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J. GRESHAM MACHEN
NED B. STONEHOUSE *Editors*

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THOMAS R. BIRCH,
Managing Editor

SHALL WE HAVE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

AS HAS been indicated elsewhere in THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, a meeting is to be held at the Whittier Hotel in Philadelphia on the evening of January 11th to consider the question of the forming of Christian schools. We regard that question as a very momentous question indeed, and bespeak a very earnest attention to it on the part of all our readers.

If one looks out upon the condition of the world today, one has to be very blind not to see that something is radically wrong. Of course something has always been radically wrong ever since the fall of man. But when we say that something is radically wrong with the age in which we are now living, we are referring to something more specific than that great central fact of the presence of sin in the world. What we mean is that the deadly evil of sin is becoming particularly blatant in the present age, and that the sweet and gentle influences of the gospel of Christ somehow *seem* for the time to be stayed in their working.

Compare the state of public opinion today with that which prevailed forty or fifty years ago, and you will see that something little short of a moral revolution has come about. Forty or fifty years ago public opinion, at least in Great Britain and America, was in the main favorable to decency and to liberty. Today it is increasingly unfavorable to both of these things.

It is true, there are here and there indications that the sense of decency is not altogether dead. Even the enormous prestige of custom could not quite enable the King of England to remain on the throne when he contemplated marrying Mrs. Simpson. The abdication of King Edward was certainly a victory for Christian morality.

But the king who has thus abdicated has unquestionably great hosts of sympathizers, and unquestionably the trend of the times is in favor of toleration for the sin which he is contemplating.

As for liberty, that is almost everywhere prostrate. Fascism and communism, superficially opposed to each other but really twin sisters, are threatening to divide the world between them; and it seems doubtful whether persons who believe in civil and religious liberty will very long be allowed anywhere a place in the sun.

Underlying this widespread decadence in the field of conduct is a decadence in the field of thought. The licentiousness of the age is not due merely to a disregard of recognized moral standards; it is due rather to the fact that there are no recognized moral standards. Immoral conduct is quite generally defended by immoral doctrine. The existence of the law of God is denied. Men no longer believe that there is any very profound difference between right and wrong.

In the midst of such a world stands the Christian Church. We are not referring to the merely nominal Christian Church; we are not referring to ecclesiastical bodies like the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. that have officially dethroned Jesus Christ and that refuse to tolerate real Christian testimony within their membership or within their ministry; we are not referring to the Federal Council of Churches with its pseudo-Christian, Modernist preaching mission under the leadership of those who do not believe in the truth of God's Word. But we are referring to the *real* Christian Church. We are referring to those ecclesiastical bodies that really do endeavor with some sort of faithfulness to obey the commands which are found in the Word of God. We are referring to those groups of Christian

people who are honestly endeavoring to make use of the means of grace which God has provided for His people upon this earth.

What shall *they* do in the midst of a hostile world? How shall they be God's instruments in preserving His Church from the engulfing paganism?

Whatever the answer to that question may be in detail, one thing surely is clear. It is that the efforts of the true Church ought to be directed particularly to the nurture of the children. Even experience shows that that is the case. Ask any company of earnest Christian men and women, especially those who have given themselves to the ministry, and you will usually find that the overwhelming majority of them received their Christian convictions in their youth, through the nurture of Christian parents or Christian pastors or teachers. It is a natural instinct in those who are opposed to the Christian Faith that they desire to get their grip on the children—through paternalistic government control or in other ways. So it should be a very powerful instinct in Christian people that they should desire to influence the children for good, as atheistic or agnostic governments seek to influence them for evil.

But it should be far more than an instinct in Christian people. The truth is that the nurture of the children is rooted deep in the commands of the Word of God. According to Reformed doctrine, baptized children are members of the Church. They are children of the covenant. Surely, then, they should be treated as such. Surely, the Church, whatever else it may neglect, should not neglect the instruction of its own children, in order that when they come to years of discretion they may confirm the vows made for them in infancy, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls and then growing up into stalwart Christian manhood and womanhood.

How, then, shall this great work of instructing the children be carried on?

In many ways, no doubt. Most important of all is the work of the Christian home—family prayers, family instruction in the Catechism and in the Word of God. Very important also is the work of the pulpit. It is a great calamity when children attend a "children's church," under the control often of uninstructed laymen, instead of sitting with their parents in the family pew. No doubt also young people's societies have their uses. They are a great evil when they lead young people to attend their meetings instead of attending the evening service at which the pastor preaches; but they can be productive of much good if instead of being a rival to the evening service they make it their primary business to support the evening service and the other regu-

lar services of the Church. The Sunday School, also, is an important agency. Its sad decadence is one of the most important causes of the defection in the Church, and much good can be done if it is improved.

All these agencies, however, are faced by a terrible handicap. It is found in the attendance by the children of the covenant, during five or six days in the week, upon non-Christian public schools.

There was a time in the history of our country when the evil of this policy was somewhat disguised. In the days of "the little red schoolhouse," no doubt teachers in the public schools were usually Christians and the evils of secular instruction, though they were always present, were apparently kept within bounds. Today, if school-houses are "red," we very much fear that they are apt to be "red" in some other way than by the application of red paint on the outside. At any rate, from state universities down, the anti-Biblical character of public instruction is becoming increasingly clear.

What shall be done about it?

Well, various palliative measures are being proposed. Some of them—like the introduction into public schools of "character education" based on considerations of expediency—are positively harmful. Others of them, like the required reading of the Bible in public schools (it is, alas, apt to be a sadly garbled Bible even if Modernist or indifferentist propaganda can really be eliminated) are at least dangerous. All of them are woefully inadequate.

The real remedy, as over against these makeshifts, is found in the establishment of Christian schools.

Fortunately we have in this country a splendid example of the way in which that can be done. Our Reformed brethren, largely of the Christian Reformed Church, have established a splendid system of Christian schools, and very richly has God blessed them. Those schools are not under ecclesiastical control. In that they differ from parochial schools. But they are under the control of associations of truly Christian people and they are doing a splendid work in building up the children and youth in a solid knowledge of the Reformed Faith as it is taught in God's Word.

Dr. Cornelius Van Til, Professor of Apologetics in Westminster Seminary, formerly a minister in the Christian Reformed Church and now a minister in The Presbyterian Church of America, will discuss Christian schools at the meeting to which reference has already been made. No one is better qualified to do so. No matter what measures can immediately be taken, the meeting offers a unique opportunity to obtain information about a subject that is of vital concern to Christian people.

There Were Giants in Those Days

A Review by the REV. CHARLES J. WOODBRIDGE

FIGHTING ANGEL, by Pearl S. Buck: a John Day book, Reynal and Hitchcock, New York. \$2.50.



Mr. Woodbridge

THIS book is a vigorous biography of the Rev. Andrew Sydenstricker, Southern Presbyterian missionary to China, and the father of Mrs. J. Lossing Buck, the author. But it is more

than a biography. It is a mirror of Pearl Buck's soul.

Fighting Angel is an intensely interesting book. We have yet to see the person who has commenced to read it and laid it aside unfinished. The author of *The Good Earth* has accomplished her purpose: she has portrayed for us a soul dedicated to God.

Andrew, the hero of the story, was one of that sturdy breed of missionary giants who stalked across the plains of China in the interests of the gospel a generation ago. For more than fifty years he served his God in that country before he fell asleep.

The picture presented to us is that of a tall American, spare, big-boned, with child-blue eyes, of a "lofty bearing of great dignity," yet with a slight stoop. How well we remember Dr. Sydenstricker! We have seen him many times. With a constitution of steel and indefatigable energy he went forth proclaiming the gospel. Those were the days of "militant expansion" in China. Deeper and deeper into the vast interior of the Middle Kingdom these pioneer men of God penetrated, utterly fearless in the "magnificent imperialism" of their spirits.

The author depicts for us Andrew in his Chinese clothes, his brain a very map of China, itinerating, preaching the gospel, distributing tracts, teaching converts—through rebellion and civil war, banditry and famine, holding steadfastly to his one increasing purpose, the proclamation of the gospel.

Intolerant of sin, with his "restless, angry conscience," "rigorous with himself, unmerciful in his judgment upon lesser men," never shirking his duty, like a "chained and quarrelsome lion" when on furlough, so eager was

he to return to his adopted land, ecstatic when converts were made—this was Andrew. Entirely independent of men, utterly dependent upon God, he went through life a "ruling minority of one," unmoved by threats, unrepentful of bitter words, always serene and confident. He was, his daughter writes, "the most stubborn man I ever knew when God called him to a thing." His "obstinate, jutting jaw" was a striking contrast to his "beautiful, saintly, untroubled brow."

"God had caught his soul and Calvin had held it fast."

Of such, we read, was the race of missionary pioneers prior to the year 1900. These were men with martyr blood coursing through their veins. With unflinching courage and dauntless devotion they laid the foundations of Christian testimony in China.

So far so good. But our author, while compelled to admire these iron men of God, yet reveals a subtle, sophisticated contempt for them and their mission. She is writing from the standpoint of a Modern in morals, and a Modernist in religion. Throughout the book she indulges in literary side-thrusts, seeking to discredit by innuendo the Christian missionary enterprise. The immoral conduct of certain missionaries is described in suggestive and fabricated detail, for Pearl Buck seeks to be the high priestess of Realism Rampant. They were jealous, too, these men,—proud, intolerant, unmerciful. Their converts—merely a handful—were as often as not rascals who had professed the faith for mercenary ends. They were frequently "smug and pious" rogues, with their "amazingly shifty eyes." They had joined the church, many of them, in order to learn English, or to get a job. Andrew thanked God for his converts, he brooded over them with fatherly concern, for each convert meant "a new number in the statistics."

It appears that life in those strenuous days was a succession of quarrels with magistrates and missionaries. When those "early, quarrelsome men" got together at mission meeting, with their "leathery skins and hard mouths and bitter determined eyes," Andrew was "a warrior with the best of them."

Miss Buck is out to prove her case against these missionaries, and she does not hesitate to use the weapon of exaggeration in order to accomplish this purpose. We were greatly surprised to discover that half a page of *Fighting Angel* is devoted to proving that Dr. Woodbridge and Dr. Woods of Chinkiang, where Andrew lived for some years, were very quarrelsome men! That was back in the golden nineties. Now it so happens that we were born in Chinkiang, and that one of these quarrelsome missionaries was our father. Dr. Woodbridge kept a daily diary in those days. We spent three hours the other night poring over these diaries. There are many references in them to Messrs. Sydenstricker and Woods. These "quarrelsome" men, it seems, sang, prayed, preached, examined candidates for baptism together, had the most cordial social relationships. Not one word of "enmity" appears in these diaries. Either Dr. Woodbridge, who we, naturally biased, remember as a courteous Southern gentleman, knew that *litera scripta manet* and refrained from revealing in writing his quarrelsome spirit, or else Miss Buck exaggerates. The latter is true!

But we have said that this book is a mirror of its author's soul. It reveals her own deep-seated unhappiness, her unbelief, and what we regard as spiritual *heimweh*.

Her father was supremely happy. "Andrew," she writes, "was the happiest person I have ever known." In describing his joyous life, however, she unconsciously reveals her own lack of inward peace. "He had this happiness: he espoused early a cause in which he believed all his life without a shadow of doubt." And so it was with his fellow-missionaries. Theirs was "the peace of complete belief in that which they lived, the absolute certainty of their minds, the total surrender of their souls to that to which they had committed themselves."

