

The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

God's word is more unalterable than the law of the Medes and Persians and mountains of brass. Christ Himself was foreordained before the foundation of the world. All the people of God were chosen in Him before the foundation of the universe. Every event in history, every circumstance in the church is fixed in God's preordination of whatsoever comes to pass. All things were taken into account and settled, not on second thought in the fleeting seconds of time, but in the decrees of eternity.

See God's Eternally Founded Word

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MEDITATION

The Son of God
Our Savior

Rev. C. Hanko

Ques. 29. Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is Savior?

Ans. Because he saveth us, and delivereth us from our sins; and likewise, because we ought not to seek, neither can find salvation in any other.

Ques. 30. Do such then believe in Jesus the only Savior, who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else?

Ans. They do not; for though they boast in words, yet in deeds they deny Jesus the only deliverer and Savior: for one of these two things must be true, that either Jesus is not a complete Savior; or that they, who by a true faith receive their Savior, must find all things in him necessary to their salvation.

Amazing Savior!

In this Lord's Day our fathers concentrate their attention on the first three words of the second article of our Apostolic Creed, "And in Jesus." The confession we make here is, "I believe in Jesus." Our Catechism proceeds very slowly here, taking each name of the Savior separately, in order to show the significance and importance of each name. Therefore the first name that is discussed is Jesus' personal name, which He received at His birth, by which He was known and addressed by His family and acquaintances. He is Jesus.

What makes this name so very important is the fact that, not His parents, but God determined what He should be called. The angel Gabriel informed Mary, "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS" (Luke 1:31). Later Joseph was also informed that Mary had conceived a child by the Holy Spirit, and he was instructed, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Joseph and Mary faithfully carried out this mandate, for in Luke 2:21 we read, "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb."

This name is so very rich in meaning. The first part "JE" refers to Jehovah, the almighty, unchangeable God Who keeps covenant forever. The second part "SUS" means "saves" or "salvation." Thus the name means that the almighty, unchangeable, covenant God saves His people from their sins in the person of Jesus.

What an amazing name! This is especially true because the Scriptures always teach us that salvation is of the Lord. The Psalmist sang of Jehovah as his Rock, and Fortress, and Deliverer (Psalm 18:2). Through the prophet Isaiah Jehovah declares, "I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no savior" (Isaiah 43:11). Therefore this name declares to us that Jesus is none other than the Son of God, even as Gabriel had promised to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). And as the angel told Joseph in a dream, the Scriptures were being fulfilled, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is being interpreted, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). The expectation of the church of the shadows was that the Messiah would be none other than God Himself. Therefore when Nathanael met Jesus he cried out in adoration, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God: thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49). Peter later confesses

as spokesman for the other disciples, "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:69). And after the resurrection Thomas addresses Him as "My Lord and my God." How very important it is that we maintain that God came to tabernacle among men. God was in the womb of Mary, lay in the manger of a cattle stall, walked and taught and showed His power among us, shed His own blood on the cross, entered into our death to conquer death and the grave and to bring us into eternal, heavenly fellowship with Him in glory. Only God could bear the burden of wrath against our sins, deliver us from it, and merit for us a place with Him in His glorious kingdom.

Yet at the same time, the name Jesus is such a lowly name. It expresses so completely the fact that He became like unto us in all things, sin excluded. Evidently His parents, brothers and sisters, and disciples referred to Him as Joshua, a name that was by no means uncommon among the Jews of the old dispensation. This name appears sometimes as Isaiah or Hosea, but always expresses the idea that salvation belongs to the Lord. Jesus became like unto us, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. He was born of Adam. He came forth from the loins of Abraham, out of the tribe of Judah, and from the royal line of David. He was born in abject poverty as the poorest of the poor. From the moment that He was born, He was rejected and hunted like a beast of the forest. He came unto His own affairs, to which He had a rightful claim, and yet His own people did not receive Him. Scornfully He was referred to as "Jesus of Nazareth," since no one expected any good to come from Galilee. He was the Man of Sorrows, the suffering Servant of God. Joshua, who led Israel into the promised land, was His type. The Joshua who accompanied the Jews back to Jerusalem from Babylon, as their highpriest was a predecessor, announcing His coming. The prophets, such as Isaiah and Hosea, saw in Him the realization of all their prophecies. He was the Great Servant in God's House, prepared from eternity, as our eternal Prophet, our exalted Highpriest, and our Glorious King, Who through the way of deepest humility and suffering enters into His glory.

