

The Blue Banner

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Memorial

Frank E. Smith (1914-1993)

[Editor's Note: We thank Rev. Frank J. Smith for providing this memorial of his father.]

The Rev. Mr. Frank E. Smith was born December 16, 1914, in Brooklyn, New York, and grew up in Long Island. He joined the Navy and served aboard the USS Tuscaloosa. After discharge, he worked in California and eventually found his way to Florida. It was in Miami that for the first time he heard the gospel. The late Dan Iverson, pastor of Shenandoah Presbyterian Church, preached the good news concerning Jesus and His redemption and how sinners can receive full forgiveness for their sins by grace and through faith alone. Frank became born again and received Christ as personal Savior and Lord.

Not long afterwards, he met a pretty young lady who like him worked at Burdine's department store. She has often told the story of dating this really nice fellow--but what a religious fanatic, always quoting Scripture to her! Those Bible verses were used by God to convict her of her sin and to lead her to faith. Frank and Melanie's engagement announcement appeared in the Miami Herald on December 7, 1941; and they married on February 14, 1942. After the birth of the first child, Melanie Kay, Frank was shipped overseas, serving in the United States Army in 7th Corps Headquarters. After the war two more daughters were born, Virginia Sue and Deborah Joy. For many years, Frank had thought of entering the ministry. Going to seminary with the responsibility of three children was almost unheard of forty years ago; but the calling was compelling. With no college training, he entered Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, in 1952 and graduated three years later. During his time in school, he filled pulpits virtually every week drawing upon his ministry experience in Miami (which included teaching Sunday School, helping to establish outpost Sunday Schools, and jail and nursing home visitation.) Two of these three years were spent every weekend and during the summer at Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, Hobbs Island (Huntsville), Alabama.

While a senior at Columbia, a son, Frank Joseph, was born. Frank was ordained to the gospel ministry as pastor in Hogansville, Georgia. Other pastorates included churches in Florida, Alabama, North Carolina and Tennessee.

In 1973, the denomination, now known as the Presbyterian Church in America, was being formed. Rev. Smith was instrumental in helping to start this church, having participated in many of the early meetings which led up to its foundation. He was the first stated clerk of Westminster Presbytery, located in upper east Tennessee and southwest Virginia. He was organizing pastor of Midway Presbyterian Church, Jonesborough, Tennessee, the first congregation organized by a presbytery of the Continuing Presbyterian Church movement. He served on the General Assembly Committee on Presbytery Boundaries and later on the General Assembly Committee on Administration.

In 1977, Pastor Smith and family moved to Somers, New York, for the purpose of founding one or more Presbyterian churches. He and his wife had long had the vision of bringing the Gospel to this area of the country where, while growing up, they never remember hearing the message of salvation. At the age of sixty-two, when most people his age would have been thinking about retirement, he pioneered a work in what would prove to be a very difficult mission field.

In 1980, his son joined him here in the ministry; and the next year Affirmation Presbyterian Church was organized. In 1986, the son became Senior Pastor; and Rev. Smith humbly accepted the role of Associate Pastor.

One of the keys to stabilizing the church's ministry was the acquisition of property. Pastor Smith saw this goal realized with the purchase of a facility, debt-free, in Somers, a town which had not had a Presbyterian witness since at least 1872. Despite his continued suffering from disease, he was able to attend the first service here on July 11, 1993, less than two weeks before his death, and to offer the prayer as the congregation engaged in a public covenant dedicating the property to the glory of God and for the fostering of historic Presbyterianism.

As death approached, on the evening of July 23rd, his family gathered round his bed, crying, singing praise, praying, quoting and reading Scripture, and expressing their love and affection.

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He responded the best he could to their expressions both of love and of piety. During that night, he was restless; and a spiritual battle ensued. Around midnight, another morphine shot gave his body some rest; and he was able to sleep until 3:00 A.M. when he again became restless. His struggle continued for awhile until at last he was able to relax. Prayers were answered as he uttered an "Amen!", breathed quietly for a few moments, and at 4:30 A.M. slipped away peacefully into the arms of Jesus.

Frank E. Smith was a faithful churchman. Three churches were organized under his ministry. He served as Moderator of Mid-Atlantic Presbytery in 1979. He attended every General Assembly (save one) of the Presbyterian Church in America, including the latest held in June of this year in South Carolina. For fifteen years, he directed the floor clerks of the General Assembly and retired from that volunteer position in 1988 to a standing ovation. Northeast Presbytery appointed him to preach at the 1992 Assembly.

Pastor Smith loved God and he loved people, as evidenced by his extensive prayer lists, his careful handling of Scripture, his going door-to-door, in cold and heat, to spread the gospel, and his longtime nursing home ministry. He was a humble servant who never thrust himself into the limelight. Yet he was always supportive of others, especially his family.

He was a loving and faithful husband for the fifty-one years of his marriage, and a loving and wise father and grandfather. His example helped lead his son into the ministry; and his elder grandson to plan to follow the same path.

We recount his life and legacy in order to give thanks to God. The Lord had, by His grace, conquered him many years ago and had molded him into a new creature in Christ. Through his life and testimony, many people had come to faith and were strengthened in their Christian walk. Though dead, Frank Smith still speaks; and his greatest desire would be for others -- perhaps even through this memorial service -- to embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Frank's body rests in the grave until the resurrection; his spirit is now with the Lord in heaven where there is no more sorrow. Frank is now engaged in worship of the Lord he loved and served; the One Who says to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

BOOK REVIEWS

DISPUTE AGAINST THE ENGLISH POPISH CEREMONIES. By George Gillespie, 17th Century Scottish Theologian and Westminster Divine. Naphtali Press, 1993, xlix, 523 pp. \$49.95. Hardbound with Indices, Historical Introduction and Glossary. Reviewed by Richard Bacon.

Why does the church need a new edition of a work first published in 1637? There are two reasons that spring to mind: First, the book is important historically. Second, the book speaks to our generation with a force and clarity lacking even in the most conservative contemporary works on church government and worship.

George Gillespie's *A Dispute Against The English Popish Ceremonies Obtruded On The Church Of Scotland* first appeared the same month (July 1637) that Jenny Geddes threw her notorious milk stool. By October of that year the book had received such a following that it was condemned to be burned by the public executioner. The imposition of the English service book upon the Kirk was more than the Scots could bear. The Second Reformation was launched and resulted in the General Assembly of 1638, which declared itself free of the interference of the civil government and the Laudian bishops.

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We live in a day in which even the more reformed denominations have little or no understanding of such basic reformed principles as the idea that church government and worship should be regulated solely by Scripture. Once again, with pageantry, choristers and various other devices of men, the church finds herself smothered beneath the doctrines and commandments of men. Once again we see the simplicity of New Testament worship corrupted by ceremonies and practices which have no basis in the Word of God. Once again we find the church's mission stifled by layer upon layer of unscriptural officers who have never received the consent of those over whom they rule. Once again, the arrogance of officers whom Christ never called is exercised over his Zion in ways that he never ordained. Once again we need the warnings, reproofs, and corrections of George Gillespie's *English Popish Ceremonies*.

This edition is altogether new — it is, in fact, the most readable edition of this work ever published

Some may note that *English Popish Ceremonies* is contained in Gillespie's *Works* and a new edition is therefore superfluous. However, this edition is altogether new — it is, in fact, the most readable edition of this work ever published; and that for several reasons: First, the Hetherington edition has been compared textually with the 1637 first edition and the numerous typographical errors corrected. The entire text has been reset in larger, cleaner type.

Latin quotations in the text (of which there are many) have been translated in the body of the text and the Latin retained in footnotes. The translations are set in italic type so as to draw attention to the fact that they are translations.

All the "obscure" footnotes have been thoroughly researched and a complete alphabetical bibliography constructed to make further research or other reference possible. This has never before been a part of this work and adds considerably to its usefulness and value.

Additionally, a Scripture index, a subject index and a glossary have been added. Finally, a section index has been added so as to make reference possible to any edition of English Popish Ceremonies. An historical introduction adds to the volume's usefulness as well. Unquestionably, this edition is destined to become *the* authoritative edition of English Popish Ceremonies for generations to come.

This is the first volume of a planned series from Naphtali Press called "17th Century Presbyterians." The volume is well-built, using acid-free paper for years of durability without the paper yellowing. A three part cover and matching gray dust cover and end sheets add a distinctive and distinguished appearance on the bookshelf.



WHEN THE WICKED SEIZE A CITY: A GRIM LOOK AT THE FUTURE AND A WARNING TO THE CHURCH. By Chuck and Donna McIlhenny and Frank York. Huntington House Publishers, 1993. pb. 239 pp. with Appendix. Reviewed by Debby Bacon

When the Wicked Seize A City is the story of Chuck McIlhenny, and his wife Donna. In 1973 McIlhenny became the pastor of the small congregation of the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. McIlhenny was not a political activist; he did not take this pastorate with a hidden agenda; his goal was not to become an outspoken ecclesiastical leader. He and his wife, in his own words, "did our proper churchly duties: preaching, visiting the sick and elderly, working with what youth we could muster, etc." Then in 1978, the church hired a new organist to play at their Sunday morning services. When McIlhenny learned that the organist was a homosexual, he asked him to step down. "That event," writes McIlhenny, "changed our lives forever."

