

# The Presbyterian Guardian

February 10, 1943

VOLUME 12, NO. 3

J. Gresham Machen  
Editor 1936-1937

One Year—\$2.00

Published Twenty-three Times a Year

Ten Cents a Copy

#### EDITORIAL COUNCIL

1505 Race Street  
Philadelphia, Pa.

John P. Clelland  
Edwin H. Rian

John Patton Galbraith

R. B. Kuiper  
Leslie W. Sloat

Thomas R. Birch  
Managing Editor

## The Christian Faith and Mental Health

The First Article in a New Series on This Subject

By the REV. EDWARD HEEREMA

Spiritual Advisor at the Christian Sanatorium, Midland Park, New Jersey

Encourage the fainthearted, support the weak (I Thess. 5:14).

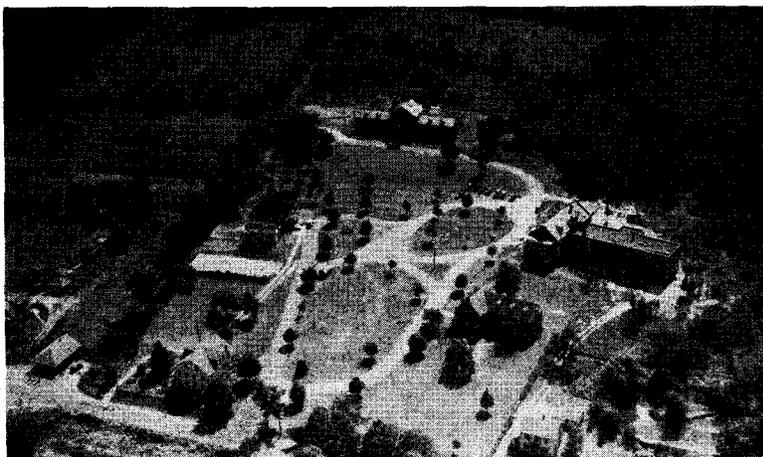
ON THE sloping side of one of the wooded hills of northern New Jersey is a compound of buildings dedicated to a unique and noble purpose. The restful sweeping lawns, the silver birches and the clear invigorating air of the hills all suggest the nature of that purpose. Here, aloof from the clatter of commerce and the trying tempo of industry, Christian men and women are seeking to bring rest and healing to sick minds and shaken nerves.

Hardly a visitor to the Christian Sanatorium of Midland Park, New Jersey, fails to experience the thrill afforded by the vista that unfolds before him as he stands on the steps of the building situated highest on the slope of Goffle Hill. In the summertime a luxuriant carpet of green stretches out before him over the valley floor and reaches to the Ramapo Mountains some ten miles

distant. Employees of years' service must pause a moment to feast their eyes on the far hills. Very clear comes the voice of the psalmist in the words of the well-known psalter, "Unto the hills around will I lift up my longing eyes".

This scene and its inspiration I mention because it illustrates aptly the foundation principle which governs the work at this place where troubled souls come for help. By God's grace the soul must be given a new direction and a new dynamic. Its eyes must be taken from self and from the maze of a garbled experience.

The soul must be directed to the enduring hills, to the God of the hills, to the ever-living God who formed and who keeps the hills, to the God of whom the psalmist also wrote: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God".



An Aerial View of the Christian Sanatorium, Midland Park, N. J.

### The Reformed Faith at Work

The Christian Sanatorium is a kingdom enterprise of the Calvinistic Hollanders of Paterson, New Jersey, and its environs. True Christianity does not stop at the salvation of souls. That may easily become a man-centered objective. Saved men and women must go forward under the banner of the cross to seek to extend the boundaries of God's kingdom to all spheres of proper human activity. In the fullest sense they must "subdue" the earth, a mandate given to man at the time of his very creation. So must it be also in the field of mercy toward the afflicted in soul and mind.

On June 27, 1911, a group of faithful deacons gathered in a Christian Reformed Church in Paterson to discuss ways and means of caring for the mentally afflicted in the church family. The order of the Lord was in their hearts: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful". That was the seed from which the present hospital has grown. Five years of planning and promotion followed—years of hard work by devoted Christians in the face of public apathy. In 1917 a seven-room farmhouse and ten acres of ground were purchased at a spot in the seclusion of the hills north of Paterson. In the same year the first patient was enrolled. That patient is still at the hospital today.

Such were the small beginnings of this work. Since then great changes have taken place. Now there are five buildings on the campus proper, three of which are modern structures for the care of about a hundred and eighty-five patients. With residences, there are eleven buildings in all. The average personnel numbers about eighty in normal times. Today the hospital owns one hundred acres of ground. There are two resident physicians. Nursing is supervised by registered nurses with college education. The writer of these articles is a full-time spiritual advisor. The patient census is always up to the capacity of the buildings, and many requests for the hospital's unique services have to be turned away because of lack of space. Latest scientifically approved methods of treatment (therapy) are used: hydrotherapy, shock therapy, occupational therapy, psychotherapy, and whatever medical treatment may

be indicated in any particular case. The dental needs of the patients are taken care of in a fully-equipped, modern dental operating room. There are expanding facilities for indoor and outdoor recreation. Though begun at a comparatively recent date, the hospital library already contains about four hundred completely-catalogued volumes, as well as choice current periodicals.

### Our First Concern

This brief review of expansion and growth tells its own story. It reflects God's blessing upon faithful and judicious stewardship. But this progress and growth has not deflected the hospital from its first concern. As a house of healing, our first concern is to alleviate suffering and to cure. Of a piece with this is our conviction that surrounding every contact with the patient and every therapeutic measure must be the proper spiritual atmosphere. Of cardinal importance in the whole healing effort is the aim to impress the broken spirit with a total impact that will, by God's grace, quicken such a soul to sense the reality of a great and wonderful secret of life, the secret of the truly successful life, of the God-ward life. By this total effect we would seek to arouse in the patient a yearning to know the God who gives this secret, and the Christ through whom it is received. Or, in cases where the Spirit of God has already implanted that

secret, we would seek to refurbish that pearl of great price and revitalize the spirit of its distraught possessor. By God's grace we would impart the dynamics of the Christian faith—dynamics that will build, and that alone will build, a truly healthy and strong personality.

Therefore, we aim to employ only those who are Christians. This is our aim first of all because it is in keeping with the God-honoring ideals which govern this kingdom enterprise, but also because, by means of the most constant contact the patient in the hospital has, namely, with the nurse, the total impression described above is always conveyed. There are devotions at every meal, in the patients' dining rooms as well as in the nurses' dining room. Chapel services are held twice each week. The medical department is manned by two Christian physicians, both reared in the solid training of the Reformed Faith. Yes, also the Board of Directors is composed of twelve Christian laymen whose aim is to conduct the hospital to the glory of God and to the leading of troubled souls into the way of life. And, as mentioned above, there is a full-time spiritual advisor who constantly deals with the patients and their problems.

### As to What Follows

We have sought to introduce the subject to be discussed in this series of articles by giving a brief outline of the work and objectives of the Christian Sanatorium, a Christian hospital for the mentally and nervously ill. In subsequent articles we wish to examine some of the dynamics of the Christian faith that guide us, and that guide especially the Christian minister in his work with those ill in soul and mind. However, before we can do that effectively we must look into the nature of mental illness. Therefore we shall first of all seek to answer the question: What is mental illness? Having done that, we shall be in a better position to explore pertinently some of the riches of the Christian faith, riches which when seized upon are capable of molding the noblest structure in God's creation—a healthy, strong personality, expressive of the image in which it was made, a true temple of the Holy Spirit.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

February 10, 1943

The Christian Faith and Mental Health..	33
Edward Heerema	
A Substitute for Christianity .....	35
Cornelius Van Til	
Korean Covenanters: Part II .....	37
Bruce F. Hunt	
War Comes to Ethiopia .....	40
Clarence W. Duff	
Today in the Religious World .....	41
Thomas R. Birch	
Editorial .....	43
God's Faithfulness .....	45
Carl A. Ahlfeldt	
The Wise Woman of Tekoa .....	47
Lawrence B. Gilmore	

# A Substitute for Christianity

The Second in a Series of Articles on Princeton Theological Seminary

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

Professor of Apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary

THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN has from time to time discussed the theological views of members of the Princeton Seminary faculty. This was but natural for a journal committed to the propagation and defense of the Reformed Faith. As has been shown again and again, several of the professors at Princeton, though pledged to defend the Reformed Faith, have departed far from it. For this situation Princeton Seminary as a whole is responsible. The present article, however, deals not with the broad policies of the seminary as a unit. It limits itself to the views of Professor Elmer George Homrighausen.

