A Christmas Editorial

The New Bible: Scholarship or Heresy?

The Messianic Builder: A Christmas Meditation

Those Little Mission Chapels

Education: An Answer to the Racial Problem?

Correspondence

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Thought It Not Robbery

I

T appears to become increasingly difficult for a Christian to observe the Christmas season in a way that does some justice to the truths that Special Revelation associates with the incarnation of the Son of God. The totality of the involvement of the historical event that transpired among the hills of Judea defies the grasp of human mentality. That is the reason that if the account of Christ’s birth be accepted at all, it must be accepted as a miracle—indeed, as THE miracle. But we are slow to accept the incomprehensible. Incomprehensibilities are whittled down to our size. In this all-too-common program we are not only abetted but even aided by the commercial world which has a way of capitalizing on Christian celebrations, and even by the humanizing process that takes place in the Christian Church by its Christmas programs and particularly by its literature. We can understand the birth of a babe, a poor babe, in destitute circumstances. That occurs within the area of our own world in perhaps even far worse circumstances than those which obtained in Bethlehem.

This tendency to ignore the essential elements in the birth of Jesus was present in the early Church and was looked upon with alarm by many Christian leaders. The Ebionitic sect denied the divinity of Jesus. Here was modernism in the raw. Here was a tendency to regard Christ as a mere man; and the observance of his birthday stressed just that aspect of the Christ as is being done today. The church fathers having the courage of their conviction decided to do something about it. They simply forbade the commemorative feasts of the birth of Jesus. It may be doubted that they followed the wisest course of action. But it did indicate that they regarded this tendency with a seriousness that we could well emulate. They wanted to save for themselves and their posterity their divine Redeemer, and they regarded no measures too severe when calculated to help them to retain a conception of Christ that was redemptive in character.

There is no record of an observance of Christ’s birthday in Scriptures. But there is an abundance of evidence that the conviction was shared by the early Christians that Christ pre-existed, that the pre-existent Christ came to this world, assumed human nature with all of its limitations and ended his earthly career in a painful, shameful, and humiliating fashion. Indeed, in the section from which the caption of this article is taken (Kenosis passage in Philippians 2:6), Paul is not interested in proving the divinity of Jesus so as to confirm the readers’ faith, or to present the perfection of atonement so as to brighten their hope, or to demonstrate the reality of Christ’s humanity or the verity of his divinity to clarify their conceptions. All that was assumed to have been known by his readers. Paul was not—except incidentally—giving a lesson in theology or polemics. The Apostle was presenting the mind of Christ for purely practical reasons. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” The mind that was urged by Paul was one that looked away from self toward the benefit of others. Incidentally, Paul does cast a most profound light upon the problem of the incarnation, a light that has been turned down, if not entirely smudged out. We know and stress the fact that the Christ is God’s—the Father’s great gift to man so that man through faith in him may have life eternal—but here Paul brings to the fore Christ’s gift of Himself to a sinful humanity. This angle is not stressed when the Babe in the manger constitutes the sum total of our Christmas visions. Babies do not—cannot give their lives. Theirs is not to sacrifice, but to be loved and perhaps pitied.

Paul is urging the Philippians to adopt a mental attitude in the midst of their quarrelings, disputations and dissensions, such as Jesus had. This is therefore a sort of an inquiry into the mind of Jesus. The thinking of Jesus after an anthropomorphic fashion is placed in his pre-existent state. He was in the form of God. A “form” is that which distinguishes a subject from others. It is a mode of revelation. His being in the form of God is to have applicable to Himself all the revelatory aspects of the divine. It is not the divine nature that is stressed, but with a fine delicacy of distinction, it is the divine form that Paul has in mind. Now in the interest of divine truth, he who has the divine form must have the divine nature. This means that since He had the form of God, possessing his attributes, thinking of Himself was on the highest levels. It was divine thinking. No cheap thinking this. The readers were instructed to think as Christ did when he was in the form of God. This instruction certainly calls for no apology and is an appeal to pattern one’s thinking after God’s.

In the perfection of His thinking He did not regard it robbery to be on an equality with God which His divine form indicated. This is perhaps the key-clause in this passage. It gives point to the instruction given to the Philippians and raises the signif-
The clause lends itself to various interpretations and each interpreter is tempted to read his own little theology into it. The readers probably did not have that difficulty, for the development of Christian theological subtleties was still to come. The language was simple and clear to them as teachings of a practical nature are wont to be. The plain, easy, and generally adopted sense is that Christ did not think of his equality with God as possession not His by right. He could have rightfully retained His form of God. He deemed Himself guilty of no usur­pation in possessing the equality with God. He had, as it were, a divine title to it. The magnificence of the incarnation proceeds from this item in the thinking of the Second Person of the Trinity. He surrendered His rights in behalf of the peace of troubled sinners in a peaceless environment.

Paul is not asking the congregation to under­evaluate what they have. That would cheapen the services or values as things that can be or must be gotten rid of. They must have the mind of Christ who regarded His most treasured possession as right­fully His own and yet sacrificed it. This constituted precisely the exemplary lesson that was needed by those who looked “every man on his own things,” and who did this at the cost of congregational peace.

There is a slight difference between being in the form of God and being equal with God. Failure to grasp the exact point Paul had in mind may create concepts at variance with other crystal clear revela­tion through Paul. Equality with God may suggest two co-equal Gods. The idea would have been abhorrent to the mind of the apostle. Equality with God cannot be properly said of Him because He was and is God. As the meaning of “form” suggests, we are not here dealing with essence but with mani­festations. The Christ therefore did not think it illegitimate to be equal with God in the matter of the possession of divine attributes which revealed what He was and is. The godhead is not involved, but the form thereof was.

The relationship between His thinking that His being on the equality with God as an essential right and His emptying Himself is not causal—as if Paul wished to say that because Jesus considered himself on the equality with God He emptied Himself of the form of God. That hardly fits the facts of revelation as we know them. More correct, and yet not exactly the point, some scholars have felt that this is concessive. This idea is expressed by “Even though He regarded His being on an equality with God as right, yet He emptied Himself.” This would weaken the pin-prick of the lesson the Apostle is trying to drive home. In the consciousness of one who did not regard his high estate to be robbery, but right­fully his own, he emptied himself. It is that state of mind in which Christ became incarnated that indicates the greatness of the sacrifice. And it was this mind which was “also in Christ Jesus” that Paul would have the Philippians emulate in the midst of the troubles and divisive congregational life in which they found themselves. It manifested the spirit of helping others, without any depreciation of themselves but in the full realization that as the children of God they occupy the highest station in life. To surrender for the peace of persistent trouble-makers what is not fully and essentially your own is one thing, but to give what you regard to be essentially yours and replace it by deprivation, suffering, and shame is quite another. This was in no ordinary sense a stewardship for which Christ was called upon to give an account. Paul could have appealed to the readers on the ground of their accountability for the possessions that were theirs. They could think of the retaining of their possessions as robbery, a conception to which some of the Old Testament prophets gave utterance when they accused their readers of robbing God. The second person of the Trinity was accountable to no one. He voluntarily entered upon the sacrificial incarnation. It was a matter of His good pleasure. That made the incarn­ation so beautiful and at the same time so exemplary.

It is rare indeed that this lesson is learned by the followers of Christ during their observance of the birth of the Christ child. Paul pointed to the mind of Christ in the incarnation process. He instructed the observers to have the same mind. It is the willing­ness to surrender what you regard to be right­fully yours to bring peace, the peace of Christ, to a troubled world, our present world. Such an ob­servation glorifies the guest of honour on the day set aside for the commemoration of the world-trans­forming event which transpired in a stall where the beasts of the field were wont to be housed.

H. S.
What About the New Bible?  
An Appraisal of the Revised Standard Old Testament

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"BOther, we would like to have you take part in our community 'Bible Observance Day' on September 30. Would you kindly give it some publicity in your church?"

The person addressing me was a member of our local ministers' conference. Because most of the churches in our town are affiliated with the National Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and because I had been reading recently that the Division of Christian Education of that council was about to present its Revised Standard Version of the whole Bible to the public, I immediately surmised what "Bible Observance Day" was for. It was for making propaganda for the new version "in a big way." Would we co-operate? I feared not. We could hardly help sponsor a Bible translation put out by an interdenominational body which we as a denomination had conscientiously refrained from joining for very good reasons. Nevertheless, I was at pains to explain to my fellow minister that my refusal did not mean that I had prejudged the new version. I explained that I felt personally duty-bound to set to work at once upon an objective but critical examination.

Hence this paper. Not only must I know about the new version, I felt, but so must my parishioners know about it. And perhaps many others, joining with me in this examination, would benefit by my findings and I by theirs as together we seek to appraise this new Bible which is certainly one of the most significant publications of modern times. Here follows in writing, then, what I have found.

This present appraisal is to be confined to the Revised Standard Old Testament, since the New Testament has long since appeared (in 1946) and has received a considerable amount of careful scrutiny in various reviews by Reformed and other conservative scholars. Dr. O. T. Allis has probably been the foremost critic of the RSV New Testament from the Reformed position, having written a volume entitled, Revision or New Translation? Dr. Allis is not particularly fond of what he finds. The "Fundamentalists" likewise have been extremely critical of it. For a very recent survey of the case against the RSV New Testament, the reader is referred to Dr. Allis' vigorous article appearing in the Sept. 15, 1952 issue of United Evangelical Action under the title "Evangelicals and 'The New Version.'" The aim of this present examination, then, is to consider the hitherto unpublished part of this new Bible, the Old Testament.

Upon examining the binding and printing of the new Bible, one feels that he has not gotten too bad a bargain for his six dollars. Though it is not the intent of this reviewer to dwell upon such formal features as these, it should be said in appreciation that the printing is in the usual excellent Nelson tradition. The binding, too, is beautiful—perhaps too beautiful for a Bible. Certainly the bright colors of the binding represent a new departure in Bible-publishing. (This refers to the buckram binding, of course, since the expensive leather-bound Bibles are black. Some persons feel that this is a commendable break with the old tradition of binding Bibles in austere colors. A sympathetic reviewer of the blue-bound Revised Standard New Testament once expressed his joy at being able to ride on the subway while reading that New Testament without anybody knowing that he was reading the Bible. It looked just like any other book! The feeling of the present reviewer is that this would all be excellent enough if the Bible were just like any other book. But since the Bible is a writing entirely unique, it seems too bad to depart from the honored tradition of binding it in an entirely unique fashion. Though the binding of this Bible be indeed a trivial thing compared with the character of the contents, it is mentioned here because it would seem to symbolize the entire nature of this new translation. In a sentence, the whole story is this: the new translation does not treat the Bible as the utterly unique product of Divine revelation. But more of that as we proceed.