At the same time, Jesus is righteous man. He never had had any sin. Because He had no earthly father, the guilt of Adam's sin could not be reckoned to Him. Therefore also the Holy Spirit could preserve Him from sin in the womb of Mary. The Holy Spirit came upon Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her during the nine months of her pregnancy, preserving her offspring from her depravity and the depravity of the human race. Jesus could challenge the whole world to try to find sin in Him. The whole world tried its utmost to do just that.

Annas, Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, Herod, and Pilate strove together to expose just one evil in Him, in order that they could justly condemn Him to death. The harder they tried the more convincingly they proved that no sin could be found in Him. Only then did God take His spotless Lamb and offer Him as a sacrifice for our sins on the accursed tree.

Amazing Name! Wonderful Savior! God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, never reckoning our sins against us. There is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved!

The Only, Complete Savior!

During His earthly ministry Jesus openly declared that, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32,33). The obvious implication is that there is only a twofold possibility, we either confess Jesus as our Savior, or we deny Him. A third possibility, that of neutrality, is ruled out. Our Catechism warns us in no uncertain terms against those who deny Jesus. There are those who deny Him outright; unbelievers who want no part with the Savior, and who possibly even curse His holy Name at every opportunity. But there are also so very many who profess to believe in Jesus, yet in reality deny Him. This Lord's Day refers to those who seek their salvation and welfare of saints. This refers to members of the Roman Catholic Church who still today worship mother Mary and seek the help of saints in heaven to make their appeals to God. Moreover, the fathers refer to those who seek their salvation and welfare in themselves or somewhere else. There were the Pharisees of Jesus' day who professed to be sons of Moses and very religious, far above the average Jew, who also professed to be expecting a Messiah, yet who openly rejected Jesus because He condemned them in their self-righteousness. There is the Roman Catholic heresy, still prevalent today, that teaches that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross was not sufficient to atone for our sins, but must be supplemented by a repeated sacrifice in the mass. And there are those who would maintain that Christ did not actually atone for sin, but only made salvation possible for all men by His death on the cross. He opened the way of escape, but man must still accept that way of escape in order to be saved. Our Catechism points out to us that a partial Savior is no Savior at all. Either Jesus completely saves, or He failed to save. Either we believe in Him as our only and complete Savior, or we make ourselves guilty of denying Him. All those who deny Him receive this condemning testimony from the Lord Himself, that He declares before His Father in heaven: "I know them not." Jesus, Who stands

before the Father in the innermost sanctuary of the heavens declares as Highpriest of His people: "I never knew them. Thou hast not given them to Me. My blood was not shed for them. I never gave them My grace and Spirit. They believe not because they are not of My sheep. They justly perish in their sins." Those who deny Jesus reject Him in unbelief and experience already in this life the condemning testimony of the Spirit. For whosoever believeth not the Son of man, upon him abideth the wrath of God.

On the other hand, those who by God's grace confess that, "I am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ," also receive this assurance that Christ claims them as His sheep and intercedes for them before the throne of God.

Blessed Confession: I believe in Jesus!

"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer with him; we shall also reign with Him" (II Timothy 2:11,12). Often the saints of the early church must have repeated these reassuring words to each other on sick beds, in times of distress, in prison, or even in the face of death. We belong! We belong to Jesus, because God gave us to Him, has chosen us in Him even from eternity. We are members of His body, so that when He died the accursed death of the cross to atone for our sins we died, when He arose we arose, when He went to be seated at the right hand of God in glory, we were included in Him. Therefore He now pleads for us before the face of the Father, even night and day presenting our needs and asking for blessings on the basis of His atoning work. The Father hears the Son always, and Christ Jesus pours out every blessing for body and soul, for time and for eternity, according to our every need. We are in the palm of Father's hand, under His watchful eye, so that His ear is always attentive even to our weakest sigh. We know that God is for us, and nothing can be against us. The cross we bear is part of the sufferings of Christ, which God uses to prepare us for glory. In the midst of severest trials we can still say, "More than Conquerors are we!" Christ lives, and we shall live with Him in His glory!

For at the name of JESUS every knee must bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father (Philippians 2:10,11). Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings, over all the creatures of heaven and earth for our sakes, even to carry out our salvation. He reigns supreme over all. Soon He will return to establish His kingdom in the new creation, and we shall live and reign with Him forever, that all praise may arise from our hearts and lips unto all eternity, and God may be all in ALL.

