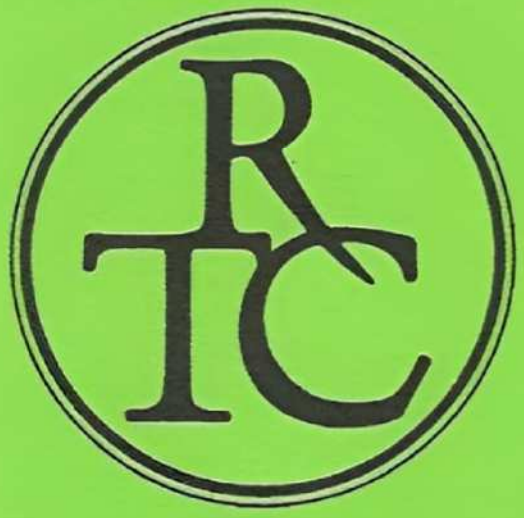

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DOMINE, DIRIGE NOS!

Lord, direct us! So reads the motto of London. It is a prayer that should be remembered in every sphere of human activity, including the study of theology. As we view the labyrinthine ways of modern theology, we realize how necessary it is for us to seek divine guidance and that wisdom which God will grant to those who earnestly desire it.

While it took a measure of courage to launch this *Journal* last year, it has been favourably received not only by individual readers, but also by a number of theological seminaries and publishing houses in various parts of the world. By this we have been encouraged.

In this second issue, we address ourselves to some practical questions. What are our present duties in view of the missionary task? What is the dominant idea in Paul's thinking and how does it relate to personal salvation? In the struggle with militant humanism, which is preferable, cultural pluralism or a Christian counter-culture? In what sense is the new covenant foretold in Jeremiah 31:31 new? What lessons can the Reformed pastor learn from the pastoral ministrations of Samuel Rutherford?

While we may, at times, interact with other theological journals, we certainly shall not echo them. It will be our constant aim to make a distinctive contribution to Reformed thought. Our emphasis will be on positive teaching and constructive criticism, and at times that criticism will touch on certain aspects of neo-evangelical scholarship. We have not yet entered the field of dogmatics or of ethics, but, if the Lord tarries, we hope to do so in due course.

One of the essential qualities of a theologian is humility. Reformed dogmatics demands such a spirit. For as Auguste Lecerf comments, "With head bowed in the dust, it would listen to the Word of God. It speaks when it believes that God has spoken, but remains silent in the presence of the silence of His Word." It has been said that knowledge without humility is vanity. Calvin in his *Institutes* quotes with approval the saying of Augustine, "If you ask me concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, first, second, third, and always I would answer, 'Humility'." It behoves each of us to say in the spirit of Solomon, "I am but a little child ... Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart ..."

F.S.L.

THE MINISTERIAL FAITHFULNESS OF SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

by Adam Loughridge

Adam Loughridge is Principal of the Reformed Theological College, Belfast.

Near the old ivy-covered ruin of the Church at Anwoth on the hillside farm at Boreland in Galloway there stands an impressive monument bearing witness to the life and work of Samuel Rutherford. It calls to remembrance the nine stirring years of his ministry and was erected

> In admiration of his eminent talents
> extensive learning, ardent piety,
> ministerial faithfulness
> and distinguished public labours
> in the cause of civil and religious liberty.

From this notable list of outstanding characteristics we underline one that is particularly relevant to us today, namely, his ministerial faithfulness. An examination of this important aspect of his life should challenge all called to serve as ministers of Jesus Christ.

Let us first of all outline the story of the man who holds a unique place in the life and work of the Church in Scotland. No one was better equipped than he to build on the solid foundation laid by John Knox and Andrew Melville. His uncompromising attachment to Christ and His Church helped to stem the rising tide against the Gospel and against simple government in the Church.

Samuel Rutherford was born of farming stock in the Parish of Crailing near Nisbet in Roxburghshire in the Border country of Scotland in the year 1600. He showed evidence of grace in his boyhood and his mind was always sensitive to spiritual impressions. One writer says: "He began life with the glamour of heaven about him". A miraculous escape from death by drowning in the village well filled him with a sense of debt to God and His grace and he carried that indebtedness with him all through life.

His academic career was one of outstanding brilliance. Entering the University of Edinburgh in 1617, he graduated Master in Arts in 1621. He was appointed Professor of Latin in 1623, but was forced to resign in 1626. He had been charged with immorality, but the real reason for his dismissal was that he roused the displeasure of Principal Adamson and Archbishop Spottiswood because he had married Euphemia Hamilton without academic or episcopal authority. In God's providence his discharge from the University was a blessing to many, for in 1627 he became the covenanting minister of Anwoth in Kirkcudbrightshire. For nine years he proved a faithful shepherd of the flock, and our assessment of his pastoral concern will deal more fully with these rich and profitable years.

His refusal to yield to the pressures for conformity to the episcopal pattern led to his deposition from office in 1636, his banishment to Aberdeen, and his detention there during the King's pleasure. It was during this period that he wrote his Letters — 365 in all — mainly to members of his congregation and to personal friends who claimed an interest in his prayers and his ministry of encouragement.

His later life was associated with the University of St. Andrews. He served as Professor of Divinity from 1638 to 1647, and as Rector of the University and Principal of New College from 1647 until 1660, when, in a peevish act, the Privy Council of Restoration days stripped him of all his offices, deposed him from the pastorate of St. Andrews Kirk and accused him of high treason. Messengers were sent from Edinburgh demanding his presence for condemnation and martyrdom. But the summons found him on his deathbed and the dying saint, sustained by glimpses of heaven's glory, sent back this message to his malignant accusers: "Tell them", he said "that I have a summons already before a superior Judge, and it behoves me to answer my first summons; and ere your day arrives, I shall be where few kings and great folks come". The frustrated Council ordered that he should not die within the precincts of the College in spite of Lord Burleigh's stern rebuke: "Ye have voted that honest man out of his college; but ye cannot vote him out of heaven".

Space does not permit an appraisal of his sterling work at Westminster as one of the Scottish Commissioners to the Assembly of Divines nor of his devotion to the principles of constitutional government so clearly illustrated in his masterly work, Lex Rex. In this work he sowed seed that bore fruit in the Revolution Settlement of 1690, some thirty years after his death. Rutherford's sixty years were filled with industry, with teaching and preaching, travelling and

writing. An expressive line on his tombstone at St. Andrews sums up his gracious life:

> What tongue, what pen, or skill of men,
> Can famous Rutherford commend!
> His learning justly raised his fame,
> True godliness adorned his name.
> He did converse with things above,
> Acquainted with Immanuel's love.

The Streams that Nourished his Pastoral Faithfulness

His own unique personality helped to make him a devoted and tender-hearted shepherd of his flock. He confessed to a correspondent that he was made of extremes. It was an easy transition then from tears of bitter sorrow to raptures of heavenly joy. He was suited temperamentally for identification with the wide range of experiences to be found in a small rural area. Strength and tenderness were graciously blended in his heart and this enabled him to understand and to encourage his people in their need.

His pastoral concern was further stimulated by a deep sense of sinfulness.

To Lady Culross he wrote:

> O my guiltiness, the follies of my youth and the neglects of my calling; they all do stare me in the face.[1]

To Lady Boyd he acknowledged the lessons he had learned in the school of adversity and added:

> I have seen here my abominable vileness. I am a deeper hypocrite and shallower professor than anyone could believe. Madam, pity me, the chief of sinners.[2]

To the Laird of Carleton he made this confession:

> Woe, woe is me, that men should think there is anything in me. The house devils that keep me company, and this sink of corruption, make me carry low sails. But howbeit I am a wretched captive of sin, yet my Lord can hew heaven out of worse timber than I am, if worse there be.[3].

Elsewhere, he pleads for contrition and the mortification of sin in such words as:

> Be sorry at your corruption.
> Sin poisons all our enjoyments.
> Put off a sin, or a piece of sin, every day.
> Labour constantly for a sound and lively sense of sin.[4]

Again, his pastor's heart was well schooled by his personal experience of sorrow and bereavement. In the early years of his ministry he nursed his young wife with tender care before laying her and two of their children in the grave.

Above all, he was motivated to pastoral faithfulness by a deep-seated passion for souls. In one of his longer letters written to his parishioners at Anwoth in 1637, he stated:

> What could I want if my ministry among you should make a marriage between the little bride and the Bridegroom. My witness is above; your heaven would be two heavens to me and the salvation of your souls as two salvations to me. I would subscribe the suspension of my heaven for many hundred years (according to God's good pleasure) if ye were sure in the upper lodging in my Father's house before me. [5]

It was a Pauline passion, rooted in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. By all these means, his faithfulness developed and flourished.

The Activities that Illustrated his Pastoral Faithfulness

There were three main activities, all closely related, that he used with rare ability and sense of commitment in shepherding God's flock. First, there was the faithfulness of his preaching. This was for him, and always must be, the essential basis for pastoral work and the proper platform on which to deal with souls. He loved preaching. "Next to Christ", he once said "I have but one joy, the apple of the eye of my delights, to preach Christ my Lord". His poetic gifts had a full and free expression in the pulpit. He had no restraint when showing sinners the loveliness of Christ. His heart burned fiercely, his imagination soared to great heights, but through it all he spoke to men in a simple, quaint and telling manner, and such preaching was highly effective for spiritual awakening and spiritual refreshment. A striking poetic outburst is recorded in one of his Communion Sermons. Speaking on the Saviour's cry, 'I thirst', he said:

> O wells, O lochs, O running streams, where were you when my Lord could not get a drink? ... O to hear the wells say 'we will give Herod and Pilate a drink, but we will give Christ none'. ... Fie on you, famous Jerusalem, is this your stipend? Is this your reward to your great High Priest? No, not so much as the beggar's courtesy, a drink of cold water to your dear Redeemer, Jesus. But by this Christ hath brought drink to all believers.[6]

To the faithfulness of his preaching we must add the fervency of his praying. In the cool dews of the morning he sought the Lord's face for

his people. Like the High Priest with the names of the tribes of Israel on his breastplate, he mentioned his people individually before the Lord. To John Gordon of Cardoness he could say:

> Thoughts of your soul depart not from me in my sleep.[7]

As a reminder of the time he spent in prayer he said again:

> My soul was taken up when others were sleeping how to have Christ betrothed to his bride at Anwoth.[8]

Pointing to a quiet corner in the woods he said to a friend:

> There I wrestled with the angel and prevailed. Woods, trees, meadows and hills are my witnesses that I drew on a fair match between Christ and Anwoth.[9]

The faithful preacher and the man of fervent prayer was also distinguished for the thoroughness of his pastoral counsel. With Christ-like compassion and clear-sighted wisdom he longed for the salvation of sinners and the growth of believers to maturity. He applied the Word pointedly and graciously. He taught, he pleaded, he warned, not from the pulpit only but also in his daily contacts as he visited from house to house. He was an expert catechist and questioned parents and children on their relationship with Christ and their knowledge of the truth. Writing from Aberdeen, he counselled his people at Anwoth:

> Keep in mind the doctrine of the Catechism which I taught you carefully. Speak of it in your houses and in the fields, when you lie down at night and when you rise in the morning.[10]

The Scope of his Ministerial Faithfulness

His pastoral concern reached far beyond his own people to the whole Church in Scotland and in Ireland. He carried on his heart a burden for the Church.

> For the goodwill of Him that dwelleth in the bush, the burning kirk shall not be consumed to ashes. The Stone of Israel shall not be broken in pieces; it is hammered upon by the children of this world, and we shall live and not die. The Son of God's wheat shall not be blown away.[11]

He gave wise pastoral counsel to the congregation at Kilmalcolm. They sought his help in days of spiritual deprivation. He reassured them by saying that their weakness would enable them to employ Christ's strength. He encouraged new converts with the words:

> Honest beginnings are nourished by Him, even by lovely Jesus who never yet put out a poor man's dim candle. If new beginners would urge themselves upon Christ and press their souls upon Him, and importune Him for a draught of His sweet love, they would not come wrong to Christ.[12]

They complained to him of a dead ministry within their bounds. "Don't depend on ministers", he said:

> Neither the conversion of sinners, nor the sanctification of believers is tied up to any man's lips. Read your unread Bibles; buy more good books; meet more in private converse and in prayer, and it will not be bad for you to look above the pulpit and to look Jesus Christ more immediately in the face. In your sore famine of the water of life, run your pipe right up to the fountain.[13]

But his pastoral concern reached out more lovingly to his own folk at Anwoth. They were his sighs in the night and his tears in the day, his dearly-loved and longed for, his joy and crown. He knew each member of the congregation intimately regardless of age or rank. He touched them at every point. He used every circumstance in their lives as an avenue of approach to their spiritual needs.

Some Distinguishing Marks of his Pastoral Care

There are so many evidences of a pastor's zeal and a pastor's love that we can only make a brief selection. We notice, first of all, the frankness of his approach to the problems of his people. He showed an extraordinary and courageous frankness in dealing with the subject of death. John Kennedy of Ayr was involved in a serious accident that was all but fatal. Rutherford used the occasion for hearty thanksgiving and warning:

> The Lord hath given you longer days. He knew that ye had forgotten something that was necessary for your journey; that your armour was not yet thick enough against the stroke of death. But the debt is not forgiven; death hath not bidden you farewell.... Have all in readiness against the time that ye must sail through that black and impetuous Jordan. We die but once, so we die well or ill once.[14]

With many such searching words he spoke to men, confronting them with the certainty of death and the need for thoughtful and prayerful preparation.