The most widely-heralded feature of the new Bible has certainly been its modernized style. The posters and the advertisements which we have seen have emphasized that this Bible is to be a readable, understandable Bible. This is the Bible for the modern man, we are told. Now surely, as we read the new Bible, the contrasts to the ancient formulations of the King James Version become apparent enough, and these contrasts are played up largely by the publishers. Yet the RSV does not go so strikingly far beyond the American Standard Version, which many thought to have supplanted the King James, as to allow speaking of the RSV as a radically modernized translation. It all depends upon one's viewpoint, that is, upon which "old" translation one
happens to consider as normative. Nonetheless the RSV does manage to improve upon the ASV in making certain pleasing changes in the elimination of uncouth expressions and archaisms here and there. For instance the expression, “Yea, though I walk,” in Psalm 23:4 becomes “Even though I walk”—perhaps a questionable improvement. “Fourscore and six years’ in Gen. 16:16 becomes “eighty six.” (But note that “thresscore and ten” and “fourscore” are retained in Psalm 90:10, undoubtedly for the sake of poetic style.) Many other examples will be noted by the careful reader.

The most striking stylistic change from both the ASV and the King James is a feature which will impress every reader. The old third-person present verb endings such as “walketh” and “driveth” have been eliminated in favor of their modern equivalents, and the same has been done with the second-person verb endings like “art,” “hast,” “leadest,” “preparedst,” etc. Moreover, the old second-personal pronouns, “thou,” “thee,” “thy,” and “ye” have disappeared, except in direct address to God Himself. Toward all others, men, angels, and Satan himself, the word is “you.” Now certainly this rule of addressing God as “thou” and all other beings as “you” does not run into the immense difficulty in the Old Testament that it meets in the New since in the Old Testament that unique person, that God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, does not appear clearly as such and is not addressed with the second-person pronoun. In the New Testament this version makes a rule of addressing Christ as “you” even in passages where His distinctive Deity is clearly indicated, such as Matt. 14:33, Matt. 16:16, and Acts 9:5. It is Dr. Allis’ opinion that this practice “is definitely Unitarian or Unitarianizing in its tendency and implications.” The translation of the Old Testament obviously presents no such obstacles nor involves such questionable implications, and yet something comparable is the fact that there are passages in which supernatural beings are at least partially recognized as such and are yet addressed as “you.” See, for instance, Gen. 19:19 and Judges 13:15. At least we have some reason to question the entire advisability of this great change when we consider that the language of the Bible herewith loses what would seem to be one of its grandest and most distinctive features. Moreover, the second-person singular and the second-person plural are no longer distinguished as they are in the original languages. This is a loss. The Ten Commandments, for instance, lose much of their distinctive force when they are made to read, “You shall have no other gods before me,” etc. Thus this reviewer is not entirely convinced of the benefit of trying to “modernize” the Bible in this particular feature.

In addition to attempting the modernizing of language, the aim of the RSV translators has been to be more faithful than the ASV had been to the hallowed King James-Tyndale tradition. The preface of the RSV Bible states its complete purpose as follows:

Embody the best results of modern scholarship as to the meaning of the Scriptures, and express this meaning in English diction which is designed for use in public and private worship and preserves those qualities which have given to the King James Version a supreme place in English literature.

The ASV has been criticized on this score. Evidently it has abandoned some of the beauty and charm of the old King James. That beauty and charm the RSV seeks to restore. Whether it entirely succeeds, while still accomplishing its other aims, is a question of style which the literary experts may have to settle. At any rate it can be said here that the RSV with all of its “modernizing” definitely does avoid going in the direction of various other modern translations, such as that of Smith and Goodspeed. It does not radically water down its translation to suit the vocabulary of the modern man-on-the-street, as Smith-Goodspeed does (translating “covenant” by the word “agreement” for instance), nor does it attempt a wide paraphrasing, though there are passages in which an attempt has been made to reproduce biblical idiom in current language, which effort has resulted in a certain amount of damage to a faithful reproduction of the original. Nevertheless, when all has been said, we should recognize with appreciation the remarkable consistency and discernment of the new version’s language.

II

Much more important than a consideration of the format and style of the RSV is a consideration of its translation. Is it a good translation or a poor one? What kind of exegesis have the revisers employed? Are we going to be able to understand the meaning of the original better now than formerly, or not? These are vital questions. First, a word must be said about the committee who have been working on the RSV Old Testament. Weigle was chairman. Others were Bewer, Moffatt, Taylor, Dahl, Irwin, Sperry, Waterman, Burrows, Yates, Albright, Hyatt, May, Mullenburg, Orlinsky, and James. These scholars are from various denominational and theological backgrounds. Certainly no question should be raised as to their scholarly competence. Some are men of truly gigantic stature. The question must be raised, however, concerning their theological standpoint, since in the translation of the Bible, as in every other project, theological bias is likely to manifest itself. Generally speaking, these revisors are liberals of a somewhat conservative type. Some are more and some are less conservative. Wm. F. Albright and James Mullenberg, for instance, are looked upon by fellow liberals as being extremely conservative. Their conservatism has made itself felt in this translation, beyond a doubt. But after this has been said, it must also be said that the liberalism of these men has definitely left its mark in the new Bible also. Upon careful scrutiny a liberal bias becomes apparent. An unquestioning de-
votion to "historical criticism" has left its mark. The view of Scripture which the majority of this committee hold is not a high one. Note the significant sentence appearing in the preface: "It (the Bible) is a record of God's dealing with men, of God's revelation of Himself and His will." Thus the Bible is a record (in some places disfigured and obscure) of God's revelation itself, not in any true sense God's revelation. Such is the view with which the committee for revision has approached the Bible, and such is the view which has definitely left its imprint upon the finished translation.

This liberal bias manifests itself particularly in textual problems, as shall be seen presently. But at this point it is our purpose to obtain a general appraisal of the translation itself. In general, the RSV is an excellent translation, showing much evidence of able scholarship. Not all has been lost in the past seventy-five years. Exegetical progress has been made (over all the wrecks of higher criticism), and particularly there has been advance in lexicography. Thus it would seem strange indeed if such eminent scholars as constitute the revision committee did not succeed in producing in most cases a more exact and discerning translation than has formerly been obtained. Actually, this more exact translation is one of the RSV's greatest accomplishments, much more important in this reviewer's opinion than the comparative conservatism and restraint of the committee—but it should be observed that "my Lord" in Psalm 110:1 (sanctioned by Christ Himself in Matt. 22:43f) becomes an innocuous "my lord" in the RSV. "Virgin" in Isa. 7:14 becomes "young woman," here again contrary to inspired New Testament approval. The text is gratuitously changed in Psalm 2:11 because of an enigmatic messianism so that "Kiss the Son" becomes "kiss his feet." No doubt other instances of theological bias will come to light as the expected further study is given to this new Bible. Features will be noted like the tiny footnote to Gen. 1:1, "Or When God began to create," a marginal reading which is extremely favorable to the history-of-religions school but has little in the biblical text to support it.

One more very important matter of translation must be mentioned at this point. That is the very obvious return from the ASV rendering of the great divine Name Jehovah. The RSV goes back to the traditional rendering, "the LORD." (Many readers will remember that the announcement of this projected change caused a great furor among the Jehovah's Witnesses, who desired to retain "Jehovah" for obvious reasons.) A brief but sufficient account of the checkered history of translating this divine Name is given in the preface of the RSV, and may help various persons gain an understanding of the great problems involved. "Yahweh" is quite likely the actual pronunciation of the Name and the ASV "Jehovah" has come the closest of the standard versions to a faithful reproduction of it. Yet the RSV committee has chosen to reverse the trend toward greater accuracy in favor of popular usage. The people are used to "the LORD" and have never given wide acceptance to "Jehovah" and would likely never tolerate "Yahweh," so the RSV goes back to what the people like. The present writer recalls vividly that one of the members of the revision committee, a professor of Old Testament in a leading American seminary, once said in his hearing that a dominant motive of the committee in returning to the old form was the desire for liturgical usefulness. Undoubtedly the form "the LORD" will be more acceptable than "Jehovah" for liturgical purposes, and yet it seems regrettable that the dilemma had to be
solved in this way. The word “Jehovah” certainly is neither an accurate transliteration of the original Name, nor is it a translation of it; but “the LORD” is even worse in this respect. Is it not lamentable that, while other divine names of Scripture receive accurate translation, the great distinctive proper Name of God is relegated, perhaps now once for all, to obscurity and misunderstanding? This is a question which will not be entirely satisfied, at least for many, by the reasons given in the translators’ preface (p.vii).

III
Now we must go on to consider a matter even more basic than the matter of translation. That is the matter of the text underlying the RSV translation. Something has already been suggested concerning the revisor’s attitude toward the text. Compared with Smith and others, the RSV translators are quite careful with the text, and yet they have taken very objectionable liberties with the original text in sundry subtle ways. Careful observance will reveal that the RSV often favors the textual changes suggested by the third and following editions of Kittel’s Biblia Hebraica, to which emendations strong opposition has upon occasion been voiced by various conservative writers. Kittel’s Hebrew Bible makes the practice of suggesting changes here and there in the Hebrew text to suit its idea of the proper meter; but it must be remembered that the laws of Hebrew meter are not nearly so rigid as some desire to think. This then is the real stone of stumbling for conservatives. They who take a high view of Scripture cannot tolerate the erratic type of textual emendation so often proposed by the Kittel Bible; this same opposition pertains to the Version so largely relying upon it. Indeed, the textual question is the big question for or against the RSV. The common church-member knows nothing about it, of course. He doesn’t probe into textual problems, and the publicity for the RSV has carefully avoided emphasizing it. It is all the more the duty of our theologians and ministers, then, to make up their mind about it.

The RSV does three distinct (but mutually-involved) things in regard to the text which are calculated to raise a few conservative eyebrows: (1) it departs at many point from the vocalization of the Hebrew (Massoretic) Text without notification; (2) it makes a wider use of versional readings in correcting the Hebrew consonants than former standard versions have done; and (3) it often corrects the Hebrew text upon mere conjecture, i.e., without any versional evidence to support it. A word must be said about each of these three procedures.

