

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Should OPs and RPs Unite?

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Christian Contentment

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“The Gospels In Current Study”

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THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August.

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.
Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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Editorial Policy: Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Question-Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
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Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$7.00 per year. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

Advertising Policy: The *Standard Bearer* does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 1st or the 15th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

Bound Volumes: The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume; such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume. A limited number of past volumes may be obtained through the Business Office.

Editor's Notes

This Issue completes Volume 48. An index to this volume will be found in this September 15 issue. We give thanks to God that we have been enabled to publish this Reformed witness for another year. It is hard to imagine that a little more than a year from now, the Lord willing, the *Standard Bearer* will have reached its Golden Anniversary.

Attention All Readers! Enclosed with this issue is a special sheet introducing several very attractive combination offers of books and subscriptions. Even if you have just renewed your subscription, take advantage of one of these offers and extend it another year. You won't find a better bargain than this. For

you early shoppers, here are some worthwhile Christmas gift ideas also! And to those of our readers who have been enjoying our introductory Ten for Two subscription — here is a golden opportunity to become a regular subscriber and at the same time to purchase a good book!

Special Attention is called to Prof. Hanks's detailed critique of Simon Kistemaker's *The Gospels In Current Study*, which will appear in two installments. This book was considered important enough to merit special attention. Hence, *Critique* appears in place of Prof. Hanks's usual *All Around Us*.

Editorial

Should OPs and RPS Unite?

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

For some years talks have been held and efforts have been put forth toward a union of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. The former is the denomination which was formed in the mid-1930's when Dr. Machen was expelled from the Presbyterian Church (Northern) because of his battle against modernism. Perhaps to many of our readers it is best known through its (unofficial) connection with Westminster Seminary. The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, is itself the product of a previous merger. And since this fact is rather closely connected with the proposed union now under discussion, it is necessary to explain the rise of the denomination with which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church now proposes to unite. When the Presbyterian Church in America (later called the Orthodox Presbyterian Church) was established in 1936 under the leadership of Dr. Machen and others, there soon became evident rather serious differences of views within the new denomination. These differences concerned chiefly premillennialism and matters of Christian liberty (the use of alcohol and tobacco). Ultimately these differences gave rise to a separation in the new group, with a segment forming the Bible Presbyterian Church in 1937 — the church which still today is associated chiefly with the name of Dr. Carl McIntire. From the start the Bible Presbyterian Church has been strongly premillennial in its doctrine, and has modified the Westminster Confession and the Larger Catechism to provide for its premillennial position. Moreover, the Bible Presbyterian Church also adopted a Declaratory Statement which is Arminian, as follows:

In adopting the Confession of Faith this General Synod (the first General Synod of the BPC) declares:

First: its firm and glad belief in the reality and universality of the offer of the Gospel to mankind. We believe that Christ's atonement is sufficient for the sins of all, adapted to all, and is freely offered to all men in the Gospel. We believe that no man will be condemned except upon the ground of his sin.

Second: with regard to the salvation of those dying in infancy we do not regard our Confession as teaching or implying that any who die in infancy are lost.

In 1956 there was a further division within the Bible Presbyterian denomination. According to Dr. Carl McIntire, this defection began in 1954 "under the leadership of the Rev. Francis Schaeffer, Dr. Robert Rayburn, and the Rev. Tom Cross, who felt that the church could get a great deal farther if it would take a

softer approach in dealing with the apostasy." Whatever may be the truth of McIntire's allegations on this score, this new group became known eventually as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. This new group, of course, received its doctrinal heritage from the Bible Presbyterians. As reported in the *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 38, p. 93, it reaffirmed its premillennialism. Presumably, it also carried along an Arminian heritage. And it also inherited what are sometimes called "strict" views on Christian liberty. At the time of the *Standard Bearer* report just mentioned, this denomination has about 70 congregations throughout the country. Now it is this Evangelical Presbyterian Church (which two separations back was united with what is now the Orthodox Presbyterian Church) that in 1965 united with the Reformed Presbyterian Church (a church in the Covenanter-Secession Tradition) to form what is now known as the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. At the time of the merger, the new denomination was reported to number about 100 congregations and some 10,000 communicants, (cf. *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 41, p. 373).

It is this latter denomination — for a large part once united with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church — which is now busily engaged with the O.P.C. in seeking union.

The status of these union efforts at present is as follows:

1. The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod has adopted the "Proposed Basis of Union."

2. The General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church acted in this year's session also to adopt it "with the further provision that the Committee [on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations] be instructed to seek to improve this statement in joint meeting with the [Fraternal Relations] Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, for inclusion in a Plan of Union."

3. Both the Assembly and the Synod instructed their respective committees to "prepare a Plan of Union to be submitted to the 1973 Synod and General Assembly."

4. The earliest possible date for the actual union would be in 1974. If both the O.P. Assembly and the R.P. Synod should approve a Plan of Union in 1973, then it would still have to be voted on by the Presbyteries (classes).

In the June/July issue of the *Presbyterian Guardian*, Editor John J. Mitchell, who voted this year in favor of the proposed Basis of Union but who seems nevertheless to have some misgivings about it, reports on these actions of the O.P. Assembly and of the R.P. Synod. He also publishes the "Proposed Basis of Union." And among other comments on the matter, he states: "The O.P. General Assembly did not specify what improvement it desired in the *Proposed Basis of Union*. The discussion preceding adoption of this instruction to its committee indicated that some commissioners (A commissioner is similar to our synodical delegate. HCH) wanted additional material, particularly in the area of Christian liberty, the need to avoid sectarianism and schism, and an emphasis on the sovereign grace of God in man's salvation, as well as other possible concerns.

In principle, the broadest assemblies of the two denominations have, therefore, given an affirmative answer to the question: Should OPs and RPs unite?

Yet, apparently the decision is not with complete enthusiasm, either on the part of the Rev. Mr. Mitchell or on the part of others in the O.P. C. In expressing his personal views on the matter, Editor Mitchell writes as follows:

The recommendation passed, by a very large majority, both in the O.P. Assembly and the R.P. Synod. The undersigned voted in favor this time. Why? and why did so large a number agree? For some it was probably done with enthusiasm and full conviction that merger was right. For others it may have been reluctant, with concern for the problems to be solved and perhaps with a little nostalgia at the thought of becoming only a medium-sized frog in a larger pond. For others it was done because they felt it was the Lord's will in spite of the difficulties and adjustments required.

A little later, after mentioning some points of agreement, Editor Mitchell writes:

But aren't there differences? Of course there are. Yet I believe it is fair to say there are no differences *between* the two churches that are not also to be found *within* each of them. No doubt there will be some tense moments in any united church, as old frictions are rubbed afresh and new problems arise. But certainly both churches have had many such experiences in the past, with strong differences of opinion, strenuous debates and protests.

The basic question is simply whether the Spirit of truth will so overrule our contentious natures that together we will grow to a fuller maturity after the image of Christ. The Reformed Presbyterian brethren may need to continue to grow in appreciation of the liberty we have in Christ free from the commandments of men, even as the Orthodox Presbyterian brethren need to grow in patterns of holy living that bring honor to the name of our Lord. It will not be easy, and there may be some whose consciences will not allow them to remain in such a united church.

Do I think the OPs and RPs should unite? Yes, though it is a cautious and perhaps reluctant affirmative. . . .

Having aired his own view, Editor Mitchell expresses the desire to see the views of others on this subject. He does not say whether by "others" he means "insiders" or "outsiders"; and so, here is an "outsider's" view.

Without presuming to give either an affirmative or negative answer to this question, I offer the following considerations.

In the first place, it seems to me that an ecclesiastical marriage should be transacted either with complete enthusiasm or not at all. A reluctant "I do" and one with misgivings before it is ever consummated bodes ill, it seems to me, for a marriage. This is true for two individuals who contemplate marriage; I believe it applies equally to the union of two churches. If the reluctance and misgivings continue after the marriage is consummated, they may become the cause of marital difficulties and, eventually, of a divorce suit. One will reproach the other for being railroaded, for being deceived, for not living up to the agreement, etc. And the end will be ecclesiastical trouble. In fact, if Mr. Mitchell's report on the reasons why the O.P. General Assembly wanted improvement in the "Proposed Basis of Union" is correct — and there is no reason to think it is not correct — then there are serious enough misgivings already. And I would suggest that indeed the O.P. Church should insist on clearing these up before it says a final "I do." Surely, marriage merely for the sake of marriage is not to be recommended. The O.P.C. has steered clear — rightly, I believe — of organic union with the Christian Reformed Church. But let it not contract a potentially troublesome marriage with the R.P. Church, as it were, on the rebound.

In the second place, in my opinion some important matters have indeed not been cleared up. This is important. Marital harmony — also on the ecclesiastical level — requires unity, unity in the truth of God's Word. It will not do at all to ignore differences, to try to "live with" important differences. Indeed, this does not mean that there must be complete agreement on every little detail. But it does imply fundamental agreement in doctrine and life, in confession and walk. It seems to this writer that these are lacking. And here are my reasons:

1) There is much attention paid to the matter of Christian liberty in these merger talks; and indeed, in a practical sort of way this can be a grave source of trouble. It was a troublesome thing in the early years of the O.P.C. And I do not know how much opinions have hardened or softened in the intervening years. But while much attention is paid to this matter in the Preamble of the "Proposed Basis of Union," I cannot see that these statements settle much of anything. They leave the impression on me of a sort of

compromise, of a glossing over of differences, of agreeing to disagree. And this is a potential source of flare-up of the old trouble.