What was the secret of their happiness, their peace, their power in the gospel? Religion, says Miss Buck—though she knows very well that the opposite is true—had nothing to do with their strength of character. "The

glory of God," she writes, "had made them blind. They were drunk with love of God, so that they saw nothing but His glory, could only see the one necessity, that all others should become like themselves. . . . Andrew belonged to the blind."

Blind, were they, Miss Buck? Remember what Jesus said to the Pharisees, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

No, "spiritual things are spiritually discerned." The author, not the missionaries, is blind. With great care she has described the family prayers in the Sydenstricker home. She has told of Andrew's habitual hour of daily prayer. (So conscious of God's presence was he while praying that once in America, when called upon to lead in prayer, forgetting audience and all, he began to speak to God in Chinese.) She has written of his unshakable confidence in the Word of God, his constant, steady fellowship with the covenant-keeping Father in heaven, his quiet assurance of divine guidance, his unswerving allegiance to an "incredibly narrow creed," which "accepts in entirety the miracle of virgin birth, water changed into wine, the dead raised to life, and the second appearance, hourly expected, of Christ," his conviction of the exclusiveness of the Christian faith. Yet she fails to see that these Bible-believers were happy because they did believe the Bible and because they unflinchingly trusted the God of the Bible. Nowhere else is there happiness.

Unbelief and happiness never go hand in hand, although Miss Buck tries to make herself believe that they may.

One of the saddest things in the life of a missionary is the inevitable separation between parents and children when the latter reach their teens and return to America to college. Miss Buck's unbelief may be in part due to the early removal of parental control in her case. But even as a child her "own private real life was lived entirely elsewhere in a place where there was no God at all." She felt herself fatherless, for Andrew "had given everything in him to God." "Great missionary he was, intrepid soul, but there was no fatherhood in him." His daughter never felt really close to Andrew, nor to Andrew's God.

Today, as the world knows, Miss Buck openly asserts her unbelief.

Occasionally her assertion has a tinge of bitterness in it. Usually, however, she regards her unbelief as the natural by-product of modern sophistication. She writes of Andrew: "The philosophy of Confucius, so essentially that of Jesus Christ, never once appeared to him as of importance. . . . He was exceedingly scornful in after years of those missionary souls, more delicately balanced, who saw in the wisdom of Confucius a means of a sort of salvation, after all." It is clear that in Miss Buck's mind the Modernist is the "delicately balanced" soul.

But frequently we noted just the slightest suggestion of regret that the faith of her father was not her own. The author would be the first to deny it. But we could not but sense a wistfulness, a pathos, a homesickness, a feeling of spiritual unfulfillment as the author unconsciously reveals herself always outside the halo of her father's utter consecration to Christ. She will never entirely escape the influence of that godly home. And who can tell but that some day Andrew's prayers for the salvation of his little children may be answered affirmatively in her case?

Pearl Buck—this is the missionary who served for years under the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. She is a Modernist, and she admits it. And her admission is truly refreshing in these days when Modernism stalks abroad on the mission field in sheep's clothing.

They refuse to believe us when we assert that Modernism is a stark fact on the field. But they might believe Miss Buck. In *Fighting Angel* she has been very frank on this subject. Will the skeptic believe her testimony?

The giants of Andrew's generation are all gone now, she writes. "Those who take their place in our modern times are shot through with doubt and distrust of themselves and their message. They talk of tolerance and mutual esteem, of liberalizing education and of friendly relations and all such gentle feeble things. They see good in all religions and they no longer wage any more wars and they serve their lives out for a small security. There is no taste in them. I can hear Andrew reading sternly from the Book of Revelation, 'So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth!' The giants are gone."

And there on the hillside in Ku-

ling, where every summer we used to romp in days gone by, they buried Andrew with his little Greek Testament beside him.

We closed the book. A deep sense of shame swept over us. The world would read this book. Tens of thousands would wipe away a tear as they read pityingly, and with a sophisticated satisfaction, of this religious Don Quixote who went forth to meet the entrenched forces of sin in a foreign land.

And from the writing of this book thousands of American dollars,—dollars which Andrew had so gladly given up for the sake of the gospel—would pour into the lap of Pearl Buck. His consecration she has commercialized; her literary gifts, bequeathed to her by godly parents, she has prostituted.

And then a prayer: God send us more giants,—men of God who will, even in this our agnostic day, push out into the pioneer lands beyond for Jesus' sake. Yes, God send us more giants!

NEWS FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF WISCONSIN

MEETING in special session at the home of the Rev. Oscar Holkeboer, of Oostburg, the Presbytery of Wisconsin on December 10th chose the Rev. W. H. Kielhorn, of Oxford, as moderator until the next General Assembly. Mr. Harold Hillegas was re-elected stated clerk.

The Rev. John J. De Waard and the Rev. Oscar Holkeboer were instructed by the Presbytery to make every effort to form a new congregation in Milwaukee.

The same evening Mr. Holkeboer was installed by the presbytery as pastor of the Bethel Church of Oostburg. The installation services were held in the Village Hall, temporary quarters of the Bethel congregation. Speaker of the evening was the Rev. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., D.D., President of Wheaton College and Moderator of the Second General Assembly. Mr. De Waard gave the charge to the pastor and Mr. Kielhorn the charge to the people. An enthusiastic audience of about 450 filled the Village Hall for this impressive service.

DR. J. GRESHAM MACHEN DIES OF PNEUMONIA IN BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

WORD has been received, too late for inclusion in this issue, of the sudden death of the Rev. J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt.D., at 7.30 p.m. on January 1, 1937. He died of lobar pneumonia in St. Alexius' Hospital, Bismarck, North Dakota, after an illness of less than three days.

Dr. Machen left his home in Philadelphia on Sunday, December 27th, to address a rally in the North Dakota capital in the interests of The Presbyterian Church of America. By Wednesday he was confined to the hospital with what was first thought to be pleurisy. Wednesday afternoon the diagnosis of lobar pneumonia was announced and he was placed under an oxygen tent. Two doctors were in attendance. Bulletins from the hospital were not encouraging, and Christians from coast to coast joined in earnest prayer that God in His wisdom and power might restore him to health.

By the morning of New Year's day the infection had spread to both lungs and little hope of his recovery re-

mained. Early that evening he went to be with the Lord he had served so faithfully and well.

Neither his brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Machen, of Baltimore, nor the Rev. Edwin H. Rian, all of whom were hurrying to the bedside, arrived in time to see him before his death.

In the loss of Dr. Machen the cause of evangelical Christianity has lost a great and mighty defender, and many of us have lost a friend. The cause which he espoused has suffered a terrific blow. But let no one assume that it is a blow of defeat. Those who are left must carry on the tremendous task, as he would have wished them to do. The road will be lonely and the burden of grief heavy, but the work will go on.

The prayers of Christians everywhere are asked in behalf of those who must continue unwarmed by the cheer and vigor of his spirit, that God, who in the wisdom of eternity has foreordained all things, may supply the needed strength.

Karl Barth on Scripture

By the REV. CORNELIUS VAN TIL, Ph.D.



Dr. Van Til

IN order to appreciate the work of the great German theologian, Karl Barth, we must realize that he is seeking to burn the house of modern theology to the ground.

For this we are very thankful. The house of Modernism must be burned; it gives no shelter for eternity.

But Barth is also seeking to burn the house of orthodox theology to the ground. He has not merely started a fire that has gotten out of control. He holds definitely that our house keeps the wind from blowing on the fire he has started in our neighbor's house. He holds that both houses must be burned or neither will be burned. We can see something of this in his attack on the orthodox doctrine of Scripture.

Barth's view of Scripture may be summed up in the following words taken from his book, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*:

"The Bible is a literary monument of an ancient racial religion and of a Hellenistic cultus religion of the Near East. A human document like any other, it can lay no *a priori* dogmatic claim to special attention or consideration. This judgment, being announced by every tongue and believed in every territory, we may take for granted today. We need not continue trying to break through an open door. And when now we turn our serious though somewhat dispassionate attention to the objective content of the Bible, we shall not do so in a way to provoke religious enthusiasm and scientific indignation to another battle against 'stark orthodoxy' and 'dead belief in the letter.' For it is too clear that intelligent and fruitful discussion of the Bible begins when the judgment as to its human, its historical and psychological character has been made and put behind us. Would that the teachers of our high and lower schools, and with them the progressive element among the clergy of our established churches, would forthwith resolve to have done with

a battle that once had its time but has now *had* it (p. 60)."

Is the Bible the Word of God?

Can one read this quotation and doubt whether Barth is seeking to burn down the orthodox doctrine of Scripture?

But someone will say: "I interviewed Barth myself and I know that he believes in the Bible as the Word of God. I asked him whether the Word of God is *in* the Bible as the Modernist says, or whether the Word of God *is* the Bible as the Orthodox say, and Barth said the Bible *is* the Word of God. What more can you ask?"

Our reply is that we need something more than the sound of words. If we are to think of Barth as a man who has reasonably thought through his position, his contention that he believes in the Bible as the Word of God must be viewed in the light of his wholehearted acceptance of the principles of modern negative criticism and reconstruction. Whatever Barth may mean by saying that the Bible is the Word of God it is plain that for him this means something quite different from what it means to the orthodox Christian.

Does Barth Hold the View of Luther and Calvin?

A second objector may say: "You are right. The Fundamentalist cannot claim Barth as a friend. Barth is no servant of the letter. He believes no such foolish theories as those of verbal or plenary inspiration. Barth's Fundamentalism is quite different from American Fundamentalism."

"But, you see, Fundamentalism is a child of the scholastic era of Lutheran and Reformed theology. Luther and Calvin were no literalists, though they truly believed the Bible as the Word of God. And Barth's views are 'fundamentally in accord with early Reformation conceptions' (*The Presbyterian Student*, Nov., 1936, p. 8)."

In our reply to this contention we need not argue whether the "early Reformation conception" of Scripture involved the notion of plenary

inspiration. Even if we grant, for argument's sake, that Luther and Calvin held merely to the substantial correctness instead of the plenary inspiration of the Bible, Barth's views would still be utterly opposed to theirs. For Barth no book that is in any sense a product of history and the human mind can be substantially correct as *the Word of God*. Such a book may be substantially correct as a record of what man has thought but the Word of God, according to Barth, can never appear in anything like permanent form among men. Barth's activist conception of revelation makes anything like an orthodox view of Scripture impossible.

That Barth wants to ruin the orthodox house of Scripture completely may be seen still further if we think of what Protestant theology has often spoken of as the perfections of Scripture. Protestantism speaks of the authority, the necessity, the perspicuity and the sufficiency of Scripture. Does Barth hold to any one or all of these in the Protestant sense of the term? We believe not.

The Authority of Scripture

But is not Barth the great prophet of the Word of God today? Is it not he that is calling men back from the word of man to the Word of God? And is not he asking unqualified obedience to the Word of God?

We answer that he is in a sense, but not in the orthodox Protestant sense. Barth has told us with a thousand voices at every period of his development that Scripture authority is not and cannot be that of a once-for-all revelation of God. At times he even identifies the Word of God with conscience. He speaks of conscience as "the perfect interpreter of life" (*The Word of God and the Word of Man*, p. 9). His views lend themselves readily to Buchmanism and other subjectivist movements. Nor does Barth feel the least bit of obligation to accept as history that which Scripture presents as history (*Credo*, p. 190). Barth's activist conception of revelation denies the Protestant doctrine of Scripture authority.