The organist sued McIlhenny and the church. The resulting publicity thrust McIlhenny into the glaring notice of the hostile gay community. What follows is a tale that forces one to ask with McIlhenny, "How could a thing like this ever happen to a family in the United States? It seemed like a scenario from an occupied overseas country, but not America. You just don't do things like this in good ol' 'God Bless America' land." (P 12)

The publicity surrounding the lawsuit made McIlhenny the target of unrelenting harassment by militant gay activists. This harassment included frequent vandalism of both his church and his home, violent and profane protests outside his church during worship services, church services being interrupted, repeated threats against his life and the lives of his children, and even the fire bombing of his home. It is devastating to discover that Christians in America are being so blatantly persecuted and that there is a Christian mother who must fear for the lives of her children because of their father's faithful stand for the truth of God's Word.

The book also details the growth of homosexual power in San Francisco and their stranglehold on that city. It tells of the horror of an American city ruled by deviates who wield power through intimidation, of rioting in the streets, and of sexual abominations performed in public on the streets of the city with the full support of legally elected "leaders." The book further tells the story of a community that threatens death to any who will not follow the horrors of sexual perversion and will-

worship. Sadly, it is also the story of a Church that is strangely silent in the midst of horrendous sin.

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McIlhenny does not give us a larger-than-life hero's version of the events in his life. He reveals the inner struggles of his heart and the trials in the lives of his family members. His wife tells of the immobilizing fear that gripped her as the lives of her children were threatened. McIlhenny speaks of his own fear as he preached to a congregation that on any given Sunday may well include an assassin. The power of God to give His peace to His faithful ones in the face of severe persecution is demonstrated as McIlhenny and his family turn to their Redeemer as their only surety; to God their refuge, who gave them strength to overcome not just the horrors, but the inner fears that threatened to overwhelm them.

The book also is filled with information on the true nature of the homosexual community in San Francisco. It reveals the depth of their depravity, the strength of their political power gained through intimidation and threat of violence, and the viciousness of their attack on any one who steadfastly refuses to call their immoral activities anything other than the sin that it is.

McIlhenny explains why he and his wife wrote this book when he states, "We're writing this [book] as a wake up call to a sleeping Church. Either the Church wakes up and gets involved in society at large, or we face incredible persecution at the hands of individuals and governments (city, state, and national) who hate the God of the Bible and want His people and message destroyed from the earth once and for all." (Page 27)

The church can no longer rest in its enclave of pietism and live peacefully with those of an "alternative lifestyle." The militant gay community has an agenda to destroy us, our way of life, our faith and our community. They are taking the battle to our schools, our churches, our work places, our government offices, our parks and our streets. We must either align ourselves on the side of God's law and His authority or fall under the dominion of Satan and the world.

This is a tremendously important book. It is a book that will make you grieve at the suffering of the faithful, angry at the persecution and injustice they have suffered, and fill you with trepidation for our country as it is swept ever further down the road of defiance to God's law. This book will compel you to fall to your knees before our just God to plead that He might

gant national repentance to our country and to ask for His continual protection of Chuck McIlhenny and his family.



GOSPEL FEAR. By Jeremiah Burroughs. Soli Deo Gloria, 1991. hb. 166 pp. \$16.95. Reviewed by Rev. Byron Snapp.

God's Word is taking a beating in our day. Our culture has little Christian basis left, having been replaced with the quicksand of a humanistic foundation. Many pulpits are filled with pastors who do not believe and thus do not preach God's Word as the inspired Word of God. In many evangelical circles, the faithful preaching of God's Word is no longer central to the worship service. It has been replaced by drama, song, and dance as a means of drawing people into attendance on Sunday morning. As one might expect in many homes the Bible remains a closed book during the week, seemingly without relevance to family issues such as the upbringing of covenant children.

Thus this reprint of Burroughs' scarce posthumous 1674 work needs to receive a red carpet welcome by our culture. It contains three sermons on Isaiah 66:2, "To this man will I look, even to him that trembleth at My Word." In these sermons the author opens up the difference between a true and false heart trembling of God's Word.

This book will be of great comfort to those who indeed do tremble at God's Word and seek to proclaim it and faithfully to obey it.

The final four sermons are based on II Kings 22:19, and examines a heart, like Josiah's, that melted when confronted with Scripture.

This book will be of great comfort to those who indeed do tremble at God's Word and seek to proclaim it and faithfully to obey it. The reader is confronted by the abundance of Scriptural testimony regarding those who trembled at God's Word. The author correctly asserts that true trembling is a joy to the soul, and drives one ever closer to God at Whose throne salvation and comfort are found. Such trembling also brings glory to God. Faithful warriors will be encouraged to remain faithful as they read these sermons from the past that speak to the hearts of today. Burroughs also clearly reminds the reader that the sovereign God opens the sinners' heart. Thus the minister should press on faithfully yet prayerfully preaching and applying God's Word. Hopefully the preacher who has grown battle weary and has gone "absent without leave" from the front lines of faithful preaching will be granted repentance and will return to the front lines filled anew with Gospel fear. Naturally Burroughs speaks to the unsaved throughout book. Thus the reader is confronted with evangelistic preaching and is reminded that although Old Testament texts are used, Christ must be proclaimed. The reader is also confronted with fearless and faithful preaching.

These sermons feed the soul and should cause the reader to examine his/her own life. Those who enjoy the Puritans will find great profit in this volume. Burrough's style is such that hopefully new readers will be attracted to his other books as well as those of other Puritans. We live in a day when we easily tremble at our own culture's demise. This reprint is timely in that it faithfully sets before the reader the truth that Scripture and the God of Scripture alone deserve our trembling hearts.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE
of the
WESTMINSTER STANDARDS
AS A CREED**

An Address Delivered before the Presbytery of New York, November 8, 1897, on the occasion of the celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Completion of the Westminster Standards. By Benjamin B. Warfield. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: 1898.

Fathers and Brethren:—

It would be difficult for me adequately to express the pleasure which it gives me to respond to your invitation to join with you to-day in celebrating the fifth jubilee of the gift of the Westminster Standards to the world. The task you have laid upon me, of seeking to set forth the significance of that gift, though it has its difficulties arising from its magnitude, cannot fail to appeal powerfully to one who has, in all sincerity and heartiness, set his hand to these Standards as "containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." It is not merely a duty but a pleasure to bear witness to the truth of God as we apprehend it, and to give a reason from time to time for

the faith that is in us. I cannot, indeed, hope to tell over to-day all that the Westminster Standards are to us — to unfold in detail all that has for two centuries and a half made them precious to a body of Christians who have been second to none in intelligence of conviction, evangelistic zeal and faithfulness of confession. But if I were to essay to express in one word what it is in them which has proved so perennial a source of strength to generation after generation of Christian men, and which causes us still to cling to them with a devotion no less intelligent than passionate, I think I should but voice your own conviction were I to say that it is because these precious documents appeal to us as but the embodiment in fitly chosen language of the pure gospel of the grace of God. The high value that we attach to them and that leads us to gather here to-

day to remember with gratitude before God the men who gave them to us, and to thank God for this supreme product of their labors, is but the reflection of our conviction that in these forms of words we possess the most complete, the most fully elaborated and carefully guarded, the most perfect, and the most vital expression that has ever been framed by the hand of man, of all that enters into what we call evangelical religion, and of all that must be safeguarded if evangelical religion is to persist in the world.

How they came to be this, it is to be my task this afternoon to attempt to recall to our remembrance.

I

It is a humbling exercise to reflect on the difficulty which has been experienced by the gospel of God's grace — or evangelical religion, as we currently call it nowadays — in establishing and preserving itself in the world. The proclamation of this gospel constitutes the main burden of the Scriptural revelation. And, after the varied and insistent statement which it received at the hands of the great company of inspired men whose writings make up the complex of the Scriptures — and especially after its rich prophetic announcement by Isaiah; its marvellous exposition in the language of living fact in the fourfold narrative of the life of Jesus; its full dialectical development and explanation by Paul, as over against almost every possible misconception; its poignant assertion by John, cut with the sharpness and polished to the brilliancy of a gem — one might well suppose that it had been made the permanent possession of men, etched into the very substance of human thought with such boldness that even he that ran could not fail to read it, with such depth that it could never again be erased or obscured. But it was not so. There is no other such gulf in the history of human thought as that which is cleft between the apostolic and the immediately succeeding ages. To pass from the latest apostolic writings to the earliest compositions of uninspired Christian pens, is to fall through such a giddy height that it is no wonder if we rise dazed and almost unable to determine our whereabouts. Here is the great fault — as the geologists would say — in the history of Christian doctrine. There is every evidence of continuity — but, oh, at how much lower a level! The rich vein of evangelical religion has run well-nigh out; and, though there are masses of apostolic origin lying everywhere, they are but fragments, and are evidently only the talus which has fallen from the cliffs above and scattered itself over the lowered surface. Thus it came about that the deposit of divine truth in the apostolic revelation did not supply the starting-point of the development of doctrine in the church, but has rather from the beginning stood before it as the goal to which it was painfully to climb.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The question sometimes comes up of the propriety of singing without the use of musical accompaniment. Psalms 149 and 150 are pointed to as justification for this concern. But let's stop and think about that for a moment. We not only sing about musical instruments; we also sing about such things as the lampstand, shewbread, and binding the sacrifice to the horns of the altar (Psalm 118). However, we do not actually *do* any of those things because they were weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law. They are some of the ordinances that were nailed to Christ's cross, and because they were, those forms no longer apply to us. As much as I appreciate musical instruments, instruments are no longer a part of the public worship of God. This fact does not make the use of instruments 'evil.' Far from it. Instruments can be employed, just as a rock can be employed, for good or evil. Musical instruments are indifferent in that respect. However, because musical instruments were brought into the temple worship particularly at the behest of David, *as a prophet*, they have passed away with all the aspects of the Levitical worship.

