

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

It is almost as if the Lord is beginning a new era for us as Protestant Reformed Churches in missions . . . calls for help have come from five places, four domestic and one foreign. We have mission work to do! Much of it! . . . It was the firm conviction of the Synod that God had set before us these open doors and that we, therefore, must go forward preaching the blessed gospel of sovereign grace in Christ Jesus.

See “The Synod and Missions” — Page 467

CONTENTS:

Meditation —	
The Eternal God Is My Father	458
Editor's Notes	461
Editorial —	
The Heidelberg Catechism and Reprobation ..	462
Translated Treasures —	
A Pamphlet on the Reformation	
of the Church	465
The Lord Gave the Word —	
The Synod and Missions	467
From Our Foreign Mission Committee —	
Come Over and Help Us	
(from G.L.T.S. in Singapore)	470
From Holy Writ —	
Exposition of Galatians	473
The Day of Shadows —	
Deceit in a Divided Family	475
Book Reviews	478
News From Our Churches	480

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MEDITATION

The Eternal God Is My Father

Rev. C. Hanko

Question 26. What believest thou when thou sayest, "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?"

Answer. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them; who likewise upholds and governs the same by his eternal counsel and providence) is for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and my Father, on whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt, but he will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body, and further, that he will make whatever evils he sends upon me, in this valley of tears turn out to my advantage; for he is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing, being a faithful Father.

Lord's Day 9, Heidelberg Catechism.

The eternal God is my Father!

That in essence is the confession of this Lord's Day. What a momentous fact that is. How amazing is God's work of grace whereby we can say: *I believe*. Almost with bated breath we add: *I believe in God*. And to that confession we make bold to add: *This eternal God is my Father*.

Reflecting on that truth the fathers remind us that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They point out that it is only for the sake of Christ, God's Son, that we are made sons of God, and thus are brought into the living union and fellowship with God in Father's Family.

From this follows, according to this Lord's Day, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is none other than the Almighty God, Who according to His eternal plan and purpose created the heavens and the earth and all that they contain. This same almighty God carries out His eternal counsel in His providence, whereby He upholds and governs all things.

The blessed significance of all this gradually dawns upon our consciousness as we consider that this God is our Father, Who "will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body." Yes, as I walk this vale of tears along the very path which He has appointed for me in eternal wisdom and love, and my flesh raises doubts and fears, I may still rest assured that He turns every evil to my advantage. I may rely on Him, come what may, for He directs all things to my salvation. "He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing, being a faithful Father."

One cannot help but stand amazed at the deep insight that our fathers had in the golden treasures of God revealed to us in the Scriptures. The church of all ages rejoices to behold these riches as they are summed up in the first article of our Apostolic Creed, "I believe in God, the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

We pause a moment with the prayer that as we explore these riches the Spirit of Christ may make this soul-stirring confession ever more our own.

"Abba, Father."

Never dare we take this name of Father on our lips lightly or thoughtlessly. Only children have the right to call their parents father and mother. It would be an intrusion on their personal rights for someone else to assume that privilege. Although all the men, women, and children born in this world are creatures of God, and as such might be referred to as children, sons of God, yet that right and privilege has now been lost through sin. How anyone who truly realizes his own depravity and guilt before God can boldly assume for himself the right to be called a son of

God, is more than I can understand. Too often the name of Father dies on our lips in the consciousness of our daily transgressions, to say nothing of our depravity. In our daily walk of life there is far more reason to plead, "In Thy wrath and sore displeasure chasten not Thy servant, Lord. Let Thy mercy without measure help and peace to me afford." By our first birth we are children of Adam, conceived and born in sin. We have a depraved nature that reveals all the ugly traits of our spiritual father, the devil. Besides, we transgress all God's commandments in every desire that arises from our depraved nature, in every thought that flashes through our minds, in every word that passes over our lips, in every deed or action we perform. We only increase our debt of sin constantly in all that we do, so that God has just reason to cast us off in His condemnation.

What wondrous work the Lord has wrought in us! He has made us new creatures, born of the Spirit with the life of Christ within us. Old things are passed away; for us all has become new. We have the Spirit of adoption, Who assures us that we are sons of God and heirs of eternal life. This same Spirit daily transforms us into the likeness of Christ, creating in us the cry: *Abba Father*. We confess, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." The consciousness of this sonship is much richer in the new dispensation than in the old. The name of Father in reference to God appears only rarely in the Old Testament. It must have been somewhat of a surprise to Jesus' disciples that He taught them to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven." It was the Spirit of Pentecost Who brought a richer revelation of the intimate communion of life with our heavenly Father. The secrets of God's heart are revealed to us through His Word in an ever increasing measure. Yet what secret can be more precious to us than the fact that the eternal God calls us His sons? This is possible only because:

He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is our Savior. His name means "Jehovah saves," for the covenant God saves His people from their sins through that one and only Name whereby salvation is made possible, Jesus.

Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed Servant of God. How dare we ever think of the trinity as a cold doctrine? For in the triune life of God pulsates the love that unites the three persons of the trinity in communion of life, and impels them to give expression to that love outside of themselves. God wills that all His glories must radiate in dazzling splendor in all the works of His hands, that all His wide and vast creation may serve to the praise of the glory of His grace in Christ Jesus. In the holy Trinity

the Son is the image of the Father, the duplicate of His perfections. Therefore the Son is qualified, as only He can be, to reveal the glory of the Father, which is the glory that fills equally all three persons. The Son is the Word, appointed of God to devote Himself in love to God. He is the Christ, Who eternally stands before God as the chief Servant in God's House. "I was there," He says, "in the beginning of his (God's) ways, before his works of old. . . . I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." (Proverbs 8). To Christ God gives an elect people, the church, making Christ the Head, and making us the members of His body. Or, to change the figure, we are sons in God's family through our Elder Brother, the First-born, Jesus Christ. We are so intimately one with Him, that He cannot exist without us, and we cannot exist without Him.

This is My Father's World.

According to the recurring testimony of Scripture* and the confession of this Lord's Day, the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ made heaven and earth, with all that is in them." Imagine that! Jehovah, the God of our salvation, created the heavens and the earth *by Jesus*. We need not pause here to consider that creation itself is a wonder, for God spake and it was, He commanded and it stood forth. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Hebrews 11:2). But here we see in awesome wonder that the first creation was made with a view to the second. The first paradise was a picture of the heavenly paradise. Adam, our representative head in paradise, was a picture of the last Adam, Who is the Lord from heaven.

Our fathers do not fail to add that the Father of Jesus "likewise upholds and governs the same with his eternal counsel and providence." This truth is drawn from Scripture, which teaches us that all things were made by Jesus, and for Him, and that by Him they all have their existence. (Col. 1:16, 17). This was true already in the old dispensation, as is evident from the ever recurring appearance of the Angel of Jehovah, Who is the Old Testament manifestation of the Christ. This becomes still more evident when Christ comes into the flesh to lay down His life for His own.

He pays the ransom for sin by His bitter, shameful, and painful death of the cross, not only to redeem His sheep, but also to redeem the whole creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. (Romans 8:19-22). Wherefore God has also exalted Christ to a position of power and authority above all the angels in heaven, above all the demons of hell, and over all the creatures of the earth, including all the wicked. At the name of Jesus, our Savior, every knee must bow and every tongue must make the confession, "Lord Jesus Christ," to the glory of the Father. (Phil. 2:11). Our Father sits on His throne in the heavens, in order to carry out His eternal purpose to bring many sons to glory through the death and salvation of Jesus Christ, Who is our *Lord*, ruling over us and in us by His boundless love. All things are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. This is indeed our Father's world. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!" (Ephesians 1:3).

On Whom I rely.

Our Catechism speaks of this valley of tears, and of doubts that assault us while we traverse this valley. Scripture speaks of it as the valley of the shadow of death, which we enter when we are born, through which we wend our way as long as we live, and pass through its exit at death. It would be a valley of intense horrors of great darkness, without a ray of hope, if it were not for the fact that Jesus walked this valley and brought into it the dawning of a new day, a new exit to glory. Therefore we can speak of the valley of the *shadow* of death. But the shadow still hovers heavily over us. There are tears because of sin and because of the many sufferings of this present time; there are crosses to bear, there are trials and temptations that weary us.

But our eye of faith is directed toward our Father in heaven. We rely on Him, casting our cares upon Him, for He cares for us. What appears to be a great evil He turns to our advantage. When we complain that all things are against us He assures us that He is on our side, so that nothing can harm us. He holds us by His hand, directs us by His counsel, and after the weary night is spent, takes us into His glory.

He is Almighty God. He can do it.

He is our faithful Father. He will do it.

*See Psalm 33:6, John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, Heb. 1:2, etc.

Know the standard and follow it.
Read **The Standard Bearer**

Editor's Notes

New RFPA Catalogue. Within the past month a new catalogue of all our RFPA publications, plus most other Protestant Reformed publications, has become available. A supply of these catalogues should soon be available in many of the churches. But if you want one immediately, write to RFPA Publications, P.O. Box 2006, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501.

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Publication News. By the time this appears in print the third of our Bible manual series, *Suffer Little Children, Book Three*, will have come from the press, along with the pupil *Workbook* designed for grade three in our schools. The *Workbook* this time features the art work of a professional artist. He is Mr. Jeff Steenholdt, of our Kalamazoo congregation, who is now doing the art work for all our new publications. *God's Eternal Good Pleasure* is at the press right now and should soon be at the bindery. Target date for its appearance is early fall. By the way, if you are a *Standard Bearer* subscriber, you can still join our RFPA Book Club. If you do, you will automatically receive all new RFPA publications (excluding educational books such as *Suffer Little Children*) at a 20% discount. You will also be entitled to purchase any RFPA publications in stock at that discount. To join, simply send a signed request to become a bookclub member. By the way, by joining you will also help us publish our books faster. The only thing that is preventing us from getting some projected publications finished more quickly is lack of liquid assets — spelled \$\$\$\$\$!