We are deeply impressed by the tenderness of his sympathy. He had a deep experience of sorrow and bereavement and this added a vital dimension to his gifts as a pastor. He had no room for empty

expressions of regret or sympathy. His approach was always positive and he pointed the troubled soul to the loving-kindness of the Saviour. It is particularly notable that no fewer than 35 of his letters deal with the trials of a Christian, 28 with their affliction and 18 expressing sympathy with the bereaved. To Lady Kenmure, whose infant son died in 1639, he wrote:

> I hope, that for His sake who brewed and masked this cup in heaven, ye will gladly drink and salute and welcome the cross. Subscribe to the Almighty's will; put your hand to the pen, and let the cross of your Lord Jesus Christ have your submission and resolute Amen.
> The best half of the cross is Christ's. Christ bore the first stroke of the cross; it rebounded off Him upon you, and ye get it at second hand, and ye and He are halvers.[15]

He brought an unusual and confident message of comfort to John Gordon of Cardoness. "Tell your wife", he said, "that I am witness for Barbara's glory in heaven". John Gordon had been a very careless member of the Church and his faithful minister, realising that even sorrow soon loses its effectiveness, added the warning:

> Ask yourself when next setting out for a night's drinking 'What if my doom came tonight? What if I were to be given over to God's sergeant tonight, to the devil and to the second death?'[16]

On many occasions he refreshed his people by the thoroughness of his instruction. He had a well-considered plan for each life, dealing with each member personally and distinctively, prescribing for their needs with accuracy and thoroughness. The case of John Gordon of Rusco may be taken as a good example. His home was close by the manse at Anwoth and he played a noble part in the affairs of the Scottish Kirk. His minister was deeply concerned for the spiritual good of this good man and his household, so he called on him to remember and lay to heart no less than seven vital principles:

1. Remember that salvation is one of Christ's dainties he giveth but to few.
2. That it is violent sweating and striving that takes heaven.
3. That it cost Christ's blood to purchase that house for sinners and to set mankind down as king's freeholders.
4. That many make a start towards heaven who fall back and win not to the top of the mount.
5. Remember that many go far and reform many things and can find tears as Esau did; and wish and desire the end of the righteous as Balaam did; and desire the saints of God to pray for them as

> Pharaoh and Simon Magus did; and prophesy and speak of Christ as Caiaphas did; and walk softly and mourn for fear of judgment, as Ahab did; ... And yet all these are but like gold in clink and colour. These are written, that we should try ourselves, and not rest till we be a step nearer Christ than sunburnt and withering professors can come.
> 6. Consider it impossible that your idol-sins and ye can go to heaven together.
> 7. Remember, how swiftly God's post time fleeth away, and that your forenoon is already spent. How blessed are they who, in time, take sure course with their souls.[17]

What a well-reasoned, Bible based programme of instruction for a sinner on his pilgrimage! How could anyone be deceived in the light of such instruction? Happy the soul that is helped heavenward by such a discerning and devoted and spiritually-minded pastor, and happy the pastor who gives himself to such a God-honouring exercise as this.

Those who have the care of souls do well to learn from the earnestness of his pleading. There was a great sense of urgency as he commended Christ to his people. The time is short; the night is coming; mispend not your shortening sand-glass which runneth very fast, he would say. Heaven is not next door. It is a castle to be taken by force.

With young Margaret Ballantine he pleaded:

> My counsel to you is that ye start in time to be after Christ, for if ye go quickly, Christ is not far before you. Rouse, rouse up your soul, Too many souls think that they have met with Christ who never had a wearied night for want of Him.
> I beseech you in the Lord Jesus, beware of unsound work in the matter of your salvation.[18]

He was burdened at times with a sense of responsibility for young ministers, and when they sought his help he spoke to them very plainly. To Robert Glendinning minister of Kirkcudbright he wrote:

> My dear and worthy friend, let me entreat you in Christ's name and by the salvation of your soul to make your accounts ready. Oh, how joyful would my soul be to hear that ye would start at the gate and contend for the crown and leave all vanities and make Christ your garland! Let your soul put away your old lovers and let Christ have your whole love.
> Salvation, salvation is our only necessary thing. Sir, call home your thoughts to this work.[19]

He spoke with persistent faithfulness to John Gordon of Cardoness:

> Consider the necessity of salvation, and tell me, in the fear of God, if ye have made it sure.
> Why will ye die and destroy yourself? I charge you, in Christ's name, to rouse up your conscience and begin to indent and contract with Christ in time, while salvation is in your offer. Play the merchant, for ye cannot expect another market day when this is done.[20]

We are, at times, shaken by the severity of his warnings. He never trifled with sin, but dealt with it in a solemn and awe-inspiring manner. To the lord in his castle and to the shepherd boy on the hills, he spoke loudly and clearly on Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, swearing and hypocrisy.

> O sacrilegious robber of the Lord's Day, what wilt thou say to the Almighty when He seeketh so many Sabbaths back from thee?
> What will the curser, swearer and blasphemer do when his tongue shall be roasted in the broad and burning lake of brimstone?
> And what will the drunkard do when tongue, lungs, liver, bones and all, shall boil and fry in a torturing fire? He shall be far from his barrels of strong drink then and there is not a cold well of water for him in hell.[21]

He would accept no excuses and dealt severely with any who sought to cover their sins with the fair speech of idle profession.

All his frankness and tenderness, his thoroughness, earnestness and severity were directed towards upright Christian conduct and the promotion of spiritual growth. He often gave advice on Christian growth. John Fleming asked him for help in the development of spiritual maturity. He recommended the following exercises:

1. That hours of the day, for the word and prayer, be given to God.
2. In the midst of worldly enjoyments, there should be some thoughts of sin, death, judgment and eternity, with at least a word or two of ejaculatory prayer to God.
3. Beware of wandering of heart in private prayers.
4. Guard against mixing our zeal with our wildfire.
5. Let your carriage be such as they that see it may speak honourably of our sweet Master.

He then added a reference to some of the things that had challenged and rebuked him in his own life and gave these further words of advice:

> I have benefitted by riding alone a long journey and giving that time to prayer; by abstinence and giving days to God; by praying for others, for by making an errand to God for them, I have gotten something for myself.[22]

He had a horror of wasting time. He spoke often of sins of the tongue. He insisted that growth in grace should be cared for above everything else and that more and more of Christ should be in all our thoughts.

The Challenge of his Ministerial Faithfulness

Samuel Rutherford speaks to us all today. His passion for souls, his patience and tenderness with people give a stern and solemn rebuke to our lack of zeal. His life and work should be studied thoughtfully as an inspiration to renewed diligence and devotion to our calling so that we might be able to say with Paul, "I am free from the blood of all men".

We ought to make a new appraisal of the nature and importance of pastoral work. There is a current trend to a more psychological approach. We are confronted with ideas like counselling and methodology, new concepts of Freudianism and behaviourism, new theories of dehabituation and rehabituation, but we are often slow to learn the lessons of love and compassion and identification with men and women in their need.

His pastoral concern gives us a final word of warning. What if some of our people were to say to us or testify against us in the Day of Christ, "You were my minister; you visited me and talked to me of pleasant things, of holidays and people and politics and world affairs. But you never showed me the loveliness of Christ; you never rebuked me for my sins nor exposed to me the sinfulness and hatefulness of sin; you never warned me of God's judgments and urged me to flee from the wrath to come." What a tragedy that we should be so busy all our days and in the end find that we had run in vain and laboured in vain.

May God give us His grace, so richly found in Samuel Rutherford, that we, like him, may be "always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick, always catechising, always writing and studying; and at night, falling asleep, talking of Christ."[23]

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4. To various correspondents.
5. No. 225, to his parishioners.
6. *Communion Sermons.*
7. No. 180, to John Gordon of Cardoness.
8. No. 186, to Robert Stuart.

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10. No. 269, to his parishioners.
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12. No. 286, to the parishioners of Kilmalcolm.
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15. No. 287, to Lady Kenmure.
16. No. 123, to John Gordon of Cardoness, the younger.
17. No. 280, to John Gordon of Rusco.
18. No. 79, to Margaret Ballantine.
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PAUL: KINGDOM THEOLOGIAN

by Edward Donnelly

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"In dealing with the apostle Paul we are dealing with one of the moving factors of the world's history" — so wrote J. Gresham Machen,[1] and his statement is no exaggeration. Millions read Paul's writings every day. His teachings have perplexed, irritated, saved, instructed and challenged multitudes throughout the centuries. While it is currently unfashionable to stress the influence of human personality in history, no theory of impersonal historical process can blunt the stupendous impact made upon the world by this remarkable individual.

As with any profound thinker, his teaching is capable of differing interpretations. Like a great mountain, vast in dimensions and complex in shape, Paul may be approached from various angles. This can cause problems, for scholars are apt to find in Paul only what they want to. They present to us a Paul created, often almost out of nothing, in their own image and their reconstructions tell us more about the authors than about the subject. F. C. Baur portrayed Paul as a Hegelian, standing for the freedom of the Spirit against the legalism of Jewish Christianity. In the view of the turn-of-the-century liberals

> Paul was the arch-corrupter of the gospel. God sent His Son to be a solution: Paul made him a problem. Jesus bade men consider the lilies and trust like little children: Paul spoke of justifying faith. Jesus had a cross, Paul a doctrine of atonement.[2]

Wilhelm Bousset saw him as a devotee of the mystery-religions, transforming the simple carpenter of Nazareth into a mythical cult-figure. More recently, Rudolf Bultmann has argued that Paul was profoundly conditioned by early gnosticism and that his interest is in "the Christ of faith" rather than "the Jesus of history". What all these views have in common is the assertion of a fundamental disagreement between the teaching of Jesus and that of Paul. At times the famous statement of Harnack seems not far from the truth — that Marcion was the only man to understand Paul, and he misunderstood him.

"Reformed theology has always thought itself to be distinctively Pauline, more sensitive than other traditions to the deeper motives and trends of the apostle's teaching and more consistent in its expression of them."[3] Part of this expression has, of course, been a rejection of any suggestion of discontinuity between Jesus and Paul. Most Reformed scholars, following Luther and, to a lesser extent, Calvin, have located the centre of Pauline theology in soteriology, particularly the doctrine of justification by faith.

> The gospel of justification by faith alone without the works of the law appeared anew to be the only and powerful means to liberate the burdened conscience and to replace the spirit of legalistic servitude with the certainty of reconciliation and of the adoption as children of God. No wonder, then, that because of this all-controlling antithesis, for the Reformation consciousness of faith Paul was above everything else the preacher of justification, and all his theology came to be regarded from this point of view.[4]

The 18th century brought a change in some quarters. "Later, under the influence of pietism, mysticism and moralism, the emphasis shifted to the process of individual appropriation of the salvation given in Christ, and to its mystical and moral effect in the life of believers",[5] so that James S. Stewart, in his aptly named *A Man In Christ,* could write "The conviction has grown steadily upon me that union with Christ ... is the real clue to an understanding of Paul's thought and experience."[6]

That these evangelical approaches to Pauline theology have been immensely fruitful is undeniable. Neither, however, has been able to encompass satisfactorily the full breadth and profundity of the apostle's thought. A different model is needed, a fundamental structure upon which the various elements of his teaching are founded, which gives unity and coherence to the whole, and which, moreover, does justice both to Paul's total identification with the teaching of Jesus and to his place in redemptive history. This structure is to be found in the concept of the kingdom.

Jesus and the Kingdom

It is generally agreed that the kingdom of God was the central message of Jesus. The word "kingdom" does not however have the precise connotation which it bears in English. "The original meaning of the term ... is the fact of being king, the position or power of the king, and it is best translated office of king, kingly rule."[7] The basic idea is dynamic, not static, the exercise of kingly power, the evidencing of authority and dominion, God being seen to act as king. From this

came the more familiar geographical meaning, when "kingdom" became the territory of the king, the area won by and enjoying the benefits of his kingly rule. So when Jesus preached the kingdom of God He was speaking primarily of the manifestation of God's kingly authority and only secondarily of the realm of blessing into which the exercise of that authority brought men. The note was sounded at the beginning of His public ministry: "The time has come ... The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1: 15) From then on, in teaching and miracle, parable and prophecy, He proclaimed the coming of the kingdom in His own person and work.

The kingdom concept was not, of course, new to the Jews. Although the precise idiom is rare in the Old Testament, the knowledge of the rule of God is everywhere present. "The Lord reigns" sang the psalmist, "let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice" (Psalm 97: 1). But not only did God reign in the present, a glorious day was coming when he would fully manifest his kingly power by destroying his enemies, redeeming Israel and establishing His reign effectively in all the world. The hope of the prophets was that this would be accomplished through the Messiah at the end of the age. The kingdom was both present and future, a comforting reality and a glowing prospect.

As time passed, however, with the trauma of exile followed by the stresses of the restoration, long years of foreign domination and a God who had apparently ceased to speak through prophets, a darkness of spirit gripped the Jewish people. Their awareness of God's present kingdom was weakened. There was hope, but only in the far-distant future, at the day of judgment.