EDITORIALS

Pseudo-Westminster

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Several months ago I called attention in these columns to a proposed new chapter which the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia wanted to add to the Westminster Confession of Faith, one of the three creeds (along with the Larger and the Shorter Catechisms) which Presbyterian churches hold in common. This was to be Chapter XXXIV of the Confession, under the heading "Of the Offer of the Gospel and God's Grace Therein." At the time we quoted the entire proposed addition and gave a few general comments by way of initial criticism, promising to write more later. Since that first editorial other things required editorial attention, and so we postponed further comments. Meanwhile, we have received word that the proposed new chapter has been approved and has become part of the PRC's creed. This simply means that the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia has confessionally separated itself from all other Presbyterians and no longer holds the Westminster Confession of Faith, but its own private creed. This is the more true in the light of the nature of this new chapter, which conflicts with the spirit and letter of the Westminster Confession. The PRC of Australia now has a Pseudo-Westminster Confession.

I am sorry about this. When I first became acquainted some years ago with the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia and with the liberalizing trend toward a united church among the mainline denominations down under, I had high hopes that here was a group of churches which was willing to buck the modern trends and was striving to be uncompromisingly Presbyterian. This was one of the reasons, too, why I was deeply disappointed when, shortly before our visit to Australia, they so abruptly and unjustifiably decided not to receive and to confer with us. On our part, we are always willing and eager to have contact and fellowship with those who show themselves to be genuinely and sincerely concerned about being uncompromisingly Reformed or Presbyterian. In such a case there may be differences, but these can then be discussed in an atmosphere of mutual trust. And differences may even persist and be of such a kind that a full sister church relationship

cannot properly be established; but even this does not preclude contact and limited fellowship and the further exploring of differences on the basis of a mutual commitment to the Reformed faith. But when a church begins to add to the creeds on its own hook, so to speak, it goes the way of individualism and separatism.

But the situation is even worse. For by this addition to the creed the PRC of Australia has officially and creedally committed itself to an intrinsically non-Presbyterian, Arminian doctrine. As long as this doctrine of the free offer was not made into an official confession of the church, there was at least hope of being Presbyterian. It was at least possible to militate against the doctrine of the free offer within the PRC. Now this is impossible. The doctrine is binding. It is not open to question, not subject to debate and negative discussion. This is sad. It simply means that with respect to the crucial matters involved, matters of fundamental Reformed doctrines, the doctrines of grace, the Five Points of Calvinism, the Presbyterian Reformed Church has chosen to be conservatively evangelical. It has chosen really to join the hordes of evangelical churches which are content to be somewhat conservative rather than liberal, fundamentalist rather than modernist. And if Presbyterian or Reformed churches (and people) deny or lose their distinctive Reformed (Presbyterian) character, they deny or lose their very right of existence. When I read this article on the offer of the gospel, I am inclined to ask, "Is this why the Presbyterian Reformed Church went down the hard road of separate denominational existence? It isn't worth the struggle and the sacrifice." And do not forget, by the way, that if you check back into the history of the mainline denominations which have today become completely modernist, you will find that their present-day liberalism had its beginnings in Arminianism.

And now let us consider the new chapter. I do not intend to go into great detail and to consider all the references to Scripture which were added to the chapter. This would probably entail writing a book

longer than that of the Rev. Stebbins, whose *Christ Freely Offered* was the study behind this new chapter. I merely intend to offer some criticism of the chapter itself.

First of all, I have already remarked that the chapter is out of place in the Westminster. If a chapter on the subject of the preaching of the gospel were to be added, it should not have been added at the very end, following the doctrine of the last things. This makes a patchwork out of the Confession. Such an addition does not indicate much respect for the Confession and its careful organization and pattern. Perhaps the Westminster Confession is too silent on the subject of the preaching of the gospel. Our Reformed creeds as a whole have much more to say on the subject. Especially the Canons offer significant instruction on the subject of the preaching of the gospel in all five heads of doctrine. Nevertheless, I would suggest that if a chapter on the preaching of the Word were to be inserted in the Westminster Confession, the logical place would be immediately before Chapter XXVII, on the Sacraments. Then, at least, all the means of grace would be treated together.

In the second place, I characterized this chapter as one of the slickest statements of two-track theology that I have seen in a long time; and I stated that it outdistances the Christian Reformed Three Points and the Murray-Stonehouse presentation. Let me illustrate this contention.

