resolved (1) that we commend the National Christian Mission to our pastors, churches and official leadership, and urge that they give this far-reaching enterprise their hearty cooperation and support; (2) that wherever possible our congregations join with all other Christians around the world in the observance of a World-Wide Communion Sunday, October 6, as an occasion when all members of the Christian family will be present at the Lord's Table on the same day, and thereby deepen their consciousness of unity, and rededicate themselves to the service of their one Lord."

One of the pamphlets published by the Commission on Evangelism and Devotional Life is entitled "The Message and Method of Present-Day Evangelism." It is called "A Syllabus for Pastors" and it makes no effort whatever to disguise its Modernism. From beginning to end it is filled with a frank exposition of another gospel

which it calls a "social gospel." It is literally impossible to turn anywhere in this amazing pamphlet without reading the most out-and-out Modernism imaginable. Just a few quotations, picked at random, will illustrate the tenor of its message:

This high compulsion to do reverence to the Holy leads man to recognize in Jesus of Nazareth a supreme expression in terms of our common humanity of that which is sound and sane in the universe. In Him men encounter the Will of God which seeks them, and to which they long to yield. This is what makes Christ bishop and Lord of men's souls.

Finally, when taken out into the rough and tumble of life, men discover that the ideals and insights revealed in Jesus' life are also continually present in the ongoing process of human experience. For whatever persons commit themselves to Christ, that is to sanity and invincible good will, with sacrificial devotion and high-souled dedication to the good—there they find that life yields them joy, and communion with its deeper meaning (pp. 4, 5).

They met for prayer in the Upper Room in Jerusalem, in the faith that He survived the tragedy of the cross, and was still in touch with them. There we are told the Holy Spirit came to them, empowering them to speak and act and live in the Name of Jesus. In their fellowship Jesus continued to live, and through their service His redemptive work was carried forward. . . .

In this earliest Christian fellowship were men of differing intellectual and spiritual attainments, living on various economic levels, but united by a common loyalty to Jesus Christ and by a warm, sincere love for one another. The fellowship was not so much the result of their intention, as it was the result of the social initiative and the gift of the Spirit. This Spirit found expression in various social results, in the sharing of material goods, in the obliteration of all barriers of race, wealth, and sex, in the insistence upon the monogamous relation in marriage, in the improved position of women in so-

ciety, in the amelioration of the condition of slaves, and in the reluctance of military service (p. 6).

Sometimes it [suffering] is a direct consequence of the sufferer's own sin, and therefore may fairly be called a punishment. But, on the other hand, it may be the consequence of someone else's sin, and the sufferer may be a vicarious sufferer—sometimes voluntarily so, as Jesus was on the cross, and sometimes ignorantly so, as a child with hereditary syphilis (p. 10).

The entire pamphlet is permeated with such declarations of unbelief. And the "social gospel" is the only gospel it proclaims.

We have long been aware of the Unitarian character of most Congregational churches, and the New England theology is notoriously anti-christian, so we are not very much surprised by the nature of these resolutions and the pamphlet. The real surprise comes when we examine the personnel of the Commission on Evangelism and Devotional Life, for listed on page 7 of the *Minutes* as one of the "active members" of the commission is Dr. Harold J. Ockenga, graduate of Westminster Seminary, one-time assistant to Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney, and now pastor of Boston's famed Park Street Church (Congregational). Dr. Ockenga was once an opponent of the Modernism in the boards and agencies of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. but, at the time of the Syracuse Assembly, elected to "stand pat" and not to throw in his forces with those who withdrew from the denomination to form The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He is still a member of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and his presence on and cooperation with this modernist commission seems once more to prove how fruitful of full surrender are the seeds of easy compromise.

A letter from Dr. Ockenga tells us that he has no knowledge of the particular pamphlet under discussion and that his election to membership on the commission was accepted "on the condition that nothing would be printed over my name which I have not first examined and made sure it is in accordance with my doctrinal position. . . . Remember," continues Dr. Ockenga, "Congregationalism represents every stripe of opinion. I am not responsible under this form of government for other ministers or for publications not under my name. Quite different from a creedal church such as the Presbyterian." We do not believe that Dr. Ockenga can so easily



shrug off his responsibility. The fact that publications by the commission do not appear over his signature cannot, so long as he remains an active member of the commission, relieve him of his responsibility. We fail to see wherein the mechanics of a Congregational commission differ in any respect from those of a Presbyterian commission, even though the two forms of government are radically different. Moreover, Dr. Ockenga is still bound by his Presbyterian ordination vows, and those vows will remain binding upon him no matter how many other loose affiliations of churches he may choose to join.

The type of evangelism and devotional life advocated by the Congregationalists has long been at work in New England. That is why the ministers of the gospel, laboring under the Committee for the Propagation of the Reformed Faith in New England, have been able to gain an entrance into many Congregational churches that had died from the slow poison of such unbelief, and to revive them with the gospel of sovereign grace. That is why the need in New England is so great, and why so many young men in the past few years have given sacrificially of their time and energies to carry the good news of salvation to those who were dying under the blight of Congregational "evangelism." The work of the Committee for the Propagation of the Reformed Faith in New England is a pioneer missionary work that merits the prayers and support of every member of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, for nowhere else in these United States has unbelief so completely killed all spiritual life and nowhere is the need for the quickening power of the Reformed Faith greater.