Before his election as Professor of Christian Education on October 12, 1937, Dr. Homrighausen was known to be very sympathetic to the views of Karl Barth and his school. Not to speak of his activity as a translator of Barth's writings, his book *Christianity in America*, 1936, proves this fact conclusively (see a review of this book in THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, Feb., 1938). Now the issue between the Reformed Faith and Barthianism is not limited to the question of Biblical inspiration. It is far wider than that. Barthianism involves an entire reconstruction of all the doctrines of historic Christianity. Not merely Calvinism but also evangelical Christianity is reinterpreted according to the requirements of a nonchristian philosophy. Barthianism has no room for a self-existent God, or for His direct revelation in nature, history, and Scripture. It rejects the historicity of man's creation and fall; it reduces all the acts of Christ's redemption to cosmic events happening to all men alike.

It was this type of theology, apparently, that the authorities at Princeton wanted taught. Yet Dr. Homrighausen's appointment was not confirmed at the 1938 General Assembly. Apparently, in view of certain opposition, the Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries voted to take no action. But Dr. Mackay, President of Princeton Seminary, and himself an ardent devotee of the new

theology, together with the Board of the Seminary, presented Dr. Homrighausen's name again at the 1939 assembly. This time they were prepared with new ammunition. Under date of May 11, 1939, there appeared in *The Presbyterian*, pp. 8f., a brief article from the hand of Dr. Homrighausen, entitled "Convictions", seemingly so orthodox in nature as to be able to silence every critic. And silence every critic it very nearly did. These critics had largely limited their opposition to Dr. Homrighausen's views of Scripture. And now Dr. Homrighausen asserted his view of Scripture in the following words: "As for the Scriptures, I believe they are the only and infallible rule of faith and practice". What more could anyone desire? And as for the other doctrines of Christianity, the following may serve as a sample: "I believe in God's self revelation in actual history, from the beginning and continuing in various and diverse manners throughout Israel's history, until in Jesus Christ He revealed Himself fully, personally, redemptively, finally. I want to emphasize the fact that I believe in historical revelation". After this the storm abated.

When asked what had caused him to change his views since the 1938 assembly, Dr. Homrighausen is said to have made the reply, "I just grew up" (THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, March 10, 1940, p. 78). In *The Christian Century* of April 12, 1939, he gives an account of the stages in his theological growth. There was first, he reports, the stage of orthodoxy, when God was to him an "all-seeing judge". Then came his entrance into the ministry with a "consistent theologic-philosophical intellectualism". There followed, third, a period of liberalism, a substitution of a theology of experience for a theology of intellectualism. After this, he says, he traveled the road to Damascus. "What struck me and my liberalism was the dialectical theology". This fourth stage itself had its stages, until at last the fifth or final stage was reached. It was the stage of inde-

pendence. This final stage was marked by certain criticism but not, he asserts, by a rejection of Barthianism. "To this day I agree with the main tenets of the dialectical theology, and regard them as essential to evangelicalism if it is to revive and meet the issues of the age".

In April, 1939, then, Dr. Homrighausen, as he says, was walking on his own theological legs, and as such was affirming his allegiance to the main tenets of Barthianism. These tenets include the complete rejection of Scripture and history as a direct revelation of God. Yet it was in May of the same year that he wrote his article entitled "Convictions", in which he affirmed his belief in Scripture as the infallible rule of faith and practice, and in which he stressed particularly the fact that God reveals Himself in history. The two positions are flatly contradictory one of another.

But, you say, a month intervened between the publication of these two articles. Perhaps, then, there was also a sixth stage. Perhaps Dr. Homrighausen only thought he was walking on his own theological legs in April, 1939, while in fact his real walking began in May. But quite apart from the strain this puts on our credulity, there is the fact that in the midsummer number of *Christendom* (vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 437ff.) of the same year, Dr. Homrighausen reviewed the book of Edwin Lewis, *The Faith We Declare*, and said of it, "I laid this book down with a sense of envy and gratification. I wish it had been given to me to write it." His entire review is one of enthusiastic approbation. Yet for Lewis the Bible is anything but the infallible rule of faith and practice. Lewis says, for example, "It seems unquestionable, even as the critics say, that the fourth gospel was never written as sober, scientific, objective history" (p. 81; see further the review of this book by John P. Clelland in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, May, 1940, pp. 153ff.). The tenets of Lewis' book are very similar to those of Barthianism.

Moreover, in *The Union Review*

under date of May, 1942, Dr. Homrighausen says of the Word of God in relation to Scripture, "This Word is not merely so much literature, static proof texts, or curriculum material. Liberalism has rightly emancipated us from a literal biblicism" (p. 12). If this be caricature, it is at any rate a rejection of the orthodox doctrine of the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

Again in "Attend to Your Reading", a pamphlet published in 1942 under the auspices of the American Bible Society, Dr. Homrighausen expresses agreement with Dr. C. H. Dodd's conception of the authority of God's Word in Scripture. But Dodd's book on *The Authority of the Bible* is far as the poles removed from the idea of infallibility. No written word, Dodd argues, can be infallible. "The written word is the medium through which we reach the personality and its experience. It is never a perfect medium,

'For words, like nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the soul within.'

But it is the best we have. In almost all parts of the Bible we can feel ourselves in touch with religious personalities, some of them displaying exceptional inspiration, all of them men of insight and sincerity" (p. 295). Or again, "Nowhere is the truth given in such purely 'objective' form that we can find a self-subsistent external authority" (p. 289).

If Dr. Homrighausen in 1942 finds himself in substantial agreement with such sentiments, there must have been in his theological growth a seventh as well as a sixth stage, and the seventh would seem to be virtually identical with the fifth.

Yet it is not the "saga of a soul" but the welfare of souls with which we are concerned. This discussion of dates and growth is by the way. We are taking for granted that Dr. Homrighausen was consistent with himself. The natural answer to this puzzle of dates is that he meant his "orthodox" statement of May, 1939, (in *The Presbyterian*) to be taken as consistent with the main tenets of Barthianism which he held at about the same time and later. That such is the case finds adequate corroboration in his book, *Let the Church Be the Church*, published by the Abingdon-Cokesbury Press in 1940. This book has been reviewed in *THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN* by the Rev. Edward Heerema (Sept. 10,

1941, pp. 54ff). We can say only a few words here.

As is to be expected, this later book is less outspoken in its rejection of orthodoxy than was his earlier one. But the principles on which both books are built are the same. In both a form of nonchristian philosophy is substituted for evangelical Christianity.

The latter book presents an eloquent argument for "God's primacy and contemporary relevancy", but the God actually presented is not primary at all and wholly irrelevant. For He is not the Creator God of Scripture through whom and unto whom are all things. The facts of the world are assumed to be self-existent. To be sure, the term "creation" is used, but as in the case of Barth and Brunner, it is used figuratively. It is used so as to avoid any possible conflict with what evolutionary scientists may wish to say about the origin of this world or of man. The whole domain of nature and history is virtually given over to the non-believing scientist to do with as he pleases. To read the Bible truly, says Dr. Homrighausen in his pamphlet "Attend to Your Reading", we must not look for a Biblical "philosophy of life". If we do we shall not hear the sovereign Word of God (p. 7). The "sovereign Word of God" therefore, according to Dr. Homrighausen, points to a God who has not actually created the universe and has no control over it. But such a God, we reply, is wholly irrelevant and meaningless to man.

With a figurative or metaphorical notion of creation goes a figurative or metaphorical notion of the fall. For Dr. Homrighausen the fall does not refer, any more than the creation, to an historical event. To be sure, he does not go out of his way in this book to attack the doctrine of an original pair called Adam and Eve. Yet his whole argument would fall to the ground if he should give place to them. Adam's creation stands simply for the idea that man has great capacities within him (*Let the Church Be the Church*, p. 148), and Adam's fall for the idea that man is yet far from having reached the goal he has set for himself. "Man is a 'fallen' creature, a sinner. He falls below his ideal" (*idem*, p. 150). With Barth and Brunner, Dr. Homrighausen might just as well say that we are all Adam. The story of Adam and Eve, we are

told, speaks to us of "man's perennial biography and that of his race" ("Attend to Your Reading", p. 8). What happens to Adam—that is, the mythical Adam—happens to all of us in actual life again and again.

Here, according to Dr. Homrighausen, Christ comes into the picture. He brings the ideal we have set for ourselves near to us. Through Him the ideal becomes real; through Him revelation becomes historical. But even so, not directly historical. To say so would be to bury Jesus in the grave-clothes of a theological system. Ordinary calendar history cannot at any point bear the direct revelation of God. Nothing very definite can therefore be said about Jesus and His work. "The cross preaches a personal message" (*Let the Church Be the Church*, p. 104), and personality is always beyond anything that can be said about it. If then there are those who say that the Cross is unjust, we reply that they are right. But we must also say that they are wrong. "True, from a legal standpoint, it is unjust. But from the personal viewpoint, such 'injustice' is being practised every day, and especially in the highest reaches of personal character" (*idem*, p. 107). In either case, if we are to accept Dr. Homrighausen's presentation, the natural man need take no offence at the Cross. The Cross does not say anything about the realm of science, and in that of personality it merely exemplifies a general principle. The Cross may still be mysterious, but that is because personality, wherever found, is mysterious.