First, the RSV takes a low view of the Massoretic vocal apparatus (the vowel-points added by rabbis in Medieval times). Of course it is recognized that these vowel-points are not divinely inspired. Yet more and more evidence is tending to show that these vowel-points do in most instances faithfully represent the original, inspired vocalization implied by the consonantal text. Dr. G. Ch. Aalders speaks of a trend back to greater respect for the Massoretic vocalization in his farewell-address at the Free University, printed in pamphlet form as De Huidige Stand der Oud-Testamentische Wetenschap. In this address he mentions various circumstances which prove his point, and, mentioning particularly the newly-discovered Dead Sea scroll of Isaiah, which tends to substantiate the vocalization of the Massoretic Text, he quotes with approval the opinion of the eminent American scholar, Wm. F. Albright (pp. 8f.) Dr. Albright says: “It cannot be insisted too strongly that the Isaiah Scroll proves the great antiquity of the text of the Massoretic Book, warning us against the light-hearted emendation in which we used to indulge.” And yet the revision committee on which Albright himself served has seen fit to treat the Massoretic Text altogether too lightly. Of course, conservative scholars will often agree that changes in the Massoretic vocalization are necessary and justified, but at any rate where the RSV has made changes it would seem that an indication should have been given in the margin.

Wherever changes in the consonants of the Massoretic Text are made, the RSV does give indication of the fact. Compared with the ASV, the RSV makes a great many of such changes. Such changes are made upon the evidence of the various ancient versions which in a particular instance give a reading preferable to that of the Hebrew text. Now, of course, there are passages where the versional reading is definitely to be preferred, but it ought to be remembered that the versions must be used with great caution. They may in some cases represent a more ancient and more reliable text than does the Hebrew, but that is a case to be proven, and wherever the evidence is not all but conclusive, the Hebrew reading must be retained. Curiously, the RSV makes far wider use of versional readings in the prophets and later writings, where the versions (particularly the Septuagint) are least reliable, and comparatively little use of the versions in the Pentateuch, where the versions are most accurate in their translatation.

Far more dubious still is the practice often resorted to by the RSV translators of correcting the Hebrew text, consonants as well as vowels, without any versional evidence whatever. Thus mere conjecture is allowed to supply the basis for this new rendering of the Word of God in various instances. Such corrections are indeed clearly marked in the margin, and yet many a reader will casually pass them by. It is perhaps well that the revisors themselves be allowed to state the purpose of this procedure in their own words. In the preface of the RSV (p.v) they say:

Sometimes it is evident that the text has suffered in transmission, but none of the versions provides a sat-
is satisfactory restoration. Here we can only follow the best judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text.

Now certainly we cannot be absolutely sure in every instance that we have the original text, but then we are at least a great deal safer in sticking to the Hebrew text before us than we would be in following the best judgment of even the most competent of scholars. Certainly this practice of employing pure conjectures concerning the text of the Bible implies a very low view of Scripture, a view entirely in accord with higher criticism and the denial of verbal inspiration. As a feature of a standard version, which is intended for use "in public and private worship," this procedure must be declared to be absolutely inadmissible.

Each reader of the RSV may check for himself how often such conjectural corrections are made. In most cases they are based upon the emendations of the Kittel third edition, as has been previously suggested. Psalm 2: 11 is an instance. In that passage the Hebrew text has been gratuitously corrected without clear versional or other evidence. Gen. 16: 13 is another typical instance. So is II Samuel 6: 7. A glance at the book of Habakkuk shows how extensive this procedure can become. Especially is Hab. 3: 9 a radical restoration of the supposedly original text upon the basis of mere conjecture. Numerous instances similar to these are apparent. We must say that the guesses of men, however clever and however appealing they may in certain instances happen to be, seem very shaky ground for those who are concerned to learn the very words of God!

It will doubtless interest many readers of the RSV to discover what use has been made of the new Dead Sea scrolls. It would seem that the scroll of "The Commentary on Habakkuk" has not influenced the revisors to depart in any instance from their translation. But the Isaiah scroll does obviously underlie various textual emendations in the RSV of Isaiah. The passages showing the influence of the Dead Sea scroll are the following: 3: 24; 14: 4; 14: 30; 21: 8; 23: 2; 33: 8; 45: 2; 45: 8; 49: 24; 51: 19; 56: 12; and 60: 19. In the majority of these instances the reading of the Dead Sea scroll supports an emendation proposed in the Kittel margin. In five of these passages there is no versional support whatever to corroborate the reading of the Dead Sea manuscript. An impartial examination of the evidence involved in each of these twelve passages will show that in only three or four instances the change is really justified, and doubtless even these may be strongly disputed by some. It is important to notice, at any rate, the fact that the RSV translators have used the new manuscript. No doubt it does shed some valuable light on the original text. And yet the many variations in the Dead Sea scroll from the consonantal text of the standard Hebrew Bible tend to raise more problems than they settle, for, although the scroll usually corroborates the vocalization of the Masoretic Text, it often departs from the consonantal system of that text. It must therefore be used with great caution. If it be made to prove a great deal, it may turn out to prove too much.

Thus we have given a not inconsiderable account of the style, the translation, and the text of the Revised Standard Old Testament. Certainly this new version deserves to be appreciated in many of its features. It reveals evidence of a great amount of excellent scholarship. No doubt it will be an invaluable aid to discerning students of God's Word. Therefore without hesitation it ought to be said that we conservatives should procure it and study it and benefit from it. And yet because of many very subtle, but often very serious faults, it cannot be recommended for a place in our church pulpits or at our family altars. The undiscerning commonalty must not innocently grow accustomed to looking upon it as a safe and true representation of the Word of their God.

The preface of the RSV informs us that An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament will soon appear. Eagerly will we examine that pamphlet when it becomes available, that we may learn more about the principles which have guided the revisors in this great project. We await, moreover, the results of broad study of the RSV by others who will undoubtedly bring to light many important facts for our consideration. The present writer trusts, in the meantime, that his appraisal will prove to be of help in stimulating such an earnest examination and discussion.
Christ, the Great Temple-Builder

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A SOLO that was sung at the opening exercises of Calvin Seminary on September 5, 1952, was entitled “Open the gates of the Temple.” Christ is the great temple-builder and is foretold as such in Zechariah 6:9-15 of which a part reads: “make crowns and set them upon the head of Joshua.” The word “crowns” is puzzling. How could more than one crown be placed upon Joshua’s head at the same time? The ancient double crown of Egypt, combining two prior designs into one crown, casts light upon this problem. And a study of the archaeological collections last summer at Ann Arbor, Toronto, and Chicago also casts a light upon it. For the Oriental Institute of Chicago showed a triple crown, a Jewish symbolic crown bearing a triple explanation indicating that it was a crown of the law, a crown of the priesthood, and a crown of the kingship.

All three crowns serve as allusions to the Old Testament prophet, priest, and king. For the Christian these three Israelitish orders point forward to Christ—our great prophet, our only high priest, and our eternal king. And through Christ’s work these orders point forward to the church as a “royal priesthood” (I Peter 2:9) in which our “sons and daughters shall prophesy” (Acts 21:17). In every age the covenant people look to the sons and daughters to maintain and adapt the eternal principles of God amid the rising new and budding age with all its building for the kingdom of God. This also applies in connection with the great prophecy of Zechariah 6 concerning Christ the great temple-builder. Both in modern times and in past centuries, the covenant people of God look toward its young people to carry forward the torch, spreading abroad the light of the eternal principles of God’s Word.

I

Men die, but principles live on. Good principles live on eternally, in spite of sin, by the grace of God. Led by such principles a band of pilgrims, soldiers, and immigrants once wended their way from far-off Babylonia to Jerusalem. There were among them old men and women who had gloried in the temple of Solomon. There were little children who had been born in Babylonia and who could not but wonder at the zeal displayed for the principles and faith of their fathers, as these exiles, soldiers, and immigrants journeyed to Jerusalem. And amid that company was womanhood’s loyalty and “manhood’s brow, serenely high, and the fiery heart of youth.” Why came they thus afar? Was it for gold and silver? Was it for “bright jewels of the mine”? Ah, no. “They sought, what here they found”—freedom to worship God in the beloved holy land of Israel. “They sought a faith’s pure shrine”—they sought the place of worship on the Lord’s chosen holy hill of Zion. They could not forget Jerusalem. Even in exile and in loneliness they lamented of Zion: “if I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning.” They were homesick for the place of worship. And now they had been led thither by Zerrubabel who was of the house and lineage and family of David. And they had been led thither by Joshua, the high priest, serving the exiles and immigrants.

But the temple where high priest Joshua was to minister was gone. The holy and beautiful house where their fathers used to worship had been burned with fire by the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar. And the golden and silver holy vessels of the temple had been carried away, to be profaned in the heathen temple of Nebuchadnezzar’s false gods in Babylon. But Cyrus, king of Persia, had overcome and conquered Babylon. Cyrus had passed a decree confessing that it was the Lord God of heaven who had given him all the kingdoms of the world and who had charged him to build for the God of heaven a house at Jerusalem. Cyrus had, therefore, returned to the Jews the holy golden and silver vessels belonging to the temple of the Lord. These holy golden and silver vessels had been carried back to Jerusalem by the exiles and immigrants. There the foundations of the temple were laid amid songs and the sounds of the trumpets. The old men wept and lamented, because the house was not to be as beautiful and wonderful as Solomon’s temple. But the young people rejoiced so much that the sound of weeping was not heard.

Somewhat later the rebuilding of the temple was stopped, before the roof was on. There were trials and tribulations, hardships and opposition. But the Lord sent his prophets to encourage the people to continue the building of the temple. He sent an old prophet, Haggai, and a young prophet, Zechariah. The old prophet, Haggai, reminded them that they lived in houses with roofs and ceilings, but that the Lord’s temple did not even have a roof. And so Haggai said: Consider now your ways, and build the Lord’s house and the Lord will bless you. Soon after Haggai, the old prophet, began to prophecy, the word of the Lord also came to a young man, Zechariah.
The temple will surely be rebuilt for the true worship. It will be rebuilt not by human power, or human might, primarily. It will be rebuilt not even, primarily, by the power or might of Zerubbabel, the royal prince of the kingly house of David. For the temple will be rebuilt by the Spirit of God. And the earthly prophets, priests, and kings of that day and age all pointed forward to Christ, the great anointed prophet, priest, and king of all time and of all eternity, the true Messiah who was to come. For the ancient Hebrew prophets, priests, and kings were types of Christ, the future Messiah, and they were symbols and representatives of Christ for their own day and age. Through them Christ worked in Old Testament times.

But Christ Himself also worked even in the Old Testament days as the second person of the Trinity. For Christ is the Son of God from eternity to eternity. He worked with the Father and the Holy Spirit even in Old Testament times for the welfare and salvation of the covenant people. As the Son of God and as the divine Angel of Jehovah he labored for the benefit of the believers. But also today in New Testament times, Christ works both directly and through the believers. These believers are also anointed with the Holy Spirit to be prophets, priests, and kings of the Most High God. The believers are anointed with the Spirit to labor for the upbuilding of the spiritual temple of God which is the church of our day and age.