### Christian Realism

(Concluded From Page 82)

ners. In actual fact, the justice of God found satisfaction on Golgotha's heights. And something happened there to the relationship between God and myself, if I am one of His. Something happened there, and now God can in all justice forgive the sinner and pardon his sin, for His own holy demands have been met.

Here is the reality of faith. Our trust in Jesus is not merely a respect

### The Separated Life

**R**EPRINTS of "The Bible Doctrine of the Separated Life," by Johannes G. Vos, will soon be available. Orders should be sent now to The Presbyterian Guardian. The price will be ten cents each, or one dollar a dozen.

for his own character, or a vague desire to follow in his steps of righteousness. No! Our faith is that act whereby we entrust our soul's eternal destiny to One who on our behalf met the demands of God concerning us. It is our acknowledgment of our own sinfulness, and our petition to Him to save us. It is real, this faith. It is the simple trust of one person in another to do something for him. God has appointed this faith as the channel through which the benefits of what Christ has done are actually and in principle communicated to us. Through faith we are saved. This salvation too is real. It removes us from under the wrath of God and makes us the objects of His love and favor for Jesus' sake. It is our reception into the home and family, as it were, of God, and our reception there as real members of that home and family.

So our hope is also real. For there are assured unto us in Christ all the benefits that can be involved in the unchanging and eternal favor of God toward us. Heaven is a reality. Eternal life is a reality. And they belong to us. Yes, we do well to tremble at the terrible reality of hell. We also do well, as Christians, to rejoice in the abiding glory and blessedness of heaven. Christian joy is not merely an emotional sentimentality. It is a solid and sane appreciation of that which God has actually done, and of those real blessings which He will most certainly give to His children.

In our present-day world, with its wars and tumult, its chaos and desolation, its material and physical advances and its moral and spiritual bankruptcy, its indifference to the past and its uncertainty concerning the fu-

ture, the souls of men grow weary. Some there are who would throw away all of the past, including the heritage of our Christian faith. Our own day, they say, must supply our soul's needs.

But nowhere save in Christianity do we meet with what is absolutely and unchangeably real. This world offers nothing. The things which are seen are temporal. One generation passes on and another takes its place. And the very turmoil of life drives us to demand assurance in these basic questions of existence. Christianity has an answer. It has the only answer, for it speaks of that which is real and abiding. It speaks the truth. Here the soul faces eternity and here the soul finds rest and is at peace.

This brings us to two further and final points. First is the tremendous importance of the church and the ministry. God has chosen to have His truth preached. And He has chosen, through the seeming foolishness of this proclaimed truth, to save those who believe. Because Paul knew the terror of the Lord he sought to persuade men. He was an ambassador of Christ. Ambassadors these days are important in the affairs of this world, but he who serves as ambassador from the great and holy One, bearing the message of eternal truth, partakes of the highest and noblest calling human men have ever known. No wonder Paul denounced as accursed that one, whoever he be, who shall presume to bring another gospel. How earnestly the Christian community must support the work of its teaching elder, making Christian truth so plain to those outside, and showing so clearly the fruitage of faith, that there shall be a combined witness that is unmistakable and perforce irresistible! For all who name the name of Christ have been called with an holy calling.

Secondly, how solemn is the warning and how wonderful the invitation of the gospel! Every individual must face for himself in the silent depths of his own heart the issues of an eternal destiny. The gospel is clear. The invitation is plain. And there is just you, and God. If this issue has not been settled yet, we as ambassadors of Christ beseech you with all earnestness, Be reconciled unto God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Here is Christianity's realism.



# The Presbyterian Guardian

## EDITORIAL

### The Malvern Conference

UNDER the leadership of the Archbishop of York many clergy and laity of the Church of England met at Malvern in January to consider the problem of post-war society in England. More than two hundred attended the conference, among them the bishops of London, Durham, Bristol, Chester, Chichester and Coventry, the deans of St. Paul's, Durham, Exeter, Chichester and Coventry, fourteen deacons and archdeacons, twenty-one canons, and Anglican laity of whom Sir Richard Acland, liberal member of Parliament and editor-philosopher, was the most prominent. The conference was called "to consider from the Anglican point of view what are the fundamental facts which are directly relevant to the ordering of the new society that is quite evidently emerging and how Christian thought can be shaped to play a leading part in the reconstruction when the war is over."

With such a galaxy of liberal leaders from the Church of England, the conference was bound to attract attention, and with its avowed purpose a change in the social order along the lines of the so-called "social gospel," it is easy to understand why such religious journals as *The Christian Century* would describe the conference as "one of the most momentous in recent church history." The findings of the conference are worthy of attention not only because they were produced almost literally under fire of bombs and guns, but also because they epitomize the great goal of Modernism.

The conference resolution consists of thirteen propositions which were adopted unanimously and an amendment by Sir Richard Acland which received a huge majority vote. While the Archbishop of York was the dominant figure behind the conference it was the lay members who produced the fireworks. Sir Richard, for example, was very vigorous and voluble in his plea for socialism. "I beg of

you now to proclaim the new society openly. Proclaim that it is now at hand; that this new way of living can never be achieved until the great resources of the community cease to be owned by private individuals. So, and only so, will you save yourselves and us." This outburst shocked some of the bishops, who sought to have the statement suppressed by the press; nevertheless Sir Richard's amendment passed.