Do you know why David instituted the use of musical instruments and choirs in the temple? The various courses of Levites had various things to carry from the Tabernacle when they were in the wilderness. Whenever the Tabernacle was moved, which it was for forty years, and a few times afterwards, various courses of Levites had different things to carry. David designed to move the worship of God out of a tent and into a permanent dwelling. The Levites were seemingly out of work. But not according to God, who said some of the Levites would play musical instruments. They would play cymbals, viols, coronets, and all manner of musical instruments. The instruments were associated with the sacrifices, more so than with singing (Carefully read 2 Chronicles 29 for confirmation of that). So when the Levites sang Psalm 150, they sang about associating these instruments with the sacrifices. In a treatise against musical instruments in God's worship, G. I. Williamson makes this comparison: You have in the Old Testament a grand show. There was a grand show going on at the sacrifices, and there was a sound track for the show. Now, when the show goes away, what goes away with it? The sound track.

So it is not that we think musical instruments are evil, or that we think creation *per se* is evil. We enjoy art. But when that art is a violation of the second or seventh commandment, we eschew it. A picture can be good or it can be evil depending upon the use to which it is put. And the same thing is true of musical instruments. RB ♦

Through how many ages men needed to struggle slowly upward before they even measurably recovered the lost elevation! No doubt the essence of evangelical religion remained the implicit possession of every truly Christian heart, and this implicit presence of so great a light lent a glow to every Christian age. No doubt the constituent elements of evangelical doctrine found disjointedly more or less explicit recognition at the hands of every really great Christian thinker, and we may piece these fragments together into a mosaic picture of the real Christian heart of each period. No doubt there persisted everywhere and always an instinctive protest, fed by the Word and quickened by the demands of the Christian life, against the deteriorated conceptions of the day; and this protest flared up from time to time into a flame of vehement resistance to some more than usually widespread, or some more than usually aggressive, or some more than usually deadly assault upon some essential element of that truth by which alone men could live, and would not be allayed until the whole truth in question had been brought to clear consciousness

and guarded expression. Early monuments of such struggles for fundamental elements of evangelical religion we possess in those forms of sound words which we know as the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian formulary, in which the evangelical doctrines of the Trinity in Unity and of the Person of Christ received such lucid, comprehensive, and circumspect statements as has safeguarded them through all subsequent time, and against every hitherto conceivable encroachment of misbelief. But it was not until four centuries had dragged by that, in reaction upon an incredibly audacious onslaught upon the very core of evangelical religion, the Church was enabled to rise upon the broad and strong wings of a great religious genius, to something like a full-orbed apprehension of the treasures she possessed in the gospel of God's grace.

Augustine compassed for her the privilege of this splendid vision, and for a season she basked in its glory. But what that generation thus achieved, it lacked the power fully to secure for its successors. It fixed its own attainments in no firmly outlined and detailed formulary of ecumenical authority; and it had not itself passed away before the lines drawn so sharply and boldly by the master-hand of Augustine began to fade again out of the consciousness of men. We can trace the increasing obscurity from age to age. Not more than a century had elapsed before the tenacity and distinctness with which the gospel in its entirety was grasped had so far relaxed, that it was possible even for the best Christians of the time, men like the great and good Cæsarius, to betray it into one of those futile and fatal compromises with its persistent enemy which have proved in all ages the snare of good men and the ruin of the truth. No wonder that three centuries later it lay languishing and dying in chains in the person of one who nobly bore the fit name of the "Servants of God,"¹ and to whose honor, as to a light shining in a dark place, we should do well to pause to pay some grateful tribute to-day. Then the pall of ecclesiasticism was dragged over the corpse, and the dense primeval night seemed to have settle again upon the face of the earth.

But it is a long night that knows no dawn; and just when the darkness seemed most hopeless, a streak of light appears again on the horizon and the sun springs suddenly up and climbs the heavens. The Reformation we call it: Zwingli, Luther, Calvin — these are its heralds: and what it really is is the gospel of God's grace brought back to earth. Ah! how men greet it! Crushed under the weight of their sin, with nothing but their poor, human strength to lift it, and nought reached to their help but the hand of a church much too obviously human, how joyously they welcome again the outstretched hand of God! And how the glad news spreads until all Europe is filled with its echo, and men everywhere rise from the ashes of their despondency, stretch themselves awake, put on new courage, and go forward in the hope of God. Surely now, we will say, flung into the midst of this mass of wakened men, with the memory of their despair fresh on them and the experience of their deliverance keen in their hearts, the gospel has come to stay. But no: the clouds at once gather again. Melancthon

himself, trusted helper and worthy companion of Luther, first systematic expounder of the newly recovered gospel, Melancthon himself readmits the old "evil leaven of synergism," and, amid the turmoils that ensue, the Lutheran churches succeed in only partially recovering the lost ground. They are able, accordingly, to establish themselves, not on the pure gospel of the grace of God, but as their *Formula Concordiæ* witnesses, only on a somewhat neutral territory over which the old humanitarianism could urge some sort of claim. Thus these churches lost the hope of giving its final and complete formulation to the principles of evangelical religion.

Meanwhile, in the grace of God, better things were being wrought by the Reformed. They it was who were most cruelly ground under the heel of the oppressor; they it was, consequently, who most passionately cast their hearts' hope upon the God of salvation. And so, all over the Reformed world, voices were raised giving expression to the doctrines of grace with a fulness, a richness, and absoluteness never before known. Reformed Confessions sprang up everywhere in a luxuriant growth, written often by the hands of martyrs, wet always with their blood, and each and all declaring through martyr lips, which spoke not only in the fear of God but out of ardent love to Him, and face to face as dying men with their Judge and their Redeemer, all the words of this life. It is a century of struggle and suffering which is distilled into these Confessions — a century of patient endurance and faithful testimony which, in their glowing and uncompromising language, speaks out, with a firmness and clearness and fulness never before attained, the principles of that gospel by which alone the soul can live, and the full sweetness and strength of which men taste only in times like those. At last the gospel had come to its rights; at last men seemed to laid hold upon it with a clearness of apprehension and an ardor of embrace which could never more be loosed.

But the treasure was not even yet to be retained without a final and supreme struggle. One evil had hitherto been spared the Reformed Churches. Every conceivable assault had been made upon them from without, but no serious internal treason had as yet endangered the purity of their confession. With the second century of their existence even this trial was to fall upon them. It came in what we know as the Remonstrant Controversy, in which the old humanitarian conceptions, the violent assertion of which had been the occasion of Augustine's republication of the gospel of grace, and by the more measured and subtle working of which evangelical religion had been gradually throttled in the Latin Church, reappeared in the very bosom of the Reformed Churches themselves and jeopardized the purity of their assertion of the gospel. We all know how the new danger was transcended. Met in ecumenical synod at Dort, the Reformed Churches gave renewed and serious consideration, in the light of Scripture alone, to those elements of evangelical religion to which exception had been taken, and with one tongue, voicing the testimony of the whole Reformed world, bore their solemn witness to them as essential elements in the gospel of God's grace. But the end was not even yet. Transferred to English ground the assault was continued for a third of a century longer under circumstances which gave it the highest conceivable force and speciousness. Here sacerdotalism, in the form of Anglican prelacy, presented itself

1. Fulgentius Goteschalcus = "illustrious servant of God."
 2. " A warmth within the breast would melt
 And like a man in wrath the heart
 Stood up and answer'd, "I have felt!" — *In Memoriam*, cxxiv.

in the disguise of the Reformed religion itself. Here humanitarianism put on the garments of light, allied itself with religious fervor, and ran up by insensible stages into a mysticism which confounded human claims with the very voice of God. This is the meaning of what we call the Puritan Conflict which, from the theological side, was nothing else than the last deadly struggle of evangelical religion — the gospel of God's grace — to preserve itself pure and sweet and clean in the midst of the most insidious attacks which could be brought against it — attacks, the strength of which resided just in the fact that now its old-time foes approached it with the sword in hand, indeed, and with no loss of their undying hatred, but under its own banner and clothed in its own uniform.

It was a battle to the death; and the arts of war could not but be learned in its progress. To meet so protean a foe, attacking at every point with weapons of unexampled fineness and tactics of unimagined subtlety, a skill of fence and a wariness of defence unknown before were necessarily developed; and, with them those high qualities which underlie them — keenness of perception, clearness of vision, firmness of purpose, accuracy of aim, precision of movement straight to the essential goal. Men trained in this school could not be content with merely general statements of the truth by which they lived, and which would long since have been wrested from them had they held to it with only a broad and, therefore, loose grasp. In the strenuousness of the conflict they had not only learned how to state the gospel sharply, distinctly, precisely; they had, so to speak, lost the power of stating it otherwise than with clearness and exactitude and force. As well expect the veteran fresh from the wars to bungle in his fence; nay, his blade takes instinctively the correct attitude of guard, and eye and wrist move in such organic harmony that it would be only with an effort that either could prove false to its fellow. As well expect the mountaineer who has trodden the peaks from infancy to stumble heavily over his arrêtes and passes; he knows not how to do otherwise than to step cleanly and surely and firmly, and he instinctively plants his feet where they cannot be moved. So, when this company of Puritan pastors was gathered from the parishes of England which they had saved for the gospel, and was bidden, "Write down this gospel," they could not do otherwise than write it down with that rich completeness which had nourished their own souls and the souls of their flocks in those times of conflict and often almost of despair, and with that precision in which alone it could preserve its integrity and power in the face of the violent and insidious foes to the attacks of which it had been, in their own experience, exposed.