Bible Study Materials. With the start of the society season soon upon us, we wish to remind you that there is considerable literature available which would be helpful both for Bible discussion and for after-recess discussions in your societies. Not only are there several useful RFPA publications listed in our new catalogue, but there is a mass of material available from our Seminary. This includes such things as notes on Old Testament History, notes on New Testament History, notes on the first three chapters of Genesis by the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema, notes on the Church Order, notes on the Canons of Dordrecht, Discussion Outlines on the Book of Acts, etc. If interested, write to our Seminary Bookstore, 4949 Ivanrest, S.W., Grandville, Michigan 49418.

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Increased Postal Costs. Our Business Manager informed me a few days ago that our *Standard Bearer* has recently been victimized by some huge increases in mailing costs. Last month he figured the increase amounted to 23%! The result of this and some other cost increases has meant that what was once a very comfortable cash balance has been steadily decreasing, in spite of the fact that our subscription rate went up to \$8.00. Please bear this in mind when you send your gifts or contribute to the collection for the *Standard Bearer* in your church.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association will be held, the Lord willing, Thursday, September 20, at 8 P.M., at the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church.

Nominees for the board are Stuart Bylsma, John Cleveland, John De Vries, Leonard Holstege, Charles Kalsbeek and Peter Koole.

Prof. Herman C. Hanko will be our speaker this year. All members and friends of the R.F.P.A. are urged and invited to attend.

David Harbach, Sec'y.

EDITORIAL

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

The Heidelberg Catechism and Reprobation

In the discussion concerning the Boer Gravamen against the doctrine of reprobation as taught in the Canons, it has more than once been suggested that there is a kind of dichotomy in our creeds and that while the Canons teach the doctrine of reprobation, our Heidelberg Catechism avoids it. Opponents of the doctrine of reprobation suggest, therefore, that we ought to follow the example of the Heidelberg Catechism and teach a doctrine of election which is not weighted down by the nettlesome doctrine of reprobation. Dr. Boer followed this line of argumentation in his (recorded) debate with Dr. Lester De Koster in Kalamazoo on March 7, 1978. From a tape-recording of this debate I have transcribed the following excerpt from Dr. Boer's address:

Permit me now in this very connection to call your attention to the Heidelberg Catechism. It is the only one of the three official creeds of the Christian Reformed Church that stands in close and intimate relation to the weekly, not to say daily, life of believers. The Heidelberg Catechism provides the weekly fare, weekly material, for the Christian Reformed pulpit. It is the basis of catechetical instruction. Its writers stood very close to the Reformation. Martin Luther was dead only sixteen years when the Catechism was published; and when it was published, John Calvin was still living. Ursinus and Olevianus were undoubtedly clearly and fully acquainted with the doctrine of reprobation as set forth both by Luther, and more fully by Calvin. Yet the Heidelberg Catechism makes no reference whatsoever to reprobation. It speaks plainly of redemption and of election, but not of reprobation. In Lord's Day XII it presents the Lord Jesus Christ as "our chief Prophet and Teacher, who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption." And in Lord's Day XXI it teaches that "the Son of God out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, depends, and preserves for himself by his Word and

Spirit, in the unity of the true faith, a church chosen to everlasting life, and that I am and ever shall remain a living member thereof." So here you have the secret counsel of God for our redemption made known, and a church chosen to everlasting life. That's what the Catechism gives us, by which we weekly, daily, live, in terms of instruction, in terms of proclamation. It is this doctrine, unencumbered and uncompromised by the ever and inevitably discord-generating doctrine of reprobation, that I ask the church to return to.

There can be no doubt about it, when you study the literature, that the doctrine of reprobation has been brought into being and maintained in the Reformed tradition not by Scriptural teaching, but by logical deductions of the theological mind.

The question is: is it true that the Heidelberg Catechism deliberately teaches and intends to teach, as Boer suggests, a doctrine of election without reprobation? To use Dr. Boer's own language, does the Catechism purpose to teach a doctrine of election "unencumbered and uncompromised by the ever and inevitably discord-generating doctrine of reprobation" — a doctrine to which Boer asks his church to return?

There are two tests which may be applied in seeking an answer to this question.

The first test is that of the confessions.

From the point of view of the harmony of the confessions, was it ever the intent of the Heidelberg Catechism to teach an election without reprobation, an election "unencumbered and uncompromised by the ever and inevitably discord-generating doctrine of reprobation"? From the same viewpoint, would it indeed be a *return*, or would it, on the contrary, be a *departure* to do as Boer requests his church to do?

We must remember that our three confessions are not three individual and unrelated documents, but

they are the Three Forms of Unity. This means that they are not to be understood in such a way that there is possibly a disjunction between them, so that, for example, the Catechism could teach one thing while the Belgic Confession would teach something diverse on the same subject. No, there is unity and harmony among the three.

Considering this from the point of view of the harmony of the Catechism and the Belgic Confession, first of all, it is clear that even though the Catechism does not literally mention reprobation, this by no means implies that the Catechism teaches or intends to teach a doctrine of election-without-reprobation. For the Belgic Confession in Article 16 does indeed teach, though in brief form, a doctrine of election *and* reprobation.

But also from the point of view of the Canons of Dordrecht, against which Boer has registered his gravamen, this is true. It ought to be clearly understood that if Boer does not want the position of the Canons on reprobation, he is also in effect repudiating the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, the former of which speaks briefly on reprobation and the latter of which is silent on the subject. Why is this true? It is true because the Canons occupy a peculiar position among our creeds. They do not stand on an equal footing with the Catechism and the Confession as far as content is concerned, but they occupy the status of a further explanation of certain points of doctrine already contained in the Catechism and the Confession. It is for this reason that the Formula of Subscription refers to the Canons in relation to the Catechism and the Confession by the expression, "together with the explanation of some points of the aforesaid doctrine, made by the National Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-'19." The Canons are only an explanation of some points of the doctrine already contained in the Catechism and the Confession, therefore. Furthermore, at the time of the Arminian controversy and the Synod of Dordrecht everyone recognized this. Not only the Counter-Remonstrants (the Reformed) recognized it. But the Arminians themselves recognized that the doctrine of reprobation was already the doctrine of the Reformed Churches even when the latter did not yet have the Canons, but only the Catechism and the Confession. This accounts for the fact that the Arminians wanted a national synod at which they would not be defendants but would be on an equal footing at the synod, a synod which would review and revise the existing creeds. This also accounts for the fact that when the Synod of Dordrecht called upon the Arminians to state in writing their position concerning the first point of doctrine in dispute, the Arminians promptly launched a sharp attack against the Reformed doctrine of reprobation. Dr. Boer could at least be forthright

enough to recognize this and not to act as though he has the beloved Heidelberg Catechism on his side.

But there is another test – call it the historical test, if you will. From the historical point of view, was it ever the intent of the Heidelberg Catechism, by its omission of the mention of reprobation, to teach what Harry Boer calls a doctrine of election "unencumbered and uncompromised by the ever and inevitably discord-generating doctrine of reprobation"?

Dr. Boer makes a big point of this matter, you know. He takes pains to point out that the Catechism was published during Calvin's lifetime and only sixteen years after Luther's death. He points out that the authors of the Catechism, Ursinus and Olevianus, were "undoubtedly clearly and fully acquainted with the doctrine of reprobation as set forth both by Luther, and more fully by Calvin. And "Yet," according to Boer, "the Heidelberg Catechism makes no reference whatsoever to reprobation."

Now is this true? Is this a correct presentation historically? Is it true that Ursinus and Olevianus, though they lived so close to the Reformation and were acquainted with its doctrines, deliberately and intentionally omitted the mention of the doctrine of reprobation, lest it should encumber and compromise the doctrine of election and lest it should generate discord? This is plainly what Dr. Boer attempts to suggest in the paragraph quoted.

There is, of course, another possible explanation. That explanation is anathema to the likes of Boer and Daane. That explanation is that in the mind of all Reformed men, Luther and Calvin and Ursinus and Olevianus and all the fathers of Dordrecht included, it is *absolutely impossible* to breathe the word "election" without saying by implication "reprobation." Daane scoffs at this as the logic of numbers. Boer repudiates it as being mere logic rather than Scripture, and makes especially Louis Berkhof the victim of his attack. The simple fact is that you can find this kind of logic in almost every Reformed theologian of note – not apart from, but in connection with the Scriptures. And the simple fact is, too, that none of the critics of this logic has yet succeeded in making plain to anyone how there can be an election (I am speaking of election in the Reformed sense!) without a concomitant reprobation. Take reprobation in the mildest infralapsarian sense of a passing by or a non-election. How can there be an election of a certain definite number of persons out of the whole human race without the passing by or non-election of those who are not chosen? The men who hold this position, if they want to be recognized as at all credible, owe it to the Reformed community to clear up this matter.

But to return to the issue, which of these two possible explanations is correct? Which represents the true position of the Heidelberg Catechism? Dr. Boer's explanation or mine?

We have an excellent court of appeal for this test — none other than Ursinus himself. As possibly most of you know, Ursinus is the author of a lengthy commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, a commentary which was produced from his lectures by Dr. David Pareus, the intimate friend and disciple of Ursinus. Turning to Lord's Day XXI, the beautiful chapter on the holy, catholic church mentioned by Dr. Boer, what do we find by way of commentary? Do we find so much as a *hint* that the Catechism (Ursinus) intended to teach an election-without-reprobation?

On the contrary!

Ursinus devotes some ten long pages to a treatment of the doctrine of predestination, including both election and reprobation.

He introduces this section as follows:

The Common Place of the eternal predestination of God, or of election and reprobation naturally grows out of the doctrine of the church: and is for this reason correctly connected with it. In the discussion of this subject we must enquire principally,

- I. *Is there any predestination?*
- II. *What is it?*
- III. *What is the cause of it?*
- IV. *What are the effects of it?*
- V. *Is it unchangeable?*
- VI. *To what extent may it be known by us?*
- VII. *Are the elect always members of the church, and the reprobate never?*
- VIII. *Can the elect fall from the church, and may the reprobate always remain in it?*
- IX. *What is the use of this doctrine?*

When he enters upon his treatment of the above questions, it is interesting to note, Ursinus cites some of the very same passages of Scripture as those which the Canons quote and to which Dr. Boer objects in his gravamen. What Ursinus has to say on the subject is worthwhile, and so I will reproduce some of it. The following is from his answer to the first question:

When the question is asked, *Is there any such thing as predestination?* it is the same thing as to enquire, if God has any counsel or decree, according to which he has determined that some should be saved, and others condemned. There are some who affirm that election, when used in the Scriptures, means *excellence*, on account of which some are regarded worthy to be chosen unto everlasting life, just as a man may make choice of a noble horse, or of pure gold. It is in the same way that they explain the idea of reprobation.