First of all, the chapter is totally lacking in clear definition of what is supposed to be the key concept of the entire chapter: the offer of the gospel. It speaks of God's "free offer of full salvation to all sinners" (pgph. 1), of "this offer of life and salvation unto sinners in the administration of the covenant of grace" (pgph. 2), of "the free offer of the gospel" and "this most gracious offer" (pgph. 4), and of the church's warrant "to offer salvation to men" (pgph. 6). And yet nowhere does the chapter hint at a definition of "offer" or make any kind of statement explaining this important concept. Still more, it confuses this general offer of salvation with a particular promise, as though offer and promise are the same and as though both are general. For in paragraph 1 it speaks of "God's earnest entreaty to be reconciled to Him and His free offer of full salvation to all sinners" and then immediately adds: "whereby He promises that whosoever truly repents of his sin and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish but have eternal life." This plainly confuses the concepts *offer* and *promise*, while the two are readily distinguishable and differ widely. One of the chief differences is that a promise is strictly and only dependent for its fulfillment on the one who promises, while an offer is in its very nature dependent

on the acceptance or rejection of the offered good by those to whom the offer is made. Further, even in the form in which the promise is stated in paragraph 1, that promise is strictly particular. It is not a promise that all sinners shall (or may) not perish but have eternal life, but a promise that "*whosoever truly repents of his sin and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish but have eternal life.*" And note that a statement like this is not conditional; it simply identifies the heirs or recipients of the promise by their spiritual marks: they are those who repent and believe.

This is a fundamental mistake in this chapter. A confessional statement should be clear and well defined, especially in our day. Such clarity is generally characteristic of the Westminster Confession, but this new chapter is pseudo-Westminster even in this regard.

Secondly, the chapter is characterized by an ambivalence and ambiguity throughout which is due to the fact that it jumps back and forth from the Reformed to the Arminian track constantly.

Paragraph 1 begins on the Reformed track. Notice: "It pleased God to commit to the church the preaching of the gospel wherein the whole counsel of God, including the accursed state of man on account of sin, the eternal plan of redemption, the redeeming work of Christ for sinners, and the effectual application by the Holy Spirit of the benefits of His death, is to be preached to all men without distinction, together with the solemn command to repent and believe." Then we jump to the Arminian track: "God's earnest entreaty to be reconciled to Him and His free offer of full salvation to all sinners." And then we jump back once more to the Reformed track when the paragraph makes reference to the particular promise, as noted above. Note also, by the way, that throughout the chapter there is a wavering at crucial points with respect to definite atonement. True, paragraph 2 speaks clear language on this score. It speaks of "all the saving benefits which Christ has purchased for them (the elect) by His death." And it speaks of the fact that God sent Christ "effectually to redeem all those and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation." But paragraph 1 speaks vaguely of "the redeeming work of Christ for sinners," leaving those "sinners" unspecified. And paragraph 3 states that "redemption has been purchased certainly for each who will receive it." The former expression is at best vague, and the latter expression as a specification of the atonement is downright false; it characterizes the heirs of redemption in a manner in which any Arminian would do so. But a Reformed confession, especially when it is going to set forth an allegedly *Reformed* doctrine of the free offer, a Westminster doctrine, ought to be at

pains to speak very specific language which leaves not a hair's breadth of an opening for the Arminian doctrine of general atonement. But in this regard again, we have two-track, pseudo-Westminster theology.

Paragraph 2 is a classic case of two-track theology. For the most part it speaks language to which any Reformed man will say "Amen." It speaks thoroughly Reformed language about the gathering of the elect, about the conferring of the benefits of salvation upon them, and about definite atonement. But the paragraph does not begin on this Reformed track. It begins on the Arminian track with the following language: "The Holy Spirit employs this offer of life and salvation unto sinners. . . ."

In paragraph 3 the two-track theology is again evident. This paragraph begins by speaking the same Reformed language as does Canons III, IV/A/8: "Yet as many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called. . . ." But then it again switches to the Arminian track. It does so, first, by giving as a reason the following: "for redemption has been purchased certainly for each who will receive it," — a statement to which we have already called attention. And then it proceeds to corrupt in typical Arminian fashion the teaching of Ezekiel 18:23 and 33:11, as follows: "and not only that but God has declared most sincerely and truly by an oath in His Word that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but rather it is His nature to delight that those who are called should come to Him in repentance and faith." The passages teach a particular gospel, as Calvin already made plain. God does not desire the death of *the wicked who turns*. He delights in the life of the wicked *inasmuch as He delights in their repentance*. But this paragraph teaches that God delights in the

life and the repentance of all who are called.

In paragraph 4 the cat finally comes out of the bag. Behind all this two-track theology is a form of common grace. "Therefore" — and notice that this "therefore" refers to what has just been said concerning God's having "no pleasure in the death of the wicked but rather it is His nature to delight that those who are called should come to Him in repentance and faith" — "Therefore the free offer of the gospel also serves to manifest the goodness of God, particularly His kindness and longsuffering in extending to sinners a season of grace." In vain does this paragraph try to get back on the Reformed track by speaking of God's holiness and righteousness and of the wickedness of the unbeliever.