The Necessity of Scripture

Next to the authority of Scripture the Protestant Reformers maintained the necessity of Scripture. "They considered Scripture to be necessary in virtue of the good pleasure of God to make the Word the seed of the Church" (L. Berkhof, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Introductory Volume, p. 175). This doctrine of the necessity of Scripture was opposed to the idea of the *living voice* of God as maintained by Rome and the Anabaptists.

Now on this point Barth's position is much closer to that of Rome, the Anabaptists and the views of Schleiermacher, than to that of the Protestant Reformers. Barth makes it as plain as he can that Christian preaching must be preaching not of a Word that is ready to hand in Scripture. To think of the Bible as anything like a complete expression of God's will for man is, according to Barth, to limit the sovereignty of God. Barth's enthusiastic defense of the "Sovereignty" or "free grace" of God makes him a bitter enemy of the Protestant doctrine of the necessity of Scripture (*Dogmatik*, p. 37ff. *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, p. 94). If Barth is opposed to "the modern use of the Bible" he is far more bitterly opposed to the generic Protestant use of the Bible.

The Perspicuity of Scripture

Protestant theology has in addition to the authority and the necessity of Scripture also maintained its perspicuity. The plain man can know what he needs to know by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If he compares Scripture with Scripture, and the less plain with the more plain he need not fear that he has missed the central meaning of it all. No *living voice* such as the Church of Rome is indispensable as an interpreter of Scripture.

On this point, too, Barth is opposed to the Protestant principle. Since for Barth no human language can possibly be the medium by which the Word of God may come to us directly, the Bible, written by human agents, presents a great heap of rubbish which must be removed before we find the Word of God. The actual words of Scriptures are but pointers indicating the direction in which the "Form" (*Gestalt*) of the Word of God may be found (*Kirchliche Dogmatik*, p. 182). "Only God understands Himself,

also in His Word" (*op. cit.* p. 170). Moreover, we cannot even recognize our own act of faith by which we accept the Scriptures as the Word of God for what it is (*op. cit.* p. 234). The prophets and the apostles are so many people pointing their fingers upward, urging us to look upward, too, so that perhaps we may hear something of God's Word in the distance. For Barth it is of the essence of pride to think that we possess any plain words in Scripture that come to us and are recognizable by us as the Word of God. Rome took the Bible away from the common man before the Reformation; Barth is trying to do this same thing after the Reformation.

The Sufficiency of Scripture

Finally we observe that Protestantism has asserted the sufficiency of Scripture. "The Reformers merely intended to deny that there is alongside of Scripture an unwritten word of God" (Berkhof, *op. cit.* p. 179).

With respect to this point, too, it cannot be denied that Barth has denied the Protestant doctrine. Speaking of the fact that the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God, Barth says: "The *oracles of God*, of which they are the possessors and guardians, are the comprehensible signs of the incomprehensible truth that, though the world is incapable of redemption, yet there is a redemption for the world. It is irrelevant whether they possess and are concerned to guard Moses or John the Baptist, Plato or Socialism, or that moral perception which dwells in all its simplicity in the midst of the rough and tumble of human life" (*Romans*, p. 79). And if one should think that this does not really represent Barth he may turn to the *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, Barth's most recent major work, and find essentially the same point of view. In this more recent work Barth is, to be sure, not so rash and outspoken in his rejection of the canon of Scripture. At points he even seems to plead for the necessity of a canon (p. 110). Even so, the canon is after all nothing but the precipitate of the Christian consciousness. The Scripture must never be taken as a completed historical document. The canon is but the starting point of the revelation of God and the preaching is the continuation of that same revelation (p. 104). The Reformers regarded the written word as the high-water-mark of the revelation of God; Barth regards the written Word as the unavoidable petrification of the living word.

Thus we see that Barth's doctrine of Scripture cannot by any stretch of the imagination be made to appear similar to the generic Protestant view. Is this a small matter? Can we overlook this as a detail? Can Barth be essentially sound on other doctrines if he is essentially unsound on the doctrine of Scripture? This could be only if the doctrine of Scripture were a subordinate doctrine for Protestantism. As a matter of fact, the doctrine of Scripture is one of the most basic doctrines in Protestant and especially in Reformed theology.

The Need of Christian Schools



CHRISTIAN parents and their friends are cordially urged to attend an important meeting in the interest of a proposed society for Christian schools, to be held on Monday evening, January 11th, in the Whittier Hotel, 140 North Fifteenth Street, Philadelphia. The speaker of the evening will be the Rev. Professor Cornelius Van Til, Ph.D., of Westminster Theological Seminary. At the conclusion of his address Dr. Van Til will answer questions on all phases of the Christian School system.

This tremendously important and timely question is of peculiar significance to all members of The Presbyterian Church of America, and it is earnestly hoped that a large number will attend.

The "Kingdom of Heaven" and the "Kingdom of God"

By JOHN MURRAY



Mr. Murray

IN THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN for August 17th we set forth by quotation from Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer and the *Scofield Reference Bible* the distinction dispensationalists draw between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, and presented part of the evidence to show the arbitrary and untenable character of that distinction. In this article we proceed to develop that argument still further in accordance with our promise.

It will be remembered that both Dr. Chafer and Dr. Scofield affirm that the term, kingdom of God, is used when there is nothing stated that would limit its authority over all the universe. It is therefore a universal and comprehensive category, embracing angels, the church, and the saints of all ages. The kingdom of heaven, on the other hand, *is the earthly sphere of the kingdom of God*, and is therefore the establishment of the kingdom of God in the earth. Dr. Scofield acknowledges that they have for this reason almost all things in common.

But this acknowledgment that they have almost all things in common naturally leads us to question the validity of the series of rather hard and fast distinctions that has been drawn. The need for such a question is greatly strengthened when we find Dr. Scofield proceeding to say that it is the omissions that are important. The only omissions mentioned are two parables, the parable of the tares and the wheat and the parable of the fish-net. In the kingdom of God, it is contended, there are neither tares nor bad fish.

Now in the face of abundant parallels where the two terms are manifestly used synonymously one is compelled to conclude that these two omissions provide us with rather scant evidence for such an important distinction. Especially is this the case

when we remember that the parable of the leaven is spoken of the kingdom of God as well as of the kingdom of heaven. On Dr. Scofield's interpretation leaven is the symbol of evil and represents, as he says, "the principle of corruption working subtly." The parable, he says, "constitutes a warning that the true doctrine . . . would be mingled with corrupt and corrupting false doctrine, and that officially by the apostate church itself" (p. 1016).

If, then, this pervasive leavening process applies to the kingdom of God, it surely must be through the instrumentality of personal representatives within the kingdom of God. Evil does not make progress as an abstract principle; it must be expressed in the activities of individuals, and in this case, since it is a leavening process, of individuals who are active within the kingdom of God. It will not do, as Dr. Scofield suggests, to find the representatives solely in the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians. It will not satisfy the conditions of the description Dr. Scofield himself has given of a leavening process to throw the responsibility on to representatives who are outside the sphere of the kingdom of God. If the representatives of this corrupt and corrupting false doctrine are, therefore, within the kingdom of God, we wonder what could be the difference between such and the tares or bad fish! Surely Dr. Scofield's argument for distinction on the basis of omissions breaks down on his own premises.* He has, no doubt, what may seem to some a rather convenient way of getting around the difficulty. He says: "But the parable of the leaven (Mk. 13:33) is spoken of the kingdom of God also, for, alas, even the true doctrines of the kingdom are leavened with the errors of

which the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Herodians were the representatives. (See Mk. 13:33, note)" (p. 1003). This resort is by no means impressive. It is but an attempt to slide over a fact that stands in the way of a theory.

Further Inconsistency

Furthermore, if "the kingdom of heaven is the earthly sphere of the universal kingdom of God" (p. 1003), that is, if the distinction between the two kingdoms corresponds quite closely to the relation between genus and species, how is it possible to hold that the condition for entrance into the kingdom of heaven is so utterly different from the condition for entrance into the kingdom of God?

On the one hand, as "the earthly sphere of the universal kingdom of God," the kingdom of heaven would be included in, without exhausting, the kingdom of God. The distinctive constitution and constituency of the kingdom of heaven could not, of course, be defined in terms of the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of heaven could always be called the kingdom of God. This surely follows from the premise that the kingdom of heaven is the earthly sphere of the kingdom of God. What belongs to the essence of the kingdom of God must be realized in the kingdom of heaven. Otherwise the latter could not be a phase or sphere of the kingdom of God. Accordingly, whoever belongs to the kingdom of heaven, even in its more restricted Messianic form, would also belong to the kingdom of God. Of course, since the kingdom of God is more comprehensive, not every one who belongs to the kingdom of God would belong to the kingdom of heaven, but every one who is within the lesser circle would also be within the larger. Not every resident of Pennsylvania is in Philadelphia, but every resident of Philadelphia is in Pennsylvania.

On the other hand, the conditions for entrance into the two kingdoms are sharply distinguished from one

* It must be borne in mind that in this article we are not giving our own constructive exposition of the kingdom of God-kingdom of heaven concept, but exposing the fallacy and error of the dispensationalist construction.

another. It is contended that the conditions for entrance into the kingdom of heaven, in its Messianic form at least, are legal. The kingdom of heaven, Dr. Chafer argues, is offered in early Matthew with positive demands for personal righteousness in life and conduct. "This is not," he continues, "the principle of grace, it is rather the principle of law. It extends into finer detail the law of Moses; but it never ceases to be the very opposite of the principle of grace. Law conditions its blessings on human works: grace conditions its works on divine blessings. . . . So the preaching of John the Baptist, like the Sermon on the Mount, was on a law basis as indicated by its appeal which was only for a correct and righteous life. . . . Lk. III:7-14." (*The Kingdom in History and Prophecy*, pp. 46f.) The law of Moses, the Sermon on the Mount, and the preaching of John the Baptist, then, were purely on a law basis,—the very opposite of the principle of grace,—and prescribe for us the conditions for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Entrance into the kingdom of heaven in this its Messianic form may, it is said, be "by so low a standard as merely exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees" (italics ours). These same legal requirements, we are told, prepare the way for, and condition life in, the earthly Davidic kingdom as it is yet to be set up upon the earth (Cf. op. cit., pp. 48f).

Entrance into the kingdom of God, on the other hand, is said to be by the new birth alone. The apostle Paul, for example, "lived in all good conscience' within the revelations of the nation's faith," but he "had to be transformed into a new creature on the Damascus road" (op. cit. p. 65).

The question we would now ask is: how, even on dispensationalist premises, can the distinction between these two sets of conditions be maintained? We have already shown that, even on the premises of this position, every one who belongs to, or has gained entrance into, the kingdom of heaven must also belong to the kingdom of God. How then, if the kingdom of heaven is the earthly sphere of the kingdom of God, and if the one condition for entrance into the kingdom of God is the new birth, can one be said to enter the kingdom of heaven by conditions that are legal, by a

righteousness merely in excess of the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. If the kingdom of God can be entered only by the new birth, then the new birth is also a condition for entrance into any sphere within the kingdom of God, in this case the kingdom of heaven. But this is exactly what this scheme denies. Dispensationalists will have to offer us some other method of distinction and formulation if they are to avoid this manifest self-contradiction.

