

the

Volume 3, Issue 1

Winter

This Issue: *Theodicy: God's Justice in an Evil World*

EDITOR'S NOTES, page 2 (See also *Letters to the Editor* on Page 20.)

KEYNOTE

Theodicy in the Book of Job, **page 3**

Rev. Christopher Lensch, Registrar and Assistant Professor of Old Testament

PERSPECTIVES

Why Doesn't God Do Something. . .NOW!?, **page 9**

Mr. Eric Frank, Adjunct Faculty in Greek and Systematic Theology

Is God Still Sovereign?, **page 14**

Rev. Douglas Sukhia, Pastor, Armor Bible Presbyterian Church, Orchard Park, NY

EXEGESIS

Remonstrating with God in Adversity: A Study in Habakkuk, **page 21**

Rev. Leonard Pine, Director of Development and Instructor in Practical Theology

PRACTICUM

Ministering to the Saints in Adversity, **page 27**

Rev. G.W. Fisher, Pastor, Bible Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee

A Review of Pagan Views on Human Suffering, **page 31**

Rev. Howard Carlson, Pastor, Suncoast Bible Presbyterian Church, Palm Harbor, FL

BOOKS

Review of Jay Adams' *The Grand Demonstration*, **page 35**

Rev. Kevin Backus, Ph. D. candidate, Adjunct Faculty in Counseling

Review of C. S. Lewis' *The Problem of Pain*, **page 37**

Rev. Leonard Pine, Director of Development and Instructor in Practical Theology



Next Issue: *The Other Reformers*

WESTERN REFORMED SEMINARY
5 South G Street
Tacoma, Washington 98405
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Tacoma, WA
Permit No. 741

Editor's Notes
Leonard W. Pine, Editor

Theodicy's Challenge

On the day after Christmas just past, a young man in our town of St. Helens, Oregon, was working at the tree farm where he had worked for the past few years. Working around a burn barrel, suddenly something exploded and he was engulfed in flames. Over ninety percent of his body has third-degree burns or worse. As I write, he is undergoing his fifth skin-graft surgery and is clinging to life. The doctors have amputated both arms and legs, and certainly he faces an agonizing road to recovery if he survives. The young man is a Christian, and the church community here has been rocked to its foundations by this tragedy. Once again, the old question makes itself heard: "How can a just God allow innocent people to suffer?" (Of course, the truth is that there are *no* "innocent" people.)

Well, that is just the question theodicy seeks to answer, and which we will explore in this issue of *the WRS Journal*. Many have sought the answer to this question using their own minds and hearts as the resource for their answers. Of course, such answers will always be unsatisfactory. The Scriptures, however, have much to say about this issue, however, and the answers they give are infallible. We must depend upon God's justice

Subscription Information

The WRS Journal is published semi-annually, with issues appearing every Winter and Summer. Subscriptions are free, and multiple copies are automatically sent to the congregations of the Bible Presbyterian Church. We welcome other churches and individuals to join our readers: please write or call to be added to our mailings.

8 3 3 3 3 3 3

the
WRS JOURNAL

5 South "G" Street, Tacoma, Washington 98405
(206) 272-0417

psychological and philosophical thought. The thrust of this book runs contrary to almost everything you have ever heard, not only outside but also inside the church.

The Grand Demonstration is easy to read and comprehend even for the reader who has no theological background. It clearly presents the answer of Scripture without compromise. Adams takes the subject home to the heart of every reader. Grasping its contents should humble, thrill and motivate you. †

Kevin M. Backus is a fellow of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors.

C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, NY: Collier Books, Macmillan Pub. Co., 1962. 157 pp., \$4.95.

Review by Leonard Pine

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) was no stranger to pain. His little treatise on the subject reflects that truth vividly. His stated purpose in writing on the subject, besides being asked to do so, is

to solve the intellectual problem of raised by suffering; for the far higher task of teaching fortitude and patience I was never fool enough to suppose myself qualified, nor have I anything to offer my readers except my conviction that when pain is to be borne, a little courage helps more than much knowledge, a little human sympathy more than much courage, and the least tincture of

the love of God more than all. (Preface, p. 10)

Lewis acknowledges that he is no theologian, and furthermore that he writes as layman of the Church of England. For all of the resultant theological pitfalls he suffers under (for example, his views on theistic evolution), Lewis nevertheless deals effectively with the thorny philosophical issues of pain. He is careful to uphold the sovereignty and authority of God and warn against the presumption of man to accuse God of mismanagement.

Lewis will make you think. *The Problem of Pain* is not easy to read, at least not quickly. Every word counts, and its simple eloquence compels the reader to contemplation of every thought.

Lewis' personal acquaintance with pain and genius for making philosophy warmly human makes his little book a suitable source for challenging one's thinking in dealing with pain and suffering. †

Book Questions?

Have an idea for a book review, or questions about current titles on the subjects we cover? Please contact Christopher Lensch at:

the WRS Journal
5 South "G" Street
Tacoma, WA 98405

matter. Nevertheless, theologians are so heavily loaded with humanism that they are either blind to the truth, or, understanding it, they refuse to teach it out of fear of what others may say. People do not like God's answer to their question, because it lowers them to their proper place as dependent, created beings and raises God to His rightful place as Creator and Sustainer of all.

The title of Adams' book refers to Romans 9:22,23. The exegesis of this passage forms the heart of the book. Here God declares that human history is a grand demonstration of His wrath and mercy. Accordingly He has prepared some of mankind for destruction and readies others to receive His grace, displaying both aspects of His character for all to see. He punishes the vessels adapted to evil so that He might display His glory. This demonstration of Himself occurs before all His creatures (earthly and celestial). Whenever God gives a clear answer to this question, we can expect certain responses. It was so in the Apostle's day, and it continues in our own. Adams faithfully presents God's answers to man's objections. In responding the challenge to God's fairness he addresses society's underlying humanistic presupposition. Adams sets forth the proper relationship between the Sovereign Creator and His creatures. He considers man's responsibility and God's sovereignty without compromising either. While maintaining that God brings all things to pass according

to the counsel of His will, Adams demonstrates that what God decreed takes place through responsible beings who without coercion do only that which they want to do. This naturally leads to a discussion of the free agency of man. Is man free? Yes, as free as God! God is free to act according to His nature; which, of course, is perfect freedom. Man is free, free to act according to His own nature.

The Grand Demonstration is classic Jay Adams. He makes a theological subject clear and easily understandable. Then, he proceeds to make it eminently personal and practical. In a chapter entitled "Election and You," he relates God's intention for this doctrine in the believer; namely, to permanently affect your world view, making it distinctly Christian.

Christians are not the only ones genuinely concerned with the answer to this question. That's why it is especially appropriate that Adams addresses another chapter to the unbeliever. This makes *The Grand Demonstration* an excellent tool to use with the unsaved. Other chapters consider the ways the rest of creation and all of history are involved in this "grand demonstration" of God's character.

To accept the teaching of Romans 9 requires radical reorientation of one's perspective on the ways of God and man. There is no way to soften the impact of the teaching of the Scripture for a humanistic mind set, whether it be in a pagan, or in a Christian who has been brainwashed by

KEYNOTE

JOB: ON TRIAL AND IN TRIALS

by Christopher K. Lensch

INTRODUCTION

Horatio Spafford was a businessman, not a song writer. His life began to change when he lost his shirt in an economic crash following the American Civil War. His business was just returning and the future looked bright until the great Chicago Fire of 1873 robbed him of his fortunes again.

At least he still had his beautiful family. In the midst of financial troubles, Spafford decided to take a retreat to Europe to contemplate the future. He sent his wife and four children on ahead, promising to join them shortly.

Their ship never reached port. His wife telegraphed him, "All is lost. Only I remain."

Spafford rushed to meet his wife in England. Approaching the site of the shipwreck, the captain informed him of the location of his children's watery grave. How could he find solace after this? He turned to God for comfort and meaning, and he found peace as he gave everything into God's hands.

Today we share in his expression of peace when we sing the hymn "It Is Well with My Soul." Spafford knew something of what the ancient sufferer Job felt when he wrote about the "sorrows like sea billows" rolling over him. Both of these men lost fortunes and

family. Yet both Job and Spafford never lost their God.

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK OF JOB

In the annals of human suffering, few mortals have suffered as Job did. The magnitude of his loss and how he handled it has made his case a paradigm for the philosophical study of human suffering.

Both wise and simple turn to the book of Job sometime in their lives. This one man's suffering provides a microcosm of "everyman's" suffering. Job's transparency of heart reveals his inner agonies and even his secret doubts about God. At the same time, this book paints a wider picture that our personal suffering is not a trifling ripple in the eons of time. Rather, human misery is set against the backdrop of an epic conflict between heaven and hell.

JOB—THE ALMOST PERFECT SUFFERER

What makes Job a model of suffering is that his adversities were more than devastating—they were unrelenting. He lost his fortunes, his family, and then his friends. The worst torture of all was the temptation to think he had lost his God.

