

# The Presbyterian GUARDIAN

J. GRESHAM MACHEN • EDITOR 1936-1937

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*According to the New Testament our Lord even in the days of His flesh presented Himself not merely as Teacher and Example and Leader but also, and primarily, as Saviour; He offered Himself to sinful men as One who alone could give them entrance into the Kingdom of God. . . . He invited men not merely to have faith in God like the faith which He had in God, but He invited them to have faith in Him.*

—J. Gresham Machen



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## Calvinism

(Continued from p. 273)

as artists? I suppose that you will add that in any case, even when unbelievers are most expressive in their hostility to God, their work may still be exceedingly beautiful, so completely self-frustrative are all the efforts of Satan and his servants in this world. The unbeliever must borrow, or rather steal, his capital from the believer. Thus do all the works of unbelieving artists

always testify against the unbelief of their creators, in lesser or in greater degree. My guess is that if you could show Mr. Grove that only the Calvinist knows the true principle of spontaneity or freedom in any field, that any other spontaneity or freedom is the liberty of flapping one's wings in a void, the freedom of painting disorder without the background of order, the freedom of painting order without spontaneity, then his face would at least begin to light up.

has been available for some years has before him a treasure that will open up to him a new perspective in dealing with the most precious of all deposits, the Word of the living God.

The work has been edited by the Rev. Johannes G. Vos, the esteemed son of the author. He has also added a most valuable index of subjects and names and of Scripture references.

It is to be regretted that the part devoted to the New Testament is not complete. The volume closes with the chapter on "The Revelation of Jesus' Public Ministry." It is a pleasure to be able to relate, however, that a great deal of the material which would have been incorporated in such a continuation is available to us in Dr. Vos's other books and in numerous articles.

Although Dr. Vos, because of his advanced years, is not now able to enrich us with the fruits of his theological erudition, we rejoice that we now have this new memorial to the graces and gifts with which God has so singularly endowed him. Those of us who have been privileged to sit at his feet wish with all the depth and warmth of esteem and affection that in his declining years the candle of the Lord may shine upon his head and the secret of God abide upon his tabernacle.

(This book may be purchased from THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Pa.)

## Biblical Theology

### A Book Review

Geerhardus Vos: BIBLICAL THEOLOGY—OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1948. 453 pp. \$5.00

"BIBLICAL THEOLOGY" is a distinct branch of theological study. Too many students of the Bible and of theology are unaware of this fact and oftentimes those who are aware of its distinctiveness have a rather hazy notion of its distinctive character. In the publication of this volume the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company has performed a great service, for it has made available a book which, if perused and digested, will correct this widespread deficiency.

There is no better definition of Biblical Theology known to the present writer than that given by Dr. Vos: "Biblical Theology is that branch of Exegetical Theology which deals with the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible" (p. 13). The key word in this definition is the word "process". The special revelation which God has given of Himself and of His will was not given all at once. It was given rather in a process of progressive and accumulating self-disclosure until it reached its culmination in the redemptive revelation embodied in and associated with the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh. And this progressive revelation that reached its culmination in the New Testament is not to be conceived of as a series of sporadic and unrelated or disconnected oracles, but as a perfectly unified and articulated organic development. The figure that serves to illustrate is that of the progress from

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seed to fully developed organism. Biblical Theology deals with this material of revelation and seeks "to exhibit the organic growth or development of the truths of Special Revelation from the primitive preremptive Special Revelation given in Eden to the close of the New Testament canon" (p. 5). A more suitable name would therefore be the "History of Special Revelation" (*ibid.*).

It is this governing conception that provides the principle in terms of which Dr. Vos's *Biblical Theology* is written. We are convinced that, to date, no one has been the peer of Dr. Vos in this department of Biblical study. This volume is therefore unique.

The concept of progressive revelation is subject to great abuse. It is no wonder that devoted students of the Bible should sometimes recoil from the use of it. But the abuse of a concept is never a reason for the rejection of the concept as such. The abuse and distortion place the student under greater obligation to frame a true conception and to apply it properly. This is the great service performed by Dr. Vos. He recognizes that God's revelation has been progressive. But there are two corollaries of this recognition upon which he is equally insistent—first, that the content available to us is deposited in its entirety in the Scriptures and, second, that this process of revelation closed with the completion of the New Testament canon.

Space will not permit any further evaluation of this work. The student who has not had access to this work in the mimeographed form in which it

## Lutherans to Withdraw China Missionaries

THE leading Lutheran denominations in this country with the exception of the Missouri Synod have decided to withdraw their missionaries from areas of China overrun or threatened by the Communists.

The decision was reached following reports on conditions in various areas served by Lutheranism. It is probable that the withdrawn missionaries will work in south or southwest China. However, apparently all the groups withdrawing from the north are relocating their people in that area, which is becoming overloaded with missionaries awaiting assignment.

The consensus seems to be that the church in Communist-controlled areas will do better without the presence of 'foreigners'. However, the Communists in some sections have actually invited the missionaries to return.