The Sermon on the Mount

The immediately foregoing objection exposes, we think, a serious logical fallacy in this construction. We should not regard fallacy of this kind a minor affair. But there are other objections that are far more serious, and that because they concern the very heart of Biblical interpretation and doctrine. Is it true that the teaching of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, or the preaching of John the Baptist, is on a law basis that knows nothing of the principle of grace? We entreat readers to pause, so that they may frankly face this question. Does the Sermon on the Mount at any point imply that the kingdom of heaven in its Messianic form may be entered by so low a standard as that which *merely* exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, by a merely external and legal righteousness? Are the conditions Jesus enumerates such as may be fulfilled without that regeneration of the Spirit of which He spoke to Nicodemus? Can they be fulfilled in a profession that may be true or false? Let us read and study some of them.

"3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"4. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"5. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"7. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"8. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"9. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

"10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

—Matt. 5:3-10.

In this same Sermon on the Mount Jesus says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the

prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17). In the immediate context He proceeds to give instances of His meaning. He refers to the sixth and seventh commandments, and with respect to the latter He says, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (vs. 28). The apostle Paul tells us that he was alive without the law once, that is, before Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus road. "But when the commandment came," he informs us, "sin revived, and I died." "Nay I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:9, 7). In other words the law exposed his self-righteousness, the depravity of conscience and heart and life. It convicted and convinced him of his sinfulness. Is the fact not plain that he found with respect to the tenth commandment the very same thing that Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount taught with respect to the sixth and seventh commandments, that the law takes cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart as well as of the outward act? The correspondence is very close, so close indeed that we may say confidently that it was just the light that shines in the Sermon on the Mount that shone into his heart and upon his life. He found what our fathers would call the spirituality of the law of God, and it is just that same spirituality that thunders from the Sermon on the Mount.

The truth is that as we read the Sermon on the Mount and catch the note of intense spirituality that pervades it, then we cease to speak of a righteousness merely in excess of the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and vehemently reject the very suggestion that the kingdom of heaven—the theme discussed—can be entered by a profession that may be true or false. If we read the beatitudes on the background of what Scripture teaches as to the depravity of the human heart, and on the background of Scripture teaching as to what constitutes righteousness, meekness, and purity of heart, we shall be assured that the qualities enumerated can be present only when the regeneration or new birth, which served the subject of Jesus' discourse to Nicodemus, has by God's grace been

wrought. Indeed we need but read on in the Sermon on the Mount to find this thought expressly stated. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (7:18). Or later in the same gospel, "Either make the tree good and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. . . . A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. 12:33, 35).

It is surely time for us to regard the position that the Sermon on the Mount is on purely legal ground, and therefore the very opposite of the principle of grace, as the fruit of baneful prejudice. It is time for us to call it pernicious heresy that entails the most serious doctrinal and practical consequences. From no part of Holy Scripture more than from the Sermon on the Mount do we gain deeper conviction of the truth that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

The Preaching of the Baptist

Dr. Chafer adduces Luke 3:7-14 to show that the preaching of John the Baptist, like the Sermon on the Mount, was on a law basis. This appeal of John the Baptist must not, he contends, be confused with the present terms of salvation without nullifying the grounds of every hope and promise under grace.

Now the burden of John's preaching as recorded in this passage, it will be remembered, is: "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance" (vs. 8). This *general* exhortation is followed by more *specific* directions in answer to the questions of different classes. In a word, it is the demand of repentance John is voicing. Is there any essential difference between this demand and the demand of the gospel in all generations? Jesus said after His resurrection: "Thus it is written, that Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day: and that repentance unto the remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46, 47). Paul says at Athens: "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the

world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30, 31). Accordingly the apostles went everywhere testifying repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance is change of mind, and it manifests itself outwardly in the renunciation of the characteristic sins of which men have been the addicts. John the Baptist says nothing more nor less than this. The baptism of John was the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. So was the message Jesus ordained for His messengers who were to be His witnesses unto the ends of the earth and to the end of the age. And yet it is pleaded that to appeal to John the Baptist's demand for repentance in presenting the present terms of salvation is to nullify the grounds of every hope and promise under grace! What *principal* difference, we ask, is there between John's demand and that of Peter on the day of Pentecost, when he said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"? John's preaching of repentance had direct reference to Christ. "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus" (Acts 19:4). So had Peter's preaching. They were both unto the remission of sins.

From what does the remission of sins flow? Surely from the grace of God. Mere law knows nothing of the remission of sins. All it knows in the matter of sin is unmitigated condemnation and curse. Repentance that is unto remission like faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ has meaning only in relation to the gospel of the grace of God. They are both the demands of the gospel, and they always bespeak grace. Shall we permit ourselves to be told that the preaching of John the Baptist was on a basis the very opposite of the principle of grace? Surely the asking of the question contains its answer.

We see, therefore, that this distinction between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God is not only an arbitrary and untenable one but, as worked out by its exponents, is fraught with very serious consequences for Biblical interpreta-

tion. What is arbitrary and self-contradictory cannot commend itself to sober intelligence. What is so prejudicial to Scripture interpretation must be vigorously rejected. It bewilders the minds of the simple and imperils the salvation of souls.

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.

THE Diamond Jubilee of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., commonly called the Southern Presbyterian Church, was celebrated during December. Seventy-five years ago, on December 4th, 1861, the commissioners of all the Southern presbyteries which had renounced their allegiance to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. met in Augusta, Georgia, and constituted the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. This split in the ranks of the Old School Presbyterian Church came with the outbreak of the Civil War. Up to that time the church had steadfastly refused to discuss economic and political questions in its assemblies. On May 16th, 1861, the General Assembly met in Philadelphia in an atmosphere of tense excitement. Only sixteen commissioners from the south were present. On May 20th, North Carolina seceded from the Union. After eight days of prolonged and heated debate the General Assembly yielded to tremendous pressure and passed the famous Gardiner Spring resolutions, which declared the obligation of the church to promote and uphold the Federal Government and pledged unabated loyalty to the Constitution, in all its provisions, requirements and principles.

On June 10th the Presbytery of Memphis, in an adjourned meeting, renounced connection with the Assembly for its so-called un-Christian and revolutionary action, and requested all concurring presbyteries to join with it in the organization of another Assembly.

The Presbyterian Church in the U.S. adopted the constitution of its parent organization without change. There have been subsequent modifications of the doctrinal statements of the Northern Church, and larger changes in the Form of Government,

On Being Slandered

A Meditation on the Seventh Psalm

By the REV. DAVID FREEMAN



Mr. Freeman

SOME of the most sainted of men have been the most slandered and maligned. The Devil delights to make them a target for his malice and hatred. When there is no fault to be found in a godly person, it is easy enough for envy and ill will to invent one.

While some of God's children have a few enemies, the Psalmist had many to harass and molest him. It is no wonder he cried out to God for deliverance. Who is sufficient for a world set against those who love the Lord, but the Lord Himself? We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in high places. Back of all evil is the Evil One.

A Heavy Burden

Of all the burdens the children of God are called upon to bear this is one of the heaviest. And if they can, in such a trial, still hope in God it is a true indication of an abiding faith. This is indeed a heavy cross to bear, but no cross ever won a brighter crown if borne patiently for Jesus' sake.

It was for no offence of David's that he was spoken against. The blessing of God comes to those against whom all manner of evil is falsely spoken. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

Now the true man of God examines himself to see whether or not the things said of him are so. He does not nonchalantly dismiss them. Only if false, as he knows in his heart before the all-knowing and righteous God, is he ready to ask God to defend him. If our case is not right, if we have not done according to truth and honor, we cannot hope that God will take our side. It is an affront to God to ask Him to be party to a matter that will not stand the light of

His justice and righteousness. Are we worthy of the help of God if we give occasion to those who oppose us?

"Love Your Enemies"

Not only did David do no wrong to the innocent, but he did good to his enemies. Even to those who hated him without a cause, and from whom he suffered grievous wrongs, he showed kindness and mercy. No man could justly say that he received any harm from his hands. It was no new commandment when our Lord said, "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you." It was binding upon every Old Testament saint. In obeying it David proved himself to be a child of his heavenly Father. This commandment involves the putting away of all rancour towards an adversary; to do him all the real offices of kindness that opportunity shall lay in our way; and to pray for him. Love so manifested to an enemy reaches up to heaven. It will not lose its reward. The gospel enjoins a greater love to our enemies than men, for the most part, today show their friends.

When Love Is a Vice

But there is a so-called love toward enemies advocated today that should be abhorred. It is a shallow, sick, sentimentalism that is neither Christian nor virtuous. What is commanded in the Word of God, and so wonderfully exemplified in the true servants of God, is turned into a vice. True, we are to love our enemy as ourselves, but if we harm ourselves in order to show love to our enemy, we are sinning against ourselves. And to sin in order to do good is forbidden in Scripture. How unbecoming for men, to say nothing of Christians, to surrender tamely to their enemy all that his avarice desires. Is this not partaking of his folly? Under the pretense of loving our enemies, we are loving instead their enmity. One has said, "Though I am commanded, when my enemy thirst, to give him drink, yet it is not when he thirsts for my blood. It is my duty to give him an

alms, but not to let him take my estate. Princes and governors may very well secure themselves with laws and arms against implacable enemies for all this precept: they are not bound to leave the state defenseless against the projects, plots, and insurrections of those who are pleased to think themselves persecuted if they are not permitted to reign. We may, with a very fair comportment with this precept, love our enemies' persons, while we hate their principles and counterplot their designs." These words were never so timely as now.

Judgment and Mercy

How can a man ask God to judge him according to his own righteousness and integrity? Was this boasting on David's part? Did he forget that there is none righteous, no, not one? Who could stand, should the Lord regard us as we are in ourselves? No, David was not boasting, but only comparing himself with his enemies. With respect to their charges he was innocent, but he well knew, as he stood before a holy God, that he was foul and needed to take refuge in His mercy alone.

When a good shepherd sees his sheep already in the mouth of the wolf, the more is his compassion drawn out toward it, and the more is he set to do all in his power to deliver the sheep. His love for the sheep is great when it is in such great danger. Such a good shepherd is the Lord. Knowing His character, David's faith is cheered. God will not forsake him, but will be the more inclined to help him when the fury of men is manifest. Since God preserves the righteous, those who do His will stand protected. When is God's grace so magnified as when He delivers from great peril?

No arm of man can save. God alone was the Psalmist's Saviour. By His grace we are delivered from sin through His offering up of Himself on the cross, and by His grace all of His children are defended and preserved.

The Sunday School Lessons

By the REV. LESLIE W. SLOAT

January 17th, *The Water of Life.*
John 4:7-26.



Mr. Sloat

THIS story, which is in many respects closely parallel to that of Nicodemus with which it also contrasts sharply, has a definite place in the plan of the Gospel. It may be said to illustrate the greater readiness of non-Jews to accept the claims of Jesus and believe in Him, as over against the Jews, who are constantly pictured as unwilling to accept Him, and as finding in His miracles and teachings only occasion for opposition to Him.