Job started well in the midst of his demonic trials. He did not jump out of a window when he

lost his estate. When his beloved children were swept away and his wife provoked him, he maintained his faithfulness.

Then Satan escalated the attack. Job's health broke and his wise counselors subtly betrayed him. They planted seeds of doubt about his relationship to the only One Who could deliver Job and unravel the mystery of his suffering.

In the end, God does vindicate Job. This happens, not when his trials get the best of him, but when he repents of his "attitude problem." There is no room for even a hint of self-righteousness before the God transcendent.

THE NATURE OF THE BOOK

Most of the book of Job is dramatic dialogue and monologue. For power and pathos these speeches rank among the great literary pieces of the world.

Still, the plot from chapters 3-41 is not always easy to trace. Sometimes the poetic dialogue is hard to follow. This is not the case for the prologue and epilogue of the book; they are easy enough for a child to understand. In fact, these two narrative sections make the rest of Job's ordeal more intelligible by showing us what he himself does not see in the beginning—that his very faith is on trial in the court of heaven.

Even more sublime is the thought that God is on trial. The arch-enemy has thrown down the gauntlet. Satan impugns the nature and life-changing power of God's

grace as manifested in the life of Job. He accuses Job of being a mercenary believer. (Would not an "easy-believer" have wilted at the first direct blast of the devil's fury?) As a testimony to all creation, God confidently allows His grace to be tested in the suffering of Job, a redeemed saint whose new nature battles against his old nature.

THE CRUX OF THE BOOK

While the speeches in the heart of the book may appear to be unstructured and even rambling, the book of Job shows deliberate internal design. Students of Semitic literature like Elmer Smick have discovered seven major sections in Job. Its first three parts mirror its last three parts. Its a) prologue, b) opening lament of Job, and c) three cycles of dialogue are designed to balance its c₁) three monologues, b₁) closing statement of Job's repentance, and a₁) epilogue.

These six symmetrical sections all hinge on the book's middle

There is no room for even a hint of self-righteousness before the God transcendent.

section, chapter 28. This remaining section is the crux of the book's structure and the key to Job's message. Verse 28 is climactic:

man.

CONCLUSION

There are many varieties of teachings on pain, but perhaps these reflect an increasing American, nominal Christian view as the church becomes increasingly paganised. Bible-believers must search the Scriptures and insure our families stay free from anti-Christian darkness. ✚

BOOKS



Jay Adams, *The Grand Demonstration: A Biblical Study of the So-called Problem of Evil*.

[Available from Timeless Texts, 7 Janice Drive, Hackettstown, NJ 07840, \$7.95]

Review by Kevin M. Backus

Theology affects life. This is especially true when it comes to our understanding of the place of evil in the world. How does evil exist in a world created by a sovereign God? Why does a good God plan for evil? If He planned for it, why then does He punish those who sin, and do not repent? This is more than a theoretical fascination for the suffering all about us. The answer to this question will determine how we face life on a day-to-day basis. People, often *hurting* people, want to know, not only how suffering and evil can permeate God's reaction, but what its presence means for them. Is God in control, or is He not? If He is not in control of suffering and evil, then how are any of His promises trustworthy?

To save God from the charge that He planned evil's existence, most people trying to answer the question have emasculated Him! Think about it: He better have planned evil, because if He did not, the world is out of control at the most crucial point!

God has spoken clearly on this

**“They
that
observe
lying
vanities**

or as a result of continuous absolutions, or on a Friday night, or in the search for the knowledge of the faith, or in defending the right against injustice; whoever loves and remains chaste and does not betray his secret and dies, dies a *Shahid* (Martyr), and anyone who meets his death fighting against his own impulses in the 'great warfare' is *Shahid*.

Great privileges await the *Shahid*—unfortunately, all after death.

By his sacrifice the martyr escapes the examination in the grave by the "interrogating angels" Munkar and Nakir. He also escapes passing through the "Islamic purgatory" (*Barzakh*). Martyrs receive the highest of the various ranks of Paradise, nearest the throne of Allah; the Prophet spoke in a vision of the most beautiful abode in Paradise for them. The wounds of the *Shahid* which he received in his warfare become red like blood in the day of judgment, and shine and smell of musk. None of the dwellers of Paradise would ever come back to earth, except the *Shahid*: for on account of the very special privileges which are granted him in Paradise he wished to suffer martyrdom another ten times. Martyrs are freed by their death from the guilt of all sins so that they do not require the intercession of the Prophet, and indeed in later traditions we even find them interceding for other men.

There is little guilt for sin in Islam, since it is God who is all powerful and ultimately causes sin. Suffering is not a result of sin, but rather of Allah's exercise of His

capricious will. If one endures to the end, the rewards will follow in another life. Islam's similarities to the Bible's teachings are only very superficial ones.

PAGANISM AND THE OCCULT

In much of the world we find what in the United States is called "New Age." Their general response to suffering is stated by Michele Cox:

I feel that the "problem of pain" really depends very strongly on what you might call a "three-legged stool" of an idea of the Divine as 1) omnipotent, 2) omnibenevolent, and 3) omniscient. If the Divine is all of these things, then the existence of suffering—innocent suffering, that is—becomes a problem. My own "escape" from this issue is to toss one of the three "legs." I don't believe that the Divine is all-powerful. Each of us has our own power, which we can use to increase joy, or to increase pain, and our choices matter and are real. From my perspective, our "job" as the sapient part of the universe is to do what we can to make God's gamble worth it—to make the joy greater than the pain. After all, they (gods) are present in all things, feeling the joy and the sorrow.

I think that human free will demands a limit to the power of the Divine. I go a bit further. I say that the gods' all good [*sic*] applies to all things equally, and that they hold all creatures' interests in equal regard. So a god who loves us so much will allow disease to make us ill because the bacteria have to survive as well as

"Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding."

Chapter 28 is a transitional "interlude on wisdom" that highlights the theme of trusting God implicitly. Thus the heart of the book departs momentarily from the cavils and conjectures of short-sighted mortals to undergird the theme of God's sovereignty stressed in the book's introduction and conclusion. It echoes the importance of implicit trust found in the opening verse, "Job . . . was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil."

THE THEOLOGICAL MESSAGE OF THE BOOK

Job's story is a classic literary work that appeals to all audiences. More importantly, Job's message offers theological answers for those who are searching to understand God's ways.

While theodicy, the justice of God, is a heavy theme in the account of this righteous sufferer, Job never learned the answer to the age-old question of why a sovereign God allows pain and evil in the world. Nor did he himself ever get an explanation of why God had dealt with him so harshly. God does not justify His ways to men, even as He does not argue His pre-existence when Genesis introduces Him as the Creator.

Still, the reader of the book of Job is given a glimpse into the mysteries of God's ways when the veil of heaven is opened to reveal the contest between God Almighty

and Satan.

THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK

More than a contest, there literally is a judicial trial taking place in heaven and earth. The trial in heaven is the main trial; the trial on earth involving Job's innocence is a subsidiary trial that affects the outcome of the heavenly one. Although not immediately manifest, this book presents a trial within a trial.

Meredith Kline, who has done extensive study in the area of biblical covenants, was among the first to popularize this interpretation of the book of Job. Covenants and covenant theology are prevalent throughout the Bible, and Job's account, possibly the oldest canonical book, is no exception.

THESIS: A COVENANT TRIAL

When a suzerain entered into covenant with a vassal in the ancient Near East, both made promises. The vassal servant promised obedience and service, while the master promised protection and provision. To seal this relationship, the servant submitted to curses upon himself that would take effect in the event of treason.

In case anyone should impugn the vassal to the master, an inquiry would be made and a trial could be held to see if the master's threats

needed to be executed for disobedience.

Significantly, a servant who felt falsely accused could avoid his accusers by appealing to a “trial by ordeal.” He would declare his innocence and thereupon undergo a physical test. It might mean anything from swimming a swollen river to wrestling the sovereign’s champion defender. This is similar to two champions from Israel and Philistia, David and Goliath, going into a test of combat in order to decide the whole battle between both nations.

JOB ON TRIAL

When we read the book of Job, we see Job going through trials. We need to think also in terms of Job being on trial. First he is indicted by the chief prosecutor, Satan (1:10-12). The word “Satan” is more than a title or proper name; technically it means [legal] “adversary” as in Psalm 109:6,7 (cf. Zechariah 3:1,2).

In the face of this opposition, Job calls for the actual trial to begin (9:14-19). He wants to escape the vagaries of the court of public opinion. Also, he appeals for his own mediator (judge advocate) to present his case honestly before the court of heaven (9:32-35; 16:21; cf. 19:25).

Finally in desperation, Job makes his oath of clearance (chapter 31). He declares his innocence one last time and calls for a trial by ordeal.

The Sovereign God Himself appears in chapter 38 to put Job

through the ordeal. It is not a test of physical prowess, but what was known in the ancient world as a “wisdom contest.” It would be similar to the Queen of Sheba’s challenge to Solomon, only in the present case, the Source of wisdom examines a receptor of wisdom.

