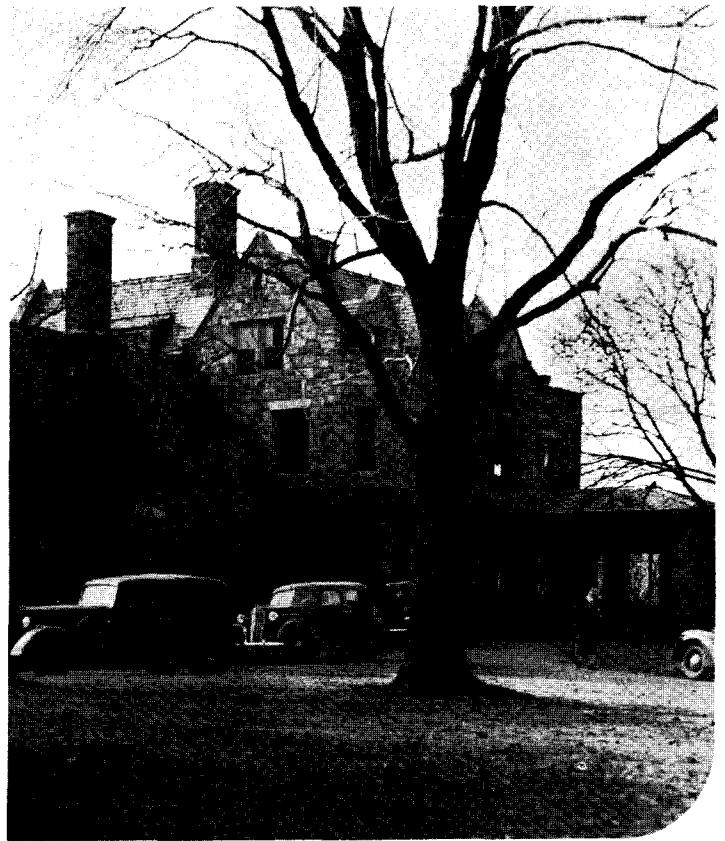
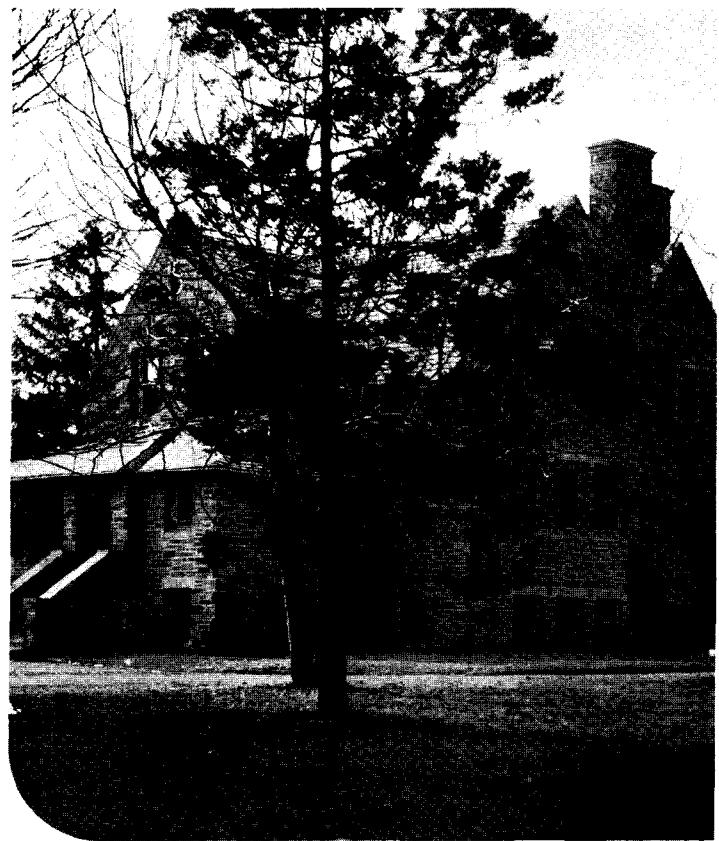


The Presbyterian Guardian



IN THIS ISSUE:

AND . . .



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Letters

"Untouchable" subjects?

I enjoy the *Guardian* and am grateful for it. But I feel there are severe shortcomings in it. Briefly, the *Guardian* has a whole range of "untouchable" subjects. Readers who are interested in the application of the teachings of the Bible to civil affairs must look elsewhere.

Soon after the American Revolution, (decadent) France sent a special envoy to find out "what makes America great"? Finally his reply to France was, "America's pulpits ring with righteousness."

What did they talk about in those days? Well, they talked about Christ and the Bible, and they applied Christ and the Bible to current civil affairs. Today we refrain from that; if we "leave off preaching" to take a biblical stand on a current political issue, that's "meddling."

Our pulpits are losing faith with Revolutionary Presbyterianism. Many of those saints were murdered for their support of America or otherwise persecuted. We today still enjoy an America (albeit declining) which was obviously built by God's grace through more and better pulpits. Our Presbyterian forefathers were determined to "occupy until I come again"; they left a huge "bank account" of Christian blessings, an account we are persistently drawing down rather than depositing into.

A recent and encouraging sign was the O.P.C. General Assembly stand against abortion. Some more such subjects: Should we pay taxes to support abortions? Should Christians vote where the entire slate appears non-Christian? Should our families refuse to send their children to public schools? Or, are we afraid of splitting congregations by preaching about the biblical aspects of Social Security, or the widespread non-Christian influence in our nation's highest political offices?

I'd like to see sessions and presbyteries discuss these matters and decide on pulpit policy. Don't we dishonor Christ by failing to keep his kingdom in every aspect and sphere?

Ross F. Rogers
Vienna, Virginia

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To whom does PALESTINE belong?

W. Benson Male

To whom does the land of Palestine rightly belong? to the Jews or the Arabs? to the Israeli state or the Palestine Liberation Organization?

Any answer to this question may appear, at first glance, to be inconsequential. What difference does it make? We might discuss it over tea and then dismiss it all with a bored "So what?"

But is it a mere academic question? A national preacher in a country bordering Palestine believed that God had long ago promised that land to the Jews to be their possession forever. So he believed it would be pleasing to God if he helped the Jews regain the territory once occupied by the nation of Israel during the reigns of David and Solomon. Over a radio transmitter concealed in his house behind a picture of Jesus, he gave military information to the Jewish forces. When his own government, through its monitors, detected this, he was condemned and shot. Was he a martyr for the kingdom of God, or duped by a false interpretation of Scripture? To him it was no mere academic question!

Recent books by "experts on biblical prophecy" teach that the occupation of part of Palestine by the Israelis is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and that God has commenced "end time" activities in giving it back again. Implied is the idea that any act of aggression to acquire the land for the Jews is a

further step in fulfillment of God's promise. Of course, any aid given to the Israelis must please God, while any resistance or opposition would incur God's wrath.

Hal Lindsey, author of best-selling *The Late Great Planet Earth*, and defender of this sort of interpretation, was quoted recently as saying, in effect, that God has always blessed those nations that have been kind to the Jews and has punished those who have opposed or persecuted them. He observed a change in American attitude toward Israel and prophesies that if this antagonism continues, it will spell the end of the United States. Obviously, Mr. Lindsey does not consider the question an indifferent matter!

Christians living in Arab countries and holding this view face a dilemma. The kingdom of David and Solomon included parts of what is now Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. To these Christians the question of divine right to Palestine poses serious problems. They observe the unspeakable suffering brought upon the Palestinian people by the loss of homeland, business, and lives because of the Israeli takeover. Refugee camps have become the sad habitat of more than a million of these people for a generation. Can Christians rejoice in this as a fulfillment of prophecy? Or should it be recognized as a travesty of injustice and inhumanity imposed upon a peaceful people? It is obvious that the "Middle East problem" caused by the partition of Palestine could easily escalate into the Third World War.

The Christian's attitude toward all things must be governed by the teachings of the Bible, the unchangeable and final Word of God. The Bible condemns injustice and calls for impartial righteousness and love in the relations of men and nations. But what does it teach concerning the claims that the land of Palestine belongs to the present-day Israelis by virtue of covenant promises made to Abraham?

