

The Presbyterian GUARDIAN

J. GRESHAM MACHEN • EDITOR 1936-1937

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I do maintain that the Shorter Catechism, with its marvellous comprehensiveness and its faithfulness to Scripture, with its solemnity and its tenderness, is the truest and noblest summary of what the Bible teaches that I have ever seen.

—J. Gresham Machen



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Your FAMILY ALTAR

Longsuffering

This age in which we live has been characterized as the "age of speed." Our forefathers would be lost in the rush of modern life, it is said. Of course there is nothing wrong in trying to improve our means of transportation and communication. But we are deceiving ourselves if we think that speed is a substitute for or a guarantee of stability. Indeed, impatience sometimes indicates a lack of stability; it is a symptom of dissatisfaction and unrest.

The person who is always on the move, never settled for a moment of meditation and calm reflection often looks upon activity as an end or goal of life. As Ruskin once wrote, "There's no music in a 'rest,' but there's the making of music in it. And people are always missing that part of the life melody, always talking of perseverance and courage and fortitude; but patience is the finest and worthiest part of fortitude, and the rarest, too—"

How impatient were the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ with His announcement that suffering and death were to precede His exaltation. They would have had the kingdom set up on earth and making progress in ruling and subduing the nations for the Messiah without the Cross of Calvary. But Jesus looked upon that suggestion as coming from the Evil One. Let the disciples of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world learn that all things must be done "in the fullness of time." Christ's hour had not yet come. The Father could wait; speed was not necessary to Him who made time. There is no deadline which God must meet. Since all the parts of His plan of salvation fit together, each phase will be brought to pass when He so wills.

So the Christian must learn from God's example of longsuffering. He must be patient and considerate of those who are weak in faith and those who are still unbelieving. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."

THE Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

(Galatians 5:22) Even in respect to the defeat of his enemies, the eradication of all sin from his nature, and the closing of the mouths of those who preach false doctrine, and the repudiation of those who despitefully use him, the believer must be longsuffering. God was longsuffering in the days of Noah, but when the time for judgment came, destruction was the portion of those who ignored God. To be patient is to possess a Christian virtue.

But lest someone equate patience with tolerance of evil, let it be said that no Christian should ever stand

idly by and fail to condemn the wrong. God proclaimed His displeasure with the sin of men who lived in those one hundred twenty years before the flood. For Noah was a preacher of righteousness. God does not look with complacency upon the world which He has made and which has turned its back upon Him. God is longsuffering to usward. He is not fearful of the possibility that evil may triumph, and He would not have us uneasy about the rise of evil men and their success.

To those who are accustomed to speed, the processes of the gathering in of the elect and their sanctification seem quite slow. Men would try expedients not countenanced by Scripture, but the God of Noah's day will not be rushed, nor can we expect His full blessing unless we be patient.

—LEROY B. OLIVER

Daily Bible Readings

Week of November 10 (continued)

Sunday..... I Corinthians 3:1-15

Questions for Sabbath Meditation

1. What is the source of true wisdom? Where do we find the knowledge of God?
2. What did Paul and Barnabas say to restrain the people of Lystra from offering sacrifice to them?
3. Did God create any things that were evil in themselves? How are the gifts of God to be regarded?
4. On what basis will God judge men in the day of judgment?

Week of November 17

Monday..... Exodus 34:1-9

Tuesday..... Numbers 14:11-25

Wednesday..... Psalm 86

Thursday..... Psalm 103:1-11

Friday..... Psalm 103:12-22

Saturday..... Jonah 4

Sunday..... Nahum 1

Questions for Sabbath Meditation

1. What happened to the first tables of stone upon which the law of God was written?
2. What are the reasons for Moses' plea to God for the people of Israel according to Numbers 14:13-19?
3. Has God dealt with His children

according to their sins? Has He been just in forgiving them?

4. How did God teach Jonah a lesson about His mercy? Why did Jonah need this lesson?

Week of November 24

Monday..... II Peter 3:1-8

Tuesday..... II Peter 3:9-18

Wednesday..... Galatians 5:13-26

Thursday..... I Corinthians 13

Friday..... Matthew 18:21-35

Saturday..... Luke 18:1-14

Sunday..... James 5:1-11

Questions for Sabbath Meditation

1. What do scoffers say about the coming of the Lord? Of what are they ignorant?
2. What are the characteristics of love as set forth in I Corinthians 13?
3. May we expect God to be forgiving of our wrongdoing if we do not forgive others who wrong us?
4. What do we know about God that should move us to importunate prayer?

Suggestions for Prayer

1. Pray for the work of the Machen Leagues in the various Presbyteries of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
2. Pray for the supply of the needs of churches building places of worship.

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**Good for the
Archbishop**

TO Presbyterians, whose elders are as much bishops as any mere men, the hierarchical, episcopal system of the Church of England usurps the dignities and the sovereignty of Christ, the only Head and King of the Church. And yet within the Anglican structure there has been a noble strain of Calvinism, appearing among the early British reformers and especially in their true successors the Puritans. When 300 years ago the Puritans of the Church of England drew up the Westminster standards, they not only gave to the Reformed Faith its greatest creedal expression, in a living heritage for the edification of the saints, but also did something for themselves and their place in history: looking at those standards we say, this was Puritanism in its essence, and the Church of England at its clearest.

In 1662, less than 20 years after Westminster, those Puritans raised another testimony; 2000 of them refused to return to ceremonies which they rightly declared to be popish, and were expelled from the Church. Yet the Calvinist strain in Anglicanism did not utterly die away. Even down to the last several generations there have been such men as Liddon and Bishops Ryle and Moule, not to speak of evangelicals of the type of the scholarly Bishop Lightfoot. But in our own time the Church of England has fallen more and more into Modernism, in a process hastened by that evil policy of latitudinarianism, the bane of the communion, according to which extremely "broad" views are taken as to the varieties of thought which may

be held within the Anglican fold. Anything goes, and the Red Dean.

Upon this background the publication this year of a book by E. W. Barnes, the Bishop of Birmingham, entitled "The Rise of Christianity," ought not to have been too great a shock. The Bishop casts the historic faith to the winds. His naturalism is unequivocal. Man, he thinks, has evolved from lower animals; the religion of the Old Testament is the "creation" of Jewish prophets; the books of the New Testament contain "incredible stories and bizarre beliefs"; the superstition and credulity of the ancient world are amazing to modern men, who are certain that miracles do not happen; there was no Virgin Birth or physical Resurrection of Jesus; and the Lord's Supper was not instituted by Jesus but is of pagan origin (we presume the Bishop, as a bishop, continues to observe the sacrament). As for Jesus, He knew "that God is good, and the problem of evil he set aside." In attempting to prove that Jesus is the Son of God, the letter to the Hebrews is "extravagant," the Apocalypse is "fantastic"; and the writer of the gospel according to John also "claims too much; his Christ has ceased to have the limitations of humanity."

We had supposed that nothing would be done, and that the Church of England had become so "comprehensive" as to stand for nothing at all in particular. On the contrary, the Bishop's views have given rise to a greatly encouraging sign of life. None other than the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, Dr. Geoffrey Francis Fisher, has joined the issue by choosing the occasion of the Convocation of Canterbury for the most public condemnation of the Bishop's unbelief. "It is necessary to say," declared the Archbishop to the assembled bishops and clergy, "that in many respects the Bishop's book so diminishes the content of the Christian faith as to make the residue which is left inconsistent with the Scriptural doctrine and beliefs of the Church in which he holds office . . . If his views were mine I should not feel that I could still hold episcopal office in the Church."