The entire resolution of the conference\* can be summarized as follows: The recognition by the church of the fact that the war in Europe is simply a manifestation of the evil in Western Civilization today with all of its maladjustments and, in view of this unpalatable fact, the need for the church to take the leadership in establishing a new social and economic order, based upon the brotherhood of man, which the conference calls a co-operative commonwealth of nations.

Every thinking Christian is agreed that the war in Europe, and the war in Asia for that matter, are due to the evil in civilization today, but it is in the definition of the source of that evil that Christianity and Modernism disagree fundamentally.

While the Malvern Conference does state that the evil and maladjustments in the world are due to the "loss of conviction concerning the reality and character of God, and the true nature and destiny of man," the rest of the resolution makes it clear that this pronouncement is only perfunctory. The real reason for such a condition, according to the resolution, is the economic and social inequalities and sins which make it almost impossible for a man to live a Christian life. The whole economic structure must be changed from capitalism, which exploits the employee and consumer for the benefit of the producer, to production for consumption only, and the ownership of the resources of the community must be taken from private individuals and vested in the community. Capital is bedeviling labor, one nation is trying to control the other, the rich scorn the poor—these and other maladjustments can be cured to a large extent by the new order, thus making it easier "for the generality of men to live Christian lives." In other words, the evil in the economic and social order is to be

found largely in its structure.

The orthodox Christian readily agrees that there is evil in the social and economic order which must be eliminated, but he is not prepared to state that, *ipso facto*, socialism is Christian and capitalism is non-Christian, and that the sorrows of today are solely due to the attendant evils inherent in the economic and social system.

Christianity and the Bible proclaim that the source of trouble is far deeper than that; it is in the human heart which is corrupt and desperately wicked. It is only when the heart of man has been changed by the power of God through the work of the Holy Spirit, and faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ is exercised, that there can be hope for man and society. When that fundamental problem is solved and the human heart is cleansed from sin there can be confidence that the maladjustments in society will be remedied.

The other main postulate of the conference is the conviction that Europe and the world must realize the brotherhood of man as the ultimate in society. This is a favorite theme of Modernism today. Over the radio, in books, magazines, from the pulpit and at practically every religious conference, there is this constantly recurring idea that Jew and Gentile, American and European, white and black, are all brothers, and that the sooner we realize it the quicker will come the kingdom of God on earth. And by the brotherhood of man is meant that all men are brothers because God is the father of all.

This is a fundamentally false conception of the brotherhood of man. The Bible plainly teaches that men are separated from God by sin and that they are not members of His kingdom but members of the kingdom of this world. The only brotherhood of man recognized in the Bible consists of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour from sin—in other words, the redeemed in Christ who are members of the kingdom of God. In this fellowship there is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Gentile, white nor black, for all are brothers in Christ. In such a brotherhood there is hope for the right relationship between employer and employee, and among the nations of the earth. This is the Christian brotherhood of man.

We do not mean to imply that

\*See THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, Feb. 10, 1941, pp. 47, 48.

Christianity is only a personal religion and that it has nothing to say about society and economics. We merely wish to emphasize that Christianity is first of all a personal relationship between God and man through Jesus Christ. But more than that, Christianity is a world- and life-view; it has implications in every sphere of existence. Christians should feel their responsibility in any recon-

struction of this modern wicked society according to the principles of Christianity. Yet we do not believe that there will be a perfect society, or one even approaching perfection, in this present evil world. That perfect society will only be realized and the kingdom of God come upon earth in its completeness when Christ comes back to consummate redemption. Then and then only will there be righteous-

ness, peace and truth in all of its fullness upon the earth. In the meantime each Christian is to exercise his faith in every walk of life, pointing men to the Saviour and upholding Christian truth for the good of men until He comes to bring all things into subjection unto Himself. This is the Bible's program for bringing the kingdom of God on earth.

—E. H. R.

## The Necessity of Scripture

By the REV. JOHN MURRAY

Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary

A NOTED poet once said that "the proper study of mankind is man." It is much better to say with the prince of Christian theologians that "true and substantial wisdom principally consists of two parts, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves." The greatest question that can be asked and answered is, What is God? For all that we are, all that we have been and all that we shall be is determined by what God is and by our relations to Him. The most important matter of life is to know God and what He is. How may we know God?

God is a person, and an infinitely great and transcendent person at that. We can know God only as He is pleased to reveal Himself. And how or where has God revealed Himself?

God has revealed Himself in all His works, for all the works of God declare His glory, the glory of His power, wisdom, righteousness and goodness. He revealed Himself first of all in the work of creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork" (Psalm 19: 1). "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1: 20). And God even reveals Himself in our own nature. We are the creatures of God, made originally in His image. The revelation that God gives in our own nature is nearer to us and more directly and inescapably present than even the display of glory that He gives in the works of external creation.

This revelation of God is a very important and solemn fact. All men are confronted with it, and every revelation of the majesty and glory of God carries with it the demand for our faith, our obedience and our worship. The revelation in nature without and within carries the stupendous responsibility that we should love that God thus revealed with all our heart and soul and strength and mind. And it leaves all men without excuse if they fail to glorify and enjoy Him.

When we speak of Scripture we think of an entirely different kind of revelation. It is not entirely different in the sense that Scripture reveals to us a different God from that revealed in nature. No, there is complete harmony between the revelation God gives of Himself in nature and that which He gives in Scripture. God cannot contradict Himself. It is the same God who unveils His glory in nature

and speaks to us in Scripture. Why then was Scripture necessary?