The promise of the land

Many passages in the Old Testament promise the land of Canaan (modern Palestine) to Abraham and his offspring forever.

"And I [the Lord] will establish my

covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee and thy seed after thee all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession" (Genesis 17:7-8; see also Genesis 12:1-3).

Does this settle the question? Are we to conclude that the Zionists and Israelis who claim to be Abraham's descendants are the rightful heirs of this promise made to him? On the basis of biblical evidence, the answer must be an emphatic "NO!"

Even in the next generation after Abraham, the promise was narrowed to Isaac: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 17:10; 21:12). In the following generation, Esau was dispossessed by divine election (Genesis 25:23; Romans 9:11-13) and by his own despising of the birthright (Genesis 25:32-34).

Much later the glorious reigns of David and Solomon were followed by the division of the kingdom—a judgment brought on by the idolatry introduced through the wives of Solomon (1 Kings 11:9-13). The northern kingdom persisted in idolatry and the people were dispossessed of their land by the Assyrians who permanently scattered them. A little more than a century later (586 B.C.) the southern kingdom suffered the same judgment under the Babylonians.

After seventy years, Cyrus allowed a return. But only a small portion of the Jews actually responded to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. The former physical glory never returned; the kingdom was never restored.

At the coming of Christ, the Jews were subject to the Romans and scattered over the known world with only a relatively small concentration in Palestine. And when Christ, Abraham and David's greater son, preached the spiritual nature

The Rev. Mr. Male is an Orthodox Presbyterian missionary, presently serving in Egypt. Until compelled to leave by the recent civil strife, he had begun to work in Lebanon and had found an open door to many. His work in Egypt includes ministry to a faithful remnant of believers established by earlier Presbyterian missions, but with no present missionary connections.

***Are the Zionists and Israelis the rightful heirs of Abraham?
On the basis of biblical evidence, the answer must be an emphatic "NO!"***

of the kingdom of God, he was met with fierce antagonism among the Jews. His claim to the Messiahship promised through Abraham and the prophets resulted in his rejection and crucifixion. The fulfillment of all the promises was despised and rejected.

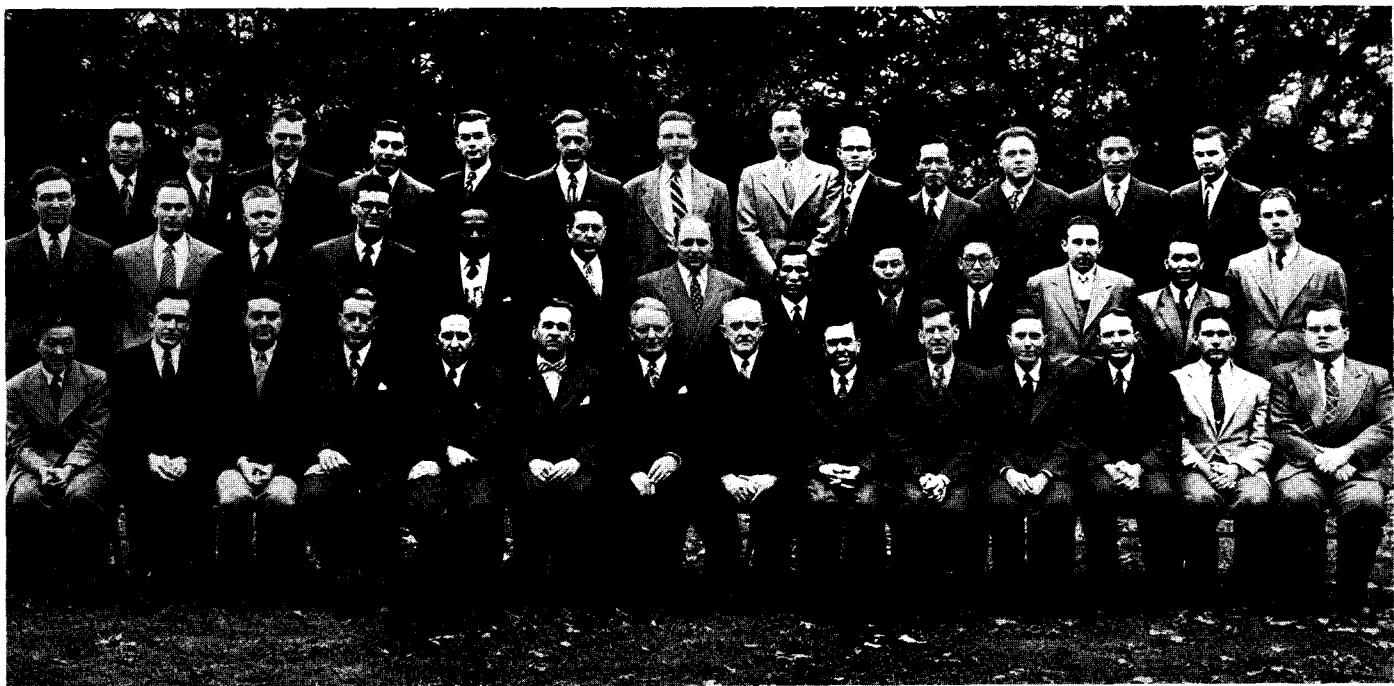
This greatest of sins reaped a terrible judgment. In 70 A.D. the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the remnant of the people (Matthew 27:25; Deuteronomy 29:64-66; Luke 19:42-44). Nowhere in the New Testament is there so much as a hint of a prophecy that the land and city would, at some future date, be restored to the Jewish people.

Rather than any such promise, the New Testament is full of warnings of judgment on those who falsely claim divine privilege as the physical descendants of Abraham. "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for, I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (Matthew 3:7-9; also verses 10-18).

And Jesus himself supports these words spoken earlier by John the Baptist: "[The Jews] answered, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father . . . ; ye are of your father the devil" (John 8:39-44). And later, Jesus says: "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43).

And Paul adds a further word of

(Continued on page 7.)



The news of Professor John Murray's death set me to thinking somewhat nostalgically about the memories of my childhood and teenage years, for so many of those early recollections were of Professor Murray and his associates at Westminster Seminary and in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

It strikes me, in looking back, that perhaps the real heroes of my formative years in the 1940s and '50s, those who really made a lasting impression on my life, were not so much Richie Ashburn, Stan Musial, Ted Williams, or Willie Mays, but the godly men who were continually in contact with my family. To be sure, as I grew up, there seemed nothing at all unusual in being surrounded by men such as Murray, Ned B. Stonehouse, or Cornelius Van Til; but in light of the perspective of time this environment appears to have



A Reminiscence

DAVIS A. YOUNG

been an incalculable blessing of God not given to very many other children.

Growing up on campus

When I was a very small boy, our family lived in a now-demolished white frame house on the campus of Westminster Seminary. I can still remember riding my scooter or pushing my toy trains in the dirt beneath the

massive trees. There were occasional forays into the woods at the edge of the campus to eat wild blackberries or catch poison ivy or watch for the long-since defunct maroon passenger cars of the nearby electric shuttle line of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

There were times of adventure in the dark, somewhat terrifying recesses of the basement of Machen Hall or times for watching a student ping-pong duel. On occasion there were chats with students like Ken Meilahn and Elmer Dortzbach. I can still see Elmer Dortzbach mowing the grass on the spacious ball field where now exists a modern express highway. From time to time there was a climb in one of the beautiful ironwood trees.

"Here comes Professor Murray!"

Among the strongest impressions of those early years, however, was the sight of Professor Murray strolling

At top: Faculty and student body, 1949.

At left: Murray, with smile, in dining club, about 1950.

Cover top: Carriage house / library / student center, as it was in 1939.

Cover bottom: Machen Hall in 1939.

across the campus towards our house, no doubt for some high-level theological or ecclesiastical conversation with my Dad. I don't remember those conversations, of course, but I can remember the uneasy excitement I felt at seeing Professor Murray approach.