The Bishop himself, it appears, is unmoved; he is under no compulsion of conscience to resign his bishopric and will stay on. We very much doubt that further action will or can be taken. For one reason the Scriptural

form of discipline is lacking. For another, there is no recognized system of truth left in the Church of England according to which, as a criterion of judgment, the Bishop might be declared sound or unsound. The Apostles' Creed has in practice superseded the 39 Articles, but even that means what it is made to mean. The Archbishop's point is that there comes a time when you can no longer take away from the doctrines of the faith and still think you have anything left; the apparent remainder is vitiated. This is true in principle, however, of all who would impoverish the great body of doctrine by reducing it to a few "fundamentals"—such as those even in the Apostles' Creed. There is no longer a system in relation to which the fundamentals can be judged, and without the system the fundamentals have no certain meaning.

Perhaps Archbishop Fisher has done all he can do. He is to be commended for it. He wants the Church of England to stand for something, and he would like to purify it. Confronted with Bishop Barnes' infidelity he has not taken the weak course of giving unrelated expression to his own views—as is the manner of so many today who retain their places in modernist denominations in order to "preach the truth where God has put them"—but he has seen the duty of being explicit in the condemnation of error. He has taken the Bishop to account in the presence of his fellow bishops. He has also shown the world that real concern for doctrine is not dead in the Church of England.

—A. W. K.

**Christian Reformed-
Orthodox Presbyterian
Relationships**

THE Acts of Synod, 1947, of the Christian Reformed Church, which has recently come into our hands, indicates that relations between that body and The Orthodox Presbyterian Church were under review when the Synod met in June of this year. Moreover, significant actions affecting future fellowship and cooperation were taken. Since in the past these Churches have enjoyed remarkably intimate and cordial contacts,

and since their common commitment to militant Calvinism challenges them to foster more effective expression of that unity, the synodical actions are of considerable practical moment to The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

It is a source of gratification that The Orthodox Presbyterian Church was included among the churches invited to send delegates to a Reformed Ecumenical Synod which is to convene in Amsterdam, perhaps in 1948 but probably not until 1949. At the "First Reformed Ecumenical Synod" held in Grand Rapids in August, 1946, the authority to determine which other American churches should be invited was committed to the Christian Reformed Church, and this mandate was carried out at the Synod of 1947. Since the GUARDIAN a year ago reported at some length on the sessions of that ecumenical gathering, we need not express more fully at this time our appreciation of its objectives and the hope that the movement may expand and flourish.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, moreover, was extended an invitation which may be of more constant and immediate significance. For several years now the Christian Reformed Church, through a "Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Correspondence," has sought in a salutary spirit to promote unity in the body of Christ by establishing contact with other Christian churches, and especially those with Reformed confessions and life. The chief recommendation to the 1947 Synod from the Committee just named was a proposal to "enter upon (or, resume) fraternal ecclesiastical relations" with several churches. These relations, described in terms of "inter-church correspondence," include such activities as the appointment of fraternal delegates to assemblies or synods, the exchange of the Acts, or Minutes, of such assemblies; seeking aid in the solution of spiritual and ecclesiastical problems; and offering advice, warnings and counsels of correction as situations may appear to require or recommend them. Such goals are most salutary. We therefore congratulate the Synod on this forward step.

Sister Churches

In the interest of clarity it is well to note that the Christian Reformed Church, while attaching great worth to such relations, places an even

higher value upon the rank of "sister churches," that is, churches which are judged to be so fully in agreement with it that free exchange of pulpits may be encouraged and transfer of church membership may be effected without examination of those who change their ecclesiastical affiliation.

In connection with the Committee's reference to sister churches, it appears that the question whether The Orthodox Presbyterian Church might qualify under this category has been raised. At least for the present, however, the requisite qualifications appear not to be clearly established. Three grounds are given for this apparently tentative judgment. The obstacles are (1) membership within The Orthodox Presbyterian Church of individuals who are members of secret oath-bound societies; (2) different standards of church membership, that of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church being described, rather inadequately, as merely belief in the Lord Jesus Christ; and (3) differing conceptions of church discipline, which are thought to have appeared in connection with what is called "the Rochester case."

Although this distinction between a sister church and a corresponding church is evidently one of vital significance to the Christian Reformed Church, we have recently had cause to wonder whether the distinction is constantly kept in view. A notice recently published in *The Banner*, official organ of that Church, and headed "Consistories, Attention!" bears out this fact. After mentioning the presence in this country of certain clergymen of the Netherlands, the notice concludes in rather astonishing fashion. It states: "We beg to inform our consistories and churches that we do not maintain church correspondence with the denomination to which Prof. Dr. K. Schilder and Rev. D. Van Dyk are affiliated, and therefore do not recognize this denomination as one of our sister churches, and consequently cannot invite their ministers to speak or preach in our pulpits." This notice was placed "by order of the Synodical Committee."

This notice is of special interest, moreover, because it suggests that, unless some official recognition exists, consistories cannot invite ministers of other denominations to occupy their pulpits. If this were applied consistently, it would mean that Ortho-

dox Presbyterian ministers would be excluded from Christian Reformed pulpits, at least for the present. We doubt very much, however, whether the Synodical Committee possesses under the Church Order of its Church the authority to tell consistories whom they may invite to their pulpits. It is indeed vital to the purity of the churches that great care be taken in the matter of pulpit supplies. But we cannot regard it as a wholesome development when committees, whether synodical or otherwise, arrogate to themselves authority which belongs actually to the local sessions.

Invitation to Correspondence

As we have observed, The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is included among the churches invited to correspond with the Christian Reformed Church and thus establish fraternal relations on a definite footing. We are grateful for this development.

It is regrettable, however, that while, for example, the United Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Church in North America were invited without reservation, such was not the case in the instance of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The action of the Synod on this point was as follows: "Synod invite the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to seek ecclesiastical correspondence with our church and also to request said church as far as possible to remove the barrier known as the Rochester case by assuring us that such practices as are involved in this case will not be repeated." We have reason to believe that this action was intended to be conciliatory rather than to raise barriers to fellowship. Nevertheless, the total effect seems to us unfortunate.

When the invitation reaches the General Assembly of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, it must prove exceedingly ambiguous, not to say unintelligible. The Church as a whole knows virtually nothing as to what is meant by "the Rochester case." It has never been before the General Assembly. Moreover the General Assembly is asked in effect to give assurance as to its future conduct with the implication that certain past conduct has been reprehensible, and yet the specific error or delinquency is not specified. How can the General Assembly be asked to give assurances not to repeat an action which is not mentioned

(See "Editorial," page 316)

The Redeemer of God's Elect

Incarnate for our salvation, the Eternal Son of God provides the only ground of hope for guilty sinners

By the REV. JOHN MURRAY

Professor of Systematic Theology in Westminster Theological Seminary

IN THE whole compass of Christian literature, apart from sacred Scripture, the Shorter Catechism holds a unique position. It is the most perfect document of its kind that the Christian church has produced. To assess a document in this way is to pay it a very extraordinary tribute.

In giving such an estimate of the Shorter Catechism we are not saying that it is perfect; it is a human document and is therefore not inspired or infallible. Of all literature only the Word of God is perfect, and it is perfect because it is the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

Furthermore, we must not forget that other works of human authorship provide us with fuller, and in this respect more adequate and serviceable, expositions of the Word of God. The Shorter Catechism is a catechism and a small catechism at that; there are numerous needs which the Shorter Catechism does not fulfill and was not intended to supply.