2) The matter of premillennialism is apparently left an open question. In the section of the "Proposed Basis of Union" dealing with the Doctrinal Standards there is included the following: "The text of the Westminster Larger Catechism in its original form, with the amendments adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod in reference to answers 86-89 which seek to ensure neutrality in regard to the eschatological sequence. . . ." True, this does not *adopt* the premillennial position, as do, for example, the amendments to the Westminster Confession and the Larger Catechism made by the Bible Presbyterian Church. It only seeks to ensure "neutrality." I suppose this means that in the proposed new denomination one will be able to be pre-, post-, or amillennial. Now, in the first place, confessional neutrality on an important matter like this, even if it were possible, is wrong. Eschatology is, especially today, an important part of the church's confession. Neutrality simply means that the church will have NO confession about the eschatological "sequence," as it is called. In the second place, — as the *Standard Bearer* pointed out at the time of the original conflict about this matter *circa* 1936 — premillennialism is at best not consistent Presbyterianism; and if it is premillennialism plus dispensationalism (as is true of consistent premillennialism), then it is not Presbyterianism at all. For then there is much more involved than Answers 86-89 of the Larger Catechism. Then the unity of the church and the kingship of Christ are also involved. In the third place, it seems to me that the O.P.C. should be extremely careful on this score. Is it not true that the very attempt at neutrality on premillennialism *failed* in the conflict which gave rise to the Bible Presbyterian Church? And is there not a danger of

similar failure if the proposed merger results in a large influx of died-in-the-wool premillennials?

3) There is the very important matter of Arminianism. Anyone who is acquainted with the little brochure by Murray and Stonehouse on the *Offer of the Gospel* and with the treatment of Dr. Clark in by-gone years may have doubts about the strength of the O.P.C. over against Arminianism. But evidently the O.P. commissioners have doubts as to the strength of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on this score. Why, otherwise, would they want an improvement in emphasis on the sovereign grace of God in man's salvation in the "Proposed Basis of Union?" And while I am not personally acquainted with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, nevertheless, judging from their background in the Bible Presbyterian Church, I would expect considerable Arminianism among them. Nor do I find the "Proposed Basis of Union" to be strong and specific on this score in this day of rampant Arminianism.

In the third place, Editor Mitchell suggests that there are no differences *between* the two churches that are not also to be found *within* each of them. If this be true, it is nevertheless not a reason to proceed with merger. And if it applies to the differences which I have mentioned above, then it is *surely* a reason to avoid merger. For I venture to say that then a merger will only result in a strengthening of whatever legalistic, premillennial, and Arminian elements there are already in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. And this will surely not result in the fulfillment of Mr. Mitchell's fond hope that "Perhaps we shall see yet again a Presbyterian church in our land with the strength to challenge the apostate churches and the size to provide a fellowship for all those of like precious faith throughout the land." Why not? Because the truly Presbyterian character of such a church will be jeopardized!

Meditation

Christian Contentment

Rev. Mr. Schipper

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Hebrews 13: 5,6.

How frequently the Word of God sounds its warning to be not too concerned about earthly things, nor to have undue anxiety respecting the future!

How deliberately Scripture exhorts the people of

God to flee from covetousness!

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves

treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." "Be not anxious for the morrow, for the morrow shall take care for the things of itself." Such were the exhortations which the Lord Jesus directed to His disciples in His great sermon from the mount. And the apostle Paul, writing to his son Timothy, warns: "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Such warnings, and many more could be quoted, show plainly the frequency wherewith Scripture warns against anxiety over earthly things.

And the actual life and walk of the children of God in this present world shows that this note of warning cannot be sounded too often. Especially is this true in our day. Today it is necessary to emphasize the need of the grace of contentment.

Christian contentment!

What is it?

It is the very opposite of worldly covetousness!

And worldly covetousness may be conceived of as consisting, in the first place, of the aggressive sin of seeking and grasping after the things of this world. Such covetousness in its urge to acquire may often be bold and aggressive; while it may also be free in scattering and squandering as it was eager and unscrupulous in acquiring. In the second place, worldly covetousness may also assume a more passive mood. It may seek to retain, and by accumulating to multiply that which it already has amassed. It is the miser's sin. And therefore, according to its nature, will be cautious and even sometimes timid. It does not necessarily always cast off the outward show of piety and uprightness. It is perhaps this latter sense that is stressed in the text; though the first sense is not entirely excluded. The word that is translated "covetousness" in the text means literally: "love of money."

Money! Money! Money!

Magic word! Worthless in itself! You cannot eat or drink it. You cannot clothe yourself with it so as to protect yourself from the heat or cold. But as a medium of exchange it provides you with the key to all the treasures of the world! With it you can obtain food and drink, clothing and shelter. With it you can get for yourself pleasures, honor, power, and influence.

It is largely the power that rules the world. All the world becomes concerned when the dollar inflates or deflates. Money controls the lives of men, corporations, and commonwealths.

And how many there are who love money only for money's sake! In the solitude and quiet of the night the miser will rise to sit and gloat over his shining shekels. He knows the power of each coin. There he sits, allowing each silvery piece to be assessed with his bony fingers. Oh, the satisfaction expressed on his face as he counts and recounts his horded gain. Gradually his pile increases, yet he dare not use any of it, lest some part of his life should be lost. Oh, the sense of security and safety it affords him!

Though the text says literally: "Be free from the love of money," we must not conclude that covetousness consists only in the love of money. It is the carnal passion that hankers after the world and its things. Often it is characterized by and attended with dissatisfaction with one's present condition. The covetous man is the grumbler who is never satisfied. Nothing in this world or another seems to satiate him. If he has money, he wants more. If he has no money, he grumbles because he has not.

Covetousness is a great evil!

A deeply rooted sin!

Chief characteristic it is of the depraved and sinful nature! By nature we are not rich toward God. By nature we turn away from the Fountain of all good. The sinner seeks himself, apart from God. What God ordained as a means to an end, he makes an end in itself. It is small wonder then that covetousness marks all his walk and conversation. He is not satisfied with bread for today, he wants more. He must be able to see ahead, and have assurance that his basket will be filled for a long time to come.

Because of covetousness the sinner, the world, will do most anything. For the love of money, a man will murder his fellowman, and lose his own soul. The employer will suck the life's blood out of his employees; while the employee will seek refuge in the power of strike and boycott. The rich will oppress the poor, and the poor will curse the rich. The big will swallow up the small, and nation will rise against nation. Totalitarian states operating under the philosophy of communism will seek to exploit capital and distribute its wealth; while democratic nations will arm themselves to the teeth, and challenge the exploiters with threats of war.

It is hardly imaginable what this world would be like if covetousness were taken out of it.

Yet, it is evident that the world of sinful men will not change. The evil can only progress, and become steadily worse.

But to us, to the church of Jesus Christ, the exhortation comes. —"Let your conversation be without covetousness!" This is, of course, a negative

admonition which is necessary because so long as we dwell in the flesh the inclination is toward covetousness.

The positive exhortation, however, lies in the rest of the text, —“And be content with such things as ye have!” Christian contentment! Again we ask; what is it?

Understand well, contentment does not mean to be indifferent. It does not assume the attitude so often seen in the world of “I don’t care.” One who assumes such an attitude is in Scripture called “the sluggard.” He is the one who is satisfied to let others do his work, or to bring to him his daily bread. In the deep sense this is nothing more than covetousness in another form. Nor is contentment that attitude of mind that never longs for the fulfillment of our earthly needs, that never desires bread when hungry, or craves water when thirsty.

On the contrary, contentment is that inner state of the soul which is in harmony with one’s outward circumstances. The text presupposes, as all Scripture teaches, that we have our present needs supplied. The Psalmist observed that the righteous is never forsaken, nor does his seed go begging bread. He does not go hungry, naked, homeless; but at the same time he has no promise of surplus. He has bread for today and no more. He has a house to live in, though it is not a palace. He has all his needs fulfilled, but does not bathe in luxury. He has enough for today, but knows nothing of tomorrow. Normally this is the way the Lord in His providence cares for us each day.

But the question arises: Suppose that I do not have enough for the present? What then? The Lord has a way of bringing about situations like that, you know. What will we do then?

Should we rebel, and say that the way of the Lord is not right? Should I then take matters into my own hands, and go out and steal, and, if necessary to obtain what I need, perhaps murder? The answer to these questions is, of course, negative.

Rather, the Christian assumes the attitude so aptly expressed by the apostle Paul to the Philippians: “Not that I speak in respect to want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” This can only mean that because he possessed the grace of contentment as a gift of Christ, he could also endure hardship, suffer hunger, and in the final analysis be willing to die if it was the Lord’s will to remove him from the scene of the present through the lack of bread.