But primarily Christ Himself was anointed with the Holy Spirit for this work of building both His earthly temple in the Old Testament age, and for building his spiritual temple, the church, until the end of time. And so for all ages, of both the Old Testament and the New, we may honor Christ the great temple-builder and adore and worship Him, as such. May the Holy Spirit enable us to do so, in the right attitude of heart and mind, an attitude of worship for the true Messiah. Let us consider together: Christ, the Great Temple Builder. We may ask these four questions: Who will build the temple? Through what offices? According to what plan? And with what laborers?

Zechariah 6:9-15 has an answer to these questions. When this passage shows us the Messianic Builder of the Temple it points us to the Davidic Branch which will surely build it; the anointive offices that will guarantee its completion; the peaceful plan that will unite this great work of the Messiah; and the many from afar that will be co-laborers with the Lord.

II

Who will build the temple? Our text points us to the Branch of the house and dynasty and family of David who will surely build it, namely, Jesus Christ Himself. He is our Mediator of our salvation who is to be crowned with many crowns. He is to be not only the real builder of the Old Testament temple. But He is especially to be the real builder of the spiritual temple, the kingdom of God, and raise it to victorious power over all the kingdoms of the world. This great King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ, is foreshadowed and represented by the symbolism of the crowning of Joshua, the high priest, and by a direct message and prophecy from God. This symbolic crowning of Joshua, the high priest, had a purpose. It purposed the strengthening and comforting of the people of God in the work which they were performing for the Lord. It is also within the scope of our text to strengthen us today in our work for the Lord who is our crowned Savior and to strengthen us in our service for the church of God.

Our crowned Savior is here symbolized and typified and represented by the high priest, Joshua, wearing a royal crown for a brief space of time. Joshua appears with the royal crown, not in a vision but in a symbolical action. For Zechariah, the young prophet, was commanded to crown Joshua, the high priest. Before this time the young prophet Zechariah had seen Joshua, the high priest, in a vision—in chapter three. There Joshua's filthy garments had been exchanged for clean white apparel and a fair mitre on his head; and he is described as a brand of wood plucked out of the fire. Joshua was one of the elect of God, saved from the wrath of God, saved unto eternal life through Jesus Christ, the Angel of Jehovah who caused his iniquity to pass from him, because Christ Himself would remove the iniquity of the land in the one great day of Calvary. And now at the time of our text, the young prophet Zechariah has received instruction from the Lord to be carried out in the symbolical act of crowning Joshua, the high priest, who was a type of the coming crowned Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

The occasion and the circumstances of this symbolical crowning of Joshua are easily seen in chapter six. For a group of several men had arrived at Jerusalem with an offering of gold and silver for the building of the temple. They had come from Babylon, a month's journey away. Babylon was the capital city of Babylonia which had carried Judah and Jerusalem into captivity. Babylon was the home
of many Jews who had not yet returned to Jeru-

selem. From Babylon had now come several men
whose names are mentioned because they had
brought the offering of gold and silver from far-off
Babylonia. They came to Jerusalem, undergoing all
the many risks that such a great and perilous journey
involved. It was to these pilgrims, from a long and
hard and hazardous trip, that Zechariah, the young
prophet, was directed by the Lord to go. They and
their offering were to be used for more than they
had even intended. For Zechariah the prophet was
to accept the gold and silver that they had brought.
He had to receive this offering in the name of the
Lord. He had to see to it that crowns were made of
this silver and gold, and then this young prophet had
to place crowns on the head of Joshua, the high
priest, for a short time during this worshipful ser-
vice when the young prophet was going to preach his
sermon.

But the worship and the honor and the service
were not to be given to Joshua—they were not to
be dedicated to Joshua, the high priest. For they
belonged to none other than to Jesus Christ who was
to be crowned with many crowns as the King of
kings and Lord of lords, to the glory of God the
Father. Here Christ as our priestly king is directly
announced by a prophecy of God. He is announced
as the man whose name is the Branch. He would
be a Branch of the royal house of David. Jeremiah
the prophet had foretold that God would raise to
David a righteous Branch, a Branch of righteous-
ness. Isaiah looks upon Him as a Branch, fruitful
and glorious and beautiful. Christ would be more
than an ordinary branch of the house of David. He
would be the Branch, the great and promised Son of
David who would sit upon the throne of David
eternally.

This Branch would grow up out of his place. He
would be a Branch of the tree of David's house. That
glorious tree would be, as it were, cut off, but Christ,
the great Son of David, would be as a Branch out of
a root in a dry ground. His growing would mean
increase for Him. He would grow up into a tall and
massive tree with many branches. He would be-
come a life-giving tree. Of Him, we are the
branches. He gives growth, strength, nourishment,
spiritual stature, and power. The same life-giving
Spirit who dwells in Him, dwells also in us. He
would grow and cause His kingdom to grow. He
would increase and cause His church to increase.
He would build the temple of the Lord. There are
three sons of David that have built temples. Solomon
built a glorious temple at Jerusalem. Zerrubabal
after the exile had laid the foundations of this house
and his hands would also finish this second temple.
But Jesus Christ, the great Son of David, would have
infinitely far more significance as the great temple-
builder, because He is both God and man. He re-

presents the sure mercies of David. The promise to

David is sure and unconditional. David would sure-
ly have a Son to sit on his throne eternally. Christ
sits at the right hand of the Father on the throne of
His glory. He will build His spiritual temple until
the end of time. He is the real builder of His church,
and He receives all honor and majesty, power and
domination, to gather and to edify and to complete His
church, the spiritual temple of God. He shall bear
the glory and the honor. May we also be able to
say even now in this life, "Lord, I have loved the
habitation of thy house and the place where thine
honor dwelleth." And in this way we may also ex-
perience unto all eternity the great promise that
"the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light,
and thy God thy glory." In Christ we may glory
even now, for He is the great temple-builder, the
builder of His church.

III

Through what offices will He build His temple?
Our text points us to the anointive offices that will
guarantee its completion. He, the true Messiah, will
be anointed as prophet, priest, and king; and our
text stresses two of these three offices in particular—
Christ's offices as priest and as king. He would be
a priest upon His throne. And He would rule as
king upon His throne.

The crowns had been put upon the head of Joshua,
the high-priest, and not upon the head of Jerrubabel,
the prince of the house of David, in order to show
that the action had religious meaning. But it did
not intend to make a king out of Zerrubabel, the
 prince of the house of David. Yet both men were
types of Christ. The religious meaning of the action
pointed forward to the Messiah, the Christ, the
guarantor, who would guarantee and make sure the
completion of his temple. How would He guarantee
that wonderful result? He would do so especially
through his offices of priest and king which are in-
dicated in our text to that end.

The great promised Son of David, Jesus Christ,
would be anointed with the Holy Spirit as our pro-
phet, priest, and king. More particularly, He would be
our Messianic, Davidic king. That a Branch, a descen-
dent, of the anointed king David would be the eternal
king was in harmony with the promise of God to
David. But that a Branch of the line of David, a
descendent of the house of David, would also be a
priest—how strange that would be! How can that be?
For the priests were of the tribe of Levi, but David
was of the tribe of Judah. What a strange, mysteri-
ous priest this anointed Branch of the house of
David and of the tribe of Judah would be! For the
law had provided the covenant people with other
priests. For the high-priest, Joshua, was a descend-
ant of the anointed high-priest, Aaron, and of the
tribe of Levi. This high-priest, Joshua, and his
fellow-priests are described in this book of Zechariah
(chapter three) as men of a sign, men that are a
sign. Thus they pointed forward to the future
Messiah, the anointed one. Joshua and his fellow-priests are signs of the future Savior. They are types of the Christ to come.

And the ground and reason is given why Joshua and his fellow-priests are men of a sign, typical men. For there is coming the Savior who is then described by Jehovah as His servant, the Branch. Such a prophesied one will come as the future Messiah. Such a predicted one will come as the great High Priest. Thus Joshua, the high priest, and his fellow-priests are types and signs of the one to come, who had been predicted and foretold as the Servant of Jehovah, and as the Branch. For both of the names, Servant of Jehovah, and Branch, are descriptions of Christ in earlier prophecy. For the great prophet Isaiah had pointed to the future Messiah as Servant of Jehovah, a suffering servant, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. This man of sorrows would pour out his soul unto death, as an offering for sin. Yet He would prolong His days. Christ prolonged his days and appeared unto His disciples after his death and resurrection and before He ascended unto heaven. There Christ is now our advocate with the Father. The risen Christ now blesses His church, His spiritual temple, and protects it. He will carry the church to full completion when He finally brings it to glory from the throne of His glory. He does this as the predicted priest from the dynasty of David. Now Isaiah had announced this coming one not only as Servant of the Lord but also as a shoot, a Branch, growing up from a root in a dry ground. Isaiah had also predicted the coming Messiah to be a shoot, a Branch, from the stock of Jesse, from Jesse who was the father of David. Isaiah had foretold this leader, this witness, to be the fulfillment of the promised sure mercies of David. He would be the fulfillment of God's great promise to David that one of David's sons would surely sit on his throne, eternally, to benefit His people.

And so Isaiah had predicted this Branch of the house of David. Isaiah had foretold the Davidic ancestry of this Servant of Jehovah who would be smitten for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and who would perform the priestly work of yielding his soul an offering for sin. Our prophet, Zechariah, also predicts the Messiah as a Davidic servant, the Branch, and as priest, and hence, as a priest from the tribe of Judah. It is true that there would be those that would reject Jesus Christ as priest, because He would be of the tribe of Judah. Even so today there are those that sneeringly reject Him as "Judah's priest." And similarly Christ would be the Stone rejected indeed of men but chosen of God and precious. The Lord in other books of the Bible had spoken of the future Messiah as His servant, the Branch, the stone, a prophet, a priest, and a king. With similar names Zechariah shows what kind of a Messiah would come. But Zechariah emphasizes the important fact that the Messiah would be a royal priest, even a Davidic royal priest.