It must be remembered that, even before man fell, God revealed Himself to our first parents in another and additional way than that of revelation through nature without and nature within. For example, He said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1: 28). And He gave them the testing command, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2: 16, 17). Obviously, then, the performance of duty by man and the enjoyment of his highest blessedness required this kind of special revelation, that is to say, revelation by another way than that of the light of nature and the works of creation and providence. So we see that in the very state of innocence there was what we call *supernatural* revelation.

Man did not continue in the state in which he was created. He fell from his original state of knowledge, righteousness and holiness. This fall into sin did chiefly two things. It changed man's mind towards God and it changed God's relation to man—man's mind and heart became depraved and man's state before God became one of guilt and condemnation. Two results followed. First, man's mind became blinded to the revelation of God. He could no longer truly behold the glory of God and thus he became destitute of the true knowledge of God. And second, man was separated from the favor of God and became an heir of

### Young People's Topics

**T**HE article on this page will be an aid in studying the young people's lessons published by the Committee on Christian Education of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which may be secured from the Rev. Burton L. Goddard, Box 73, Carlisle, Massachusetts. Topics now being studied are:

April 6th—THE IMPORTANCE OF A CORRECT VIEW OF SCRIPTURE.

April 13th — THE SCRIPTURE'S CLAIM FOR ITS OWN INSPIRATION.

April 20th—THE NECESSITY OF SCRIPTURE.

April 27th—WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

death and of hell.

God had in great mercy provided for man's salvation from this estate of sin and misery before man fell into it. It is not our purpose now to deal with this plan of salvation nor with the way in which it is accomplished. What we are going to deal with is the *knowledge* of this salvation that God planned from eternity and wrought in time. How could man come to the *knowledge* of this salvation?

In order to give greater meaning to this question we must remind ourselves of certain things. Man's mind had become darkened and blinded by his sin, so that he could no longer behold with pure and true vision the glory of God displayed in the external works of creation. Furthermore, the light of nature in his mind and heart had also been corrupted so that no longer did his nature truly witness to the glory of God. For these reasons, then, he lost the knowledge he had previously possessed. His state and condition became desperate. So far from being able to afford the loss of the knowledge that had previously been his, he now needed more knowledge than ever. He needed the knowledge of salvation. And instead of having that knowledge, he had unspeakably less knowledge than he possessed before he even needed the knowledge of salvation. Indeed, he had now no *true* knowledge at all. So two things were necessary: first, the knowledge of salvation or unto salvation, and second, the restoration of that knowledge he lost by sin.

Now the question becomes, Whence the knowledge requisite to supply these needs? It is obvious that the works of creation did not convey that knowledge that is necessary to salvation. God created the world and man when there was no sin. We are told that "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). And creation did not reveal any remedy for sin. Nature could not meet the need caused by the fact of sin. We see therefore that the knowledge of salvation required revelation by God in some other way. In a word, it required a *supernatural* revelation.

We find throughout the whole history of our race that the knowledge that is unto salvation was derived from some special revelation on the part of God. For example, God spoke to our first parents of the victory that would be secured over the serpent

**An Urgent Need**  
**G**IFTS to the mission committees during recent weeks have been far below the needed amounts. Will you not help meet the present emergency by sending your gifts now?

and of the deliverance that would be wrought for mankind. As we follow the history we find that this special revelation came at sundry times and in divers manners, but it was always special and supernatural in character. Man himself could not discover it and neither could he find it in the works of creation or in the workings of his own mind and heart. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man. God always revealed its special content in a special way.

We are dealing however with Scripture, and therefore with the supernatural revelation that God has committed to writing. Scripture refers to what is inscribed on some material so that it can be read. Why, we are asking, did God commit to writing the supernatural revelation He has given? We may not forget that God imparted to men the knowledge of salvation before any Scripture existed. It was imparted, of course, by supernatural revelation but by another method of supernatural revelation than that of Scripture. This knowledge was communicated supernaturally and passed on from one man to another and from one generation to another long before what we know as holy Scripture was committed to writing. But as for us today, all of God's supernatural revelation and particularly the revelation that is unto salvation is derived from holy Scripture. We are confined to Scripture, for God does not reveal Himself in the other ways that He used in times past. We derive our whole knowledge of the way of salvation from Scripture and therefore we are limited to Scripture. Scripture is absolutely necessary for us.

When we speak of the *necessity* of Scripture we must not limit God. There are other ways open to Him by which He could have communicated to successive generations the knowledge of His will. But the simple fact is that He was pleased in His

sovereign wisdom to commit His supernatural revelation to writing. He did not do this all at once. Contemporaneous with other ways of supernatural revelation He also inspired chosen instruments to commit to writing as much of His supernatural revelation as He was pleased to give for the instruction of His people to the end of time. This continued over the course of some fifteen centuries, until the whole body of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation was completed. It is this finished canon of Scripture that is our only source of knowledge of God's supernatural revelation. This makes Scripture to be for us most necessary. There is no salvation and no pure and true knowledge for us apart from the light that shines from its sacred page.

We can see in this the marvelous wisdom and grace of God. It is a peculiarly *secure* way of transmitting the knowledge of His will. His revelation in all its fullness and completeness is thereby given permanent shape and embodiment. The Word of God is exceedingly precious. But just because it is precious, it is being constantly attacked by Satan and wicked men. They would destroy it and blot out its memory. Without a perpetual miracle—and perpetual miracle is not the way of God's providence in this world—there is no way known to us whereby knowledge can be rendered so permanently secure as by the committing of that knowledge to writing.