This view, however, is false, in as much as election is the eternal counsel of God. That there is such a

thing as predestination, or election and reprobation in God, is proven by these declarations of Scripture: "Many are called but few are chosen." "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." "I have much people in this city." "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." (Matt. 20:16. John 15:16; 10:16. Eph. 1:4, 5. Acts 18:10; 13:48. Rom. 8:30.)

The following passages of the word of God, may be regarded as having a special reference to reprobation. "God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." "It is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." "Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation." "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise, and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." "Ye have not the words of God, because ye are not of God." "Ye believe not; because ye are not of my sheep." "The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Rom. 9:22, 13. Matt. 13:11. Jude 4. Matt. 11:25, 26. John 8:47; 10:26. Prov. 16:4.)

The entire treatment of this subject by Ursinus is instructive. But let me limit my quotations to one more. For in it you find, in the last sentence, the very same logic on the part of Ursinus which Dr. Boer repudiates, namely, that reprobation is implied in election. Take note of that sentence. In these paragraphs Ursinus is answering the question, "What is predestination?"

Predestination differs from providence, as species from genus. Providence is the counsel of God concerning all his creatures; but predestination is the counsel of God, with reference to the salvation of angels, and men. Predestination is, therefore, the eternal, most righteous and unchangeable counsel of God concerning the creation of man, the permission of man to fall into sin and eternal death, the sending of his Son in the flesh that he might be a sacrifice, and the salvation of some by true faith and conversion through the Holy Spirit and the word for the sake of the mediator, by, and on account of whom they are justified, raised to glory, and rewarded with eternal life; whilst the rest are left in sin and death, raised to judgment, and cast into everlasting punishment. This definition of predestination is given with reference to men, and not to angels, because it is of the salvation of men that we shall here speak.

The two parts of predestination are embraced in *election and reprobation*. *Election* is the eternal and

unchangeable decree of God, by which he has graciously decreed to convert some to Christ, to preserve them in faith, and repentance, and through him to bestow upon them eternal life. *Reprobation* is the eternal, and unchangeable purpose of God, whereby he has decreed in his most just judgment to leave some in their sins, to punish them with blindness, and to condemn them eternally, not being made partakers of Christ, and his benefits. That both election and reprobation are the decree of God, these and similar declarations of Scripture prove: "I know whom I have chosen." "According to his grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." "He hath mercy on whom he will." (John 13:18. 2. Tim. 1:9 Rom. 9:18.) Election and reprobation were, therefore, made with counsel; and hence each is the decree of God, and for this reason eternal: because there is nothing new in God, but all things

are from everlasting, or before the foundation of the world. In as much now as he has chosen us, he must have rejected the rest, which is still further proven by the import of the word election, or choice; for that which is chosen, is selected, whilst other things are rejected.

It is abundantly plain, therefore, that the Heidelberg Catechism — according to the testimony of its author himself — does not purpose to teach a doctrine of election-without-reprobation. The contrary is true. And he who would keep silent about reprobation in connection with the mention of election by the Catechism in Question and Answer 54 would be unfaithful to the doctrine contained in the Catechism — again, according to the testimony of its author.

TRANSLATED TREASURES

Pamphlet on the Reformation of the Church

by Dr. Abraham Kuyper

(Kuyper has been talking in general about the matter of authority in the church. He is in the process of discussing different types of church government. In the previous article, he discussed the Romish system of church government. Now he turns in this article to the Lutheran system and other systems.)

The Lutheran Church attempts to solve the question of the best form of church government in an entirely different way. Her system is actually the same as that which was promoted by the Remonstrants in our land and in the name of Erastus in England. And, after the appearance of Thomasius, it is best known by the name of the Territorial System, i.e., the system that the one world-church splits and divides into as many parts and fragments as there are royal provinces, each of which has its own sovereignty. This system is diametrically opposed to Rome's system insofar as it deliberately breaks the unity of the world-church. National divisions are permitted to determine the character of the church. And it does not place the state under the church, but

principally, the church under the state. The struggle which is still being carried on in Germany between the Prussian Court and the Curia of Rome is concerned with nothing less than the absolute opposition between this Lutheran system and that of Rome.

According to the drift of this Lutheran system, Christ has laid the authority over His church in the hands of the prince of the land. The king, duke, or count is lord over the church just as he is lord over the land. The church as church has no authority of its own. All authority over her is confined to the prince of the land. Men differ in how this is to be expressed. One teaches that only the former power of the bishops was transferred to the prince. The other, decidedly more logical, takes the position that the prince, by virtue of his own princely sovereignty, is also sovereign over the church. Nevertheless, both actually confess that the prince alone possesses authority over the national church according to the fatal rule: *cuius regio, eius religio*; i.e., "He who is lord in the land determines the religion out of hand."

The laity have no right in this Lutheran system. The defenders of this Lutheran system distinguish not two but three classes: the ruling class, the ministerial class, and the lay class. Of these three, all authority rests in the ruling class which points out to the ministerial class in what way this authority will operate; and nothing remains for the lay class except what men call, in complete seriousness, the right to obey and to be subject. This system is also called Consistorial. In order that the princes are not in the final analysis included with the preachers, the princes place some ministers under them in the form of a consistory in their capital city. These ministers keep their colleagues in check. Their authority also extends to the appointment of superintendents and general superintendents in order better to hold tight the reins of government.

It already appears from this how the Erastian or Remonstrant system, although coinciding with the Lutheran system in the territorial idea, yet brings into this system an important variation. Erastus and the Remonstrants taught, partly following Zwingli, that there is really no authority in the church of Christ on earth; that the authority exercised by the magistrates is over the church in the same way as it is over the state and the whole of society, although it does not as such bear a special ecclesiastical character; and that the preachers, as a result, have no other obligation than simply to warn and advise. They do not possess the use of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. It is because of this that the Remonstrants opposed a general synod and made their plea for a territorial or provincial synod. Based on this is their opposition to the introduction of discipline, a power for which they did not consider the church authorized. And finally, on this basis rested their demand to tolerate diverse teachings in the church. All these ideas came forth out of the fact that in their opinion the ministry of the Word was devoid of all authority and was limited merely to warning.

One sees from this that the ecclesiastical ideas of Irenicists and the Legalists follow in principle the Lutheran system, and more specifically, its Remonstrant variation.* The ruler of the land decreed the Church Order in 1816. The church must be one for the whole territory. The Reverend's position must set the tone. The laity must not be included. Provincial and classical administration came in the place of general superintendents and superintendents. The General Synodical Commission formed the Lutheran consistory. All the actions of the church had to be purely admonitory. And finally, all kinds of variation

of confession had to be tolerated because the authority of the church might not be activated with respect to doctrine.

Thus of itself the law of contradiction brings us to the third or Reformed system, generally known by the name of Presbyterian or Synodical system. The chief marks of this system are: 1) That the internal unity of the world-church, which the Lutheran system separates into territories, is also divided by the Reformed so that the local church becomes the point of departure for all church government. 2) That these local churches are bound in a federation in Classis and Synodical National churches, and, although in weaker measure, in world councils.

3) That here for the first time the laity operates powerfully and, through the appointment of elders and deacons, stamps out all clericalism. 4) That the ecclesiastical authority, without in the least arrogating itself over the state, maintains itself completely independent from the state. These are the four great principles of Reformed church polity which decide if one moves in reformed paths rather in Romish, Lutheran, or Congregational.

On the foreground, as the cornerstone of the entire system, stands the theory of the local church. The devout confession of the hidden, spiritual character of the one Holy Catholic Church of Christ which manifests itself everywhere, where also believers dwell together, is bound up in this truth. The Lutheran idea of one large national church, divided into sections which men call congregations, is in irreconcilable strife with this idea. The Reformed church, according to the tenor of God's Word, has as its *cor ecclesia*, not the means of grace, but the choice of the elect; and accordingly, the church does not come to manifestation through the introduction of a certain liturgy, but through the manifestation of believers. However, because this local point of departure does not detract from the glorious idea of the unity of the church, the second mark stands alongside of this. This second mark is that these local churches must walk in union with each other and thus need to exercise Presbyterian discipline and authority over each other. It needs to spread out, not in a classical administration, but in the glorious institution of Classes and Synods, as at Dort, and preferably into a world-synod. This confederate authority of Classis and Synod must, in the meantime, never nullify the character of the church as a church of believers by virtue of election. Hence, as the third mark, there must be the introduction of presbyters or elders and of deacons as representative of believers. This stops all supremacy of the clergy. Finally, in the matter of the government, our Reformed churches always held in honor and with firmness the distinction of secular and ecclesiastical authority. This appeared in the most

*The Reference of Kuyper here is not altogether clear. It is possible that Kuyper refers to the history of the State Church in the period just prior to the Afscheiding when, under the prodding of Napoleon, the state imposed its will upon the church and ordered a fundamental change in the Church Order.

complete sense in lands where the magistrates remained Romish, as in France and in Poland. In those lands the Reformed churches, on Calvin's advice, developed and were organized and instituted completely independently. And this was maintained so firmly and strongly that everybody who in our day nevertheless rejects the separation of church and state becomes an opponent of the Reformed principles though now in these lands we live under magistrates who are not Reformed.* Yet the fact that Calvin and his followers, also in this land, and in states with a Reformed magistrate, permitted interference, does not alter the strong demand and correct tendency of the principle. Only, one must correctly distinguish in this connection. In the first place, e.g., at Geneva, the representatives of the boards of the citizenry appeared not as a government having authority in the church, but as representatives of the laity, something like our deputies now. In the second place, a certain *ius in sacra* (authority in holy matters) was not given to the government by virtue of her sovereign right, but men granted to government officials, as good church members, an authority of ecclesiastical origin. In the third place, the control of the manner in which the church would take her constitutional and civic place was left to the magistrate. And in the fourth place, finally, men have held, and correctly, before the magistrate the obligation, by virtue of her calling

*This is, of course, a reference to the State Church as it existed in the Netherlands.

as sovereign by the grace of God, to promote the honor of God and God's righteousness in the land according to the service of both tables of the law.* These are ideas in which are given, according to our innermost conviction, the correct lines along which we still must move in order to arrive at a pure and correct separation of church and state. If one must maintain a system of absolute separation of church and state recommended by Calvin for France and Poland, even the formerly mentioned system (that the magistrate must enforce both tables of the law) is valid. This absolute separation must never be lost from sight as is the case in our country.