Still the test is carried out under the metaphor of wrestling. Wrestling was a common method of trial by ordeal and is found in the challenge, “Now gird up your loins like a mighty man” (38:3; 40:7a). God serves as His own champion and warns Job to be on guard as He begins (38:3). Then He warns him again after Job has taken a fall and has only one chance left (40:7a).

The wisdom contest takes the

Like Jacob, who wrestled with the Angel of God, Job ultimately prevailed with God through tears and supplications.

form of the scholarly master instructing the disciple by means of catechetical questions about the nature of the world and universe (chapters 38-41). Job had prided himself in his attainment as one of the wisest of men and had sought to instruct his friends in the way of wisdom (27:11). Now he was chagrined to find himself on the receiving end of the questioning,

exempt from the “relative” perception of suffering. Examples would include the inevitability of incurable diseases no matter the wealth or quality of care available; or the suffering the death of loved ones and our own fear of it; or perhaps the certainty of aging (in spite of plastic surgery); and finally the unpredictability of any result no matter our utmost meticulous planning. Practitioners of Buddhism are not pessimistic about life. They enjoy the good days but they attempt to transcend the bad ones by the balanced view of detachment.

Simon Smith was clearer on the subject, saying:

Suffering can arise from attachment. We form attachments to “things” such as loved ones, material objects—i.e. a new car—but do not accept that all things change. . . . It is this non-acceptance of change that causes suffering. To end suffering we must accept change as the true nature of all things and face this with equanimity.

Simon does add in brackets, “Easily said, very difficult to practice.”

Ken Russell adds a philosophical element to the subject: “The essence of Buddhist teaching on suffering is that everyone—good, bad, indefinable—suffers until they wake up to Reality.” I asked what that means. Ken responded: “To wake up means to be in touch with what really is.” I admit to suffering at this definition.

One last respondent, Frank McGlohn, came closer to the classic Buddhist statement: “To

suffer or encounter problems should be welcomed. With problems we as Buddhists can challenge and strengthen our practice. We grow with each event through the struggle to break that negative Karma.”

One must remember that there are over 200 different sects of Buddhism in the world. No form of Buddhism has a place for biblical doctrines of God, man, sin, salvation or resurrection. Most are either polytheistic, pantheistic or atheistic, and hold to reincarnation. *Amida* Buddhists do speak about salvation by faith, not works. They use such terms as “the new birth” and “changed lives.” However, for them the terms have far different meaning than the Biblical truth. No real dealing with the problem of sin can be found.

ISLAM

No Muslim responded to my forum questions. Their attitude, however, can be gained from *The Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, under an article entitled “Shahid” (or, “Martyr”). In Moslem tradition,

. . . anyone who dies a violent death, e.g., from starvation, thirst, drowning, being buried alive, burning, poison, a lightning stroke, being killed by robbers or wild beasts, or a mother who dies in childbirth; also anyone who dies during the performance of a meritorious action, e.g., in the pilgrimage or in a foreign land, where no friend or relative is with him, or on a journey which is *sunna* or while visiting a saint’s tomb or while in the act of prayer,

Raja Bhat expanded on Dani's last point in this way:

In a word, suffering is caused by *Karma*. The Hindu concept of Karma is fatalistic, in that once you accumulate a karmic load, it's on your back and you can't just shake it off. You work it off paying back and the load gets relieved. . . . Yet devotional Hinduism speaks of the divine being able to get the monkey off your back if you're devout enough. And Yoga meditation methods are meant to cleanse the *samskaras* off the inner mind (*samskaras* being subconscious impressions of prior experiences). If you killed a rat, that is a *samskara*, and so on. I myself try to avoid *himsa*, which is harm to others in thought word and deed.

For Hindus a missionary would emphasize two points:

- 1) "It is appointed for man once to die, and then the judgment." (Heb. 9:27); and
- 2) Suffering for all eternity is not sufficient to take away sin's guilt or penalty. That is why Christ came to earth: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. . ." (1 Peter 2:24).

BUDDHISM

An early split from Hinduism, Buddhism has many sects and is similar to Hinduism on the topic of suffering, but adds some further elements, according to Ivan Figueroa:

As tradition says, the Buddha

formulated four Noble Truths after his enlightenment. The first is *Dukkha*, meaning that life in samsara is always associated with some degree of suffering. Second is *Samudaya*, meaning that suffering originates from our craving or desire for pleasures and the attachment to the feelings created by that experience. Third is *Nirodha*, which teaches that there is a way of liberation from suffering which is based on controlling or eliminating our attachment to "happiness." Fourth is *Kukkha*, the method to obtain detachment through the eight-fold Noble Path (The "paths" are: 1.

**Suffering for all
eternity is not
sufficient to take
away sin's guilt
or penalty.**

right belief; 2. right aspiration; 3. right speech; 4. right action; 5. right livelihood; 6. right effort; 7. right thought; and 8. right meditation—including various forms of Yogic meditation). The first Noble Truth says that, according to the causes and conditions (karma) generated by former lifetimes, different individuals will obtain relative advantageous or harmful conditions in our earthly experience which will be judged by others and ourselves as good or bad. But in reality there is no single living being, no matter what his privileged situation who is

and was more embarrassed yet to discover that he could not answer the Master's questions.

All through his suffering Job somewhat smugly has been declaring his righteousness before men and God. He stood on his own when God seemed to be silent. Now that God had appeared, Job is forced to yield in his trial by ordeal to his covenant Master. He could not stand on his own. He could only repent in dust and ashes (42:6). Ironically, this outcome brought his acquittal. The final act in the trial is for God the Judge to declare the accused to be innocent (42:7,8 says Job had spoken what was "righteous"). His merciful Master had not intended to grind Job into the ground, but to vanquish him by extracting his true confession that he himself really was nothing apart from the grace of God (42:2-6). Like Jacob, who wrestled with the Angel of God, Job ultimately prevailed with God through tears and supplications.

GOD IS ACQUITTED

Job's case looms large on the court's docket. But remember that an accusation had also been lodged against God by Satan. Because of its gravity, this really is the primary trial in the book of Job.

When God conquered the protesting Job, God is vindicated in His challenge to Satan (1:8; 2:3). Job really did serve his Maker for more than what God gave him. Job's wisdom was to love and know God for Who He is.

IMPLICATIONS

Understanding the book of Job as a judicial trial of the covenant puts it in a whole new light. The middle speeches with Job protesting his innocence must be taken in the light of the Adversary's early accusations and the Sovereign's finally justifying Job on His terms.

There are other important implications that we can learn from Job's trial and from Job's trials.

Implication #1

Job serves as a universal picture of redeemed man's faith on trial.

God Himself describes Job as one of kind among men, "... blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil" (1:8). In that Job stands a test of fidelity he is almost like Adam, especially in the scene where his wife tempts him as Eve did Adam. Unlike the latter, Job passes the test of fidelity when he rests in the provision of God's grace.

Job is not a federal representative like Adam, yet he may be emblematic of all of God's righteous ones since he appears to be outside the flow of sacred history. In this generic context, he is the epitome of those who will live by faith.

Implication #2

The Sovereign God of the universe allows his creation design, yes, even His own character, to be put to the test. This happens when He uses one of His primary creatures, Satan, in testing a vassal made in God's image.

This has implications for the meaning of evil in creation. Our unrighteousness and Satan's nefarious schemes do not thwart the purposes of God. Rather, the God Who works all things together for good is glorified in sharp contrast to the darker side of life. (Note Romans 3:5.) He easily brings good even out of evil.

Implication #3

Consider the durability and predictability of sovereign grace on trial in the life of Job.

The grace of God that keeps us from falling also ensures that His work will be perfected in us, even in the face of a demonic onslaught (Jude 1, 24; Phil 1:6).

Implication #4

Ultimately, our wrestlings in the center ring of life are with God, not just with the devil or our own fleshly propensities.

When we struggle against temptations, against the limitations of our mortality, or against opponents who appear to be from the devil, God is watching. Will we like Job "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," or will we question and fight against God's providence?

Implication #5

Similarly, God wants us to live by faith. God does not ask us to bite the bullet in the face of life's trials, nor to grin and bear our agonies. He tells us to trust Him in adversity even though we may not know why we suffer or what the outcome will be.

He encourages us with examples like Job whose latter end was better

than his beginning. Remember that when Jacob also wrestled with God, he became Israel at Peniel.

Implication #6

Finally, no answer is given to Job WHY he suffered. The sovereign God is in heaven and man the creature is on the dust of the earth (Rom. 3:4,5,26).

CONCLUSION

Whenever we start singing "Nobody Knows the Troubles I've Seen," we betray our short-sightedness. Job has been there before. In reality he has experienced all these trials, and the Spirit of God has preserved his experience with God and the devil for our encouragement.

We remember that Job suffered, that he did not get all the answers, and that God was still in control of Job's life.