It is because the Westminster Standards are the product of such men, working under such circumstances, that they embody the gospel of the grace of God with a carefulness, a purity, and an exactness never elsewhere achieved, and come to us as, historically, the final fixing in confessional language of the

ENVYING THE WICKED (Psalm 73)

This is a psalm of Asaph, as are the next ten psalms. Notice as the psalmist begins the psalm, he makes the mistake that we have been warned against again and again, by the psalms and scripture in general, of envying the wicked. How often do we say to ourselves, "I wish I were in the wicked's place." Asaph admits it was foolishness on his part to think that way. But he does realize that the wicked seem to be in prosperity many times. They seem to be in positions of power. Their strength seems unbreakable at times. Who would not envy the wicked? Here is who: the person who considers their end. If all you see is the present, then you will fall prey to the temptation of envying the wicked. But if you lift up your eyes and look through time to their end, you will see that they are destroyed. First of all they die; but that is just the beginning of terrors for the wicked. For they undergo a terror that by God's grace we have escaped: not by our own works, not by standing firm ourselves, not by any reliance on our own arms, but by grace. Asaph finally admits, starting in verse 22, "So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.... Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee?" If God is not going to uphold me, Asaph says, who will uphold me? Verse 26 says, "My flesh and my heart faileth." Asaph is saying, "It may seem to me that the wicked are strong, but I have one stronger than they are to uphold me."

So when we see the ungodly prospering in the world; when we see them increasing in riches; when we see them sitting in the places of power and authority; there is a temptation to envy them. But I submit to you that the reason God allows such a temptation to exist is to strengthen our resolve that we will not be like the wicked.

One of the things that makes the Psalms so vastly superior to human compositions, is that again and again, in virtually every psalm the psalmist makes a distinction between the godly and the ungodly. He tells you, "Look, by God's grace here is the way you are and you need to stand in that." Take away grace and it may seem to you that the wicked man is an oak tree, but what you really have in the ungodly is not an oak tree at all. He is like the dandelion that blooms in the morning and by afternoon is a puff ball. The first wind that comes along will blow it away. God intends to blow upon the wicked.

Even in the imprecatory psalms, as the psalmist prays down God's wrath on the ungodly; let us learn where the target of God's wrath is and stand off the bullseye. Let us learn what God hates and *not be that*.

Yes, we do need to make a distinction, as the psalmist does, between the godly and the ungodly; not because of any good thing in us, but because God makes such a distinction.

You will simply not find people writing many songs about the just judgment of God. In the Trinity Hymnal the few hymns that you do find on the subject of God's justice are psalms. Interesting. is it not, that they had to choose psalms to find songs about God's justice and judgment. I would never say that God is all justice and judgment and no mercy. Listen, we live by mercy! But neither should we so accentuate any of God's attributes above the others that we end up with an unbalanced view of who God is. And that is precisely why God gave us a song book so that we would not overlook any of his attributes in our praise songs. RB ♦

principles and teachings of evangelical religion. Sixteen centuries of struggle toward the pure apprehension of the gospel lay behind them, culminating in that ultimate proclamation of evangelical truth which we call the Reformation. More specifically, a hundred and fifty years of

the development of Reformed theology lay behind them, culminating in the vindication of the purity of the gospel by the Reformed world as over against the Remonstrant adulterations. Most specifically of all, there lay behind them the half century of the Puritan conflict — a half century of working and polishing the jewel of the gospel beneath every hammer that the cruelty of men, and every chisel and file that the ingenuity of men could devise, until it was beaten and cut into the most compact and sharply outlined possible expression of the pure gospel of the grace of God. It is to these historical conditions of their origin that the Westminster Standards owe their high significance and value. Historically speaking, this is the significance of the Westminster Standards as a creed.

II

But when we thus say that the historical origin of the Westminster Standards operated directly to give them peculiar completeness and precision as a statement of the gospel, that is as much as to say that they appeal to us not more because they are historically the ultimate crystallization of the principles of evangelical religion, than because of the high scientific perfection which they attain, considered as a product of human thought, in their statement of these principles. The scientific quality of the Chalcedonian formulary, for example, was not due to any speculative interest dominating the minds of its framers, nor to any singular speculative ability characterizing them, but to the thoroughness with which the whole problem with which the document deals was threshed out in the course of the keen and prolonged controversies which preceded its formulation and prepared the material for its use. This effect is not best expressed by representing the vital processes which go on in a long discussion, affecting the basis of the religious life, as simulating in their results a scientific product; it would be more nearly correct to conceive the processes of scientific statement as imitating, and that at a considerable interval, the work of organic controversy. The scientific investigator makes all due effort carefully to consider every possible solution of the problem brought before him, candidly to weigh every conceivable element which may affect the result, and thoroughly to canvass every combination of the elements possible to imagine; and he hopes, by strenuous diligence, watchful impartiality and thorough manipulation of his material, to reach a result which will do full justice to all considerations, and which will therefore stand permanently in the face of all criticism. But it would seem to be obvious that such a sifting and weighing cannot go on in a single coolly working mind with anything like the same searching completeness, or ultimate in anything like the same perfection of result, as when they take place in the caldron of an aroused and deeply moved mass of men striving earnestly to comprehend and express the elements of their faith. Scientific construction, therefore, bears to vital processes in this sphere, too, very much the same relation as in chemical synthesis: not until the manipulation of the laboratory can outdo the subtle alchemy of life can we expect scientific care to surpass living controversy in producing a truly scientific statement of vital truth. Whenever the elements cast into the crucible of life include all those that enter into the case, and the ferment is violent enough and sufficiently long continued, we may expect the ultimate eliminations and combinations to be in the highest

sense natural — that is to run on the lines of essential rightness — and the final crystallization to be a scientific product of the first quality. It is to the fact that just this was the process by which the Westminster Standards came into being that they owe their high scientific character.

For, consider how richly represented in the religious life of Europe during the formative period of the Reformed theology, and especially in the religious life of Britain during the era when the Westminster theology was in preparation, were all those constructions which can with any show of attractiveness be given to the Christian religion. I think it may be said that there are only three main forms in which this religion may be plausibly presented to the acceptance of men; which can acquire — certainly which have ever acquired — a completeness, a self-consistency, a power of presentation, such as tend to give them any extended empire over men's minds. We may, for our convenience, label these the Sacerdotal, the Humanitarian, and the Evangelical Gospels; and it is among them that the battle of the faith must needs be fought out. Possibly there never will be a time when all three will not, in one form or another, be represented in the world; certainly up to to-day, and apparently as far into the future as our conjecture can penetrate, the supreme task of each has been and will continue to be to make good its position as over against the other two, and to protect its territory from absorption by them. Every attack that has ever been made, or apparently can ever be made, upon evangelical religion — be it as violent or as insidious as it may — will, on analysis, be found to be a more or less gross, or a more or less subtle, manifestation of one or the other of these opposing tendencies. No statement of evangelical religion can stand, therefore, which does not differentiate it, and in differentiating protect it, from those its two perennial and ever-encroaching foes. And the statement that does perfectly differentiate it from them both will be the highest and most perfect scientific statement of which evangelical religion is capable.

It was thus incident to the historical circumstances of their origin that the Westminster Standards should attain the high-water mark of a differentiated statement of the elements of evangelical religion. For the most complete and the most powerful embodiment of the sacerdotal tendency is found, of course, in the church of Rome; and never was this tendency so active in its propaganda, so impassioned, so filled with the courage of intense conviction and utter devotion as in those days of the Counter-Reformation, when the Jesuit hosts flung themselves into the work of recovering every inch of the ground lost in the Protestant revolt with a fiery zeal and a fertility of resource which remain until to-day the wonder and example of the world. And while the most complete embodiment of the humanitarian tendency is to be sought in more extreme developments, such as for example Socinianism or rationalizing naturalism, to the workings of which the Reformed Churches were no strangers; its most effective elaboration within the limits of a church claiming to believe in God and His Christ, has ever exhibited itself in that great middle system which under the name of Semi-Pelagianism early allied itself with Roman ecclesiasticism and in later Romanism became the characterizing feature of the Jesuit theology, and which broke out afresh in the churches of the

Reformation in the forms of Lutheran synergism and Remonstrant humanism and sought to poison the fountains of evangelical religion in their sources. The simple enumeration of these facts will serve to indicate the fires in which the Reformed theology was forged. It would have been a marvel had it emerged from its century of conflict with these forces without having been beaten into something like shape. There was indeed but a single alternative open: that it should be crushed out of existence and pounded into the dust that is spurned by the foot of man, or else that it should come forth from the forging compacted into adamant and polished into perfection.

And yet the process of the forging of that exquisite product of scientific theology which we call the Westminster Standards is but half revealed when we recite these broad facts. It was under those hammers that the Reformed theology was beaten into that perfected shape in which it lay in the minds of its adherents throughout Europe in the seventeenth century. Thus it was fashioned into the noble shape in which it was spoken out by the assembled Reformed world at the Synod of Dort or by the Swiss theologians in their *Formula Consensus*: and thus it would have been spoken out in every centre of Reformed life in all Europe, from Scotland to Hungary. It was already in a high and true sense a finished product. But in a higher and finer sense there was a finish yet to be given it: a finish which could be acquired only by passing through the yet more severe ordeal that awaited it on English ground. There can be no need to recite again the details of the story of how narrow the lines were there drawn within which he must walk who would preserve his good confession: of how sacerdotalism seized the reins of the Reformed Church of England itself and drove rough-shod over the hearts and consciences of her only faithful children; of how, in the dreadful confusion of the times, humanitarian self-assertiveness obtained control of some of the finest spiritual sinew in the land and set it to demolishing the foundations of the gospel. No wonder that many of the very elect were deceived and lost the purity of their testimony. But no wonder, on the other hand, that those who endured, because — how else? — they saw the Invisible One and in the light of that Vision were enabled to keep the word of God's patience, emerged from the ordeal as from a furnace seven times heated, purified and refined and shaking the very smell of the smoke from their undefiled garments. These were they, who, sitting in solemn conclave in the Jerusalem Chamber, gave forth that serious expression of the faith by which they lived which we call the Westminster Standards: and this is the reason why this their enunciation of the elements of the gospel of God's grace has a perfection of finish upon it elsewhere unattained, — which could not have been equalled by the work of any other body of men then on the face of the earth, which we can never hope to surpass, and which we can lightly lose or rashly cast from us only when our grasp upon evangelical religion becomes weak or our love for it grows cold.