But there is no other document of its kind that presents the truth of the Christian faith with such precision of statement, such brevity of expression, such balanced proportion, such rhythmical stylistic quality, and such theological adequacy. This is just saying that there is no other document of human composition that packs into so few words such an excellent summary of the truth respecting God and His holy will revealed to us in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Any one who has perused it with some Christian intelligence must be persuaded that it is *par excellence* a masterpiece of human thought and labour, a masterpiece, too, in those things that concern man's chief end—"to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever." What loss has been sustained by those who in their tender years have not been disciplined in its instruction and in their maturer years have not been fortified with the truth it so effectively inculcates, words of ours cannot calculate.

The Mystery of the Incarnation

There is one answer in the Shorter Catechism that for many years has impressed the present writer as an unexcelled example of precision, brevity, adequacy and completeness. It is the answer to the question, "Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?" The answer runs as follows: "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so, was and continueth to be God and man, in two distinct Natures, and one Person, for ever." The very punctuation should be observed.

Any one who reads the New Testament with the humility of believing devotion and therefore with the reverence begotten of faith must be overcome again and again with the mystery that surrounds the person and work of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As understanding expands and as reverent inquiry seeks to push farther and deeper there grows upon the believer the marvel of the Saviour's person and work. In reading the four Gospels, for example, one comes increasingly to appreciate the repeated expressions of wonderment on the part of those who were the eye-witnesses of the manifestation of Christ's glory. A deep chord of intelligent acquiescence is struck in the believing reader's breast as ever and anon he comes across the exclamations and acclaims of astonishment. "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" "And the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel." "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."

Jesus was indeed man. But He was also truly God. All the marks of humanity! And no less the insignia of deity! What a stupendous and incomparable conjuncture! It was never so seen in Israel. No wonder that at the very beginning of the Christian era Satan should have hurled his darts at the mystery of godliness, and in one

way or another have done his utmost to destroy the faith of this Jesus. Sometimes he secured instruments to deny the reality of the Lord's humanity and sometimes to assail the reality of His deity. By hook or by crook Satan sought to destroy the faith of the church in that which constituted the mystery and the offense of Christ the incarnate Son of God. It is no wonder that the church struggled through centuries of conflict and controversy to preserve the precious truth and to state it in the most precise and definite terms available. It is with profound gratitude to God that we should remember the issue to which these centuries of struggle came in 451 A.D. when at Chalcedon an ecumenical council was able to arrive at a statement of the faith that fixed and conserved the precious truth regarding the person of Christ, that He was truly God and truly man in one person.

In the answer from the Shorter Catechism, quoted above, this cornerstone of the Christian faith is expressed in language which a child can memorize, in language that is unexcelled in its well-balanced emphasis, and in terms that adequately guard and declare the great mystery.

Eternal Son of God

At the outset it should be observed that the person here spoken of is called the eternal Son of God. This means that He was eternally God's Son. He did not become the Son of God. There is a Sonship, therefore, that belongs to this person quite irrespective of His becoming man. There are some people who think that the title "Son" applies to Christ only because He became man, so that, though He was God before He became man, yet it was when He became man that He assumed the title "Son." This view might seem to be in the interests of guarding the full deity of Christ and His equality with the Father. It is, however, an unscriptural tenet, and it really impairs the evidence which the

Scripture presents for the full deity of Christ and for His distinct personality.

If we should deny that the Lord Jesus Christ was eternally the Son of God, then we should have to deny that the Father was eternally Father. For if the first person is eternal Father, it is necessary that there be a Son of whom He is the eternal Father. And this means that the second person must be eternally the Son of the first person. Again, it is in this way that the distinction between the Father and the Son is maintained. It is also very important to notice that, if we deny that the Son was eternally the Son, then we do grave prejudice to the greatness of God's love in sending Christ into the world. The Scripture magnifies the love of God by showing that it was none other than His own well-beloved and only-begotten Son that the Father sent. He must then have been sent as the Son and not simply to be the Son. It is the greatness of such a gift that advertises the greatness of the Father's love.

We thus see how precious a truth

the Shorter Catechism guarded and confessed when it prefixed the word "eternal" to the title "Son of God."

Another very significant word in this answer of the Catechism is the simple word "being." This is what we call a present participle, and how important tenses are when we are dealing with divine truth. This participle means that the Lord Jesus was not only the eternal Son of God but that He continued to be such when He became man. There was no interruption of or interference with the eternal Sonship when He became man. And again we have a striking example of care and precision when, in addition, it is stated or, at least, implied that His continuing to be God is the corollary of His being the eternal Son of God. The one is coordinate with and inseparable from the other.

We are very liable to think that the title "Son of God" suggests that the second person of the Trinity is in some way or other less than the Father. How can the Lord Jesus Christ, we are disposed to say, be both

God and the Son of God? Does not the latter title indicate inferiority rather than equality? It is here that the Catechism shows its faithfulness to Scripture teaching. It is a signal feature of Scripture that, instead of representing the eternal Sonship of the second person as inconsistent with His Godhood and His equality with the Father, it rather teaches that the eternal Sonship implies or carries with it the Godhood of Christ. We have a good example in John 5:18. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." The Jews quite properly interpreted Jesus' claim that God was His Father as tantamount to "making himself equal with God." That the Jews were right in this inference is shown by the fact that Jesus does not repudiate their inference but rather proceeds to vindicate His claim and to support the inference, namely, that He was equal with God.

(See "Murray," page 316)

A Message to the Church

Opportunity and Crisis in China

By the REV. EGBERT W. ANDREWS

THESE are truly days of opportunity and crisis in China. In their extremity, people of all classes are willing as never before to give Christianity a hearing. For the first time in the history of the Christian enterprise in China, the college students who comprise but a scant one or two hundred thousand of the population of four hundred and fifty million, and whose importance and influence are therefore completely out of proportion to their numbers, are interested in studying Christianity. Many of them have entirely erroneous conceptions as to what constitutes the Christian message, but their interest is an open door through which to introduce to them our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The rank and file of the members and preachers of the Chinese Church are evangelical in their faith. The unpopularity of the appellation, "Christian," has in the past simply not permitted very many to exchange their traditional way of life for one offering as little as does Modernism. This explains why it has been impossible for the modernists to conduct any "national" preaching missions in the cities of

China. Evangelistic campaigns in China are conducted by Bible-believing preachers and everywhere they go they have the enthusiastic city-wide support of the churches.

But now that the intelligentsia are giving attention to the Christian message, the lament constantly heard in evangelical circles is the woeful lack of trained leadership to meet the situation. Returned students from abroad, most of the religious publishing houses and up-to-standard seminaries, the leadership of the Church of Christ in China (a union church and China's largest denomination), and the National Christian Council (China's Federal Council) are modernist-influenced or controlled. With pseudo-Christian and anti-Christian forces trying to get the ear of the intelligentsia and with anti-Christian forces working for control of the masses that comprise eighty per cent of China's population, the crisis is grave indeed.

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest."

Memorize the Catechism!

Let's Not Rob Our Children of a Priceless Heritage

By the REV. ROBERT L. ATWELL

Pastor, Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Middletown, Pa.