As it was, after the total failure of the Romish system, and the grim disappointment in which the Lutheran system resulted, finally by Calvin the pure and best and through God's Word much sought after system of church rule was found, and was especially defended with sturdy courage and striking results against the calumnies of our Erastian Remonstrants. Let it therefore be here presumed that both systems which are still to be discussed, namely, the independent and collegiate systems, bring us far from the purer systems, and in fact to corruptions of the one good system.

*Kuyper's reference to grace here is to "common grace," an idea to which he held at the time of the writing of this pamphlet, although they were not as fully developed as they would be in his "Gemeene Gratie" and in his "Stone Lectures."

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

The Synod and Missions

Prof. Robert D. Decker

It is almost as if the Lord is beginning a new era for us as Protestant Reformed Churches in missions. This is not to say that our churches have been lax in their calling to do mission work in the past. This, most emphatically, is not the case. From the very beginning of our history we have been engaged in missions. This has been exclusively in the area of home missions and church reformation and extension. God has richly blessed these efforts too. Many of our present congregations had their beginnings as home mission stations. In addition, for some sixteen years we have been laboring through our Domestic

Mission Committee on the island of Jamaica, and for three of those years Rev. G. Lubbers labored as missionary on that island. But now calls for help have come from five places, four domestic and one foreign. We have mission work to do! Much of it! Synod responded to those calls after careful and prayerful deliberation by appointing calling churches for all of them. It was the firm conviction of the Synod that God had set before us these open doors and that we, therefore, must go forward preaching the blessed gospel of sovereign grace in Christ Jesus. Truly the word of Christ, "the fields are white with harvest,"

remains. But Christ also said: "the laborers are few." This too remains true. Besides the four vacant congregations there are four mission fields which need missionaries in the next year. This means in effect that our churches have no fewer than eight vacancies. How fervent we must continue to be in our prayers that God will give us men for the ministry! We must labor while it is day, ere the night cometh in the which no man can labor.

Jamaica

In our survey of Synod's actions concerning missions we begin with our oldest field, Jamaica. A good deal of time was spent on Jamaica by both the Mission Committee and its subcommittee on Jamaica. Twice during the past year emissaries were sent to the island on brief, but concentrated visits, first Rev. B. Woudenberg and Mr. C. Prince and later Rev. M. Joostens and Mr. Prince. In addition there was constant correspondence by means of both tape and letter. As a result of these contacts the Mission Committee advised Synod that the field demonstrates a receptivity to our preaching of the gospel and teaching of the Reformed faith. The ministers there are in dire need of further instruction. Specifically they need to know how to apply the doctrines of the Word of God to the problems of everyday life. Whereas in times past the congregations were characterized by the old and children, there is increasingly a number of young people in attendance at the worship services and showing interest in things spiritual. There continue to be problems on the field. Upon these grounds the Synod went on record as favoring the establishing of a missionary on Jamaica as soon as that is practically possible. Synod further instructed the Mission Committee to investigate the possibility of calling a missionary to Jamaica after the Synod of 1980. Synod also instructed the Mission Committee to send emissaries to Jamaica, preferably at the time of their classis meetings, for a period of at least three weeks, taking into consideration a minister (or ministers) and elder or former elder who are interested in working there. Meanwhile, for the interim, Synod instructed the Mission Committee to arrange for tape instruction for the ministers of Jamaica. Finally the Synod appointed First Church of Grand Rapids the calling church for the Jamaican field and to take over the supervision and investigation of this field in conjunction with the Mission Committee.

It is apparent that Jamaica remains a viable field for mission work. There is pressing need and the door remains open. The Synod recognized this and took positive and constructive action in response to it. May God bless these decisions for the furtherance of the cause of the gospel on the island of Jamaica.

Victoria, Vancouver, British Columbia

Synod heard a report from the missionary, Rev. Robert C. Harbach, concerning his labors the past nineteen months. In addition to his regular preaching and teaching Rev. Harbach published a paper *Calvinist Contender*, and initiated a fifteen-minute radio program, "Bible Truth Meditations." Rev. Harbach labored with a core group of three families and visitors. Because of Rev. Harbach's impending emeritation and the fact one of the families has ceased attending and another has moved to our Lynden Church, Synod instructed the Mission Committee that, with the concurrence of the Hope (Walker, Mi.) Council, full-time work in Victoria, B.C. be concluded at the end of August 1979 if the situation remains unchanged. Synod also transferred the field from Hope to Lynden so that continued contact can be maintained.

East Lansing, Michigan

About the time of the Synod of 1978 a request for a missionary came from four families in the Charlotte, Michigan area. This request was referred to the Kalamazoo Consistory. The pastor of Kalamazoo, Rev. B. Woudenberg, has since July of 1978 held mid-week Bible study classes with the group. Beginning in January of 1979 the Mission Committee in conjunction with the Consistory of Kalamazoo began worship services, with the retired ministers doing the preaching during January and February, and the seminarians and professors during March, April, and May. Recently the group moved to East Lansing, which is more centrally located and has better prospects for growth. For the summer months Kalamazoo, with the approval of the Mission Committee, has engaged the services of Candidate Steven Houck. It may be reported with thanksgiving that the preaching is well received and there is growth both in spiritual knowledge and in number. The group now numbers six families and one individual. In the light of this the Synod appointed Hope, Walker, Michigan the calling church for a missionary for East Lansing. May God prosper the work.

Birmingham, Alabama

In a letter addressed to the Mission Committee dated August 26, 1978 a group of believers in Birmingham requested a full-time home missionary. Two ministers were sent to investigate this request and they returned with a favorable report. In January of 1979 the Mission Committee asked South Holland Church to consider Birmingham as a field and to call a missionary. Rev. Ronald Van Overloop has recently accepted the call of South Holland and will be installed and take up his labors there sometime this summer. May God bless Rev. VanOverloop and his

family and cause his work to bear fruit toward the establishment of a congregation in Birmingham.

Mt. Vernon, Monroe, Washington

For the past few years considerable interest has been shown in our churches by the people living in these northwest Washington areas. Lynden's Consistory and pastor, Rev. D.H. Kuiper, have been and are now pursuing this interest to the best of their ability. The distance, involved, however, (up to 100 miles) makes it impossible for Lynden to work this field by itself. Upon the request of Lynden Church and the advice of the Mission Committee, Synod appointed Lynden to call a missionary to labor in this field. It is our prayer that the fruit of this labor may be that a Protestant Reformed Congregation may be organized in this area.

Singapore

We conclude our survey with a report on our first genuinely foreign mission field. In Singapore there is a group of believers (generally single and in their twenties) recently converted from heathendom (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Chinese Ancestral Worship). This group suffers much persecution on account of the Christian faith, even from their families. There are fifty-nine members in the Gospel Literature and Tract Society with some sixty to seventy who visit the meetings and worship services. Rev. J. Slopsema and Mr. Dewey Engelsma visited the Society in the spring of 1978 and Rev. M. Kamps and Mr. Engelsma and their wives labored among these believers in the spring of 1979. The emissaries, in extensive and detailed reports to the Synods of 1978 and 1979, informed the Synods that these believers are sincerely interested in the Reformed faith. They need our help. The fruit of these contacts has been that the GLTS addressed a letter to the Foreign Mission Committee in which they requested a missionary from the Protestant Reformed Churches. As noted above, this is the first call our churches have received from a foreign field. That in itself makes the letter significant and for that reason we quote it in its entirety:

"Dear Brethren,

Greetings in the Name of our Rightful Lord and Most Holy Saviour Christ Jesus the Righteous.

We thank God for His grace in granting us your fellowship, love and concern and in this letter we wish to express to you officially our hope, vision and the decision we made concerning your labour of love with us.

We are thankful for the help you have rendered us through the sending of Emissaries last year, the tape programme, literature and the Emissaries presently here with us, through whom we send this letter to

you. They have been a great help to us in showing to us the truth of God's Word which we are now persuaded to be expressed in the Reformed truth you hold. We are also much encouraged by the way you hold the Word of God in high esteem and it is in view of these that we made our decision after much deliberation.

"On the 8th of April 1979, our Study Commission of 8 brothers and 1 sister (who refrain from voting herself), who were chosen by the congregation to conduct a study on your doctrines and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee and took a unanimous decision to recommend that we request a missionary from the Protestant Reformed Churches. On the 15th April, a survey was taken of the Congregation's inclinations in which out of the 54 constituted members present, 32 were in favor of requesting a missionary from the Protestant Reformed Churches, 14 put their confidence in whatever the leaders decide and 8 thought it more prudent to delay such a request. There were none who did not want the Protestant Reformed Churches' help!

Taking all these into consideration, the Executive Committee met on the 22nd April 1979 to decide on the course of action. We hereby request a missionary from you to establish us as a Church holding the Reformed Truth.

We also want to add that, it is the longing and vision of the leaders, as we see that there exists in these parts of the world no strong witness of the Glorious Gospel once delivered to the saints embodied in the Reformed Truth, that the Lord may raise up here and there a witness. We desire for the Church in our midst a strong foundation established upon the Apostles and the prophets with Christ as the Chief Corner Stone, that we may act as a centre where the True Light of God's Word may in the future, reach beyond the shores of Singapore to neighboring South-East Asia, and where men of God may be trained for such ministry. We believe you as the Protestant Reformed Churches to be God's provision for us in His grace to help us do His will.