Let us then, the argument virtually continues, contemplate as best we can, with all our mutually contradictory systems of atonement helping us as so many pointers, this marvelous incarnation of personality. "He brought with him a new realm of reality. That is an inescapable fact. In him and through him a new humanity began. He injected a serum of superhuman vitality into the hardening arteries of humanity" (*idem*, p. 175). Here our ideals seem largely to be realized. "According to our best moral judgment, another Jesus has not appeared since or before" (*ibid.*). "How repentant Jesus was! Though dogmatic, yet his dogmatism never rested in himself or in his ideas about God, but in the reality of God!" (*idem*, pp. 36f.). "He came disclosing the real world within ours, which we never

could have found for ourselves. He came telling men—exegiting to them—about their real selves that lie buried and unrecognized within them" (*idem*, p. 32).

With such an impelling exemplification of personality brought comparatively near to us, we cannot help but follow. The church must then be born. "The church is both witness and incarnation; it is God's and man's necessity" ("Attend to Your Reading", p. 9). Leaving the Flatlands "where men know but two dimensions" (*Let the Church Be the Church*, p. 51), we reach out unto God who "is the assurance that the universe is not capricious" ("Attend to Your Reading", p. 7). We are now in "the house of personality" with Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick (*Let the Church Be the Church*, p. 54). Into it all may come. The "Divine Embrace" is in its nature all-comprehensive. The "epochal event" that took place in Jesus may take place anywhere and everywhere (*idem*, p. 179). For as we see the "looming mystery of God", we also see, as involved in it, the church as the "looming personal household" (*idem*, p. 135). In its bosom the church has "preserved the dream of an earth redeemed and renovated" (*idem*, p. 139).

To keep this dream ever before us, we must attend to our reading of Scripture. "Through the centuries, the reading of its words have brought to mind the story upon which Christianity rests" ("Attend to Your Reading", p. 4). Through constant reading, the "strange new world of the Bible", the dimension of personality, is made "continuously contemporaneous" to us. And in response we are taken up into that world. "For those who 'read' the Scriptures, there is a restoration of the timeless and eternal element in their thinking and living" (*idem*, p. 8). Thus through contemplation of Christ as pictured in the Bible we can see how God is made human and man is made divine by means of indefinite personal growth.

It is this gospel of personal growth that Dr. Homrighausen would propagate in the church through the influence of his chair in Christian Education at Princeton (see his address on "The Task of Christian Education in a Theological Seminary", *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, July, 1940). It is this purely naturalistic philosophy of personalism that he would use also as

a banner by which to effect church union. Together with Dr. Mackay he has been busily engaged in extending the current ecumenical movement. It is, in short, this personalist philosophy as a substitute for the Reformed Faith, even for historic Christianity, which Princeton Seminary is doing its best to propagate through Dr. Homrighausen's work. It is perfectly plain that for Dr. Homrighausen Scriptures do not tell on their own authority and directly of certain events that have taken place on certain calendar dates in the past; for him there is nothing unique in the past. The past is for him, as for Barth, a dead past. The revelation in history of which he speaks is a revelation in some other history, that merely touches ordinary history as a tangent touches a circle. When he speaks about the Bible as

the infallible rule of faith and practice, and when he speaks of revelation as historical, he, together with the Modernist and the Barthian, merely uses a figure of speech. He is then thinking and speaking "existentially", and to think existentially means in practice to think allegorically, figuratively, and unrealistically about the story of redemption told in the Scripture. By embracing and propagating this sort of theology Princeton Seminary is now undermining and attacking—and in fifth-column fashion—all that for which the Hodges, Warfield and Machen stood.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The first article in this series appeared in THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN of January 25th. The third will be published in the February 25th issue.)

## Korean Covenanters

By the REV. BRUCE F. HUNT

Orthodox Presbyterian Missionary to Manchuria

### PART II

#### 4. THERE IS BUT ONE GOD,

"we know . . . that there is no God but one" (I Cor. 8:4).

"yet to us there is one God . . . of whom are all things" (I Cor. 8:6).

"Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6).

#### AND A CHRISTIAN SHALL NOT HAVE,

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3).

#### SERVE,

"nor serve them" (II Kings 17:35).

"and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10).

#### NOR SERVE TOGETHER WITH GOD,

"They feared Jehovah, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away. Unto this day they do after the former manner: they fear not Jehovah, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law or after the commandment which Jehovah commanded the children of Jacob" (II Kings 17:33, 34; cf. II Kings 17:33-40).

#### WORSHIP,

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy

God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10).

#### FEAR,

"Ye shall not fear other gods" (II Kings 17:35).

#### TRAFFIC WITH,

"or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard or a necromancer" (Deut. 18:10, 11).

#### BOW TO,

"Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them" (II Kings 17:35).

#### PRAY TO,

"they have no knowledge that . . . pray unto a god that cannot save" (Isa. 45:20).

"They shall be put to shame together . . . worshippeth, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god" (Isa. 44:11, 17).

#### SACRIFICE TO,

"Nor sacrifice to them" (II Kings 17:35; cf. Ex. 22:20 ("destroyed")).

#### PLACE OFFERINGS IN FRONT OF, OR

#### PREPARE A TABLE FOR,

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger" (Jer. 7:18).

"which are defiled . . . even all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink-offerings unto other gods" (Jer. 19:13).

"and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering; there also they made their sweet savor, and they poured out there their drink-offerings. . . . Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Do ye pollute yourselves after the manner of your fathers? . . . Do ye pollute yourselves with all your idols unto this day? and shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 20:28, 30, 31).

"Therefore thus saith Jehovah: . . . set this city on fire, and burn it, with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink-offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger" (Jer. 32:28, 29).

"But ye that forsake Jehovah, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for Fortune, and that fill up mingled wine unto Destiny" (Isa. 65:11).

#### WEEP FOR OTHER GODS,

"Thou shalt again see yet other great abominations . . . women weeping for Tammuz" (Ezek. 8:13, 14).

#### OR WHAT ANYONE CALLS GODS

"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many" (I Cor. 8:5).

#### OR DEMONS,

"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God" (I Cor. 10:20).

#### NOR SHALL IT BE BELIEVED THAT ANY IDOL CAN DO GOOD OR EVIL,

"For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good" (Jer. 10:3-5).

#### NOR SHALL OTHERS BE ASKED TO DO THESE THINGS FOR HIM,

"And the people gathered . . . unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods which shall go before

## February-March Book List

**T**HE following books are available to GUARDIAN subscribers at substantial savings during February and March. Remember also that we sell all religious books printed in the United States. For prompt service, send all your book orders to THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN.

A COMMENTARY ON THE CONFESSION OF FAITH, by A. A. Hodge. This famous analysis of the Westminster Confession will both stimulate and facilitate your understanding of its system of Christian truth. Price to subscribers during February and March, \$1.40 (list price, \$1.75).

PERFECTIONISM, by B. B. Warfield. Two volumes dealing with the false doctrines that result from a misunderstanding of the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. Prices to subscribers during February and March: Volume 1, \$2.50 (list price, \$3); Volume 2, \$2.90 (list price, \$3.50).

A CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE, by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown. This well-known commentary belongs in the library of every serious student of the Bible. Contains 1347 pages, well-bound and easy to read. Price to subscribers during February and March, \$4 (list price, \$4.95).

WOMEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, by Abraham Kuyper. Fifty character sketches for devotional use and for study groups. (The companion volume will be offered in the next Book List.) Price to subscribers during February and March, 80c (list price \$1).

SERMONS ON BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER, edited by H. J. Kuyper. Seven sermons on the sacraments. Price to subscribers during February and March, 80c (list price, \$1).

us. . . . And Jehovah spake unto Moses, . . . Thy people . . . have corrupted themselves" (Ex. 32:1, 7).

#### NOR SHALL THOSE BE OBEYED WHO ORDER HIM TO DO THESE THINGS,

"If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken

unto the words of that prophet or unto that dreamer of dreams: for Jehovah your God proveth you, to know whether ye love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 13:1-3).

"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, that is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him" (Deut. 13:6-8).

"We ought to obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29; cf. Deut. 18:20-22; Gal. 1:8, 9; 2:5).

#### NOR SHALL HE HAVE COMMUNION IN OR PARTAKE IN THESE THINGS;

"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons; ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons" (I Cor. 10:20, 21).

#### HE SHALL FLEE THESE THINGS (WHICH ARE CALLED IDOLATRY)

"Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry" (I Cor. 10:14).

#### AND EVERYTHING THAT MIGHT HAVE THAT APPEARANCE

"Abstain from every form of evil" (I Thess. 5:22).