It belongs to the very essence of the situation that an enunciation of the elements of the gospel, springing out of such conditions, should be supremely well guarded from the sides of both its most obdurate foes, — between which it was at the time, only by the greatest circumspection, preserving itself from being crushed as between the upper and nether millstones.

No wonder, then, that even the most cursory reader of the Westminster Standards is impressed with the exquisite precision and balance of their statements, with the clearness and purity with which they bring out just the essence of the gospel, and the drastic thoroughness with which they separate from it every remainder of sacerdotal and humanitarian leaven. To read over a chapter or two of the Westminster Confession gives one fresh from the obscurities and confusions of much modern theological discussion a mental feeling very nearly akin to the physical sensation of washing one's hands and face after a hot hour's work. Here the truth is shelled out clean. No doubt there are those whose perverted appetites seem to like more or less chaff in their bread, and who may therefore manage to take offence at this very perfection of statement. And it may be easy to find fault with what we may be pleased to call the polemic flavor of documents so formulated, and to ask whether it is not time to smooth out the frowns of war from our countenance and to speak out our testimony to the gospel of love with the unbroken serenity of a universal peace. As if truth could ever be stated without offence to falsehood: as if the very essence of definition lay not in exclusion: as if it were not self-evident that perfect and clean inclusion must always work equally perfect and clean exclusion, and the more complete and perfect the exclusion the more complete and perfect the definition. The wall that protects the citadel must needs be too narrow in its compass to enclose the foeman's camp as well: the flask that preserves the precious essence must needs be tight enough to shut out corrupting germs. The Westminster fathers placed nothing in their Standards which they did not think worth fighting for, — nay, which they had not already been called upon to fight for; and it marks the height of their service that they have given it a form securely guarded on every side, on the well-polished surface of which, in particular, the chiefest and most persistent foes of the gospel will seek in vain for a foothold.

So long, then, as the leavens of sacerdotalism and humanitarianism — of externality in religion and of dependence on flesh — remain, in one form or another, the most dangerous perils to which the gospel is exposed (and it would seem as if this must be as long as human nature endures), so long the statement given the gospel of grace in the Westminster Standards must remain the ultimate scientific enunciation of the principles of evangelical religion. In the same sense in which the Nicene and Athanasian creeds attained the final expression of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Chalcedonian definition the final expression of the doctrine of the Person of Christ, the Westminster Standards attained the final expression of the elements of evangelical religion. Of course, nothing like divine inspiration is attributed to any of these documents; nor is it necessary to invoke any special or peculiar divine superintendence over their production, though he who believes in a God will not fail to perceive His providential working, nor will he who believes in the God of the Bible fail to perceive the fulfilment of His promises, in such supreme products of human thought on divine things as these. What we discover on the surface of these documents, however, is the product of historical processes and of historical conditions which not only enabled but compelled their framers firmly to grasp in all their relations and clearly, clearly, and

guardedly to express the truths with which they deal. They mark, in a word, epochs in the history of human reflection on the truths of the gospel — epochs in the attainment and registry of special truths; and they, therefore, in the nature of the case, give these special truths their complete and final scientific expression. All subsequent attempts to restate them can but repeat these older statements — which were struck out when the fires were hot and the iron was soft — or else fall helplessly away from the purity of their conceptions or the justness of their language. In this fact resides, scientifically speaking, the significance of the Westminster Standards as a creed.

III

It is sufficiently clear that a scientific statement of truth, originating in the manner described and owing its scientific character not merely to closet reflection but to the interaction of the varied interests and requirements of men's souls, need not — nay, cannot — lack in vital quality. It will necessarily bear in its very fibre a coloring from the heart. A product of the intensest intellectual activity, and exhibiting in its forms of statement the niceties of scientific construction, it is nevertheless the product of intellect working only under impulse from and dictation of the heart, and in its very forms of statement will be the vehicle of the expression of the needs and attainments of the spiritual life. And thus it comes about that the Westminster Standards appeal to us not merely as, historically, the deposited faith of the best age of evangelical development, and not merely as, scientifically, the most thoroughly thought out and most carefully guarded statement ever penned of the elements of evangelical religion, but also as, vitally, filled with the expressed essence and breathing the finest fragrance of spiritual religion.

They gravely err who picture to themselves the fathers to whom we owe the formulation of any of the great doctrines of our religion as dominated by merely speculative interests, or nerved for their task mainly by metaphysical considerations. It has never been so. Restless speculation and philosophical pretension have ever been rather the boasts and, let us frankly admit it, the characteristic possessions of the purveyors of heresies and the fomenters of those fatal conciliations with the thought of the world which have, from the beginning, been the bane of the Church and one of the most serious perils of the gospel. It is not only in the infancy of Christianity that it has been a true testimony that "Not many wise are called." A certain speculative inertness, we might almost say, has marked the Church, and even those to whom God, in His providence, has committed the formulation of its treasures of truth, until, goaded into action by intolerable assaults on the very penetralium of their spiritual life, their minds have taken fire from their hearts and risen to compass and proclaim the elements of the higher wisdom of God. The accents which smite our ears, out of our creeds, with such tremendous emphasis do not indicate the crisp, cold, sharp movements of mere intellection; they are the pulsations of great hearts heaving in emotion and rising to the assertion of the precious truth by which they live. If we read them as merely speculative discriminations, the fault lies in us, not in them. It is because our hearts cannot, like theirs, stand up and answer, "We have felt!"² The scoffer who mocks, for example, at the Nicene fathers wrangling over a mere iota in

framing their definition of the Trinitarian relation,³ but uncovers the poverty of his own spiritual life and betrays the shallowness of his own religious experience. He that knows his Lord, that has in his periods of despair fled to His sheltering arms and in his periods of comfort rested upon His bosom, I do not say will not, I say cannot, abate one jot or one tittle of his passionate assertion of His divine majesty. We treat these cleanly cut and nicely balanced phrases as if they were intellectualistic scales weighing minute differences of merely speculative import, only because, and only so long as, we have not vitally experienced the spiritual truths which underlie them, to which they give just expression and for which they form the bulwarks. "Nothing could be more mistaken," says Professor Sabatier in one of his lapses into sound reason,⁴ "than to represent the fathers of the councils or the members of the synods as theorists, or even as professional theologians, brought together in conference by speculative zeal alone in order to resolve metaphysical enigmas. They were men of action, not of speculation; courageous priests and pastors who thought of their work as like that of soldiers in open battle, and who were ready to die as one dies for his country." The creeds have been given to the Church, not by philosophers but by the shepherds of the flocks, who loved the sheep; not in a speculative but in a practical interest; not to advance or safeguard what we may speak of as merely intellectual, but distinctively spiritual needs: and to every seeing eye — that is, to every eye open to spiritual vision — they bear their corresponding appearance.

Of no creed is all this more true than of the Westminster Standards. Perhaps I may even venture to say, of no creed is it true in an equal measure as of the Westminster Standards. Men of learning they were, no doubt, who framed these standards; men of speculative power and philosophical grasp; men who were the heirs of all the Christian ages, and who had consciously entered into their inheritance; in whose minds were stored the well-ordered fruits of serious study of the whole product of Christian thought and living up to their time.⁵ But their chief claim to greatness does not lie in this. "Some of the Assembly," is the testimony of one who, though not in sympathy with them, strives hard to do them justice—"some of the Assembly were great men; most of them were sincerely good."⁶ They were above and before all else—and that too consciously to themselves—men of God, men of strenuous and devout lives, who had known what it was to suffer for Christ's sake, and who spared not themselves in the work of His vineyard. They were, in one word, just a picked body of Puritan pastors — "the flower of the Puritan clergy," as the secular historian calls them⁷ — the best men of the best age of British Protestantism. And they were met together not to air

3. This is the difference between the orthodox formula (CCCCCCCC) and the semi-Arian (CCCCCCCC); the decided Arian affirmed CCCCCCCCCC. Of course, the whole doctrine of the Trinity in Unity and the proper Deity of Christ resides in the iota.

4. *Discours sur l' evolution des dogmes*, pp 23, 24.

5. "It was an age of great religious knowledge, and now for thirty years of free and violent discussion." — Marsden: *History of the Later Puritans*, p. 53. "The Presbyterian party [in the Assembly, i.e., the great majority] were not ordinary men, nor men of fickle minds. Most of them left to the world some records of ministerial ability, of solid learning, and of zeal and piety, which time has not destroyed." - *Ibid.* p. 64. On the knowledge and power displayed by the Westminster Divines in the work of preaching, see p. 88.