Jesus, who had a true human nature, as well as a true divine nature, and who could thus become thirsty and weary as anyone else, engages in conversation with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well near Sychar, while waiting for the disciples who had gone to the city to buy food. His request for a drink brings from the woman a reply indicating both surprise and a willingness to talk. The surprise is because "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." The Greek word means strictly "to use a thing together," whence comes the wider application. The purchase of food, and such purely impersonal transactions, were not of course excluded.

10. *If thou knewest*—Sensing her readiness to talk, Jesus leads her on with intriguing questions. *The Gift of God*—Some say Jesus Himself (3:16), others the more general blessings of Salvation and the indwelling Spirit. Subsequent conversation seems to indicate the latter. *And who it is*—A broad hint that the speaker was more than He appeared to her at the moment to be. Her increasing respect for Him is indicated by the change in the title she uses, from the first mere "thou," to "Messiah," by which she describes Him to others. *Living Water*—the Greek is ambiguous, and may mean "spring water," whence comes the reply of the woman, indicating she understood it as such. Notice how frequently Jesus employs

things of the natural world as illustrating the spiritual world (cf. bread, vine and branches, shepherd and sheep, etc.). Romans 1:20 would seem to indicate that such was the intention of God in the plan of creation.

The woman's question as to Jesus' ability to provide such "spring water" He ignores, and instead speaks of the inability of that which this world produces to satisfy permanently. *Who-soever drinketh of this water shall thirst again*—how well she must have known this, both from repeated trips to this well, and, morally, from various matrimonial ventures. *But who-soever . . .*—What He had to give was infinitely superior, first, in its source, Himself; secondly, in its internal result, becoming a well of water; thirdly, in its sufficiency, constantly renewing itself; and fourth, in its ultimate result, which was eternal life. This "Living Water" seems plainly to refer to or symbolize the Holy Spirit within the individual (cf. 7:38, 39).

15. The woman, still thinking in terms of this world, asks for this water. Jesus immediately introduces the question of her moral fitness to receive it. She does not need to be morally good. But she must recognize and be sorry for her sin. Repentance is a necessary accompaniment of faith. Jesus therefore makes clear to her that He knows all about her past and present moral character. It is this knowledge, which the woman recognizes as more than natural, which most impresses her (verse 29).

19. *I perceive that thou art a prophet*—His knowledge of her persuades her of this, and the conviction provides the opportunity to turn the conversation into less personal channels. Notice also that Jesus does not condemn the bringing up of a controversial issue, but actually seizes upon and develops it, and does not again return to the matter of her sin. The Holy Spirit will do the work of convicting her in that matter.

20. *This mountain . . . Jerusalem*—The Samaritans considered Mt. Gerazim as the proper place of worship, and expected the Messiah to come to

it. Some have made the doubtful suggestion, that the woman wanted to make sacrifice for her sins and wanted to know which was the correct place to go. It is more probable that, having found one whom she considers a real prophet, she naturally puts to Him the religious question that was most prominent.

21. *Woman, Believe me . . .*—A solemn utterance, indicating that Jesus considered the woman sincere. His statement points out (1) the principle, that the place of worship is a matter of relative unimportance, and (2) the fact, that Jerusalem is soon going to cease to be a center of worship. In this there is an implicit foretelling of the destruction and cessation of Judaism as a proper form of worship. *The Father*—Jesus lifts worship from mere approach to deity, into the plane of a family relationship of the most intimate kind with that Deity. Of course, a child can approach its father anywhere, anytime.

22. But though place is unimportant, Jesus now indicates that the pure Jewish religion was superior, and that because it was the worship of a known and true God. God had responded to the worship of the Jewish people. He had made Himself known to them. The worship of an unknown or false God is vanity. *Salvation is of the Jews*, for Jesus was Himself the Saviour of the world, and in the plan of God, it was before determined that He should be born, as pertaining to the flesh, of the Jewish race.

23. And already, inasmuch as the Saviour is in the world, true worship can exist apart from Jerusalem. In principle the New Testament period has begun, though in fact His work was not yet finished. True worship is internal, spiritual, and according to the reality of things, rather than external and through types and symbols of those things. In spirit and in truth, therefore, will the worshippers approach the Father (cf. Rom. 1:9). And this is what the Father really desires—He "seeketh such." The present tense indicates the continual desire of the Father, even under the Old Testament regime. That regime was not sinful or false, but immature, and intended to prepare the people for the coming regime of reality (cf. Heb. 10:1ff). Thus it is apparent that the reestablishment of any such worship as that by type and symbol at

some future time is excluded. Our present sacraments are memorials, and representative, not of something to come, but of something that has happened. In the future even they will be done away, and the fellowship between man and God will be even more definitely realized than at present.

24. And the reason for this is that *God is Spirit*. Not having any material attributes, He must not in true worship be approached through forms which would suggest that He had. The form of worship must befit the object of worship. *In Truth*—That is, with due recognition of the reality which characterizes God and our relation to Him. Heresy and acceptable worship do not go together.

The woman admits that she is beyond her depth, and suggests that the Messiah will have to solve those problems. Whereupon, to this sinful, alien woman Jesus makes the great revelation, "I Am He, who am speaking to thee." Jesus was willing to reveal to her His Messiahship, for the Samaritans would not seize upon the supposed political aspects of it, as would the Jews (6:15).

And the outcome of the meeting? See verse 42. Some believed the testimony of the woman. Others believed Jesus Himself. But the important thing was what they believed: not merely that He was the expected Jewish Messiah, but that He was Saviour of the world bringing blessings upon all nations (Gen. 12:3). Truly, in spiritual things, seed-sowing is often quickly followed by harvest.

January 24th, Two Miracles of Mercy. John 5:2-9; 6:8-15.

THE *Healing of the Impotent Man*, 5:2-9. Jesus was back in Jerusalem again, for a feast which is not particularly named. *At the sheep gate a pool*—Some prefer to translate it, "sheep-pool," a place where the sheep were washed. But a sheep gate is mentioned in Nehemiah 3:32. *Bethesda*—i.e., "House of Mercy." Other manuscripts have Bethzatha, "House of Olives." *Porches*—Partially sheltered places arranged around the sides of the pool. *Awaiting the moving of the water*—This clause and the following verse are not found in the best manuscripts, and are generally admitted to be a later addition, explaining the superstition suggested in

verse 7. *Thirty- and eight years*—the period of his sickness, not of his being in this place. We are not told what his particular ailment was, other than that it resulted in partial paralysis. *Jesus seeing him lying, and knowing . . .*—The knowledge was not necessarily supernatural, for the man was probably well known. Why did Jesus heal only one person, and that this one? There is no indication of any appeal from the man, and the sequel reveals him as almost indifferent to the cure. Only the sovereign pleasure of the Son of God, whereby He chooses whom He will, can answer this question. Enough for us that He did select this individual alone. *Do you wish to become whole?* The question designed to arouse interest and hope, and yet uncovering only an attitude of despair. *I have no man*—Without friends and helpless himself, the man is in a sad case. Jesus indicates no approval or concern over the superstition about the pool. *Arise . . .*—A command involving the man's own restoration, his departure from this place, and his showing to the people that he was well. *And immediately . . .*—The cure came with the command. No sooner were the words spoken, than the man had arisen, picked up the cot, and was walking.

And it was the Sabbath Day—John has chosen his miracles because of what they mean for the person of Jesus Himself, rather than because of what they mean for the recipients of the benefits. The very first miracle, in Cana, had resulted in faith on the part of the disciples (2:11). And all the miracles were of such a nature that they most plainly proved that Jesus possessed the attributes of deity. And that was what they actually did prove to John—that Jesus was the Son of God. But what was the result they produced on the part of the Jewish people? Unbelief, hatred, and a determination to do away with Jesus. Thus in this case, instead of showing any interest in the fact that a man was healed, the Jewish leaders find it only an opportunity to charge Him with Sabbath desecration. When He intimates that the miracle proves Him truly the Son of God, they charge Him further with blasphemy. And that is the story throughout the Gospel. That is the thing that overwhelms John as he looks back to the events of that time.

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (1:11). Though He had done so many miracles in their presence, yet they believed not in Him (12:37). The Christological passage (5:17-47) contains Jesus' claims for His own person, based on the undeniable proof of the miracles, coupled with His charge against the people, that they do not "will to come" to Him that they may have life.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand (6:8-15). Jesus is back north again, and this time across the Sea of Galilee. The multitude comes to Him, having seen the miracles He wrought for the sick,—but not, as we shall see, interested in the Person who wrought miracles, but only in the miracles themselves as interesting events. A question to Philip about the source of food for the crowd brings a reply that indicates the size of the group. *Five barley loaves*—the kind of bread used by the poor. Some have suggested that this was a baker's boy with the remnant of his wares. *Make the men sit down*—Jesus was going to work a supreme miracle. And He was going to do it in the open, with every eye fastened upon Him, and nothing else to disturb the people. Since Jesus was standing they could see better sitting down. Only the men are mentioned, according to local custom. Jesus was primarily interested in showing this thing to the men. *He took then the bread*—Did He look slightly foolish to the multitude, as He blessed five barley loaves, with the intent of feeding five thousand? *Having given thanks*—the act of a father at the dinner table. No indication of a special prayer for the occasion. *He gave to the ones sitting down*—a regular dinner, served, of course, with the help of the disciples. We are not told at what point the miraculous multiplication took place. It was indescribable. But feeding five thousand and more took time. There was ample opportunity for the people to discover what was happening, and then to watch even more closely. And before their eyes they saw Jesus actually employing the creative power of God and bringing into being something out of nothing. *Gather up the fragments*—As Matthew says, they became stuffed and could not eat any more, and the disciples gathered up twelve baskets full of fragments, remaining from five loaves and two

fishes. The people not only ate, but now had the chance of examining what was left over. There was no escaping the fact that a miracle had been performed. And a miracle truly proving that Jesus possessed the attributes of deity.

This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world—Cf. Deut. 18: 15. This miracle created this conviction in the minds of the people, but it did not result in their believing in Him. For they wanted to do their will with Him—make Him a king—rather than let Him do His own will in them, which would have led them to trust in Him. If He was truly the Messiah, the Son of God, then it was up to Him to control them, rather than up to them to control Him. Jesus charges them with unbelief and disobedience and tells them that to do God's work is to believe on Him (26-29), and immediately they turn back, revealing their true unbelief, and say, Show us a sign. This leads to the discourse on the bread of life, with the four-times repeated declaration, *I will raise him up at the last day*. Yet they will not believe, and in verse 65 we have the final answer, "No one can come unto me except it be given him of the Father." Calvin's doctrine of the sovereignty of God, and predestination, is based upon the teaching of our Lord Himself. It is the only possible explanation of the unbelief of the Jews. And yet the Jews were themselves, actually, morally responsible for their rejection of the Christ. Divine predestination and moral responsibility for our own acts are taught side by side in the Scriptures. We can deny neither.

January 31st, Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles. John 7.

INSTEAD of following the International Lessons for this week, we are continuing our comments on the Gospel of John, treating of Chapter 7, which has been omitted from the lesson studies.

In this chapter two points of pertinent interest are woven together into one pattern. First there is a review of the various opinions of Jesus, held by different groups. And secondly, we see the opposition to Jesus on the part of the authorities take definite form, as they first send men to seize Him, and then, that failing, show that their determination is His destruc-

tion, regardless of how it may be accomplished. The narrative thus fits the program of the Gospel to perfection. The close of chapter six told the story of the climax and downward start in the popularity of Jesus. From henceforth, with the brief exception of the triumphal entry, the story is one of growing strength in the opposition, right up to Calvary.