#### OR CAUSE A BROTHER TO STUMBLE.

"Wherefore if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble" (I Cor. 8:13).

#### 5. A CHRISTIAN SHALL NOT WORSHIP OR SERVE THE SUN OR THE MOON OR THE STARS OR THE HOSTS OF HEAVEN,

"and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, thou be drawn away and worship them and serve them, which Jehovah thy God hath allotted unto all the peoples under the whole heaven" (Deut. 4:19).

#### NOR STOCKS NOR STONES,

"And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that the land was polluted, and she committed adultery with stones and with stocks"

(Jer. 3:9).

NOR IDOLS NOR PORTRAITS, WHETHER THEY BE MADE OF GOLD OR SILVER OR BRASS OR STONE OR WOOD,

"And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood" (Rev. 9:20).

"The wicked abominations that they do here . . . and behold, every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about" (Ezek. 8:9, 10).

NOR ANYTHING THAT IS THE WORK OF MEN'S HANDS,

"Their land is full of their idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is brought low; therefore forgive them not" (Isa. 2:8, 9).

NOR ANYTHING AT ALL THAT IS CREATED,

"For that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen". "Who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them" (Rom. 1:25, 32).

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10; cf. 18:21).

WITH THE EXCEPTION THAT IT IS ALLOWABLE TO BOW TO MAN AS MAN,

"Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise: Thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies: Thy father's sons shall bow down before thee" (Gen. 49:9).

NOR DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT HAVE THIS APPEARANCE

"Abstain from every form of evil" (I Thess. 5:22).

6. A CHRISTIAN SHALL NOT BUILD TEMPLES FOR WORSHIP TO ANY BUT GOD, NOR HIGH PLACES TO ANY,

"And they built the high places of Baal . . . which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind,

that they should do this abomination to cause Judah to sin" (Jer. 32:35).  
NOR SHALL HE CARRY ABOUT A SHRINE OF ANY,

"Yea, ye have borne the tabernacle of your king and the shrine of your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves" (Amos 5:26).  
NOR SHALL HE OFFER SACRIFICES AT THESE PLACES,

"But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations, whom Jehovah cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree" (II Kings 16:3, 4).

"And the children of Israel did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah their God; and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city; and they set them up pillars and Asherim upon every high hill, and under every green tree; and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the nations whom Jehovah carried away before them; and they wrought wicked things to provoke Jehovah to anger" (II Kings 17:9-11).

NOR SHALL HE WORSHIP THESE PLACES,

"And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, in that they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands" (Jer. 1:16).

NOR DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT HAVE THIS APPEARANCE.

"Abstain from every form of evil" (I Thess. 5:22).

7. WE BELIEVE THAT THOSE SINS SHOWN IN THE VARIOUS SCRIPTURES QUOTED ABOVE ARE A PARTICULAR ABOMINATION UNTO GOD, CONSTITUTING UNBELIEF AND IDOLATRY. IF ANYONE WHO IS CALLED A BROTHER DOES THESE THINGS, TEACHES THESE THINGS, OR HOLDS THESE TEACHINGS, A CHRISTIAN SHALL FIRST GO AND SHOW HIM HIS FAULT AND SEEK TO GAIN THE BROTHER, BUT IF HE DO NOT HEAR, THE CHRISTIAN SHALL TAKE ONE OR TWO WITNESSES AND, IF HE REFUSE TO HEAR THEM, HE SHALL TELL IT TO THE CHURCH, AND IF HE REFUSE TO HEAR THE CHURCH, THE CHRISTIAN SHALL TREAT HIM AS

A GENTILE AND A PUBLICAN,

"And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican" (Matt. 18:15-17).

"And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22:23).

AND CHRISTIANS SHALL PUT HIM OUT OF THEIR COMMUNION.

"Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Cor. 5:15).

IT IS THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO COME OUT AND BE SEPARATE FROM THAT FELLOWSHIP OR COMMUNION WHICH DOES THESE THINGS, TEACHES THESE THINGS OR HOLDS THESE THINGS.

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner" (Rev. 2:14, 15).

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:4-7).

In associating anew, we do not deny the Presbyterian creed or government, but believing that the present church has departed from that creed and government, we affirm only our inability to be under the discipline of its governing assemblies. We the undersigned do hereby declare that we accept as truth all that is revealed in the Scriptures of the

Old and New Testaments and the Holy Spirit speaking through these Scriptures. We believe this truth to be the only true religion, pleasing to God, and the only religion which can and does bring salvation to man.

We believe the Westminster Confession of Faith with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, though incom-

plete and man-made and therefore fallible, to be founded on the Word of God. We willingly accept in our consciences the system of doctrine set forth in these standards to be that which the Word of God teaches and declare them to be an expression of our faith. We do ourselves subscribe and do require of all who would

associate with us a subscription to these standards as the standards of our particular association subordinate to the Word of God. By this subscription we do receive, believe, and do covenant before God, by His help, to keep, preach, and defend them.

THE END

## War Comes to Ethiopia

A Mission Study by the REV. CLARENCE W. DUFF  
Missionary Appointee of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

"I will raise up against you a nation" (Amos 6:14).

WHEN I returned to Ethiopia in the fall of 1935 after a few months' furlough in America, the war clouds were rapidly gathering over that country. Neither war clouds, nor even the actual breaking out of hostilities, prevented the carrying out of plans for a very happy wedding in which I played one of the two leading roles.

Mrs. Duff and I spent our honeymoon for two weeks in camp about twenty miles west of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital. The day we started back home on our horses we traveled for several hours with the retinue of an important governor, Ras Getachau, who was coming from a distant southwestern province to join Emperor Haile Selassie's armies in the north. Here was a typical band of Ethiopian soldiers. In addition to thousands of men equipped with swords and old French and Belgian rifles, many of them driving pack animals loaded with tents and food supplies for the journey, there were numerous women and children, young slave boys and servants following their masters to war.

When a few months later we watched the remnants of the armies straggling back into Addis Ababa from the north, there were very few women and children among them. Hunger and exposure, in addition to bullets and bombs and poison gas, had taken a heavy toll.

As we rode along that day returning from our honeymoon, we were looking for an old friend of mine, Fitaurari Geidja, whom I had known in the interior province in which I

had spent most of my first term on the field. About noon we discovered him in a group of the governor's chief men. He introduced us to the governor, who was very gracious and friendly.

That evening our friend, with his wife and daughter who were accompanying him to the war, had supper with us and camped in a little tent beside our own. We never saw him again, for he was killed in action in one of the northern battles.

For a good while the war seemed rather remote. I had expected to go into Red Cross work. Lady Barton, the wife of Sir Sydney Barton, His British Majesty's minister to Ethiopia, asked me to go as interpreter with a Red Cross contingent in which she was especially interested. I went so far as to get my uniform, but at the last moment was prevented from leaving the capital by other responsibilities put upon me there.

The war was brought home to us in December when Dr. Robert Hockman, one of the most promising young mission doctors in the country, was killed by an Italian bomb which exploded as he was attempting to render it harmless. Dr. Hockman was the first American to go to the front in Red Cross work.

All through this time the mission work at most of our stations in the interior had gone quietly forward, in many cases with even more encouraging results than heretofore. Our missionaries were trusted by government officials and, when necessary, were able to travel between stations without undue difficulty.

Near the end of the year Bruce Ostien and I had an interesting trip

by car to the brink of the Nile Canyon in an attempt to catch up with a party of missionaries who were on their way by caravan to Debra Marcos in Gojam Province. We understood that they were being held at Jarso and also heard rumors that there was serious trouble in Gojam; hence, it seemed advisable to bring back the two ladies in the party. After passing Mariam Church at the top of Entoto Mountain above Addis Ababa at an altitude of over 9000 feet, our road was only a cross-country trail leading down rocky mountain sides, over grassy plains, through bogs and across little streams with no bridges. I never thought a car could negotiate some of the obstacles we encountered, but our 1929 open Ford took it all in its stride. We had to carry several cases of gasoline, as of course there were no service stations. We had thrown in an extra rear and front spring, but how we would have put them on if we had needed them I do not know.

Twice we had several tense moments when armed Ethiopians, justly suspicious of strange white men, suddenly surrounded our car, wildly shouting and threatening us with their guns and swords. By offering no resistance and quietly waiting till the tumult died down a little, we avoided any untoward results. In each case a friendly spokesman was on hand to intercede for us: at Jarso, a local chief who had helped us change a flat tire after nightfall and then offered to guide us to camp, and at Fitcha, a friendly native teacher from the government school.