HAPPY indeed is the Christian who, with David, can say, "Thy word have I hid in my heart." Twice happy is the man who not only has stored in his mind and heart the precious texts of Scripture, but has also laid up the teachings of Scripture in such form that the light of all the Scripture is ready to be focused on any question or problem. Such a person is the one who has added to his memorization of Bible texts the memorization of the Catechism. Our *Shorter Catechism* (the same applies to our *Catechism for Young Children*, our *Larger Catechism*, and the *Heidelberg Catechism*) is worthy of memorization just because it is systematized Scripture—it presents Biblical truth with Biblical emphasis and in Biblical proportion. Allow me to present three reasons for memorizing the Catechism.

Brings You Great Blessing

It brings you great blessing. That you might find ready comfort in the face of discouragement I would urge you to memorize Romans 8:28—"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." For the same reason I would urge you to memorize the comprehensive summary of Scripture teaching on the same subject, which is found in Catechism Answer 7: "The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

Who could, in the shaping of his life and the solving of his problems, have a better guide than a command like that of Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"? Many such commands are accurately summarized in the very first Catechism answer, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

What greater inducement to thankfulness and joyful service could a man have than the assurance involved in the words: "Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are re-

ceived into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God"? We would be sure that here, in Answer 34, our Catechism had erred, were it not, as elsewhere, on the solid rock of revealed truth, for Paul tells us (Romans 8:17) that we who are believers are "joint-heirs" with Christ.

Where find a better rule for life than already in the *Catechism For Young Children*: "How can you glorify God? By loving Him and doing what He commands." Or where a better rule to present duty than "The duty which God requireth of man is, obedience to His revealed will . . . The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments" (Answers 39, 41)? What better garrison to Christian humility than the re-

NOVEMBER 16, 1947, is the 300th anniversary of the completion of the *Shorter Catechism* by the Westminster Assembly of Divines.

The actual work of preparing the Catechism, which has proved to be one of the most influential documents in the history of Presbyterianism, appears to have taken up but a small portion of the time of the Assembly.

Though the task of preparing a catechism was given to a committee in December, 1643, little progress had been made by January, 1647. Then the plan of having two catechisms, a larger and shorter, was decided upon. But not until October 19th was the committee appointed which actually did the work. This committee consisted of Antony Tuckney, Stephen Marshall, John Ward, and the only Scottish commissioner remaining in the Assembly, Samuel Rutherford.

The Catechism was completed on November 16th, and on November 25th, it was submitted to the House of Commons, and 600 copies were ordered printed for the use of the members of Parliament and of the Assembly.

minder in Answer 84 that we do daily break the commandments in "thought, word, and deed"? What guide to the right use of Scriptures is equal to that found in the 90th Answer, "That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer; receive it with faith and love; lay it up in our hearts and practice it in our lives?"

Truly such truths as these, Scripture truths summarized in catechism form, laid up in your hearts, will bring you great blessing.

Makes You a Blessing to Others

Better yet, if you have the truth of God's Word so laid up in your heart, it will make you a blessing to others. Just yesterday one came to my study with two questions concerning the teaching of Scripture which troubled him. One had to do with the person of our Lord, the other with the present state of the dead in Christ. In both instances it was the Catechism which directed me in the handling of Scripture to answer his questions. "How," he asked, "if Jesus was God, could He have been limited as He clearly was in His earthly ministry?" He pointed to the statement in Mark 13:32, to the effect that Jesus did not have all knowledge, and alluded to His having been wearied. As it had hundreds of times before, the glorious answer of Catechism 21 came to my mind: "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so, was and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, for ever." He took (cf. Answer 22) a "true body and a reasonable soul" and was, as to His human nature, subject to all our limitations, sin alone excepted.

Again, my visitor asked, "What happens to the souls of our loved ones who die in Christ between this present and the final resurrection." It may have been that both of his questions had been pointed by the unbiblical teachings of "Jehovah's Witnesses." At any rate, he had evidently heard some teach "soul sleep." I began by quoting "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves until the resurrection" (A. 37), and then went on to show how many passages of

Scripture necessitate just this answer, and how verses alleged to support a contrary answer are misinterpreted. There is no question but that the person who has memorized the Catechism should find its clear simple answers helpful in numberless instances as they discuss the faith with others.

Memorizing the Catechism will not only bring you a blessing, but will make you a blessing.

Gives You Discernment

Finally I would urge you to memorize the Catechism for the power of discernment which it will give you. How greatly we need true discernment today.

I know of nothing which will go so far toward equipping a man for detecting error on the one hand, and for accurately stating truth on the other, as will a grasp of the system of truth taught in the Word. And this is just what comes through a thorough acquaintance with the Catechism. Not only is this the case in the realm of theology, but it applies also in every other realm of life.

Ian MacLaren's theology hardly predisposed him in favor of the Catechism, but his understanding of the

people of Scotland in his day caused him to pay it a perhaps unwilling, yet real tribute; "Intellect with us had been brought to so fine an edge by the Shorter Catechism that it could detect endless distinctions, and was ever on the watch against inaccuracy." In the same vein again he wrote, "The literary credit of Drumtochy rested on a broad basis, and no one could live with us without having his speech braced for life. You felt equal to any emergency, and were always able to express your mind with some degree of accuracy, which is one of the luxuries of life."

To think clearly and to speak accurately is indeed a luxury. Or perhaps, we ought to consider it a necessity. In either event it is nurtured by memorizing the Catechism.

Christian nurture is the heritage of the child entrusted to Christian parents. That child is robbed of a rich portion of that heritage, who is not taught to memorize the Catechism.

Perhaps I should close with a confession—no small part of my zeal for parents teaching children the Catechism is due to the knowledge that to do so most effectively, the parents must also memorize it themselves!

spective creeds will not prove a real barrier to union. Creeds which are not held to be landmarks of attainment in the grasp of absolute, unchanging truth, can easily be treated as material for bargaining and compromise, or even be relegated to the museum of curious antiques as possessing a historical interest only.

Wherever this perverse skeptical attitude toward creeds prevails there can only be failure to provide any real remedy for the evil of denominationalism. For this attitude of indifference fails to face the fact of error and take it seriously. Any real remedy must start out with the recognition of the supreme, absolute and permanent authority of the Scriptures, and with the assumption that the creed of one's own denomination, as far as it goes, is a faithful formulation of the teaching of the Scriptures. It must then be recognized that the various denominations have creeds which, in some points at least, are mutually contradictory. The fact must then be faced that where two creeds are contradictory, at least one of them must be in error. Although every denomination must necessarily start by assuming that the other denomination's creed, in the contradictory points, is false, still these assumptions must be regarded as provisional only. That is to say, if there is to be any real progress in providing a remedy for denominationalism, all parties must recognize that, after all, only Scripture is the absolute and final authority; no party may claim infallibility over against other parties; no party can absolutely rule out the possibility that it is in error and that the opposing party is holding the truth on a particular matter. Otherwise even discussion of contradictory points would be impossible: there can be no real discussion where each party insists that its own rightness, and the other party's wrongness, are matters beyond dispute. To take such an attitude would be to assume that which, for a real remedy of denominationalism, requires proof, namely the actual Scriptural character of the doctrines which one or another party alleges to be Scriptural.