In the midst of our remembering, let us not forget the Lord Jesus. No one ever suffered the pangs of body and soul as Jesus did. He suffered by choice. Obedience and a loving heart led him to suffer quietly for others. Let us follow in His steps and "entrust our souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right" (I Peter 2:21; 4:19). †

prepare a mortal for such a moment?

It is not an easy task to deal with the tragedies, temptations, and heartaches of men while striving to maintain the honor of God, but this is what every faithful counselor and pastor must strive to do. In the Lord Jesus Himself we have our example. May God give us the grace to follow (2 Cor. 1:3-11). †

A SURVEY OF PAGAN VIEWS ON HUMAN SUFFERING

by Howard Carlson

When one leaves the doors of the church he is confronted with a non-Christian world of ideas. The meaning of suffering certainly has many pagan answers. I recently held an electronic symposium with several non-Christian individuals to find how their religion answers the question of "Why good people suffer."

HINDUISM

Hinduism is the basis of much popular belief on suffering. Hitesh Dani expressed his faith this way:

It is very hard to express Hinduism within confining words. I think its philosophy is like this:

- I AM god. This is called *Adwait*.
- I am part of God and worship God in various ways (called *Dwait*).
- I am an Atheist who does not believe in God.
- Regardless of how you approach the first three points, there is a law of *Karma*. Simply put, Karma means you reap what you sow. The fruits (good or bad) or results of one's actions reach him/her. If that is not in this lifetime, then in the next, and the next, and the next. . . until the balance sheet is balanced in full.
- To specifically answer why good people suffer, Hindus believe that it may be due to their previous life.

“God is
our
refuge
and
strength
, a

Bunyan; *Christian Contentment* by Jeremiah Burroughs; and *All Things For Good* by Thomas Watson. All are powerful tools in dealing with this world's miseries and the justice of God. It may be helpful to update these works in a prayer meeting study, laying the ground work for future needs among your people.

PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

No matter how the Lord may use you to help someone handle these issues, physical reactions may interfere or follow the efforts of the best counselor and the person's understanding. In dealing with people it is important to prepare them for and help them with these as well. A violent physical reaction to the trauma of personal tragedy does not necessarily mean that there is a lack of faith or confidence in God.

Physical responses should be expected, and it is good if you can give some counsel ahead of time, so that Satan can not easily make use of them. Those who have been exposed to some personal tragedy should avoid sugar, caffeine, salt, and alcohol. They should also get all the physical exercise they can stand and plenty of rest. Long, private walks are very helpful. These provide a good opportunity to pray earnestly.

PRAYER CONSIDERATIONS

This is the key to the mourner's peace of mind and the counselor's

effectiveness. Encourage them to pour out their hearts, to confess their fear and doubts, and to call on the Lord to send the comfort that only He can. Be constantly pointing them to Christ and coaxing them to call on Him. Even if someone is mad at God for what he consider to be an injustice, and he is truly the Lord's by faith, let him carry the charge to the throne of grace, look into His loving face, and confess it. His mercy will soon melt the heart and send peace. "It is said of Hannah," writes Burroughs, "that when she had been at prayer her countenance was no more sad (1 Samuel 1:18), she was comforted: this is the right way to contentment." (*Christian Contentment*, Banner of Truth)

Similarly, no counselor can be prepared to deal with these issues without prayers of his own. These petitions for usefulness should be offered generally, as well as for specific cases, because you never know when you may be called on to reconcile for some saint the goodness and justice of God and his suffering. Walking through the hospital one day, I was summoned into a room full of weeping people. They sought me out because they saw me go by with my Bible. Quickly it was explained that the mother lying in the bed was about to undergo brain surgery and that the doctors had told them that she would awake from the operation with no memory of her husband, children, or parents, and they wanted me to pray with them and to comfort them and to help them understand: what but prayer can

PERSPECTIVES

WHY DOESN'T GOD DO SOMETHING ... NOW?

by Eric Frank

A study on the justice of God (theodicy) is as much practical as it is theological. Most people will never read Charles Hodge or Benjamin Warfield, but they will look at their own lives and experiences, as well as those of others, and ask such questions as: How?, Why?, and What for?

The gruesome images portrayed on T.V. seem to make this sensitivity even more acute. Graphic pictures from Bosnia, Somalia, and other places bring the tragedies of thousands (often little children) right into our living rooms, causing us to come to grips with the bleakness that many experience.

The same questions that have plagued mankind for centuries still confront us today: "Why does evil come?," "Where is the justice of God?," "Why doesn't God do something?" Usually responses like these come from people who are sincere in their concern, and yet feel compelled to indite God with complacency and wrongdoing. Even those within the Church are not immune to this disposition. Often, without perceiving it, Christians can lose sight of the sovereignty and mercy of God and begin to doubt his wisdom.

Inquiring into these matters is not necessarily wrong. The Scriptures list many examples of

saints who questioned God about the trials of life. In James, the Lord's brother instructed believers to ask God for wisdom when they were being tested. However, in the same context the saints were exhorted to ask in faith and single-mindedness and to never accuse God of wrongdoing (James 1).

Using this biblical passage as a paradigm I have endeavored to answer two questions in this article. First (something frequently asked by those who are antagonistic against God), "Why doesn't God do something now?" And second, "What should the Christian perspective be concerning world crises?" There are no solid answers to these dilemmas apart from the Word of God. All the wisdom that we can hope to attain must come from the Bible.

WHY DOESN'T GOD DO SOMETHING NOW?

For everyone who has read the Scriptures and has a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ the first question stated above is nonsense. In the Gospel of John Jesus said, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working" (Jn. 5:17). Since the fall of man God has continued to work his will and bring salvation to his people. Therefore, a more accurate question to ask would be, "What is God doing now?"

From a mere human standpoint,

suffering indicates God's apparent unwillingness to rescue people, because it seems as though He is not doing anything. However, the Bible reveals God as more than just a Savior, but as the righteous Judge. Theodicy not only means God executing justice for his people, but the opposite also, a just judgment for sins committed.

Scriptural evidence supporting this doctrine is abundant. Both Noah and the Israelites were preserved through an overwhelming flood, while their adversaries found judgment in a watery grave. During the time of Abraham the Amorites were allowed to continue in the land of Canaan because their sins had not reached their full measure, but four hundred years later they found no mercy from the descendants of Abraham or God.

Although this teaching is not popular today, evidence of God's judgment on sin will become an ever-present reality to us. In all of the synoptic Gospels Jesus' Olivet discourse is recorded with vivid language;

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be *famines, pestilences, and earthquakes* in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows"...For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until that time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. (Matt. 24:6-7, 21)

These verses make it clear that

eventually this present world order will be judged and brought to an end, and God's Kingdom will be fully manifested and established. He will wipe away every tear, and pain and sorrow will cease.

Even though we should continue to pray that relief would come to those who suffer tragedy, let us never lose heart at *apparently* unanswered prayer. Instead let us pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

Some may ask, "What about God's people who find themselves in the midst of these world judgments? Can God in his omni-science distinguish

Theodicy not only means God executing judgment for His people, but the opposite also, a just judgment for sins committed.

between the righteous and the unrighteous?" These are good questions. The answer is tucked away in the small book of Habakkuk, and has become a cornerstone of Pauline, Augustinian, and Lutheran theology: "The just shall live by faith."

This almost sounds like a pat

personal tragedy.

If we hope to be a help to others in these matters, we must be convinced of them ourselves. Our own faith should be of what was called a century ago, the "experimental" kind. That is, exercised, practiced, and applied. Uncertainty of faith, hidden in the study, can easily betray itself at the mourner's side. Thankfully, the Lord promises to put our faith to

It is one thing to be academically prepared to deal with these issues; it is something else to be spiritually prepared.

the test, but it is also good for us to think about these things ahead of time and to test our own hearts on them before we go out to teach and comfort others.

EMOTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this area there are several things for which to be prepared, including our own emotional reactions to tragedies. Walking into a room where someone who is very dear to us has just lost a loved one by accident or violence can be very unsettling. Helping him to reconcile it with the goodness and justice of God can be complicated by our

own feelings and reactions. It's important to take time to pray and prepare for such encounters.

Commonly, a pastor tends to feel hurt or even rejected as a counselor if the person he is trying to comfort and reconcile does not respond as expected. Patience is vital in dealing with people under these circumstances; they may seem to reject what they consider to be your "theological" justification for God's actions against them, but if they are truly the Lord's, the Word will not return void. The important thing is not to take these reactions personally.

Be ready also to be available in the long run. Being emotionally prepared to help someone reconcile his personal tragedies with God's goodness and justice may require a substantial commitment of time and understanding; it is a good thing to know that initially. Some of the most profound spiritual battles resulting from critical incidents can take place much later than the actual events.