The result of all this is that in paragraph 6 this new chapter speaks of the church's commission as its "warrant to offer salvation to men." Again it speaks, without limitation, of God's having "no pleasure in the death of the wicked." At the same time, the paragraph strives to leave the impression of being Reformed by speaking of the fact that "It is to the praise of the glory of God's grace or justice that His word shall accomplish that which He pleases."

The whole effect of a chapter like this is confused and confusing. The final result is that the church which follows its teachings will run on the Arminian track, not the Reformed track. For to run on both tracks is impossible. And the result, therefore, will be that the pure preaching of the gospel will be corrupted.

This is the first time, to my knowledge, that a Reformed or Presbyterian denomination has officially elevated the error of the free offer to confessional status and has actually inserted it in a creed. How sad!

An Endorsement and a Review

We do not often carry book reviews in the editorial department. But the review below, by Rev. C. Hanko, is worthy of special attention because, in my opinion, the book reviewed is worthy of special attention.

Having read the book myself, both in Dutch and in English, I want to endorse Rev. Hanko's review and thereby endorse the novel.

This was a very popular story in the Netherlands, though the story came from an American, a transplanted Hollander. The Dutch edition went through eleven printings. This is understandable: the story is about mystical Zeelanders and would be of interest to Dutch readers.

But there is no reason why interest in the book

should be limited to Dutchmen. The story itself is very interesting and has much human appeal. And the style is interesting. Nor, by the way, is it spoiled at all by the excellent translation. When one reads the book in English, there are very few points at which one would even guess that it is a translation.

We live in a day when there is much literary trash on the market, stuff that we do not care to have in our homes. Here is a good Christian story. You need not hesitate to have your teenagers read it. They should find the story captivating. I hope that Paideia Press will find a good market for the story and that they will find it possible to furnish more such books.

Buy the book, and *see for yourself*.

HE GATHERS THE LAMBS, Cornelius Lambregtse (translated by Harry der Nederlanden); Paideia Press, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada; 290 pp., \$7.95 (cloth). (Reviewed by Rev. C. Hanko)

This is a recent translation of a book that appeared in the Dutch under the title *In Zijn Arm De Lammeren*. Those who have read the book in the Dutch will also enjoy the English translation. Those who are interested in the background of our forefathers in the Netherlands will also find a keen delight in the descriptions of that part of the Netherlands that belongs to the province of Zeeland. One enjoys the simple, hand-to-mouth existence of the pious Weststrate family, can appreciate their sincere godly walk and take interest in their peculiar religious customs and practices. It is a pleasure to see the main character, Fransje, develop into a four year old, as the author tells us of his many questions and

cares, and describes the manner in which God is preparing him for an early departure from this world to be gathered into the arms of the Good Shepherd. Especially those who have experienced the loss of a child will realize that here a father is giving expression to his own bitter fears and sorrows at the loss of a small child, for, as the author tells us in the dedication, this book is written, "In precious memory of my only son Calvin John who at the age of three years and seven months had finished his earthly sojourn and on the day of his departure said: 'I am going home to Jesus. Don't cry, Daddy.'"

Although the religious background of the Weststrate family is different from that of most of us who are of Dutch parentage, we can appreciate the sincere, spiritual devotion of this family and its friends. The book is edifying, as well as enjoyable reading. We are thankful for the English translation and urge those interested to read it.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Galatians

by Rev. G. Lubbers

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT — Continued (Gal. 5:22-24)

However, here in this verse we are dealing with "longsuffering" as God gives this in sovereign mercy as a fruit of the Spirit in our lives, to fulfill the Law and thus walk in spiritual freedom of adopted sons in the light. In this "longsuffering" which is manifested in the saints, we have that law, which in one word is, "love the neighbor as ourselves," being fulfilled in the midst of all kinds of cruel opposition and duress.

There is much longsuffering required to live in an evil world that lies in darkness, but there is ever the need of being longsuffering in the midst of the imperfect saints, of which we are a fellow-saint, and that, too, very sinful and imperfect. Shall we truly walk worthy of the efficacious calling wherewith we have been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light, then we must have the fruit of the Spirit

which is called longsuffering. This is evident from Ephesians 4:2 where longsuffering is a walking worthily of our christian, upward calling in Christ Jesus. Here Paul connects longsuffering with the other virtues of "all lowliness of mind and meekness." The longsuffering christian is basically very lowly and humble *before God!* He is also very meek and looks for the help and final vindication of God Himself (I Pet. 5:5,6). The fruit of the Spirit in the longsuffering saint is that he in profound thankfulness to God for his efficacious calling (I Cor. 1:26-31) now manifests himself very longsuffering over his erring and often irritating brother or sister in Christ. It is the prayerful and constant and spiritual attempt to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:4). It is the manifestation of love as the bond of perfection. Longsuffering is God's energy in us whereby we work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12, 13). For then we imitate God

in His longsuffering love to His own elect who cry unto Him day and night, and whom He speedily hears! This is the love which suffers long and is full of kind usefulness in God's church. It is interesting and also rather sobering to notice that in the list of virtues of *love*, which excels all knowledge and wisdom of men and angels, longsuffering is the first fruit mentioned as operating-love in the imperfect body of Christ (I Cor. 13:4). It leads the list also here in the practical demonstration of love to the brother, upholding this imperfect son of God, in tender affection, which is slow to wrath and kind!