It was excitement, because he really loved me as he loved all children, and he clearly showed his great affection. It was an *uneasy* excitement because the affection was always demonstrated with a bone-crushing squeeze. I was never certain that I was going to be able to breathe again! Whenever we saw him approaching, my sister and I would warn each other, "Oh, oh! Here comes Professor Murray!"

As I grew older the bone-crushing body squeeze was replaced by a bone-crushing handshake.

When I became a teenager I attended prayer meetings at Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Glenside, just across the road from the seminary. Professor Murray was always there. It seemed that when he prayed we were carried into the very throne-room of God. It was almost like experiencing the vision of Revelation 4. Only once did I ever sit in on one of his classes at Westminster; I'll never forget it. He began with barely audible prayer and gradually built up to a crescendo with a magnificent lecture on regeneration from 1 John — and all with his eyes closed!

Heroes and sermons

There were other heroes, too. Every so often Robert Marsden came to Philadelphia. He seemed rather gruff and tough, but it was not so, for he always had a twinkle in his eye and great good humor. One day when I was a teenager my mother and I met him in the main entrance of Machen Hall. After chatting briefly with me he turned to my mother and said, "Well, *some* day you'll be proud of him."

When I was around nine or ten years old, he preached a sermon from John 10 on the theme, "My Sheep Hear My Voice." The reason I can recall that sermon is because he used several illustrations geared to young children. He included children in his audience. I sorely wish that preachers today would make greater efforts to include the children when they preach. Maybe young people would be more interested in church and maybe adults would understand sermons better, too, if preachers followed Robert Marsden's example. It seems hardly possible that



Mr. Stull, former custodian now retired, cleans up hurricane damage. The white frame house was located below the field seen beyond the trees at left.

he's been gone fifteen years.

I remember Leslie Sloat and his wife from my earliest days. Occasionally I stayed at their home, and Mrs. Sloat kept her eye on me to give my mother a break. At the age of three, I broke a small toy train belonging to them. I assume they have forgiven me, for they have always showed great interest and love to me through the years. Perhaps more than any other individual Leslie Sloat is responsible for my beginning to grasp the heart and core of the Reformed faith with just one brief informal comment.

When I was still in high school, a large group of high schoolers, collegians, and parents from our church were gathered for a time of fellowship at one of the homes. As often happened, little theological discussion groups formed spontaneously. In our group the kids were talking about God, the state of affairs in the world, and right and wrong, when Mr. Sloat interjected the comment: "Look, we've got to get it through our heads that whatever God does is right."

How prone the sinful heart is to subject God to some universal law of right and wrong that is somehow outside of God. But in that one brief statement, Leslie Sloat brought home, at least to me, the glorious biblical truth that God is really God, that he is the standard, the source that determines what is right and wrong. Because God does it, that makes something right.

Friends and teachers

Arthur Kuschke has always been my friend, perhaps because we share a common interest in rocks and birds

and nature in general. When I was a young boy with a growing interest in birds he often helped out in solving a problem of identification or taught me to recognize a bird by its song. I'm sure he enjoys working in the Montgomery Memorial Library at the Seminary. There were times when I would go with my Dad to the old library and sometimes I'd find Mr. Kuschke working in a dusty office hidden away in the dimly lit stacks. There were hardly ideal working conditions in the early days of Westminster.

Although I haven't heard Mr. Kuschke preach often, I do remember his preaching in the late 1940s on, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Although I cannot recall the content of the sermon, his forceful repetition of that text drove home permanently an exceedingly important imperative that Christians are all too prone to forget.

There's the memory of Paul Woolley seated at his desk in the Registrar's Office in Machen Hall. There's the memory of R. B. Kuiper shaking his head vigorously during a sermon. There's the memory of gracious N. B. Stonehouse who generally occupied the pew behind us on Sundays. I can't forget the time he was filling the pulpit at the Glenside church and was so moved by the choir anthem that he could barely begin his sermon.

Then there is John Skilton. From the beginning I can recall his steady smile and his warm face that reflected inner peace. He's always had that wonderful gift of making you seem the most important person in the world. When you talked with him, he really listened. Dr. Skilton preached at my



Dad's funeral not so many years ago, and what impressed me so very much was that instead of saying all kinds of wonderful things about his departed friend, he was full of praise for the sovereign God.

Pastors and teachers

Robert Atwell was another who had great influence on me, for he was my pastor for many years. He had to put up with me in catechism class for quite some time. When I was twelve years old, we were discussing the doctrine of election in class, and he asked me whether God chose people to salvation because he foresaw their faith in Christ or they believed because they were first chosen by the good pleasure of God.

Now since the Arminian tendency comes quite naturally to the sinner, and because it seemed logical in view of the fact that God is powerful enough to foresee all that will happen, I replied that men were chosen to salvation because God foresaw their faith in Christ. "Why, you lousy Lutheran!" Mr. Atwell blurted out (and apologies to our Lutheran friends here). Something told me that the answer I had given was wrong. In fact that one experience set me straight for good on the doctrine of election.

I learned much else from Robert Atwell, and it eventually became my privilege to serve on a session with this man who had so patiently been my instructor years before.

Dr. Van Til is another whose memory is always with me. Though I remember no specific sermon of his from my boyhood days, I do recall some of his performances at the Seminary's stunt night and times when he played tag with me. And I guess it is not too likely that a five-year-old would remember much about the unbiblical presuppositions of Thales or Aristotle or Kant!

But as I matured, Dr. Van Til's work began to have a tremendous impact on me. Since college days it has always been a treat for me to hear a Van Til sermon or address, or sit in on a Van Til class, or read a Van Til book or syllabus. No one has helped me to think in a consistently Christian way more than has Dr. Van Til.

Footsteps of a giant

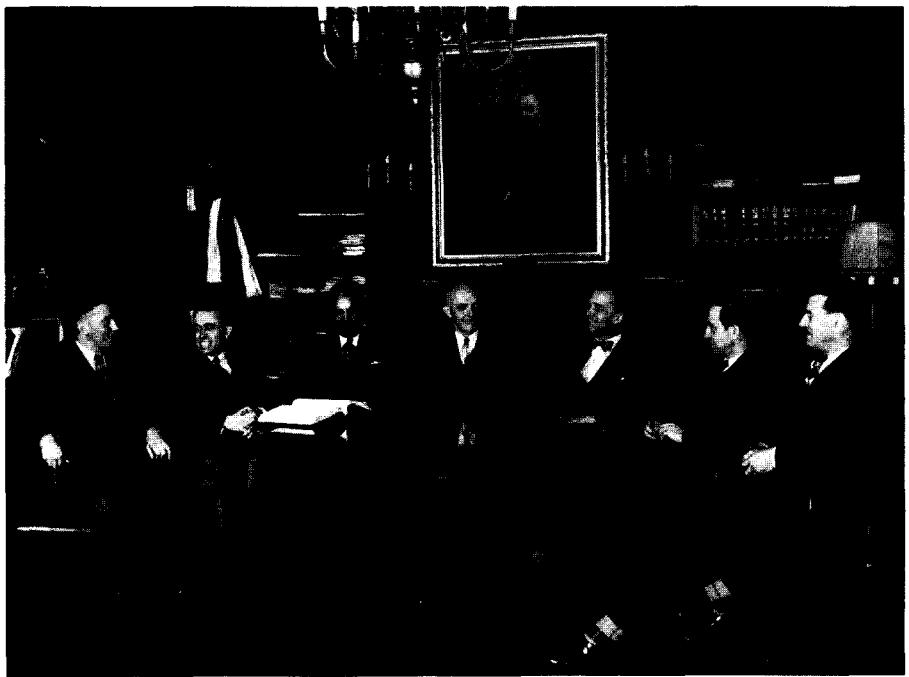
There have been others, too. Above all these, of course, was my own Dad whose consistent example of Christian patient well-doing and humble faith in Christ, both in the home and out of it, whose instruction and counsel, and whose life work so profoundly molded my own life.