In dealing with these matters it is also important to recognize that there are helps that can be enlisted other than your own counsel. It is important to make use of them without offense, even if they prove more effective than your own efforts. There are many contemporary works available for this purpose, and they are easily accessed, but don't forget the much neglected works of the past. Four Puritan classics which have been very helpful are *A Lifting Up For the Downcast* by William Bridge; *Advice to Sufferers* by John

practical, spiritual implications may be very broad. Comforting and counseling someone under such circumstances is not just a matter of helping him to come to grips intellectually with the reality that the Lord allows trauma into our lives and that He is not unjust in doing so; it is much more. It is therefore important that anyone who is going to deal with these issues be prepared. This includes being equipped *theologically, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and prayerfully* for the task. Some preparations must wait until just before help is required, but a great deal can be done before the demands of that critical moment.

THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our reformed theology, based soundly on the Word of God, offers great consolation and helps us to understand how the presence of sorrow and misery in this life is not inconsistent with the love and justice of God. It is crucial that the officers of the church have a good working understanding of this point. Some seminars on this subject for all of those who may find themselves as counselors in such situations ought to be planned and effected.

A good mixture of Scripture evidence, theological works, and practical resources should be included. The more you wrestle with these questions in non-critical situations, the better prepared you will be for that inevitable question, "If God loves me, why has He done this to me?"

Some of the other questions that might be covered in these sessions are: "Is God punishing me for my sins?", "How can God be glorified in this tragedy?", "This is all my fault, isn't it?", "I've been so faithful to the Lord, why is He allowing this to happen to me?"

There are many other theological points that could be dealt with under this general heading. Being prepared to discuss with people the difference between *punishment* and the *natural consequences of sin*, for example, is very important, and the life of David makes a practical illustration in such cases.

SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is one thing to be academically prepared to deal with these issues; it is something else to be spiritually prepared. For example, the Westminster Confession of Faith teaches that "God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy." (WCF, Chapter V, Paragraph I.) This is a beautiful statement that incorporates all that the Bible teaches about God's holy providence, but there is a difference between knowing this and believing it, trusting in it, and resting in it in the midst of some

answer, and yet it is very pertinent for this discussion. Habakkuk the prophet complained to God about the sin in his homeland, Judah. The Lord told him that his complaint would be answered; God was raising up the Babylonians to execute His judgment. This aroused another objection from the prophet, "How can you judge my country by using a nation that is more sinful" (text question summarized). God did not give the reasons for His sovereign choice; the proud Babylonians would be judged. In the mean time "the just will live by faith."

But what does this mean? Habakkuk was distinguishing between nations, while God was looking upon individuals. The transgressions of Israel were as evil as the sins of the Babylonians; only those who had faith in Judah (and Babylon if there were any) would live.

The apostle Paul picked up on this same theme in the book of Romans. In chapter one Paul quotes from Habakkuk describing the gospel that he preached among the Jews and the Gentiles. In almost an identical context he places this promise of life within a setting of God's judgment;

For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith [faith of Jews and Gentiles]; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:17-18).

The reference to *all* ungodliness and unrighteousness describes the sins of both Jew and Gentile, "For all

have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Ro.3:23, NIV)

The passages in Habakkuk and Romans hold the same assurance; even in a time when God is judging the world, the just shall live by faith. The life that we

Even in a time when God is judging the world, the just shall live by faith.

receive by faith is eternal. Even if believers perish in the midst of calamities, the promise of everlasting life will never be nullified.

This whole subject raises another important question; "Does suffering always indicate God's displeasure and judgment?" Once again the Bible gives us helpful insight.

Toward the end of Jesus' ministry our Lord encountered a man who was born blind. The disciples asked Jesus a theological question, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus promptly answered that neither the man nor his parents had sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him (Jn. 9). There was a deep purpose for this man's affliction; God would glorify his own name by healing his blindness, and the man, although he was blind for a season, rejoiced anew with physical and spiritual sight.

The O.T. is also steeped with similar examples. Joseph could see the hand of the Almighty even in the wicked plots of his brothers; "You intended to harm me (Joseph told his brothers), but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Gen. 50:20). In order to preserve his people during a time of judgment, the Lord sent his servant Joseph ahead to Egypt. During the famine that followed

What seemed to be a hopeless situation for Joseph was really the beginning of a perfect plan of salvation.

Israel and his descendants found deliverance through a surprising candidate. What seemed to be a hopeless situation for Joseph was really the beginning of a perfect plan of salvation.

The oldest book in the Bible is also exclusively devoted to the causes of suffering. In Job the patriarch and his three "friends" discuss why he had lost his possessions, family, and even his own health. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were convinced that the righteous Job had sinned greatly before God, while Job maintained his innocence.

The readers of this discourse have an advantage over the three men. In chapters one and two we read of a heavenly council

between God and Satan. The accuser charged that Job only loved God because of material and physical blessings; if these were removed he would curse the Almighty to His face. God, on the other hand, knew that Job's piety was genuine and that he would maintain his integrity even in the midst of calamity. The Scriptures give this testimony showing that God's keeping power is greater than Satan's power to test: "In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong" (Job 1:22).

After Job, the three "theologians" and young Elihu gave their long-winded speeches, God spoke the final word from a whirlwind:

Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding (Job 38:2-4).

Although Job had not cursed God in the beginning like Satan said he would, as his three friends continued to denounce him for his "hidden sins," Job began to elevate his own righteous character above God's supreme wisdom for his life; he justified himself instead of God. In chapter 31 Job said, "Oh, that I had someone to hear me! I sign now my defense, let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing. Surely I would wear it on my shoulder, I would put it on like a crown" (vs. 35-36).

In the response that God gave Job, the Almighty did not explain his actions; He merely pointed to

PRACTICUM

MINISTERING TO THE SAINTS IN ADVERSITY

by G. W. Fisher

Several years ago our family was struggling through a season plagued with sickness. The illness was working its way through the seven of us when it infected, with devastating effects, our middle son. Christmas morning he suddenly and unexpectedly became delirious and stopped breathing. There was no time to call for help; we wrapped him up in a blanket, carried him to the car and rushed to the nearest hospital.

Shortly after our arrival, we found ourselves in the "mourner's room" with the head nurse advising us to get our thoughts in order and to think about whom we might need to call. This room was familiar to me, I had been there often, but suddenly there I was, sitting on the plastic couch, staring at the non-descript paintings, struggling to understand what was going on and whether the Lord was asking me to surrender my son to His ultimate will.

Presently, we were called out of the cubicle and the prospects looked good. We were allowed to see our son in the treatment room and he talked with us in a thin weak voice. He seemed to be better. After a while we were sent out as the staff performed what they thought was a necessary procedure. We returned to find our

boy much worse for the experience; within minutes he was in violent convulsions and we were removed from his presence and escorted back to the mourner's area. Again the head nurse appeared and told us to prepare for the worst. It was at this point that a true peace and calm came over me, and I could pray thoughtfully, "Thy will be done."

The Lord did not take our son home that day, and after a grueling week of all-night-vigils, he was released from intensive care

We found ourselves in the "mourner's room," struggling to understand what was going on. . . .

having survived the infection; but something else also survived that experience, a lingering emotional and physical trauma that was smoldering just under the surface. One year later, almost to the day, it erupted, crippling me physically for over a month. It was at that point that the spiritual battle took on a more vital depth.

I've used this very personal opening illustration to remind us that in dealing with people who are facing critical situations, the

kind of faith works no matter what the circumstances *because of the nature of its Object*. Job demonstrates proper faith when he asks, "Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" (2:10) Habakkuk still does not understand God's thinking, but he does trust his Lord to be faithful to the covenants with His people (note the frequent use throughout the book of the covenant Name, *Yahweh*, written as LORD). In his closing hymn (chapter 3), Habakkuk remembers the marvelous works and the infallible words of the Lord. The memory brings reverence and awe. Habakkuk's closing lines demonstrate that he knows how to properly remonstrate with God: no matter what the circumstances of life may be, he will rejoice in his covenant-keeping God. He knows that his Lord will invariably do what is right.

CONCLUSION

Far from being a sin, proper remonstrance with God is the activity of a healthy faith relationship with Him. He delights to instruct us and impart wisdom to us. Our proper method of coming before God includes our humble acknowledgment that we do not know, nor need to know, the mind of God. It also includes a calm surety that our lives are solidly in the hands of the Creator of all. As we face the calamities that confront us from day to day, let us not fear to seek God's face about them. On the other hand, let us not arrogantly

presume that we know better how God should order His world (and ours!). As we faithfully remember His works and word, we will, with Habakkuk, confidently assert that "The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills" (3:19). ☩

¹All Scripture quotations taken from *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville:Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1992).

²Statement made in a leadership meeting at Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina, September 6, 1982.

**“The
just
shall
live**

the mysteries of the universe and asked Job to explain them. Just as the stars of the heavens were under God's sovereign control so also were the circumstances of Job's life.

God's infinite wisdom is beyond our grasp. All that we need to know is that the Lord of all the earth will do right and that all things work together for our (believers) good and God's glory. The Lord did not leave Job in this state of calamity, "The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first" (42:12). Truly all things worked together for his good and the Lord was magnified even more in his life. Job's final words before God are enough to respond to the question, "Why doesn't God do something now?"