We understand that as we make this request, we have placed our teaching ministry under the care of the missionary you send us. Should you grant our request, we have every confidence that he will work closely with the leaders. It is our desire, as much as we are able, to provide for him and his family in carnal things as he minister to us in spiritual things.

To Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His Own Will we owe our thanks and praise for your work of faith, and labour of love and patience and of hope.

Yours in Christ,
The Executive Committee of GLTS"

In response to this request the Synod appointed Doon, Iowa as the calling Church for a missionary to Singapore. May God soon give us a man who shares

the vision of the GLTS to labor among them, in order that they may be instituted as a manifestation of the Church of Jesus Christ.

We praise God for these mission opportunities and

for the privilege of preaching the gospel and extending our witness to the ends of the earth. May our Churches be faithful to the end.

*FROM OUR FOREIGN
MISSION COMMITTEE*

Come Over and Help Us (from G.L.T.S. in Singapore)

Rev. M. Kamps

The Foreign Mission Committee of our churches appointed the undersigned to write once again concerning our labors upon the mission field in Singapore. In March the undersigned and Mr. D. Engelsma were sent by the Foreign Mission committee and our Doon Church as your emissaries to the Gospel Literature and Tract Society of Singapore. This group was formerly known as the Gospel Letters and Tract Department (G.L.T.D.). They are now a society registered with the government of Singapore and possess the right to sponsor a missionary from a foreign country. The fact that Mr. Engelsma was one of the emissaries in the spring of '78 proved to be very helpful unto the establishment of rapport with the G.L.T.S. immediately at the beginning of our labors.

The G.L.T.S. has sixty young men and women members. All these members are unmarried, under twenty-eight years old, all were raised in pagan homes where the parents are either Hindus, Buddhists, or Chinese ancestral worshippers. These young people, of course, formerly accompanied their parents to the temples of the heathen gods to bow down in prayer and praise of these vain idols. But our God has delivered them from the darkness and wickedness of paganism and has called them into the fellowship of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of that fact there is no doubt! Children of God they are.

These young people had been brought to the

Christian faith through various unusual means. Outstanding is the witness of a public school teacher. The present core members of the G.L.T.S. were taught some ten to twelve years ago the Holy Scriptures by their public school teacher, who found time before school, after school, and at recess time to teach these pagan children the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. This little group gradually grew and today when the G.L.T.S. meets for worship there are about one hundred twenty persons in attendance. All are not members but they are there regularly to hear God's Word and to worship with God's people.

The G.L.T.S. is a society, not a church, even though it functions in many respects as a church. The G.L.T.S. does not have an ordained pastor, nor elders, nor deacons. This society is governed by a constitution and directed by five young leaders, which the society elected to lead her. Your emissaries stayed in Singapore from March 23 to May 1. We preached six sermons while on the island. Sunday morning at 10 a.m. we met for worship in their humble building on River Valley Road. The worship services generally were finished in two hours. These sermons were thankfully and attentively heard. They were receptive to the Reformed faith. This receptivity was of God's grace. Each Saturday afternoon from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. we met to discuss a speech which the undersigned delivered on various subjects which the leaders of the G.L.T.S. asked us to address. Each Wednesday evening at 7:30 they met for a prayer service. In addition to the above meetings the G.L.T.S.

membership meets once a week in various localities throughout Singapore in small groups for Bible study.

Your emissaries were impressed with the deep interest the G.L.T.S. membership had in God's Word. They were hungry! They peppered us with questions. They sought instruction; they had not come to argue. Not only were they concerned with gaining answers to personal questions, and solutions to personal problems, but they wanted to know specifically what this text or that text meant. They wanted to grow in the knowledge of God and of His Word. When we showed them from God's Word the proper interpretation, they thankfully received our instruction.

I am especially at this time mindful of the young sister, who, as it became apparent through her questions, did not believe that the grace of God is an irresistible power unto the salvation of His people. She was convinced that the grace of God was merely a feeling or attitude of unmerited favor in God towards all men. She was so sweetly earnest in her contention. However, how pleasant and refreshing it was for me to hear her earnest and humble acceptance of the truth of God's Word as we brought it to her. Another young lady asked us to distinguish and clarify for her the biblical expressions, old man and new man, regeneration and the rebirth, and the carnal mind and the flesh. Interesting, substantive, and important questions she asked. These questions reveal the searching mind and heart of a youthful saint. Others asked questions about the return of Christ Jesus and the millennium. One young person, with all the simplicity of a child, said to us: "Tell me about heaven." I tried! I read to him from the book of Revelation and other passages. I felt terribly inadequate, for he wanted to see with his natural eyes and handle with his hands the realities of heaven. We had to direct his eye of faith to the covenant friendship that God has now established with us in Christ Jesus. Blessed work we were privileged to do on your behalf.

The earnestness and godliness of these young brethren and sisters is demonstrated in their christian giving. Most of the members come from poor families. Many still are in school. But their offerings are generous. The six weeks we were there the offerings totalled as follows: March 18 - \$278.60, March 25 - \$306.50, April 1 - \$527.10, April 8 - \$522.85, April 15 - \$317.00, April 22 - \$317.20. They have a yearly budget of some twenty thousand dollars. These monies are used to cover the expenses of tract distribution, the purchase of good books, to help support two of their members who are preparing themselves for the ministry of God's Word, and to pay the \$241.00 rental fee for their meeting place.

Another christian virtue evidenced abundantly among them was that enjoined by the apostle Paul in Eph. 4:32; "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Their love for one another was not the superficial kind of a plastic smile and phony sweet voice. But their love and kindness toward one another were the expressions of their sincere love of and unity in God's Word, and their soft words were motivated by a mutual appreciation for the work of God's grace among them.

The G.L.T.S. has experienced considerable difficulties in the recent past. After Rev. Slopesma and Mr. Engelsma returned from Singapore in April of 1978, approximately twenty-five members of the group left, because they disapproved of the continued Reformed emphasis in the preaching and teaching of the leaders. Those who were troubled by the Reformed emphasis in the teaching of the G.L.T.S. claimed that if one was committed to the tulip doctrines of the Reformed faith it would be impossible for him to engage in Christian witness unto others. One of the leaders of the G.L.T.S. felt duty bound to answer this allegation and thus wrote a position paper and distributed it among the membership. We want to quote some excerpts from this paper to let you read from one member of the group his concern for the truth of God's Word and his willingness to apply Reformed principles to the work of Christian witness and missions. However, in all fairness to the reader, the G.L.T.S., and Quek Kok How (the author of this position paper), we must take note of the fact that this young brother expresses only his own views and does not write officially for the G.L.T.S. We quote the following with his permission.

"It is not my desire in this article to try to convince others of my convictions but it is in fact written especially for those who are already inclined to the Reformed doctrine or are unsure and are studying and seeking the truth. I will not deal with the questions whether Christ died for all men and whether God in His good pleasure desires all men, head for head, to be saved, but rather, how we shall present the Gospel after embracing these truths.

"Certainly, our witnessing and preaching cannot contradict our convictions. To go to a person and say 'Christ died for you and he loves you' is going to incur the opposition of our own conscience if we believe that Christ did not die for all men and that He does not desire the salvation of all men. Even those who are unsure, when they utter these words, their spirits may prick them, questioning their right to so boldly proclaim in their witnessing of the truth, something which they consider may be untrue.

"The question for us is 'how then shall we witness?' We are so orientated to saying 'God loves you and wants to save you,' 'Christ died for you,

wouldn't you believe Him,' in witnessing that to confront a lost soul without these words is unthinkable. If we have no universal atonement to offer for the decision of the sinner to accept or reject at the end of the conversation, it seems impossible for any evangelism-personal or from the pulpit. Yet we cannot just say that we will not witness and avoid the issue . . . the Lord's command forbids us to partake in such folly. . . .

"Indeed the question 'Who God Is?' is sorely missing in evangelism today and I stress that without knowing God there is no salvation for 'this is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only True God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' We have already seen that a conviction to sin is Godward and likewise is repentance, faith, yielding and following. The question is what God? Is it just the name Jesus Christ? Not everyone who calls Lord, Lord is saved. If we believe in the Jesus Christ of the rock opera 'Jesus Christ Superstar' are we then saved? Can one call on the name Jesus having in mind an idol like the many one has at home and expect salvation? Can one add the crucifix to one's trophy case of idols in one's heart and escape damnation? Putting the doctrine of Limited Atonement aside, can we tell a person 'God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life,' if the person has not the faintest idea that this is the God that made heaven and earth? Surely an idolator will think of his own idols with eyes, hands, feet, noses, which have no living function. An ordinary man-on-the-street may at best have an impression of a benevolent fairy-God-Father who is so perturbed by man's disobedience that he died for him. Dare we as ambassadors risk such a gross misrepresentation of our Sovereign? . . . We need not always follow this set pattern of expressing God's attributes but I believe Paul makes it clear that we must impress upon the sinner the Great and Almighty God. It is pointless to proclaim to the lost that God is Love before first bringing to them the Great and terrible God. If we do, how will we show them that 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God?' Heb. 10:31. How can we impress upon the sinner that the wrath and anger of the God of Righteousness and Judgment is upon him for his sin if he does not repent, if we start off with the God of love? The truth is that without the wrath fearfulness of the God of Judgment, the grace and Love of God, lose their significance and we can scarcely appreciate them. Judgment for sin is that which inflicts the mortal wound while grace is the balm. If we apply the balm, even the death of our Lord for sin, before exposing the wound, the balm loses its value and the receiver may even deem it cheap. . . . Let us come to the realization that Christ did not die to save us from the devil, who has no power over our soul, but from the wrath of the Living God, which wrath would consume us if not for Christ our Advocate. . . .