Even where the above-mentioned presuppositions of a remedy for denominationalism exist, it is obvious that any real progress in this matter will require a great deal of effort, much

The Visible Church

Part 5: The Only Road to True Church Union

By the REV. JOHANNES G. VOS

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IT IS quite true, of course, that absolute and final authority may not be claimed for any creed or confession; only the Scriptures constitute the absolute and final authority for faith and life, and the creed of a denomination has at best the value of a limiting concept or landmark of progress already made in understanding the Scriptures. Thus no creed may ever be regarded as complete and final, that is, not subject to future revision or additions as more light is gained from Scriptures. But thus to recognize that no creed can be absolute, complete and final, is something quite different from the attitude towards creeds which modern skepticism has produced. That attitude has begotten the notion that truth itself cannot be absolute and permanent, but changes with the times. Thus there are those who say that the Westminster Con-

fession was an excellent expression of Christianity for the seventeenth century, but is not suitable for the twentieth century, because today men think in other categories than those of the seventeenth century. For our own day, it is said, there must be a new construction of Christianity in terms of modern thinking. Now those who think thus of the creeds which form their denominational heritage will of course not venture far in defending those creeds, nor will they be inclined to insist upon the doctrines formulated in them. Rather the tendency will be to regard the creeds as pieces of antique furniture, not indeed without interest and importance, but hardly relevant to the issues of the present day. If two denominations are negotiating a merger, where this attitude toward creeds prevails, even flatly contradictory propositions in their re-

patience, and a high degree of Christian humility on the part of the denominations concerned. The temper of our times is against it. The Westminster Assembly of Divines, representing all parties of English Protestantism except the high episcopacy of Archbishop Laud, sat for about seven years, during which time 1163 sessions were held. Ample time was taken for unhurried and thorough investigation and discussion of the matters under consideration. There was a patient and painstaking effort to ascertain the real sense of the Scriptures on these matters. No doubt the Assembly's work, for industry, patience, thoroughness and whole-hearted devotion to the Word of God, has never since been paralleled. There seems little reason to suppose that any present-day assembly called to attempt to resolve denominational divisions would equal or even approach it. The hurried sessions of synods and assemblies of the present day, with their ready-made dockets and pressure of business and inevitable struggle to finish their work by a fixed closing date, afford but an unfavorable climate for the calm, deliberate investigation and discussion of doctrinal matters which is so urgently needed today. Mutual agree-

ment among the people of God in their confession of the truth of His Word is a plant that cannot be forced; it must grow slowly, even in the most favorable soil. The impatient, pragmatic temper of the twentieth century is too much in evidence, even in the most orthodox denominations, to permit sanguine expectation of any early or marked progress toward a real elimination of denominational divisions. Not that such an elimination of divisions should be regarded as impossible, in whole or in part; it is only that the Churches do not value truth highly enough to make the necessary efforts and sacrifices. No doubt most Church members today would regard a contemporary Westminster Assembly of Divines, called to meet for seven years, and hold over a thousand sessions, in the pursuit of mutual agreement on doctrinal truth, as a waste of time and money which ought to be devoted to more "practical" ends. But we may rest assured that there is no short-cut to the desirable goal. There can be no real progress toward Church union on a truly Scriptural basis, without the payment of a heavy price by the parties involved. Comparatively few would be willing to pay that price.

by which God was addressed. He wished to know what kind of a God this was who was in the bush. Specifically, he wished to know whether or no this was a God who could fulfill His promise, who was able to lead forth the children from Egypt as in times past He had taken care of the patriarchs.

It is obvious that this is what Moses had in mind. Moses was facing the problem that would arise when he returned to his people. He would come to them as they were in bondage in Egypt. God has appeared to me, he would say, the God of our fathers. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has appeared unto me.

The Israelites well knew that the God of the patriarchs bore the Name Jehovah. As early as the time of Enos, "began men to call upon the name of the LORD" (i.e., Jehovah) (Genesis 4:26b). The actual vocable was surely known to the patriarchs and to the Israelites in bondage. And doubtless all the people would have been assured that Moses himself knew this Name. The very name of Moses' mother, Jochebed, in all likelihood, contains a part of this name. Why then, we may ask, would the Israelites in Egypt have asked Moses what the vocable was by which the God of the patriarchs had been known? Suppose that they had asked this. Suppose also that he had replied, His Name is Jehovah. What would have been accomplished? Moses would merely have stated what the people already knew. In what sense would this have accredited Moses unto the people as a messenger from Jehovah?

There is a passage in Exodus which at first sight may seem to conflict with what we have been saying. When God speaks to Moses again, He says unto him, "I am the Lord: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known unto them" (Exodus 6:2b, 3). It soon becomes apparent however, that this verse does not intend us to understand that the patriarchs did not know the name Jehovah. What about a passage such as Genesis 15:8, "And he said, Lord GOD (i.e., my Master, JEHOVAH) whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it"? Many other passages could be brought forward to show that the patriarchs did indeed know the name Jehovah. It is obvious, is it not, that the pas-

The Name of God

By the REV. EDWARD J. YOUNG, Ph.D.

Professor of Old Testament in Westminster Theological Seminary

WHAT is the Name of God? Moses was standing before the burning bush. He was at a respectful distance, for the place whereon he stood was hallowed ground. The bush was burning, but since the Lord Himself was in its midst, the bush was not consumed. The miracle was designed to convince Moses that he was in the presence of the one true God. When God had announced to him the intended mission unto Pharaoh, Moses had exhibited some hesitation. He had recognized his own weakness, but the Lord with tender condescension had assured him of His own presence. Now, however, a further problem arises, What is the Name of the God who speaks from the bush?

The Revelation of the Name of God

"And Moses said unto God, Behold,

when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, what is his name? what shall I say unto them?" (Exodus 3:13). For us today this question presents certain difficulties. When we ask a man his name, we merely expect to hear some vocable in reply. He tells us that his name is Smith or Jones. It is a mere word. In itself it means practically nothing. When we come to know and to love a person it makes little difference what his name is. The name is little more than a word; it certainly is no indication of the character of the person in question.

Such, however, was not the case in Biblical times. In Biblical times the name was a clue to the character of the person. What Moses desired to know, therefore, was not some word

sage in Exodus must be considered more carefully?

What then, is the meaning of this revelation which the Lord is giving in these words? When the Lord says that He appeared unto the patriarchs as God Almighty (i.e., as El Shaddai), He means that He appeared unto them in the character of El Shaddai. To put the matter simply, we may say that God revealed Himself to the patriarchs as One Who would protect them from all their adversaries, both when they were in the land and when they were without. Thus, God assured Abraham that He would fulfill to him the promises which had been made. When Jacob was far from home, he also experienced the blessings of God as El Shaddai. The patriarchs then had known much about God. They had known that He was the Creator and they had known that He was the powerful One, who could take care of them and protect them. They had not yet known God as Jehovah. True enough, as we have said, they did know the word itself. But in His character as Jehovah they did not know Him. In this sense, they did not know the Name Jehovah.

Jehovah—The Redeemer God

In answer therefore to the question of Moses, God says, "I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14). The Name I AM is not henceforth used in Scripture, but in its place the word YAHWEH (this word appears in our English Bibles as the LORD or JEHOVAH). Let us pause and ask what these words mean.

A great amount of energy has been expended in an endeavor to discover the proper etymology of this word. Such study is very interesting, but it is not as fruitful and profitable as it might be. In all likelihood, the word Jehovah means, "He causes to be." However, we must come to our understanding of the meaning of the word in a different manner. It is well to know the etymology of the word, if we can, but there is something far more important than that. How is this Name of God used in the Bible? In what context is it presented to us? If we examine closely the context we shall see the true meaning of the word.