At the end of our journey we found our friends had gone on out of reach

across the Nile into Gojam. We were treated with great courtesy, but found ourselves under suspicion. After being held in Jarso for half a day while telephone conversations with Addis Ababa were carried on, we were sent back to the capital in custody of a government official and required to report to the foreign minister. Our punishment for having gone without an official permit was a very humiliating rebuke from His Excellency Belatin Geyta Herioee, the more painful to me because I had often dealt with him personally on business matters for the mission. We didn't feel personally responsible, since we had gone at the request of Dr. Lambie, then executive secretary of the Ethiopian Red Cross and in almost daily touch with the foreign minister who was president of the organization, and since it was Dr. Lambie who had authorized us to don our Red Cross uniforms, trusting in their recognition by the Ethiopians to get us through, instead of waiting for an official permit that would have taken days to obtain and made almost certain the failure of our errand.

On Sunday, December 22nd, the Italian commander in the north, Marshal Badoglio, finding Ethiopian resistance stiffer than expected, gave the fatal command to use poison gas. The Ethiopians had no defense against such tactics, and their resistance cracked.

Eventually the emperor had to retreat from the north, and on April 29, 1936, reached his capital. As the broken remnants of the northern army began to pour into the capital, the several missions combined their resources to minister to the need of the returning soldiers. A big Red Cross tent was set up on the outskirts of the city at a point where two main caravan routes from the north converged. A doctor and nurses examined hundreds of sick and wounded each day, treated those who were not hospital cases, gave the others emergency treatment and divided them into groups to be taken in ambulances and trucks to the various hospitals in the city. Wounds untreated for weeks, great tropical ulcers that had eaten to the bone, huge blisters caused by mustard gas, smallpox, dysentery that had so weakened its victims that they could barely stagger along, hunger and sickness of many kinds made a most pitiful pic-

ture.

As a gesture of sympathy, we attempted also to give something to eat to each person. I was on the food committee and spent much time in scouring the city for all the bread, native or foreign, that could be bought in the markets and bakeries of Addis Ababa, and in hauling it in the old mission Ford to the relief camp. Large quantities of corn meal mush were cooked on the grounds. In one day over four thousand people were fed. One missionary and a number of native Christian helpers distributed Gospels in various native languages to all who could read, and spoke to the people of the way of

salvation as they sat down near the camp to eat the handout they had received.

There can be no doubt that many yet remember the kindness shown them at that time by foreigners who were thoroughly ashamed of the barbarities of their white brothers. There is no way of computing the value of so genuine, though insufficient, an expression of sympathy. Unfortunately, this good work was not to continue for more than a few days. In the next installment I shall tell how Ethiopia's capital city suddenly became an inferno of rioting, burning and looting, making impossible all humanitarian efforts.

## Today in the Religious World

By THOMAS R. BIRCH

### God and the War

**A**T THE Cincinnati Conference on the Christian World Order a memorable address was delivered by the Rev. John Murray, Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, on "God and the War". Shortly thereafter the address was published in *The National Republic* and reprints of it were widely circulated. A copy of it reached the desk of the Chief of Chaplains of the United States Army, who has now requested five thousand copies which will be distributed to every chaplain in the Army. In our opinion, this is one of the very best pieces of

news in a long time. If every Army chaplain can be convinced of even a fraction of the Christian truth so admirably expressed in Professor Murray's address, the total ultimate worth for the kingdom of God and the war effort of the nation can hardly be estimated. Readers of the *GUARDIAN* may still secure one of the few remaining copies by writing to Westminster Seminary, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia.

### Christ's Place in the Post-War World

Our desk has been deluged with hundreds of reports and declarations by clergymen and politicians alike concerning the plans for a post-war world and the bases of a just and durable peace. Few, if any, have seemed worth discussing. Those of the clergymen have a certain pious flavor derived, we believe, by a process of spiritual osmosis from the more Christian past; those of the politicians have not even this vague virtue to recommend them. So far as we know, no politician or statesman has given so much as a passing nod to the eternal Christian verities in the course of drawing up his plans for the world order after the guns have been silenced. It warmed our heart, therefore, to read of an address delivered to the London Missionary Society by Dr. Pieter S. Gerbrandy, Dutch Prime Minister. Dr. Gerbrandy is well-known as a Calvinistic Christian statesman, of whom the world has too pitifully few in these dark and bitter

### Subscriptions for Service Men

**A** POSTAL regulation now requires that all new or renewal subscriptions of magazines sent to army post offices for delivery to men serving outside continental United States be requested in writing by the service man himself. In ordering such new or renewal *Guardian* subscriptions, please send us a signed request from the service man himself.

days. We wish him Godspeed in the task before him.

"If Christ is again left outside the deliberations of statesmen, outside the council chambers of the Peace Conference, it is doubtful whether the Kingdom of the Netherlands or the British Empire can rise again out of trouble and humiliation", said Dr. Gerbrandy. He warned that "superficial reformers are now boasting of the building of a new world, but the Architect of our world is God, who only accepts our help according to His Plan".

The problem of Europe can only be solved, the Dutch Minister declared, if statesmen have the courage to bridge the gap between ideals and the reality of making sacrifices. He added that "an ideal which theoretically can be adapted to the whole world can only be practiced among those people in whose souls and spirits there is something of the Christian ideal and in whose culture Christianity has become an element".

On economics Dr. Gerbrandy said: "When we think of our economic system our hearts swell with pride. There is a word which expresses that pride: progress. I am sure that many people think of progress as a bath in the morning—which one-half per cent. of mankind can afford; as a radio set—which on the Continent now tells more lies than truths to millions of listeners.

"We people of the twentieth century do not immediately connect the idea of progress with a life enriched by the knowledge of our God and Creator; of a family warmed by the joy of living; of a feeling for beauty in nature and art—all things of more real importance than the appliances of modern science. . . .

"Our political and economic life yearns for Christianity. . . . Never perhaps in history has Christianity had an opportunity like this. May all Christians realize it. Christ is always ready to offer Himself, just as much today as ever, but one thing is foreign to Christ and Christianity, and it is this that makes it the opposite of Communism: they do not know compulsion.

"Christianity and Christ appeal to free men created in God's image, free to choose, and Christianity offers them everything if they choose Christ".

Oh, America, America! We would

to God that these words had come from the lips of your mighty men! For that way alone can victory mean peace and our sons not die in vain!

#### Religious Liberty

Ever since the minority opinion of the Supreme Court in a case involving Jehovah's Witnesses last June, dissenting from the court's ruling that municipalities could license the sale of religious literature, the pendulum of popular opinion has noticeably swung away from the earlier policy of wholesale persecution of members of that heretical sect. For the third time in six months, a high state court has ruled in favor of tract-selling members of Jehovah's Witnesses. The latest instance occurred in Albany, New York, when the state Court of Appeals reversed the lower court conviction of a sect member who had failed to obtain a door-to-door selling license. Pointing out that it is not bound by a United States Supreme Court decision, the Appeals body quoted from a brief filed by three New York bar associations. "Every case of denial of rights to an individual or to a small minority", said the court, "may seem to be relatively unimportant, but we know now, more surely than ever before, that callousness of the rights of individuals and minorities leads to barbarism and destruction of the essential values of civilized life".

#### Errata Apologique

One of the many not unpleasant duties of the proprietor of this cubicle is the proofreading of each GUARDIAN. Every word of the entire issue is carefully read three separate times before the presses roll, and usually the finished magazine is free of all typographical errors. That is something of which, until now, we have been rather proud.

Just at the time when the final proof of the January 25th number should have been checked by us, however, we were being successfully dive-bombed by a squadron of influenza germs, and the important task was, of necessity, surrendered to two other people. Then the gremlins who lurk in every printing plant went to work, concentrating all their fiendish efforts on Page 26 and shattering a record of long standing. When a copy reached our bedside two days after it had been mailed to every subscriber, we crawled under the covers

and had us a relapse. All we can say now is a profound apology to the Rev. John Patton Galbraith, Dr. Lawrence B. Gilmore, and every subscriber. The last sentence of the first paragraph of the editorial, "Return to God", was not originally written by Mr. Galbraith in doubletalk. It should have read, "Now, in time of trouble, they say, Let us get back to God, let us return to religion". And Dr. Gilmore's name should, of course, have preceded, not followed, the disclosure that he is pastor of Grace Church, Trenton.

Our head is humble, and very bowed!

#### Notes on Archaeology

THE last great king of Babylon was Belshazzar. You have read, in the fifth chapter of Daniel, the account of the great banquet which he gave on the night in which he was slain. In the midst of the revelry, the fingers of a man's hand wrote on the wall. It was Daniel who interpreted the writing to the king. "In that night was Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, slain".

We have read this remarkable narrative many times. Who, however, was this wicked king before whom Daniel dared to stand and whom he did not hesitate to rebuke? He appears suddenly upon the scene without a word of introduction. The monuments of Babylon were silent concerning him. For long years it seemed to be practically impossible to account for him.

Some students of the Bible thought that Belshazzar must be another name for Evil-Merodach, one of the Babylonian kings. However, this was a solution that did not really satisfy. Consequently there were those who did not hesitate to assert that Belshazzar had never existed at all. He is a purely fictitious character, they said, a mere figment of the writer's imagination.