Again, this method makes the Word of God singularly *accessible*. We have but to open the pages of the sacred Word and read. There God in all His majesty and truth speaks to us just as surely as He spoke directly to prophets and apostles. Indeed we have a more sure word of prophecy. And to us with the whole of Scripture in our hands He speaks more fully than He ever did before the Scripture was completed. Upon us the very ends of the ages have come.

Finally, this method is more *universal* in its embrace. As the Scripture is propagated there is no race or class or age that is shut out from its glorious light. Its message is to all and adapted to the needs of all individuals and generations.

So, to conclude, we may say that in the very *necessity* of Scripture resides the guarantee of the security and certainty of God's Word and the universal scope of its accessibility as God's message of light and salvation.

## Jeremiah B. Griggs

**J**EREMIAH B. GRIGGS, long-time friend of orthodox Presbyterianism, died on March 2nd at his home in St. Petersburg, Florida. He was 77 years of age. Death occurred suddenly as the result of a heart attack, but for a number of years he had been an invalid with arthritis.

Mr. Griggs, with his wife who also has been a loyal friend of Westminster Seminary and of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, had for many years been a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pa., whose pastor is Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney. After the Syracuse Assembly in 1936, Mr. and Mrs. Griggs withdrew from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and were active in the organization of the Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church of that city. For the past several years the condition of Mr. Griggs' health made it necessary for him to live in Florida, but he kept in close touch with The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Westminster Seminary and THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, and aided in every way possible the progress of the cause of Biblical Christianity.

He was a member of a brokerage firm in Pittsburgh and, for many years, occupied an important position in the work of the Young Men's Christian Association. He was actively interested in the study of history and of Christian doctrine. The League of Evangelical Students counted him a valued friend, and his participation in the work of spreading the gospel was continued as far as possible even throughout his illness.

The funeral was held in Pittsburgh on March 7th and the service was conducted by the Rev. Calvin K. Cummings, pastor of the Covenant Church, with the Rev. Professor Paul Woolley of Westminster Seminary assisting. Mr. Griggs is survived by his widow and by a brother.

The whole cause of historic Presbyterianism has lost a friend in the death of Mr. Griggs. Had his health permitted, he would have delighted to take a more active part in the work of the church. But, despite that handicap, his influence was felt throughout The Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the enterprises associated with it, and the inspiration of his zeal for the gospel will be sorely missed by a host of friends.

## An Humble Confession

A Meditation in the Book of Jeremiah

By the REV. BURTON L. GODDARD

O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).

**T**HE Lord Jesus once told the story of a man who was rich, yet who was a fool. An abundant harvest had filled his granaries to overflowing, and the man had determined to erect more capacious structures in their place. He was then resolved to put in store all the fruits that had been gathered, after which he would give himself to leisure and the material luxuries of life. No thought entered his mind that his plans would miscarry. With every feeling of security he embarked upon the determined program. "But God said unto him, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Borne home to the rich fool in the twilight hour of his sojourn on earth was the truth, "The way of man is not in himself."

### Historical Background

An interesting historical setting produced the prayer in which confession of this fact was made. To a people who had long been living by the philosophy of the rich fool, God had at last made known the sure advance of a hostile army to plunder the kingdom and carry away the people into captivity. The destruction was prophesied as imminent. The prophet's words were alarming. There was no time to lose. The stoutest fortress would fall, and its inhabitants were urgently warned to pack their bundles in haste that they might be ready to leave in a moment.

The prophet was not slow to pursue his advantage. Hitherto his admonitions had been unavailing, but now he would destroy once and for all that false sense of security which had made his countrymen proud and godless. He exposed with cutting satire the impotence of the idol gods in which they had long trusted. He declared the majestic power and greatness of the true God whose wrath was now unleashed against the doers of iniquity. He denounced the religious leaders who had led their flocks astray and he prophesied for them an unhappy end.

If his words should not bring the people to their senses, the harassing

experiences of the invasion would, and in anticipation of a broken spirit on the part of the people, Jeremiah put into each mouth words of confession, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

### Human Inability

Nothing was farther from Judah's desire than to suffer invasion, to have her national existence destroyed, and to go away into a long exile. But what could she do? She was helpless. It was plain that the destinies of men and of nations were held in the hand of a higher power.

It was ever thus. Day after day the very sight of the champion of Philistia incited greater fear in the hearts of the Israelites. Not one dared to go forth to meet him. Then one day a shepherd boy, resolute in faith, slew the mighty Goliath, enemy of Israel. Alexander the Great built up a massive empire, only to die almost before the blush of youth had faded from his countenance. The great Roman conqueror, Caesar, was cut off from the enjoyment of his victories when the trusted hand of Brutus plunged a dagger into his breast. We have lived to see Norway fall in a day and to witness the collapse of the supposedly impregnable Maginot Line. Are we yet unconvinced of the limitations which check the ability of men to work out their own destiny?

What is true of nations and generals is true of every individual in the common walk of life. The words of the poet might well have been those of the rich fool: "I am the master of my fate! I am the captain of my soul!" But what utter folly to arrogate such power to oneself!

He who thus speaks knows nothing of what lies ahead in life's pathway. Strength may be his today, but tomorrow men who have had strong physiques and sturdy health will lie for the first time upon hospital beds. Tomorrow wealthy citizens will find themselves in poverty. Tomorrow a nation's once-honored leaders will face the firing squad.