The Lord calls us unto this Christ, our priest and our king, in one and the same person. For to this priest-king, to Jesus Christ, is given eternal glory. For to Him Jehovah says, "Thou art priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." Our permanent High Priest is He, unchangeable and eternal. For Melchizedek represents the unchangeableness and, therefore, the eternity of Christ's priesthood. Melchizedek is one of the greatest types of Christ. Melchizedek was a priest for sin. So is Christ. Melchizedek was priest as well as king. So is Christ. Melchizedek's priesthood appears in the Scriptures without changing from father to son, while Aaron's priesthood did change from father to son. And so Melchizedek's priesthood signified and typified the unchanging character of the priesthood of Christ, whose priesthood is eternal. Christ ever liveth to pray, to intercede, for us. He is our eternal advocate with the Father. He is our eternal and merciful High Priest. And thus He mercifully gives an eternal glory to His Church. This spiritual temple of God will last forever. We owe eternal gratitude to God for the privilege of belonging to this spiritual temple, to the church of God. Christ, the greatest Son of David, builds the greatest temple of all, the temple of the Holy Spirit of all times and places. And yet to build it "He humbled Himself and took upon Himself the form of a servant and died the death of the cross, wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him." He had been predicted as the righteous servant that would justify many, for He would bear their iniquities. And now in glory He rules and protects, He develops and perfects, His spiritual temple, His church. He is our priest-king. He is the object of our love, our obedience, our adoration.

IV

According to what plan will Christ build the temple? What is the plan that will unite the great work of the building of the church? What is the plan that will unify the development of the covenant people? It is a plan of peace and harmony and unity. It is a counsel of peace. Every building needs a plan. The temple does too. The church needs a plan. It has a plan to which Christ has given thought and counsel. This is a plan of peace and unity, a plan of fittingness and harmony. There is harmony and unity in all the parts of the work of Christ.

Christ carries out a plan that unifies all his activities. Although the Old Testament priests brought many sacrifices at the altar, Christ, our Great High Priest, brings so great a sacrifice that it needs to be brought only once. His sacrifice is final. His sacrifice is once, for always. And after that he sits down at the right hand of God, the Father. He sits down on His throne. It was not in harmony with the usual priestly tasks of the priesthood that the High Priest should serve at the altar in a sitting posture, in a sitting attitude. For the High Priest stood, he stood at the altar, when he brought the sacrifices. He had
to bring many sacrifices. For no animal sacrifice was sufficient. Hence, every sacrifice that the earthly High Priest brought had to be followed by other sacrifices. It therefore did not seem proper for the earthly High Priest to sit at his sacrificial work. He stood. Yet here in our text we have the coming Savior sitting, for we are told that the coming Messiah, the Christ shall sit and rule upon His throne, and He shall be a priest upon His throne. How can that be? This feature is not in harmony with the custom of the Old Testament high priest who stood when he brought his sacrifices. And the earthly high priest had no throne on which to sit. But the Lord’s plan will bring harmony out of such apparently discordant features.

Thus a plan of unity will unite and unify the activities of Christ as priest and as king. The counsel of peace shall be between them both. Christ has devised a unified plan in His character as priest and in His character as king. Thus, salvation will be secured for the people of God, in principle now, and fully, in eternity. Christ’s plan has unity; it is a counsel of peace and unity between Christ’s activities as priest and His activities as king. What Christ earns for us as priest, he gives us as king. As priest He makes atonement for sin; as king He enables us to conquer sin. As priest Christ purchases redemption; as king He applies it to our hearts through the operation of the Holy Spirit. For Jesus Christ does not work alone. He works in connection with the Father and the Holy Spirit. What is the task of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in making and in carrying out the plan for the building of the spiritual temple of God? What is the task of each person of the Trinity in making the counsel of peace and of unity between Christ’s activities, and in carrying out the plan for this great work? Jehovah Himself appoints and sends Christ who is the Angel of Jehovah for His task and for His mission. Christ, the Messiah, is anointed for that task. Christ, the Angel of Jehovah, accepts the great task of removing iniquity, in one day, and of dying on the cross of Calvary, in one day, that is to come. Thus Christ Jesus causes the iniquity of the true and penitent worshippers of the Lord to pass from them. Christ can say to us as He said to Joshua: I have caused thy iniquity to pass from thee. Thus, it is through Christ’s priestly and royal offices that God blesses His covenant people for time and for eternity. This should lead to gratitude on our part. For the joy of the Lord is our strength.

And when the covenant-people work at the building of the temple and at the extension of the church, it is not by human power nor by human might but by the Holy Spirit that the temple is completed and that the church, the covenant-people, is sanctified and glorified. There may be mountains of difficulties, but they shall become a plain. All that and much more is contained in the eternal counsel and plan of God, and all that will be carried out according to His divine counsel, and according to His sovereign good-pleasure. And according to this basic plan of God, the Messiah, the Christ, the great Anointed One, will carry out the royal work and the priestly task, and these two kinds of activities, working harmoniously together, will finally bring the spiritual temple, the church, to completion and to glory. The house of your hope for all eternity rests upon all these activities of Christ, upon His priestly and His royal work.

The basic attitudes of our hearts and of our minds, in which Christ is willing to see us come unto Him, are the attitude of penitence in connection with Christ’s priestly work, and of loyalty of service in connection with Christ’s kingly tasks. Let us cultivate both penitence and loyalty. Christ as our great High Priest takes our sins upon Him and carries them away on the cross. Christ as king protects us by His might. As priest Christ saves His people from their sins. As king He promotes and completes the development of the church, the spiritual temple of God, for time and for eternity.

Finally, with what laborers will Christ build the temple? There are many that will be co-laborers with the Lord in this work—not only those near, but also those afar in many lands. For the prophet says, “They that are far off shall come and build, in the temple of Jehovah.” The services and gifts brought by these few men from far-away Babylon served as examples for others to follow. As these few men had come so others, both Jews and Gentiles, will come and build in the Kingdom of God. They will have the spirit of Nehemiah who said, “The God of heaven, He will prosper us; therefore, we His servants will arise and build.” The Messiah raises His believers to the honor that they are co-laborers with Him in the Kingdom of all ages, in Christ’s kingdom of truth that abideth forever. He was crucified for our sakes and therefore He is now the enthroned Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father. This crucified and risen Savior was preached to Jews and Gentiles on that first great missionary Day of Pentecost. Then Peter spoke of the Messiah sitting on the throne of David when he told his hearers that Jesus Christ had gone to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father.

God’s Word will be preached to all nations, and God’s work of salvation will be completed in His elect people. Two great themes of the Word of God are Christ, the great Savior, and man, the great sinner. And one test of our piety is the fervency of our
missionary spirit. The great Sender is Jehovah of hosts—ruling the hosts of His covenant people and of the angels, even the host of the stars, for He is the all-powerful God. This almighty God is the sender. He sent the interpreting angel to the prophet Zechariah to explain the messages. But He also sent, especially, the Angel of the Lord, the Son of God, who said to Joshua the high priest, “I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee.” For the Lord of hosts has sent Christ in order that we might cling to Him, and in order that He might fulfill some of His great promises through our work. Christ is the greatest missionary of all, with the greatest mission of all.

But the Lord of hosts also sends prophets, priests, and kings, apostles, pastors and teachers, elders, and deacons with their messages and their services. The Lord is also sending men into the gospel ministry at home and abroad, through His church. And so, the Lord sends the good news far and wide saying, “Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” Church-work and missionary-work is really successful. It prospers. This makes us see and recognize that God is the Sender of His servants. The Lord’s work prospers particularly well, if God’s covenant people diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord. Hearing, we should hear, and thus we should obey and hearken and listen diligently.

Some people are diligent without hearkening. Others hearken without being diligent. Still others hearken more to man than to the Lord. We are here warned to hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord our God. The warning and condition is added in our text not for the sake of the Messianic kingdom which was sure, according to the sure mercies of David, but for the sake of the individual hearers that they may each diligently hearken, and for the entire congregation that they might all hearken diligently. When we are diligent in hearkening to the Lord and to those whom the Lord sends to us, then also our offerings and our efforts will be used by the Lord so that some other persons, far or near, may come and build in the temple of the Lord and work in His kingdom. This is an encouragement. But a warning is also given, in the next chapter of the book of Zechariah, to those that refuse to hear and to hearken, and to listen and to obey. Of them we read as follows: “But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they might not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which Jehovah of hosts had sent, by His Spirit, by the former prophets; therefore there came great wrath from Jehovah of Hosts.”

This written word, this recorded revelation, is the subject of this great wrath from Jehovah of hosts for those that refused to hearken to it. Let us all hearken unto it. Let us each individually hearken unto it. Then according to the promise of our text, our humble efforts will also serve to lead others, whether far or near, to become co-laborers in the Church of the Lord. Then we, too, shall be used to help others to build in the spiritual temple of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Neighborhood Missions: Erroneous Method**

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**EVER since 1920 I have been in rather close touch with what we call today “neighborhood missions.”** The morning after my first sermon in my second congregation the older minister who had installed me called to secure my co-operation in launching the Hammond City Mission. He had the lay-worker ready, and all I had to do was to fall in line. So I did; and those who remember my ministry during six years at Munster, Indiana, will bear witness that I supported that mission loyally.

When I was at Twelfth Street, Grand Rapids, members of the Neland Avenue Church tried to sell me on the idea that the Comstock Park Mission was too far removed from their church and that a West Side congregation ought to take over that field. The mission, I was informed, was “in poor shape,” and needed diligent workers who lived more closely to the scene of action. The Twelfth Street Church did take over, and after some time I sacrificed one of my most capable and energetic elders to the work at Comstock Park. He became entirely wrapped up in the work at Comstock Park and later left that mission for Denver.

In my present field of labor I found the West Jasper Mission with its “Back to God” Chapel, supported by the then existing Alberta churches to the tune of eight dollars annually per family—more than our entire Calvin College and Seminary per capita quota at the time, and almost as much as our synodical quotas for all foreign missions.

At the time when my zealous predecessor at Edmonton organized the West Jasper Mission there
was room for such evangelistic work, because that entire suburb was without evangelical preaching. Today that fast growing community has four organized churches, two of which are evangelical ("fundamentalist") in type, which two work among our prospects or converts and try to "cash in on" our labors by inducing them to join their churches upon an easier confession of faith than our church knows of.

Meanwhile our second evangelist has asked to be dismissed because he has felt the call to go through Calvin College and Seminary to equip himself as an ordained foreign missionary. The Board thereupon has decided that in view of the strong present-day competition in that field, the distance of the chapel from our three churches, and the enormous sums of money needed to build several churches in Alberta, and parsonages, and perhaps an eight-room school in Edmonton alone, it would be better to abandon this field for the time being. The chapel has been rented to "The Church of God" and the house to one of our immigrant families.

I am now for the first time at liberty to voice my convictions, which have ripened over a period of many years, concerning "neighborhood missions." My conviction is, in brief, that we are on the wrong track and must retrace our steps or at any rate should refrain from organizing any more of such missions with the necessary buildings.

Neither the Hammond City Mission nor the Comstock Park Mission nor the West Jasper Mission have ever to my knowledge added one member to the supporting churches. Of the majority of neighborhood missions in Grand Rapids the same, or almost the same, holds true. The number of additions to our Christian Reformed Church from these missions is on the whole pitifully small. The converts remain from year to year "with the mission" and in some cases are received as members of some Christian Reformed Church with the understanding that they must come to church when the sacrament is administered, but otherwise are at liberty to continue worshipping in the Mission. This is very strange procedure, to say the least. Nor is this by any means all that is to be said.