> Jewish apocalyptic lost the sense of God's acting in the historical present ... Apocalypticism had become pessimistic — not with reference to the final act of God to establish his Kingdom, but with reference to God's acting in present history to save and bless his people. Jewish apocalyptic despaired of history, feeling that it was given over to evil powers. God's people could only expect suffering and affliction in this age until God would act to establish his Kingdom in the Age to Come.[8]

At the beginning of the New Testament the Jews expected nothing from the present. All their hopes were placed on the world to come and on the climactic termination of history by which God would introduce it. They awaited the coming of the Messiah and the end of the world, and believed these events to be simultaneous — "the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. 61: 2).

But when Jesus read this passage in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4: 16-21), He stopped reading with "the year of the Lord's favour." The day of vengeance had not yet come. On the surface it seemed as if nothing had changed. The world continued, evil men prospered, the people of God faced trial and suffering. But the jubilee, the "year of the Lord's favour", had come, and come in Christ! God's kingly rule was manifest on the earth, the new age had arrived, it was the day of God's redemption. The seed was planted in the soil, the yeast placed in the dough, and, though the process of transformation would take time, the powers of heaven were now active on the earth. His miracles, for example, were demonstrations of God's kingship — "If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt. 12: 28).

This was the essence of Jesus' call to faith. Men were summoned to see in Him the salvation of God, the hope of the end-time. The "day of the Lord" had already begun, visible only to the eyes of faith. God's kingly rule had come to earth, not yet in a shattering apocalypse, but in the carpenter of Nazareth.

> Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come visibly, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is among you" (Luke 17: 20, 21).

Paul and the New Age

This same awareness of the coming of the kingdom, the dawning of the promised time of salvation, undergirds the theology of Paul. In the words of Herman Ridderbos

> The governing motif of Paul's preaching is the saving activity of God in the advent and the work, particularly in the death and resurrection of Christ.... It is this great redemptive-historical framework within which the whole of Paul's preaching must be understood and all of its subordinate parts receive their place and organically cohere.[9]

George Eldon Ladd agrees:

> The centre of Pauline thought is the realization of the coming new age of redemption by the work of Christ.... Paul's theology is the exposition of new redemptive facts; the common characteristic of all his theological ideas is their relationship to God's historical act of salvation in Christ. The meaning of Christ is the inauguration of a new age of salvation. In the death and resurrection of Christ, the Old Testament promises of the messianic salvation have been fulfilled, but within the

> old age. The new has come within the framework of the old; but the new is desitned also to transform the old.[10]

The point can be established by brief reference to several Pauline passages.

As an important component of his Jewish background, Paul grew up with the concept of the two ages — "this age" and "the age to come". The present age is a time of wickedness and weakness, the future age an era of uninterrupted blessing. So Paul can renounce "the wisdom of this age" (1 Cor. 2: 6) and "the philosopher of this age" (1 Cor. 1: 20) as being quite unable to bring men to God. "The rulers of this age" are those "who crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2: 8), blinded as they are by Satan, "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4: 4). Christ is the One "who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age" (Gal. 1: 4). This age will be succeeded by "the one to come" (Eph. 1: 21), or, as he prefers to describe it, the kingdom of God. This kingdom cannot be inherited by flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15: 50), nor do the wicked have any portion in it (1 Cor. 6: 9; Gal. 5: 21; Eph. 5: 5). It is the future hope for which the believer suffers (2 Thess. 1: 5) and in awareness of which he seeks to live obediently (2 Tim. 4: 1). In almost the last words he ever wrote, Paul looked forward to his safe arrival: "The Lord will rescue me from every attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. 4: 18). To all of this his pre-conversion friends among the Pharisees would have said a hearty "Amen".

Where Paul differs from them, where he in fact follows closely in the footsteps of Jesus and grounds his theology in the kingdom, is in his repeated assertion that the future kingdom has already come, that in Christ the powers of the new age are operative in the world. The consummation of the kingdom is still future, demonic powers still oppose the saints (Eph. 6: 12f.), the creation remains in bondage to decay (Rom. 8: 21) and the elect continue to face death all day long (Rom. 8: 36). But the kingdom "not yet" is balanced by the great kingdom "already", the triumphant affirmation of the present reality of God's saving rule. "I tell you" exults Paul, "now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2). By this he means

> not merely a certain saving event or opportunity that one must embrace and which may perhaps presently disappear again. Nothing less is intended than that the decisive, long-expected coming of God has dawned, the hour of hours, the day of salvation in the fulfilling eschatological sense of the word.[11]

A similar emphasis is found in the words of Galatians 4: 4: "But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son." This is usually interpreted as referring to the "praeparatio evangelica", God's guiding of history to create a political and cultural environment ideally suited for the propagation of the gospel. But Paul is referring rather to a new stage in redemptive history. The great moment has arrived. The day of the Lord has dawned. The issue of the world's history has been settled and believers are those "on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come" (1 Cor. 10: 11).

Perhaps the clearest expression of Paul's awareness of the presence of the kingdom is to be found in the familiar words of 2 Corinthians 5: 17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" "Newness" is an eschatological concept in Scripture. We read of new heavens and a new earth (Isa. 65: 17; 2 Pet. 3: 11; Rev. 21: 1), the new Jerusalem (Rev. 3: 12; 21: 2), a new name (Rev. 2: 17; 3: 12) and a new song (Isa. 42: 10; Rev. 5: 9; 14: 3). All of these lie in the future. But there is newness also in the present — new wine, for example (Mark 14: 25) — and Paul is here stating that the new age has come in the Christ who describes himself as the Renewer of all things (Rev. 21: 5). The believer is not merely a new individual, a "new creature", as the King James Version has it. He is "new creation", taken into the age to come, a citizen of heaven. In the words of Geerhardus Vos, "not merely individual, subjective conditions have been changed, but ... there has been created a totally new environment, or, more accurately speaking: a totally new world, in which the person spoken of is an inhabitant and participator".[12]

Paul's thought, then, is dominated by the kingly rule of God. The kingdom is a glorious inheritance which he anticipates with longing. But it is also a present reality and all that he is and does is conditioned by the fact that he is already a citizen of a completely new realm. The Father has not only provided for us future blessing — "the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light ... he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves" (Col. 1: 12, 13).

A Unifying Principle

From this perspective the various components of Paul's theology can be seen as parts of a coherent whole. While each element has its peculiar richness and reveals aspects of truth which are not immediately linked to the kingdom, this does nevertheless provide a most useful point of integration. Time and again Paul relates the

doctrine which he is discussing to the kingly activity of God, the triumphant events of the new world and the new age.

Justification is, of course, pivotal in Paul's thinking and Gunther Bornkamn is in the direct Reformation tradition when he remarks: "His whole preaching, even when it says nothing expressly about justification, can be properly understood only when taken in closest connection with that doctrine and related to it."[13] But justification is much more than a future declaration of righteousness. Paul teaches that, in a real sense, the eschatological trial has already taken place. Sin has been condemned and punished at Calvary. The righteous Judge has pronounced the verdict "righteous" for all those who are in Christ. For everyone justified through faith there is present peace (Rom. 5: 1) and absence of condemnation (Rom. 8: 1). The future judgment has become, in this respect, a present experience.

Again the Old Testament spoke of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in connection with "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Joel 2: 28-32). But, as the apostles realised at Pentecost, God's people did not have to wait until the end of the world for this gift. He was present with them and in them, as Christ had promised. While Paul recognizes that the full experience of life in the Spirit still lies in the future and that the present is a time of anguish and expectation, he maintains that believers already have that glorious life, as is shown by the use of the term "first-fruits". "We ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8: 23). First-fruits were not leaves or blossoms, but the beginning of the actual harvest. As the farmer held them in his hand he was not simply looking at a pledge of a coming crop, but at the crop itself, the very ears of grain. There would be more later, but qualitatively no different from what he already saw.

Another expression relevant in this connection is the Greek word "arrabon", translated as "earnest" (KJV), "deposit" (NIV) or "pledge" (NASV). The term refers to a down-payment, which fulfilled the double purpose of reserving an object for future possession and actually paying part of the purchase price. So the Spirit is more than the guarantor of our inheritance: He is also the first instalment (2 Cor. 1: 22; 5: 5).

Similarly, the resurrection of Jesus is not simply a unique and isolated event. It is the beginning of *the* resurrection, that life from the dead for the people of God which the prophets promised at the end of the age. Far from being a vague, future hope, it has already

commenced. Christ is "the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15: 20). The resurrection of believers will therefore be identical with that of Jesus, except that more will rise than on that first Lord's Day and they will rise later: "Each in his own turn; Christ, the first-fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him" (1 Cor. 15: 23).

Each element in Paul's theology could be placed in the same way in the context of the kingdom. His doctrine of sanctification is a call to the believer to act upon the basis of what has already happened, to grasp the indicatives so that he may fulfil the imperatives, to live in the power of the King's victory. The Church is the Messianic congregation of the great end-time, God in the midst of his people. The return of Christ is described as near, not in a strictly chronological sense, but because of "the practical experience that the earnest of the supernatural realities of the life to come was present in the church."[14]

Paul and Jesus

An important objection is possible at this point. If the concept of the kingdom is so central to Paul's thinking, why does he say so little about it? The word "kingdom" is used 117 times in the gospels and only 32 times in the rest of the New Testament. While not omitted from Paul's writings, for it occurs 14 times in 8 of his epistles, its usage is admittedly infrequent. As is the case with the Old Testament, of course, the absence of the word need not mean the absence of the idea, for, as Ridderbos argues, the fact that the expression does not appear so frequently in the New Testament outside the Synoptic Gospels is "simply a matter of terminology .... It is the central theme of the whole New Testament revelation of God."[15] Still, the comparative scarcity of the term is puzzling and one does not feel much confidence in Ladd's attempted explanation:

> Probably the reason is to be sought in the fact that Paul's letters are addressed to Gentile audiences rather than to Jews.... These subjects were capable of gross misinterpretation. To proclaim any king other than Caesar made one liable to the charge of sedition.[16]

The answer is to be sought in a different, more fruitful, direction.

Jesus preached the kingdom — God's kingly rule. But, as the apostles reflected on the person and work of the Saviour, they understood with increasing clarity that He Himself was the embodiment, the personification of God's kingly rule — that, in a sense, the King was the kingdom and that between the two terms there

could be no disjunction. This identification can be seen even in the gospels, where the person of Jesus and the kingdom of God are on occasion used interchangeably. In Luke 18: 29 reference is made to those who have "left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God", while the parallel passage in Matthew 19: 29 reads: "everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children ... for my sake." Jesus could not, of course, preach Himself fully while his death and resurrection lay still in the future. The Church, however, transformed by these glorious redemptive events, could do no other than preach Christ and Him crucified. How better might the kingly rule of God be proclaimed than in the person of the mighty King, the Son of God incarnate, the risen and reigning Saviour, the Lord highly exalted, before whom every knee shall bow? In the words of K. L. Schmidt—

> We can thus see why the apostolic and post-apostolic church ... did not speak much of the "kingdom of God" explicitly, but always emphasized it implicitly by its reference to the "Lord Jesus Christ". It is not true that it now substituted the Church for the kingdom as preached by Jesus of Nazareth. On the contrary, faith in the kingdom of God persists in the post-Easter experience of Christ.[17]

Or, as Klappert puts it:

> Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God was in no way displaced in the early church by the proclamation of Jesus Christ.... The kingdom of God is present only in the person of Jesus Christ, so that one can only properly speak of the kingdom of God by speaking of Jesus Christ.... By tying salvation to the person of Jesus ... Paul has maintained a consistent and legitimate extension of Jesus' preaching of the kingdom.[18]

This identification of King and kingdom is seen particularly clearly in 1 Corinthians 15: 24, 25, where Paul portrays the present activity of Jesus in terms of His kingdom, or reign, and associates it in the context with resurrection and salvation: "Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."

It is a strange blindness which would claim ignorance of the kingdom on the part of a man who literally gave his life to preach the King. Calvin's comment on Acts 28: 31 is worth noting:

> He does not separate "the Kingdom of God" and "the things concerning Christ" as if they were different, but adds the second phrase

> rather by way of explanation, so that we may know that the Kingdom of God is founded on, and consists in, the knowledge of the redemption procured by Christ.[19]

Paul, then, is a kingdom theologian. He warns us against a limited, individualistic gospel which concentrates solely on personal salvation and neglects the wider perspectives of the kingdom. As Ephesians reminds us, the chief concern of heaven is not the wellbeing of man but the glory of God. He testifies, on the other hand, against those who are so enthusiastic for the kingdom that they forget the King. Elaborate designs for "kingdom reconstruction" are worse than useless if there is not at their centre a heart-felt devotion to Jesus in all his glorious beauty. He tells us again that the new age has come, that victory has been won, that no-one who believes that "the kingdom is among you" should be defeatist about the present or timid for the future.

There is a remarkable consistency in his ministry. We read of his returning to the young churches at Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, warning them that "we must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22). At a later stage in Ephesus "Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God" (Acts 19: 8; cf. 20: 25). The book of Acts ends at Rome, the capital of world-empire, and the last verse shows us the little old man in prison. "Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28: 31). "Here, O church" said Bengel, "thou hast thy pattern."

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13. *Paul,* p 116.
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THE SEEDS OF SECULARIZATION

A REVIEW ARTICLE

by Frederick S. Leahy

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The Seeds of Secularization: Calvinism, Culture, and Pluralism in America, 1870-1915, by Gary Scott Smith. Grand Rapids: Christian University Press and Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985. Pb. 239pp. £16.75. U.K. agent, The Paternoster Press Ltd.