But the text, as we pointed out, assumes that we have the fulfillment of our present needs. It says: “Be content with such things as ye have.” And one who is content says: “I have enough. I crave no more. The lack of more does not fill my heart with envy or malice. My heart and soul are at peace with my outward circumstances.”

Contentment is a grace!

Which the natural man does not possess. Which only the child of God receives as a gift of Christ.

And it lies in the very nature of Christian contentment to lay hold on the promise of God: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Such a promise of the Lord was spoken by Moses to Israel and especially to Joshua as a word of encouragement prior to their entrance into the land of Canaan. “Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” (Deut. 33:6,8). And after Moses’ death, the Lord spake directly unto Joshua the same comforting words: “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” (Josh. 1:5). Later David spoke these same words to Solomon his son: “Be strong and of good courage, and do it, fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.” (I Chron. 28:20).

Verily, the source of the peace of contentment must be sought in the grace of Christ, and in His unchangeable, unfailing promise, —“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

And the one possessing this grace of contentment, and relying on this precious promise of God, will also give a confident expression of this contentment as the Word of God in our text clearly indicates.

“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

Such confident expression one finds reiterated in the Psalms. Listen: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Ps. 27:1). And again, “In God I will praise his Word, in God I will put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.” (Ps. 56:4,11). And once more, “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: What can man do unto me? (Ps. 118:6).

Such confidence is not the expression of mere stoical indifference!

It is the expression of the boldness of faith!

Critique

"The Gospels In Current Study"

Prof. H. Hanko

THE GOSPELS IN CURRENT STUDY, by Simon Kistemaker; Baker Book House, 1972; 171 pp., \$2.95 (paper).

The rise of higher criticism has sharply divided the ecclesiastical world into two distinct camps. There are the higher critics in the one camp who approach the Scriptures as a human document and examine it as they would examine the writings of any ancient author. They refuse to believe that the Scriptures are the Word of God. Their approach is one of unbelief. In the other camp are those who maintain that the Scriptures are infallibly inspired; that they are therefore, the authoritative Word of God; that they constitute a unique book differing from any other book which has been written. The key then, to the understanding of the Scriptures is faith — a faith which receives the Scriptures as God's Word and bows in humble submission to them.

The trouble is that, increasingly in our day, there are those in the latter camp who, while they receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, nevertheless no longer recognize as fully as they ought, that the only key to unlock the Scriptures is indeed faith. While they surely do not accept the presupposition of the higher critics that the Bible is only a human document, nevertheless they permit themselves to use the tools invented by the higher critic as the means to gain entrance into the teaching of Scripture. And, when they are called upon to give answer to the destructive criticism of these higher critics, they permit the higher critics to choose the battleground and engage in the conflict on terms dictated by the enemy. The result is that they attempt to answer higher critical studies with the weapons of human reason and rational argumentation as these methods are divorced from faith. They forget that the battle is not between two sets of arguments based on available evidence, but is, rather, a struggle between faith and unbelief. They forget that the result of the battle is not determined by who has superior knowledge or whose arguments are the most convincing, but that the outcome of the battle is determined by the victory of faith over unbelief.

When they fall into this trap, the results are uniformly bad. They, in the course of their argumentation, lose sight of the truth of inspiration, fail to give a proper place to the fact that Scripture is God's Word, and end up making all sorts of concessions to the higher critics which finally rob the Word of God of its power and truth.

I do not know the reasons why conservative scholars so often do this. Perhaps there are various explanations. It is, e.g., customary for conservative scholars to make a distinction between what is traditionally called "the divine element" and "the human element" in Scripture. (Cf. in this connection the important series of articles which were written by Prof. H. Hoeksema and which have just been concluded in the *Theological Journal*.) And perhaps this distinction leads them to place so much emphasis on the human element that the divine element is forgotten.

Then again it sometimes appears as if conservatives are overly sensitive to the charge that, if they maintain inexorably, the truth of infallible inspiration, they are less than scholarly. This criticism seems to hurt. And, in an effort to appear scholarly, they answer the higher critics on their own ground of rational argument and lose the approach of a humble faith as the way to the mysteries of the Word of God.

Whatever may be the reason, Kistemaker in his latest book has fallen into that error. This is particularly sad because Kistemaker is considered to be a conservative New Testament scholar and many look to him for leadership in the defense of the truth concerning Scripture. After teaching for a while in Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, he went to the Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, a conservative Seminary in the Southern Presbyterian tradition.

His book is intended to examine recent developments in the field of New Testament studies, particularly as these studies have dealt with questions relating to the four gospel narratives. In the first two chapters, which are intended to be introductory, the author discusses some of the more recent manuscript finds and the influence they have had on textual studies, and gives a brief introduction to the field of textual criticism. In chapter 3, under the title "Criticism," the author discusses "Source Criticism," "Form Criticism," "Redaction Criticism" and "Audience Criticism." Chapter 4 deals with hermeneutical problems, particularly with the question of the historical reliability of the gospel records. In Chapter 5, Kistemaker discusses how the gospel narratives came into being and their relation to the

oral tradition which was present in the Church from the days of Christ. Chapter 7 deals with the gospels individually and discusses such questions as dependence (whether the gospel writers were dependent for their material on each other or on other documents or on both), authorship and purpose in writing. The final chapter deals with three theological questions which arise from the gospel narratives: What is the origin of the name "Son of Man?"; What is the origin of the name "Son of God?"; and, Is the historical evidence sufficient to justify the historicity of the resurrection of Christ?

Now, the altogether strange part of the book is that there is, in the whole of the book, almost no mention made of inspiration. Two or three times this doctrine is referred to, but then only in passing. One such reference, quoted in its entirety, reads:

We believe that the Holy Spirit stood behind the author of the Second Gospel, so that the Holy Spirit is the primary author and Mark the secondary author of this Gospel. We begin with the Holy Spirit and end with the Gospel writer. (p. 59)

I am not saying that the author was obligated to spend a large part of the book in spelling out and defending the truth concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures. But one would expect, in a book of this sort, that a conservative scholar would have not only made clear what the doctrine of inspiration is, but would have shown how this doctrine must be the final answer to the higher critics. Or, if he chose not to do this, one would expect that he would, at least, answer the various problems which the higher critics ask within the context of inspiration. But he never does this. Always the critics are answered on their own grounds. The truth of inspiration has no role to play. It is politely and continuously ignored.

It is but natural to expect that, when this is done, concessions of major proportions are made to the higher critics. These concessions are not on peripheral matters, but are on matters which strike at the very heart of the Church's confession of the truth. And the inevitable result of such a procedure will be that Kistemaker also will soon go the way of those who deny the Scriptures altogether.

We do not intend, in this review, to discuss exhaustively the contents of the book. But the serious charge which we have made ought to be substantiated. What concessions does Kistemaker make?

Perhaps not of critical importance, but nevertheless of significance is the fact that Kistemaker often has praise for the work which the higher critics have done. This is a rather customary procedure in our day. No matter how violently one may disagree with the writings of an individual, one seems almost to be obligated by the manners of the times to find something good to say about him. Kistemaker does

this repeatedly. In discussing the form critics, Kistemaker writes:

On the positive side of our evaluation, we do express our appreciation to the form critic. By means of his scholarly studies on the formation of the Gospels, he calls every serious reader of the New Testament to reconsider the period of oral tradition most seriously. The form critic invites the student of the Bible to study the background of the four Gospels anew. And that is an invitation no one may decline. (p. 49.)

Now this may be so. But the question is: Do we need the form critic for this? The fact is that, historically, students of Scripture have already done this before higher criticism ever made its appearance.

Further, in discussing the redaction critics, Kistemaker writes:

What shall we say about redaction criticism? Now that the pendulum has swung back from extreme left and is now, so to speak, on its way to center, should we be grateful to the German theologians who have studied the interpretation of the Gospels as redaction critics? What are the results to which they have come in their studies?

For one thing, we are thankful that the redaction critic looks at the Gospel in its totality. . . . The redaction critic sees the personality of a redactor in the individual Gospel who is working out his own theological purpose. (pp. 57, 58.)

Must we be thankful because a higher critic looks at the Gospel as a unity? Really, now. Have not faithful students of Scripture always done this ever since the time of the Reformation, and even before? And we praise the critic because he tells us that the redactor of the Gospel is working out *his own* theological purpose? Whose theology is contained in the Scriptures? The redactor's? Or is the theology God's?

What is so troubling about this is the fact that the basic issues are lost sight of in this kind of approach. The higher critics stand on the ground of unbelief. They refuse to receive the Scriptures as the Word of God. They treat them as historical documents. And, although they may differ as to the precise nature of these historical documents, they agree completely that the Scriptures are of human origin. They rule out of their thinking from the very outset that the Bible is God's Word. The battle is very real between the believing Bible student and the higher critic. It is the battle between faith and unbelief. Are we now going to pat these enemies of God and His Church, who seek to rob God's people of the Holy Scriptures, on the back and express gratitude to them for all the marvelous benefits they have given to us as they systematically go about destroying God's Word?