Let us note first of all, therefore, that the revelation of this Name is given in connection with the organi-

FAITH in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel.

zation of the people into the theocracy and their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. It is a Name therefore which stands in close connection with the subject of redemption. It reveals to us that God is a Redeemer. This background must ever be kept in mind. The Name has to do with the Mosaic economy.

As, then, we examine the background against which this Name was revealed, we come to see that Jehovah is not only a Redeemer but also a sovereign Redeemer. In Exodus 33:19, there is a wondrous statement of the saving power of Jehovah: "And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." Grace and mercy are to be shown. They are not, however, to be shown indiscriminately. Not all men; not all nations, will be the recipients of grace. In His choice of those whom He would save, God is sovereign. He chooses those of His good pleasure. It is no foreseen good in the sinner that causes God to choose one and to reject another. It is His sovereign good pleasure. God is sovereign and God is a Redeemer. Herein is the blessed truth revealed which the patriarchs had not known.

Does someone object; this is Calvinism? Indeed it is. He who revealed Himself at Sinai is the God of heaven and earth. He comes to us sinners, not on our terms, but on His. In His choice of the recipients of His favor, He is not influenced by forces outside Himself. He determines whom He will save. Thus there is refuted at once the false notion that the God of the Old Testament was nothing more than a tribal deity. The God of Sinai is sovereign in the exercise of His saving power.

Another fact also emerges from a study of the background against which this revelation was given. Says the Lord, "And I will bring you unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac

and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD" (Exodus 6:8). Not only does the Name Jehovah reveal the fact that God is sovereign in all His dealings with His people but it also shows clearly that He is a faithful God. It was Jehovah who had made the promises. And Abraham had believed the LORD (i.e., Jehovah), and it had been accounted to him for righteousness. Abraham had believed the Lord, and so had the other patriarchs. Had their faith, however, been in vain? Not at all. The answer to their faith is Jehovah. That is the Name which reminds the elect that God is Faithful. He remembers the covenant which He has made. He is faithful to the promises. And so He has come to His people.

Such then is the God who appeared in the burning bush. It was fitting that His appearance should be accompanied by a miracle. "By my Name Jehovah was I not known unto them." The patriarchs had not been the recipients of this wondrous revelation. How great then, their faith must have been. But now God, in marvelously loving fashion, is making known to His people what He had not revealed to them in times past. They had known Him as the Creator and Protector. Now, however, they are to know Him with a new Name. They are to know Him as the Redeemer, the gracious Redeemer, the Deliverer who is able to deliver because He desires to do so. And in this deliverance they are to be reminded that He is a faithful God.

This was the Name which the Israelites needed. For they had been in bondage and servitude to Egypt. They could not save themselves. They were weak and helpless, and the way before them lay through the unknown desert. But the Name was revealed. Jehovah had come down to save them. He had heard the cry of His people. Jehovah is good, "for His mercy endureth forever" (Psalm 106:1b).

We too are weak and helpless. We are in bondage to sin, and in ourselves there is no way through the desert to the Promised Land. We too need the Name. We need the pillar of cloud and fire. We need the precious blood of Him who said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto Me, and him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." We need the Almighty, Faithful Redeemer.

The Glory of the Christian Church

By the REV. PROFESSOR R. B. KUIPER

II TWO ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH

A DISTINCTION is often made between the visible church and the invisible church. That distinction is both valid and valuable, but in making it we must not suppose that there are two Christian churches, the one visible and the other invisible. There is, of course, only one church of Jesus Christ. However, this one church has different aspects, and two of them are wont to be described as visible and invisible.

The Membership of the Visible Church

The visible church consists of all who are enrolled as church members. It is not difficult to determine who they are, for their names appear on the registers of churches. With little effort an accurate count of them can be made. To be sure, this is not always done. Some churches, determined to make a good showing and to cover up the annoying fact that their membership is dwindling, have a way of juggling figures so as to make their membership appear larger than it actually is. But such camouflage is not hard to see through. The fact remains that the adjective *visible* applies to this aspect of the church.

It is a foregone conclusion that the visible church comprises both believers and unbelievers, such as are truly Christians and such as are merely professing or nominal Christians. The little circle of the twelve apostles, which was the nucleus of the New Testament church, contained the traitor Judas Iscariot. The church at Jerusalem upon which the Holy Spirit had recently been poured out harbored such pious frauds as Ananias and Sapphira. Membership in the visible church does not guarantee eternal life. There is every reason to fear that in these days of exceedingly lax requirements for church membership and the almost total neglect of church discipline the unsaved within the visible

church constitute much more than a sprinkling.

The Membership and Glory of the Invisible Church

On the other hand, the invisible church consists exclusively of those who by the grace of the Holy Spirit have been born again. It is not difficult to understand why this aspect of the church should be characterized as invisible. We cannot tell with certainty who have been regenerated and who are in an unregenerate state. Only God omniscient is able to do that. Occasionally a pastor will talk as if he can without fail name the "born again ones" in his flock, but this is arrogant presumption. It is altogether likely that Luther was right when he predicted that on his arrival in heaven he would meet with two surprises: he would miss many whom he had confidently expected to see there, and he would meet many concerning whose Christianity he had had serious doubts. It is well to remember too that he added that the greatest wonder of all would be that unworthy Martin Luther would be there.

From the fact that the invisible church consists solely of regenerate persons it follows that this aspect of the church is glorious indeed. Every single member of it has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). Of all its members it may be said: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8). "As lively stones" they are "built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5). They are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 6:11). Together they constitute the body of Christ (Col. 1:18). To be sure, they have not attained to perfection, they still offend in many things, they have to contend every day with the weakness of their faith and the lusts of their flesh, but that does not alter the glorious fact that even now they have the victory

over sin and the devil through their Lord Jesus Christ. In Him they are perfect.

The Glory of the Visible Church

But what of the glory of the visible church?

Consisting as it does of believers and non-believers, it must of necessity be far less glorious than the invisible church. That is a sad fact. In the course of history it has also proved to be an exceedingly troublesome fact. Churchmen have struggled long and hard with the problem whether measures should not be taken to remedy the impurity of the visible church and, if so, what should be done about it. To the present day there is nothing like unanimity on that question. Three divergent views may be named.

Throughout its history there have been groups within the Christian church which insisted on what has come to be known as the "pure church" idea. They restricted membership to such as were conscious of having been born again and could give a more or less glowing account of that experience and its effect on their lives. They deemed it both necessary and possible to keep all unregenerate persons outside the church. Here the Novatians of the third and following centuries, the Anabaptists of the Reformation age and the followers of John Nelson Darby in more recent times may be named. This view had considerable currency among the early Congregationalists of New England. It is an extreme view and savors of fanaticism. It places undue emphasis on subjective religious experience. It overlooks the inability of men to determine who are regenerate and who are not. Instead of solving the problem presented by the impurity of the visible church it destroys that problem.

Others have gone to the opposite extreme. They have adopted a "laissez-faire" policy and ignore the problem. Consequently they would exercise no judicial ecclesiastical discipline. Frequently they appeal to the well-known

parable of the tares in support of their position. They interpret—rather misinterpret—that parable to teach that the church may not attempt to separate tares from wheat in its midst. The adherents of this view are exceedingly numerous in our day. In effect they would let the purity, and hence the glory, of the visible church—to use a popular expression—“go hang.”