But they spoke too soon. The ancient Babylonian language which Belshazzar spoke has risen up to give testimony to his existence. His very name occurs, and the reason why he was upon the throne is now perfectly clear. Thus, the statements of Scripture have been gloriously vindicated. In our next column, we shall seek to point out how this was accomplished.

—EDWARD J. YOUNG

# The Presbyterian Guardian

## EDITORIAL

### The Word of God and the Present Return to Religion

IN 1936 Henry C. Link wrote his popular book *The Return to Religion*. If there was a return to religion in America already six or seven years ago, there surely is one today. The dire distress which is inseparable from war has greatly accelerated it. The wide use of the motto "God bless America", the oft-repeated saying of one of our soldiers on Bataan that there are no atheists in fox-holes, the stirring story of Captain Eddie Rick-enbacker's conversion, and the prominence of the religious note in President Roosevelt's recent addresses—these are bits of evidence that come to mind readily and can without much effort be multiplied tenfold.

To evaluate the present return to religion requires great care. Especially when reflecting on individual instances, it behooves one to be mindful of the Saviour's warning, "Judge not that ye be not judged". Only God omniscient knows the hearts of men. On the other hand, to jump to the conclusion that a major religious revival is in the making would give evidence of extreme credulity. Who knows, time may prove the present return to religion a mere flash in the pan.

Man is constitutionally religious. His creation in God's image accounts for this. Seriously corrupted though that image was by the fall, traces of it remain in the most perverted of men. Down deep in every human soul dwells the conviction that there is a supreme being, and, try as one will, no man can uproot that conviction. For that reason it is natural for man, when he despairs of extricating himself from distress, to call upon God for deliverance. The story is told of a blatant atheist who was sentenced to death for a crime he had committed. When the fateful moment arrived, he cried out: "O God, if there be a God, save my soul if I have a

soul". Who dares to say that this prayer—if prayer it may be called—gave proof of genuine conversion?

The book of Judges tells us that, when the Israelites forgot God, He would deliver them to the will of their enemies. Then, in their extremity, they would turn to God for help and He would succor them. But hardly had they been rescued when they would again turn their backs on Jehovah. That process was repeated over and over again. In the days of Eli, when the Philistines seemed ready to swallow Israel up, someone got the pious idea of carrying the ark of the covenant into battle. In spite of the fact that it was borne by as wicked a pair of priests as ever disgraced the tabernacle, that too may have been hailed, and no doubt was, as a return to religion. But God spewed that return to religion out of His mouth and permitted the very symbol of His presence to fall into the hands of uncircumcised heathen.

There is a valid way of judging the merits of the present return to religion. That way is to view it in the light of what, according to Holy Scripture, constitutes a genuine return to religion. By that standard the revived religiosity of our day must be measured. In these balances it must be weighed.

The Bible tells us that the following are essential features of a true return to religion:

1. *A true return to religion is invariably mediated by the Word of God.*

Scripture teaches that there are means of grace; that is to say, means which God is wont to employ in imparting saving grace to men or in sustaining that grace. The first and foremost of them is the Word of God. Whatever other means there may be, they are inseparable from the Word. In Romans 10, Paul makes the sweeping statement: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved". But immediately he adds: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" That is an unmistakable way of declaring the Word indispensable.

It is quite the vogue today to substitute religious experience for the Word of God. Therefore the expectation is widespread that a religious

revival will be ushered in by the trying experiences of war, apart from the Word. But that is wishful thinking of the most unwarranted kind. To be sure, God often uses the trials of life to plow up, as it were, the soil of men's souls, but an undeniable prerequisite of the bringing forth of fruit is the sowing of the seed of the Word. Plowing alone never produced a single blade of grass or grain of wheat. The shocking experience of an earthquake contributed to the Philippian jailer's inquiring anxiously what he should do to be saved, but the Word of God had to be taught him before he could believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. A thousand earthquakes cannot make one believer.

The rich man of one of Jesus' parables, finding himself in hell, beseeches Abraham to send Lazarus from his bosom back to earth, there to testify to his five surviving brothers. Abraham replies: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them". Dives pleads: "Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent". But Abraham insists with absolute finality: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead". How emphatically our Lord here teaches that not even the most startling experience can take the place of the Bible as a means of conversion!

2. *A true return to religion will invariably manifest itself in a deep interest in the Word of God.*

The evidences of a genuine conversion are, no doubt, numerous. A regret for past sins, a resolve to turn from sin, a delight in the doing of good works, and a renewed interest in prayer are some of the most obvious. But all these evidences must be validated by another. That other is a revival of interest in the Word of God. A religious revival not accompanied by a revival of Bible study not only falls short of being a great revival, it falls far short of being a true revival. It is no real religious revival at all.

In the wake of the return of the Jews from Babylon came a remarkable return to religion. One of its prominent aspects was a return to the Bible of that day. The eighth chapter of the book of Nehemiah tells us: "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man unto the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe

to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand, and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law". We are told further that a number of men assisted Ezra in reading, "and they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading".

The greatest revival in the history of the New Testament church is known as the Protestant Reformation. Its most outstanding characteristic was an unprecedented hunger for the Word of God. The Reformers translated Holy Scripture into the language of the common people, and men everywhere willingly risked their lives—nay, gave their very lives—for the possession of a Bible.

The first article in the January, 1943, issue of *The Reader's Digest* is entitled "Grace for This Day". It tells how families in which the altar has long since fallen into decay are today, under the pressure of war, resuming the custom of saying grace at meals. That is indeed a hopeful sign. But it is good only so far as it goes. Not even a return to prayer is evidence of a genuine return to religion, if it is not accompanied by a return to the Word of God. What God has said to man is of far greater importance than what man may say to God. Nor can man address God aright unless he has first been taught by God through His Word. He who lifts his own voice to God in time of trouble but ignores the voice of God is self-centered. However, religion is God-centered.

3. A true return to religion invariably consists in a return to the God of the Word.

The God of the Bible is the only true God. All other gods are idols. Hence only a return to the God of the Bible is a genuine return to religion. Any other return to religion so-called is actually a turn in the direction of idolatry.

We Americans are often guilty of

using religious language loosely. And of all religious terms not one is used as loosely among us as is the name God. When speaking of God we may mean almost anything. Perhaps we mean the Creator of the universe, perhaps the universe itself. Perhaps we mean a personal being, perhaps a mere influence. Perhaps we mean Him who differs infinitely from us, perhaps our better selves. Perhaps we mean the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and of those who for Christ's sake have been adopted into the divine family, perhaps a Father of all mankind. Perhaps we mean a being of absolute justice as well as perfect love, perhaps a glorified Santa Claus. And so, whenever we hear it said that our age is one of return to God, it behooves us to ask, *What God?*

Today as never before we must be on our guard against a prevalent conception of God which is completely at variance with what God has told us of Himself in His Word. According to the Bible, God does not exist for the sake of man, but man, as well as every other creature, exists for the sake of God; God owes man nothing, but man owes God everything; God is not a means to the end of man's happiness, but man is a means to the end of God's glory. The popular theology of our day completely reverses this fundamental teaching of Holy Writ. Therefore the danger is exceedingly great in these troublous times, when men are aroused to a realization that they need more than human help, that they will flee for deliverance, not to the God of the Bible, but to that other God, who really is non-existent. If that constitutes the present return to religion, it is safe to predict that it will not last. As soon as war-clouds begin to lift, God will be forgotten. He will have served His purpose.

4. A true return to religion is invariably a return to God by way of the personal Word, Jesus Christ.

Man is sinful, but God is perfect in justice and holiness. Only when the barrier of sin between God and man has been removed can they have communion with each other. Woe to the sinner who dares to approach to God as he is in himself! He will experience that God is a consuming fire. But in infinite grace God has sent His Son into the world to atone for sin by the accursed death of the cross. In Him God and sinners are recon-

ciled. Whosoever believes in Him may boldly draw near to God. In a word, the one and only way for man to return to God is by Him who declared: "I am the way . . . ; no man cometh unto the Father but by me".

No one will care to come to God by that way who has not learned to see himself as an undone sinner. Therefore repentance, heart-felt repentance, is a prerequisite of every true revival of religion. Again, no one will care to come to God by that way who has not learned to shudder at the thought of the awful justice of God. A vision of eternal punishment is a prerequisite of a religious revival worthy of its name. The Great Awakening in America was the fruit of the vigorous preaching of sin and hell. As long as men make light of sin and hell they are not returning to religion.

Then too, no one who trusts for salvation in his own works or character will feel the need of coming to God by Christ. Only he who despairs utterly of saving himself will abandon himself for salvation to the crucified Redeemer. It follows that a true return to religion is infinitely more than a sincere and firm resolve to practice the golden rule. Only he returns to religion who cries from the depths:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply Thy cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress,  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Saviour, or I die".