6. Marsden: *History of the Later Puritans*, p. 106.

7. S. R. Gardiner: *History of the Great Civil War*, I., 272. "It [the Assembly of Divines] comprised the flower of the Puritan clergy."

their conceits, but to save the good ship of the Church of England alike from the rocks of sacerdotalism and the shoals of humanitarianism on one or the other of which it seemed likely to founder; and above all, to speak out heartily and without circumlocution, all the words of the Divine life. It results, therefore, from the very nature of the case that it is above everything else a religious document which they have given us — a document phrased in theological language, no doubt, as all religious instruments must be, for such is the language of religion when seeking to express itself in terms of thought — but a document which, in the highest and most distinctive sense of those words, is a religious document; a document transfused with the very spirit of the age of religious revival which gave it birth, and bearing to every age which will receive it the spirit of devotion enshrined in its bosom. Speaking of the Puritans of London, one of the soberest of historians is forced to give utterance to the admiring cry that "aiming to be a saint, each man unconsciously became a hero."⁸ The description may be applied in an eminent sense to the divines of the Westminster Assembly. If they have become intellectual heroes to us, as we wonder over the solidity and circumspection of their theological structure, it is not because their prime aim was scholastic. They wrote these definitions aiming before all things to be saints: is it strange that we see the saint through the theologian and have our hearts warmed by the contact? Certain it is that the Westminster Standards have a spiritual significance to us which falls in no wise short of their historical and scientific significance.

Open these standards where you will and you will not fail to feel the throb of an elevated and noble spiritual life pulsing through them. They are not merely a notably exact scientific statement of the elements of the gospel: they are, in the strictest sense of the words, the very embodiment of the gospel. They not only know what God is; they know God: and they make their readers know Him — know Him in His infinite majesty, in His exalted dominion, in His unlimited sovereignty, in the immutability of His purpose and His almighty power and universal providence, but know Him also in that strangest, most incomprehensible of all His perfections, the unfathomableness of His love. Their description of Him transcends the just limits of mere definition and swells into a pæan of praise — praise to Him who is "most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." And how profound their knowledge is of the heart of man — its proneness to evil, its natural aversion to spiritual good, its slowness of response to spiritual influence, the deviousness of its path even under the leading of the Holy Ghost. But, above all, they know, with a fulness of apprehension which startles and instructs and blesses the reader, the ways of God with the errant souls of men — how He has condescended to open the way to them of having fruition of

Him as their blessedness and reward, how He has redeemed them unto Himself in the blood of His Son, and how He deals with them, as only a loving Father may, in disciplining and fitting them for the heavenly glory. Where elsewhere may we find more vitally set forth the whole circle of experience in the Christian life — what conversion is and how God operates in bringing the soul to knowledge of Him and faith in its Saviour, what are the joys of justifying grace and of adoption into the family of God, and what the horrors of those temporary lapses that lie in wait for unwary steps, and what the inconceivable tenderness of God's gracious dealings with the stumbling and trembling spirit until He brings it safely home? Who can read those searching chapters on Perseverance and Assurance without feeling his soul burn within him, and without experience of a new influx of courage and patience for the conflicts of life? It is not a singular experience which Dr. Thornwell records, when he sets down in his journal his thanksgiving to God for this blessed Confession. "I bless God," he writes, "for that glorious summary of Christian doctrine contained in our noble Standards. It has cheered my soul in many a dark hour, and sustained me in many a desponding moment." We do not so much require as delight, with consentient mind, in his testimony, when he declares that he knows of "no uninspired production in any language, or of any denomination, that for richness of matter, soundness of doctrine, scriptural expression and edifying tendency can for a moment enter into competition with the Westminster Confession and Catechisms."⁹ The Westminster Standards, in a word, are notable monuments of religious life as well as of theological definition, and, speaking from the point of view of vital religion, this is their significance as a creed.

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I have sought, father and brothers, nothing more than to indicate, with a brevity suitable to the nature of the occasion, what may be thought to be the chief sources of the significance of the Westminster Standards as a creed — to suggest in broad outline why, after two centuries and a half, they are still enshrined in the affections of the churches which have been blessed by their possession, and why we feel impelled to gather here to-day to express before the world our sense of benefits received from them and of satisfaction in them. It would be easy to show, for example, how freely the best thought of the best age of Protestantism was poured into them; how fully and genially they represent the *consensus* of Reformed doctrine in its most developed and most catholic form; how strictly they are held in every definition to the purity of the Biblical conceptions and enunciations of truth. These and similar grounds of appeal to our admiration and acceptance may be considered, however, to be implicitly included in what has been broadly adduced, and we may agree that the hold of the Westminster Standards upon our hearts and suffrages is due proximately to the facts that we see in them, historically speaking, the final crystallization of the very essence of evangelical religion — scientifically speaking, the richest and most precise and best guarded statement possessed by man, of all that enters into evangelical religion and of all

8. Marsden: *History of the Later Puritans*, p. 111.

9. B. M. Palmer: *The Life and Letters of James Henley Thornwell, D.D., LL.D.*, pp. 162 and 165.

that must be safeguarded if evangelical religion is to persist in the world — religiously speaking, the very expressed essence of vital religion. Surely blessed are the churches which feed upon this meat! Surely the very possession of Standards like these differentiates the fortunate churches which have inherited them as those best furnished for the word and work of the Christian proclamation and the Christian life. May God Almighty infuse

their strength into our bones and their beauty into our flesh, and enable us to justify our inheritance by unfolding into life, in all its completeness and richness and divinity, the precious gospel which they have enfolded for us in their protecting envelope of sound words!



THE SEVENTY WEEKS

Kenneth L. Gentry

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The chronology provided in Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Dan. 9:24-27) is a linchpin in the dispensational system, although it is not crucial to any of the other millennial systems. Walvoord Comments that the "interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 is of major importance to premillennialism as well as pretribulationism." Being such, it is the "key" to prophecy and, consequently, "one of the most important prophecies of the bible." Surely Allis is correct when he observes that "the importance of the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in Dispensational teaching can hardly be exaggerated."¹

This dependence upon Daniel 9 is unfortunate for dispensationalism for two reasons. First, historically: Great difficulties are associated with the interpretation of this passage. J. A. Montgomery calls the prophecy "the Dismal Swamp of Old Testament criticism."² Young comments: "The passage ... is one of the most difficult in all the OT, and the interpretations which have been offered are almost legion."³

Second, theologically: This "extremely important prophecy" is the most difficult for dispensationalists to make credible to those outside of their system. Even dispensationalist Robert Culver admits: "The difficulty of the verses that now lie before us is evident."⁴ "Premillennial writers of two or three generations ago were very far apart on the details. Much of the same diversity appears in premillennial contemporary writers."⁵ In fact, Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy leads dispensationalism

into one of its most strained peculiarities: The doctrine of the gap theory of the Church Age.⁶ I will consider this later.

Covenantal Structure

As we get started, it is crucial to grasp the structure of the prophecy. Meredith Kline provides a thorough presentation of the strongly covenantal cast of Daniel 9 which leads up to the prophecy, noting that it is "saturated with formulaic expressions drawn from the Mosaic treaties, particularly from the Deuteronomic treaty" (cf. Dan. 9:4-6, 10-15).⁷ This prayer regarding covenant loyalty (*hesed*, 9:4) is answered in terms of the covenantal sabbath pattern of the seventy weeks (9:24-27), which results in the confirmation of the covenant (9:27). Daniel 9 is the only chapter in Daniel to use God's special covenant name, YHWH (vv. 2, 4, 10, 13, 14, 20; cf. Exo. 6:2-4).

Recognizing the covenantal framework of the Seventy Weeks is crucial to its proper interpretation. It virtually demands that the focus be on the *fulfillment of redemption* in the ministry of Christ. Let us see why this is so.

The prophecy of the Seventy Weeks is clearly framed in terms of *sabbatic chronology*. The first phase of the Seventy Weeks is "seven weeks," or (literally) "seven sevens" (Dan. 9:25), which results in a value of forty-nine. This reflects the time frame leading up to the redemptively significant Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8ff). The total period of "*seventy sevens*" is also covenantal. Seventy represents ten seven-week periods: ten jubilees. The seventy sevens (weeks) appear to point to a *complete* redemptive Jubilee. This appropriately points to Christ, who brings in that ultimate Jubilee (cf. Luke 4:17-21; Isa. 61:1-3; Matt. 24:31), and who is the leading character in Daniel's prophecy. Consequently, the time frame revealed to Daniel demarcates the period in which "the Messianic redemption was to be accomplished."⁸

1. John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), p.24. John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), pp. 201, 216. O.T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1945) p. 111. See also: Alva J. McClain, *Daniel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1940) p. 9. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958) p. 240. E. Schuyler English, "The Gentiles in Revelation," *Prophecy and the Seventies*, Charles Lee Feinberg, ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), p.242.

2. J.A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel (International Critical Commentary)* (New York: Scribner's, 1972), p.400

3. E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, [1949] 1977), p. 191.

4. Robert Duncan Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days* (2nd ed.' Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), p. 144.

5. *Ibid.*, p.144

6. Allis mentions this teaching flowing out of the dispensational approach to Daniel 9:24-27 as "one of the clearest proofs of the novelty of that doctrine as well as of its revolutionary nature." Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 109. Kline's analysis of Daniel 9 leads him to call dispensationalism an "evangelical heresy." Meredith Kline, "Covenant of the Seventieth Week," *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Oswald T. Allis*, John H. Skilton, ed. (n.p.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974), p. 452.

7. Kline, "The Covenant of the Seventieth Week," p.456.

8. E. J. Young, "Daniel," *Eerdmans Bible Commentary*, Donald Guthrie and J. Motyer, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p.698

Chronological Value

The seventy weeks represent a period of seventy times seven *years*, or 490 years: (1) In the preceding context, the original seventy *years* of Jeremiah's prophecy is in Daniel's mind (Dan. 9:2). (2) The sabbath *year* (the seventh year of the sabbath period) is frequently referred to simply as "the sabbath."⁹ (3) There is Scriptural warrant for measuring days in terms of years in some passages (Gen. 29:27-28; Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6).