The second perfection (fruit) of the Spirit here is called *gentleness*! The Greek term is *chrestotees*. This means: usefulness of persons to others. The KJV translates this noun: gentleness, mild of disposition. In other New Testament passages the translation is: kindness (II Cor. 6:6; Eph. 2:7; Col. 3:12; Titus 3:4). Here the term has the meaning of tender affection and beneficence. The Holland S. Vert. renders this term throughout by the very expressive *goedetierenheid*, which is akin to the English: bowels of yearning mercy, mercy for the helpless and the wayward children of God. The German translation of Luther gives the term *Freundlichkeit*, that is, friendliness. That seems to be the contextual meaning in Colossians 3:12 where the term "kindness" is connected with friendliness, bowels of mercy, inner, deep, spiritual compassion and understanding. Here blooms the precious flower of heavenly fragrance in the garden of the great Husbandman, Who would have much fruit in our lives (John 15:8). Is He not glorified in our bearing much fruit?

It should be remembered that this kindness (gentleness) is, first of all, in God, as the eternal perfection of His sovereign will, and that, in His outgoing works in Christ, it is the manifestation of the superabundant riches of God's grace, now and in the ages to come (Eph. 2:7). But, secondly, this gentleness is also a gift of God to us by the Spirit of Christ, so that we are imitators of God as dear children. When it is the fruit of the Spirit, it is a fruit of the Vine in us, because the Spirit takes it out of Christ and gives it to us (John 16:15). Perhaps we may say that this "kindness" is the spiritual-psychological impulse of being long suffering. Kindness is the root, and longsuffering is the fruit. Surely, it should be obvious that there is not a law against such kindness, for it is the fulfilment of the whole law. Here we see men and women "under grace" and, therefore, free in the Lord.

The third perfection mentioned in this second triad is: *goodness*. It ought to be rather obvious that goodness (*agathosune*) is the abiding fountain of all of both the gentleness and longsuffering in our Spirit-led lives. The Spirit joins these together in such

a way that by the *goodness* of our hearts we manifest bowels of mercy and patient longsuffering toward our neighbor. Only thus do we suffer long with him as God does with all His children. It is remarkable that Paul writes in Romans 15:14 that these Christians there are "full of goodness." Because of this goodness the Romans are filled with all knowledge to admonish each other. This requires much longsuffering, as Paul admonishes Timothy (II Tim. 4:2b). From the fountain of goodness, in the bowels of mercy, Christians admonish each other in great longsuffering. What a beautiful triad of graces, fruit of the Spirit in the adopted sons, who cry Abba Father! Now they will not consume each other any longer (Gal. 5:15).

We still have one more triad of graces to consider. These too are fruits of the Spirit. They are: *faith*, *meekness*, *temperance*.

The term "faith" (*pistis*) seems at first glance not to fit in this triad. The term *pistis* is predominantly a New Testament term. It occurs no fewer than some two hundred thirty-nine (239) times in the New Testament Scriptures. Paul states rather clearly in Galatians 3:23 that, in the fulness of times, "faith came." The whole Christ in all His rich and law-fulfilling grace is now set before us in the preaching, evidently set forth in the preaching of the Cross (Gal. 3:1,2). Paul uses the term "faith" some twenty-one (21) times in Galatians. And it is then ever used in the sense of justifying-faith, or, more exactly, the faith by which God justifies us in Christ's merits. Thus we are righteous before God and heirs of eternal life (Gal. 2:19-21; 3:5,6). Yes, indeed, it is also the faith which works by love, and by which we expect the hope of justification in the day when all shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ (Gal. 5:2-5). It is by faith that we keep the law of God: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. This faith is both justifying and sanctifying in the Holy Spirit.