Very often we are afraid to point out the sin of idolatry to an unbeliever in fear that he will say we are arrogant and condemning other religions, which in their minds are equal to Christianity. But brethren,

have we forgotten that our God is the only true God? The very point we need to bring out is that our religion is not equal to others, our God is above all gods. We must never leave our hearers with the idea that our God is like unto an idol. Evangelism in this present world has deteriorated to the stage that one need not forsake his idols to become a Christian. We hear of Christians speaking of certain 'converts' 'saved' at certain rallies who have not yet been 'convicted' to stop praying to idols. Counsellors need to tell counselees sometime after their conversion to stop their idol worship. Is our evangelism bringing forth grotesque hybrids holding joss-sticks in one hand and a Bible in the other? Is salvation possible for one who still clings to idols just because he has 'accepted Christ.' Nay, it is not ours to accept or reject Christ for what He is but His to accept us in spite and despite of what we are or to reject us because of what we are. Ours is only to receive Him just as the clay receives the shape the Potter so desires. Clay has no power to accept nor to reject the Potter's will. We need to come as needy sinners without hope nor power to redeem ourselves and as the Word is declared to receive it with gladness rather than be as one on bargaining ground with God to accept Him should we find Him appealing. This incidentally is irresistible grace in operation. It is He who 'worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.' Phil. 2:13. Brethren, let us remember the Thessalonians who 'turned to God from idols to serve the Living God.' I. Thess. 1:9

From the above quotes we gain an appreciation for this young (twenty-one years old) brother's convictions and we marvel at the fact that just some eight years ago he with his pagan parents bowed down to the gods of Buddhism. It is truly amazing how the Lord has drawn His own unto Himself in Singapore and revealed to them the truth of His Word.

Thankfully the Foreign Mission committee reported to our Synod that it was the desire of the G.L.T.S. that we send as soon as possible a missionary to labor among them. Besides this call for help they informed us of their vision: "We also want to add that, it is the longing and vision of the leaders, as we see that there exists in these parts of the world no strong witness of the Glorious Gospel once delivered to the Saints embodied in the Reformed Truth, that the Lord may raise up here such a witness. We desire for the Church in our midst a strong foundation established upon the Apostles and the prophets with Christ as the Chief Corner Stone, that we may act as a centre where the True Light of God's Word may in future, reach beyond the shores of Singapore to neighboring South-East Asia, and where men of God may be trained for such ministry. We believe you as the Protestant Reformed Churches to be God's provision for us in His grace to help us do His will." (From the call letter addressed to F.M.C.)

Our Synod of 1979 granted this request of the G.L.T.S. Our Synod further appointed our Doon, Iowa congregation the calling Church. The ponderous ecclesiastical machine is slowly but surely beginning to roll. It is the prayer of the undersigned that the Lord will lay it upon the heart of one of His laborers to take up this work among his people in Singapore,

who have sought our help.

On behalf of the Foreign Mission Committee and the Doon congregation we ask for your prayerful and enthusiastic support in this work, which is of God in Jesus Christ and which has been laid upon us as reapers in His Harvest.

Reverend Marvin Kamps

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Galatians

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE THREATENING WARNINGS OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST (Galatians 5:15)

It is evident from the Greek text here that there was a very bad spirit in the church. Bad doctrine and bad walk in life go hand in hand inevitably! Sound words of doctrine make for healthy piety, preparing us unto every good work. (II Tim. 3:16, 17) We must be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. (II Tim. 2:21) But such was not the case with these legalizers, who would have a Gospel, which is not a Gospel. (Gal. 1:7) These "troublers" of the church could be seen by their fruits as being false prophets. (Matt. 7:15-20)

The text says: "but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." We should notice here that, in the three verbs, "bite," "devour," and "consume," there is an increase in the description of the destructiveness. To bite one another is bad; however, to "devour" is much more destructive. Yet, "to consume one another" is far worse. Then there would be nothing left of the congregation; she would be entirely destroyed. The conditional sentence is stated as presupposing a determined reality. Such is actually the condition of the Galatian churches, who do not walk in their liberty in Christ, but who are now acting from the principle of law and of the sinful flesh. Having their mouth full of laws and precepts upon precepts, they fail to grasp in a spiritual-psychological way what the real fulfillment of the law is: to love the neighbor as ourself.

Legalists have a way of devouring one another; legalists cannot forgive in their own self-righteousness because they do not themselves taste the justifying and forgiving love of God. (Eph. 4:31, 32) Legalists strain at the gnat and swallow the camel! (Matt. 23:24) They look with disdain upon the repentant and joyful sinner, who has found peace in the blood of the Cross; to kiss the feet of Jesus in sheer joy of heavenly gratitude. (Luke 7:45) And now Paul warns these Galatians, in the Gospel context of their liberty in Christ, not to be enslaved with such a bondage of the law which can only provoke to sin as the power of sin. They are not under law but under grace; sons of Sarah they are and not of Hagar, which gendereth to bondage! We are from Jerusalem above, we are free, and, therefore, we must not walk according to the flesh but we must walk according to the Spirit.

Paul does not give a little larger dose of "law" to correct these erring brethren in Christ. More than one minister, which I have heard, does exactly this: thunder the law. Nay, we need to be called to our spiritual senses, when we wander away from the straight and narrow path of the liberty in Christ, by showing us the devastating effects of walking after the flesh, which is tantamount to walking as being "under law." The call to repentance is a *Gospel-call* to walk in our liberty in Christ: to love our neighbor as ourself, by a faith which works by love, and which expects the hope of righteousness. That is the only Scriptural and Reformed pedagogy in the church; it is the very quintessence of the law of God as promulgated from Sinai to the church of God in the wilderness; it is the very essence of the moral law as it

is interwoven in every Gospel-precept in the New Testament Scriptures, calling us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, reminding us that it is God, Who works (energizes) in us both to will and to do after His good-pleasure. (Exodus 20:1, 2; Phil. 2:12, 13)

THE GREAT POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Galatians 5:16-26)

Paul will now clarify what he has said concerning this danger of a fleshly-legalistic walk, this departure from fulfilling the royal law of liberty. Writes he, "Now I say walk by the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16) That is the thrust of Paul's argument. That is the only sound pedagogical approach to any trouble in the church in Galatia and to the church at any point and place in history.

The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the dwelling-place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:21, 22); the only life in the church is by the life-giving Spirit. Writes Paul in Gal. 5:25, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." The Greek text literally states: If *live* we by the Spirit, *by the Spirit* also let us walk! We can only walk by the Spirit because we live, have our life's blood from the Spirit.

We may remark here, in passing, that Paul contrasts the Spirit on the one hand with "the flesh" in the Christian who is reborn, and on the other hand with "the law." For the former see Gal. 4:16 and for the latter see Gal. 4:18. This contrast which Paul makes we should keep in mind and see more in depth. The truth of the matter is that, in the Bible, being "under law" is tantamount to being "under sin." Only when we walk according to and by the Spirit do we stand on higher ground. To that higher ground of our freedom in Christ Paul exhorts us in this passage concerning the work of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 6:12-14) Only thus do we come to the higher ground of sanctification, which cries out, "God forbid, that I should remain in sin, that grace may abound."

Paul makes the profound and yet lucid pronouncement here in Gal. 5:16 that, when we walk by the Spirit, we shall *not fulfil (ou mee teleseete)* the lusts of the flesh! Paul puts this statement in the imperative mood. Let the entire circumference of all your life, your whole heart, mind, soul, and strength be such that you are Spirit-led; that the inward quickening, drawing, sanctifying, renewing power of the Spirit is the motivation and power of your life toward God, your fellowman, and toward all things, as circumscribed and demanded by the law of God, as fulfilled in Christ on the Cross. Let *Christ* dwell in you by the Spirit. *Only* this Spirit of sanctification will banish the flesh from your life; it alone is the power to mortify our members upon the earth. That

will be the end, once and for all, of all biting, devouring and consuming one another! That will be the law written upon our fleshy (not fleshly) hearts. (II Cor. 3:3; Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 11:19; Heb. 8:10) The only remedy for overcoming the works of the flesh is that we serve the Lord in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. (Rom. 7:6)

Thus we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Paul begins by defining this flesh from the viewpoint of the "lusts." He begins by pointing out the deep spiritual nature of the law in opposition to the "lusts." Paul had not known "lust" to be sin, its very root, if the law, the tenth commandment did not say "Thou shall not covet." Here Paul sees the "motions of sin" in his members, the deep, inner, uncontrollable "passions," (*patheemata*) which are wrought in him by the law. Paul could never say: walk *according to the law* and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. More law-principle would only result in more sin, more transgression! On the contrary Paul says: lust can only be mortified by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ became a curse for us on the Cross in order that we, the Gentiles, might receive the promised Spirit through faith. (Gal. 3:13, 14) That is the starting-point of Paul's great Gospel-precept, the warning and exhortation by which grace is wrought in our hearts. To do less would be tempting God in the church. (Acts 15:10; Canons of Dordt, III, IV, Art. 17)

Hence Paul can state as a most certain axiom that when we walk according to the Spirit "ye shall *not at all (ou mee)* fulfil the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16)

What does it mean to "fulfil" the lust of the flesh? The term in the Greek for "fulfill" is "*teleseete*." The idea of the verb is: to bring to a close, to finish, to end. It is not the same as the term "*plerooo*" which means to make the measure full. Rather we are here dealing with bringing the lust to its full end, as it expresses itself in words, thoughts, and actions. We see this very strikingly set forth by James where he writes, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when sin hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:14, 15) He that walks by the Spirit does not come to this "finishing" of the lusts of the flesh in actual deeds. Instead, he sees the fruit of the Spirit in his life, and may with holy joy see the infallible fruits of election in his life, and be assured of his faith by the fruits thereof. (Canons of Dort, I, 12; II Pet. 1:5-10; Matt. 12:33)

Such is the great power of the Spirit of sanctification in our lives!