If man has no certain control over his life in this world, much less can he depend upon his own powers to

carry him safely out into eternity. How can natural man direct his steps down the highway of salvation? According to the Scriptures, he is dead in trespasses and sins. How idle is the boast of him who thinks to lift himself into heaven by his own bootstraps! "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

### Divine Control

Scripture warrants us in assuming that the opposite of "in man" is "in God," and the context in which our meditation is found gives us license to interpret the prayer of confession thus: "It is *not in man* to direct his steps; rather, it is *in God*."

It was a Babylonian army which swept in to devastate the land of Judah—an army used of God as a chastening rod to bring His wayward people to repentance. God was later to punish the Babylonians for their own wickedness. God directed the hand of David as he released the stone from his sling in the fight with Goliath. God humbled the proud Nebuchadnezzar and caused his removal from his kingdom. And we may well rest assured that God's decrees determined the rise and fall of Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon.

A young man preparing for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. was willing to admit that God's decrees have governed the fortunes of *some* men in history, but he was unwilling to grant that they control the individual destinies of *all* men. Was he right? What of the ordinary person? Is it true that God directs *his* steps?

Men make plans. They set their wills. They determine on courses of action. But God "worketh *all* things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11). Sometimes His direction of men's steps consists in His allowing them to follow out their own plans, whether they be for good or for bad. Sometimes He overrules and forcibly restrains them from carrying out their purposes. Sometimes He moves them to repentance so that they reverse the choices they have made. In any case, this direction of man's steps rests in the hand of the Almighty.

In spiritual matters, this truth is even more apparent. It is God's quickening, the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, which establishes one on the highway of salvation, and it is God who worketh in the born-again

life that such a life may both will and do His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). Little wonder that Paul exclaimed about His Lord that "of him, and through him, and to him, are all things!"

The humble confession of the people of Judah came too late to stave off the disaster which threatened them. Those who were spared immediate death died in a strange land. Their children and many of their grandchildren died on foreign soil. How great a pity it was that they did not long before confess their own inability and plead for grace and help from the God of lovingkindness and tender mercy!

Would that the tragedy were an isolated occurrence in history, but it is not! There are and always have been proud hearts which refuse to submit to the sovereign God. They echo and reëcho the words, "I am the master of my fate! I am the captain of my soul!"

Oh that every such spirit might be broken and that every heart might exclaim, "Thy will be done!" For if a man wilfully cleaves to his own course and God lets him die in his sin, there will be no hope for him in the day of judgment. Some day every knee shall bow and every tongue confess but, as in the case of Judah, the time for confession leading to safety will be past. "Now is the day of salvation," and it is God's direction of a man's steps in *this* life that will determine his blessedness forever.

## MACHINE OUSTS PASTOR IN U.S.A. PRESBYTERY

**I**N AN open demonstration of ruthless machine tactics, the Presbytery of Jersey City of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. on February 3rd dissolved the pastoral relationship existing between Christ Church of Passaic and the Rev. Walter C. Jent, one-time modernist but now champion of Biblical Christianity.

Mr. Jent, who was recently converted, had incurred the disfavor of a minority of his congregation through his insistence on preaching only the gospel. That minority, however, included most of the church officials. When Mr. Jent opposed worldly practices in the church, and attempted to persuade the officers to abandon them,

hostility toward him became intense. A "test-resignation" to discover the will of the congregation was submitted by Mr. Jent, and a straw vote showed that sixty-four members wished to retain him as pastor and only twelve desired him to withdraw.

Before his decision could be announced, however, the clerk of session allegedly forwarded the resignation to the Presbytery of Jersey City, without being instructed to do so by

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the congregation, the session or the pastor. That body proceeded to approve the dissolution of the pastoral relationship (which dissolution was not so much as mentioned in the resignation) and to concur in a purported request for a date on which the dissolution should be made effective.

At the meeting of presbytery, the moderator acknowledged that "Mr. Jent is not on trial; there are no complaints against him," but allowed the pastor's bitterest opponent the privilege of the floor for the apparent purpose of open and personal denunciation. When Mr. Jent protested the illegality of such procedure, his opponent was limited to "two minutes for the purpose of information." Upon further protest from the elder commissioner from Christ Church, the moderator replied, "The proceedings are irregular, but presbytery is

exercising its 'episcopal' authority and is stepping in anyway." And presbytery, presumably on the same fantastic authority, dissolved the pastoral relationship.

Mr. Jent filed notice of appeal to the Synod of New Jersey. Two weeks after the notice had been filed, he called the stated clerk of presbytery to inquire what had been done with it, and was naively told, "Oh, we didn't send it up yet; we're hoping you'll withdraw it."

"In protest against the hypocrisy and double-dealing of the machine," declared Mr. Jent, "and in grief over the failure of the church to insist on and support the preaching of the way of salvation through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, I have resigned from the organization known as the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. I do not wish my witness as a Christian minister to be hindered."

## Orthodox Presbyterian Church News

### Presbytery of New Jersey

**C**OVENANT CHURCH, *Vineland*: The evening worship service is now being broadcast each Sunday from 8 to 8.55 over station WSNJ (1210 kilocycles), Bridgeton. The work has been well supported in every way by the congregation, and attendance in the evening has increased since the inception of the broadcast. A prayer meeting, attended by thirty or forty people, meets each week before the service, and some who have not prayed in public before are joining the others in prayer for a revival of true religion in this New Jersey area.