Of the many early recollections I

have of him, one of the more vivid is that of my following him across Westminster campus in a deep snow. I vainly tried to place my little feet in the widely-spaced bootprints he had just left behind. It seemed I was following the trail of a giant; and the truth is, I was. My Dad was a giant, and so too were and are these other men who so faithfully gave their whole lives for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Though every Christian minister must experience times of frustration, when he wonders whether he's doing any good at all, whether his life and message are influencing anyone for good, I know for certain that the words and lives of these men were not in vain. To Paul Woolley, John Skilton, Cornelius Van Til, Leslie Sloat, Arthur Kuschke, and Robert Atwell and to others unnamed, I thank you for your testimony through the years. For the memory of Robert Marsden, John Murray, Ned B. Stonehouse, R. B. Kuiper, and my Dad, I thank the Lord.

Dr. Davis A. Young is a professor of geology at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington, N.C. His father, Dr. Edward J. Young, became an instructor at Westminster Theological Seminary soon after its founding and continued as a professor of Old Testament until his death in 1968.



The faculty in 1950; l. to r.: John Skilton, Paul Woolley, Cornelius Van Til, R. B. Kuiper, Ned Stonehouse, John Murray, E. J. Young.

To whom does Palestine belong?

(Continued from page 3.)

condemnation: "[The Jews] killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and have persecuted us; and they please not God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thessalonians 2:15-16).

But has the attitude of the present-day Israeli shown such change that God's favor has been restored to them? Are they as a people and a nation bringing forth the fruits of repentance, faith and obedience that God has always required of his true children?

A religious census of the Israelis revealed that about 13% professed some religious faith. The majority of these would be Reformed Jews who deny the absolute authority and inspiration of the Old Testament. The remainder would have more or less faith in the authority of their Scriptures, but almost all of them reject the New Testament and the Messiahship of Jesus. It is well known that the few Israeli Christians are subject to repression and threats.

There has been no real change in the attitude of the Jews. There is no reason to believe that God has changed and altered his requirements for blessing. It is a truism, based on the uniform teaching of Bible, that God has assured all men who refuse to honor, love and obey the Son that there is judgment and only judgment in store for them. The Bible contains not a single promise that God will reward the unbelieving Israeli by giving him the land of Palestine.

Promise fulfilled in Christ

The promise of the possession of the land of Canaan-Palestine is fulfilled in the inheritance of Christ's universal and eternal kingdom by the true children of Abraham.

One might suppose that the promise of the land to Abraham has been negated because of the sins of Abraham's physical descendants. But such is not the case. No covenant that God ever made has been set aside. "God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew" (Romans 11:2), and neither has any promise made to them failed. God still has his "election of grace" and these inherit the promises.

"They are not all Israel that are of Israel. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh,

these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Romans 9:7-8; see also Romans 2:28-29).

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, . . . for we are all one in Christ Jesus. And if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28-29). "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19; see also Ephesians 3:2-3).

True believers, whether Gentile or Jew, are now the heirs of God's covenant with Abraham without distinction or preference. These show forth in their lives the works of Abraham, "the father of all who believe" (Romans 4:11). Theirs is the promise of an innumerable seed and universal blessing. God blesses those who bless them, and curses those who curse them.

But, has God fulfilled for them the promise of the land? If so, how? Does

The promise of the land is fulfilled in the inheritance of Christ's universal and eternal kingdom by the true children of Abraham.

every believer have title to a piece of Palestinian real estate where he can sit under his own "vine and fig tree" (Micah 4:4) ?

Since we are sharing in Abraham's inheritance, let us see just what we have inherited. It is an amazing fact that Abraham himself never owned any part of the promised land except the burial ground of Machpelah (Genesis 25:7-10). But this does not mean that God's promise to him had failed. "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world [was] through the righteousness of faith" (Romans 4:13).

What? Has Abraham, the heir of Palestine, become the heir of the world? No wonder Peter tells that the prophets "enquired and searched diligently" the things they prophesied concerning the salvation to come in Christ (1 Peter 1:10).

"Eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him" (Isaiah 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9). So Abraham is now the heir of the whole world — and heaven, too!

"By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out unto a place which he should

afterward receive for an inheritance, obeyed, . . . for he looked for a city whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8, 10). "These all died in faith, not receiving the promises, but having seen them afar off. . . . But now they desire a better country, this is, an heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews 11:13-16).

And what city has God prepared for them? Is it a city of stone and cement in the land of Palestine? No such materialistic and worldly promise is made this book addressed to the *Hebrews*: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, . . . to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, . . . and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:22-23).

The blood of Christ is a better sacrifice than the animals of the Old Testament. The new covenant is better than the covenant with Abraham and Moses, for it includes every spiritual blessing they were promised and immeasurably more. The promise of the land of Palestine was only a deposit, a down payment, a sample of the heavenly Canaan and the new Jerusalem, the eternal homeland of God's elect.

In the plan of divine redemption, the land of Palestine was but a temporary means to an eternal end. It was a temporal home for God's ancient people in preparing for the coming of Christ, the great Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16). Through Christ there would be worldwide blessing of salvation.

The Old Testament offices of prophet, priest, and king were preparations and fore-shadowings for the real Prophet, Priest, and King. The ancient animal sacrifices pictured dimly the infinitely greater and only effective sacrifice of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). Israel as a small earthly kingdom was a faint picture of the coming universal and eternal and spiritual kingdom of the Son of David, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. All of these physical previews were encompassed and swallowed up in the ineffable glory of the fulfillment in this present age and in the perfection of eternity. (Compare John 14:2; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21, 22.)

To make these physical pictures of the preparation period into permanent features of Christ's kingdom is to pervert the teaching of Scripture and to corrupt

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the spiritual perfections of that kingdom. It is significant and remarkable that the Jews of Jesus' day expected the Messiah to free them from the domination of foreign powers and to establish an earthly kingdom with Jerusalem as the capital city. And because Jesus did not fit into this expectation, they rejected and crucified him.

The all-inclusiveness of the believers' inheritance in Christ is fully attested in Scripture:

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ" (Romans 8:16-17).

"For all things are yours, whether . . . the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Corinthians 3:21-23).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which . . . hath begotten us again . . . to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-4; see also 1 Timothy 6:17; Revelation 21:7; Psalm 2:7-8; Revelation 11:15).

The heirs of Abraham, participating as joint-heirs with Christ in his kingdom, inherit all things present and heaven to come. What a tragedy that some have

Abraham is now the heir of the whole world—and heaven, too!

confused this magnificent blessing with a small piece of real estate! In doing so, they have like Esau sold their birthright for a mess of pottage.

Many barriers make communication difficult between the Arab Muslims and Christians. Let us not be so foolish that we raise yet another, based on an erroneous and materialistic interpretation of the prophecies of the Bible. Christ's atonement broke down forever every barrier or "wall of partition" that formerly separated Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14-22). No longer is any nation favored above another through physical descent or divine covenant (Acts 10:34-35; Romans 3:29).

The Arab peoples need to know that salvation is offered freely to them through Christ in the message of the gospel. And the Jewish people need to turn from the delusion that any real peace or rest can

be found in an earthly homeland; they too must seek true peace in reconciliation with the covenant God, through the true Jewish Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth and Calvary. May God be pleased to open the eyes of multitudes to see the true spiritual blessings that may be their inheritance:

"As Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness, know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. . . . But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be to all that believe" (Galatians 3:6-9, 22).

Missionary Memorial Fund expanded

For many years friends of Orthodox Presbyterian foreign missions have made gifts for that work, instead of sending flowers to the funeral, in memory of relatives and friends who have died. Now the Committee on Foreign Missions is expanding that fund's usefulness by providing what it believes to be a unique feature: a booklet that is addressed to both believer and unbeliever is sent to the bereaved with the expression of sympathy from the donor. The booklet, entitled "A Look to the Future," was written by the Rev. John P. Galbraith, General Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Galbraith says, "We regard the Missionary Memorial Fund as a service to those interested in our church's ministry to the world. It serves them in at least five ways, as it

1. expresses the donor's sympathy for the bereaved;
2. establishes a memorial to the departed friend or loved one;
3. provides a message of comfort or witness from God's Word to the bereaved;
4. sends the gospel to the nations; and as it
5. is a tax-exempt contribution—unlike a gift of flowers."

Other information about Missionary Memorials, and an envelope form for making Missionary Memorial gifts, may be obtained from the Committee on Foreign Missions, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia, PA 19126.