\* \* \* \* \*

Let us not be gullible. Not everything that announces itself as a return to religion is really that. In the light of the Scriptural requirements for a genuine return to religion, much of the present return to religion cuts a sorry figure, indeed. Let us try the spirits whether they be of God. The only norm by which to try them is the Word of God.

But neither let us be pessimistic. Who knows, even now God may be plowing the souls of men with a view to the early sowing of the seed which is the Word of God.

Nor let us be idle. If true revivals of religion are always mediated by the Word, it is the solemn duty of us Christians zealously to teach men

the Word of God.

Least of all let us be pharisaic. If there is to be a genuine return to religion, it will have to begin at the

house of God. As never before, the members of Christ's church must honor the Word of God. For Jehovah has said: "To this man will I look,

even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my Word".

—R. B. K.

## God's Faithfulness

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness (Lam. 3:21, 22).

IT WAS not a pleasant task to which Jeremiah had been called by God. It was his to proclaim woe and destruction and punishment for sin. Unlike Isaiah he could hold forth no hope for the deliverance of Jerusalem. He suffered both in body and soul. He was persecuted from without; he was broken-hearted within.

Out of the depth of sorrow for his people, Jeremiah wrote his Lamentations. There he poured forth his sadness, and the picture is dark indeed. Yet, set in this dark background, we find perfect gems of glorious truth shining forth in their splendor. The passage before us is one of these. The chapter begins: "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath", and the verses which follow are fearful indeed. But suddenly the prophet soars to the very heavenlies: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness". What was it that lifted Jeremiah out of the depth of gloom and despair? It was the very thought of the faithfulness of his God. Even though all around him was sorrow and destruction, even though he was misunderstood and mistreated, even though there was no human reason for encouragement, the thought of the faithfulness of God overbalanced everything else.

We live in times which are in many respects similar to those of Jeremiah. It would be a blessing for every Christian to consider again and more deeply God's faithfulness.

### The Object of God's Faithfulness

"Great is thy faithfulness". It is one of God's own people speaking here—His true servant Jeremiah. His was

the testimony of experience, the experience of one who belonged to God. This testimony will be echoed by every heart that has been given over to God. The sinner saved by grace will know whereof Jeremiah speaks; all others will find it strange language. "Great is thy faithfulness". Faithfulness to whom? To those who have been born from above, to those who have been washed from their sins in the blood of Christ, to those who have entered the household of God by faith.

Now in a certain sense it is true that all men enjoy the faithfulness of God. God has even made a definite promise to mankind in general. "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). How much this one promise means to the human race, and how much men depend upon it! Surely all men everywhere ought to cry out, "Great is thy faithfulness"! Nor do we need to stop with this one promise. The working of any one of God's natural laws is a revelation of His faithfulness. We see this in the gravity which holds us to the earth and in the chemistry which keeps our bodies healthy. Thus in God's common grace He reveals His faithfulness even to the unsaved.

Jeremiah, however, is speaking here especially of God's faithfulness to His own people. He means the faithfulness of God's special or saving grace. This faithfulness is just as exclusive and particular as the electing love of God. John wrote: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God". There is a sense in which God loves all men, but there is also a sense in which He loves in a peculiar way His own. He is faithful to all mankind in the respects mentioned, but He is faithful in a pecu-

By the REV. CARL A. AHLFELDT

Pastor of Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis

liar way to His people. "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deut. 7:9).

Thus the believer stands in a peculiar relationship to the mighty God. The believer is the object of His faithfulness, and he can bank on that faithfulness as an unsaved person cannot. Thus there is no more vital question for you to ask than this: Am I a child of God? Am I a member of the family of God? We cannot be too careful at this point. It is perfectly possible to have been raised in a Christian home, to have been baptized, to belong to a church (yes, even The Orthodox Presbyterian Church) and yet never to have been truly saved. Have I passed from death to life? Have I evidence in my life that I have been born again? Then the great faithfulness of God is unto me and I may rejoice in it.

### The Revelation of God's Faithfulness

Wherein do we see this faithfulness revealed? It is in the mercies of His grace. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness". The grace of our God is too great, too wonderful to describe. From this grace, this unmerited favor, flow a thousand mercies, tender compassions from our God. This is especially true of His attitude toward us in our sins and failings. We are all of us utterly unworthy of His faithfulness. It might be conceivable that He should be faithful to His unfallen creatures, the angels pure and holy. But it is the marvel of marvels that He should be faithful to us miserable sinners!

He is faithful to us in His long-

suffering patience. We have all made promises to God and broken them. But not He! "According to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise" (I Kings 8:56). It would be His right to cast us away forever. Small wonder that the believer cries out, "Great is thy faithfulness". It has persisted through all the dark hours when we sinned against Him, when we failed Him. Day in and day out the Lord's mercies have continued. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not".

God reveals His faithfulness in His readiness to forgive sin. When finally the convicted soul comes to Him for pardon, He is ever faithful to grant it. Never at any time or place in this life has He failed to forgive a penitent soul that truly sought pardon. Suppose our God were not faithful here! Where would all of us be if, for just one moment, He withheld His forgiveness? Not a day passes but that we need it. But thank God, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

He reveals His faithfulness further in His keeping power. None of us realizes just how much we owe to our God in this respect. From the time He calls us out of darkness into His marvelous light, it is His faithfulness which keeps us on the road to heaven. We stumble, we go astray, we sin—yet He faithfully draws us back unto Himself. What gracious promises He has made to us that He will keep us! "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:28). "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

"We may be shaken on the Rock,  
Yes, Satan's waves may reach us  
there;  
But fear not, Jesus is our  
strength,  
Upon Him let us cast our care,  
For off the Rock we ne'er can  
fall;  
The sheep of Christ can ne'er  
be lost;  
We're kept by God's eternal  
power,  
He values us at what we cost!"

God shows His faithfulness in His loving care. His hand continually provides for His own in the material things. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Truly did David of old say, "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25). But that provision goes far beyond our mere material needs. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). In His faithfulness, God works everything in our lives toward one great goal and purpose—His glorious purpose for us. How little we know of shifting events, and how little we can control them! But God knows them all, and controls them all in great faithfulness unto us. No event comes to the Christian except in the loving providence of our faithful God.

What faithfulness God reveals in the grace He provides that we may meet our testings and burdens! "He giveth more grace" (James 4:6). As our need increases He is faithful to increase our strength. He never fails us. He tells us, as He did Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (II Cor. 12:9).

Many other revelations of God's faithfulness could be mentioned, but these surely manifest something of its greatness.

### The Foundation of God's Faithfulness

What is the reason for such faithfulness? Upon what basis does it rest? There is no reason for it in us. There is nothing in us to call it forth. It rests first of all upon the very nature of God. Men in their sinful nature are unfaithful; God in His perfection is faithful. He is faithful because of His truth. As we read in Hebrews 6:18, it is "impossible for God to lie". He is "abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex. 34:6). Therefore what He has promised must surely come to pass. He cannot lie. He is faithful because of His immutability. With Him there is no variableness, neither shadow caused by turning (James 1:17). "For I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6). He is faithful because of His great love. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail

not." Whence do these mercies flow? From His love. There is no other answer. That love is the fountainhead of every blessing we know, and the blessing of His faithfulness is no exception. Yes, God's faithfulness rests upon His very nature.

But more particularly we might say that this faithfulness rests upon the covenant of grace. God has promised to be faithful to us, but only in Christ and for the sake of Christ. Where was this arrangement made? It was planned far back in the council chambers of eternity when the covenant of grace was made between the Father and the Son. The Son promised to leave the glories of heaven, to take unto Himself a human nature, to keep the law of God, to bear the sins of His people to the cross and there to suffer and die in their place. The Father promised to save those for whom He died—to quicken them from spiritual death, to pardon their sin, to sanctify them, to give to them every good and perfect gift in Christ. Christ has fulfilled His part of the covenant. Therefore the promise to His people is sure. Therefore is God faithful to us. A covenant cannot be made between a king and a rebel. Therefore, when Adam had sinned, God did not save by a covenant with us, but with our great Mediator and with us in Him. Therefore all God's mercies are covenant mercies—promised to Christ, and to His people in Christ. It is covenant faithfulness, this faithfulness of our God. "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips" (Psalm 89:34).

### Our Response to God's Faithfulness

What should be our response to this faithfulness? We should be ashamed for our own unfaithfulness. How black it is, when viewed against the faithfulness of our God! May we resolve to be more true to Him who is always true to us. We should increase in love and devotion to this faithful God. We have great regard for those who are faithful to us in human relationships. Then what should not our love be for our covenant-keeping God?