I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, "Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?" Surely

***All that we need
to know is that
the Lord of all the
earth will do right.***

I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. (Job 42:2-3)

WHAT SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE BE CONCERNING WORLD CRISES?

Hopefully, by endeavoring to answer the first question much of the perspective that we should have

has already been answered. It is clear from the Scriptures that God is continually working his will in all of the happenings of this world. In his sovereignty God glorifies his name and brings deliverance to many, and at the same time sends judgment on both nations and individuals. Therefore, we should understand all circumstances in the light of God's omniscience and omnipotence. The God of all the earth will do what is right.

Promises for believers should also be a part of our outlook and a true comfort to us: "All things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose," and even in the midst of judgment and wrath, "The just will live by faith."

However, we have not considered one important point that is crucial for a proper Christian perspective on suffering. How do we view this life? Are we biblical or are we conformed to a worldly viewpoint?

Those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ perceive this life as coming to an end with no hope of heaven. We, however, are not to sorrow as those who have no hope, but we are to comfort one another with the promise of the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Many times we have a worldly perspective on our suffering, when we should have our hearts fixed on the Kingdom of heaven. The sufferings that many go through are painful and real, and yet there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The Apostle Paul had the proper perspective, "I consider that our

present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). Paul placed his sufferings (more than many of us will ever suffer) on a scale with the glory of heaven; there was no comparison for him, nor should there be for us.

Our life now is like a drop of water taken from the ocean of eternity. If we have to suffer now, understand that soon we will stand before the throne of God with resurrected bodies; never again will we hunger or thirst or have pain and sorrow for the former things will have passed away.

CONCLUSION

Is God doing something now? Yes, my heavenly Father is always at work, both willing and doing his good pleasure. What should my perspective be concerning crises? The God of all the earth will always do what is right. He is able to discern between the righteous and the unrighteous, and soon those who are faithful will receive an inheritance that will never perish, spoil, or fade that is reserved in heaven for us. Come quickly Lord Jesus! ✠

IS GOD STILL SOVEREIGN?

by Doug Sukhia

THE DOCTRINE STATED

The Sovereignty of God is an aspect of His character and relation to creation that has been held to some degree by all Bible believers. The concept is part of the very fabric of the "theology proper" of the reformers and their successors. Our confession of faith is permeated with the "aroma" of divine sovereignty. Note these examples:

He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. [Chapter II of God and the Holy Trinity, Section I.]

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather Re-established. [Chapter III of God's Eternal Decree, Section I.]

God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy. [Chapter V of

capabilities to control or direct. So when adversity confronts us, our questioning must be characterized by reverence and humility.

We must here take a moment to discuss *disloyalty*. Jim Berg, Dean of Students at Bob Jones University, describes disloyalty as an "act of disobedience or attitude of displeasure which I perform or possess when personal desires are valued more than the desires of my authority."² Put another way, disloyalty is *someone making a decision about a previously made decision*.

THE LESSONS FROM HABAKKUK

As I read the book, I find that Habakkuk's remonstrations with God boils down to two principles. First, God sometimes does things that we do not understand. On the surface, of course, we would admit that is a given. After all, there would not be any question about God's justice if this principle were not true! However, recognizing a truth and *humbly* recognizing a truth are two different things. Habakkuk shows us the proper way of dealing with the principle.

Consider the following problem/solution layout of the development of this first principle in Habakkuk's book:

P: God allows sinfulness. (1:2-4)
S: God uses an outside nation to correct. (1:6)

P: That nation is wicked and Gentile. (2:12-17)

S: They will be punished for their sin. (1:11; 2:5-19)

P: They are punished for something that God moved them to do. (1:6)

S: They acted according to their will. (1:11)

P: Habakkuk lacks understanding. (1:1-3a; 1:12-2:1)

S: Habakkuk responds in faith. (2:4; 3:1-19)

Habakkuk uses an interesting word in 2:1 that indicates his frame of mind as he remonstrates with God. The verse reads, "I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am *corrected*." That last word, really a noun, indicates the propriety of Habakkuk's remonstrations. It also governs how we are to understand Habakkuk's line questioning. *Corrected* translates the Hebrew word *tôkahaṭ*, which means *correction, rebuke, contradiction, or instruction*. Habakkuk realizes that he just does not understand God and that his own thinking needs clarification. He humbly assumes that he is wrong in his assumptions about the appearances of things and waits for God to instruct him properly.

Habakkuk's second major principle is the one that Paul builds his gospel on: the just shall live by faith. God's instruction to Habakkuk in 2:4 ensures that our response to God will not be the mere grudging acquiescence of a dumb brute. Living faith is not a mindless trust, but a trust based upon the sure and certain knowledge of a relationship. This

there is much about God and His ways that are beyond human understanding, God *is* faithful to His covenants.

Section 5

- 3:1-19 Habakkuk responds to God's oracle in praise.
 3:1, 2 Title and invocation
 3:3-17 Habakkuk sings of God's power.
 3:17-19 Habakkuk sings of God's faithfulness.

Habakkuk realizes that God is in control. As he responds in faith, his heart overflows into a hymn of praise. His faith is secure in the work and word of the God of his salvation. His remonstrance at an end, he bows before the feet of his covenant-keeping God in adoring worship. Habakkuk's trust is absolute, echoing Job's statement that "though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." (Job 13:15)

3:19d Epilogue

THE QUESTION OF LOYALTY

Habakkuk, like all the other prophets, primarily functioned as a spokesman for Yahweh. The majority of the prophets' messages are concerned with calling God's people back into faithfulness to the covenants that God had made with them. The prophets habitually couch even the foretelling aspects of their messages in covenant terms.

The sin of questioning God is not in the questioning, but in the manner and attitude we engage in while questioning. Here is where

loyalty comes in. Loyalty is both passive and active. Philippians 2:13-16 describes the passive side: ". . . It is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life. . . ." This passive aspect of loyalty is a combination of allegiance to God's person, as children to their father (v. 15), and of acceptance of God's purpose and revealed will ("holding fast the word of life," v.

The sin of questioning God is not in the questioning, but in the manner and attitude we engage in while questioning.

16). It is critical that we meditate upon what we know when we are faced with the unknown.

Titus 2:9 and 10 discuss the active side of loyalty. Servants "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior" when they obediently demonstrate "all good fidelity" to their masters. Even so men show honor to God when they faithfully receive and act upon God's decisions. We know we serve a God who is both faithful to His promises and far above our

Providence, Section I.] (See also III:3; VI:1; VIII:1,8;X:1; XI:4; XIV:1; XVI:3; and XVII:2.)

The reformers, the Westminster divines and all "reformed Christians" have held and cherished this doctrine primarily because the Scriptural data supports it. We accept statements like that of David (a "sovereign" King in his own right) as true:

Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all (I Chr. 29:11,12).

Our God does "whatever pleases him" (Ps. 115:3). He is an absolute sovereign "who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (Eph. 1:11). A "partial sovereign" is an oxymoron like "dry water," "partial

God sovereignly governs all the life events and actions of his creatures.

pregnancy" or "almost alive." He sovereignly creates. "By your will they were created and have their being" (Rev. 4:11). He sovereignly governs all the life events and actions of his creatures as well. Hannah's inspired prayer puts it this way:

The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord sends

poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. For the foundations of the earth are the Lord's; upon them he has set the world (I Samuel 2:6-8).

THE DOCTRINE CHALLENGED

But this view of the Sovereignty of God has been challenged, mostly on philosophical grounds, by unbelievers and some Bible believing Christians. The latest challenge is presented in a controversial new book entitled *The Openness of God* (IVP, 1994). It is co-authored by evangelical scholars representing reputable, mostly Christian, colleges and universities: Clark Pinnock (McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario); Richard Rice (LaSierra University, Riverside, California); William Hasker (Huntington College, Huntington, Indiana); and David Basinger (Robert's Wesleyan College, Rochester, New York). These men all claim to hold a high view of Scripture. Their concept is called variously the "open view of God," "creative-love theism" or "free will theism."

The book was reviewed in an article by Roger Olson entitled "Has God Been Held Hostage to Philosophy?" that appeared in *Christianity Today*, Jan. 9, 1995. He summarizes the basic thesis of *The Openness of God* in his article.

The following quotes are from that article (my summary

statements are in italics). According to Olson the book's main ideas are:

1. *God chooses to limit His knowledge of the future and the sovereign exercise of His will in history.*

"The heart of the change is this: God is no longer to be understood as an immutable monarch controlling human history and individual lives, but rather is to be seen as a self-limiting, loving, and suffering father who allows himself to be affected by his creatures. . . ."

"According to free-will theism, history is the combined result of what God and his creatures decide to do"

"They assert that part and parcel of the open view of God is belief that God does not know future free decisions and actions of his creatures."

2. *The traditional view of the transcendent God overseeing but not touched by history is a result of the influence of Neo-Platonistic philosophy on theologians.*

"It is a Hebrew-Christian model of God stripped of the deleterious effects of Neo-Platonism and other Hellenistic philosophies."