However, a term must be explained in the light of the immediate context. That is very important here in the context of the entire triple triad of virtues. Contextually the term "faith" must mean: the loving *trust* and confidence which we have in our fellow-saint, who has but a small beginning of the perfect and new obedience. Here is a "faith" which is the fruit of love; it is energized by love. It is a living and not a dead faith. Yes, it is a faith which believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things, and in believing trust covers a multitude of sins (I Cor. 13:7; Prov. 10:12; I Peter 4:8). In this faith we recognize the fervent love and trust of those, who have their souls purified in the truth, and thus love each other with fervent love (I Pet. 1:22). Here is a love and trust which excels all knowledge, even the giving of our bodies to be burned, as martyrs who have not love. It is, once more, the infallible earmark of true

discipleship! (John 13:35)

The second term in this triad is "meekness" (*praoutees*). This is truly a virtue in which love is most beautifully and manifestly set forth in our lives. It is in meekness that we have another aspect of love, which is the fulfilment of the whole law. Here is love as it comes in contact with all the brethren and with all who are outside of the communion of saints (Titus 3:2). For the sons of Sarah, who are born from heaven, are the meek who shall inherit the earth (Ps. 37:11; Matt. 5:5). And "meekness" is one of the choicest fruits of the Spirit in our life. For meekness is another aspect of love, which is the fulfilling of the whole law in one word. If ever there is a man who does not bite and devour his neighbor, it is the meek man. He has learned to roll his burden upon the LORD, not to fret or be envious of his neighbor who seems to prosper while he walks in iniquity, but to wait patiently for the Lord as the righteous judge to vindicate his cause (Ps. 37:1-6). Here we find a man who had learned the deep secret of God in the midst of the raging storms. He has a healthy soul and a victorious stance in the midst of troubles that come upon him. He is taught of God, and is guided in his judgment. A meek man is strong, and he stands in his position like the rock of Gibraltar. In Ephesians 4:1,2 Paul connects this meekness with "lowlimindedness." A little study of the Greek word for lowlimindedness, which is *tapenophrosunees*, shows that it is basically a being humble (near the earth) *before God!* God alone is great for the lowly man, who is the meek man. He

in the greatness of His justice and power takes up the cause of the afflicted, and casts the proud down, so that his place will be found no more (Ps. 37:11; 76:9; 147:16). The meek man waits for the LORD to avenge. Such meekness we see in Moses, who gave the matter of Miriam's accusation over to the Lord, as did Christ at the Cross, in the highest sense. The Son of God, while he learned obedience from that which he suffered, was meek and lowly in heart, and gave it over into the hands of God. When He was reviled he reviled not again (Num. 12:3; Matt. 11:29; I Pet. 3:13-17) Here in this meekness we see faith as it conquers the world. Abel lies dead in his blood; it was the blood of a meek man, who shall inherit the world! Here we see men and women of whom the world was not worthy (Heb. 11:32-39).

Let it be underscored that we see in these last three, as in all the other triads, a threefold strand which cannot be broken. We hope to see this once more when we consider the third of these christian graces, fruits of the Spirit in our life. This fruit too is for those who are legally sons of adoption, born from above, the children of the free-woman, Sarah. The Fruit of "temperance" is not given by the Spirit, is not wrought in the hearts of the reprobate unbelievers in the world, and who are not drawn by irresistible grace (John 6:44). Such have not the Spirit and are none of Christ, and, therefore, are not Abraham's seed. For this "temperance" is a beautiful christian grace which is qualitatively different from all worldly, natural self-control.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

That Troublesome and Sinful Triangle

Rev. John A. Heys

Try to appreciate Jacob's embarrassment and pathetic situation after Laban had mocked him by having a big feast for his wedding with Rachel only to find that he had taken Leah into his tent that night. Well could he feel that he was the laughingstock of the whole neighborhood. All knew that he loved

Rachel and that he had worked seven years for her. The great love that he had for Rachel could not be hidden from anyone in Haran. And to Laban's shame is the fact that after the seven years he did not give Jacob his daughter Rachel, but Jacob had to ask for her even after he had worked hard for seven long

years for her. And when we read that they seemed as only a few days, so great was his love, it certainly means that more than the family of Laban were aware of so great a love. And how sheepishly Jacob must have come out of his tent to confront his father-in-law that morning. How could he face the whole neighborhood?

Let us not excuse Leah for her trickery. She undoubtedly loved Jacob and was happy to be married to him. But that does not make her part in the deception right. He who deceived his father is now deceived by his father-in-law and uncle, and by the woman he had taken as his wife under the impression that she was her sister. And undoubtedly Jacob was by God reminded in this of his own deception before his blind father. That, at least, seems the best way to explain his mild attack upon his deceptive father-in-law. "What is this that thou hast done to me? Did I not serve thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?" can hardly be called a strong rebuke. One would expect some rather nasty name-calling and a stronger flare of temper and anger than that.