The services in these Missions and their Sunday Schools are generally held during the hours of worship in the sponsoring churches, and the latter are continually drained of a number of their most promising young members who are teaching Sunday School when they, as well as other members, ought to be present at their pastor's preaching on the Heidelberg Catechism or at the evening worship.

In addition to this, our church bulletins continually mention the names of two or three families who are requested to "skip" services in their own church and attend worship in the Missions. This has a twofold aim: first to arouse and prove interest in mission work within the congregation; secondly, to drum up an audience so that the evangelist and the few stray "mission subjects" may not grow discouraged because of the impression that "there are no people here." Besides this the missionary generally enlists "on the sly" a few solo singers or quartets from the churches to add more lustre to the day.

Among the families that are thus officially requested to leave their own churches, we find four types: Some are more than willing to go even when it is not their turn, because they feel more at home with the beginners' "milk" that is served in the missions. ("Why don't our own minister preach that way instead of giving all that heavy stuff?"). Others resent being told to miss the continuity of some series of sermons and refuse to go. A third group deems the note in the bulletin a welcome opportunity to remain at home "since no one will know where we are anyhow." A fourth group goes when they see their names in the bulletin.

Apart from these practical difficulties, we are in this way gradually organizing and approving of two sets of Christian Reformed worship services, one in the church proper, and one segregated from the official church, with a lighter type of service—in some cases even with with their own, not synodically approved, hymnals of a less Reformed type.

And all this goes on under the specious excuse that "these people do not feel at home in our churches"—from which we have diligently kept them at a safe distance!—"do not fit in with our own people," presumably because they cannot boast "Neerlands bloed, van vreemde smetten vrij." (Shades of the Pilgrim Fathers and Puritans of the original Thirteen American Colonies!) And all that at a tremendous outlay of capital: the Comstock Park Mission has recently erected a $20,000 new building to keep its "mission subjects" segregated from the west side churches in Grand Rapids.

It is doubtful if there exists any other denomination that works in the above described manner. That in itself may well cause us to stop, look, and listen. Does wisdom indeed die with our gradually developed method? The question will not down. What is wrong? Have not our churches—at any rate those in our larger centers such as Grand Rapids, Chicago, Paterson and Lynden—Americanized to such an extent that we may be able to feel at home with people of Reformed persuasions of various nationalities? Is our Reformed conception of the truth isolationist? Was Calvin the type of Frenchman who could work with the French only? Or did he plant his purely evangelical brand of Christianity in more lands than did the Lutherans with their Germanic type of religion? There is a flagrant contradiction between the oft repeated slogan that "Calvinism is evangelicalism at its purest and best," and the remark that only
“our own people” can be made to feel at home in
“our type of service.”

I am of the opinion that the fault lies not so much
in our or others’ nationality as it must be attributed
to the erroneous method of evangelizing apart from
the church and away from the church, with a special
and different type of service, and with the pre-
conceived idea that they cannot be made to feel at
home among “our people.” And all the time we are
doubling up on work, multiplying workers, and rob-
bing our congregations of good talent that should be
utilized in a different direction, remain within the
church proper, and that should result in much gain
for the Christian Reformed Church.

III

During the year 1950 the editors of The Christian
Century published twelve monthly articles on
“Great Churches of America.” An enormous amount
of preparation and labor was expended upon these
articles. They were preceded by a poll of scores of
thousands of ministers throughout the U. S. A. who
were asked to suggest the most successful churches
within a given area. The church that received the
largest number of votes was thereupon visited dur-
ing an entire week by one of the top men of this
“most important organ of Protestant opinion in the
world today” (Newsweek). This representative at-
tended the Sunday worship, Sunday School, prayer
meetings, various organizations, and in general spent
a week meeting with members and digging into the
secrets of the success of such a church.

In passing it may be said that The Christian Cen-
tury was eminently fair and objective in this work:
the majority of the chosen churches were strictly
evangelical rather than of The Christian Century’s
own doctrinal convictions. These twelve “success-
ful” churches were then written up by the ones who
had studied them. The twelve informative chap-
ters were published in pamphlet form in 1951 under
the title “Great Churches of America” (Twelve
Churches Chosen by a Poll of 100,000 Ministers and
Studied by the Editors of The Christian Century.
The Christian Century Foundation. 407 S. Dear-
born St., Chicago. 60 cents per copy. 5 or more 50
cents each).

This material of unparalleled value has hitherto
received altogether too scant attention in the Chris-
tian Reformed Church. The more is the pity! “We
might well learn from these studies,” wrote De
Wachter editorially. Number eight in the series of
great churches is the First Presbyterian Church of
Hollywood, California, the largest Presbyterian
Church in America. It boasts a tremendous num-
erical growth with most of its additions coming in
upon confession of faith, and many after baptism,
with a minority upon attestations from other
churches. All new members are given a sheet which
mentions eighty-six different types of service in the
church. Every new member is supposed to mark at
least one type of work as well as to pledge financial
support as evidence of serious purpose.

There are six choirs, 65 enrolled groups that op-
erate under church supervision, more than 4,000 in
the Sunday School (in various buildings). One hun-
dred seventy-five of the graduates of the College De-
partment of the Sunday School have gone into the
ministry and foreign missions. The church’s ses-
sion is made up of 36 elders and 18 deacons who
serve for three years at a time. All the elders are
required to take a course in Christian doctrine and
missions. An occasional visitor to the Sunday
worship, if he has signed the visitor’s card, is at once
contacted by the “minister of evangelism.” If he is
interested, he is introduced to the home of some
member or/and enrolled into the Sunday School or
some other organization. He is asked to join a class
in: “What it means to be a Christian.” When the
“minister of evangelism” has completed his task, i.e.,
when the prospect has joined the church, all the data
concerning him go to the “minister of shepherding,”
or, in case he is under forty, to another ordained
pastor, the “minister of new life.”

There are 309 officers and teachers in the Sunday
School of this church, plus “the Seventy”—a group
specially trained by the church’s “minister of evan-
elism.” Many members donate forty or more hours
of work per week to the church. A staff of six
ordained ministers, four department heads, nineteen
part-time employed workers, and dozens of “pretty-
well trained volunteers” guard against the danger
of bigness by seeing to it that the individual mem-
ber is not lost in the crowd. The church operates
(in 1950) on an annual budget of $250,000.

IV

I herewith humbly suggest that instead of or-
organizing additional little mission chapels to create
work for the growing number of graduates from our
Reformed Bible Institute, all these valuable forces
and talents should be turned back “right smack” into
our own churches whose ministers are over-burdened
with work—and which, almost all of them, suffer
greatly from a lack of specially trained workers.
Our elders are mostly men who work during the day.
Few of them feel much like going out evenings calling
on people.

Women graduates of our R.B.I. should be ap-
pointed as deaconesses. These could do an enormous
amount of visiting, both in the congregation and
round about it, in consultation with the pastor(s) to
whom they should report. They should be remun-
erated for their work.

The “mission worker” should be either an or-
dained minister (why not?) or a lay worker whose
task it will be to visit prospects AND to conduct a
class on Monday evening where the minister’s ser-
mons of the previous day are discussed, explained,
debated, so as to make the missions “subjects”—a
silly Christian Reformed term (prospects are mis-

THE CALVIN FORUM * DECEMBER, 1952
Education and Racial Hostility

Donald H. Bouma
Associate Professor of Sociology
Calvin College

EDUCATION has frequently been suggested as a means of reducing or removing inter-group tensions and racial hostility patterns. This recommendation has come both from those who actually believe education is an effective way to deal with the problem, and from those who are opposed to alternative ameliorative proposals, such as F.E.P.C. and other compulsive measures, and who feel that by suggesting education they can remove from themselves the onus of negativism and barbarism and still be rather sure that the status quo will remain.

It is not the intent here to evaluate the motivations of the various groups which suggest that education is the way, or one of the ways, to reduce inter-group tension.

Neither is it intended here to delineate the various types of programs which might be followed should one decide to use education as a tool to reduce racial hostility. The possibilities range all the way from a barrage of pamphlets or a newspaper campaign on the one hand to inter-cultural courses at various educational levels on the other. Probably the most highly developed of these intercultural programs which has been in existence for any length of time is the so-called “Springfield Plan” which was inaugurated in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1939. (See Clarence Chatto and Alice Hal-}

The above are just a few suggestions. They do not exhaust possibilities. The fact is that most of our churches are sadly undermanned when it comes to trained talent and organized effort. Why continue sending all the available talent in a direction away from, segregated from the church proper, when the experience of twenty-five years is there to show that the results have not been as expected? Why duplicate the work of preaching? Why this unnecessary outlay of capital for additional buildings when we are all convinced that the Christian Reformed Church has something worth keeping and extending?

I have written objectively. Needless to say, I have no axe to grind. I have the interest of God’s Kingdom at heart. And I have offered this article to the courteous pages of our Calvin Forum exactly because it is a forum. If some one else has a better suggestion, I trust that the editor will give us an opportunity to hear him. If by means of such a discussion we could gradually arrive at a solution of what seems to me to be an impossible and erroneous procedure, I shall feel greatly relieved.

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the resulting conditions measured in terms of minority group experience may be only slightly altered, outside of the school atmosphere itself." Thus the purpose here is to determine whether there is any shift in attitudes toward minority groups as the result of a discussion of minority groups in a sociology course for undergraduate college students.

More than 200 students taking a course in social problems with the writer were involved in the study. A modified version of Bogardus' social distance test was given to the students before the problem of minority groups was discussed and again after reading, lecturing, and discussion on this problem had taken place. The assumption was that any change in the social distance scores in the two-week interval could be attributed to the academic discussion of the problem.

A sample of the social distance scale used is attached. (See Appendix). The numbers stand for arbitrary units of social distance; the higher the number, the greater the social distance, and presumably the greater the antagonism toward that group. The table gives the results of the first test, along with the second test results and the average decrease in social distance for each of the groups. It might be indicated that the college students were practically homogeneous as to national and religious background and as to religion. Most of the students were of Dutch ancestry and members of the Christian Reformed church.

In the two-week discussion of minority problems the most of the attention was focused on the Negro-White relationship. The two weeks were spent in reading textbook and collateral material, lecturing, and discussion. There were no hortative admonitions, no inter-racial panels or projects, and no excursions into run-down Negro areas. The approach was cognitive rather than emotional, analytical rather than propagandistic. Nothing unusual was introduced in an attempt to sway attitudes.