Here & There

Decatur, Ga.--On February 4, the Rev. Wick Broomall went to be with the Lord. Mr. Broomall, a PCA minister, had over forty years in active ministry and was known for his Bible studies appearing in various periodicals.

Philadelphia, Pa.--Westminster Seminary announces two significant lectures: Dr. Douglas Vickers, professor in the University of Western Australia, will speak on "Economics in Christian Theological Perspective" on April 6 and 8. The James Rustand Lectures, on April 13, will present Harold O. J. Brown, Ph.D., and Everett Koop, M.D., Sc.D., on "Biblical, Medical, and Legal Aspects of the Right to Life." Lectures are held in Van Til Hall on campus.

Hialeah, Fla.--The Sharon O. P. Church has been conducting Spanish services for some time under the leadership of ruling elder John Berrios. The church has arranged to have the Rev. Paul Gilchrist (former RPCES missionary) assist in this growing ministry to the Spanish-speaking community.

Lookout Mtn., Tenn.--Covenant College announces its annual "Yoke Week" for July 3-9. The idea is for friends of the college to come as families, guests of the college, and helping hands for various projects on campus; handyman skills are needed. Schedule includes sightseeing, Bible study, fellowship, as well as work.

Houlton, Me.--This town in northern Maine registered nationwide low temperatures in January (30 or more below zero). On Sunday, January 11, the congregation of Bethel O. P. Church arrived to find its heater with a frozen fuel line. The people repaired to the manse, crowded but with heat, and were reminded anew that Christ's church is not a building by the assembly of God's people for praise and worship.

St. Louis, Mo.--At press time, Dr. Robert G. Rayburn was to enter the hospital for surgery in connection with a serious internal cancer. Dr. Rayburn is president of Covenant Seminary here. Prayer for his health and recovery is requested.

THE WEEK THAT WAS

Philadelphia, Pa.--The week of February 23-27 saw all the major committees of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in town, plus a special Home Missions Seminar. Of special interest:

The Committee on Christian Education appointed the Rev. Allen Curry as Associate General Secretary and so relieved the Rev. Robley Johnston for duties with the (joint OPC-PCA) Great Commission Publications, Inc.

The Committee on Foreign Missions determined to send representatives to confer with its missionaries in war-torn Eritrea. It also rejoiced in sending the Rev. Donald Ritsman who left for Korea on March 1.

The Committee on Home Missions continued to be concerned with a deficit budget situation, but looked to the special seminar as a spur to improvements in outreach and church growth through planned efforts in the various presbyteries.

Oxnard, Cal.--Under the leadership of the Rev. Henry Coray, a group of believers here is looking forward to organization as a regular congregation. Services are held at 1039 S. Ventura Road and attendance averages about thirty.

Westwood, N. J.--The Rev. G. Travers Sloyer, pastor of the Reformed Church of Westwood, died after a short illness on February 2. Mr. Sloyer was formerly a pastor in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Funeral services were conducted by the Rev. Raymond Meiners of Calvary O. P. Church, Schenectady, N.Y.

New Addresses

Rev. Donald M. Poundstone
(from Sewickley, Pa. - OPC)
8820 S. E. Ankeny St.
Portland, OR 97216

Dr. Luder G. Whitlock, Jr. (OPC)
1304 Huntcliff Way
Clinton, MS 39056

Rev. Howard E. Hart (RC, US)
426 Way Avenue
Sutton, NE 68979

Rev. James Perry (RPCES)
(from Indianapolis, Ind.)
2629 Pasea Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80907

Rev. Stephen L. Phillips (OPC)
(from Stratford, N.J.)
42 Beresford Road
Rochester, NY 14610

Rev. A. Boyce Spooner (PCA)
(from Cocoa, Fla. - OPC)
P. O. Box 1139
Waynesville, NC 28786

Rev. Laurie V. Jones (PCA)
(from Montgomery, Ala.)
2110 Gray Falls Dr.
Houston, TX 77042

Rev. Timothy Fortner (PCA)
(from Hazelhurst, Miss.)
1303 Bellemeade
Jacksonville, FL 32211

Rev. W. Benson Male (OPC)
c/o Rev. Labib Kaldas
Evangelical Church Palais
Ramleh, Alexandria, EGYPT

Rev. Kenneth A. Ironside (OPC)
(from Tampa, Fla. - PCA)
117 Railroad Avenue
S. Hamilton, MA 01982

Rev. Frank B. Morse (PCA)
(from Fairfield, Ala.)
Rt. 1, Box 899D
Leeds, AL 35094

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Rev. Robert Grossman (WTS '63)
816-454-1196

RYM Conferences

The Reformed Youth Movement announces its 1976 conference to be held at Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Tenn., June 7-12. Main speakers are the Rev. Al Martin and Dr. Henry Krabben-dam. For further information write: RYM, Box 43347, Birmingham, AL 35243.

Buswell Commemoration

Covenant Theological Seminary is planning a special commemorative issue of its journal, *Presbyterion*, in honor of Dr. J. Oliver Buswell, former professor at the seminary. Former students and colleagues of Dr. Buswell who are serving in ministerial and educational positions are invited to send their names to be included in a congratulatory list in this issue of *Presbyterion*. A fee of \$5 will insure your copy of the issue. Deadline: March 25. Send to J. H. Hall, Covenant Theological Seminary, 12330 Conway Rd., St. Louis, MO 63141.

NPRF regional conference set

St. Louis is the place, March 11-12 are the dates, and the Rev. Joel Nederhood is the speaker for the first of a Bicentennial series of regional conferences on the Reformed faith, sponsored by the National Presbyterian and Reformed Fellowship (NPRF).

Announcement of the St. Louis conference was made by the Rev. Edward Heerema, pastor of the Christian Reformed Church in Bradenton, Florida, and president of NPRF. An adjourned annual meeting of the NPRF corporation will also be held in conjunction with the St. Louis conference.

Additional conferences will be held in Philadelphia, Atlanta, Miami, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The overall Bicentennial theme is "Building Christ's Church in a Changing World."

Among those already committed to participate as leaders in the project are the Rev. Mario DiGangi of Canada, the Rev. Robert G. Rayburn of St. Louis, the Rev. John Sanderson of Lookout Mountain, Tenn., the Rev. Roger Greenway of Grand Rapids, the Rev. John R. de Witt of Jackson, Miss., and others.

Climax of the series will be a Reformation Day Celebration on October 28-29 in Grand Rapids. That program will coincide with annual meetings of the NPRF and also of the newly formed North



Graham talks to student at Grossmont College. Display table is visible behind Ron Dean, also a student at the college who assisted Mr. Graham.

Gospel heard on Campus

"Religious Emphasis Week" at Grossmont College in El Cajon, California, gave opportunity to present the gospel clearly. The Rev. Robert H. Graham, field missionary for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church's Presbytery of Southern California was invited to represent Protestantism in a panel of six religions at the college. Assured of full liberty, he appeared with representatives of Hare Krishna, Islam, Muslim, Roman Catholic, and Judaism on November 18.

Each speaker was given five minutes to present his position; Mr. Graham emphasized the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, noting what Scripture says about man as a hell-deserving sinner, and about Christ as God's only provision for salvation and eternal peace with God.

Most speakers sought to call attention to what we all have in common as "brothers and children of God." A local

newspaper noted also that all speakers had some view of rewards and punishments. Mr. Graham received many questions from the audience, particularly concerning eternal punishment, a real hell, and salvation by grace rather than works. Several evangelicals in the audience expressed their approval of this presentation of historic Protestantism.

On the next day, Mr. Graham was permitted to set up a display table for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church along with some fifty other religious displays in the college court. A selection of Reformed books was on display together with tracts and invitations to the local church services. (Mr. Graham is serving the congregation in nearby Santee.) Mr. Ron Dean, the student moderator of the panel on the previous day, assisted Mr. Graham in distributing invitations and witnessing to many students who stopped to talk.

Prayer for fruit from this unique opportunity to witness to Christ is sought.

American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).

Further information on the Bicentennial conferences may be secured from NPRF, 12330 Conway Road, St. Louis, MO 63141.