It can, of course, be argued that the higher critic has called attention to problems which exist and has thus forced the believing child of God to answer these arguments. There is no question about that. This is, as

a matter of fact, the way the truth is usually developed in the history of the Church. Unbelief attacks the truth; and the Church is called upon to defend it. And, in defense of the truth the Church develops that truth as it is contained in the Scriptures. But we need not, I think, thank Arius for denying the divinity of Christ even though his foul attack on this truth led to the

development of this doctrine. And we need not thank Pelagius for his destructive errors even though it was the immediate occasion for the development of the truths of sovereign grace on the part of Augustine.

We must never forget that the battle is between faith and unbelief.

(to be continued)

From Holy Writ

Exposition of Hebrews 11:22

Rev. G. Lubbers

The writer now cites the faith of Joseph. These Old Testament saints suffered and died in faith and hope; they were long in patience, and thus they obtained the promises! The Hebrew Christians had need of patience. It is true that when they first believed they had endured a great fight of afflictions; scorn and contempt had been heaped upon them for the faith; they had been made a gazing-stock in the world; they had not been ashamed to cast their lot with those who were their fellow-sufferers, but had joyfully taken the spoil of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and an abiding treasure!

Had the writer noticed the element of living by faith and seeking a better country on the part of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, here he points out the vision of the dying prophetic faith of Jacob and Joseph. Both were men who were moved by the Spirit of God; the Spirit of Christ which was in them and all the prophets, when they spoke of the sufferings to come upon Christ and the glory to follow in the heavens above. In each case the Lord brought their prophesying to pass; they let the light of the promisory and prophetic word shine more and more unto the perfect day!

This was all performed *by faith!* It was the faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. By this faith the elders obtained a good report. Without this faith it is impossible to please God; he that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:1-6).

Such was the faith of Joseph as delineated upon in Hebrews 11:22. Writes the text, "*By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones*"

A TIMELY PROPHECY (Hebrews 11:22)

Joseph dwells in Egypt as a prince, but his heart is

with the children of Israel. Who does the writer have in mind when he speaks of the children of Israel? The term "Israel" has various meanings in Scripture. Sometimes it refers simply to old father Jacob, who received this name when he returned from Haran to Canaan after his twenty-year stay there with Laban his uncle. It was at the brook Jabok that the Lord came to Jacob and wrestled with him; the Lord took the initiative in this mighty wrestling till the breaking of the day. It was then that the Lord said: "Let me go for the day breaketh." And then Jacob with strong crying and tears besought the Lord for His blessing, saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Then the Lord said, "Thy name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for thou hast as a prince power with God and man and hast prevailed." (Gen. 32:24-32) But "Israel" also refers to the twelve tribes as they become a nation. It was "Israel" which went down into Egypt, and then the name refers to the nation, both the children of the promise and the children of the flesh. (Rom. 9:6-16) Nevertheless, the Israel of God is the people which walks in the faith of Abraham; these are the sons of the promise, that the purpose of election might stand.

To understand this word "children of Israel" we must bear this truth of election in mind; for Israel is the people of God as the Christ, the Son of God, will be born from them. He is Immanuel, God-with-us. For from this viewpoint Israel is God's First-born son, as it is written: *out of Egypt have I called my Son!* (Matt. 2:15; Hos. 11:1) Hence, not simply one of the nations of the world had been brought into Egypt, but the church of God was in Egypt, removed from the promised land where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had sojourned as strangers.

Had it been a mere seventy souls which went down into Egypt at the time of the great famine in all the earth, it did not remain thus. For Israel increased greatly, and they were living in the best of the land.

Their land was fruitful, an irrigated garden beside the Nile river; they enjoyed their onions, leek and garlic, as well as their cucumbers and melons, for which they so ardently and sinfully longed, later in the wearisome, hot journeying in the wilderness. (Numbers 11:4,5) We may be certain that as long as Joseph lived he "nourished Israel" in the land of Goshen. From a purely materialistic point of view Israel never had it better. During the almost seventy years that they had been in Egypt they had settled down in Goshen and were becoming a well-organized nation, according to their tribes and their leaders. Had Israel not moved from the first to the third and fourth generations? Do we not read, "And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation. . ." (Gen. 50:23 a) Forsooth, it was time that a prophetic word came to Israel of the "exodus" which God would bring about to fulfil His promise that Israel would dwell in the land of Canaan! Israel must not dream and plan about remaining in their present soft nest in Egypt.

This was the situation in Israel when Joseph's life is drawing to a close. From this viewpoint it was indeed a timely prophecy, which the Lord sends to Israel from the lips of Joseph. However, it is also a timely prophecy when we see that Joseph must bring this message to the Sons of Israel at the close of his life. It is then that Joseph has a message concerning the future "exodus" of Israel out of Egypt.

Joseph's life was coming to a close; it was ending in a ripe old age. He had served his generation, and now he will be gathered to his people. There is really no more work to be done for Joseph, except that he must make preparation for his death, one would say; and then he could be buried amongst the princes of Egypt in one of the Pyramids. But this Joseph, whose entire life was really the fulfillment of the prophetic dreams which God had given him, still has a task to perform. This one, who was great in Egypt, a prince and ruler in the land, is an Israelite at heart. All that he had done in Egypt was that, under God, he had kept a great people alive. That was his life's calling. And he will finish the work to the end.

What an eventful life Joseph lived. He was born the eleventh son of Jacob in Padan-Aram from Rachel, Jacob's most-beloved wife. When he was some five years old, he went to the land of Canaan, where he lived till he was about seventeen years of age, after which he was sold into Egypt by his brothers as a slave to the Ishmaelites. The latter in turn sold him as a slave to Potiphar, an Egyptian. Here in slavery and in imprisonment Joseph lived for some thirteen years till he reached the age of thirty years. And now, some eighty years later, Joseph is about to die. He has lived most of his life in Egypt; it is more than one hundred years that he had lived there in the providential guidance of God, who meant it for good!

At the end of this life, which was busy in bringing

Israel into Egypt and caring for them there, Joseph must now prepare Israel for the great event of God's deliverance from Egypt by his great and mighty hand!

It is to be the prophecy of a man about to die.

It was indeed timely; it was timed by the Lord Who determined the times before appointed for the nations as well as the bounds of their habitations. (Acts 17:26)

JOSEPH MAKES MENTION OF THE EXODUS (Hebrews 11:22)

It ought to be observed that the text says "made mention of." Someone made the observation to me that this "made mention of" is a rather weak way of expressing this in the present day English; in fact, it was stated that the present day young people would not even understand this language. The latter would merely think of a casual reference to the "departure" of Israel. Joseph spoke of it in passing. This point raised has merit. But anyone, who is deeply desirous to know the meaning of "make mention" in the English of the times of King James, will discover that "made mention" referred to a special, explicit, and meaningful bringing up of an important point. Here it refers to the great fact of the "Exodus" which God will bring about through Moses His servant.

Joseph did not simply remember the promise of God when he spoke to the children of Israel, but he *made mention* of it. He called it to mind; it was not something new and unheard of for the people of Israel in their generations. He reminded Israel of their destiny as a nation, according to the sure promises made to the fathers. And these promises will not fail; He Who hath promised them is faithful, and He cannot lie. The word of God will not fall out! Had God not said to Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee?" (Gen. 13:14-17) Of this Joseph reminded Israel. But there was also an expressed word of God concerning Israel's going down into Egypt. Had not the LORD appeared unto Abraham in a vision, assuring Abraham, saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward?" It was in this vision that the LORD revealed to Abraham what would befall the great nation which would come forth from his loins — would be by a son born of the promise, Isaac — and how this nation would become great and be in a strange land for four hundred years. Thus we read in Gen. 13:13-16, "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four

hundred years . . . but in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full."

Yes, there was much to make mention of. Joseph could preach a good sermon and could outline the meaning of Israel's stay in Egypt and then make mention of Israel's departure from Egypt. And Israel must have understood what Joseph was saying, that it was according to the *rule* of faith. And the Holy Spirit must have worked faith in the hearts of Israel, so that they saw their stay in Egypt in the perspective of the Divine promise which will not and cannot fail.

Somehow through the years Israel learned to say: We must prepare to leave this land. We will return to the land of Canaan; the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

And thus spoke Joseph by faith!

He believed this word of God; he clung with all his heart to the word of the promise. And thus in faith he makes mention of the "Exodus." He did not see all the details. This was only for Israel to know as God unfolded His ways at the burning-bush to Moses at the mount of God. But the fact he saw, and he preached it; by it he lived and died in faith!

Signs of the Times

What Did "Agnes" Say To You?

Rev. G. Van Baren

Yes, "Agnes" talked. She had a message of God to you. Did you hear what she had to say?

One could hardly miss "Agnes." Her name made the headlines in the daily newspapers. It was featured prominently in news magazines. Radio and television made extensive references to her. *Time* declared in its July 3, 1972 issue:

The most ravaging storm in U.S. history started as a tiny blip on radar screens, a knot of tropical air masses forming near the island of Cozumel in the Gulf of Mexico, a few miles east of the Yucatan peninsula. Quickly, awesomely, it built into the first hurricane of the year, christened Agnes, a turbulent mass 250 miles in diameter drawing unusually heavy amounts of moisture from the sea below.