### DIFFERENCE IN SOCIAL DISTANCE BETWEEN 200 COLLEGE STUDENTS AND 9 ETHNIC GROUPS BEFORE AND AFTER DISCUSSION OF MINORITY PROBLEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>TEST I</th>
<th>TEST II</th>
<th>Mean Decrease in Social Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Social Distance</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Mean Social Distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientals</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negroes</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusions

1. There is greater social distance between the college group studied and Negroes than between the college group and any of the other ethnic groups. A part of the study not reported here indicated that this held true for both men and women and for veterans as well as non-veterans. In another study conducted by the writer in another community this greater antagonism toward the Negro was also found to exist among a high school group and an adult, married group with national and religious homogeneity similar to the college group.

2. A breakdown of the college group into three broad geographical regions (east coast, west coast, and midwest) brought little change in the ranking structure, although one might have expected greater hostility toward the Orientals on the west coast and toward the Jews on the east coast. It is granted that the area delineations are broad, and hence some of the differences may be hidden.

3. The greatest decrease in social distance came where the social distance had been the greatest. One reason for this may be that it was largely with these groups (Indians, Orientals, Jews, Negroes) that the students were concerned during the two-week period. This seems to be supported by the fact that the distance to Negroes decreased the most, and most of the discussion centered on the Negro problem. However, the Russians were not discussed at all and yet the distance to them also decreased.

4. There was some increase in tolerance toward all nine ethnic groups although only four groups were discussed at all, with most of the time being spent on the Negro.

5. An academic discussion of minority groups in the American culture concomitantly affects attitudes as well, through a measurable decrease in the social distance between the group studying and the group studied. This would seem to support Myrdal's thesis cited above and the contention of many that one of the basic ingredients of prejudice and intolerance is ignorance.

6. Finally, one should not overlook the important, although difficult to measure, indirect impact that a college course dealing with minority relations has no attitudes. Students whose attitudes have been concomitantly changed in such a course often go out into leadership positions in the community and influence the attitudes of others. Institutions which play a large role in training teachers and preachers have a particularly strategic influence. This is not at all to suggest the deliberate embarkation on such a course of attitude transformation. It is the explicit recognition of a concomitant effect which possibly has been unrecognized heretofore which is of concern here.

In view of these considerations it may be assumed that even the limited educational approach of a college social problems course has both direct and indirect influence on decreasing the social distance.
between two groups, and to that extent reducing patterns or intensity of hostility toward minority peoples.

Appendix

SOCIAL DISTANCE SCALE

In the last five years I have resided principally in the state of

According to my first feeling reactions I would willingly admit members of each race or nationality (as a class and not the best I have known, nor the worst members) to one or more of the classifications which I have circled below. (Begin at the right for each group.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To close</th>
<th>To my</th>
<th>To my</th>
<th>To employ-</th>
<th>As visit-</th>
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<td>kinship by</td>
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<td>street</td>
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<td>marriage</td>
<td>personal</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>occupation</td>
<td>to my</td>
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<td></td>
<td>neighbors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

American 1 2 3 4 5 6
Indians 1 2 3 4 5 6
Jews 1 2 3 4 5 6
Negroes 1 2 3 4 5 6
Orientals 1 2 3 4 5 6
Italians 1 2 3 4 5 6
Russians 1 2 3 4 5 6
English 1 2 3 4 5 6
Polish 1 2 3 4 5 6

From Our Correspondents

Amsterdam
September 2, 1952

Dear Calvin Forum Friends:

Today is the last day of my vacation. I want to spend it bringing a number of vacation jobs to an end. One of those jobs is writing this letter for The Calvin Forum. I want to begin by expressing my sorrow on the fact that our former editor, who devoted his talents to this periodical for so many years, has not as yet recovered. May God bless him and his family and restore him to complete health!

Facing the new editor is the great challenge of continuing to unite Calvinistic churches and groups throughout the world. These include the newly-founded churches in Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand. Many immigrants who settled there during the past two years were placed before a dilemma which should not be completely unfamiliar to most of you. You know from the experiences of your forefathers what it means to be an immigrant. One of those problems is to ascertain whether there is in the new homeland a church which closely corresponds in doctrine and practice to the church of the old homeland. Must a group start a new church when it is observed that the neighboring churches do not practice serious discipline or no discipline at all? Or should a group of immigrants affiliate with an orthodox group in an unorthodox church in order to stimulate a reformation "from within"? There are many problems which present themselves in situations like these. These questions are intriguing our people who went from the Netherlands to Australia. At first we thought it advisable that they join the small Free Presbyterian Church. This church has been helping our folk tremendously. Nevertheless the affiliation or assimilation proved to be impossible. I quote here a news item from the Deputies for Immigration of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands.

It had been hoped that despite differences in national and ecclesiastical antecedents the Dutch immigrants of the Reformed faith would find a church home in the Free Presbyterian Church of Australia. Certain practical difficulties, however, made this seem inexpedient.

The deputies of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands agree with the Reformed ministers resident in Australia that in view of the modernistic trends within the larger Presbyterian and Methodist churches, the transfer of members of Reformed churches to those churches would be indefensible. This the delegates of the Free Church fully understand.

Meanwhile conferences between the Reformed ministers and representatives of the Free Church are taking place for the purpose of forming an independent ecclesiastical organization for Dutch immigrants of the Reformed faith, the standards of which will be the Beijer Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, and the Westminster Confession. The new organization will be designated as the Reformed Churches of Australia.

Perhaps eventually the Reformed Churches of Australia and the Free Presbyterian Church will arrive at some kind of federation. Meanwhile the two churches will consider one another as sister churches of the Reformed faith.

The present address of the Reformed Churches is

Rev. S. Hoekstra,
A 94 Alma Road, St. Kilda S 2,
Melbourne, Victoria,
Australia.

The above item was published some time ago. In the meantime there have been significant developments. The Reformed Churches of Australia have come into existence. There are three in Tasmania, four in Australia, and one in New Zealand. Five ministers sent by the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands are already at work. This number will have to increase.

Readers of the Calvin Forum will be interested in knowing about these developments. Perhaps one of these Australian ministers will write an article for the Forum about the life of the young churches there. They should think about this.

I will close now, though I could write at length about the new "government" here in the Netherlands. For the first time in seven years two members of the Antirevolutionary Party are seated in the cabinet. Another interesting and timely subject would be the General Synods of the Hervormde Kerken and of the Gereformeerde Kerken which met this year. We shall save these subjects for next time.

Sincerely yours,

PIETER PRINS, D. D.
Cliostr. 21, Amsterdam

THE CALVIN FORUM • • • DECEMBER, 1952
Book Reviews

ISAIAH AND THE CRITICS

ISAIAH 53. By Edward J. Young. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans. $1.50

I WAS happy to note the publication of Dr. Young's latest book. Knowing Dr. Young as I do and having benefited from his other publications such as “Introduction to the Old Testament” and “Prophecy of Daniel” there was confidence in my mind that here was another contribution to Old Testament studies, even though the latest volume is considerably smaller than the two mentioned above.

It is with hesitancy that I undertake writing an appraisal of his work. Having been a student of Dr. Young I feel that an objective evaluation may be difficult. Dr. Young's works command respect everywhere, and knowing him personally makes one appreciate the product of his pen even more. As a teacher he is truly a twentieth century Gamaliel, but a Gamaliel before whose eyes the Christ is not withheld. In fact the Christ is the object of his Old Testament study as this commentary on Isaiah 53 clearly demonstrates.

Dr. Young proceeds in his lucid and forthright way of exegeting this Old Testament chapter which is a most embarrassing section to all who deny predictive prophecy. His interpretation is masterful, being guided by all the technical principles of exegesis, yet employing language that even the untrained will understand. He constantly meets the objections raised by those who reject the supernatural and predictive prophecies.

His guiding beacon is the New Testament interpretation given by Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch, but this is done simply because it may not be ignored. This Messianic interpretation is so natural that no doubt it was the only one in the minds of the spiritually enlightened of the day.

The message of Dr. Young's book (as it seeks to unfold the message of the chapter) is powerful in its simplicity, devastating in its objectivity, yet pleasingly devotional. One has a feeling that the author would have shown greater kindness to the Higher Critics had he not been so objective. As a student once remarked, “Dr. Young would give even the devil all the credit due him.” Even in his writing one can feel that Dr. Young has a type of “Davidic” confidence and poise as he stands before the imposing and mocking “Goliaths” of the Higher Critics. Thus in the last thirteen pages of the book, in a chapter entitled “Of Whom Speaketh the Prophet This?” the author uses Goliath's own sword to slay his opponent and buries the remains under the weight of New Testament evidence.

The book is a treasury on Messianic prophecy, but a regrettable small treasury. I am aware that many would prefer to see more “Biblical Theology” and less of the dueling with the higher critics. And I too admit that I would like to see more theology. But let us not make the mistake to think that Higher Criticism is dead. Let us not gloat over the dead skins that this serpentine spirit has cast off during the nineteenth century. Higher Criticism is much alive today and now advances from a new quarter with even greater refinement and subtlety.

The last chapter states the case for the correct view of predictive prophecy very cogently, yet in language so simple that all can understand. In fact it is the reviewer's wish that many conservatives and liberals alike will read and study this book so that they may understand more fully what is the issue between those who subject the Bible to their reasoning and those who subject their minds to the reasoning of the Bible, thereby also concluding that the former is the foolishness of man, the latter the wisdom from God.  

CLARENCE J. VOS  
Duvall, Washington

CHRIST FOR EVERY CRISIS


UNDOUTEDLY the author himself is best qualified to introduce his own subject. This Dr. Bavinck has done accurately and interestingly in the prefatory remarks: “In this book people are discussed as they were in the days in which our Savior was upon earth, as they still are today, people with faults and failings, with their desires and revulsions; with foolish miscalculations and deceitful departures.” People who wanted to stand on the sidelines, who couldn't surrender themselves, who cherished erroneous conceptions about God, who followed the wrong path where their hearts could find no peace. And in the midst of all these people Jesus stands. . . .”

How Christ deals with all these individuals, as He applies the medicine of the gospel, is unforgottably described. No one can read this book of Dr. Bavinck without a better understanding of the pertinence of the gospel for himself. In each sketch the author makes clear that Christ Jesus is an ever-present help for His people in their times of trouble and temptation.

Even the reading of several of the chapter headings whets the reader's appetite. Who can ignore sketches entitled: “The Man Who Couldn't Make Up His Mind,” “Passivity: the Sin of the Impotent,” “Letting Go of Yourself,” and “The Man with an Inferiority-Complex?” Especially beautiful is the last chapter on “Jesus Alone.” Here we realize anew how intensely practical and relevant the Bible is for the believer's daily life. And the way in which the material is handled again offers abundant proof of the sensitivity and spirituality which characterize the author. Our chief regret is that this book, because of the language in which it is written, will unfortunately enjoy but a limited sale in America.