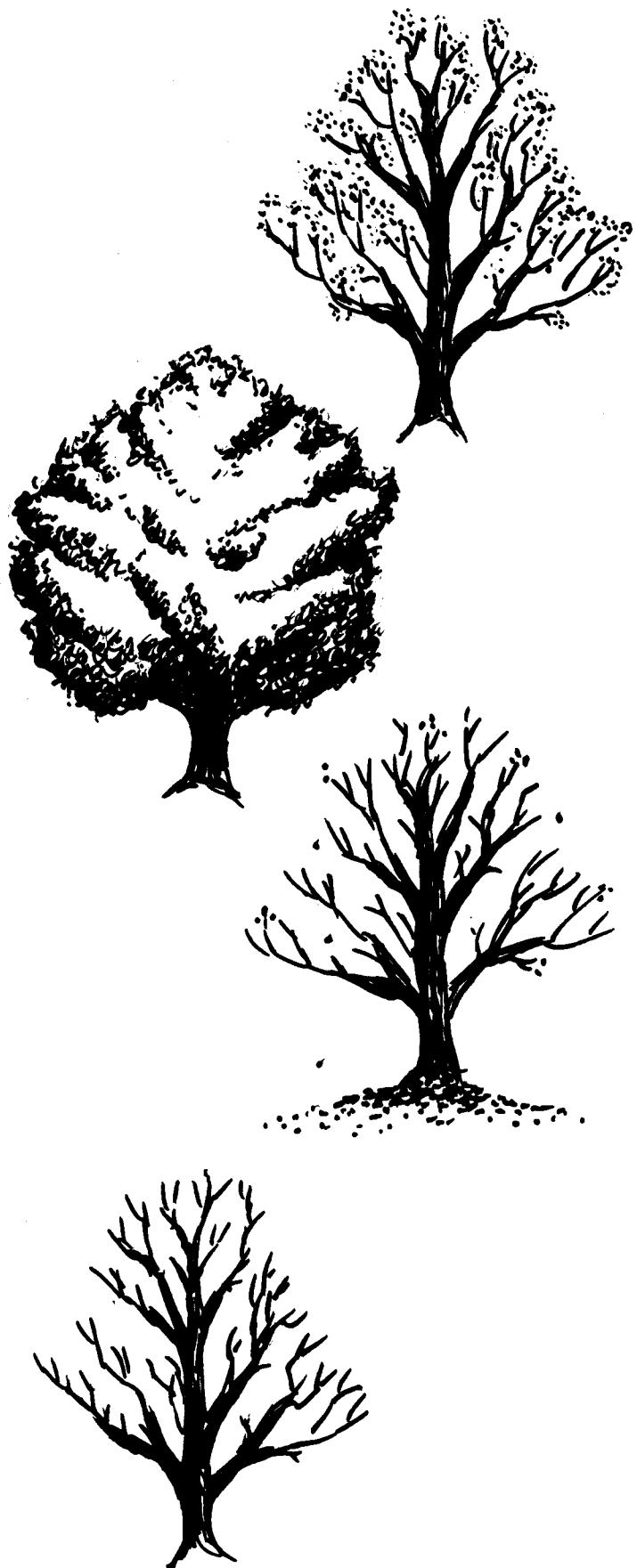
Reformation Translation Fellowship

The Reformation Translation Fellowship exists for the purpose of translation and publication of Christian literature in Chinese. It has recently published such works as Lorraine Boettner's *Predestination*, and a series of studies in Genesis by Dr. Johannes Vos. It also publishes brief articles of special current interest from the pens of such men as J. I. Packer and

John R. W. Stott.

The work is primarily conducted in Taipei, Taiwan, with the Rev. Charles H. Chao serving as Chinese Executive Secretary. Support for the effort comes from various interested groups in the British Isles and America. The organization is non-profit and has tax exempt status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Its doctrinal basis is that of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The Fellowship has been hard pressed financially in recent months, even with a budget of less than \$15,000 for the year. Reformed Christians who wish more information or can make a contribution may write to Mr. R. E. Catloth, P.O. Drawer G, Winchester, KS 66097; a regular newsletter is sent to interested persons.



For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content (Philippians 4:11).

The Maple Tree

O, how I love the maple tree,
When spring comes to the wood,
Filling buckets up with sap
For syrup sweet and good.

O, how I love the maple tree
With summer shade grown wide
And deep for climbing children
And nesting birds to hide.

O, how I love the maple tree
Along the autumn street—
Dropping drifts of drying leaves
To rustle with my feet.

O, how I love the maple tree
Against the winter sky—
Loud with the tap of hungry birds
And the branches' icy sigh.

The maple tree is subjected to intensely different environments—the chill strokes of winter wind, the full heat of summer sun, quick spring thaws, and quicker autumn freeze-ups. Yet in the continual stress of seasons, the maple tree is content. It grows strong and wide until it is a blessing to animals, birds, and people. Though it changes in usefulness and in appearance, one does not tire of its presence.

The Christian also is subjected to many seasons in life. There are times of pleasure and times of trouble, times of rest and times of hard work. Not only does the Christian find seasons in time but in place and in relationships as well. Life is in constant change; yet God wants us to be able to say with the apostle Paul, "I have learned to be content with whatever state I am in." Paul goes on to tell us the secret of that contentment: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (verse 13). Christ is the secret of contentment amidst life's varied seasons.

Lastly, as the maple tree is a blessing, so the one who has the contentment of Jesus Christ within him will be a blessing also. The Christian may not be aware that he is a blessing to others, but this is God's promise, first to Israel long ago and now to us:

I will save you and you shall be a blessing; fear not, but let your hands be strong (Zechariah 8:13).

Ellen Bryan Obed

The Changing Scene

Henry W. Coray

...mighty ship went down

On April 4, 1912, the mighty ocean liner *Titanic* set out on its maiden voyage from Liverpool to New York. So convinced was the captain of its indestructability that he said, "God Himself could never sink this ship." A few nights later the indestructible ship struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic and disappeared in its freezing waters, bearing with it 1502 souls. There were 705 survivors.

It is an interesting commentary on human nature to learn what value people place on material things when crises strike. As word circulated among the *Titanic's* passengers that the vessel would go down, many pushed the panic button and dashed for the lifeboats. Note what articles achieved priorities:

One man left his cabin grasping two gold watches, two diamond rings and a sapphire necklace. Another carried away 200 Swedish gold coins and a musical toy pig. A theological student was seen clasping a Bible. An elderly gentleman appeared on deck with a revolver in one hand and a compass in the other. A lady climbed into one of the lifeboats cradling four oranges. Another abandoned \$11,000 worth of jewelry in her stateroom, then sent her husband back to their cabin for her muff. A tycoon left behind \$200,000 in bonds and \$100,000 in preferred stock, and took with him a good-luck charm and four oranges.

"A man's life consists not in the abundance of things which he possesses," said our Lord. In his excellent book, *To Be Near unto God* (now unfortunately out of print, Abraham Kuyper puts some piercing questions to his readers:

To understand what constitutes riches in God, imagine for a moment that all your earthly riches had taken wings, and that bereft of all you had, you are forgotten by those who once knew you. In this utter forsakenness of soul ask yourself: What have I left? What do I now possess? This will be our state in the hour of death. We will go into eternity alone. What will we take with us? We must leave money and houses behind. We must part even from our body. There will be nothing to us but the soul, our spiritual self. Shall we be rich then? If so, it can only be in spiritual goods. When we die we are either rich in God or poor in God. It will not do, therefore, to defer searching self-examination. When I am alone with my soul, what have I; what is there of me? Does my money impart to me my worth as a man, or am I something myself? Are there treasures stored up in my heart? Apart from all material interests has my personal self any significance worthy of mark in God's sight, or am I actually nothing?

History-shaping forces

Fundamentally, there are three philosophies of history. The first is that natural forces shape human history. Economic conditions, scientific development, evolutionary drives, culture, industry, public opinion add up to influences that determine the actions of men and nations. Arnold Toynbee has illustrated the onward rush of history, parabolically, as he cites a deposit of bones of twenty-one civilizations resting on graduated ledges, and predicts that the twenty-first is on its way out.