Paul lays great and repeated emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit in this epistle to the

Galatians. He reminds them that their very beginning in grace was by the Spirit, (Gal. 3:2) (and that they must not try to be perfected in the flesh) which is the very opposite, the sin-principle, the law-principle of the old Adamic, fallen nature, which is totally corrupt and sold under sin. (Gal. 3:3) God is the One, Who ministers the Spirit unto us, working powerfully in our hearts. He sent His Son to the Cross that we might receive the promised Spirit; yea, He sent Him in the fulness of time, made from a woman, and made under law, that we might receive the Spirit of adoption through which we cry, Abba, Father! It belongs to the essence of our sonship of adoption to receive the Spirit of adoption, which is not a Spirit of bondage again to fear, to slavery once more, but to freedom. (Gal. 4:6, 7) And Paul enforces this with the allegory of the two mothers, Hagar and Sarah, which are two mountains, as we have seen in earlier

essays. (Gal. 4:21-31) For the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. For the Spirit of grace and glory rests upon the church, which is God's dwelling-place in the Spirit. (I Peter 4:14; Eph. 2:22) Every individual believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the very inner sanctuary. (*naos*) This temple must not be defiled! (I Cor. 6:18-20)

This we must keep constantly in mind, that we are God's holy temple in the Spirit of Christ. We have been raised with Christ unto a new life, which is not in the oldness of the letter, but which is in the newness of the Spirit. We are not under law, but we are under the mighty, quickening power of grace in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And this calls for a mighty battle!

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Deceit in a Divided Family

Rev. John A. Heys

Were it not for the fact that in Hebrews 11:20 we read that "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come," one would never gather from the account in Genesis 27 that in this deed Isaac was moved by faith. It looks like a pretty carnal thing. And for this we are somewhat prepared already by what the Holy Spirit tells us in Genesis 25:28. We are told that Isaac's family was a divided family, for "Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob."

Esau was the kind of son of whom any earthly father could be proud. Yes, there was that marriage of Esau to an unbelieving Canaanitish woman; and this was a grief of mind to Isaac as well as to Rebekah. They were agreed on that, and here was no division of reaction. But when Holy Writ says that Isaac loved Esau while Rebekah loved Jacob, the idea is that there was a strong attachment that Isaac had for his eldest son that put Jacob in the distant background as far as Isaac's affections were concerned. It was an open thing, something Isaac in no way tried even to hide, even as Jacob later made

no attempt to show his great love for Joseph by giving him a princely coat. And Scripture is not recording these actions of God's people to give us a pattern to follow. The very opposite is true. We must see these sins also in the Church in order to flee from them ourselves. The consequences of such divided families and affections should warn us not to put one child before the other, not to divide our children and set them against each other by favouring the one and nagging and shunning the other. And here it is much more than being proud of this strong, aggressive, and physically promising son. Scripture uses the word love; and Scripture shows that this love was upon a son who manifested no spirituality in his life. The connection — even though many years may have gone on between — which the Holy Spirit makes here must not be overlooked. Even though years may have passed by between what we read in the last part of Genesis 26 and the first part of Genesis 27, the Holy Spirit connects the marriage of Esau to an unbelieving woman of Canaan, and Isaac's grief of mind about this, with his calling of Esau to come and get the blessing.

Did he not know what God told Rebekah at the birth of these twin sons? Was Isaac unaware of what we read in Romans 9:9-13, namely, that the elder would serve the younger, and that God loved Jacob but hated Esau? Was it ignorance on Isaac's part? Was it forgetfulness now that he was old? His eyesight failed. Was the process of the hardening of his arteries also at work here to cause him to forget those words of the angel to Sarah and that carnal walk of Esau? Did he forget how his own father saw to it that he would get a believing wife for him, so that now the awfulness of Esau's marriage to an unbeliever did not look so bad, because he was getting so forgetful?

Never may we take such a stand. Rebekah never hid these things from Isaac. God wanted him to know this as well as Rebekah. Together they were to bring up these sons. It was not a matter of the woman's duty. The father is the responsible one to see that his wife trains the children in the fear of God's name. As head and responsible party in the family, Isaac is not kept from this truth. No, but the Scriptures explain this act of Isaac as due to a fleshly love which he had for his eldest son in spite of what God had revealed concerning the two sons.

Isaac meant to give the whole birthright blessing to Esau and to leave Jacob out entirely! You cannot escape that truth. For when Esau later on comes and pleads with tears for a blessing, Isaac says to him, "Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?" Note that he made Jacob lord, and asks, "What shall I do to thee?" The idea is, I gave him everything, and there just is not anything to give you. This is borne out in the Hebrew of verse 39 where Isaac says to Esau, "Behold, thy dwelling shall be *away* from the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven above." His fleshly attachment to Esau moved him to want him to have it all; and his trembling so exceedingly, of which we read in verse 33, reveals that his conscience smote him. He did remember what God had said.

Nor was Rebekah moved by faith to seek the blessing for the son whom she loved. Her deception that she planned for Jacob, in order to get the blessing, taught him and encouraged him in the much deception that he practiced in later life. As the saying goes, "The apple does not fall far from the tree." Jacob did not get his "apple" of deceit and trickery from somewhere in the land of Haran. It was not that Rebekah acted in a firm conviction of that word of God about her favoured son. With her as well it was a matter of the flesh rather than of the Spirit. Jacob time and again revealed that he had the foolish notion that God needed help in fulfilling His promises. Rebekah showed that same folly here and set a bad

example for his son.

What should she have done? What would faith in that word of God, given to her before the children were born, have done? Faith would have caused her to go to Isaac, even while Esau was still there, and before he could leave on his hunt for venison, and would have reminded him of this word of God. Faith not only believes the Word of God, faith also confesses it, reminds of it, and defends it when it is brushed aside. Faith never resorts to the lie. Faith and the truth are wedded in an inseparable bond by the Spirit of God. Faith holds on to that Word, lives by it and lives for it. Faith finds no need for deception and trickery. Faith commits the whole matter to God Whose promises are true and Who is able to keep His Word without one letter of it falling to the ground. It is the flesh that finds what it thinks is the necessity of deceit and trickery. Faith is wholly divorced from the lie and wants nothing to do with it in any form.

Neither can we find any spirituality displayed by the other two members of this quartet. Esau, as we pointed out, showed no concern for God and His covenant. His flesh ruled him to choose the kind of wife that any other unbeliever would seek. Long before this he had sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; and because of this, Scripture calls him a profane man; and he is one whom God hated before he was born or had done any good or evil. We need not spend much time on him in our present consideration of the deceit in this divided family except to point out that he manifested no deception in the whole transaction. The three believers did. Esau, in this account at least, appears to be the kind out of which God could build His church.

By faith Jacob would have refused to submit to the deceit his mother suggested. He did put up a token objection based upon a fear of having his fraud exposed and of making things worse for himself. This after all was his father. Yes, Rebekah was his mother, and he would not have wanted to oppose her either. But in such situations one has no choice. For the love of God, not natural love for our parents, must rule us. And even love for Rebekah in the true sense of the word would mean that Jacob's faith would move him to remind her of God's law, and not of getting caught red-handed by his father in an act of deceit. And just as surely it would have moved him to go in to his father and remind him of what God said before the twins were born. We cannot take the position that in a covenant home, and in this time of the history of the church, that Isaac and Rebekah never told their children God's Word. They, and certainly Rebekah, did not leave Jacob in the dark about what God promised him. And since he had purchased the birthright, would he not have trusted God to give him the birthright blessing? Does faith not take hold of

God's promises and say, "God's word to me cannot fail"?

And the amazing thing — were it not for our own faith in God's Word — is that out of this trio, each working his own works of deceit, God builds His Church. What kind of material, we might be inclined to ask, is this from which to build an holy, catholic church? Why not build it from Esau and his descendants? Surely God can work conversion in him as well as he did in Saul of Tarsus who sought to destroy the church, or in an host of others who married heathen wives, and many who were forgiven for their sins of youth and kept faithful in a sanctified life in later years.

Well, the point we want to remember is that God does not build His Church out of that timber in the sense that He uses it, salvages what He can, rearranges, changes it a bit and makes it serve. God's Church always, and that holds true for Isaac, Rebekah, and Jacob as well, begins with a rebirth, begins with the implanting of something NEW in those whom He eternally chose to be His Church. And although this new man in Christ was not in all the transaction — with the one exception of Hebrews 11:20 that Isaac performed the deed he was called upon to do, namely, pronounce the blessing upon his sons and prophesy their future — that new man was there; and he is the member of God's Church and is built as the Church of Christ.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing, in us that God can use. What He uses is that which He puts in us by the Spirit of His Son. As Paul writes in Ephesians 2:10, causing the New Testament Scriptures to throw its light upon this Old Testament event, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Or again in II Corinthians

5:17, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

Parents do not give spirituality to their children. They do not endow them with faith. And the Church does not continue to grow, and our children do not follow us as pillars of the truth because of anything we handed down to them. God does not build His Church out of our children because we gave them something. Indeed, we taught them the truth and pointed out to them the way. We warned them and encouraged them. We sowed the seed. But God builds His Church. He gave the ears to hear, the mind to comprehend spiritually, the heart to embrace by faith, and behind and before it all the new life of the Church.

Yes, in divided families where there are parents who *have no faith* in God and spiritual life to give to their children, it pleases God to build His Church. He does not need a reborn parent to bring forth a reborn child. And if the parents will not sow the seed and train the child, God will see to it that they come in contact with other believing parents who, as missionaries, ministers of the Word or teachers, will cause them to become acquainted with the truth as it is in Christ.

Let there not be that deceit in us that we think that God needs our help. Let us be agreed on this one thing: God builds His Church as both the architect and builder. That is what Scripture says in Hebrews 12:2. He is the author — or beginner — and finisher of our faith. Or, if you will, Hebrews 11:10, where He is called the builder and maker of the city which hath foundation. And again, "For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things: to Whom be glory forever." Romans 11:36.

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Book Reviews

THE UNITY IN CREATION, by Russell Maatman; Dordt College Press, Sioux Center Iowa, 1978; 144 pp., paper. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

In a Foreword by Bernard Haan, President of Dordt College, this book is introduced with the following:

This work by Dr. Russell Maatman is the first to be published by the newly formed Dordt College Press. Furthermore, it is the first in a forthcoming series, "Mandate," which the Dordt College Press intends to produce within the next few years. Both the Board of Trustees and the faculty of the college are truly excited about this publishing venture. Not only is the need for Biblically-directed, Reformed publications urgent in our day, but also getting such works on the market is becoming more difficult.