1-9. First, then, we have a brief story about Jesus and His brothers. To deny that Jesus had real brothers after the flesh, children of Mary, requires the grossest misrepresentation and misinterpretation of Scripture. These brothers urge upon Jesus that He go up openly to the Feast of Tabernacles. One is not sure of their purpose. Either they are openly mocking Him, as some have suggested, or else they are seriously in doubt. If the latter, what they wish is to have His claims once for all decided by a public proclamation of Himself at the feast. There the question could be settled, so they think, once for all.

His brothers, at least, did not yet believe in Him as Messiah. And they did not come to that conviction till the resurrection.

10-13. Next we have a picture of the Feast itself. And here we see the undercurrent of discussion about that Man, Jesus. Some people are saying that He is a good man. Others claim that He is deceiving the people. But the discussions are being carried on on street corners and in little groups,—none of the people dare to speak out in the open for fear that the authorities, who have not yet officially decided, will declare them wrong.

14-36. Then Jesus Himself appears, having come into the city quietly. He starts teaching in the temple about the middle of the week: There He joins a number of other teachers and makes His purpose the exposition of the Old Testament, rather than any particular Messianic claims concerning Himself. But He attracts attention by the very ability with which He expounds the Scripture. The people marvel, knowing that He had never attended the Rabbinical schools. And to that He makes definite reply. He had been taught His doctrine—but not by those schools. He had been taught it by God (if we may so speak). And that fact may be proven by two things. First, if any man really desires and wills to do God's will, he will know of Jesus' doctrine that it is true, and

that Jesus is not speaking on mere human authority. Here then Jesus, in spite of what has been said in the previous chapter, lays the responsibility for His rejection directly at the door of the Jews. If they really willed to do God's will, they would not be standing in doubt of Him. The reason they are in doubt and are opposing Him is that they do not really desire to do the will of God. They are responsible for what they are going to do. The second argument He uses is that, if He were merely speaking on His own authority and not really from God, He would not be saying things that are bringing reproach upon Him. He would rather be seeking His own honor and glory. As it is, He is saying things which are ultimately going to lead Him to His death. This implication, though not fully stated, would show that Jesus must indeed be speaking for someone else, and must be determined to be loyal to that other one, regardless of cost to Himself. Jesus then contrasts His own attitude with that of the Jewish people (especially the authorities). They claim to be honoring Moses and the Law he had given. But instead, they are really seeking their own honor, and are being disloyal to Moses. For Moses foretold Jesus, and Moses also commanded that people should not kill. And yet the people are rejecting the one foretold by Moses, and are going about to kill Him. And then, from another angle, Jesus proceeds to point out that they do exactly the same thing He Himself has done. He, according to them, has broken the Sabbath in healing the impotent man. Well, they break the Sabbath when they circumcise a child (circumcision was performed on the eighth day, even when that was the Sabbath). But they claim to be justified because the law of circumcision was older than Moses, and takes precedence over the law of the Sabbath given by Him. Should He not therefore be justified in what He had done, on exactly the same basis, (1) because of the character of His act, which was to make an entire man well, and (2) because the authority and power by which He performed the act had clearly come directly from God, and should therefore take precedence over the law that came only from Moses? (This argument is, of course, to meet their interpretation, and Jesus does not in any sense really imply that He has broken the law of

Moses truly understood.) The people should, if they were really true to Moses, be judging according to the deeper righteousness of the act, instead of through surface appearances alone.

25-27. The Jerusalemites, who knew the plans of the authorities to kill this man, now speak among themselves, wondering how He dares thus to appear in the open. And wondering, too, if it is possible that the rulers have decided that this is the Christ, and are yet determined to carry out their plans. But they immediately answer their own suggestion. This cannot be the Christ, for they know something of the origin of this man.

28-36. Jesus, knowing their conversation, makes direct reply, asserting that though they do know His human origin, they would also know His divine origin if they were truly of God. But the latter is hidden from them, because they do not know God (cf. 4:22—the true and the false Jewish religionists). But He does know God, and therefore He knows about His own origin. This speech in the temple is so impressive that many believe. But the Sanhedrin hears about this and, hastily summoning a council, sends men to seize Jesus and bring Him to them. This action, prophetic

as it seems to be of the final outcome of Jesus' ministry, leads Him to speak briefly of that which He knows is going to happen, only a little hence.

37-52. On the last great day of the Feast, the day of the Solemn Assembly which represented the entrance of Israel into the promised land following the wilderness wanderings, Jesus presents Himself in the Temple and offers to give of the water of life to all who truly seek it. John explains this as of the Holy Spirit (cf. 4:14). In consequence of this final appearance many of the people were convinced that He was either the Prophet (Deut. 18:15) or in truth the Messiah. (The Jews generally understood these as two different persons who were to come.) And the men sent to seize Jesus return without Him, testifying to His greatness. Whereupon the Sanhedrin, in anger and disgust, shows its true character, and reveals that, regardless of what may happen, it is determined to get rid of this man. Nicodemus objects that they are going contrary to the law of Moses in judging a man without trial, and they reply in a fashion that indicates they are wholly governed by prejudice, and not at all by facts. Hypocrisy among those who claim to be religious leaders is not a new thing.

(II Thess. 2:13). See also Psalm 119:89-91; Ephesians 1:4; and I Peter 1:2.

God has planned even the actions of men, both good and evil.

Good: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

Evil: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).

See also Luke 22:22; Acts 4:27-28; Exodus 7:3 and Romans 9:17; Genesis 50:20; I Peter 2:8; and Revelation 17:17.

The Plan of God or Chaos

A god who did not have an eternal purpose concerning whatsoever comes to pass would not be the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable God revealed in the Bible. Nor would he be the God who must exist if life is to have any meaning for us (See Lesson 2).

A god who would create a world without planning all things to occur in it would be limited in wisdom and knowledge—and could be no suitable authority for us.

The true God, of course, did not blindly create, having left some events uncertain, undetermined, and not foreknown: but with infinite wisdom He determined all things for His own glory, the highest possible end; and, because He settled or determined all things He knew all that would occur.

If we deny that God has decreed all things we must deny not only His wisdom and His knowledge, but will find ourselves logically driven to make other devastating denials. Bennett Tyler has aptly said, "The denial of decrees involves denial of the essential attributes of God, such as omnipotence, omniscience, benevolence; exhibits him as a disappointed and unhappy being; implies denial of his universal providence; leads to a denial of the greater part of our own duty of submission; weakens the obligations of gratitude."

If we must choose between God or chaos, we must choose between a God who has planned all things or chaos.

Cautions

Although God's eternal purpose determines all things, man is not to be regarded merely as a machine, which

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

By the REV. JOHN H. SKILTON

LESSON 14

The Decrees of God

QUESTION 7. *What are the decrees of God?*

ANSWER. *The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.*

God Has Planned All Things

GOD planned, decreed, or foreordained from eternity whatsoever comes to pass. Without exception everything in the universe is part of God's eternal plan or purpose, as revealed in the Bible.

"... Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Ephesians 1:11).

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure... yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isaiah 46:10-11).

Consider also Psalm 33:10-11; Isaiah 14:26-27; Daniel 4:34-35; and Acts 2:23; 15:18; 17:26.

The eternal purpose of God extends even to such matters as the length of man's life and the bounds of his habitations (Job 14:5; Acts 14:26).

It has regard to means as well as ends. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth

need have no initiative, nor is God to be considered responsible for man's sin. Man is revealed by the Scriptures to be a morally responsible being with a will of his own. That man's nature should be evil, and that man should accordingly will to do evil, place guilt only on man. God has decreed means as well as ends and has instructed man as to how he may be a means in the accomplishment of exalted purposes: man should in no wise feel himself justified in refusing to labor together with God. Problems may arise in our attempts to understand the profound truths of God's all-embracing purpose and man's responsibility: but we must not reject revealed truth because of any difficulties it presents to us.

SUBJECTS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. In what ways does the doctrine of God's eternal purpose or foreordination help us? Does it tend to develop humility? patience? confidence that God will keep His promises? courage? assurance of a final triumph of righteousness? Does it help us to see the hand of God in our experience? Does it give us an indication of our high privilege of serving God? Give reasons.

2. What is fatalism? How does it differ from the doctrine of God's eternal purpose?

3. Who is responsible for sin?

4. Is there such a thing as chance?

5. In what ways would the fact of prophecy and its fulfillment support the doctrine that God has planned all things?

6. If any one event of history is foreordained must others be as well?

7. Show from the Scriptures that the crucifixion of our Lord was foreordained and that at the same time the men who brought it about were morally responsible.

8. What effect should the doctrine of God's eternal purpose have upon sinners? Should it make them realize that God's warnings of punishment ought to be heeded?

9. What is the relationship between the eternal purpose of God and salvation? See Question 20 in the Shorter Catechism.

10. If we deny the doctrine of God's eternal purpose what else are we logically compelled to deny? Reasons?

11. If we did not believe that God has an eternal purpose could we say that "all things work together for

good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose?"

12. Is there any reason for disregarding God's holy law because all things have been foreordained?

LESSON 15

The Decrees of God

QUESTION 7. What are the decrees of God?

ANSWER. The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

QUESTION 8. How doth God execute His decrees?

ANSWER. God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence.

One Purpose

GOD has not many plans for whatsoever comes to pass, but only one plan, only one purpose. Of course, since God's one purpose concerns all things that come to pass, we may properly speak of His purpose regarding any one thing, and, for convenience' sake, of His *decrees* or *purposes* with regard to many things. But we must never forget that, as Dr. Charles Hodge has said, "the vast scheme of creation, providence, and redemption lies in the divine mind as one simple purpose, although including an infinite multiplicity of causes and effects." The Shorter Catechism recognizes the oneness of God's plan when it says, "The decrees of God are His eternal purpose."

An Eternal and an Unchanging Purpose

Being infinite in all His perfections God cannot have different plans at different times. His purpose was formed before the world was created and has existed from eternity in Him with whom there is no beginning, no ending, and no "succession of moments." No lack of wisdom, knowledge, or power, and no alteration in His Being could force God to change His plan.

Eternal: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).

"Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given

us in Christ Jesus before the world began (II Timothy 1:9). See also Ephesians 3:9, 11; I Peter 1:20-21; Romans 11:33-36; Acts 2:23; 15:18; II Thessalonians 2:13; Matthew 25:34; and I Corinthians 2:7.

Unchangeable: "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations (Psalm 33:11).

"The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, surely as I have thought so shall it stand (Isaiah 14:24).

See Isaiah 46:9-10 and John 23:13-14.

Further Considerations

1. God has decreed whatsoever comes to pass according to the counsel of His will. With His infinite wisdom He has chosen the end from the beginning. From all possibilities He has determined actualities that will give Him most glory. We can rejoice that the universe is not enslaved by a malignant fate or by blind "chance," but that all things are foreordained by our great, infinitely wise God, whose will is holy.

God's decrees are not dependent on anything outside of Himself.

"Who hath known the mind of the Lord? . . . of him, and through him, and to him are all things" (Romans 11:34-36). See also Isaiah 40:13-14; Daniel 4:35; Psalm 135:6; Job 36:22-23; and I Cor. 2:16.