First Agnes crashed through Florida and Cuba and seemed about to peter out as it moved inland. But then it turned out to sea off Virginia, recharged its depleted energies and slammed back onto the northeast mainland, already saturated by a week of nearly incessant rains. By the weekend, at least 96 people were dead and more than 120,000 had been evacuated. Five states — Florida, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia — had been declared disaster areas, and damage estimates ran into the billions. Robert M. White, head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, pronounced the flooding produced by Agnes "the most extensive in the country's history."

Nor was only the voice of "Agnes" heard. *Time* continues its article by reminding its readers:

Oddly, Agnes was not the only flood news in a grim week of troubles around the globe. . . . Irrigation canals overflowed around Phoenix, Ariz., drenching desert land that is normally parched. A hastily built earthen dike gave way in Andrus Island in the Sacramento delta, forcing the evacuation of 1,400

people. Near by, a 100-yd. levee break drove several hundred people in the area near Rio Vista to high ground. And in Rapid City, S.D., where floodwaters killed 226 early in June, Charles Childs, head of the missing persons office, reported that the list of those unaccounted for, which initially included about 4,500 names, is now down to 124.

It strikes one's attention, does it not? How often in recent years have we not heard the statements, "worst in history," "worst in a century," "worst since records were kept." These statements are applied to storms both in this country and in other parts of the world. Some such statement was made concerning the hurricane which devastated Mississippi a few years ago. Some such statement was made concerning the tropical storm which killed thousands in what was East Pakistan. Some such statement was made concerning the floods which recently struck North Vietnam. Similar statements have been made concerning floods in the Philippines.

Now, without doubt, vast devastations occurred in many other periods of history. News reports rather customarily report present disasters, and then compare them with known disasters of the past. Usually other disasters in the distant past seem as frightful as those which we have experienced in our lifetimes.

MAN'S REACTION

Of course, the response of man generally is that he has experienced one of the "quirks" of nature. Man can explain what happened. He can tell of the various air masses which collided. He can explain how a hurricane picked up vast quantities of water over the ocean. He is ready enough to acknowledge that there

was a "disaster," but he hastens to add that it was a "natural" disaster.

Man also makes provisions to avoid such disasters in the future. After one of these "disasters," man devises more fool-proof methods to give advance warnings so that the lives of people may be saved in the future. He makes plans to dissipate the fury of these storms through his scientific discoveries. He will control the winds and the waves.

Yet, the storms strike; often the worst in recorded history.

But man refuses to see the hand of God in it all. He recognizes not the wrath of God. He sees no indication of the nearness of the end of this age.

And what did YOU hear "Agnes" say? Or, have you given it no thought at all?

God acts

Our readers will doubtlessly agree that God sent "Agnes" and all of the other storms which struck this country and others. Not one hair falls from our heads without the will of our heavenly Father (Luke 12:7); does not He then also govern the storms which strike this earth? God controls all of His creation (Psalm 147).

Christ Himself reminds us that "natural" disasters are signs of His return on the clouds of heaven. He states in Matthew 24:7, "... And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places."

We see then the providence of God in which He directs all events, also these "natural" disasters, so that His purpose may be realized and His Son may return. "Agnes" was a striking example of this.

But you, perhaps, object that God has always sent these things in the past too. Why should "Agnes" have any special message then for us?

First, some of the most devastating disasters of history have struck in our own lifetimes. I would remind you again of the many instances one reads, "The worst in ..." Note that fact also in future accounts of various disasters. It must not escape your attention.

Secondly, more people are being affected by these disasters than ever before. This is perhaps naturally the case, for there are more people living on the earth than ever before. Nevertheless, we may not forget that Scripture reminds us of the death and destruction which precede the end — as a sign. Revelation 6:7-8 points this out when the fourth horse is described.

Thirdly, these "natural" disasters are more widely known over the entire earth than any disaster of past ages. By means of radio, television, and newspapers, the awfulness of the disaster is brought into virtually

every home. Man is more aware in recent years of the fact of disasters than ever before.

God sends all this in our times as signs. Do you see them and recognize them for what they are?

What did "Agnes" say? First of all, she said that God is angry with the wicked. She said that the wicked will not escape the wrath of God. She said that all of this is but a foretaste of that wrath of God which shall be revealed in the last day. Psalm 7:11 explains, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day."

And again, "Agnes" spake of the great power of our God. What is man in the face of such violence? What are the works of man's hand that they should withstand this proof of God's power? Man builds his cities. He guards them with dikes and walls. He plans to direct the course of the river so that it will serve man. But when God comes with His rain, He destroys the work of man's hand in a moment. In light of all of this, how dare man raise his fist against the living God? How dare man take His Name in vain? How dare man ignore His Word? Yet man persists in doing exactly that.

Finally, we do have also a reminder of the nearness of Christ's return. That will not be tomorrow, but doubtlessly it will be soon. We know not the day and the hour. But we are reminded to watch. Do you think of that as you read of the disasters which come upon this earth? "Agnes" was only one link in the entire chain of events which must precede the coming of Christ. But we are called to observe the links as these are manifested before our very eyes.

Why are we to be reminded again of all of this? Not, of course, because we are inherently pessimists. Strange, but some regard an awareness of the signs of the end as being pessimistic. But this is not meant to be such at all. A pessimist is one who looks on the dark side of everything. A pessimist is one who thinks that these evil days are going to continue indefinitely. Rather, we are called to be realists — that is, that we recognize events for what they really are. Let us not fool ourselves. When all the signs of the times are viewed together, the child of God sees clear evidence that the return of his Lord is at hand.

Actually, one who sees the signs aright, one who views these as evidence of the nearness of Christ's return, is an optimist. He looks at the bright side of things. The signs include many things which might perhaps trouble us — especially persecution. But we can rejoice, for our redemption draweth nigh. Optimistically we confront the signs of our times, knowing that soon our Lord returns. Rejoice, for "the Lord is at hand." (Phil. 4:5).

The Day of Shadows

Sneering Defiance

Rev. John A. Heys

Pride is sin.

No one will argue about that. But consider also that all sin is an act of pride. It makes no difference what form sin assumes, it makes no difference whether it is a sin against God directly, or indirectly as a sin against God in a sin against the neighbour, sin always is an act of pride. And it is such because it always is an act of elevating one's will above God's will. It is pushing God's will aside to decide for oneself what is good and what is evil. And that certainly is a proud thing to do. To ignore the will of one your equal, and to think that your way is better is not always pride, though it may be foolishness. But to think that one's way is better and wiser than God's is conceit, and the work of a proud mind.

Adam's and Eve's sin of eating of the forbidden fruit was then an act of pride. Cain's offering up his fruit of the ground contrary to God's instructions given to Adam, and heeded by Abel, was an act of pride. His act of taking away from Abel the life that God was pleased to give him again was a deed that revealed a proud heart and mind that would not bow before God and His will. And every time that we commit a sin of any kind, we are proudly elevating our will over God's and saying by our deed, "I am a god to myself!"

For this reason Scripture says that God sees the proud afar off and is nigh to the humble. The proud are men who are *sinful*, men full of sin. The humble are men who are sin-haters, men who hate the sin they know is within them. The proud want no salvation take note of the pride of the Pharisee in Jesus' parable who wanted no salvation but praise from God – while the humble seek it in the confession of their guilt and in casting themselves upon God's mercy. The proud dishonour God, the humble always honour Him with being an holy God.

Having shown his pride, when he came with the offering he had invented, and having rejected the good counsel of God when he was told to fight sin that was crouching at his door, to rule it and not to let it rule him, Cain proceeded in pride to take his brother's life. But he does not stop there. The awful haughtiness of his sinful heart drives him forward to more and more sin. And sneeringly he answers God, when He comes with the question, "Where is Abel thy brother?" That question he answers not only with a bold lie, "I know not!", but with another question, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Who really was he to ask such a question of God?

We may ask God questions. How often have the saints not asked God in prayer, "Shall I do this or that?" Jesus Himself on the cross cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" When the Jews asked Him by what authority He performed His miracles, He countered their question with a question as to the baptism of John. To answer a question with a question is not, therefore, of necessity an act of pride. But Cain's question was one of pride that was sneeringly spoken.

It is an act of pride to lie to God as Cain did when he said, "I do not know." What pride there is in an act of trying to hide the truth from the all-seeing eye of God! How haughty and conceited we are whenever we lie to each other, for in this we behave as though we have also hidden our evil from God. That proud heart not only says, "I do not need to speak the truth," but it also says, "I can hide my sin from the eyes of God by my speech." No, we do not say that audibly, or even perhaps consciously – for God is not in all our thoughts, sad to say – but whenever we lie to each other, we do so because we think that this is the way in which we can cover our sin, or cover someone else's sin. And then we walk as though there is no God in heaven. And that is a proud way to walk for one whose every breath of life comes from that God in heaven, for in Him we live and move and have all of our being.