*Calvary Church, Wildwood*: The young people's work has been reorganized into two active Junior and Senior Machen Leagues. A Saturday night men's prayer meeting is held each week, and catechism classes are held each Wednesday after school. The pastor, the Rev. Leslie A. Dunn, is preaching a series of Sunday morning sermons on the catechism. Mrs. Dunn has formed a new Sunday school class for persons of Swedish descent, in which she teaches the lesson in both English and Swedish.

*Faith Church, Pittsgrove*: Under the direction of the building and finance committees, plans have been formulated for the erection of a new church building. It is proposed to

build the church in installments, if need be, holding services in the basement until it becomes possible to complete the upper portion of the contemplated structure. The finished building will be fifty feet by thirty feet. The fund for this purpose has grown steadily during the past few weeks, and it is hoped that a sufficient amount will shortly be on hand to enable the actual construction to begin.

*Calvary Church, Ringoes*: On a recent Sunday morning the young people arose before dawn and canvassed the town of Flemington, leaving a gospel tract at each door. After completing the task, they gathered for a fellowship breakfast at the home of the pastor, the Rev. Bruce H. Wideman. . . . On March 30th the young people will conduct a gospel service in the City Rescue Mission, Trenton, in addition to the regular monthly service held in the Hunterdon County Jail at Flemington.

*Grace Church, Westfield*: This church now has three young people's societies in the presbytery's Machen League, and the necessity for a fourth is not far off. . . . The Rev. R. Heber McIlwaine, Orthodox Presbyterian missionary to Japan, will be the speaker on March 21st at a special meeting of the Missionary Society to which the men of the church have

been invited. On the following Sunday, he will occupy the pulpit and also address a young people's gathering.

The Rev. Donald C. Graham, pastor of Emmanuel Church (Independent) of Morristown, reports a gratifying response to the recent visit of the Rev. David Freeman, Orthodox Presbyterian missionary to the Jews. The chapel was crowded to capacity, and more than two hundred persons heard the two addresses, including a score of Jews from the community. They listened with marked attention, and many of them spoke with Mr. Freeman after the meeting. Some attended both services.

*Covenant Church, Orange*: The Rev. Robert S. Marsden, general secretary of the mission committees, addressed a meeting of the Women's Missionary Society at a covered dish supper to which the men were invited. March 9th was Missionary Day at the church, and the Rev. R. Heber McIlwaine was guest speaker. At the young people's service on that day the Women's Missionary Society conducted a missionary program. . . . March 16th was Every-Member Day. At the morning service the special Building Fund drive, which will last for one year, was launched. In the afternoon an Every-Member Canvass was conducted for weekly and monthly pledges to the Building Fund. . . . The pastor, the Rev. Richard W. Gray, is conducting a Home Bible Study Course. Each Sunday a mimeographed lesson containing the Bible reading for the week, an outline of the Scripture portion to be read, and about twenty-five questions on the text, is distributed to the members. The lesson centers about a Bible character, and the purpose is to give a chronological history of the Bible by taking the characters in order. On Sunday evenings the correct answers to the questions are given and Mr. Gray brings a message on the Bible personality which has been studied during the week. Keen interest is being shown in this program.

### Presbytery of California

**C**OVENANT CHURCH, *Berkeley*: Attendance at the preaching services has been increasing. On March 2nd a group of Christian sailors testified at the evening meeting to the saving work of Christ in their lives. The Sunday school has broken all former records with a recent attend-

ance of sixty-four. Plans are now being made for presbytery meeting, presbyterial meeting and the Machen League Rally, which will be held in San Francisco and Berkeley on April 15th and 16th. Dr. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary will be the guest speaker at the rally.

*Westminster Church, Bend, Oregon:* On January 14th the men of the church enjoyed a fellowship dinner followed by a meeting at which the missionary work of the denomination was presented in a series of brief talks by four of the men. . . . "Westminster Watchmen" is the name of a new organization which plans to hold three meetings annually. The spring meeting will be a father-and-son banquet. . . . Two new members were received at the January communion service. . . . The fifth annual young people's service was presented on the evening of February 9th by the members of the senior, intermediate and junior societies. The young people conducted the entire service, which included two talks, vocal and instrumental numbers, and the recitation of Scripture passages. . . . At the Sunday morning service on January 26th, in response to an invitation at the close of the sermon, four boys and three girls volunteered for full-time Christian service. . . . The Rev. Henry W. Coray will conduct a series of special services from March 19th to 30th.

### Presbytery of Wisconsin

**A** PRO RE NATA meeting of presbytery was held in Milwaukee on Tuesday, February 11th, for the purpose of examining Mr. George J. Willis of Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, for ordination to the gospel ministry. One week later Mr. Willis was ordained by the presbytery and installed as pastor of the Calvary Church of Cedar Grove. The theme of the sermon delivered by the Rev. Oscar Holkeboer of Oostburg was "God, Our Sovereign Lord." The moderator, the Rev. Leland C. Jorgensen of Milwaukee, propounded the constitutional questions. The charges were delivered by Mr. Holkeboer and Mr. Jorgensen.

On Friday, February 21st, the Bethel Church (Unaffiliated) of Oostburg held a joint meeting with the Christian Reformed Church of Oostburg for the purpose of establishing a Christian School Association. Dr. Harry Hagar, pastor of the Bethany Reformed Church, Chicago,

was the special speaker.