This book by the Assistant Professor of Sociology at Grove City College, Pennsylvania, is the result of five years intensive research in an area of crucial importance for Church and State alike. Dr. Smith has done his work thoroughly and reviews with commendable objectivity the struggle between Calvinism and Humanism in America from the close of the Civil War and the Amendment of the Constitution giving equal citizenship to all born or naturalized in America, to the early days of the first World War. While the author concentrates on this period, he is not restricted by it and we are given a view of the current situation in American society.

The writer shows that by 1870 American churchmen were beginning to realize that the Civil War had been a cultural watershed in their country's history. New philosophical and theological challenges were emerging.

> Evolutionary theories, biblical criticism, and utilitarian ethical systems raised questions about traditional views of human origins, scriptural authority, and absolute moral standards. Dramatic industrial and economic changes were transforming society. Urbanization, technology, labour strife, and massive immigration were uprooting familiar ways of life. The new age threatened their persistent determination to build a Christian America; it challenged their notion of cultural homogeneity by demanding pluralism; and it threatened to tear the nation's intellectual and moral leadership from their hands. (P.9).

Smith reminds us that in 1870 two of the most influential religious leaders in the States were Charles Hodge, professor of systematic

theology at Princeton Seminary, and Lyman Atwater, professor of moral philosophy and political science at Princeton College. He quotes their statement as coeditors of the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* in January 1870—

> The minds of men are unsettled; multitudes are drifting away from the faith of their fathers; the profoundest verities of the Word are questioned.... The moral, political and social world is astir.... A new era of thought, of investigation, of doubting, of testing everything has dawned.... Error is rife, and science, falsely so called, is arraying itself against the truth.... The agencies of hell and of an ungodly world are leagued in every conceivable form to lead men astray. (P.10).

From the arrival of the Mayflower to the Civil War, Calvinism was the dominant religious and philosophical influence in America. Now it found itself facing a determined foe and its exponents struggled to stem the advancing tide of secularism. Long before men like Walter Lippmann and John Dewey systematized and popularized humanistic views, American Calvinists saw the thunderclouds forming and warned of the coming storm. Smith traces in a fascinating manner the grim struggle between Calvinists and humanists between 1870 and 1915, not that the contest ceased at the end of that period. By 1920 it was apparent that, as Smith puts it, "a profound shift in American attitudes, values, and beliefs was occurring." (P.1). Calvinism was losing its grip on American religious and cultural institutions. Humanism, under the banner of 'secularization' was rapidly gaining ground.

It is interesting to note that in 1870 Calvinists, who represented approximately thirty percent of American Evangelicals, exercised an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. Smith distinguishes, in the period under review, between the "consistently Calvinist," the "considerably Calvinist," and the "somewhat Calvinist"! In the first group he places such denominations as Southern, United, Reformed and Associate Reformed Presbyterians and the Christian Reformed Church. "Before World War I," he writes, "their Calvinistic armour contained few chinks." (P.15). In the second class Smith sees such denominations as the Reformed Church of America, Northern Presbyterians, Southern Baptists and Northern Baptists, listed as he puts it "in order of their members' decreasing faithfulness to the Westminster Confession." (P.16). The "somewhat Calvinist" group included Congregationalists, Reformed Episcopalians, German Reformed, Episcopalians and Cumberland Presbyterians.

In spite of the slide from a Calvinistic bedrock, and perhaps to some

extent because of it, this was a period in America when some of the most outstanding Calvinistic theologians appeared. Names like B. B. Warfield, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, Henry Green, W. G. T. Shedd, Henry B. Smith were to become world famous. In Baptist circles men like A. H. Strong (Northern), James P. Boyce (Southern) and John L. Dagg (Southern) were associated with Reformed theology. Although Strong changed his position radically after 1900, Boyce (who studied at Princeton and was influenced by men like Archibald Alexander, the founder in 1812, his sons James and Addison and Charles Hodge) and Dagg remained staunch Calvinists. Their theological writings are still in print.

Smith quotes J. I. Vance who told delegates to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1909 that despite its "many funerals" John Calvin's theology

> had a way of rising from the dead every generation. A doctrine that can ... incite antagonism of the kind that confronts Calvinism is feared, not as men fear a cause that is done for, but as they fear a force that threatens to undo them. (P.23).

Certainly Satan's heaviest artillery was directed against the Calvinistic positions. Robert Ingersoll, for example, selected Calvin and Edwards as his chief targets. Smith quotes from his oft-repeated address, "What Must We Do to Be Saved?" in which he described the Westminster creed as the worst in the world. Said Ingersoll,

> The Presbyterian god is the monster of monsters. He will enjoy for ever ... the wails of the damned. Hell is the festival of the Presbyterian god." (P.23).

Sir Edwin Arnold preferred "the very darkest things of the Hindo faith to the brightest sunshine of Calvinism" (P.24). More intellectual and philosophical attacks came from men like Oliver Wendell Holmes and John Miller, the latter writing a critique of Hodge's *Systematic Theology* entitled *Fetish in Theology* (1875). Smith gives abundant evidence of a sustained attack on Calvinism both on the popular and intellectual levels and shows how the Calvinists vigorously defended their position. Indeed some of their best work was done during this period.

Philip Schaff, the distinguished German American historian, who led those seeking a radical revision of the Westminster Standards, called for "a theology and a confession that is more human than Calvinism, more Divine than Arminianism and more Christian and catholic than either" (P.29). The revisionists were opposed by Patton,

Shedd and Warfield. This battle within Northern Presbyterianism was closely watched by other Calvinist denominations, most of them supporting the conservative position. Thus Calvinism was on the defensive on two fronts, the aggressive assaults of skeptics without and the pressure from liberals within. Smith comments:

> During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the artilleries of Arminians, and liberals and skeptics continually bombarded the Calvinist fortress. Such shelling gradually eroded the orthodox bulwarks, leaving them substantially weaker in 1915 than they had been in 1870. (P.35).

However, Calvinists were heavily involved in a warfare that was even more demanding and that was to have far-reaching consequences for American society.

This wider conflict had to do with the kind of society which was to exist in America. It came about because of the early impact in that land of Enlightenment philosophy from Europe, a philosophy which, as Smith rightly says, has its roots in ancient Greece and Rome,

> especially in the belief of Plato and Aristotle that humans could achieve self-actualization through their autonomous rational and moral powers. (P.37).

According to this philosophy, "man was the measure of all things." Smith rightly reminds us that

> while the secularism of the Enlightenment was limited to an intellectual and social elite, that of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries affected a much broader spectrum of society, including many in the labouring classes. (P.37).

Although most Americans were more or less attached to inherited Christian ideals, humanists were rapidly gaining control in cultural areas. Evolutionary philosophy was becoming increasingly influential. Scientific naturalism insisted that "physical nature constituted the sum total of reality" (P.40), and debunked such doctrines as creation and providence. Smith sums up the mood thus:

> Humanity was a product of natural evolution. Its dignity and worth were rooted not in the created image of a personal, all-powerful, and loving God, but in its position at the pinnacle of the evolutionary process. Humans were capable of determining their own destiny in this world, the only one that existed. They could solve their own problems, unaided by any deity, through reliance upon reason and the scientific method. Human knowledge owed little to reasoned faith in God's

> revelation, but was rooted in what reason discovered by experimentation. Human rationality was the final judge not only of material facts, but of moral values as well — of what is true, good, and beautiful. Society should be organized to promote human rather than divine aims. Ethics and all human values were grounded not in God's character and revelation but in this earthly experience. Since there was no immortality, life on earth was of supreme importance. (P.40).

The ramifications of this philosophy were enormous: they affected civil government, marriage and divorce, punishment of crime, education, the civil Sabbath and medical ethics; points that were forcibly made by A. A. Hodge who denounced the humanist programme. Smith describes this conflict as a clash of worldviews. A. A. Hodge, who led the Calvinist counter-attack, considered it essential to reassert Reformed convictions that God was sovereign, human beings totally depraved and in need of saving grace, that Christ reigned as King over families, churches, and nations and that civil government was a divine institution. Hodge also stood for Christian education, rejecting so-called "secular education with its 'absurd pretense' that religion could be ignored and yet not denied." (P.41).

Hodge's position was reinforced when Abraham Kuyper visited Princeton Theological Seminary in 1898 and gave his now famous *Lectures on Calvinism*. Kuyper saw theological modernism and secular philosophy as Calvinism's chief foes. He believed that only a comprehensive, Calvinistic worldview could match and overcome that of humanism. Thus the Calvinists insisted that because God was sovereign, all of life and culture must be subject to His dominion. In family, church, State and in agriculture, commerce, industry, education, art and science, believers should labour to promote the glory of God. The battle between Calvinism and humanism was at its height.

It was in the areas of civil government and education that the battle was hottest and the issues at stake most in evidence. The Calvinists were committed to the concept of a Christian America. The fourth chapter of Smith's book is devoted to this struggle. There were men like Professor Robert Thompson, a Northern Presbyterian, who said that

> those who see no God behind the state are driven by a kind of spiritual necessity to exalt the state into a God. (P.55).

J. M. Foster, a Reformed Presbyterian pastor in Boston, was in the forefront of the struggle for a Christian nation. He saw that if the Law

of God were ignored in the process of government, the will of a bare majority could tyrannize the rest of the citizens. (P.55). Lyman Atwater of Princeton asked, "Does a man acquire a right to deny or insult God when acting as a ruler or magistrate, which would be impious if done by him as a private citizen?" (P.56).

Smith describes the campaign of the National Reform Association, with its primary goal of amending the preamble of the U.S. Constitution to read:

> We the people of the United States, humbly acknowledging Almighty God as the source of all authority and power in civil government, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Governor among the nations, and His revealed will as of supreme authority, in order to constitute a Christian government ... do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. (P.59).

Founded in 1864 as an interdenominational movement, the chief supporters of NRA were Calvinists like Charles and A. A. Hodge. Smith points out that Reformed Presbyterians did much of the organization's everyday work.

> They edited the NRA's journal, *The Christian Statesman,* wrote most of the organization's promotional literature, and spoke frequently at NRA annual conventions. (P.59).

A prominent Reformed Presbyterian actively involved in the NRA programme was Professor David McAllister of the Reformed Presbyterian Geneva College, northwest of Pittsburgh. Smith pays considerable attention to the arguments employed by McAllister, who saw Christianity as the underlying standard in American society.

> McAllister thought this was evident from the beliefs of the nation's first settlers, the founding of civil institutions upon scriptural principles, and the universal American acknowledgment of the Bible as the measure of political morality. Thus, McAllister concluded, the United States had an unwritten Christian constitution and a non-Christian written constitution; it must amend the latter to conform with the former. (P.60).

McAllister had an ally in Lyman Atwater who said that while America was not as Christian as it should be, its responsibility to be Christian was evident in its "origin, history, traditions, institutions, in the whole drift ... of our social and national life," and this was emphasized by the fact that the vast majority of Americans who professed any religion confessed Christianity. (P.61).

On the other side Ingersoll wrote that the government of the United States

> derives its power from the consent of man. It is government with which God had nothing whatever to do.... The people [alone] must determine what is politically right and what is wrong. (P.60).

W. F. Jamieson expressed the view that

> the proposed religious amendment would make the Bible the new Constitution and a jealous, cruel, devious 'Jewish divinity' the source of all authority in the government. (As stated by Smith, Pp. 66, 65).

The NRA's amendment was before the U.S. House of Representatives in 1874 and again in 1896. On both occasions it failed to obtain the necessary support. Smith, who does not endorse NRA aims, makes this sad comment:

> The amendment was defeated primarily because many Americans did not believe it was necessary, fair, or biblically justified to recognize officially the lordship of Jesus Christ over the nation. (P.65).

He records that many Christians who did not endorse the NRA programme, joined with secularists, Jews, Unitarians, Deists and others to defeat its aims.

Smith considers the position of Reformed Presbyterians, whom he terms "the chief supporters of the NRA." It is gratifying to find an author who has taken the trouble to read the Covenanters on this subject and who is familiar with names like Foster, McAllister, Coleman, McFeeters, R. J. George and others, and who understands, although not accepting, the position they held. This is in marked contrast to Leonard Verduin, who brackets the Reformed Presbyterian Church with Roman Catholics in their view of Church-State relations![1]

Smith rejects the concept of a Christian State, as does Verduin, although on somewhat different grounds, and takes his stand for "cultural pluralism" in which

> different groups which make up a society should be free to develop their own versions of public life. This position opposes the idea that a single, agreed upon set of attitudes and values must control the public order. (P.72).

In the chapter dealing with the clash over educational ideas, we see that the basic issues are the same and the battle-lines are drawn in the same places. Smith gives a most informative account of the struggle by men like the Hodges and Robert Dabney in the interests of Christian

education. Most Calvinists agreed with Charles Hodge who declared, "education without religion is irreligion." Professor Robert Thompson of the University of Pennsylvania said that if the schools totally ignored religion they would provide a "lesson in practical atheism that shuts God out of all but certain selected parts of life." (P.78). Smith gives a fair assessment of the views of those who held this position.

> Ignoring God's relationship to history, mathematics, literature, and other subjects, Calvinists argued, promoted a false understanding: it suggested that God was irrelevant to the realities with which these disciplines dealt. (P.78).