H. G. Wells's description is equally vivid: "Ancient kingdoms and dynasties were bubbles that bobbed along the surface showing the swirl of forces below." Again: "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." Not a particularly rosy forecast, you will agree.

The second view posits man as the history maker. "Produce great men, the rest follows," Walt Whitman declared. With this Carlyle agrees: "All things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realization and embodiment of thoughts that dwelt in Great Man sent into the world." This is humanism unashamed, the Great Society in action, six hundred and sixty-six, the number of man. Man is the alpha, omega, the foundation, the superstructure, the ceiling.

The third concept is that all that happens on earth is in reality the unfolding of a divine plan. "History is not self-revelatory," Dr. Van Til reminds his students. To this the Bible bears witness. Paul tells the Ephesians that God works all things according to the counsel of his will. "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."

A Gentile king, Nebuchadnezzar, paid tribute to Deity when he stated that "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35). Over and above all social, industrial, military, cultural movements, ruling and overruling all human councils and plans, a sovereign Lord is directing the course of history from the control tower in heaven. In dark days what a radiant light is this!

Kingdoms and thrones to God belong;
Crown him, ye nations, in your song;
His wondrous names and pow'rs rehearse;
His honors shall enrich your verse.

Hymnody

Our honorable minister sometimes tells us
Something of the background of certain hymns.
Last Sunday he startled the congregation
When, as he announced number 475—
Which is "In the Hour of Trial"—
He told us this hymn was composed
By a certain Mr. Spencer Lane,
While his wife was preparing dinner.

—The Old Chinese Philosopher

Going someplace?

*Don't go without
telling us where!
Four weeks' notice
will keep your
Guardian coming.*



Christian Schools Applicants Sought

The Evangelical Christian Academy of Colorado Springs may have two teaching positions open for the 1976-77 school year. One of these could be that of a combination Teacher-Principal. For an application, please write: Rev. James Perry, Assoc. Pastor, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 2511 N. Logan Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80907.

Covenant Christian School (grades 1-6) of St. Louis, Missouri, will have an opening for a teaching principal for the 1976-77 school year. Present staff consists of certified, experienced teachers. Interested candidates should have teaching experience on the elementary level and show evidence of administrative capabilities. Contract provisions require membership in a church of Reformed faith. Letters of application and resumes should be sent to: The Education Committee, Covenant Christian School, 2143 N. Ballas Rd., St. Louis, MO 63131.

Also, Covenant Christian School's expanding enrollment permits us to invite inquiries regarding positions available for experienced, certified elementary-grade teachers of Reformed persuasion. Letters should include educational background, work experience and current salary. Please reply to The Education Committee at the address given above.

Academic kindergarten teacher wanted by:
Peninsula Christian School
22507 S. Figueroa St.
Carson, CA 90745
(adhering to Westminster Conf. of Faith)

Teachers — Christian Schools

Grades 3-5

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of Western Pennsylvania.

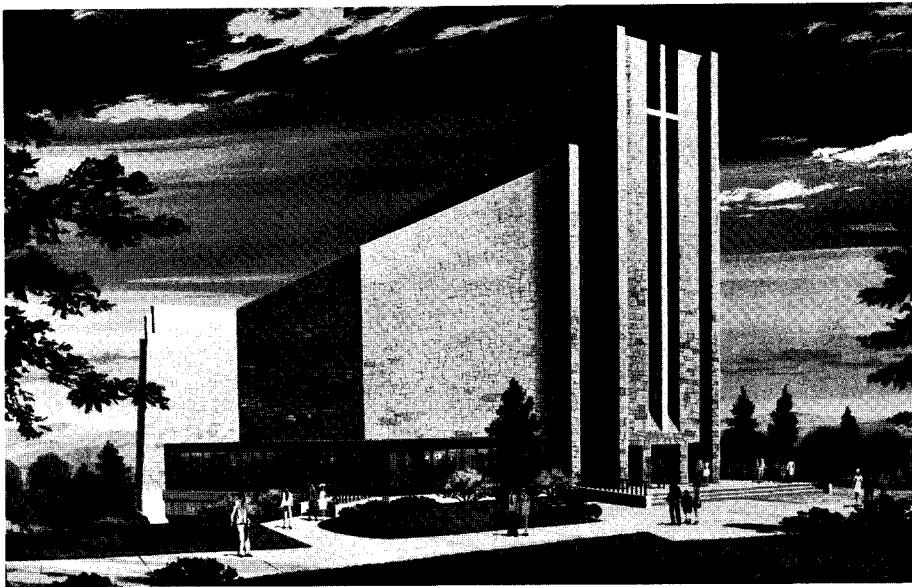
P. O. Box 423

Harrisville, PA 16038

Calvary Christian School

A new school committed to the Reformed faith and scheduled to open next fall, Calvary Christian School needs teachers for grade school and high school, all subjects. Contact:

Samuel van Houte
16575 S. E. Webster Rd.
Portland, OR 97222
(503-659-2782)



Covenant College building new chapel

Groundbreaking for a new chapel-fine arts building on the mountain-top campus of Covenant College took place on December 15, 1975. The building, to be named in memory of Mrs. Dora Maclellan Brown of Chattanooga, is expected to be completed within eighteen months.

The modern, three-story structure will include an 800-seat auditorium, another

150-seat auditorium for classes, a drama workroom and music instrument room, along with seminar room and offices.

The new building is the first step in a five-year plan of development for the college. Since first moving into the original "Castle in the Clouds" Hotel in 1964, the college has added a library, men's residence hall, and physical education center.

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Genesis 2:22

God's Word on TUESDAY

Jill Bjork

The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law (Deuteronomy 29:29).

What does Tuesday morning mean to you? For a group of women I know it means a time to gather together to study the "things which are revealed," the things that belong to us and our children forever.

Tuesday morning is a time to share with each other what God has revealed to us through our personal studies in his Word. It is a time to help each other to understand our relationship to God and God's relationship to us. And this helps us to understand each other.

Tuesday morning is a time to edify, to strengthen, and to grow as God's children. It is a very special time to delight in fellowship through God's Word. "Thy words were found, and I ate them, and thy words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by thy name, O Lord, God of hosts" (Jeremiah 15:16).

Our Bible study was born out of an intense need to understand God's purpose for us. It's not always easy to understand God's Word, especially if you don't know how to study it. Like any type of study, there is a right way and a wrong way. We must learn the right way to study the Bible if we are to receive the full blessing of Scripture. "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

The original motive for beginning our group Bible study was a God-given hunger to understand, along with faith that the Holy Spirit would teach us. "The anointing which you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that any

one should teach you; as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him" (1 John 2:27).

There is no need to fear testing different doctrines against Scripture, for we have his Spirit. "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God" (1 Corinthians 2:12). Proceeding on these two beliefs, we started our study with six ladies.

A good Bible study should encourage better individual study habits. Some guidelines we found helpful are:

1. There are no contradictions, only perfect harmony, in God's Word.
2. Compare all the verses on the same subject.
3. Take a verse in its context.
4. Find the who, when, where, why, and to whom.
5. Check on the history and customs important to understanding.
6. God's purpose for us does not change.
7. The Bible is for today.
8. The Bible is the authority.

Through God's guidance we have grown spiritually. At one point in our history we dropped back to just two people. At that time we did consider discontinuing our studies, but God had other ideas. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

We still found Christian growth and fellowship, even though small in number. God blessed the two of us many times over and we found a joy in his Word that cannot be described. Gradually he sent others who had the same need for his Word. These new sisters also found the joy we had found in God's Word and they grew along with us. We come from different denominations, but all of like faith.

God has worked wonders in our midst and brought a love and understanding to this group that he alone can bring. God's Word is never boring to us, but a joy and delight. Starting your own group may not be easy, but it is so worth the effort.

You too may come to understand what

it means to "hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isaiah 55:2).

Mrs. Bjork is a member of the very young Christ Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Janesville, Wisconsin.

In Christ ELECT

God has given a heritage
to those who fear his Name.
He qualifies me for my share
and holds my portion sure.