### Presbytery of the Dakotas

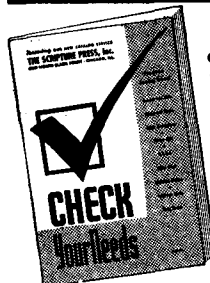
**T**HE work at Carson, Lark and Leith, North Dakota, under Mr. John F. Gray, has enjoyed the blessing of God. A new Sunday school at Lark has been attended by about twenty-five persons, and there are excellent teachers and workers among the members. Recalling the banner attendance of 130 at the performance of the Christmas cantata, the church is planning to present an Easter cantata next month, and much interest and enthusiasm is being shown. In Carson the church has revived the Missionary Band—a Bible study, catechism and handcraft class for the youngsters in the community. About twenty children attend.

At Rutland, South Dakota, the pastor, the Rev. Charles L. Shook, welcomed four persons into church membership on confession of faith. A group at Rutland and another at Volga are energetically following a program of Scripture memorization, and Mr. Shook is presenting a series of talks on Bible study, Scripture memorizing and personal work at the mid-week services. Several have memorized seventy-five verses in the past two months, and it is planned to follow up this work with a systematic study of Christian doctrine.

A new work in Lincoln, Nebraska, seems to have a bright future. A red brick church on the edge of the city has been deeded to the group "for the

consideration of one dollar and other valuable considerations." It is now being used to store hay, but the members expect to renovate and recondition it at once. Most of the needed funds have been raised, and volunteer labor will be available as soon as favorable weather arrives. At present, a good sized Bible study class is

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Brown, are continuing each week and gratifying interest is being shown.

#### Presbytery of Philadelphia

**C**ALVARY CHURCH, Willow Grove: A delegation of forty-five persons from this church visited the new Mediator Chapel during the week of special services following the dedication. . . . Eight new members were welcomed into church fellowship on March 2nd. . . . The Calvary Hour (WIBG, Sundays at 4.30) is approaching the half-year mark in its series of broadcasts. The Rev. Edward J. Young, the Rev. William T. Strong and the Rev. George W. Marston will speak at special services during the week before Easter. . . . Dr. and Mrs. Robert Strong are receiving congratulations on the birth of a son, James Walter, on March 8th.

Davis Alan, infant son of the Rev. and Mrs. Edward J. Young, arrived on March 5th.

**Faith Church, Quarryville:** Work will be started this month on a new conference dormitory, fifty-six by twenty-eight feet. The nine-room building will do much to meet the need for additional dormitory facilities for the Quarryville Bible Conference. . . . The Rev. and Mrs. Franklin S. Dyrness are being congratulated on the birth of Franklin Seth, Jr., on February 23rd.

**Faith Church, Harrisville:** The session is conducting an every-family visitation, to be completed by Easter Sunday. . . . The pastor, the Rev. Charles G. Schaufele, expects to conduct services each evening of the week preceding Easter.

**New Hope Church, Branchton:** Trustees of the congregation met recently to plan for the redecoration of the church building. Many of the present members are descendants of the founders of the church who built it more than sixty years ago, and it is expected that the whole congregation will volunteer labor and time for the renovation of one of the oldest church edifices in the denomination.

**Kirkwood Church, Kirkwood:** At recent services eleven new members were received, nine of them on confession of faith. Seven of these are from one family. . . . Fourteen persons have recently received the sacrament of baptism, including six covenant children. About 150 people were present at the last communion service.

**Knox Church, Philadelphia:** On

February 9th Mr. LeRoy B. Oliver, a student at Westminster Seminary, was ordained as a ruling elder. . . . From February 16th to 23rd the pastor, the Rev. George W. Marston, conducted evangelistic services at the Covenant Church of Pittsburgh. In his absence, guest preachers were the Rev. Professor R. B. Kuiper, the Rev. Professor John Murray and Mr. John C. Hills. . . . Special evangelistic services will be held from March 23rd to 30th. The Rev. J. Marcellus Kik of Montreal, Canada, will be the guest speaker.

#### Presbytery of New York and New England

**T**HE Rev. Arthur O. Olson, pastor of the Second Parish Church of Portland, Maine, addressed a father-and-son dinner for members of the boy's division of the Y. M. C. A. He told the members that the greatest friendship and understanding between father and son comes when both are believers in the cross of Christ.

The mother of the Rev. William Painter Green, D.D., formerly of Boston and now pastor of the Third Reformed Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, died on February 6th. In her death, the work of the Committee for the Propagation of the Reformed Faith in New England has lost a generous and loyal friend. The prayers of Dr. Green's many friends throughout the denomination are with him in his bereavement.

#### QUARRYVILLE TO CONDUCT TWO BIBLE CONFERENCES

**T**WO conferences will be held this year on the grounds of Faith Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Quarryville, Pa. The first, from June 28th to July 6th, will be the Fifth Annual Young People's Conference, and the other, from August 29th to September 1st, will be the Second Annual General Conference designed especially for adults. At the young people's conference two complete sets of courses will be offered—one for beginners and the other for advanced students.

The total cost for the July conference is \$9.50 and for the Labor Day conference \$5.00. Registration fees of \$2 and \$1.50 respectively should be sent to the Rev. Franklin S. Dyrness, Executive Director, Quarryville, Pa.