Smith also describes the humanist approach to education and how some denominations, in particular the Christian Reformed Church, developed an extensive system of schools after 1890, without the help of local tax money. This section on education will repay careful study. Smith, however, supports "educational pluralism" consistently with his over-all cultural pluralism.

The author's chapters on the challenge of Scientific Naturalism, the roots of modern morality, the spirit of Capitalism and the Cross and the social order, contain a wealth of information and his analysis of humanism as it bears on science, art and morality is brilliant. Smith writes well. Seldom does one find a present-day book as well written as this one. It is a model for modern authors.

In his final chapter, "Calvinism and Secularism," Smith wrestles with the question of a Christian or a pluralistic State. He favours the latter.

> Neither the Declaration nor the Constitution directly mentions Christianity or even the Bible. Although America's religious heritage has been substantially Christian, our political system was not built upon the idea that our nation should be a distinctively Christian one. Nor according to the Scriptures, should it be. While we should strive to bring biblical values to bear upon all public policies and practices, we must guarantee all religious viewpoints, including secular humanism, the right to participate in shaping public life. (P.178).

The author offers no evidence for his statement that Scripture does not require an acknowledgment of Christ by the nation. Indeed he asks

> Where does the New Testament teach that God's kingdom is political? Where does it command believers to build a distinctly Christian state? (P.178).

We might ask, with equal force, where does the New Testament teach

that God's kingdom *excludes* the political? And what are we to do with the closing exhortation of the second Psalm addressed to earthly rulers, bidding them submit to Christ? or with Revelation 6: 15-17 which shows the judgment of those rulers who took counsel against Jehovah and His Anointed, when the wrath of His Anointed was kindled?

There is a recurring self-contradiction in Smith's position. The last sentence of his book reads:

> Only as people experience the risen Christ in a personal way and rest social structures and practices more fully on divine principles will we solve our perplexing individual and social problems.

That fully agrees with his earlier statement:

> As Americans have rejected God's authority over cultural life, flagrant immorality, militant amorality, growing materialism, and pervasive despair have resulted. Law has lost its majesty and moral chaos is widespread. (P.5).

It is hard to reconcile with such excellent statements the comments of Smith in support of cultural pluralism:

> When various groups advance different visions of life and reality, the most just and effective arrangement would be to allow each group to develop its own unique principles in the public areas of government, business, education, and social relations.... By encouraging each person to choose which set of principles he supports, this approach would challenge the current practice of many Americans who divide their lives into public and private sectors with appropriate philosophies for each. It could enhance respect for individual faith-commitments, and it could stimulate people to conduct politics on the basis of principles rather than on personality and patronage. (P.164).

Smith goes on to envisage a society in which humanists, existentialists, socialists and naturalists would contribute, along with Christians, to civil righteousness, since they "accept aspects of biblical morality while eschewing biblical theology..."! (P.165). Yet he declares:

> As we seek a Christian transformation of culture, our principal model ought to be the Scriptures — not a particular period in history. (P.177).

He makes the point that in 1870 American society was "certainly not consistently Christian." (P.177). True. But which society is preferable, that of 1870 or 1980?

Smith repeatedly speaks of advocates of a Christian State wishing to

"force" unbelievers to accept their principles. This is hardly fair. It has never been the intention of such men to establish a totalitarian regime. Besides, the cultural pluralism advocated in this book is without chart or compass: when Smith speaks of "principles" in this connection, we must ask, Whose principles?

This is an important book. The author has placed us in his debt. There is a wealth of detail in every chapter and the notes at the end are a mine of information for those who wish to study the subjects discussed. The author hints at the desire of the nation's first settlers to found civil institutions upon Scriptural principles (P.60). His book would have been improved by an opening chapter dealing with this. For as R. J. Rushdoony has shown, the concept of a secular State was virtually non-existent in 1776 as well as in 1787, when the American Constitution was framed and no less so when the Bill of Rights was adopted. Says Rushdoony:

> To read the Constitution as the charter for a secular state is to misread history, and to misread it radically.... Why then is there, in the main, an *absence* of any reference to Christianity in the Constitution? ... There is an absence of reference because the framers of the Constitution did not believe that this was an area of jurisdiction for the federal government. It would not have occurred to them to attempt to re-establish that which the colonists had fought against, namely, religious control and establishment by the central government.[2]

Rushdoony contends that the federal government did not secularize itself and that "every constitutional state had some form of a Christian establishment or settlement which it jealously guarded." "This," he says, was an area of *states'* rights, not of federal control."[3] ... That is another approach to the situation that has developed in America and it is a pity that Smith did not review this period in the history of his country. Certainly his contribution to the discussion about the place of religion in the public arena is valuable. This reviewer, however, finds his conclusion, in which he pleads for cultural pluralism, weak and his rejection of the acknowledgment of Christ by the nation, unconvincing — not that the mere addition of some words to a written Constitution would make a nation Christian! In this area of thought, Herman Dooyeweerd is more impressive when he asserts:

> ... the State is subject to Christ's kingship, which ought to find its own typical expression in the internal life of the State. Holy Scripture is too explicit on this subject for a Christian to be permitted to think that the structure of the State as such falls outside the Kingdom of Christ.... A

> State that does not bow before Christ's sceptre and excludes Him from all political activities, although living in the light of the revealed Word, remains irrevocably lost in the *civitas terrena,* the kingdom of darkness. But God maintains the divine office and the divine structural law of the body politic also in this state.[4]

Recently Professor Donald Macleod, of the Free Church of Scotland's College, Edinburgh, noted the aggressive missionary activities of Islam in Britain, including his native Scotland, a strategy which he says "exploits the facilities offered by Western democracies," and which is more to be feared than Gadaffi's terrorists. Macleod brings the problem into focus thus:

> Islamic residents in Britain have a right to their own mosques. But even here there are grave questions to face. Democracy would not survive the triumph of Islam. Nor would toleration.... How, without sowing, the seeds of our own destruction, can we guarantee to our Islamic neighbours those civil rights which we owe to our Christian heritage (and which they could never enjoy in the countries of their origin)?[5]

Without discussing now the humanistic nature of modern democracy, we may well repeat, How indeed? Professor Macleod reminds us that "the Christian Church is not even allowed to exist in Saudi Arabia"? Does cultural pluralism have the answer? Can Christianity be dove-tailed into an amalgam of non-Christian creeds and philosophies, or even co-exist with them in a coalition of political and social administration? We think not. Better be guided by Biblical teaching than pragmatic expediency. Better witness faithfully to an apostate world-order than capitulate to the world's demands.

References

1. *The Anatomy of a Hybrid,* P. 37. Smith is mistaken, however, when he refers to the Reformed Presbyterian Church as one of the "descendants of the Covenanter or Seceder Branch of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland" (P. 15). In fact the Reformed Presbyterian Church is not a Secession Church.
2. *The Nature of the American System,* Pp. 2, 3.
3. Ibid., P. 3.
4. *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought,* Vol. 3, Pp. 504, 505.
5. The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland, June 1986, Pp. 136, 137.

JEREMIAH'S PROPHECY OF THE NEW COVENANT IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

by Hugh J. Blair

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It is important to remember that prophecy had a message for the day in which it was made as well as for generations still to come. The Book of Revelation, for example, had its setting in history, in the persecutions that threatened the existence of the church in the early days of Christianity; and its primary message was a message of encouragement to the church in face of those persecutions. That is not to say that it had not a message for suffering Christians throughout the history of the church right up to today and on to the end of time. But that message has all the more pointed relevance to every contemporary situation because it had a pointed relevance to the situation when it was first given. Jay Adams writes

> There was only one sensible way for the suffering church of Asia Minor to interpret Revelation — the way it was intended to be interpreted by its first readers — as a book primarily pertaining to events shortly to take place in their midst. With this encouraging message in their hearts (a message of God's providential control over all that was transpiring) no wonder so many of them were able to face Nero's lions and burning stakes fearlessly....
> Having said this, it is important to note that ... Revelation abounds in principles, exhortations and promises which have been applicable to every succeeding age. The contemporary view robs us of no future promises.[1]

Graeme Goldsworthy makes the same point—

> One of the neglected aspects of Revelation in modern interpretations of it is the occasion of its writing. We should never lose sight of the historic circumstances out of which this extraordinary book arose ...[2]

And then, significantly and very movingly, he dedicates his book "To all who suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, and especially to the Christians in Soviet-occupied Estonia." A setting in history only makes more relevant a message of encouragement for a contemporary situation.

The purpose of the present article is to apply that principle to the "new covenant" prophesied in Jeremiah 31: 31-34. Little, if any, attention has been paid to the importance of the historical context of Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant. George Adam Smith suggested that—

> the epithet *New* applied to Covenant was most relevant to the prophet's and his people's recent sense of the failure of the ancient covenant, as repeated and enforced in Deuteronomy. In spite of the excitement caused by the discovery of the Book in which it was written, and the recital of its words throughout the land, the Old Covenant had failed to capture the heart of the people or to secure from them more than the formal and superstitious observance of the letter of its Torah.[3]

It would appear that an understanding of the significance of that new covenant for us can only be enriched by a consideration of its setting in the time of Josiah.

Josiah's Reformation — a failure?

It is difficult to assess the success or otherwise of Josiah's reformation, since his untimely death, when he went out to fight with Necho king of Egypt at Megiddo in spite of clear warnings (2 Chronicles 35: 20-24), immediately led to the reversal of all that he had accomplished. Had he lived, it could well have been that reformation in accordance with the Book of the Law would have been continued and intensified. But his death changed everything. The people appointed his son Shallum, who took the throne name Jehoahaz, to the throne, and though he reigned for only three months before being deposed by Pharaoh-necho and carried off as a prisoner to Egypt, it is recorded in 2 Kings 23:32 that "he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done." Pharaoh-necho replaced him with his older brother, Eliakim, whose name was changed to Jehoiakim, His reign showed how temporary and superficial the reformation under Josiah had been. The abominations of Manasseh's reign came flooding back into the nation's life. The prophets who dared to protest were disregarded and threatened. Jeremiah was in constant danger of imprisonment and death, and the king with his own hands cut up and burned the denunciations and warnings of the prophet (Jeremiah 36). When Urijah, the son of Shemaiah, testified against the iniquities of the land in the same terms as Jeremiah, Jehoiakim sought to put him to death, and, when he fled to Egypt, had him extradited and murdered. But the worst feature of

the situation was the blatant idolatry of the people, castigated by Jeremiah in chapter 7. Their burning incense to Baal and their offerings to the Queen of Heaven were incredibly linked with an incongruous confidence that the temple of the Lord in their midst would guarantee their survival. Scholars are not agreed on the dating of Jeremiah 7, but the picture of apostasy which it presents fits better with the early part of Jehoiakim's reign than the reign of Josiah. Certainly a similar warning — if not the same warning — in chapter 26 is dated "early in the reign of Jehoiakim." The idolatry of the people had its fruit in theft, murder, adultery and perjury, providing ample evidence that Josiah's reformation had been speedily reversed. So far as the mass of the people were concerned, it had been largely a failure.

Jeremiah's attitude to Josiah's reformation is revealing. While Jeremiah may not have taken an active part in the execution of the reforms, it seems clear that his earlier prophecies played a large part, as did those of Zephaniah, in the reforms that began in the twelfth year of Josiah's reign. Donald W. B. Robinson sets in parallel columns prophecies from *Zephaniah* and the early chapters of Jeremiah and events recorded in the account of the reformation in 2 Kings 23, and demonstrates that there were clear correspondences between the prophecies and the reforms.[4] John Bright maintains that Zephaniah and "the young Jeremiah" did much "to prepare the ground for reform."[5] He goes on to say that Jeremiah "certainly must have approved of its eradication of pagan practices and its attempt to revive the theology of the Mosaic covenant."[6] It is significant, however, that Jeremiah's praise of Josiah in Jeremiah 22: 15ff, where he castigated Josiah's son for his outrageous conduct, does not include any reference to the reformation. Josiah is praised rather for his integrity of character and his generosity.

Jeremiah indicates in chapter 4, verse 3 his clear awareness that a superficial reform will not be adequate: "Break up your unploughed ground, and do not sow among thorns." Anything less than a radical reformation will amount to the futility of sowing on ground that has not been cleared of weeds and thorns. Chapter 17, verse 1 similarly gives a realistic assessment of the near impossibility of a real remedy: "Judah's sin is engraved with an iron tool, inscribed with a flint point on the tablets of their hearts and on the horns of their altars." Something radical was needed, and God's word to Jeremiah made very clear what that was — *a new covenant*. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."

The need for a new covenant

Was there a need for a new covenant because the old covenant had been faulty? Hebrews 8: 7 suggests that that was the case: "For if there had been nothing wrong with the first covenant, no place would have been sought for another" (NIV). But v. 8 goes on immediately to put the blame squarely where it belonged: "But God found fault *with the people*...." A new covenant was necessary not because the old covenant was faulty or inadequate, but because the people had broken it. "Finding fault *with them,* he saith, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah..." What was their fault? They had broken the covenant, that is, the law which spelled out how God's redeemed people should live. Jeremiah had only one thing to say about the old covenant that had to be replaced by a new covenant: it had been broken: "which my covenant they brake." It is noteworthy that what was discovered in the Book of the Law, which was at the heart of Josiah's reformation, was the covenant. Covenant and law were linked inextricably in the people's thinking. The Book of the Law in 2 Kings 22:8 becomes the Book of the Covenant in 23: 2, 21. Law in the Bible is covenant law, and breaking the law and breaking the covenant are one and the same.