In Christ God claims me as his own —
chosen from the beginning,
chosen to be,
chosen to glorify him —
Chosen!

Through Christ's atoning death
my inheritance is effective;
And through his resurrection,
my hope is all secured —
called to an inheritance
indestructible, undefilable,
an eternal inheritance —
Called!

Now I stand as marked —
sealed for God's ownership;
The pledge of my inheritance,
his Spirit, in my heart —
kept by resurrection power,
kept in the hollow of his hand;
kept for praise of his glory —
Kept!

A legacy that none can break!
My life-care contract
stretching across eternity —
signed with his Son's blood;
sealed with the Spirit's mark;
safeguarded by the Father.
So, come Lord Jesus!

—Kathryn Beckham

This poem originally appeared in "Share Time," produced by the Women's Missionary Society of the Garden Grove (Calif.) Orthodox Presbyterian Church of which the author is a member.

At the COFFEEPOT

Juliet W. Griffin

"This is one of the most significant developments at our church in a long time!" So said a member of the congregation of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Westfield, N. J. The interesting thing is that the speaker was a *man*, and he was referring to the coffee hour ministry instituted by the *women* of the church.

Inspired by the enthusiasm of Mrs. Doris Fikkert in describing a program, called "To Tell the Truth," some members of the Women's Missionary Society met to determine the best means of reaching friends and neighbors with the glad news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The biblical principles outlined in Mrs. Fikkert's book, as well as many of her ideas for organization, entered into their deliberations.

A simple format, geared to the size of the church group and deemed to be appropriate for the suburban community of Westfield, was adopted under the name, "Meet Us at the Coffeepot." This involves the holding of meetings once a month, from 10:00 a.m. when coffee is served until 11:15 a.m. The period is divided into three parts: (1) informal conversation over coffee and coffee cake, for 20 minutes; (2) a message, centering on the biblical answer to problems facing women in today's world, for 30 minutes; and (3) a period of discussion of questions relating to the message, for 25 minutes.

The course of study currently being pursued is loosely based on chapters from a book by Gladys Hunt, *Ms Means Myself* (Zondervan, 1972). Each month's message centers about one particular Scripture passage; references are given by page numbers as a courtesy to those who might not be familiar with the Bible's arrangement, and care is taken not to use "ecclesiastical" language with which others may not be conversant.

Eight women take turns sharing the role of speaker. This affords each one ample time to research and prepare a meaningful talk for the month assigned to her, and to formulate relevant questions for subsequent consideration. These eight are also the discussion group leaders.

The room arrangement allows for a smooth transition from one part of the morning's program to another. A reception table at the entrance holds a supply of new name tags, appropriately in the shape of different colored coffeepots. Nearby is a bulletin board on which are pinned the alphabetized tags of those who have attended previously; as these women enter, they find their name tags and then re-pin them to the board as they leave.

The coffee table is at the opposite end of the room. In between are groups of 8 to 10 chairs in semicircles, the open ends facing the speaker's podium. Bibles and paperback copies of the New International Version of the New Testament are on card tables in the center of each cluster of chairs; the tables also provide convenient spots for resting coffee cups.

One discussion leader sits in each semicircle, which later becomes a closed circle as the time for considering the questions arrives. The random placement of chairs helps to break down any feeling of strangeness or formality, and enables the hostesses to circulate freely to greet strangers.

The tendency has been for the women to sit in the same seats each time they come. This has enhanced the freedom within the discussion groups so that there are increasing opportunities for practical help on a personal level. Attendance has ranged from 60 to 85; approximately two-thirds have been from outside the congregation. Most have come as a result of personal contact, although a few have acted on the open invitation given in news releases. Mothers of Vacation Bible School pupils, especially, responded to the initial publicity circulated in the immediate neighborhood of the church. Many women come early to take advantage of the friendly, relaxed atmosphere; few leave at 11:15. There are often small groups still in earnest conversation until well past noon. Even so, the stated closing time is announced for the sake of those

who have other appointments and appreciate being able to leave gracefully.

As implied, the coffee hour program is a cooperative effort on the part of many. One person has charge of the overall arrangements. She relies on the whole-hearted support of those who signed up for specific duties. These include the providing of coffee cake, the serving of coffee, the arranging of chairs, the sending of publicity to local newspapers and radio stations, the making and sorting of name tags, and the distribution of flyers and invitations. Of special note are those who take turns tending the nursery and others who teach Bible stories and songs to the pre-school children; their ministry is every bit as important as that of the speakers or the greeters at the door.

Although it is still too early for a thorough assessment, there have been positive reactions from many quarters. The women involved in carrying on the coffee hour have been drawn closer as they have worked out details and have covenanted to pray earnestly for each month's session. The interest and enthusiasm shown by all who have come have been continuing encouragements.

There are also evidences that some are beginning to recognize Christ's claims on their lives. The discussion group leaders are now attempting to devise an effective follow-up for those who particularly seem to be searching for answers to eternal questions. The women of Grace Church are eager to demonstrate the relevance of the gospel message as they invite others to

"Meet Us at the Coffeepot."

Mrs. Griffin has long been an active leader in the life of Grace Church in Westfield and in reaching out into the community. Though challenged by Mrs. Fikkert's book, the Westfield women devised a program judged to be better suited to their particular community. For a program outline, or for a stimulus to planning one of your own, write for Mrs. Fikkert's book, *To Tell the Truth*; available are a workbook, program manual, and teacher's guide, at \$10.05 from Great Commission Publications, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia, PA 19126; the book is a study of the Gospel of John.

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The Presbyterian Guardian

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We need more FELLOWSHIP

George R. Cottenden

One of the concerns of many Christians in recent years has been to make the church function more the way it did in the days of the apostles. It is obvious from the Book of Acts that the church was a very close-knit fellowship in which they knew what it meant to "bear one another's burdens."

When people look at the church in the twentieth century, they see very little that looks like this. They attend worship services on the Lord's day and note that these are usually rather structured affairs. The suggestion is sometimes made, therefore, that the cure for the lack of interaction between believers is to "loosen up" the worship services. Many churches have tried this. Some innovations have been useful, while others have taken the focus of worship away from God and placed it on man and his needs.

... and the rest of the week?

Something important is being overlooked, however, when greater informality in worship is suggested as the primary means of bringing about a better functioning fellowship of believers. This is the fact that the two hours of activities on the Lord's Day are not all there is to the life of the church. If they were, then the life of the church could not help but be lacking.

Obviously the things we do during those two hours cannot begin to meet all our needs as Christians. And they are not intended to. They do provide occasion

for the whole congregation to join together in adoring God in response to the preaching of his Word. But they need to be judged on how well they enable us to do that, not on how well they meet our total needs as Christians.

Congregations meet many other times during the week, and these other meetings must be considered when we judge the quality of our church life. Bible studies, Sunday school classes, prayer meetings, work days, and even recreation nights, all give us opportunities to share our gifts in more personal ways and in less structured situations. These meetings are not serving their purpose for a large portion of our church fellowship when many members attend nothing but morning worship. The life of the church is going on and they are missing it.

Using the fellowship biblically

Even for those present at all church gatherings there is often not the spiritual benefit we desire. Partly this may be due to our interacting at too superficial a level. We are afraid to discuss our real problems or seek help in finding biblical solutions to them because we are afraid of what others may think of us. There is, of course, the danger of making some people aware of our problems when they are not mature enough to handle that information biblically. But there is also

the pride that keeps us from admitting to our fellow Christians that we have problems and we need their prayer and help in solving them.

To develop genuinely Christian relationships with one another requires that we see much more of each other than many of us do. The opportunities are there. We need to make more and better use of them.

All of this is not to say that we can never make improvements in the structure of our worship services. The New Testament gives us the elements of worship and the principles to govern it; but we are not given a specific order of worship. When changes are made, though, we must respect the nature of the service as worship of the awesome, holy God.

Before we try drastic changes in the way we conduct worship services, in a vain attempt to meet all the needs for fellowship in one or two hours on Sunday, let us begin living out our church life the rest of the week. And let us see if we don't begin looking and acting more like the New Testament church.

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