To continue and to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" was for Cain a stronger manifestation of his haughty attitude before God. Implied in his question is the question, "Do I have to answer to YOU for my brother?" Now these were grown men, and it was not a case of bigger brother watching over – and maybe baby sitting for – little brother. Abel was well able to take care of himself and "shift for himself" the day they came to sacrifice. He took care of a flock of sheep, and that means that he was able also to take care of his physical needs and life as fully as Cain could. It might seem as though Cain had a point here, then, in his question to God.

But be careful not to take such a position. His question must be taken in the light of his lie. His lie, "I do not know," meant – because he did know – "I am not going to tell you." (More evidence of his pride.) And his question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" was then a question of defiance. Together they may be paraphrased thus, "I am not going to tell you; and what right do you have to ask me?" The question, "Am I my brother's keeper" can only mean in the

context, "Did YOU make me his keeper?" His question is addressed to God, not to his father and mother. And to God he directs the question, "Am I responsible before YOU for where my brother is?" What pride it is that manifests itself so quickly after the seed of sin had been planted in the soil of this earth. What a vicious plant was already at this stage of history showing its devilish fruit! That little speck of dust called Cain dares to defy the holy and almighty God!

And he rushed headlong in his pride to more words of defiance when God pronounces the punishment that will come upon him. God's Word does not humble him but hardens him. God tells him that the ground will be cursed for his sake. Wherever he will go, God will send drought and/or insects to devour what he tries to grow. He will not prosper materially no matter where he goes. And he will be a fugitive and a vagabond because men will seek him to slay him for his dastardly deed. Sneeringly and defiantly Cain laughs in God's face. He ridicules the whole idea of his punishment. His words, "My punishment is greater than I can bear," are not a confession of guilt, are not a cry of the awfulness of his crime. He is not speaking of a guilt he cannot bear, but of a punishment he cannot bear. And what he means is that if God will so curse the ground for him, he will soon die of hunger, and the punishment is over. And if men seek him to kill him, the day will come when they do take his life, and then it is all over. As the Atheist of today, Cain believes that man dies like the beast of the field. The wages of sin which is death to him means only physical death. He ridicules, as so many do today, in the church world, the idea of an everlasting punishment in the lake of fire. They, too, say that it is more than man can bear. There is no everlasting hell fire. And though they may not teach it as defiantly and sneeringly as Cain, they, nevertheless, speak what they learned from this proud sinner.

Now Cain deserved to die. And God, Who in effect pronounced the death sentence upon him, nevertheless put a mark upon him so that the physical aspect of this punishment, namely, death at the hands of men, did not take place—at least not for many, many years, and we are not told that he ever died at the hands of men. But let us be sure that we understand that this sparing of Cain's life was no "common grace" of God upon him. All of God's grace comes from the cross of Christ, that very cross that Cain despised when he refused to come with a bloody sacrifice, and when he slew him who was a type of The Seed of the Woman.

Let us never confuse God's grace with His providence. Satan's life has been spared almost six thousand years. He has never had a sick day, in fact, although countless numbers of sinners since Cain's death for centuries have been in the torment of hell. Does Satan receive some "common grace" from God because he has these goods gifts? Consider, too, that he

has not only been spared all these years what Cain, Korah, Dathan and Abiram — to say nothing of the whole world of ungodly destroyed by the flood — are experiencing, but he also retained his keen mind, his gift of leadership and the like.

The psalmist says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous"; but it would seem that the "common grace" that the devil and the wicked enjoy and which gives them less afflictions than the righteous, is to be desired *in this life* above God's saving grace. Perish the thought! For these afflictions work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while the prosperity and health and wealth of the ungodly only increases their punishment in the life (death) to come. For he who has a penny, and does not serve God therewith will be punished. But he who is a millionaire, and does not serve God therewith will be punished that much the more.

God pronounced the death sentence upon Cain, and then He put a mark on him so that it would not be executed. This God did not in His grace, but in His providence. Cain had work to do which God decreed for him; and he may not die till that work decreed in God's eternal and unchangeable counsel has been finished. He must bring forth the generation of the viper's brood that will fill the measure of iniquity that will be visited by the flood. He must live to produce a generation that will in time bring forth Judas Iscariot, Caiaphas, and Pilate to shed the blood of our salvation. He must become the father of a multitude that will in proud defiance produce the man of sin, the Antichrist, who will oppose all that which is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (II Thessalonians 2:4), so that the full measure of iniquity may be realized, and the way may be prepared for Christ to return to bring Abel and the whole seed of the woman to glory with body and soul.

Therefore Satan likewise is still free—while some evil spirits are reserved in chains of darkness. There is no grace of God in this to the devil, although there is grace in this for the elect children of God. This is the work of God's providence according to which He uses all His creatures, the devil and his host included, for the fulfillment of His good counsel. Satan must live and be free, after he fell into sin, to tempt not only Adam and Eve, but also even to tempt Christ. Did not the Spirit drive Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted? (Matthew 4:1). He must be healthy and alive to enter Judas Iscariot. And in His providence God sees to it that the wicked receive what they need for their works because His grace is upon us. It was and is saving grace that Satan has his freedom today. Only it is not grace upon him, but upon us. Peter explains that so beautifully when he says in II Peter 3:9 that God is longsuffering to *us-ward*, not to the wicked who abuse us. He not only waits with the return of Christ until all

Christ's sheep have been born and reborn into the kingdom of heaven, but also gives the wicked all the gold and silver, the health and life they need to realize all that which is necessary, first to send Christ in our flesh and to have Him slain for our salvation, and now

to prepare the way for His glorious return. It is a work of His providence as far as the wicked are concerned, but always a work of saving grace, the only kind of grace God has, towards His elect, whose cause is served by these wicked with their lives and talents.

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

THE REFORMATION PERIOD
THE SYNOD OF DORDT
THE CANONS

H. Veldman

Continuing our discussion of the doctrine of the atonement of Christ as set forth by the fathers of Dordt in Head II of the Canons, we now turn our attention to the Rejection of Errors of this Second Head. These sections of the Canons, called the Rejection of Errors, and setting forth the negative aspect of the truth, constitute a fundamental part of this Reformed creed or confession. It certainly speaks of weakness when churches, who formerly incorporated these articles in their confessions, now omit them. How important it is, not only that we set forth and maintain the truth, but also that we are constantly on the alert to fight and oppose all heresies that are repugnant to that truth! May we as churches ever continue to be faithful in this calling which our Lord Jesus Christ always lays upon His church in the midst of the world. May we constantly strive to recognize the wolf also, and especially when this enemy of the true gospel appears as an angel of light and in sheep's clothing.

The first error of the Arminians and rejected by our fathers of Dordt in Art. I of this rejection of errors, reads as follows:

Who teach: That God the Father has ordained His Son to the death of the cross without a certain and definite decree to save any, so that the necessity, profitableness and worth of what Christ merited by His death might have existed, and might remain in all its parts complete, perfect and intact, even if the merited redemption had never in fact been applied to any person. For this doctrine tends to the despising of the wisdom of the Father and of the merits of Jesus Christ, and is contrary to Scripture. For thus saith our Saviour: "I lay down my life for the sheep, and I know them," John 10:15, 27. And the prophet Isaiah saith concerning the Saviour: "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand," Is. 53:10.

Finally, this contradicts the article of faith according to which we believe the catholic christian church.

These articles in which are set forth the errors of the Arminians are of the greatest importance. And they are certainly significant also for this reason, that, recognizing these errors as being taught in our present day, we may recognize them as Arminian. When, for example, it is taught today that Christ died for all men, and when the distinction is made between the intention and efficacy of the cross, then we may immediately recognize this teaching as having been condemned by the fathers of Dordt. The history of the development of doctrine may well lead us also in this respect.

In this article, the Arminian heresy is exposed that Christ was ordained by the Father to the death of the cross without a certain and definite decree to save any, in order that the necessity, profitableness, and worth of Christ's death might have existed and might remain complete in all its parts, even if the merited redemption had never in fact been applied to any person. The Remonstrants taught that the death of Jesus Christ would lose nothing of its significance even if no one actually would be saved. Regardless whether anyone be actually saved, that death would retain completely its worthy, necessary, and profitable character.

To this we may answer, in the first place: what kind of logic is this? Imagine, if you please, that none would actually be saved! We may certainly assume this. The teaching that the efficacy of the death of Christ upon the cross is dependent upon the will of the sinner certainly implies that the living God does not determine the salvation of any sinner, but that only that sinner is saved who wills to be saved. And this teaching that Christ's death upon the cross becomes effective only when the sinner consents to be saved certainly leaves room for the possibility that no sinner

will be saved. All the living God can do is offer sinners His love and salvation. But whether that sinner will accept it is dependent upon that sinner. But, assuming, then, that no sinner is saved, what kind of logic is it to teach that the death of Christ loses nothing of its significance, profitableness and worthiness? How profitable, I ask you, is the death of Christ when it actually saved nobody? And what about its worthiness? So, also in this respect the heresy of Arminianism does not make sense.