How then did the people break the old covenant?

(a) They broke it first by turning away from the Lord.

Jeremiah 11 spells out in detail what was involved in the breaking of the covenant. Basic to every breach was the people's turning to other gods. "They have followed other gods to serve them. Both the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken the covenant which I made with their forefathers.... You have as many gods as you have towns, O Judah; and the altars you have set up to burn incense to that shameful god Baal are as many as the streets of Jerusalem." (11: 10, 13, NIV).

Israel's turning away from the Lord to other gods involved their repudiation of the God Who had redeemed them from Egypt. Their breaking of His law had behind it their failure to acknowledge the Lord as the Lord Who had brought them out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. The Ten Commandments did not begin, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." They began with, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Failure to acknowledge that had its consequence in their breaking of the law that He had given for a redeemed people. Behind the breaking of law there is always the

repudiation of a relationship. The Lord's message to Jeremiah in 31: 32 underlines the importance of that relationship when He says that the setting of the covenant was His taking them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt. That was the sign of the covenant made with their fathers: "I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt." There we have a wonderful picture of the personal, redemptive relationship involved in God's covenant with His people.

Then there follows the consequence of that covenant relationship: "And I ruled over them." Various interpretations have been given of the difficult phrase translated in A.V. and N.I.V., "though I was a husband to them." The verb used (ba'al) means basically, 'rule over', 'be a master', and frequently, derived from the basic meaning, 'be a husband'. In the context of the covenant — and marriage is a covenant relationship — it means 'rule over,' and signifies submission. Literally, Jeremiah 31: 32 (31 in Hebrew) may be read — omitting the vital parenthesis, "which my covenant they brake" — "Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ... and *I* (emphatic) ruled over them, declares the Lord." H. L. Ellison interprets it differently, though he takes the verb in its basic sense: "forasmuch as they brake My covenant, so I had to lord it over them."[7] "He was acting as a despotic ruler (a Baal), for this was the only way to handle them once the covenant had been broken." "In other words, the whole history of Israel from the golden calf on was lived out under the sign of a broken covenant." But Ellison senses that that interpretation suggests that God is no longer acting in grace, for he has to explain, "All God's dealings with Israel were in grace, even when that grace expressed itself in judgment." It seems better to take the account of God's dealings with His people like this: "I made a covenant with them... . I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt... . I ruled over them...."

Is there a pointed and poignant play on words in Jeremiah 31: 32? Because God had redeemed them from Egypt, he was to be their Master, their Ruler (or even their loving Husband, claiming their submission), literally, their Baal. But they had chosen a different Baal — the "I" is emphatic, "*I* ruled over them", suggesting another ruler — and that meant the breaking of the covenant relationship. Hosea gives a vivid illustration of that kind of spiritual adultery and the lawlessness which followed from it. The people broke the covenant first by turning away from the Lord.

(b) The people broke the covenant by their disobedience.

Divorced from the covenant (by their unfaithfulness), they had no incentive to keep the law, and lawlessness abounded. Jeremiah in chapter 11, dealing with the broken covenant, brought God's message that obedience was the mark of the covenant, and that disobedience was the evidence of the broken covenant and must result in judgment: "I said, 'Obey me and do everything I command you, and you will be my people, and I will be your God.... From the time I brought your forefathers up from Egypt until today, I warned them again and again, saying, 'Obey me.' But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubbornness of their evil hearts" (11: 4, 7, 8). The law, instead of being God's instruction for a redeemed people, became something external, imposed on them, which they felt they could accept or reject as they pleased. The broken covenant issued in lawlessness.

(c) The people broke the covenant by their trust in ritual rather than in spiritual reality.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews uses the contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant to stress in chapters 8-10 the futility of ritual that is divorced from spiritual reality. It is significant that his argument in 8:13-10:14 is framed by two quotations of the passage in Jeremiah 31, in 8: 8-12 and 10: 15-17: all that comes between sees the new covenant as rejecting outward ceremonial for spiritual reality. Paul makes the same point in his reference to the new covenant in 2 Corinthians 3: 6 — "not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." The distinction made in *Hebrews* is the distinction between the shadow and the reality. A real sanctuary lay behind the earthly tabernacle: a real Sacrifice lay behind the sacrifices of the old dispensation, and a real Priest behind the Levitical priesthood. But the trouble was that the people to whom *Hebrews* was first written were quite happy with the shadow and did not want to go beyond it to the spiritual reality which it represented. An earthly sanctuary, outward forms of worship, and a religion that was concerned with externals satisfied them. And the writer insists that the new covenant means that they must go beyond these to the reality, which is Christ.

It is quite clear that the writer to the Hebrews in speaking of the old covenant is concerned simply with its ritual, and is dealing with the ceremonial law. That is why he can maintain so strongly that the old covenant would inevitably pass away. Calvin thinks indeed that it was this concern with ceremonies which made the writer of *Hebrews* speak

"more opprobriously of the law" (meaning the old covenant) than Jeremiah did. He says it was "because there were some mischief-makers wrongly jealous for the law who obscured the clarity of the gospel by a perverse zeal for ceremonies."[8] But there were the same kind of "mischief-makers" in Jeremiah's time as well. Jeremiah 7 is an indictment of those who put such trust in the Temple building that they were convinced that their survival was guaranteed. God had to remind them of what He had done to an earlier building because of the sins of a covenant-breaking people: "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.... Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight ..." (7: 12, 14, 15). Trust in externals was futile and would be judged. The NIV translation of 11: 15 gives us God's question: "What is My beloved doing in My temple as she works out her evil schemes with many? Can consecrated meat avert (your punishment)?" Ritual without reality is the evidence of a broken covenant.

There was need, then, for a new covenant to replace the broken covenant, because there had been a repudiation of a personal relationship with the Lord; because there had been disobedience to God's law; and because ritual had taken the place of spiritual reality.

How new was the new covenant?

In view of the fact that fault lay not with the covenant but with the people who had broken the covenant, the question must be asked, How new was the new covenant? Was it something different? If there was dissimilarity, where is it to be seen?

Certain relevant points demand careful consideration. (a) Anticipating the fulfilment of the promise of the new covenant in Christ, it must be noted that in the New Testament Christ is seen as the fulfilment not only of the "new" covenant of Jeremiah 31, but also of the "old" covenant made to Abraham and renewed to David. Paul, writing to the Galatians, makes the point that even a human covenant if it has been duly established cannot be set aside, and goes on to apply that principle to God's covenant with Abraham: "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds', meaning many people, but 'and to your seed', meaning one person, who is Christ" (Galatians 3: 16, NIV). And Luke 1: 68ff sees in the birth of John the Baptist, Christ's forerunner, the beginning of

the fulfilment of the covenant made with Abraham and renewed to David.

(b) Jeremiah himself in 31: 35ff and 33: 20 uses the permanence of the ordinances of sun, moon and stars, and day and night, to illustrate the perpetuity of the covenant made with the nation of Israel and with David. "If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever" (31: 36). "If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant ..." (33: 20, 21). The old covenant is an everlasting covenant.

(c) The fact is that God's covenant relationship to His people does not change. Basic to it, as enunciated at Sinai (Leviticus 26: 12), is, "I will be your God, and ye shall be My people." Jeremiah 31: 33 proclaims it yet again, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people." That basic statement of the covenant does not change, and will be found even in the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21: 7): "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son."

There is a continuity in the covenant that cannot be set aside. And yet Jeremiah 31: 32 declares that the new covenant is "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers...." The dissimilarity is indicated by the vital words in the verse, "which my covenant they brake". The new covenant is not according to the broken covenant. The authors of the commentary on *Jeremiah* in the *New Bible Commentary Revised* state it without qualification: "Wherein lies the newness of the new covenant, as compared with the great covenant-making at Sinai (cf. Exodus 24: 3-8)? *They broke.* This is the one feature of dissimilarity which Jeremiah notes...."[9] And yet the dissimilarity is so great that it has divided our Bible into Old Covenant and New Covenant, and our history into B.C. and A.D. It is time for us to return to the setting of the new covenant in the context of the failure of Josiah's reformation, to discover what changes had to be made if the broken covenant was to be made new.

Characteristics of the new covenant

(a) The new covenant would be *effectual rather than ineffectual* as the old covenant had been. The failure of the old covenant was manifest in the fact that it had been broken. That is the first point that is made in Jeremiah 31: 32. The new covenant would be "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers ... which my

covenant they brake." The history of Israel was the history of a broken covenant: again and again the people had forsaken their God and disobeyed His commands. Josiah's reformation had seemed to stem the tide of apostasy and disobedience for a time, but, as we have seen, on his death the old story began to be rewritten. There was need for a new covenant that would be effectual, and that new covenant was promised.

(b) The new covenant would be *internal rather than external.* "I will put My law in their inward parts." John Bright's assessment of what had been accomplished by Josiah's reformation is that

> the reform tended to be satisfied with external measures which, while not profoundly affecting the spiritual life of the nation, engendered a false sense of peace that nothing could penetrate.[10]

Certainly Jeremiah 7: 21-23 stresses that no external worship can compensate for failure to obey—

> This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go ahead, add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices and eat the meat yourselves! For when I brought your forefathers out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people (NIV).

The essence of the covenant — "I will be your God and you will be my people" — was linked with obedience, and that obedience had to be the obedience of the heart. The new covenant promised, "I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts."

(c) The new covenant would be *personal rather than nominal.* God insisted even in the days of Josiah that the personal relationship of "I will be their God and they will be my people" had been broken in a breach likened only to the divorce that breaks a marriage. Attention is drawn to the fact that Israel had already been divorced for her unfaithfulness, but equally unfaithful Judah was no better than her sister, and refused to learn the lesson of Israel's exile—

> During the reign of king Josiah, the Lord said to me, 'Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there.... I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce.... In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretence,' declares the Lord (Jeremiah 3: 6, 8, 10, NIV).

The *New Bible Commentary Revised* makes the comment: "*In*

pretence; the reformation under Josiah did not go very deep. Judah returned, but only superficially." Her return to the Lord was not real but feigned, not personal but nominal. Judah's divorce was as real as Israel's. The personal relationship had been broken.

But the new covenant promises a renewal of the personal relationship that had been broken. The call to repentance of Jeremiah 3: 14 points the way to restoration: ' "Return, faithless people," declares the Lord, "for I am your husband" ' (NIV). And 31: 34 describes the relationship in the most intimate terms: "Know the Lord.... They shall all know me..." The verb used to describe the most intimate relationship between man and woman (Cf. Genesis 4: 1) is used to describe the relationship between God and His people. The new covenant promises a renewal of that personal relationship. "I will be their God and they shall be My people."

(d) The new covenant would be *universal rather than special.* "They shall all *(all of them)* know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them... ." The weakness of Josiah's reformation was that it was not really supported by the mass of the people. It is significant that in 2 Kings 23, where the reformation is described in detail, verse after verse describes what the king did, and only at the end of verse 3 are the people mentioned at all. Even there, while most modern translations take "the people stood to the covenant" as implying their full commitment to it, the verb used is exactly the same as that at the beginning of the verse, describing the king's literal standing by the pillar. Perhaps the people's standing was more a formality than an actual acceptance of the covenant! In any case, the swift return to the abominations of Manasseh's reign as soon as Josiah was dead suggests that support for his reforms was not whole-hearted. No doubt others as well as Josiah were enthusiastic for reform, but enthusiasm was by no means universal. The new covenant would set that right when all of them, "from the least of them unto the greatest of them" would know the Lord. It would be universal, not limited to a special class.

(e) The new covenant would be *evangelical rather than penal.* "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

It is surely significant that the effect which the reading of the Book of the Law had on Josiah and presumably on all who heard it was one of utter fear and alarm. "And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes." And he said, "Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book to do according unto all that which is written concerning us" (2 Kings 22:

11, 13). Huldah the prophetess left them in no doubt about its penal content. "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will bring evil upon this place, and upon all the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read.... My wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched" (2 Kings 22: 16, 17). There was, of course, far, far more in the Book of the Law than punishment for sin; there was grace, there was the promise of forgiveness to the penitent. But they did not see that, so deep was the conviction of sin that the law had wrought in them. They needed the reassurance of the new covenant: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." There was a message of grace and forgiveness. The new covenant would be evangelical.

It is clear that the need for a new covenant stemmed from the fact that the old covenant necessarily was linked with outward ordinances which, while they represented to faith God's eternal provision for His people's need, were open to misunderstanding and misuse where faith was lacking. The old covenant was ineffectual because its outward ordinances — "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," as Paul describes it in Ephesians 2: 15 — had been misunderstood. Such misunderstandings surfaced unmistakably in Jeremiah's day, but they were always there, and reappeared again in the Pharisaism of Christ's day, which rejected the new covenant fulfilled in Him.

A law, imposed from without, emphasizing externals, and divorced from the covenant of grace, could not change a man's heart. The sense of a need for a personal relationship with God might be blurred in communal worship and outward ceremonies. A religion which focused attention on special individuals, such as king or priest, might seem to have little relevance for the ordinary man. Detailed instruction for the ordering of the daily life of a redeemed people could harden into a legalism in which the penalties for disobedience were stressed to the exclusion of forgiveness. All these misunderstandings of the old covenant cried out for a new covenant that would be effectual rather than ineffectual, internal rather than external, personal rather than nominal, universal rather than special, and evangelical rather than penal. That new covenant, promised in a day when the weakness of the old covenant had been demonstrated beyond question, was fulfilled when in a quiet Upper Room Christ took the bread and the wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, shed for many for the remission of sins."