PETER Y. DE JONG  
South India

AN UNCERTAIN TRUMPET


THE present volume is a very helpful introduction to the reading and study of the Old Testament prophetic books. A short introduction is given to each of the prophetic books, and in the Appendix there is a treatment of Lamentations. In the introduction questions
of authorship and date are discussed; and also an outline of each book is given together with a brief interpretation. All of these outlines appear to be worthwhile, but probably that on Jeremiah is above the rest.

The book is written throughout upon the assumption that the prophets did speak from God, and so it stands in opposition to the current trend which would minimize the place of special supernatural revelation. Likewise, for the most part, the work is conservative; that is, it is willing to accept the testimony of the Scriptures as trustworthy. There are a few unfortunate statements which seem to betray an undue inclination toward certain "critical" views. For example, the author speaks of Deutero-Isaiah (p.55), although he does remark that "—it is surely easier to accept the traditional view of the Isaiahic authorship of the whole prophecy" (p.43).

The treatment of the Immanuel prophecy (Isaiah 7:1-17) is disappointing. We are told that "few who quote 7:14 as evidence for the virgin birth of Christ trouble to study the promise in its context" (p.50). It is precarious, however, to make a judgment of this nature. Then follows the statement, "The sign promised by Isaiah cannot be our Lord in its primary fulfilment" (p.50). We would ask, "Why not?" The author believes that the sign has a double meaning:—one natural and immediate, the other supernatural and future" (p.50).

There are certain statements made in the introductory chapter which are not clear to this reviewer. Thus, "The prophet is not defined or explained in the Old Testament; he is taken for granted" (p.13). This, however, is not the case. Verses such as Deuteronomy 18:18—to mention but one—explain very clearly what the prophet is and what his function is. Again, we are told that "There are true and false prophets among the nations, as there are in Israel" (p.50). Such, however, was not the case. The true prophets were a special supernatural gift of God to His chosen nation, Israel (Deuteronomy 18:9-22), and there is nothing among the heathen nations of antiquity which can compare with them. True enough, among the heathen nations there were phenomena similar to that of the false prophets in Israel—witness the mahan priests of Mesopotamia, but these were not the recipients of Divine revelation.

Nor can we agree that "—the prophet speaks primarily to the men of his time, and his message springs out of the circumstances in which he lives" (p.14). Such was not necessarily the case. We are on safer ground when we hearken to the words of Peter: "Ye also all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days" (Acts 3:24). The entire prophetic body was a type, pointing forward to the great Prophet, Jesus Christ. It is true that many of the messages of the prophets were local and arose out of contemporary needs and situations. But the prophetic body as such was a witness to Jesus Christ (Hebrews 3:6).

We are somewhat hesitant in making these criticisms, since there is so much that is good in the book. We hope that, in a future edition, the author will free himself entirely from the "critical" tendencies and will seek to make the work more consistently Biblical.

Edward J. Young
Westminster Seminary

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**Lutherans Look at the History of Revelation**


The two-volume work by Erich Sauer, director of a Bible School in the Rhineland, is a good specimen of "historia revelationis" and more specifically "historia salutis" from the Dispensationalistic point of view. It exhibits freshness of insight and considerable originality of interpretation as well as evangelical warmth and earnestness and devotion to the atoning Saviour. The author stresses a good thought when he says with respect to Bible interpretation that "...whoever wishes to please God's secrets must be adorned with the three-fold ornaments of humility, reverence, and faith; and when these are found the soul can restfully commit to the Most High all matters not revealed" (I, 37). Students of Genesis 1 will note his espousal of the Restitution Theory (albeit cautiously (I, 44), his acceptance of the 24 hour day in creation, and his concession of death in the animal and plant world before the race of man—on the basis of "...geological strata (which reveal a huge cemetery) and the stages of the development of the prehistoric animal world" (I, 35).

Doctrinally, Erich Sauer is vulnerable on the following counts: 1) His assertion that the essence of God is love (I, 18, 22). But will that concept exhaust the being of God? Does not His majestic sovereignty transcend and include both His love and righteousness? (Psalms 115:3; 135:6; Eccl. 8:3 etc.). 2) His construction of the "ordo salutis" in that "...conversion is the condition for regeneration, and regeneration is the Divine answer to conversion" (II, 67). But can man exercise such priority in the matter of his own salvation? Is the determinative lever in his hands? If God is thus limited, what comes of His supremacy? 3) His interpretation of Pentecost. In the Old Dispensation, says he, the Holy Spirit worked spasmodically with certain select individuals and only to educate and capacitate for service, while in the New He descends upon all believers, dwells within them, and regenerates their souls. Granted that construction, how then could the Old Testament saint be saved? If spiritual illumination is indispensable, and Sauer intimates that it is (II, 52), must not the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit have been active in the salvation of every Old Testament saint? And does not Pentecost simply imply that the Holy Spirit came in much richer measure and cut a much wider swath in the New Dispensation? 4) His attempted harmonization of universalism and particularism by asserting with respect to the earthly and heavenly work of Christ "...as priest in lowliness, He served for the redemption of the whole world, and without their cooperation He offered the reconciling sacrifice for all; as priest on High He serves only His chosen; only for 'us' His members..." (II, 50). But did not Christ state clearly and unequivocally that He gave His life only for His sheep? (John 10:11). 5) His constant sounding of the premillennial note with its accompanying insistence upon a literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecies.
The work by Prof. Bales of Harding College serves as a good refutation and expose of the weaknesses of the Premillennial position. The author is concerned about the principles that ought to govern the interpretation of Old Testament prophecies, and specifically with the light that the New Testament sheds on the kingdom prophecies of the Old Testament. His argumentation, strongly buttressed by Scriptural documentation, appears to this reviewer to be well-nigh incontrovertible. He points up the invalidity of a consistent and thoroughgoing literalism in Bible interpretation. Not only are some Old Testament prophecies typical in character, e.g., the prediction of Elijah in Malachi 4 as interpreted by Christ in Matt. 11:14, but furthermore some literalism is definitely unscriptural, e.g., the restoration of the Old Testament ritual, priesthood, and sacrifices. (Cf. the argumentation of the book of Hebrews and Jesus’ statement to the effect that Jerusalem would cease to be a sacred place). M. J. Wyngaarden’s *Future of the Kingdom* is cited with evident approbation in this connection. Bales lays down what appears to be an eminently sane principle when he says that “. . . one will spiritualize when the context and the rest of the Bible shows that he ought to spiritualize, and literalize in the place where the context and the rest of the Bible shows that it ought to be literalized” (p.21). Bales concludes that the distinction between a “church age” and the “kingdom age” (the former of which is called a ‘mystery parenthesis’) is hermeneutical fabrication and imagination. This work contains, in my estimation, cogent criticism of the premillennial position.

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**PSYCHOLOGY FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS**


Here is a book that is replete with pertinent and helpful information and suggestions for Christian parents, Sunday School teachers, and Christian school teachers. All three are in need of helps which incorporate the best that current study of child development affords in the light of the Scripture. Professor Le Bar makes an earnest attempt to provide such helps, especially for Bible school teachers. She merits much commendation for her competent work.

Let me mention several outstanding features of this book. There is authentic psychology in it. There is a genuine recognition of the nature of child life as we observe it in given situations and attempt to describe it with reference to learning and teaching in the Bible school. This is more than a book in teaching techniques. The author helps the Bible school teacher to understand the child in his development, and there is a helpful attempt to understand child development in the light of the Scriptures. This gives meaning and purpose to technique.

Notwithstanding the authentic psychology permeating the whole book, it is very readable for the average Bible school teacher. It does not presuppose a knowledge of elementary psychology, though a reading acquaintance with psychology would prove very helpful.

Psychology is made very functional as it permeates the discussion of the various aspects of Bible school teaching. The psychology incorporated so functionally is alert to the recent developments in this field of learning. Without be-

coming technical at any point, the author manifests an awareness of the contribution of current psychologies to our understanding of child life.

Such chapters as the following are particularly good from these points of view: How Children Learn or Grow; Memorization of Scripture; Story Telling; Visual Aids; Worship; and Prayer.

It is abundantly clear that we do not learn only by doing, but also by knowing. The self-activity of the learner is meaningfully stressed and developed according to the child’s maturity. This is good psychology, well thought out, and Scripturally well appraised.

Because of these and other excellent features of this book, it seems regrettable that its basic theodicy is in error. I know that this is the common error of much of our American Fundamentalism, but this does not justify the author’s views. Whether the error of Fundamentalism has been uncritically accepted or whether it is the personal conviction of the author matters not, as far as the text is concerned.

Regeneration and conversion are identified, or at least used interchangeably. It is not clear that God by a divine act of grace turns the heart, an act in which man is entirely passive. That the new life is Spirit-wrought is not clear, and that it is wrought only in “those that Thou hast given Me,” to use the words of our Savior, is not clear. Because this is not clear, the book is not free from a humanism which keeps the author from going all the way in Christian education.

The chapter on Spiritual Development is an excellent chapter, except for its wrong emphasis. One might even say that this chapter is stronger than the author’s theological position permits. This statement might be made about the book as a whole.

The sub-title of the book is “The How of Christian Education.” The psychology the author is talking about applies to the development of child life as a whole, but in practice she confines herself to the Bible school. Now, what she says about teaching and learning applies to all of the education of the child. Why confine it to the Bible school?

But here the dualism of modern fundamentalism comes to the fore, namely, the secular and the sacred. Christianity and education meet in the Bible school apparently, but not in the social studies in the sixth grade. Heart surrender does not apply to the latter, it seems.

When there is no clear presentation of the sovereignty of God and His claim on all of life, everything else goes wrong in our thinking. We’ll become the victims of dualisms and inconsistencies.

The book is much more consistent in its central emphasis upon a Scriptural interpretation of child life than its theology permits. The Christian teacher in the Christian day school will find this book very helpful if he will revise it to fuller consistency with its main thrust: the child is to be taught according to God-ordained ways of child life to serve Christ from the heart. The Christian day school can accomplish this by the grace of God, for it deals with life as a whole.

The Bible school, valuable though it may be, cannot deal with life, but with its spiritual dynamics only, and that in isolation from life in its fullness as the child lives it. The Bible school can be an evangelistic power for conversion, but it cannot reach full Christian service. Only the Christian day school can do the latter, as it carries forward the work of the Christian home into the fullness of life.

**Cornelius Jaarsma**

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