3. *They reject the concept of antinomy or paradox contending that such "logical contradictions" are illegitimate.*

". . . truth claims about God that involve logical contradictions are literally nonsense and should not be accepted in theology any more than in any area of intellectual endeavor."

4. They say that the traditional reformed view of absolute predestination destroys true freedom and therefore must be jettisoned in favor of their view of the self limiting God.

"True freedom means being able to choose between options without any predetermination."

DOCTRINE DEFENDED

In my opinion, this "open view" of God should be rejected for the following two reasons: The weight of scriptural evidence for the reformed view and the denial of the transcendent the view requires.

1. *Scriptural Evidence for the Reformed view.*

There is overwhelming scriptural evidence that God has a sovereign plan and that He moves and acts in history to accomplish that plan in spite of the will of His creatures. There are many examples of this divine planning and acting throughout the Scriptures.

The events of Joseph's life, based on his testimony recorded in Gen. 50:20, were all guided by God to accomplish His will. "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." God's intent regarding Joseph was revealed in outline form many years before this time (Gen. 37:5-11). God's will was accomplished in spite of the evil intentions of Joseph's brothers and others (39:17; 40:23).

The captivity of the Israelites is always referred to by the prophets

knows that God's covenants promise curses for disloyalty, but nothing is happening. Habakkuk wants to know why God is permitting injustice.

Section 2

1:5-11 The Lord God answers Habakkuk's complaint with His solution to the problem.

1:5 The Lord uses means unbelievable to man.

1:6-11 The Lord raises up the Chaldeans to judge the nation.

1:6 They are ruthless.

1:7 They are unscrupulous.

1:8 They are fierce.

1:9 They are destructive.

1:10 They are skilled warriors.

1:11 They are proud.

The Lord's answer is amazing. He intends to use the wicked to judge His own people! The Chaldeans were incredibly cruel and hostile, and their actions against Israel (stirred up by God, verse 6) would be fierce, quick, and hateful. In their arrogance they would ascribe their victory to their own gods and their own prowess. Israel, on the other hand, would have no trouble realizing that they were being punished by the Lord!

Section 3

1:12-2:1 Habakkuk incredulously questions God's decision in light of His character.

1:12a He reminds God of His covenant with His people.

1:12b He observes God's decisions in light of that covenant.

1:13 He compares God's character with that of the Chaldeans.

1:14-16 He notes the cruelty of the Chaldeans.

1:17 He wonders how God can allow such a situation.

2:1 He waits for God's reply.

To Habakkuk, the Lord's solution is worse than the original problem. Like David, who did not want the heathen to carry out the Lord's justice (I Chronicles 21:13), Habakkuk begs the Lord to reconsider His decision. Why should God use the wicked to accomplish His purposes?

Section 4

2:2-20 God reveals a glimpse of His sovereign providence to Habakkuk.

2:2-4 Habakkuk is to live by faith.

2:5-20 The wicked will be judged for their sin.

Now we have another amazing answer. For the Lord intends to punish the very instruments He has raised up to correct His people. The pronouncement of woes to the wicked reminds Habakkuk that God is a Holy God who is faithful to keep His promises. Also, the Lord's admonition to the righteous to live by faith (v. 4c) and to all to keep silent before Him (v. 20) is a reminder to Habakkuk that though

intensity comes the desire on our part to object to what God is doing. Again, we come to the question of objecting properly before God.

The last term I wish to discuss is *loyalty*. Frankly, understanding loyalty is the key to knowing how to properly remonstrate with God. The concept of loyalty is not grudging acquiescence to someone or something; it has to do with covenant faithfulness. *Fidelity* is a good synonym for loyalty. It means we are faithful with a whole heart; happy to obediently and contentedly walk in the way before us. Loyalty involves the recognition of authority and obligation in our lives, and so it has become an increasingly unpopular concept in this pagan world in which we live. Loyalty runs opposed to self-centered living and acknowledges that someone else

**Understanding
loyalty is the key
to knowing how to
properly remonstrate
with God.**

may have a better handle on our lives than we do.

The popular bumper sticker that reads “Question Authority” expresses very well unregenerate man’s independent thinking. Ultimately it is the issue of authority that separates those who are the Lord’s and those who are

not. Everyone instinctively realizes that decision-making is the primary activity of any authority. It all boils down to who is going to make the decisions in our lives, and how we are going to respond to those decisions. With that in mind, let us now look at God’s revelation to Habakkuk.

AN OUTLINE OF HABAKKUK

With your Bible open to Habakkuk, you will be able to easily follow along and see the structure of the book. The structure is important, because it helps us see arguments and principles that we might otherwise miss if the book had been written differently (for example, if it had been written as a narrative and not a dialogue).

1:1 Title

Habakkuk’s heavy heart reveals itself in the choice of the word *burden*.

Section 1

1:2-4 Habakkuk complains of God’s tolerance of injustice.

1:2 He does not think that God hears his cries for deliverance.

1:3a He cannot understand God’s lack of action.

1:3b-4 He sees nothing but abrogation of God’s law in the land.

The problem is that Israel is walking in open rebellion against God, and nothing is apparently being done about it. Jew is oppressing Jew; strife and contention reign. Habakkuk

as a sovereign retributive act of God towards them. “Hear O, earth: I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words and have rejected my law” (Jer. 6:19). Although the Assyrians and Babylonians were acting out their own sinful desires in subjugating Israel and Judah, they were at the same time under the sovereign sway of God Almighty (Isa. 37:26). Assyria is but an instrument of God to execute His wrath. God says “I send him against a godless nation I dispatch him against a people who anger me. . . .” “After using these nations he will punish them for their own sins. “I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart” (Isa. 10:6,12). God punishes the Babylonians by stirring up the Medes to destroy them. “See I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer against Babylon. . . .

**The God of Scripture
makes plans and
executes them
in history.**

The Lord has stirred up the kings of the Medes, because his purpose is to destroy Babylon” (Jer. 51:1,11). When the time is right God “stirs up one from the north” to deliver His people and restore them to their land (Isa. 41:25). “I will raise up Cyrus . . . he will rebuild my city and set my exiles

free” (Isa. 45:1, 13). In all these twists and turns of history we see God sovereignly accomplishing His preordained plans even though those on the stage are making moral choices for which they are held accountable.

The God of the Bible takes pleasure in distinguishing Himself from all other so called “gods.” His sovereign administration of the world to accomplish His will is presented as one of those distinctions. He is the God who has a plan and accomplishes it. The prophetic element in revelation is meant in part to demonstrate this control of history. In the midst of specific prophecies regarding Israel He declares: “I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare, before they spring into being I announce them unto you” (Isa. 42:8,9; cf. 43:8-13; 44:6, 7, 18, 24-26). The God of Scripture makes plans and executes them in history. At times He even reveals before hand what He will do to prove His sovereignty.

God’s sovereign influence over history to accomplish His will is illustrated all throughout the biblical record. God tells Solomon He will “tear the kingdom away from (him) and give it to one of (his) subordinates” (I Kings 11:11). In order to accomplish this He sees to it that Rehoboam follows the advice of his contemporaries rather than elders “for this turn of events was from

the Lord” (II Kings 12:12-15). Similarly, Absalom listened to Hushai instead of Ahithophel “For the Lord had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom” (II Sam. 17:14). Amaziah King of Judah didn’t heed the warning of Jehoash, King of Israel, because “God so worked that he might hand him over to Jehoash” (II Chr. 25:20).

Since no evil can take place without God’s express permission, there are places in Scripture where evil actions are directly attributed to God. God is said to send raiders, adversaries and disaster (I Kings 11:14; II Kings 22:20; 24:2; II Chr. 15:6). In the case of Job, we are aware that Satan instigated his troubles; yet God rightly is ultimately considered responsible (Job 1:11,12; 2:5,6 cf.; 1:21; 2:10; 23:13, 14).

All of these incidents illustrate the truth stated in Proverbs: “In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails” (Prov. 16:9; 19:21).

The Scriptures are permeated with statements that declare His sovereignty and history that illustrates it. This is the primary objection to the “openness of God” theory. The Scriptures overwhelmingly support the truth that the God of the Bible plans all things and sovereignly executes that plan.

2. *The denial of transcendence.*

Secondly, I object to these

authors’ rejection of the transcendence of God. They force Him into human categories and insist on absolute correspondence between our perception and relationship to the world and His. They insist that words like “repent,” “before,” “after,” “beginning,” etc., have the exact same meaning when applied to God and man. But there is an infinite distance between God’s wisdom and ours, and His ability and ours. In the midst of prophecies of destruction and restoration God declares, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways . . . As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8,9). God is the infinite awesome being who is omnipresent yet incarnate, three yet one, omnipotent yet a personal, tender “Abba.” There is mystery here. There is antinomy and paradox because we are dealing with such an incredible Being with abilities that are beyond us.