The fulfilment in Christ

The simplicity of the phrases used in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper gives a wonderful illustration of the truth that all the characteristics of the new covenant were fulfilled in Christ.

"Take, eat." The partaking of the bread and wine symbolises Christ's coming by His Spirit into the heart and life of the believing participant to give inward power and life.

"This is *My* body broken for *you.*" Faith in Him means entering into an intensely personal relationship.

"Drink ye all of it." There is abundant provision in Him for every believer.

"Shed for many for the remission of sins." Here is the assurance of a full forgiveness made possible by the offering of the perfect Sacrifice by the perfect Substitute, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

There is one link between the promise of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31: 31-34 and its fulfilment in Christ that has perhaps not been sufficiently noted. The verb translated "I will put" in the sentence "I will put my law in their inward parts" is the verb "to give," and it is in the Hebrew perfect tense, indicating absolute assurance. *"I will give..."* Like an echo we hear the words, "This is My body which is given for you" — broken *and given.* We, by God's grace, reach out empty hands and take His unspeakable gift.

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THE CHALLENGE OF MISSION

by Rev. Thomas Houston, D.D.

Thomas Houston, Reformed Presbyterian pastor of the congregation of Knockbracken, near Belfast, was appointed Professor of Exegetical and Pastoral Theology and Ecclesiastical History in 1854 by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. This extract is taken from an article addressed to the youth of the Church on "the Duties of Practical Religion," (Works Doctrinal and Practical, Vol. II, p. 196ff.) Although published in 1876, the principles here enunciated are still valid and timely.

Among those things which appear to us indispensable to sustain and carry forward enlarged missionary efforts, we notice—

1. *More fervent prayer — individual and united — for the conversion of the world.* When our blessed Lord taught his disciples to pray, and gave them an inspired model, to which all their prayers are to be conformed, he placed among the first of the petitions which it contains the request, *"Thy kingdom come."* He has impressively taught us, that the conversion of the world should occupy a principal place in all our prayers; that it should be sought above any blessings that we ask for ourselves, and that the fulfilment of this petition should be a matter of daily concern. The Saviour himself, as our exalted Advocate in glory, makes continual intercession on this subject, "For Zion's sake," He declares, speaking with interest and delight in this work, "will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isiah 62: 1). The imitation of his blessed example He has made obligatory upon all his faithful followers. Verses 6, 7 — "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Those who profess Christ's name are constituted "the Lord's remembrancers." They are to put Him in mind of his covenant-engagement, plead his promises, and cease not to wrestle importunately in prayer, until Zion's enemies are brought down, and Jerusalem becomes the joy of the whole earth. The emphatic command, contained in the second psalm, is of the same import, "Ask

of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psalm 2: 8). And of similar purport, too, is the prediction in the seventy-second psalm, verse 15, "Prayer also shall be made for Him continually, and daily shall He be praised." These declarations evidently imply that the Church is to ask earnestly, and importunately supplicate for the conversion of the nations. In connection with the faithful performance of this duty, the Divine guarantee is given, that the heathen shall be converted, the uttermost part of the earth become the Redeemer's inheritance, and that his praise shall be celebrated in all nations.

It may be added, that wherever eminent success has attended evangelical efforts, there has been this spirit of fervent persevering prayer. So was it in the apostolic times, and at the period of the Reformation; and the most honoured of modern missionaries, such as Swartz and Brainerd, have prevailed for the conversion of the heathen more by their earnest pleadings than by all their other labours. As the revival in "the valley of vision" immediately followed the prophet's earnest call to the Spirit to come from the four winds, and not his preaching to "the dry bones," so the Church will be revived, Israel gathered in, and the heathen converted, when the spirit of importunate supplication shall universally pervade the Church.

There is the highest reason why all other instrumentality should be proved to be useless without prayer; why the blessing should be withheld till the Church is stirred to mighty wrestlings for the conversion of Jew and Gentile. God will not give his glory to another. Prayer is the expression of faith putting the work into the hands of Omnipotence, and confiding in Him to accomplish it. When Christians are excited to plead earnestly, and to give the Lord no rest, they "move the Hand that moves the heavens." In answer to the Church's supplications, the Spirit shall yet be poured out like the flood upon the dry ground. "The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Have we not reason to fear, that in many modern missionary efforts there has been undue reliance upon other means to the neglect of prayer? Do not the fewness and coldness of the Church's prayers for the evangelization of the world, give sad indication that we are not yet awakened to a proper sense of the importance of the missionary undertaking? It should ever be remembered, that as exertions without prayer are *infidelity*, so prayer without corresponding efforts is *hypocrisy*. Let the young set themselves to remedy this evil. Let them learn to plead, and to engage others to pray much for the coming of

Christ's kingdom. Let them give to this matter the position which the Hearer of prayer designed that it should occupy; let them place it at the head of all their supplications, and let all their efforts be prayerful. The fire of consecrated zeal enkindled at the mercy-seat will propel them to holy and sustained activity. God will accept and bless prayerful exertions; and those who become the Lord's remembrancers will be acknowledged as the instruments of establishing and rendering Jerusalem "a praise in the earth."

2. *A more devoted spirit in the Church* is essential to the advancement of the missionary cause. We must regard the Redeemer's glory as the great end in all things. Christians must learn to live not to themselves, and to be willing to spend and be spent for the establishment of Christ's kingdom. They must practise habitually lessons of self-denial; and regarding the world as made by Christ, and for Christ, they must consider their work in the world as that of bringing back a revolted province to subjection to its rightful Lord. Low worldly aims and ends must be discarded. We must overcome the world by faith, and be crucified to it by the power of the Cross. Thus shall we be prepared to estimate aright the wretchedness of the world without the Gospel, and to feel the weight of our obligations to labour continually for its amelioration. Devotedness in ministers and candidates for the ministry would impel them to go forth as labourers, to gather in the spiritual harvest. A similar spirit prevailing among the members of the Church would lead them to devise "liberal things," to pray with all earnestness for the conversion of sinners, and cheerfully to contribute all in their power for the accomplishment of an end so important and glorious. The young are the most suitable instruments for exciting and increasing such a spirit throughout the Church. Self-denial manifested by them in relinquishing the world's allurements, and in devoting such worldly things as they possess to the advancement of Christ's cause, will have a salutary effect upon others. The fervour of youth will give vigour to benevolent undertakings, and the example of baptized youth, acting in the spirit of their baptismal engagement, as soldiers following the Captain of their salvation, as He goes forth conquering and to conquer, will animate older members of the Church to embark with new life in missionary work, and to prosecute it with resolute perseverance. The young have it certainly in their power either to give a new and powerful impulse to the missionary cause by their devotedness, or to impede it by lukewarmness and indifference. Oh! let them consider that the Church greatly needs to be excited to redoubled exertions in this cause, that a

rich blessing will be the fruit of their consecrated zeal, and that a blight and curse must follow the want of it. Let them gird up their loins for their work. Let them stand forth before the Church and the world, as single-hearted and devoted servants, to perform it. Thus will they influence others to take part in the sacred enterprize. Christ's cause will be greatly advanced, and many may be brought to say of them, as in a day of revival, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8: 23).

3. *Enlarged liberality in the Church* is required for the prosperity of the missionary undertaking. The offerings of Christian benevolence must be on a scale commensurate to the magnitude of the undertaking. The power of Christian love expands the heart, and genuine zeal for the propagation of the Gospel will root out of it the love of the world, and will lead Christians to regard it as a high privilege to dedicate their substance to the establishment of Christ's kingdom. When the tabernacle was to be erected in the wilderness, the offerings for this purpose were so readily furnished, and so abundant, that proclamation had to be made that the gifts should be stayed. Afterwards, when David had made preparation for "building a house to the Lord, exceeding magnifical," the princes and people presented freely the offerings of a liberal benevolence, and gladdening the heart of the aged monarch, so that, under the power of a singular effusion of the Spirit, he exclaimed, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (1 Chronicles 29: 14). The introduction of the Christian dispensation was distinguished by eminent liberality. When the Spirit was plentifully poured out at Pentecost, one of the happy fruits was, that the converts willingly parted with their goods, and regarded their worldly substance as given them only for supplying the wants of the poor, and for the furtherance of the Gospel. Indeed, at all times in which true religion has flourished, and the cause of the truth has advanced, a spirit of enlarged liberality has characterized those who have been honoured as approved instruments in this good work.

In our own day, although large sums have been contributed to the treasury of Christian benevolence, yet the Church has much to learn on this subject. In the great majority of cases, the offerings of Christians for the spread of the Gospel have been irregular, fitful, given under the impulse of some temporary excitement, and bearing no proportion either to their own weighty obligations or to the wants of a perishing world. The consequence has been, that the cause of

4. The youth of the Church should seriously consider whether they are not *called to give themselves as agents in the missionary work.* Greatly as we require an increase of pecuniary support, a devoted instrumentality for propagating the Gospel is much more needed. When the Saviour would have the tidings of his mission heralded throughout Judea, He directed his disciples to "pray the Lord of harvest" to send "faithful labourers into his harvest;" and He added this emphatic reason, "THE LABOURERS ARE FEW" (Matthew 9: 37). Alas! that this should still be the melancholy record, in relation to the world's conversion, *"The harvest is great, and the labourers are few."* Comparing the number of evangelical missionaries that are at present labouring in Pagan lands, with the vast population that is immersed in idolatry, how inadequate the supply! how disproportionate the means of *moral* amelioration! One missionary of the Cross to every *million,* or million and a half of heathen, even were the missionaries dispersed throughout all countries in the world, is all that the Church has hitherto sent to proclaim to an enslaved, perishing world, the tidings of salvation! What are these among so many? And when it is, moreover, considered, that vast regions, such as ... Afghanistan, Tibet, many parts of the extended empire of China, ... have not labouring in them a single herald of the Cross, the destitution of the heathen, and the criminality of the Church in not sending to them the means of salvation, will appear yet more appalling. As in attempting to reduce a fortress of a powerful enemy, it would be regarded as madness to send a soldier to fire a random shot or two against the walls, instead of despatching a well-equipped and sufficient force, so the Church has been similarly culpable in only sending to the heathen a few ill-sustained labourers, instead of a numerous and well-prepared host. No vigorous assaults upon the strongholds of the enemy can be made in this way; and instead of wondering that the success of missionary exertions has been so limited, the only wonder is that any success whatever should have followed attempts so desultory and inadequate. The Church must betake herself to an entirely different mode of warfare, if she would be instrumental in reducing the nations to subjection to the Lord's Anointed. Her resources must be tasked; the means of salvation must be liberally supplied to perishing men; well-trained missionaries, in sufficient numbers, must be sent forth into every country that is under the dominion of the prince of darkness; and we must never rest satisfied till all lands, and the men of every tribe, shall have been made to hear the joyful sound.

One of the greatest obstacles existing at present within the Church

to vigorous exertions for the world's conversion, is the reluctance or refusal of persons who acknowledge the claims of the missionary cause to give themselves to the work. Some magnify unduly the difficulties that retard its accomplishment. A large number of the members of the Church seem to have no proper sense that they are under any obligation to give their personal exertions in this cause; and some rate the qualifications so high as to shrink back, as if they could do nothing whatever in the matter. It is to be feared that all this proceeds from wrong conceptions of the nature and claims of the missionary enterprise, or from real apathy or unbelief. The first Christians — under the powerful impulse of the Spirit, without outward resources, destitute of many of the qualifications on which so much stress is laid in our day — went forth into all the world, and preached the Gospel to every creature. Their grand qualifications were glowing and supreme love to the Saviour, and deep, heartfelt, absorbing concern for perishing souls; and wherever these are still possessed, there will be, in some degree, the desire entertained to be instrumental in collecting jewels for Immanuel's crown. Some of the most distinguished and most successful of modern missionaries, such as Carey, Morrison, Williams and Moffat, have risen from humble stations of life, and enjoyed few advantages of education in boyhood; and not a few of those who are now in the field, were at home the humble teachers in the Sabbath-school. It is related of the celebrated Socrates, that when, on a certain day, his pupils vied with each other in the presents which they offered as a token of gratitude and respect to their master, and at the last a poor boy said he gave himself, the philosopher declared that he esteemed this present above all the rest. Thus the most costly and valued gift that can be presented on the missionary altar is the devotement of faithful labourers to the work.