2. Whatever God has planned will come to pass.

"The Lord of hosts hath purposed, who shall disannul it?" (Isaiah 14:27.)

(The answer to the eighth question of the Catechism tells us that "God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence," works to which we shall give special attention in succeeding studies.)

3. It is for the highest end that God has foreordained all things: His own glory.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). Consider also Numbers 14:21; Isaiah 48:11; Romans 11:36; and Ephesians 1:5, 6, 8-10, 12.

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Distinguish between decrees and the execution of decrees. Does what-

ever God decrees come to pass? How?

2. Are the actions both of God and man included in God's eternal purpose?

3. Do the decrees of God relate to things "within" God as well as outside Him? Does God decree to be all powerful?

4. Could God change His eternal purpose? Why can He not have different plans at different times?

5. Could God have chosen any higher end than His own glory? Rea-

sons?

6. Is it more fitting for us to say that God has an eternal PURPOSE rather than PURPOSES? Reason?

7. Give Scripture references to show that God is eternal and His purpose is eternal; that He is unchangeable and His purpose is unchangeable.

8. Do we find comfort in the fact that God's eternal purpose is according to the counsel of His will?

9. Review last week's lesson and study Catechism Questions 8 to 10.

CHRISTIAN REFORMED EDITOR REVIEWS THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

IN AN editorial in the December 25th issue of *The Banner*, organ of the Christian Reformed Church, the Rev. H. J. Kuiper gives a hearty Christian welcome to The Presbyterian Church of America, and comments with particularly warm approval on actions of the Second General Assembly pertaining to the field of Christian Education. A portion of the editorial is here quoted:

"One of the outstanding events of 1936 in the religious and ecclesiastical world, as far as our own country is concerned, was the establishment of a new denomination holding to the Reformed faith, namely, The Presbyterian Church of America. We are prayerfully interested in the welfare of this Church. Its progress will mean much for the preservation and propagation not only of the evangelical faith but more specifically of our Calvinistic doctrines and traditions. . . . And by things Reformed we mean not only Reformed doctrine and government but also such educational agencies which we believe are needed to perpetuate the fundamentals of our faith. Therefore we were happy to read the report of the Committee on Christian Education at the Second General Assembly held last November in Philadelphia. This noteworthy report states, for example, that 'if The Presbyterian Church of America is to be a truly Reformed Church, activities in the sphere of education, however humble, cannot be initiated too soon. Certain truly Evangelical and Reformed publications and projects which are already available can be

utilized, but it will be necessary also to take steps toward the development of a comprehensive program of Christian education. . . ."

The editor of *The Banner* then proceeds to enumerate four recommendations of the Committee on Christian Education, which parallel current aims and efforts in the Christian Reformed Church and which he wholeheartedly endorses.

"But more important than some of the recommendations already mentioned," he continues, "is the last one, pertaining to Christian schools. It reads as follows: 'That the General Assembly recommend to pastors and members of the church the formation of Christian School Societies which shall have as their purpose the establishment of Christian daily schools.' This is a remarkable pronouncement indeed. We know of no other Church in our country, besides The Christian Reformed Church and the Protestant Reformed Church, which is officially committed to the cause of parental Christian schools. A silver lining shining through the dark clouds of present day American Christianity!

"Any one who reads the report from which we have quoted will understand why we have given The Presbyterian Church of America special attention in *The Banner* ever since its organization last spring. . . .

"Let us add to this that if we have been an inspiration to the leaders of the new Presbyterian Church, they have no less been an inspiration to us. We have often asked ourselves the question whether we would have been

willing to suffer the hardships and the calumny for our faith which they have endured during the past few years. And let us not forget that our contacts with the men of Westminster Seminary and others who have stepped out or been cast out of the Presbyterian Church, North, [the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.] have served us as a constant warning against the ever-present perils of Modernism."

SYNOD COMMISSION DEFERS TRIAL OF JAMES E. BENNET

THE trial of Ruling Elder James E. Bennet by a special judicial commission of the Synod of New York temporarily collapsed on December 15th in a touching demonstration of cordiality and pre-Christmas good-will. Mr. Bennet, New York lawyer who still retains his membership in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., had been ordered brought to trial on charges growing out of his Independent Board membership.

It is important to note that this first session was held, not in any church building, but in a room at 156 Fifth Avenue, on one of the three floors occupied by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Mr. Bennet, whose brother, William S. Bennet, represented him as counsel at this first session, pointed out that the proper tribunal for his trial would be the session of the Fort Washington Church of which he is a member. He stated also that the trial was outlawed by the statute of limitations, since more than two years have now elapsed since the "mandate" of 1934.

With a charming display of concern for the provisions of the Book of Discipline the commission made no attempt to proceed beyond the presentation of charges, but unofficially received Mr. Bennet's criticisms in order to consider them before the next session. In a general spirit of friendliness and good-will the commission adjourned until January 19th.

It is expected that since Mr. Bennet did not withdraw from the church, merely protested, he will receive little more than an official wrist-slapping.

COURT RULES AGAINST PRELIMINARY OBJECTIONS TO SUIT OF OLD ORGANIZATION

Defendants Ordered to File Answer on Merits of Case

ON December 3rd the Court of Common Pleas, No. 5, in Philadelphia filed an opinion dismissing the preliminary objections filed by counsel for the Home Missions Committee of The Presbyterian Church of America against the Bill of Complaint of certain members of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

This decision is not determinative of the case; its effect is to require the defendants to file an answer to the Bill of Complaint.

The first portion of the opinion summarizes the Bill of Complaint which was printed in full in THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN for September 12, 1936. The second portion discusses the preliminary objections of the defendants to the bill. These objections were published in the issue of September 16, 1936. The text of the opinion itself is here quoted in full.

The first objection of the defendants to the bill in equity is without merit. There is no effort made by law to secure a preference for any religious establishment contrary to Section 3 of Article I of the Constitution of this Commonwealth. The right to the name, The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, is recognized by usage and tradition since that unincorporated society was organized under that name and title in America in 1788. The mere use of a specific name for a religious body in no way hampers a man's freedom of worship or compels his attendance or adherence to a church conducting religious services under that caption. There is here no attempt being made which would compel a preference by law for this particular religious body or mode of worship over all other religious organizations or modes of worship. The primary purpose of the bill is to prevent the use of a name by another independent organization whether it be created by schism or by a group never before affiliated with it, so nearly identical to its own ancient name associated to it in the public mind as to lead to confusion, misunderstanding and material damages.

It seems futile to deny that the original name: The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America is not substantially copied by the defendants in their adoption of the name: Presbyterian Church of America.

It also appeals to common sense that the use of this latter name must lead to confusion among those who worship under

the name of Presbyterians as such form of worship conducted under the churches being a part of the plaintiff organization as well as misunderstanding among those who may be desirous of making contributions to the original organization or attending its colleges of learning, missions or other auxiliary organizations. This is not a monopoly. It is merely a natural and protective right that belongs to organizations, religious or otherwise, to safeguard them against organizations attempting to adopt their time honored and descriptive name or one so similar to it, as to lead to confusion and tend to deceit.

The bill is not defective because of any multifariousness as to parties plaintiff and causes of action. The parties plaintiff are the individual officers, and a specially constituted committee of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, an unincorporated body and the Trustees of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, a corporation. All of these parties have a common interest or a single object in the proceedings even though that interest may be variable to some degree.

In *Rafferty v. Central Traction Company*, 147 Pa. 579, Mr. Justice Greer said (on p. 584):

"We dismiss the first and second assignments of error, because we think that the cause of complaint is one that is common to all the plaintiffs, the right under which all claim is precisely the same as to each, the complaint of all is against the same defendant for the doing of acts which affected all alike and in the same manner, the defence set up is common to all the plaintiffs, and the testimony, proofs and decree are alike as to all the plaintiffs. It is not necessary to cite authorities to show that when all these matters concur a bill filed by several such plaintiffs against a common defendant is not multifarious."

See also *Riley v. Pennsylvania Company*, 32 Pa. Superior, 579.

There is also only one prayer to enjoin the defendants from using or employing the name Presbyterian Church of America or any similar name or imitative of that of the plaintiff church or holding meetings or enterprises under such name. The plaintiffs share the same name, have a common interest in it and in varying degrees would be affected by its imitation. If injuries are suffered by these plaintiffs to any degree, equity will assume jurisdiction. It is not necessary therefore that all forms and degrees of injury must be contained in the bill. Neither is it necessary for the bill to set forth all, each and every character or description of the property that may be affected or the property held in trust by the corporation or the specific uses and purposes thereof. Many of the averments of the bill may be surplusage and unnecessary. That which is material and relevant may be adduced by proof.

Paragraph Four of the bill describes the bodies and groups constituting the plaintiff church including the governing body as well as the powers and duties of the General Assembly and the Form of Gov-

ernment of the plaintiff church. The latter is as follows:

"the power of deciding in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; of reproof, warning or bearing testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any church, presbytery, or synod; of erecting new synods when it may be judged necessary; of superintending the concerns of the whole Church; of corresponding with foreign churches, on such terms as may be agreed upon by the Assembly and the corresponding body; of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations; and in general, of recommending and attempting reformation of manner, and the promotion of charity, truth, and holiness, through all the churches under their care."

This action is brought in the interest of The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and to assert a right which belongs in it. The other parties plaintiff are but the instrument in bringing the matter to the attention of this Court. The sole question is to have the matter adjudicated on the question of the right of the plaintiff church to enjoin another organization or group from using its name or one so similar to it as to lead to confusion, misunderstanding and consequent damage.

DECREE

AND NOW, to wit, this 3rd day of December, 1936, the Preliminary Objections to the Bill in Equity are dismissed with leave granted to the defendants to file an answer on the merits within fifteen days.

By THE COURT:

FRANK SMITH,
P. J.

CHICAGO AREA PRESBYTERY LOOKS FORWARD TO RALLY

THE Presbytery of the Chicago Area, formerly known as the Presbytery of Chicago, is enthusiastically planning a rally to be held on January 21st at 7.45 P. M., in Chicago's Belden Avenue Baptist Church, Belden Avenue and Halsted Street. The Rev. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., D.D., President of Wheaton College and Moderator of the Second General Assembly, will preside.

The principal speaker at this important gathering will be the Rev. J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt.D., and it is expected that many in the Chicago area will give hearty support to the rally.

Ministerial members of the Presbytery of the Chicago Area are: Dr. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., *Moderator*; R. Jackson Vaughn, *Stated Clerk*; William Agnew; Frank H. Heyden-

burk; Benjamin Mickle Brown; Chas. G. Sterling; O. W. Winkfield; Fred Geisenheiner; William Henry Myers.

STATISTICS SHOW RUSSIA NOW 50 PER CENT ATHEIST

FROM Russia, one-time land of the samovar but now the home of religious desolation and oppression, comes a series of reports recently released by the World Dominion Movement, of London. In 1935 fourteen thousand churches were closed. A Polish publication gives official Soviet figures to show that, between 1917 and 1935, 42,800 clergymen died in concentration camps and that of the 55,000 priests before the revolution about one-fifth only remain. Last Easter 35 churches were open in Moscow, with 75,000 persons attending. At the tenth anniversary of the League of Militant Godless, celebrated last year, President Yaroslavsky reported that half the population of Russia was now atheist but that fifty per cent. of Russian youth still cling to the Faith. Nina Kamneva, holder of the women's championship for the delayed parachute jump, was loudly cheered when she declared that in all her nebular travels she had been unable to find God or the angels in the clouds.