We don’t know how God is able to be absolutely sovereign yet hold men accountable but He does it. Calvin used the term “wise ignorance” to describe the humility of mind we should have in the face of irreconcilable truths. Is it possible this latest attack on these doctrines betrays an intellectual pride that refuses to accept that “secret things” have been kept hidden by God (Dt. 29:29)? These transcendent qualities of God are what bring us to awe. They illicit our praise and worship. “God

EXEGESIS

REMONSTRATING WITH GOD IN ADVERSITY: A STUDY IN HABAKKUK

by Leonard Pine

Think about the following verse: “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.” (Philippians 4:11, NKJV¹) What is Paul saying here? Is he saying that no matter what God throws at him he will, as a dumb brute who has no choice, bow his neck to his horrid fate? I do not think so. What Paul is really saying, I think, is that God’s decisions are fine with him. Paul is content and pleased to abide in and with them because he knows God’s decisions are right and good. He is talking about loyalty.

You may think this is a strange way to begin a study of the book of Habakkuk, but I hope that you will quickly see the connection between Habakkuk’s thought and Paul’s. Before we launch into the prophet’s marvelous little book, however, I must define some terms. First, the verb *remonstrate* means “to exhibit or present strong reasons against an act, measure or any course of proceedings” (Webster, 1828 ed.); or as Webster’s *New World Dictionary* states it, “to present and urge reasons in opposition or complaint; protest; object.” I could have titled this article “*Protesting with God in Adversity*,” or “*Complaining to God in*

Adversity.” *Remonstrating* is a strong word for strong action, and you may wonder at its use in this context. Most evangelical, Bible-believing people consider complaining to God a sin, not recognizing that the Bible is full of godly men *properly* complaining to God. The purpose of this article, then, is to explore how to properly bring complaints and objections to God when His providence seems to contradict our understanding of His character and practice.

A second term is one that you have already seen defined elsewhere in this issue, namely, *theodicy*. Coined in 1710 by the German philosopher and mathematician Baron Gottfried

**Most evangelical,
Bible-believing
people consider
complaining to God
a sin.**

Wilhelm von Leibniz, *theodicy* utilizes the Greek words *theos*, God, and *diké*, justice, to describe a system of theology that seeks to vindicate divine justice in allowing evil to exist. The subject is one that has intrigued human beings since the Fall. How can a just God allow evil, adversity, and chaos to exist? As evil becomes more predominant, the question becomes even more intense. With that

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Linking Theory and Practice

I have found the articles of *the WRS Journal* to be accurate, insightful, and greatly motivational in my Christian walk. Last issue's [Summer, 1995, *Ed.*] article on "Reforming Evangelism" was especially powerful, bridging the gap between a cranial understanding of reformed doctrine, and an effectual application of that knowledge in my everyday life. The myth that Calvinism inhibits evangelism was thoroughly debunked, as the need for scriptural adherence was established. I found it immensely helpful in my own battle against the temptation to resort to Arminian tactics. I feel that I have been strengthened in the promulgation of God's truth as a direct result of *the WRS Journal*, and eagerly anticipate the next issue.

Zeal Sydor

Letters to the Editor

Questions? Comments? Thanks? Rebuttals?

We want to hear from you! We intend *the WRS Journal* to be a forum for the development of opinion and interpretation among members of the Bible Presbyterian Church and our friends. If we're the only ones talking, however, our readers miss out on the broader base of knowledge available in our churches. So, *write* to us!

Our criteria for publishing a letter to the Editor are simple:

First, your letter must include your name, address, phone number, and signature. Unsigned letters will not be published.

Second, while you are welcome to disagree with our contributors, your letters should reflect Christian charity at all times as you express your opinions.

That's it! Please understand that we may have to edit your letter somewhat to conform to our space requirements. All letters received become the property of *the WRS Journal*. Please mail your letters to:

Letters to the Editor
the WRS Journal
5 South "G" Street

comes in awesome majesty. The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power" (Job 37:22,23). God is worthy of praise because "his greatness no one can fathom" (Ps. 145:3). When we press God into the mold of our limited capacity He loses that majestic awesome quality that we adore and are humbled before.

DOCTRINE APPLIED

We should defend this doctrine as an essential revealed truth. But this doctrine has been given to us primarily to benefit our souls. Among other things it should bring us peace to know that God is working all things for our good (Rom. 8:28). If He is in charge and we are the objects of His redeeming love then we can rest in Him (Rom. 8:31-39). We should be content with our present circumstances (Phil. 4:11-13) and should submit to His providence towards us (II Cor. 12:7-10). Do we really believe this doctrine? Then what is this sound of grumbling and complaining that we hear in our churches, session meetings, homes and places of business? Why are we so bitter over past losses and failures? It is hypocritical to defend God's sovereignty and not submit to it.

Do we believe this doctrine? Then we should worship His majesty. We have been permitted to see His glory and should fall at His feet in worship of this awesome Being (Rev. 1:12-18). Our heartfelt praise should flow from our redeemed hearts (Rev.

4:2-11).

A young novice was mountain climbing with an experienced guide in the Swiss Alps. When they reached the summit the vista was so magnificent the novice began to jump in exultant joy. Quickly the guide pulled him down to the rock with this rebuke: "The only safe place at these heights is on your knees." In the presence of such a sovereign, awesome deity as is described in Scripture we must humbly lose ourselves in wonder and praise. Worship is the logical response to the sovereign God.

"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen." (Rom. 11:36) †

**“Shall
not
the
Judge
of**

Our Personal Approach Sets Us Apart. . .

Our small classes and special programs emphasize the individual student. Our teachers have time to mentor students, not just pump them full of information. Ministerial students are given special attention to help them develop personal holiness and dedication to one's calling.

WRS involves the student in both classroom study and ministry in local churches, schools, jails, nursing homes, and youth organizations. This involvement provides practical training in evangelism and discipleship and actively promotes home and foreign missions.

WRS offers counseling courses which meet the academic requirements for certification by the *National Association of Nouthetic Counselors*. We share NANC's commitment to biblically-based counseling unblemished by secular psychology.

WRS is the only seminary in the country offering classes "on-line," allowing students the opportunity to study with us via their personal computers. **WRS On-line** is live, interactive classes in the comfort of your home or office. Earning credit is an option for additional benefit.

WRS promotes seminary/local church partnerships to cultivate spiritual maturity in the lives of God's people. Our **Church Scholarship Program** is an easy way for churches to encourage their laity to develop their Bible knowledge, and it's great for pastors who feel the need for a refresher, too!



WESTERN REFORMED SEMINARY

provides a classical theological education, emphasizing biblical languages, exegesis, theology, church history, and ministerial training.



We maintain the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, including the inerrancy and straightforward interpretation of the Scriptures. We teach the Reformed doctrinal system as presented in the Westminster Confession of Faith. **WRS** holds to covenant theology and the premillennial interpretation of prophecy.



We promote the founding of biblical churches separate from apostasy and unbelief while seeking to maintain unity with other Bible-believing communions in the body of Christ. The Seminary does not require students to agree with its distinctives. We provide academic freedom, realizing that the unity of Bible-believing Christians must be stronger than issues that may divide them.

WESTERN REFORMED SEMINARY "Standing for the Principles of the Protestant Reformation"

Since 1983, Western Reformed Seminary has been proclaiming the truths of Reformation Christianity to students from the Pacific Northwest and the world. Taking our cue from old Princeton and the Scotch-Irish Presbyterian tradition, we staunchly adhere to the Westminster Standards, recognizing at the same time that "God is the Lord of the conscience." This attitude helps us maintain our Presbyterian perspective without alienating those from other traditions. Though initially founded as a school to train Bible Presbyterian ministers, WRS has become a resource for a wide variety of denominations which still desire to stand on the Word of God. Our programs are designed to train the student in practical as well as scholastic knowledge, that the student may be "thoroughly equipped to



Our students come from all over the Western Hemisphere and represent many evangelical traditions. They enroll in the Master of Divinity program or one of five Master of Arts programs: Biblical Studies, Theological Studies, Christian Ministry, Biblical Counseling, and Religious Studies. Our graduates become pastors, missionaries, Bible teachers, and lay leaders all over the world. Here's what a few of them have to say

The instruction is friendly, helpful, biblically based, intellectually challenging, and spiritually edifying. Theology is demonstrated to be relevant to everyday living.

—Roland Porter, M.Div. candidate, Gig Harbor, WA

More than an accumulation of knowledge is evident among both professors and students: rather edification of spiritual life and Christian spirit is the hallmark.

—Geoffrey Muthangya, M.A.T.S., Professor at Faith College of the Bible, Nairobi

The school holds Christ as the supreme Head, and the Word is unashamedly given the pre-eminence. Here the hearts of future ministers are being nurtured on doctrines for which the reformers shed their blood.

—Eric Frank, M.Div., Licentiate of the Northwest Presbytery of the BPC

Please call or write for more information and a free catalog

WESTERN REFORMED SEMINARY

5 South "G" Street, Tacoma, Washington 98405 (206) 272-0417