The "command" spoken of in Daniel 9:25 is "know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem..." At first appearance it would seem to be by Cyrus' decree to rebuild the Temple in 538 B.C. This command is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and in Ezra 1:1-4; 5:13, 17, 6:3. Daniel, however, specifically speaks of the command to "restore and build Jerusalem," which is an important qualification.¹⁰

Though half-hearted efforts were made to rebuild Jerusalem after Cyrus' decree, for a long time Jerusalem was little more than a sparsely populated, unwallled village. Daniel speaks of the command to "restore" (*shub*, return) Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25). This requires that it be returned to its original integrity and grandeur "as at the first" (Jer. 33:7). It was not until the middle of the fifth century B.C. that this was undertaken seriously.¹¹

The first period of seven weeks must indicate something, for it is set off from the two other periods. Were it not significant, Daniel could have spoken of the sixty-nine weeks, rather than the "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" (Dan. 9:25). This seven weeks (or forty-nine years) apparently witnesses the successful conclusion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem.¹²

The second period of sixty-two weeks, extends from the conclusion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the introduction of the Messiah to Israel at His baptism at the beginning of His public ministry (Dan. 9:25), sometime around A.D. 26. This interpretation is quite widely agreed upon by conservative scholars, being virtually "universal among Christian exegetes"¹³ - excluding dispensationalists. The third period of one week is the subject of intense controversy between dispensationalism and other conservative scholarship. I will turn to this shortly.

Interpretation of Daniel 9:24

In Daniel 9:24, the overriding, glorious expectation of the prophecy is stated: "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

The six infinitival phrases of verse 24 should be understood as three couples (Payne, Terry, Maurer, Hitzig, and the Massorettes), rather than as two triplets (Keil and Young). Clearly, these six results are the main point of the prophecy,

servicing as the heading to the explication to follow. The "know therefore and understand" statement in verse 25 begins that explication.

The general view of Daniel 9:24 among non-dispensational evangelicals is that "the six items presented ... settle the *terminus ad quem* of the prophecy,"¹⁵ that is, they have to do with the First Advent. Dispensationalists, however, hold that these events are "not to be found in any event near the earthly lifetime of our Lord."¹⁶ Rather they teach that "God will once again turn His attention in a special way to His people the Jews and to His holy city Jerusalem, as outlined in Daniel 9:24."¹⁷ The dispensationalist takes a decidedly futurist approach to the prophecy, *when he gets past the first sixty-nine weeks*.

Let us notice, first, that the Seventy Weeks will witness the *finishing of the transgression*. As just noted, Daniel's prayer of confession was regarding Israel's sins (Dan. 9:4ff) and the prophecy's focus is on Israel (Dan. 9:24a). Consequently, this *finishing (kala) the transgression* has to do with Israel's finishing, i.e., completing, her transgression against God. The finishing of that transgression occurs in the ministry of Christ, when Israel culminates her resistance to God by rejecting His Son and having Him crucified (Matt. 21: 37-38; c. 21:33-45; Acts 7:51-52.)¹⁸

The second part of the couplet is directly related to the first: Having finished the transgression against God in the rejection of the Messiah, now the *sins are sealed up* (NASV marg.; *chatham*). The idea here is, as Payne observes, to seal or to "reserve sins for punishment."¹⁹ Because of Israel's rejection of Messiah, God reserves punishment for her: the final, conclusive destruction of the temple, which was reserved from the time of Jesus' ministry until A.D. 70 (Matt. 24:2,34). The sealing or reserving of the sins indicates that *within* the "Seventy Weeks" Israel will complete her transgression, *and* with the completing of her sin, by crucifying Christ, God will act to reserve (*beyond the seventy weeks*) her sins for judgment.

The third result (beginning the second couplet) has to do with the provision of "reconciliation for iniquity."²⁰ The Hebrew word *kaphar* is the word for "atonement," i.e., a covering of sin. It clearly speaks of Christ's atoning death, which is the ultimate atonement to which all temple rituals looked (Heb.

14. For couplet view, see: J. Barton Payne, "The Goal of Daniel's Seventy Weeks," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21:2 (June, 1978) 111; Milton Terry, *Biblical Apocalypics: A Study of the Most Notable Revelations of God and of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, [1898] 1988), p.200. Young lists the other two: F. Maurer, *Commentarius grammaticus criticus in Vetus Testamentum*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: 1838); F. Hitzig, *Das Buch Daniel* (1850). For the triplet view, see: C. F. Keil, "The Book of Daniel," *Commentary on the Old Testament*, C.F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, [1877] 1975), p. 341. E.J. Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 197

15. Keil and Delitzsch, "Daniel," p.201.

16. Robert Duncan Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days* (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1954), p.155

17. Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1986) 465.

18. Matt. 20:18-19; 23:37-38; 27:11-25; Mark 10:33, 15:1; Luke 18:32; 23:1-2; John 18:28-31; 19:12,15; Acts 2:22-23; 3:13-15a' 4:26-27; 5:30; 7:52.

19. Payne, "Goal of Daniel's Seventy Weeks," p.111.

20. The definite article, which occurred before "transgression" and "sins," is lacking here. There it referred to the particular situation of Israel. Here it considers the more general predicament of mankind.

9. Lev. 25:2-5, 26:34,35, 43; 2 Chr. 36:21: etc.

10. E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (McLean, VA: MacDonald, [1854] n.d.), 2:884ff

11. *Ibid.*, 2:8840911. J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973, pp 388ff. C. Boufflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel* (London: SPCK, 1923.) pp. 195ff.

12. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, 2:894ff.

13. Montgomery, *Daniel*, p. 332.

9:26²¹). This also occurred during His earthly ministry - at His death. The dispensationalist here prefers to interpret this result as *application* rather than *effecting*. He sees it as subjective appropriation instead of objective accomplishment: "[T]he actual application of it is again associated with the second advent as far as Israel is concerned."²² But on the basis of the Hebrew verb, the passage clearly speaks of the actual making *reconciliation* (or *atonement*).

Because of this atonement to cover sin, the fourth result is that *everlasting righteousness* is effected. That is, the final, complete atonement establishes righteousness. This speaks of the objective accomplishment, not the subjective appropriation of righteousness. This was effected by Christ within the seventy-week period, as well (Rom. 3:21-22a).

The fifth result (the first portion of the third couplet) has to do with the ministry of Christ on earth, which is introduced at His baptism: He comes "*to seal up vision and prophecy*." By this is meant that Christ fulfills (and thereby confirms) the prophecy (Luke 18:31; cf. Luke 24:44; Acts 3:18).²³

Finally, the seventy years are for the following goal: "*to anoint the Most Holy*." This anointing [*mashach*] speaks of the Christ's baptismal anointing for the following reasons: (1) The overriding concern of Daniel 9:24-27 is Messianic. The temple that is built after the Babylonian Captivity is to be destroyed after the seventy weeks (v.27), with no further mention made of it. (2) In the following verses, the Messiah (*mashiyach*, "Christ," "Anointed One") is specifically named twice (vv. 25, 26). (3) The "most holy" phraseology speaks of the Messiah, who is "that Holy One who is to be born."²⁴ It is of Christ that the ultimate redemptive Jubilee is prophesied by Isaiah (Isa. 61:1-2a; cf. Luke 4:17-21). It was at His baptismal anointing that the Spirit came upon Him (Mark 1:9-11). This was introductory to His ministry, of which we read three verses later: "Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, 'The time is fulfilled [the Sixty-ninth week?]²⁵, and the kingdom

of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15). Christ is pre-eminently *the Anointed One*.²⁶

The Seventieth Week

The Messiah now experiences something "after the sixty-two weeks" (Dan. 9:26), which follow the preceding "seven weeks" (v.25). This is to occur, then sometime *after* the sixty-ninth week. A natural reading of the text shows this is in the seventieth week, for that is the only time frame remaining for the accomplishment of the goal of the prophecy listed in verse 24. That which occurs at this time is: "Messiah shall be *cut off*." The Hebrew word translated "cut off" here (*karath*) "is used of the death penalty, Lev. 7:20; and refers to a violent death,"²⁷ i.e., the death of Christ on the cross.

Given the Hebraic pattern of repetition, we may easily discern a parallel between verses 26 and 27; verse 27 gives an explanation of verse 26. Negatively, Messiah's *cutting off* in verse 26 is the result of Israel's completing her transgression and bring it to a culmination (v.24) by crucifying the Messiah.²⁸ Positively, verse 27 states this same event: "He shall *confirm a covenant* with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering." Considered from its positive effect, this confirming of the covenant with many makes reconciliation and brings in everlasting righteousness (v. 24). The *confirming of a covenant* (v.27) refers to the prophesied covenantal actions of verse 24, which come about as the result of the Perfect Covenantal Jubilee (Seventy Weeks) and are mentioned as a result of Daniel's covenantal prayer (cf. v.4). The covenant mentioned, then is the divine covenant of God's redemptive grace.²⁹ Messiah came to *confirm* the covenantal promises (Luke 1:72; Eph. 2:12). He confirmed the covenant by His death on the cross (Heb 7:22b).³⁰

The word translated "confirm" (*higbir*) is related to the angel Gabriel's name, who brought Daniel the revelation of the Seventy Weeks (and who later brings the revelation of Christ's birth [Luke 1:19. 26]). "Gabriel" is based on the Hebrew *gibbor*, "strong one," a concept frequently associated with the covenant God.³¹ The related word found in Daniel 9:27 means to "make strong, confirm."³² This "firm covenant" brings about "*everlasting righteousness*" (Dan. 9:24) - hence its firmness.