The baptized youth of the Church should be trained by parents with such an object in view, and they should readily offer themselves for such a noble service. At least they ought seriously to consider the claims of perishing men as addressed to themselves personally, to consider whether their own duty may not be to dedicate themselves to this good work. God accepts of persons according to what they have, and not according to what they have not. The woman of Samaria who met the Redeemer at Jacob's well, was a successful evangelist to the men of her native place, and so was the cured demoniac of Decapolis. Did the youth of the Church feel, like them, the strength of love to Christ, and the weight of their obligations to the Saviour, they would be prepared to become volunteers in the armies of the Lord of hosts,

and might be of incalculable use in calling forth the slumbering energies of the Church, and in promoting the evangelization of the world. It is melancholy, indeed, to consider, that while Christian parents send their children to distant countries — and the young of Christian families shrink not from going even to unhealthy climates for some merely worldly objects — there should be so much fear, or apathy, or reluctance, in consecrating personal efforts to the conversion of the world. Let the young strive to wipe away this reproach from the Church. What have they to fear in yielding themselves to the Lord, to do his work, and to advance his glory? The natural elements, the influence of climate, the hearts of all men, are in His hand. He can give suitable qualifications; and He will do it to all who unreservedly devote themselves to Him. His all-gracious promise, "Lo, I am with you always," is surely sufficient for every want and for every difficulty. Confiding in it, the young should give themselves up to the great enterprise of bringing a rebel world under the dominion of Christ. This undertaking will reflect on themselves unspeakable honour. They will enjoy success in their work, under the blessing of the best of Masters; and hereafter theirs may be the reward of those who turn many to righteousness, and who shall shine as the stars, and as the brightness of the firmament for ever and ever.

Lastly. *The exercise of a missionary spirit at home, in evangelistic exertions to reclaim the wretched and perishing in one's own neighbourhood,* is important as an element of enlarged success in the missionary work. The advancement of the Redeemer's glory, in the conversion of souls, is the great object of missionary exertions; and love to souls — a love by which the heart bleeds and is bowed down, in view of the miserable condition of perishing men, and which intensely desires their spiritual renovation — is the right missionary spirit. Now, surely a human being, under guilt and moral pollution in the circle of our friends or acquaintences, is in as wretched a condition as a Pagan in India or China; and the salvation of a soul in our families, or at our doors, should be esteemed as valuable as the conversion of a soul in some remote part of the world.

We must divest the missionary enterprise of all that is romantic and sentimental, and deal with the solemn realities of the eternal loss and the eternal salvation of souls. Unquestionably, he has no right missionary zeal who, while he talks of the evangelization of the nations, neglects to seek the salvation of his own household, or leaves souls to perish around him, without making any efforts to rescue them from destruction. Genuine love to Christ will impel us to endeavour to

bring all with whom we have influence to the Saviour. To pray fervently for the souls of relatives and acquaintances; to devote one's self to efforts for instructing the ignorant and reclaiming the wretched; and to cherish an inextinguishable desire to be instrumental in the conversion of sinners, will supply the best evidence that we are actuated by a right missionary spirit. We will thus *begin at home,* but never think of confining our exertions there. A person thus engaged will embrace the world in the circle of a lofty and expansive benevolence. His exertions on the field of neglected humanity around him will train him for more extended effort. He will be, in the best sense of the phrase, "a missionary of the love of Christ" to perishing men, and through his labours he may have many recovered souls "for a crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus...." Let the young imitate these examples of Christian philanthropy. Let the young obey the Saviour's urgent command, go to the streets and broad ways of a thronged population, to gather in the blind, and halt, and lame; let them go again to the highways and hedges, and, with still more urgent importunity, "compel them to come in." They will thus evince a true scriptural zeal for the advancement of the Redeemer's glory; they may be prepared to give themselves for the work of distant missions; and should they remain at home, they may, notwithstanding, be the means of delivering souls from death, and of leading others to devote themselves to the work of Christian benevolence. The Sabbath-school, the evangelization of our native country, and of our own neighbourhood, and revivals in the Church, will furnish ample opportunites of exertion, and supply, at the same time, the best means of training and drawing forth a missionary spirit.

The cause of Christian Missions is, under these views, recommended to the special attention of the youth of the Church. It is not going too far to say, that this is eminently the work of God, that on which his heart was fixed from all eternity, that which led to the most wondrous sacrifice that ever the universe witnessed, and that to which He renders all the movements in the kingdom of providence subservient. This, too, is the present great work of the Church — that to which her exalted Head is loudly summoning all her ministers and members, the neglect of which will be followed by sure tokens of his displeasure; while its *performance* will result in countless blessings to the Church, and to the whole family of mankind.

The baptized youth of the Church — her youthful members — should account it their greatest honour and privilege to have a part in this glorious undertaking. The world, created by Christ, was designed

to reflect his glory, and one day, through all the extent of its wide population, to resound with his praise. To whom should we look, with deeper concern and more confident expectation, than to the young who are dedicated to God, that they will labour diligently, prayerfully, and perseveringly for this desirable consummation? On you it devolves, Christian youth, to create a new era in the missionary undertaking. Yours it is to be among the first to "bring the King back." ... We are fallen in no ordinary period. Events, thickening everywhere betoken that the day of the Lord's power is at hand, when He shall utterly overthrow and destroy terror-stricken enemies; when He will take to Him his great power and reign, and when the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. Be it yours, in the spring and vigour of life, to enter with alacrity upon this work of faith and labour of love. Dedicate to it all your talents, your fervent prayers, pecuniary means, and personal exertions. Try to bring others to the same spirit and conduct. Resolve to labour to the end of life, whether at home or in a distant land, to bring sinners to Christ. Your labour will not be in vain in the Lord. What you sow you shall afterwards reap. A great and glorious harvest will at length reward your toil, and self-denial, and sacrifices. The nations of the saved shall bring their glory and riches to Zion; and as the redeemed converts from Jew and Gentile shall enter the heavenly Jerusalem, or as the tidings of their conversion are borne thither by the ministering spirits that take the deepest interest in the progress of Christ's kingdom on earth, the joys of eternity shall be enhanced. They that sow and they that reap shall rejoice together; and, in the triumphs of Christ's cause on earth, the ransomed in heaven shall share in the joy of their exalted Lord, and shall drink "rivers of pleasure at God's right hand for evermore."

BOOK REVIEWS

The Christian Attitude towards War, Loraine Boettner. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1985. Pb. 91pp. £2.60.

This is the third edition of a book which first appeared in 1940. There are few noticeable additions. Chapter 2, 'The Present Crisis', based on a sermon delivered in 1983 by Dr. D. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Florida and duly acknowledged by the author, is a call to mobilize all our energies against the unholy war of Communism which has already begun to deprive our children of their freedom. The final chapter, 'The Danger We Face', is a plea to support the present U.S. defence programme in light of the threat of Russian attack. While the KGB spends $300 million to promote peace movements in the U.S. and Europe, and at the same time Russia continues to increase her military strength, we should recognize the danger of Soviet propaganda and refuse to be caught unprepared.

The first impressions one receives after reading this book is that the author believes America is a great nation, that there undoubtedly is such a thing as a just war, of which the war of Independence was a glorious example, and those who hold pacifist views are sadly misguided. Whether his British readership would share all these views remains an open question. This said, we are nevertheless given an interesting insight into the attitude adopted towards war within both the Old and New Testaments. With quotations from Judges and stories such as David and Goliath, referred to with approval, he gives us to understand that there are Divine purposes in war. Christ's final advice to his disciples is "Sell your cloak and buy a sword" (Lk. 27: 36); and Paul majors on the symbolisms of war (Eph. 6). It has always been quite acceptable to speak of the Church 'militant' and the final victory of Christ as depicted by John is a warrior upon a white horse going forth to make war (Rev. 19).

From James 4: 1 we are left in no doubt as to the cause of war — "Is it not your passions that are at war in your members?" As long as man is intrinsically evil it is inevitable that wars will continue. As Communism does not believe in peaceful co-existence but only ultimate universal triumph, the nations of the world will constantly have to offer resistance or forfeit their political and religious freedom.

A large section of the book is given over to practical issues which face the individual in a war situation. There is an obligation laid upon the 'conscientious objector' who has enjoyed all the privileges of citizenship to play a sincere supportive role in the life of the nation. He need not actively engage in battle but may follow the example of the Quakers in World War I who volunteered to man the mine sweepers as a positive contribution towards saving life. In matters of conscience the Christian has only one option — "to obey God rather than men", but this must never be used as a cloak for cowardice. On the other hand, if one is not sure whether that which he is being invited to participate in is a just cause for war or not, he should submit to the State realizing that as a private citizen he may not be in possession of all the important facts. In regard to compulsory military training Boettner has this to say, "Unless the service is made universal and compulsory, only the best and bravest young men are killed or disabled in large numbers, while the selfish and spiritually weak remain at home to perpetuate the race."

It is often asked why does God permit war among the nations? Boettner's reply is, "He permits such a thing as war to chastise and punish them, to teach them what a heinous thing sin is, and to call them to repentance and acceptance of His gracious offer. What men refuse to learn though the preaching of the gospel in times of peace God often reveals to them through the sufferings and destruction that come through war." The classical example of war used as an instrument of chastisment is given in the book of Habakkuk. One other means of trying to justify war is by saying that not all the consequences of war are bad. A glance at history should convince us that many of the great religious struggles were only won by men laying down their lives in the battle for truth e.g. the Protestants in England. War also has a broadening influence on mankind through travel and intermingling with other peoples. Such an influence was found in Europe during the Middle Ages when the crusades brought Western Europe into fresh contact with other civilizations thus giving birth to the Renaissance, which in turn provided the intellectual and cultural background for the Reformation. The two World Wars produced medical and industrial inventions which have benefited all mankind.

The conclusion Boettner wants us to draw from this book is that a Christian should be neither a pacifist nor a militarist, but if he is to remain a loyal citizen of his country he must adopt a position somewhere between these two extremes. In the course of developing his argument there are some doctrinal implications which would

benefit from further elucidation, and if war be considered within the area of theodicy, some of the major problems such as how a God of holiness can be involved with that which is evil, he has completely avoided. In his favour, it must be said that he has attempted to suggest some simple Biblical and understandable reasons for what remains a very difficult subject.

Harold G. Cunningham

Abortion: the crisis in morals and medicine, Nigel M.de S.Cameron and Pamela F. Sims. Inter-Varsity Press, 1986. Pb. 159pp. £2.25.

Abortion is big business, so also it would seem is the writing of books on the subject. This latest offering means that all of the major publishing houses now have something in their current range which deals with this very topical subject. The fact that so many of these books have been from an evangelical standpoint is a source both of regret and encouragement. It is distressing that the stable door has been opened and the horse has bolted years ago, while the church was largely sleeping. To recapture ground that had been lost may well prove more difficult than the initial defence would have been. Nevertheless that the Spirit of God has constrained so many to be involved in opposing this public sin is comforting and gives reason to hope that the argument has not been finally lost.

This present book which has been ably written from both a medical and theological perspective, provides a comprehensive treatment of the issues and problems that have arisen or are beginning to appear on the horizon. The discussion of the many biblical passages which relate to the subject, including in an appendix a helpful essay on Exodus 21:22-25, establishes beyond all question that the Scriptures have much more to say on the matter than is often alleged. The survey of the attitude of the Church throughout history and the explanation of some of the medical terms which tend to baffle the layman provide interesting reading. An illuminating insight is given into the experience of Aleck Bourne. He was the gynaecologist involved in Rex v Bourne in 1938, a legal case which proved a watershed in the practice of abortion in the United Kingdom. However he later regretted his action, recognizing its undesirable aftermath, and he even appeared on the executive committee of one of the pro-life organizations.

A particular strength of this book is the way in which it exposes the inadequacies of the attempts to argue from something other than

conception the position of the unborn. Arguments about viability, personhood and potentiality are discussed and dismissed in turn. The linking of the full humanity of the unborn with the incarnation of the Lord Jesus is very informative. It is stated,

> The objection that Jesus' origins are different from ours will not hold, since his virginal conception is set forth as the start of a normal human experience — a normal experience on the part of God of human life which, while free from sin and begun in miracle, is the life that all will lead. He was not spared anything that is common to man, save the personal experience of sin. It is therefore not possible to argue that he 'began' his human existence at any other point than we 'began' ours. The fertilization of Mary's ovum by the power of the Spirit which stands at the high point of the biblical narrative ... is the only point at which Jesus' human life could have begun.

There are, however, some areas where one finds the book rather weak: e.g., in chapter 5 after dealing with some of the problems that arise in the aftermath of abortion, its effects on the medical profession are considered. We are told that consultants who do not perform abortions will have limited contact with such cases, and that like-minded GPs will miss out completely on opportunities for counselling. The compromise adopted by some GPs is said to be not unreasonable, viz., after chatting to the patient and explaining his own pro-life view, the patient is then referred to the hospital gynaecologist. Nurses are given even less encouragement in the special difficulties which they face. If abortion is indeed the great evil the writers describe, one would have expected something more positive and helpful in these areas. Should Christians withdraw entirely from this area, or remain and act as salt and light? Whichever of these options is chosen, how practically can this be done?

Elsewhere a similar lack of practical application is apparent. Part of the crisis in this whole area is that statistics and arguments often still cut little ice with many Christians. The view is that these things merely confirm that things are indeed getting worse and worse as is expected in the last days. Many otherwise spiritual people have no concept that it is their responsibility to withstand the tide of pollution sweeping the country. Neither writer touches upon the problem or suggests how it might be tackled.

An interesting query arises out of chapter 7. In dealing with the arguments used by other Christians reference is made to the subject of compassion. Each side in the abortion question would say that they are acting out of compassion. However, is it right to concede compassion

to the abortionist? Is compassion a positive virtue or simply an emotion that can be used for good or ill? One accepts that because of common grace which God extends to all, many excellent qualities can be found even in disreputable people. However, the compassion that God has shown us is a positive expression of His character. We ourselves are told, "If you love me, you will obey what I command." True compassion can only be for those things which are in accord with the revealed will of God.

Despite these slight reservations, this is a book deserving of a wide readership and is warmly commended.

Malcolm Ball