There is a third view. It excels in balance. One might expect that, for it is based squarely on the Word of God. On the one hand it admits that the visible church cannot be kept perfectly pure. Its most godly and most faithful and wisest officers are far from infallible in seeking to distinguish between wheat and tares. But on the other hand it insists firmly that the church is in sacred duty bound to keep itself as pure as is humanly possible and to that end it must exercise discipline, if need be to the point of excommunication. Did not the apostle Paul command the believers at Corinth to put away from among themselves a certain wicked person (1 Cor. 5:13)? Did he not enjoin his helper Titus: “A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject” (Titus 3:10)? And did not the Lord Himself ordain that, if an offending brother refuses to heed the admonition of the church, he must be regarded “as a heathen man and a publican” (Matt. 18:17)?

The conclusion of the matter is that the visible church is glorious only so far as it resembles the invisible church. Visibility and invisibility are two aspects of the one church of Jesus Christ. For that very reason the visible church must manifest the invisible. Admittedly the resemblance of the one to the other is never perfect. But in some instances the visible church is no more than a caricature of the invisible. Then it lacks all glory. In a great many instances the visible church tries feebly to reflect the invisible. Then its glory is dim. By the grace of God there are also instances in which the visible church concertedly emulates the invisible. Such a church is glorious indeed.

That is a way of saying that the glory of the visible church does not consist of such externals as costly edifices, artistic stained glass windows, richly appointed furnishings, dignified vestments and talented preachers. A church may have all these and yet be so inglorious as not to deserve to be

called a church of Christ. Not even long membership rolls necessarily betoken glory. They may very well evince vainglory.

The glory of the visible church is found in its members and consists in their loyalty to Jesus Christ. That church is glorious which honors Christ as its Head and itself manifests His body.

Editorial

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and in which, as a matter of fact, it has not been implicated.

Moreover, the invitation ignores the fact that the Presbytery of New York and New England, which was involved in this matter, has sought patiently, in a spirit of love and fairness, to deal with the issue. And this evaluation has been before the Christian Reformed Church, for it was published in *The Banner* on July 7, 1944. The Presbytery's statement sets forth at length all the pertinent facts, maintains that it acted throughout in good will and integrity, always endeavoring not to violate the interests of the Christian Reformed Church, and seeking to overcome misunderstanding. It specifically reports, moreover, that when the Classis of Hudson, of which the Rochester Church is a member, gave expression to its grievance because the Presbytery had “received into its communion the schismatically resigned group from the Rochester Christian Reformed Church,” the Presbytery, re-evaluating the situation, conveyed to the Classis its deep regret that “it did not exercise its full prerogative and duty, namely, to determine whether the group concerned, then seeking admission into the communion of the Presbytery, exhibited schismatic tendencies or actions in separating from the Rochester Church.” In the face of this acknowledgment and apology, and in the light of the statement as a whole, we believe that the Christian Reformed Church should recognize that as full assurance as is feasible has already been given.

Perhaps the Presbytery of New York and New England may wish at some meeting before the next Assembly to take cognizance of this invitation, and advise the Assembly of the course it should pursue when the

communication of the Christian Reformed Church comes before it. But at this stage we cannot but reaffirm our regret that the matter was not dropped.

At any rate there are the best of reasons for seeking to overcome every obstacle in the path of closer fellowship and cooperation. Our high calling as churches of Jesus Christ, made more urgent by the times in which we live, does not warrant any party to a dispute to hold out for its own “honor.” For the glory of God and the advancement of the truth to which we unitedly hold, we must go forward constructively. In view of the mutual good will which is generally prevalent in these Churches, we have confidence that the Rochester incident will not be allowed to thwart the encouraging efforts that are being made to establish relations of a solid and fruitful kind.

—N. B. S.

Murray

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Hence the Catechism shows a fine perception that the eternal Sonship and the Godhood of Christ are necessarily coordinate and that since He was and continued to be the eternal Son He also was and continued to be God.

He Became Man

The Lord Jesus Christ, however, became man. How He became man is stated in the Catechism in the answer to the succeeding question. But in the answer with which we are now concerned it is simply stated that He became man. We come now to a very important distinction. It is the distinction between the two words “being” and “became.” “Being” indicates what the Lord Jesus Christ was eternally; He did not become the eternal Son of God. But He did become man. How important again are tenses! His being as man was something that happened; it began to be. Since it was something that had a beginning it was, therefore, a temporal, historical event. Beginning to be can never be separated from time, for time and beginning belong together. So the Lord Jesus Christ became something which He previously was not. The Catechism by the

simplest of terms and distinctions pro- pounds the most mysterious of all happenings, the truth with which our holy faith stands or falls, to wit, the historical reality of the incarnation of the Son of God.

It was man that the Lord Jesus Christ became, not the appearance of man, not superman, not even deified man, but really man with a true body and a reasonable soul. And as a result of what He became He was man. It is not as if He united Himself to another man, not as if He, a divine person, became conjoined to another who was a human person. It was He, a divine person, who himself became man, so that as truly as He was the eternal Son of God so truly was He also man. The Catechism was jealous to say precisely this, for its framers knew the Scripture teaching that He was both God and man in one person. They were faithful to John 1:14 and many other texts—"the Word became flesh."

It might appear to us that Christ's becoming man required in some way or other a transmutation of what He previously and eternally was, a metamorphosis whereby His deity would be reduced or curtailed to the measure of humanity. So many have, in effect, taught. Or it might be thought that there was in some mysterious way a merging of the divine and the human and no longer undiluted deity or unchanged humanity. This has been the tendency of much speculation. But the beauty and adequacy of the concluding statements of the answer of the Catechism appear—"and so, was and continueth to be God and man, in two distinct Natures, and one Person, for ever."

If there had been some kind of transfer of human properties to the divine nature, then the Lord Jesus Christ would have ceased to be truly God. If there had been some kind of transfer of divine properties to the human nature He would not have been truly man. In the one case He would no longer be the eternal Son of God and equal with God. In the other case He would not be of one flesh with us, made in the likeness of

sinful flesh, clothed with our nature and the High Priest endued with a feeling of our infirmities, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Hence the preciousness of the statement, "two distinct Natures, and one Person, for ever."

God and Man—For Ever

A word must be said about the expression, "for ever." It might be plausibly protested: surely Christ is not now, in His glorified state, man; in any case, surely He will not be man for evermore. Or, it might be said, did not Jesus' exaltation mean, at least, the deification of His human nature? It is true that Jesus was exalted in His human nature; He was exalted in human nature far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and given the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. It is in human nature that He sits at the right hand of God. And it is also true that by His exaltation His human nature was endowed with the qualities that fit it for and are appropriate to that transcendent realm and the specific functions which are peculiar to that glorified state. But it must be noted that it is in human nature He is exalted and, although His human nature is fitted for the supernal realm of resurrection life and activity, yet His human nature is not endowed with qualities that are proper to any other nature than the human. It is surely significant that, when Christ will come the second time, God will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained (Acts 17:31). Jesus will come in human nature to judge the world. And the truly human character of the nature in which Christ is exalted is intimated in such a statement as, "who shall change the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:21). Jesus' body in the exalted state is no more divine than will that of the saints be when they will be resurrected in glory. The saints will indeed be conformed to the body of Christ's glory and that will mean a glorious transformation. But the glory of it all resides in the fact that the transformation will consist in conformity to the resurrection glory of that same human nature in which the Lord of glory suffered and died.

To deny the integrity of our Lord's human nature as truly and properly human in His exalted and glorified state is to overthrow what is nothing less than the pivot of Christian hope—"then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:17). "God and man, in two distinct Natures, and one Person, for ever"!