Of course, this nonsense the Arminians were compelled to teach and maintain. They, we understand, made separation between the merit and the application of that merit of the death of Christ. As far as the application of this merit is concerned, they presented that as dependent upon the free will of man. Christ did not die for a definite people, but merely in general, in order to establish the possibility of redemption and reconciliation.

We have already called attention to the fact that, in these articles of the Rejection of Errors, the fathers of Dordt present what they believe to be the errors of the Arminians. Now it is certainly true that our fathers are correct when they declare that the Remonstrants taught that the death of Christ would lose nothing of its significance even if no one actually would be saved. The Arminians certainly taught this. O, it is true that they, in the second point of the Remonstrance, declared that Christ has obtained by His death upon the cross redemption and the forgiveness of sins. But they also declare that Christ obtains this for all men and for every man. Now we should bear in mind that the Arminians, in their view of divine predestination, and as expressed in their first point of their Five Points of the Remonstrance, declare themselves in favor of a conditional predestination, that the Lord has determined to save those who shall believe on His Son Jesus, and that therefore they believe in a divine predestination upon foreseen faith. As far as God is concerned, therefore, His love is conditional and universal. It all depends upon the free will of the sinner. Whether God will save him depends upon his desire and willingness to be saved. God, therefore, does not determine who shall be saved, but it is man who determines this. However, that the fathers appraise the Arminian view correctly is also evident in the light of the Arminians' second point of their Five Points of the Remonstrants. Now it is true that the Arminians here declare that Christ died for all men, head for head. So, should anyone accuse the Remonstrants of teaching that the Father has ordained His Son to the death of the cross without a certain and definite decree to save any, the Arminians might retaliate with the remark that they certainly do believe that Christ died for men, inasmuch as they believe that Christ died for all men. But we must call attention to the fact that the Remonstrants also add that no one actually enjoys this

forgiveness of sins except the believer. Of course, in a certain sense this is true. It is certainly true that only the believer actually receives and enjoys the forgiveness of sins. But we do well to remember, the distinction between the Arminian and Reformed views of salvation and of the death of Christ. According to the Reformed view, the believer enjoys the forgiveness of sins because Christ died for him and bestows this forgiveness of sins upon His people through faith. But, according to the Arminian, Christ died for me because I believe in Him. According to the Remonstrant, the efficacy of the cross is strictly dependent upon the free will of the sinner. The fathers of Dordt are, therefore, very correct in their appraisal of the Arminian view of the death of the cross. The Father has indeed ordained His Son without any certain and definite decree to save any.

However, the question still persists: in the light of the fact that the Arminians really believe that God ordained His Son to the death of the cross without a certain and definite decree to save any, how can they teach that the necessity, profitableness and worth of what Christ merited by His death might have existed, and might remain in all its parts complete, perfect and intact, even if the merited redemption had never in fact been applied to any person? We understand the question: how can the Remonstrants maintain that the death of Christ retains its profitableness and worth even if none be saved through that death of Christ upon the cross? How can that death of Christ be considered as worthy and profitable even should none be saved? Of course, this, we know, is not true. If Christ did not die atoningly then it is impossible for anyone to be saved. If Christ did not die atoningly, then He did not pay for any sin. Then the sin of no sinner is paid. And if my sin and guilt are not paid, my salvation is impossible. However, this is the position of the Remonstrant, namely, that, even should none actually be saved, the death of Christ nevertheless retains its profitableness and worth. How, upon the standpoint of the Arminian, can he maintain this nonsense? The answer is obvious. You see, the Arminian believed that Christ upon the cross simply earned the possibility of our salvation. He did not merit salvation itself, only the possibility of our being saved. Well, regardless, then, of the question whether anyone be actually saved, it still remains a fact that the Saviour did merit the possibility of our salvation, and this fact, according to the Remonstrant, is not affected by any man's salvation.

How do the fathers of Dordt refute this position of the Arminians? Well, in the first place, they declare that this view tends to the despising of the merits of Jesus Christ. How true! In these words, the fathers maintain that Christ's death has significance and meaning only if He shed His blood for definite persons, who are also actually delivered and saved. Of course! A death of Christ that does not actually save anybody is

surely without meaning and significance. A death of Christ that is dependent for its efficacy upon the will of the sinner itself does not save, itself is not redemption, is void of any meaning. Man's salvation, therefore, is not dependent upon the cross of Christ, and this means that actually nothing happened at the cross of Calvary as far as the actual salvation of the sinner is concerned. The fathers of Dordt are certainly correct when they declare that the Arminians despise the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ; fact is, they actually deny these merits.

Secondly, the fathers declare that the Remonstrants are wiser than God in their view of the cross. Again we say: how true! Is not the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, as reconciling the world unto Himself and as redeeming His own from all the power of sin and guilt

the wisdom of God? To deny this power of the cross is certainly the denial of this wisdom of the Lord. Besides, one surely changes the wisdom of God into unspeakable folly by presenting the cross of Calvary as dependent upon the will of a sinner. God, then, would send His own Son into our world of sin and guilt and death and present that priceless gift of His Son as dependent upon a sinner? How foolish! Would the Lord, I ask you, "take a chance" as far as the blood of His Son is concerned? Is it possible for one drop of that precious blood to have been spilled in vain? Isn't it foolish for me to spend millions upon millions of dollars for something and then not even be sure whether I will ever possess it? And this view must be applied to Christ's death upon the cross? How foolish!

Book Reviews

SOLVING PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE

SOLVING PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE, By Robert Bower; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972; 148 pp., \$2.45 (Paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

There has been an abundance of books on marriage rolling from the presses these last few years. No doubt the nature of the times is the explanation for this. Dr. Bower, professor of Practical Theology and Pastoral Counseling in the School of Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, and Professor of Clinical Psychology at Fuller's Graduate School of Psychology, has added another.

The book is hardly a worthwhile addition to one's library, however. It is psychologically orientated rather than Scripturally grounded. A reading of the chapter titles already makes this clear: "The Need For

Openness in Marriage," "Learning Acceptance," "Creating Healthy Self-Images," "Improving Communication," "Developing an Identity," etc. If the psychology of the book were thoroughly Scriptural, there would be benefit to the book. But it is not. In fact, the author's theology leaves much to be desired. For example, in a footnote on p. 51. the author writes: "The doctrine of justification includes God's *acceptance* and love of his children in their present position. This is to be distinguished from the doctrine of sanctification which deals with God's encouragement of his children *to grow* and to improve their Christian life."

There is still the need of a good sound book on marriage which can be used by those who wish to build their marriage on the truths of Scripture.

NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES, Vols. 1 and 2, by John Albert Bengel; Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1905 pages, \$29.95 (Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema)

These are two worthwhile volumes in the Kregel Reprint Library. Although these volumes are a bit expensive, yet considering their size and the value of the material which they contain, the price is not exorbitant.

Who was John Albert Bengel? He was a German Lutheran theologian, of a somewhat pietist inclination, who labored during the first half of the eighteenth century, especially as professor at the cloister-school of Denkendorf, a seminary for the early training of candidates for the ministry. He was an early scholar in the field of textual criticism of the New Testament. An

illustration of the spirit of his studies is afforded by the theme chosen for his inaugural at Denkendorf, "true godliness the surest road to true science."

New Testament Word Studies is a new title for the translation of Bengel's chief exegetical work, *Gnomon of the New Testament*. This is a reprint of the English edition by Lewis and Vincent, Philadelphia, 1860-61. It should be noted that this work, as may also be deduced from its size, is much more than a word study. It is rather a brief and suggestive commentary on the entire New Testament.

With the understanding, of course, that such a recommendation does not imply one hundred percent agreement — as might not be expected in any review of a commentary — I recommend these two volumes as worthwhile additions to any minister's library.

A BIBLICAL MANUAL ON SCIENCE AND CREATION

A BIBLICAL MANUAL ON SCIENCE AND CREATION, by Henry M. Morris; Institute for Creation Research, 1972; 80 pp., \$1.50 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

This brief book is intended to be a companion volume to the *Science and Creation Series*, also published by the Institute for Creation Research and reviewed earlier in these columns.

The purpose of the book is explained in the Preface:

This book has been prepared in order to meet the need for a concise treatment of the Biblical perspective on creation as confirmed by the facts of modern science. The almost universal prevalence of evolutionism in our modern culture, especially in the schools, makes it urgent that Bible-believing Christians and their churches have a clear understanding of Biblical creationism and are able to make an intelligent and effective counter-attack against this pervasive system of evolutionary humanism.

The *BIBLICAL MANUAL ON SCIENCE AND CREATION* covers eight of the major issues involved in the subject of origins, giving the Biblical and theological aspects of each. Although the *MANUAL* is designed for independent study it also parallels the eight books of the *SCIENCE AND CREATION Series*, which were prepared specifically for use in the public schools and which, therefore, are limited strictly to the scientific aspects of these topics. Concurrent or subsequent study of the *MANUAL* is thus necessary to obtain a more complete picture of creation and its true significance than can be obtained from the *Series* alone.