In the Soviet Union in 1935 there were 300 priests; today there are fifteen. Moslems and Jews have experienced similar treatment. But news of the evangelical churches is even graver. The Lutheran church, in 1914, had 230 pastors. Now there are three. The groups in Northern Russia suffered equally with the other evangelical minorities when the Soviet realized that the aims of the Christians of this area were radically divergent from their own. These groups remain a thorn in the governmental flesh because their very loose organization prevents them from being corporately crushed.

The following is a significant statement from the *Communist International* for 1936: "Among the objectives of the cultural revolution the fight against religion, that opium of the people, holds a special place. Inflexibly, systematically, anti-religious propaganda should be conducted and all education based upon a material conception of the universe."

DEDICATION SERVICE OF WISCONSIN CHURCH TO BE CONDUCTED BY DR. MACHEN

Calvary Church of Cedar Grove
Reports Unusual History
and Progress

ON JANUARY 20th the new church building of the Calvary Presbyterian Church of Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, will be dedicated at a service to be conducted by the Rev. J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt.D. This service, eagerly anticipated by the congregation and its pastor, the Rev. John J. De Waard, will climax an inspiring history and a summer of hard work.

The Calvary Presbyterian Church of Cedar Grove was organized on June 9, 1936, with 301 members, but it is not a new church which came into being on that day. For more than eighty years there had been in Cedar Grove a true Presbyterian Church. The system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster Standards was understood and loved not only by these people, but also by their friends and relatives in the Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches of which there are five in the community. In order to continue as a true Presbyterian Church, the members have been compelled to build another building, for the Presbyterian Church in

the U.S.A. would not permit them to teach and practice consistently the Calvinism of the Standards. The Presbytery of Milwaukee made it perfectly plain that it would not allow the Cedar Grove Church to remain an Old School Presbyterian Church as it had ever been. These Presbyterians were, therefore, constrained to make a choice. They would have to choose either to continue their fellowship with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and cease to be Presbyterian in doctrine and polity, or else to continue Presbyterian in doctrine and polity and break with the old organization.

For some time they seriously endeavored to continue their fellowship with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. without compromising in the least their witness to the Reformed Faith. But the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.—tolerant of every shade of doctrine, intolerant only of true Presbyterianism—made this impossible, and the people chose to continue as a true Presbyterian Church though they were required to build again in order to do so.

At one time 376 members, out of a membership of 464 in the Presbyterian Church in Cedar Grove, signed a paper sent to the Presbytery of Milwaukee in which they asked the presbytery to allow them to continue as a true Presbyterian church. While the paper was not so worded it was nevertheless perfectly plain that this was the substance of their request. In order to continue as a true Pres-



... The Building Committee of the Calvary Presbyterian Church

byterian church it would not, so they stated in this paper, be possible for them to continue support of the Boards of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. so long as these were teaching doctrines contrary to the Word of God as set forth in the Standards of the church. The Presbytery of Milwaukee, finding it impossible to answer this paper, simply ignored it.

Some time later 355 members of the church, then still within the old organization, signed a formal petition to the presbytery in which they stated that if their request could not be granted they would have to break their relationship with the denomination. This petition, in which they also requested permission to keep their pastor, was before the three courts of the church but was not granted. In substance the Assembly ruled that a presbytery can constrain its ministers to support the Boards, regardless of what these Boards may teach or do. To the members of the Cedar Grove Church this seemed anything but Presbyterian.

A minority petition, signed by 25 members of the Church, was then composed by a ministerial member of the presbytery who also obtained the signatures. It prayed for pastoral dissolution on the sole ground that the minister disturbed the peace of the Cedar Grove church by telling the people the well-known truth that the Boards of the church were not Presbyterian in doctrine. This petition was granted.

There was now but one thing for the Cedar Grove people to do. If they wished to continue in the faith they would have to break their relationship with a denomination which tolerated all heresy and excluded only historic Christianity. They broke their relationship with a denomination in which they had been members for many years. A group of 301 members, which number soon grew to 380, left to organize the Calvary Presbyterian Church.

Immediately they adopted plans for a new building, the first unit of which is now almost completed. But before beginning construction they offered to take over the old building for the debt in it amounting to about \$24,000. It seemed only fair to make this offer, though many of the members were not eager to do so, because less than one hundred members were

left in the old church. If these few members wanted a church, Presbyterian in name only but with all manner of strange doctrines, they could have built themselves a little church for far less money than the maintenance and debt on the old church building required. But they had never taken the Presbyterian people of Cedar Grove seriously; perhaps they

Cedar Grove Children of the Covenant



... Four Generations of the
Voskuil Family

did not take them seriously now, either. At all events the offer was not accepted.

On August 5th the members began building their new church, for they meant what they said. Without the least bitterness in their hearts they worked with joy all through the summer. They brought their teams and their shovels for the excavation, they carried brick, they mixed concrete, and they hired men only for skilled labor. What they could do themselves, they did. The first unit of the building would surely have been completed long ago had they hired some contractor to build it for them. It would have cost them more money that way, and they would have missed the joy and the pleasure which they found last summer. No one ever complained that he was asked to do too much, and the sacrifice in money and time was all a joy. Those who know these people intimately believe that the love of Christ constrained them.

Commenting on the approaching dedication of the building, Mr. De

Waard said, "It is with keen anticipation that we are looking forward to the coming of Dr. Machen. With this scholar and Christian leader we are going to celebrate. It is said that the 20th day of January will be an exciting day in Washington, for the President will be inaugurated. It may be. Certainly it will be a blessed day for the people of Cedar Grove when with Dr. Machen they set apart and consecrate to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for us their new building."

GERMAN PROTESTANT BODY DEMANDS RESIGNATION OF STATE-APPOINTED MINISTRY

ON TUESDAY, December 22nd, the Prussian Confessional Synod, at present the most powerful Protestant opposition body, demanded the immediate resignation of the church administration appointed by Hans Kerrl, minister for church affairs.

The confessional leaders assert they have been betrayed. The day before the Prussian Synod convened in Breslau to consider the proposals of the Church Ministry for complete church peace, the Rhineland police raided and suppressed the independent Confessional Theological Seminary at Barmen-Elberfeld, near Cologne.

The independent Confessional seminaries were created in order that candidates for the ministry might not be forced to receive their training under German Christian teachers, whom the Confessional leaders regard as heretics, devoted body and soul to the service of the state. Accordingly, the suppression of the Barmen-Elberfeld seminary caused the Synod to adopt a series of resolutions indicating profound distrust of the government's conciliatory proposals and, in a certain sense, constituting a declaration of war.

Evidently expecting trouble the Confessional Synod has adopted a plan for the hurried training of lay preachers to replace Confessional pastors who may be expelled from their pulpits by the State-imposed church authorities. This has already been done in Wuerttemberg, and the National Church pastor complains

bitterly that his church is more than half empty. Nevertheless, it is not available for ordinary Protestant services.

Ministers admitted as religious instructors in public schools are forbidden to be active in Confessional youth organizations. Public school teachers who join the Nazi Teachers' Federation must resign membership in any Confessional teachers' organization.

Young people's societies conducted under church auspices are not permitted to operate their own summer camps.

Finally the Confessional Synod has revived the Protestant Youth groups, which were turned over to Hitler in 1933.

To escape the decree of compulsory membership in the State Youth group which suppresses all other youth groups, the Confessional organizations will be parochial affairs devoted in principle to purely religious activities.

What the result of all these moves will be cannot now be predicted, but certainly the State will not ignore them. The National Socialist party has always shown itself particularly impatient with any interference with its totalitarian program of training and instruction of the younger generation in its own ideals and concepts.

NAZIS SUBSTITUTE HITLER FOR CHRIST IN GERMANY'S CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

UNDER National Socialism the festival of Christmas was this year moved up to December 21st, linked with the winter solstice, and given a neo-pagan complexion that completely erases the glory of the incarnation and the birthday of Jesus Christ.

Some of the more extreme Nazis are even accusing Christianity of having stolen the winter solstice celebration of the German forefathers and of adapting it to Christian purposes.

The National Socialist holiday celebration was formally inaugurated on Monday, December 21st, in 2300 communities comprising every city and town of any size in Germany. At these

gatherings about three million persons received gift packages provided by the National Socialist welfare organization, and listened to a speech by Dr. Joseph Goebbels, high priest of propaganda and mouthpiece of the party movement. In his speech Dr. Goebbels seemingly attempted to ascribe deity to Hitler when he said, "We unite in this hour in sincere and hearty thankfulness to the Fuehrer, who as faithful guardian of the German people is a special patron of our nation's children. The children love him because they have the feeling that he loves the children. He is in spirit with all German children at this feast. Three million pairs of bright eyes look up to his picture and remember him."

Minister Hans Kerrl emphasized even more strongly the new significance of Christmas, when he said, "The Christmas celebration is for us today not only a family celebration but an all-embracing and uniting celebration of the German people's community, which marches in solidarity behind its Fuehrer above all confessions and classes.

"One will, one spirit and one love rule among us. That is the work of the Fuehrer, which grew out of comradeship and love. It is the Fuehrer who assures the German future for us and our children."

It must not be assumed that all Germany is thinking this way about Christmas. This so far is the voice of Naziism as exemplified by Hitler's own body-guard and the all-powerful secret police. But in the last few years Germany has, for good reasons, obediently followed where these have led.

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CHIANG KAI-SHEK'S RELEASE AVERTS CRISIS IN CHINA

THE release on Christmas day of the kidnapped Chinese Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-Shek, is of almost incalculable importance to the whole missionary enterprise in China.

The Generalissimo is himself a Christian, having been baptized through the ministry of southern Methodist missionaries. He can be counted upon to be friendly toward the modern effort for the evangelization of China. And the friendship of this man counts for more than that of any other. Chiang Kai-Shek is regarded as the greatest force for order and unity in China today. His death would probably result in quarrels for supremacy among his lieutenants and the disintegration of China. The greatest single check to communism, outlawry and other forces which are hostile to Christianity would be gone, and in many quarters the missionary enterprise would probably be placed in jeopardy, or completely crippled. His unique place in the affections of the Chinese people may be gauged from the wave of resentment against his kidnapper.

The audacious kidnapper, Chang Hsueh Liang, represents China at its worst—ruthless, unprincipled, greedy, treacherous. Even missionaries as dauntless as Pearl Buck's father, "the fighting angel"—would find it difficult to cope with such forces. Chang has been something of a bad boy in China. His father, the General Chang Tso Lin, was war lord of Manchuria until he was killed by a bomb. Succeeding his father, young Chang was driven out of Manchuria by the Japanese conquest of 1931, and has become the leading advocate of war with Japan. Through disloyalty, he had been forced to live abroad for a time. Restored recently to a place of trust, he was sent to the far west to suppress banditry and aid in the unification of China. Instead, he seems to have made common cause with enemies of Chiang Kai-Shek, and when the latter went to take his lieutenant to task, he was kidnapped and the world was told that he had been murdered in cold blood. Christians throughout the world are giving fervent thanks to Almighty God at the news of the Generalissimo's release.