Hoeflinger — Clark

THE Rev. Herbert Hoeflinger, pastor of the Mediator Orthodox Presbyterian Chapel in Philadelphia, and Miss Doris Clark, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Clark of Vineland, New Jersey, were united in marriage on October 25th. The ceremony took place at 6.30 p.m. in the Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Vineland, and was performed by the Rev. Everett C. DeVelde, pastor of the Church. A large company of friends and relatives witnessed the event, and attended the reception which followed immediately in a neighboring social hall.

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Sixth Annual Convention of American Council of Christian Churches

Use of Salvation Army Citadel for Final Rally Refused

THE Sixth annual convention of the American Council of Christian Churches took place in Detroit, Michigan, October 16-19. The Rev. W. O. H. Garman of Wilkensburg, Pa., was elected president of the Council. Perhaps the most significant action of the Convention was the issuance of a call for delegates to meet for the establishment of an International Council of Christian Churches. The meeting is to be held in Amsterdam, Holland, August 12-19th, 1948. The invitation is to "Bible-believing church bodies in true Protestant succession throughout the world," and they are asked to send at least one duly authorized representative to the meeting.

The final rally of the Convention was planned for Sunday evening, October 19th, with the Rev. Carl McIntire speaking on "Russia's Fifth Column in America—the Federal Council of Churches." The rally was to be held in the Salvation Army "Citadel." Sunday afternoon, however, the Salvation Army officials notified the Council that it could not use the building, unless Mr. McIntire changed his subject. This was refused, and so the building was locked against the Council and the rally was held instead in the main ballroom of a nearby hotel.

Lt. Col. W. H. Fox of the Salvation Army declared that the building could not be used for "controversial subjects." The Salvation Army, he said, holds membership in both the Federal Council of Churches and the Detroit Council of Churches. Earlier in the week he had requested the American Council to remove from its exhibit of books certain volumes that attacked the Romanist religion. "The

Salvation Army never attacks any man's religion," he is reported to have said.

The American Council adopted for the next year a budget of \$203,000 and made plans to hold its next annual convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

Among the resolutions adopted by the gathering were the following: a request to President Truman to "make available to the Nationalist Government of China all the aid legally possible in order to save China and eventually the United States from the disaster" which would result from Communist domination; a resolution against Communism and the Marxian ideas, "which are actually being peddled in the United States by representatives of the Federal Council"; a resolution urging the passenger airline companies to grant reduced rates to clergymen; a resolution concerning Greece—"that the United States do all in her power to keep friendly troops of the democratic powers in Greece until such time as the Greek government indicates they are no longer needed to preserve their freedom from the threat of Communist occupation"; and a resolution repudiating Barthianism as "unscriptural."

There was also a resolution concerning evangelism: "Be it resolved that the constituent bodies of the American Council of Christian Churches reaffirm their emphasis upon preaching the Gospel to individuals everywhere, urging upon each the necessity of true repentance toward God and faith in our Saviour." (Note: We don't exactly understand how the Council could pass a resolution declaring that the constituent bodies were doing something. Was this an attempt to avoid the charge that the

Council itself is engaging in evangelism, which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, for example, has contended is not the business of a council?)

And there was a resolution on cooperation, aimed in particular at the National Association of Evangelicals, Dr. Harold J. Ockenga and Fuller Seminary. According to this resolution, Dr. Ockenga had declared at the opening of Fuller Seminary, "we do not believe, and we repudiate, the come-out movement." On this basis, the American Council thought it should be apparent to all that they could not cooperate with the NAE in Sunday School lessons, or anything else.

National Presbyterian Church

ON SUNDAY, October 19th, a service commemorating the establishment of the National Presbyterian Church was held in Washington, D. C. The National Presbyterian Church is really the former Covenant-First Presbyterian Church of Washington, with a new name and certain new relationships to the Presbyterian U. S. A. Assembly.

At the special service President Truman was present and unveiled a memorial plaque commemorating the event. He took the occasion to make a few remarks concerning Presbyterians in American history, particularly John Witherspoon. He also declared, in typical Modernist fashion, "There never was a time in the history of the country when we needed more the backing of those people who believe in the golden rule and who believe in the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." At the regular service which followed, Moderator Wilbur LaRoe, Stated Clerk William B. Pugh, Princeton President Harold Dods and others took part.

Just what does the establishment of

a National Presbyterian Church mean. In the *Presbyterian* for October 11th, Dr. Edward Nelson, pastor of the Church, has indicated his ideas on the matter. It can be (1) a representative Church of the denomination in the nation's Capital. Although its trustees must be approved by the General Assembly, it is otherwise similar to any particular church of the denomination. (2) It can provide an authentic voice for the General Assembly in the Capital. But what is meant by an "authentic voice" of the Assembly? Every minister in good standing in the denomination has as much right to speak as any other minister. And the Assembly is not some sort of a voice that can be separated from the voices of the individual ministers as a "super-Presbyterian voice." Or is it? (3) The National Church can symbolize the inseparable relationship between true religion and noble patriotism. (4) It will be available for any use the Assembly may want to make of it in the future.

What this all sounds like is that somebody thought there ought to be a National Presbyterian Church in

Washington, so one was established. Perhaps Moderator LaRoe was not far wrong when he suggested, "I am wondering whether the voice of this pulpit cannot be loud enough to be heard on Capitol Hill above the voices that clamor for special favors." A National Presbyterian Church is a much better-sounding name than a Presbyterian lobby.

Beyond Our Own

"BEYOND OUR OWN" is the name of the first of a series of feature-length movies, produced jointly by major Protestant denominations and distributed by the Protestant Film Commission. It will be first shown on November 10th, and then will be available for general showing, in churches or elsewhere.

The film is described as keyed to the "1947-48 emphasis on world evangelism." It is said to portray the need of casual church-goers for greater participation through the church in community undertakings. The suggestion is made that it be used for Sunday

evening and even Sunday morning services.

No doubt many local churches will eagerly seize the opportunity to have something out of the ordinary at their service. No doubt there is in the motion picture business a great opportunity available to Christians, which has not been used up to the present. But we fear the consequences of the use by interdenominational agencies of the motion picture to promote modernist ideas. And frankly, when we go to church, we would rather "see Jesus" through the minister's exposition of the Word of God, than feel that we were attending a movie theater.

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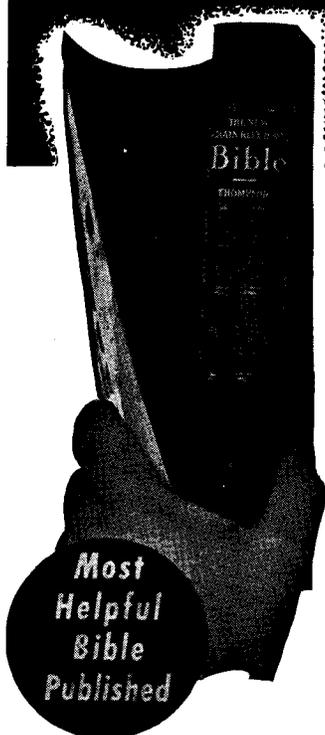
Mrs. Walker (left) and Miss Blake have their hands full with the children in the West Collingswood

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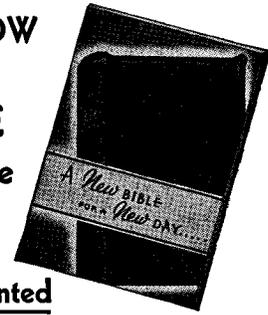
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