While some of the material in this book can be found in the author's other writings, this brief manual is of considerable value. The book, along with the publishers, not only condemns all evolutionism, but also takes a strong stand against theistic evolution and progressive creation. There is insistence upon an absolute antithesis between creation and evolution. We

cannot give the contents of the book in detail. A listing of the chapter headings will give some indication of its contents. "Order and Design in Nature," "The Nature of Physical Processes," "The Testimony of the Fossil Record," "The Structure of Living Systems," "Origin and Nature of Man," "The Origin and Structure of the Universe," "Creation, Evolution and Modern Science," "Age and History of the Earth." It also has two appendices on "Biblical Arguments for a Worldwide Flood," "New Testament References to Genesis 1-11."

The interesting part of the book is that it spends a great deal of time on important Biblical themes which relate directly to the scientific questions involved in creationism vs. evolutionism. It demonstrates vividly that the whole of the Scriptures and their authority are involved in this controversy.

Interestingly, the author writes on pp. 20, 21: "Many creationist scientists today are actively doing research on these problems and the scientific basis of so-called 'flood geology' is becoming stronger all the time."

Many, even within the churches, have attacked the publications of this organization as being unscientific and untrustworthy. We have yet to read, however, of a single particular instance where the "science" of these men is proved to be bad. General condemnations will not work.

While we need not agree with all the conclusions of these men and all their interpretations on every point, we are grateful that there are those who give their time and abilities to explain science in the light of God's Word and not God's Word in the light of science.

This book is easy reading and is recommended to teachers and pastors, but also to parents and young people. Purchase it; you will not be sorry.

Editor's Note. For those interested in obtaining their publications, the new address of this organization is: *Creation-Science Research Center, Suite 117, 4250 Pacific Highway, San Diego, California 92110.*

MASTERS OF DECEPTION

MASTERS OF DECEPTION, by F.W. Thomas; Baker Book House, 1972; 162 pp., \$2.45 (paper) [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

This book is subtitled: "An Expose of the Jehovah's Witnesses, with clear-cut suggestions for refuting their teachings." It is written by a layman and is of considerable value in the understanding of the evil of Jehovah's Witnesses and in answering them on the basis of Scripture. The author pulls no punches in describing the doctrinal departure of this sect and in condemning them for their many sins. Sometimes the interpretation of Scriptural passages is erroneous, and there are places

where one is reminded of the saying: "A bad argument in defense of the truth can do more damage than a good argument against it." But on the whole we found this book interesting and helpful.

Many people have had the experience of having Jehovah's Witnesses come to their door. This book can be valuable assistance in such circumstances. Yet we remind our readers of the words of John in II John, 10,11: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 1, 1972, our beloved parents
MR. AND MRS. MELVIN WIERSEMA
celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

We, their grateful children and grandchildren, are
thankful to our covenant God for the many years of
love and instruction they have given us.

It is our prayer that they may continue to
experience the Lord's blessing in their remaining years
as they have in the past.

Their children:

Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Lotterman
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Heys
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Noorman
Mr. and Mrs. William Masselink
Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Mastbergen
Mr. and Mrs. Carl Wykstra
and 20 grandchildren.

ANNIVERSARY NOTICE

On August 15, 1972, our parents and grandparents,
MR. AND MRS. STUART BYLSMA
celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Covenant God for preserving them for
each other and for us these many years, and for the
covenant instruction we were privileged to receive
from them. We pray to God for His continued blessing
upon them throughout their earthly walk.

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Bylsma
Christie and Stevie
Marcia Bylsma
Mr. and Mrs. John ten Haaf
Phyllis and Sharon Bylsma

ANNIVERSARY

On September 4, 1972, our parents and
grandparents

MR. AND MRS. BERT VAN MAANEN
celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Covenant God for preserving them for
each other and for us these past years. Our prayer is
for God's continued blessing on them in the years to
come.

Their children:

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Horstman
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Buys
Brenda
Alvina
Carol
Evert
Janice
and their grandchildren

Classis East will meet, the Lord willing, on October
4, 1972 in the Southwest Protestant Reformed
Church. Material to be treated in this session must be
in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least ten days prior
to the convening of this session. Consistories will
please consider this to be an official announcement.

Jon Huiskens
Stated Clerk

NOTICE!!!

The Annual Membership Meeting of The Reformed
Free Publishing Association will be held, the Lord
willing, on Thursday evening, September 28, at 8 P.M.
in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Our speaker
at this important meeting will be our Editor in Chief,
Prof. H. C. Hoeksema. Prof. Hoeksema promised that
his speech — entitled THE STANDARD BEARER
AND FOREIGN CONTACTS — will be limited to a
twenty minute synopsis. The board urges ALL
members to be present. A special appeal is made to the
YOUNG MEN of our congregations to attend this
meeting and become acquainted with this important
kingdom activity.

The Board of the R.F.P.A.
G. Bol, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed
Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, wishes to express
its heartfelt sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Rein
Harkema, in the loss of his wife

CLARA HARKEMA.

May our gracious Father comfort him by His Word
and Spirit, and strengthen him in the hope of the
saints.

H. Meulenberg, Pres.
Art Bult, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

An Office Bearer's Conference will be held Tuesday,
October 3, 1972, at 8 PM, at the Southwest Protestant
Reformed Church. Prof. H. C. Hoeksema will speak on
the topic — "FAMILY VISITATION." All past and
present office bearers are invited to come and enjoy a
pleasant evening together.

P. Knott, Sec'y.

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News From Our Churches

The following trios have been proposed recently by the council of Hope Church (Grand Rapids): for pastor, Rev. J. Heys, Candidate R. Van Overloop, and Rev. B. Woudenberg; for home missionary, Rev. R. Decker, Rev. D. Engelsma, and Rev. D. Kuiper. At a congregational meeting held on August 21, Candidate Van Overloop was elected from the former, and Rev. D. Kuiper from the latter. Candidate Van Overloop has also received the call from Forbes, North Dakota.

From Hull's bulletin of August 13 comes the following message concerning Rev. Kortering: "Our pastor received the call from our Theological School to be professor in the branches of pastoral theology. These include homiletics (sermon making), poimenics (pastoral care), liturgics (proper worship), etc. as determined by synod in 1971. Let us direct our prayers to God that He may give guidance in this difficult decision."

During Rev. Schipper's absence (for vacation), the pulpit at Southeast was filled, on August 20, by two of our recent graduates from the Seminary, W. Bekkering and M. Kamps. Southeast's bulletin noted that "these brethren will be leaving soon for their charges: W. Bekkering to our church in Randolph, Wisconsin, and M. Kamps to our church in Redlands, California." Southwest, incidentally, planned a farewell program for Candidate and Mrs. Bekkering, to be held on September 15.

Some of our teachers and prospective teachers are also pulling up their stakes. For the school year which will, by the time you read this, have already begun, no less than three members of First Church planned to leave the city of Grand Rapids. Carol De Jong heads for South Holland, Illinois; Mary Looyenga for Edgerton, Minnesota; and Barb Meyer for Doon, Iowa. Peter Brummel, who has taught for the past three years in our South Holland school, is the new teacher-administrator in our school in Edgerton. Quoting from the June issue of the *Reflector*, "We wish Mr. and Mrs. Brummel God's richest blessings as they embark on their new teaching assignment and as they reestablish their home in Edgerton, Minnesota." That prayer for God's blessing is ours, of course, for all of our teachers, whether they begin a new assignment or continue in an old.

Several of our schools hold convocation exercises prior to the commencement of the school year. From a

couple of bulletins we learn that "the convocation exercises of our Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School will be held . . . August 29, in the auditorium of the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. Engelsma will speak on 'Reformed Principles of Education.'" From Hull's bulletin: "In keeping with the opening of school, a special convocation will be in Doon church on Monday, August 28, at 8 P.M. Rev. Kortering will be the speaker." And we mustn't forget the Seminary. Grand Rapids' area bulletins read, "As all schools are again opening, so also is our Seminary. (September 6) is Convocation night, and the Theological School Committee invites you to enjoy this program at our Southwest Church."

Remodeling of the auditorium of our church in Hull made it necessary that worship services be held in the Community Building on August 27 and September 3.

From a March bulletin of First Church comes this bit of Reformed Witness Hour Correspondence: "I would like to remain on your mailing list. I am inclined to believe that you are one of the very few that proclaim the whole truth or Word of God. . . ."

"Rare it is in this day to hear a faithful witness uphold the pure doctrine of grace without any mixture of Arminianism. May God bless your labors and enable you to continue your witness in the midst of this world. While this world will never receive your witness, there are many strangers and pilgrims who will enjoy it."

Also in connection with the work of the Radio Committee, there's the following contribution concerning a request from a foreign country: "They (of the Radio Committee) wonder how in the world requests for the printed copies of the Radio Sermons come from Tasmania, Australia. Certainly the stations broadcasting the programs cannot reach Australia. Nevertheless, a note was addressed to and received by the Radio Committee for printed copies of the Radio messages. Indeed amazing! Also, many requests from the Iowa listeners, the California listeners, and several from the Western Michigan listeners. But — from Tasmania — that really stumps the Committee!"

As you may have guessed, that came from the pen of Mr. H. Vander Wal, *Standard Bearer* business manager, and also active member of the Radio Committee.

D.D.