The burden of this little book is not merely to show that there is a basic unity in the creation, but to demonstrate that this unity is possible and present only because God Himself is the Creator of it. In dealing with this fundamental subject the author repudiates strongly any form of evolutionism, discusses the interesting question of whether the non-Christian is able to do science, proves the orderliness of the creation from the unity of God and the Headship of Christ and discusses ways in which teachers can teach science from a Christian perspective in Grade School, Junior High, and Senior High.

We enjoyed the book and commend Dordt College for publishing it. We hope that their new publishing venture may prove to be successful. We look forward to receiving other books in this "Mandate" venture.

I have a few points of criticism, although these are not intended to detract from the general value of the book. In the first place, while the unity of the creation was the main theme of the book, it seemed to me that insufficient attention was paid to the Scriptural view of the *organic unity* in the creation, an idea which, I think, would make the author's discussion much richer. Secondly, and in connection with this, it seems to me that insufficient attention was paid to the Scriptural doctrine of sin — the effects of sin both on the creation and on man. The author repeatedly states that man is able to do science because he is a part of the creation, but stands in the creation as image bearer. While this is partly true, Scripture also teaches that man has lost the image through sin and this image is only restored by grace through Jesus Christ. In the third place, while I agree generally with the author's statements con-

cerning the ability of the unregenerate to do science, nevertheless, the distinctions between the work of the believer and the unbeliever were not always clear. This, I know, is an epistemological question too, and perhaps the author did not intend to enter into it.

There is one bad typographical error on page 83. The sentence reads: "God does exist. He was created, and He does uphold." The sentence should read: "He was not created."

The book is written so that anyone can read it. The author purposely steered away from technical language as much as possible. So we recommend the book to all our readers, but especially to those in our schools who teach science courses.

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY — AN INTRODUCTION, Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.; 464 pages, \$14.95 (cloth). (Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema)

I can best describe this book by quoting the following accurate description from the dust jacket:

"'An ideal historical theology, or even an introduction to it,' says Geoffrey Bromiley, 'lies beyond the limits of human possibility.' And he does not intend this volume to be an all-inclusive, theological study about everybody and everything. Rather, 'this work is composed for beginners, for inquirers, for those who know nothing or very little of the history of theology, but who want to know something, or something more.'

"The approach here is theological rather than strictly historical. And among the implications of this approach are the acknowledgement that God has really spoken to the church, a genuine and specific christian commitment on the part of the historical theologian, the belief that historical theology is a discipline of the church, and the view that historical theology serves the mission and ministry of the church.

"Bromiley maintains that the student learns theology best by reading theologians, not by reading about them. Thus, in selecting those theologians included in this volume, he has considered not only their representativeness in the total flow of historical theology, but also the availability of their work in English. Likewise, his bibliographies concentrate on primary sources."

This is an excellent contribution in the field of the

history of dogma. It is interestingly written and well organized. The author has achieved his purpose of writing an introductory work for beginners. This book will make an excellent addition to the libraries

of our ministers and students, and it should serve the purpose of kindling a greater interest in the study of the history of dogma, a study which, in this reviewer's opinion, is too often neglected.

NOTICE!!!

Rev. Van Overloop's mailing address in Alabama was incorrectly published in our August issue. His new address is:

Rev. R. Van Overloop
5080 Sunny Dell Drive
Hueytown, AL 35020

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 7, 1979, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. AND MRS. JOEL SUGG celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to our heavenly Father for giving us God-fearing parents to bring us up in the admonition of the Lord.

"This is the Lord's doing, it is marvelous in our eyes." (Psalm 118:23).

We pray He will continue to bless them in their years ahead together.

Their children and their grand-daughter
Allan and Cassy Carter
Elisa Sugg
Emily Rose
Cari
John
Paul
Christiana
Monica

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Hull (IA) Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express their sincere sympathy to Mr. Gerb De Jong and son, Todd, in the loss of their wife and mother, BARB DE JONG.

May our heavenly Father strengthen them by His Spirit and Word. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Psalm 55:22.)

Brenda Bylsma, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society "Ruth", of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Walker, MI), expresses their sincere sympathy to their fellow member, Mrs. J. Bomers, in the sudden death of her husband, MR. JAY BOMERS.

May she and her children "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." (Psalm 37:5).

Mr. J. Huiskens, Vice Pres.
Mrs. P. Zandstra, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Junior Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Walker, MI), expresses sympathy to its members, Mr. and Mrs. Phil Baas and to Mr. and Mrs. John Schipper in the sudden death of their father, MR. A. JAY BOMERS.

"Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say on the Lord." (Psalm 27:14).

Mr. Larry Meulenberg, Vice Pres.
Mrs. Daniel Schimmel, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

On July 27, 1979, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our beloved husband, father and grandfather, JAY BOMERS, at the age of 55 years.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass." (Psalm 37:5).

Mrs. Jay Bomers
Mr. and Mrs. William Huber
Heidi, Billy, Chad
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Bomers
Carli, Jessica
Mr. and Mrs. John Schipper
Angela, Nathaniel
Mr. and Mrs. Phil Baas
Lisa
Tim Bomers
Brenda Bomers

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council and the congregation of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church (Grandville, MI), express sincere sympathy to one of their fellow elders, Arie Griffioen, in the death of his brother, and to their former pastor and his wife, Rev. and Mrs. H. Veldman in the loss of their brother-in-law, MR. ALEX GRIFFIOEN.

We are assured that they, and all of God's people will find comfort in the Word of God as found in Romans 8:39, 40. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is Christ Jesus our Lord."

Rev. M. De Vries, Pres.
Phil Lotterman, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church expresses Christian sympathy to Mrs. Jay Bomers and her family in the recent death of her husband, their father, and our fellow officebearer, ELDER JAY BOMERS. May the family and we find comfort in the fact that God is wise, that he doeth all things well and in his own time. May we and they trust Him knowing that "The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy." (Psalm 33:18).

John Buiter, Vice-President
Jon Huiskens, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church extends its heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Hilbert Kuiper in the death of her sister, MRS. SAM ALTENA.

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." (John 11:26).

Rev. Gise Van Baren, Pres.
Mrs. Phil Dykstra, Ass't. Sec'y.

News From Our Churches

There is quite a bit of news concerning calls extended and trios formed. A trio for home missionary to serve in the northwestern Washington area consists of Rev. Arie den Hartog, Rev. James Slopsema, and Rev. Jason Kortering. Lynden, Washington is the calling church. From a duo of Rev. den Hartog and Rev. Bernard Woudenberg, our Hudsonville Church extended a call to Rev. den Hartog to serve as minister-on-loan to Christchurch, New Zealand, Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Some information concerning Rev. den Hartog's call is found in a newsletter attached to Hudsonville's bulletin. The church at Christchurch, New Zealand specifically and urgently requested the loan of one of our ministers for a period of not less than three years. They desired this assistance in order that such a man could serve in preaching, pastoral labors, and in giving some basic instruction to several of their young men who aspire to the ministry. Our Synod of 1979 has agreed to provide that assistance and appointed the Hudsonville congregation to be the calling church for such a man.

Concerning the O. P. church of New Zealand, it may be pointed out that they have no relationship to the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches of our country. The denomination consists of three or four small churches. The Christchurch congregation is very active, supporting a bookshop, a tape library, and is responsible for printing their denominational magazine, *The Gospel Witness*.

Our Synod decided that this Minister-on-loan "have the status of associate pastor of the calling church, that accordingly he also be under the supervision and discipline of his home consistory . . . ultimate responsibility for the supervision of this minister and responsibility for discipline in case of deviation in doctrine and walk rests solely with the calling consistory."

The Synod further decided: "that the original term of service shall be three years. This shall be subject to renewal for periods of two years, with the consent of the minister concerned, at the discretion of the calling church, to whom the request of the Christchurch Session (consistory) shall be directed." Additional details on this decision will soon be available in the 1979 *Acts of Synod*.

Candidate Ronald Cammenga was called to serve at our Hull, Iowa church and candidate Carl Haak was called to serve our Southeast Church in Grand Rapids.

Rev. Marvin Kamps has declined the call extended to him by our church in Loveland, Colorado. From a trio of Rev. David Engelsma, candidate Ronald Hanko, and Rev. Kortering, Loveland has extended a call to Rev. Kortering.

Rev. and Mrs. Robert Harbach planned to leave Victoria, B.C. on July 30. Rev. Harbach served our churches as home missionary in Victoria for the past several years. Rev. Harbach observed his 65th birthday on July 29 and has now retired from the active ministry.

Our Doon, Iowa church has formed a trio from which to call a missionary to Singapore. The trio consists of Rev. den Hartog, Rev. Richard Flikkema, and Rev. Meindert Joostens. There has been some discussion as to whether this is a proper trio. Neither Rev. Flikkema nor Rev. Joostens have served their respective congregations for more than two years. The decision of our churches pertaining to Article 5 of our Church Order states that ministers who have not served their present congregations two years not be placed on nomination unless "there be preponderant considerations." The question is whether or not "preponderant considerations" exist.

Hope Church in Walker, Michigan has extended a call to Rev. Kortering. Their trio also included Rev. den Hartog and Rev. Kuiper. From a trio of Rev. den Hartog, Candidate Steven Hauck, and Rev. Woudenberg, Hope extended a call to candidate Hauck to labor as home missionary in the Charlotte - Lansing, Michigan area.

After receiving reports from Jamaica that a severe storm had struck the island, emissaries from our churches were sent to the island to assist the churches and their members there. An immense amount of rain had fallen in a short while, resulting in a loss of animals, damage to fields, crops, fishing equipment, etc. Rev. Woudenberg, Mr. C. Prince, and two deacons from Hudsonville, T. Miedema and M. Lubbers made the trip the first week in August. About 3,000 lbs. of clothing was distributed. The deacons also disbursed money in cases where they saw immediate need for food or medical attention. The deacons of Hudsonville will continue to work in relieving this situation with the financial assistance from the special offerings received in our churches for this purpose.

K.G.V.