We should have strong confidence and faith as we consider our heavenly Father's faithfulness. Our confidence in men depends largely upon their past record. The manager of a firm

promotes his employees in accordance with their faithfulness in the past. If we need encouragement, let us look at the record of our God! Is there any flaw to be found in all of His dealings? Has He ever been anything but faithful? Christian, consider your own experience. Look back through the years. Is there one place where God has ever failed you? If that is not enough to reassure you, call upon the testimony of Christians all around you—scores of them. They will agree that never in any case did God fail any one of them. If that be not enough and your faith wavers still, then call upon the record of history. Go back through the centuries, and see what God's people have to say. Ask Joshua, and he will say, "Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning

you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof" (Joshua 23:14). Ask David, and he will say, "Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds" (Psalm 36:5). Ask Paul, and he replies, "God is faithful" (I Cor. 1:9). Ask John, and he will describe Him as "Faithful and True" (Rev. 19:11). Then ask the martyrs of the early church. And ask Luther, Calvin, and Knox. All will declare God faithful.

How much we should trust our God! We should be able to say with Habakkuk: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab. 3:17, 18).

without an heir, thus destroying the family name from the earth.

### The Parable Applied to David

God's people, she says, are in a similar difficulty, for the heir is likely to be cut off. Absalom's banishment is really against the public interest, and David is treating Absalom with severity. Everyone must die sometime, and life once gone is as hard to gather up again as water poured on the ground. The king, therefore, should be merciful, like God, who devises ways to bring back His banished ones.

### The Widow's Argument

There is both good and bad in the widow's argument. It is good that she emphasizes the frailty of human life, which is indeed as irretrievable as water spilt on the ground. A later Scripture even tells us that life is a vapor (James 4:14).

It is good, also, that the woman emphasizes the mercy of God. David was familiar with this mercy as portrayed in the Mosaic sacrifices instituted by the holy God as the way for sinful man to approach Him. David knew, too, of the cities of refuge provided in the law as havens for unwitting slayers of humankind. Most of all, David had experienced God's

## The Wise Woman of Tekoa

A Meditation on II Samuel 14:1-24

By the REV. LAWRENCE B. GILMORE, Th.D.  
Pastor of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Trenton, N. J.

**T**HIS parable, with its implications, may be regarded as the greatest of the Old Testament parables. This is because it involves the problem of the reconciliation of the transgressor. How shall a sinner be restored and forgiven? And how shall God, without impairing His justice and holiness, justify the ungodly?

### The Setting

Because of David's grievous sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, God had told him, through Nathan the prophet, that the sword would never depart from his house. The prophecy soon began to be fulfilled. David's sons Amnon and Absalom broke out into violent sin. Amnon callously violated Tamar, Absalom's sister. Absalom ere long treacherously had Amnon murdered.

This was too big a crime for David to ignore, though Absalom was his favorite. Absalom had to flee. He went to Geshur, a place south of Damascus, and stayed three years with his maternal relatives.

At the time of the parable, David seems to have been longing to see

his son. Joab, David's crafty general, noting everything, noted also this. He sent accordingly a clever woman from Tekoa, a place in Judah, to the king, to win by strategem the king's consent to Absalom's return.

The woman puts her parable in the form of a personal complaint to the king. She says she had two sons. In a quarrel one slew the other. The whole clan is now bent on slaying the killer. But this will leave the woman without a son and her dead husband

### Money for Your Treasury

Over 2,000,000

### SUNFLOWER DISH CLOTHS

were sold during 1942 by Ladies' Aids, and members of Sunday schools and Young People's Groups. Finest quality cloths. An easy, pleasant way to raise funds for your treasury or for the purchase of WAR BONDS.

Sample Free to Official  
Sangamon Mills—Est. 1915  
Cohoes, N. Y.

## NEXT QUARTER SWITCH TO STANDARD'S

## TRUE-TO-THE-BIBLE LESSONS



● For the coming Sunday School quarter plan now to get Standard's True-to-the-Bible lesson helps, either Closely Graded or Uniform. Children's helps in attractive colors. Every lesson a Bible lesson. All lessons are true to the Bible as God's revealed Word. Prospectus of Closely Graded lessons, actual samples of Uniform lessons and big catalogue are free. Please state in which you are interested and mention department. Address Desk PG-2

THE STANDARD PUBLISHING CO., 8th & Cutter Sts., Cincinnati, Ohio

## Sunday School Papers

Edited by  
REFORMED BIBLE TEACHERS

Lessons in Bible Order

CHRISTIAN REFORMED  
PUBLISHING HOUSE

Grand Rapids, Mich.

**HEADQUARTERS**  
for **CHOIR GOWNS**  
PULPIT ROBES • EMBROIDERED  
HANGINGS • STOLES • VESTMENTS  
ALTAR APPOINTMENTS  
COMMUNION SERVICE  
NEW CATALOG on Request  
NATIONAL ACADEMIC CAP GOWN CO.  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.



### AGENTS WANTED

We need 500 Christian workers to sell our splendid religious line of Easter, Mother's Day and every-day greeting cards, pencils, stationery, novelties, sacred music, song books, plaques, mottoes, Bibles, and books. Good commission. Send for our large free catalog.

The Boone Publishing Co.

P. O. Box 200 Des Moines, Iowa

### WANTED FOR TRAINING

Christian men and women in practical psychiatric nursing, ages 18-35. School in beautiful surroundings and salary given while learning. Write: Director of Nurses, Christian Sanatorium, Midland Park, N. J.

**LIGHT**  
on the International  
Uniform Lessons  
Union Lesson Helps offer sound, inspiring lesson expositions written by specialists for every age group. Undenominational and uncontroversial with room only for constructive truth.  
Write for free specimens  
AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION  
1816 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa.

marvelous grace in forgiving his own sin, the sin of premeditated murder, for which no sacrifice was provided in the Mosaic system (Num. 35:31; Deut. 19:11, 12; Psalms 32 and 51).

But it is bad that the woman of Tekoa in her argument passes over the blameworthiness, the guilt, of sin. She says nothing of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, or of its violent lawlessness. It is also bad that she says nothing about meeting the demands of justice. Her thought is all of mercy and quick restoration. Further, it is bad that she does not see any need for a change of heart in the sinner. She makes no mention of repentance or any need for a desire to be right with God and with one's fellow men.

### The Result of the Parable

David sensed that Joab was behind the woman's story, and this she quickly admitted. So David called for Joab, and told him to bring back Absalom.

The result was that the prince returned no better than he had left. He was conceited, unrepentant, high-handed, and treacherous. At the end of two years in Jerusalem, impatient at not yet being allowed in David's court, Absalom secures Joab's attention and quick action by the reckless device of burning up Joab's grain fields. Then in full favor at court, Absalom foments the conspiracy that well-nigh wrecks David's rule, and leaves twenty thousand slain in civil war. The end result is the proud prince's own violent death, hanging in the oak tree with Joab's darts jabbed through his heart. We see David's agonized weeping in an upper chamber, and we hear his bitter cry, "Would I have died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

### The Lesson for Us

The great lesson for us in this parable is that reconciliation must not leave out justice. Absalom was a wilful murderer. He was cursed with bloodguiltiness, from which only God could deliver him (Psalm 51:14). Besides, he had not only the objective guilt of past sin, but also the subjective evil of an unrepentant heart. Yet David, by mercy divorced from justice, restored Absalom, with the ruinous results we have seen.

God, however, in dealing with sinners, does not do as David did. He combines mercy and justice (Psalm 85:10; Rom. 3:26, 31).

We, and all sinners, are the banished ones, separated by sin from God who is the yearning Father. God sees and chooses the vast number of the redeemed before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4, 5). He draws the elect to Himself by His Holy Spirit (John 6:44; 3:5, 6). He welcomes from afar the returning prodigal (Luke 15:20).

The obstacles to God's restoring the sinner are the sinner's objective guilt and his subjective enmity toward God. God's remedy is the redeeming work of His Son applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit.

The substitutionary sacrifice of Christ for His own removes the sinner's objective guilt (Matt. 10:45; Gal. 2:20). The sinner's subjective enmity toward God is overcome by the Spirit's gracious work, regenerating the heart, and working faith in Christ as Saviour (Tit. 3:5, 6; Phil. 1:29).

The Apostle Peter sums this up beautifully when he says of Christ: "Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (I Peter 2:24, 25).

Absalom's death-tree in the forests of Ephraim shows the tragic result of restoration without justice. The tree on Calvary shows the eternal blessing and peace brought by the divine restoration that combines justice with mercy. Calvary is the place to which our thoughts finally come as we meditate on the parable of the wise woman of Tekoa. God grant us the true wisdom that receives His full salvation!

## The BEST for Your Sunday School

Scriptural, Spiritual, Sound and Sane

### CHRISTIAN LIFE SERIES of Sunday School Literature

Premillennial, Practical, Pointed and Pure

★ FREE SAMPLE SENT ON APPLICATION

UNION GOSPEL PRESS Box 6059 Cleveland, Ohio