Daniel's prayer was particularly for Israel (Dan. 9:3ff), and it was uttered in recognition of God's promises of mercy upon

21. Heb. 1:3; 7:27; 9:7-12, 26,28; 10:9-10. See also: John 1:29; Rom. 3:25; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 2:2.

22. Walvoord, *Daniel*, p. 222.

23. Walvoord slips by allowing this prophecy to cover "the cessation of the New Testament prophetic gift seen both in oral prophecy and in the writing of the Scriptures." Walvoord, *Daniel*, p.222. This, however, does not occur in either the first sixty-nine weeks (up to "just before the time of Christ's crucifixion") or in the seventieth week (the future Great Tribulation), the periods which he claims involve the 490 years. Walvoord, *Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*, p. 258. Yet he specifically says that the "six major events characterize the 490 years" *Ibid.* p. 251.

24. Luke 1:35; cf 4:34,41. See also; Mark 1:24; Acts 3:14; 4:27, 30; I John 2:20; Rev. 3:7; He is called the "anointed one" (Psa. 2:2; Isa. 42:1; Acts 10:38).

25. Interestingly, there was a current and widely held belief that a ruler from within Israel was to arise "at that very time," i.e., during the Jewish War. Tacitus, *Histories* 5:13: "The majority were convinced that the ancient scriptures of their priests alluded to *the present as the very time* when the Orient would triumph and from Judaea would go forth men destined to rule the world. This mysterious prophecy really referred to Vespasian and Titus..." Suetonius, *Vespasian* 4: "An ancient superstition was current in the East, that our of Judaea at this time would come the rulers of the world. This prediction, as the event later proved, referred to a Roman Emperor..." Josephus even picks up on this idea, when he ingratiate himself to regarding Vespasian by declaring he was the one to rule (*Wars* 3:8:9). The only prophecy regarding Israel that actually dates Messianic era events is Daniel 9:24-27. Josephus also applies the Daniel 9 passage to the rule of the Romans in another context: "In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that

our country should be made desolate by them. All these things did this man leave in writing, as God had shewed them to him..." (*Ant.* 10:11:7).

26. Psa. 2:2; 132:10; Isa. 11:2; 42:1; Hab. 3:13; Acts 4:27; 10:38; Heb 1:9. Vanderwaal denies the Messianic referent of this passage, preferring a Maccabean priestly referent. Cornelius Vanderwaal, *Hal Lindsey and Biblical Prophecy* (St. Catharines, Ontario: Paideia, 1978), p.37.

27. Young, *Daniel*, p. 206

28. Matt. 20:18-19; 27:11-25; Mark 10:33; 15:1; Luke 18:32; 23:1-2; John 18:28-31; 19:12,15; Acts 2:22-23; 3:13-15a; 4:26-27; 5:30; 7:52.

29. When "covenant" is mentioned in Daniel, it is always God's covenant, see: Daniel 9:4; 11:22, 28, 30, 32. This includes even Daniel 11:22. See: J. Dwight Pentecost, "Daniel," *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds. 2 vols. (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985), 1:1369. Hereafter referred to as *BKC*.

30. Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24.

31. Deut. 7:9,21; 10:17; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; Isa. 9:6; Dan. 9:4. Hengstenberg argues convincingly that the source of Daniel 9 seems to be Isaiah 10:21-23, where God is the "Mighty God" who blesses the faithful remnant.

32. Young, *Daniel*, p. 209; Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 122; Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, 2:856.

those who love Him (V.4). Therefore, the prophecy hold that the covenant will be confirmed with *many* for *one week*. The reference to the "many" speaks of the faithful in Israel. "Thus a contrast is introduced between *He* and the *Many*, a contrast which appears to reflect upon the great Messianic passage, Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and particularly 53:11. Although the entire nation will not receive salvation, the many will receive."³³

This confirmation of God's covenant promises to the "many" of Israel will occur in the middle of the *seventieth week* (v.27), which parallels "after the sixty-two [and seven] weeks" (v.26), while providing more detail. We know Christ's three-and-one-half-year ministry was decidedly focused on the Jews in the first half of the seventieth week (Matt. 10:5b; cf. Matt. 15:24). For a period of three and one-half years after the crucifixion,³⁴ the apostles focused almost exclusively on the Jews, beginning first "in Judea" (Acts 1:8; 2:14) because "the gospel of Christ" is "for the Jew first" (Rom. 1:16; cf. 2:10; John 4:22).

Although the event that serves as the terminus of the sixty-ninth week is clearly specified, such is not the case with the terminus of the seventieth. Thus, the exact event that ends the seventieth is not so significant for us to know. Apparently at the stoning of Stephen, the first martyr of Christianity, the covenantal proclamation began to be turned toward the Gentiles (Acts 8:1). The apostle to the Gentiles appears on the scene at Stephen's death (Acts 7:58-8:1), as the Jewish persecution against Christianity breaks out. Paul's mission is clearly stated as exceeding the narrow Jewish focus (Acts 9:15).

This confirmation of the covenant occurs "in the middles of the week" (v. 27). **I have already shown that the seventieth week begins with the baptismal anointing of Christ.** Then, after three and one-half years of ministry - the **middle** of the seventieth week - Christ was **crucified** (Luke 13:6-9; *Eccl. Hist.* 1:10:3). Thus, the prophecy states that by His conclusive confirmation of the covenant, Messiah will "bring an end to sacrifice and offering" (v.27) by offering up Himself as a sacrifice for sin (Heb. 9:25-26; cf. Heb. 7:11-12, 18-22). consequently, at His death the Temple's veil was torn from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51) as evidence that the sacrificial system was *legally disestablished* in the eyes of God (cf. Matt. 23:38), for Christ is the Lamb of God (John 1:29).

The Destruction of Jerusalem

But how are we to understand the latter portions of both verses 26 and 27? What are we to make of the destruction of the city and sanctuary (v. 26) and the abomination that causes desolation (v.27), which most non-dispensational evangelical commentators agree occurred in A.D. 70?

In verse 26, we learn there are *two* events to occur *after* the sixty-ninth week: (1) The Messiah is to be "cut off," and (2) the city and sanctuary are to be destroyed. Verse 27a informs us that the Messiah's cutting off (v. 26a) is a confirmation of the covenant and is to occur at the half-way mark of the seventieth week. So, the Messiah's death is clearly within the time frame

33. Young, *Daniel*, p. 213.

34. Payne, "The Goal of Daniel's Seventy Weeks," p. 109n; Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, pp. 195ff; Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, 2:898. Young, *Daniel*, p.213.

of the Seventy Weeks (as we expect because of His being the major figure of the fulfillment of the prophecy.)

The events involving the destruction of the city and the sanctuary with war and desolation (vv. 26b, 27b) are the *consequences* of the cutting off of the Messiah and do not necessarily occur *in* the seventy weeks time frame. They are an *addendum* to the fulfillment of the focus of the prophecy, which is stated in verse 24. The destructive acts are *anticipated*, however, in the divine act of sealing up or reserving the sin of Israel for punishment. Israel's climactic sin -their completing of their transgression (v.24) with the cutting off of Messiah (v. 26a) - results in God's act of *reserving Israel's sin until later*. Israel's judgment will not be postpone forever; it will come after the expiration of the seventy weeks. this explains the "very indefinite"³⁵ phrase "till the end of the war": *the "end" will not occur during the seventy weeks.* that prophesied end occurred in A.D. 70, exactly as Christ had made abundantly clear in Matthew 24:15. ♦

Images of Christ — Professor John Murray

A picture of Christ, if it serves any useful purpose, must evoke some thought or feeling respecting him and, in view of what he is, this thought or feeling will be worshipful. We cannot avoid making the picture a medium of worship. But since the materials for this medium of worship are not derived from the only revelation we possess respecting Jesus, namely, Scripture, the worship is constrained by a creation of the human mind that has no revelatory warrant. This is will-worship. For the principle of the second commandment is that we are to worship God only in ways prescribed and authorized by him. It is a grievous sin to have worship constrained by a human figment, and that is what a picture of the Saviour involves. "Pictures of Christ," *The Presbyterian Reformed Magazine*, Winter 1993, pp. 186-188.

Church News

Scriptural Worship. Carl Bogue's excellent tract on the regulative principle of worship has been reprinted by Blue Banner Books as the first in a series of Presbyterian Tracts. Send \$1.25 to receive one copy postage paid. Order ten at \$6.00 postage paid. Order twenty-five or more at \$0.40 cents each (Include \$1.00 postage). This would be a very good handout to introduce someone to the regulative principle of worship.

Pastor Bacon's Surgery. On March 4th, Richard Bacon had quadruple bypass surgery. The Lord was merciful and Richard is recovering well. He preached both services on April 17th. He was also able to attend the March 25th meeting of Concerned

35. ³⁵Allis, Prophecy and the Church, p.115.

Presbyterians. Pray for his continued healing, and the Lord's blessing on his ministry.

Forth Coming Issues. In future *Blue Banners* we hope to have issues devoted to The Lord's Day, an updated version of Richard Bacon's *What Mean Ye by this Service* (against Paedo Communion), a reprint of Frank Smith's *Petticoat Presbyterianism*, and a continuation of our Presbyterian Bibliography with articles by Pastor Bacon on a bibliography on the Westminster Assembly.

Worship Song Update. To date we have not received any retraction from Ben Shaw or Greenville Seminary regarding errors in Shaw's *Studies in Church Music* (See the December 93 issue). While Mr. Shaw admitted privately that part of his argument therein was flawed, it seems he is unwilling to acknowledge this publicly. The Seminary still offers the book without retractions in its list of publications. ♦

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