Crafty Laban suggests seven more years; and Jacob in that great love agrees. He fills his week with Leah — and some "honeymoon" that must have been! Jacob's mind throughout that week is upon Rachel and not upon Leah, while he lived with her as his wife. The seven years may have seemed like a few days; but this week seemed like seven years as he looked forward to getting Rachel as his wife. And when Leah's week was up, Jacob did get Rachel. That must be the meaning. He did not have to work another seven years before he could take her into his tent. The account of the children born to Leah and Rachel makes that impossible. Jacob worked for Laban six years after the second seven for Rachel were over, and the ages of the children — particularly Joseph's age in connection with Benjamin's — makes it plain that Rachel got many of these children, and so did Leah, before the last six years of work for Laban. When we say children, as far as Rachel is concerned we mean those of her maid as well as Joseph.

And after Jacob had fulfilled his second seven years for Rachel he did work for Laban another six years in which Laban changed his wages ten times. God blessed everything that Jacob did. He did not have a "Midas touch" that caused everything he touched to turn to gold. God was with him, and this Laban even confesses in Genesis 30:27, "And Laban said unto him, I pray thee if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry, for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." Yet Laban does foolishly in spite of this insight and tries to trick Jacob and tries to get the advantage by changing the wages those ten times. The only explanation of it is that God was with Jacob as

He had promised. No matter what Laban agreed or decreed to set as the wages so that Jacob would come out on the short end, God turned things about and Jacob always got the greater share of the cattle and the goods. One cannot outguess or outwit the living God. And Laban would have done wisely to cast his lot in with Jacob and assist him, and so — even as he had said — be blessed for Jacob's sake. One cannot fight God's people and prosper. One can share in that blessing when one allies himself with those whom God blesses. Unless you are allied with God's people, you are standing in opposition to God Himself. The Church is the apple of His eye, His beloved; and you cannot oppose her without incurring His fierce wrath. It makes no difference whether you attack her in the truth she maintains or in her walk of life, you oppose God when you oppose His Church. And His blessing rests upon you when with those who hold the truth you walk in sweet communion, and when you pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

But it is the lack of peace in Jacob's family, the many troubles he had, to which we particularly call your attention at this time. The truth of Scripture that a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they *two* shall be one flesh, is powerfully demonstrated here. In more powerful language than simply the statement that polygamy and bigamy are sinful, the Scriptures demonstrate, in the lives of those who practiced it, this very truth in a way that it stands out so clearly that it cannot be denied.

What a troubled life Jacob had! What a fierce rivalry is presented in Genesis 29 and 30 between Leah and Rachel! And, if we may anticipate, how clearly we see that this spills over into the four sets of children born to Leah and her handmaid and Rachel and her handmaid when Joseph is sold into Egypt; and Jacob has created the very situation in which he, who deceived his father, is deceived as father by his own sons.

Jacob did not treat fairly and decently Leah whom God had given to him as wife. Let it not be overlooked that God did this, be it through the trickery of Laban. But it was no accident; and let it not be forgotten either that it is to Leah that God gives the honour and privilege of bringing forth Judah, who brought forth David, who brought forth the Christ. No, God had this all planned, and had covenant considerations in mind when, according to His eternal, unchangeable counsel Jacob received Leah for his wife. And loving Rachel as much as he did, Jacob should have loved God more and been content with God's choice of a wife for him, as strange as that may sound in modern ears that rate the love of man and woman above the love towards God. Today love for mankind is elevated to the point where, in hatred against God, the doctrines and the

preaching have to be changed to gain men and lose God. He is belittled and insulted and denied His sovereignty in order to accommodate and elevate man.

And a fierce competition arose between Leah and Rachel to supply Jacob with sons and have the pre-eminence as wife. As we said, Jacob clearly showed, if not contempt, then dissatisfaction with Leah as his wife; and she sought to gain his favour by producing sons for him. Rachel became extremely jealous. She had Jacob's love. She knew that, although she may have feared losing it in the long run because she could not fulfill the purpose of a wife, namely to be a mother and provide her husband with seed. She gave Jacob her handmaid when she saw that God would give her no children and had given Leah and her handmaid several, and undoubtedly saw that this meant much to Jacob and that he treated Leah a bit better. We read in Genesis 29:31 that the Lord saw "that Leah was hated," and that means by Jacob, not by Rachel. The names Leah gives to her sons and those of her handmaid indicate that she was fighting for Jacob's affection. She even states after the birth of her firstborn, "Now therefore my husband will love me." After her second son she said, "Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, He hath therefore given me this son also." And after the third son, "Now this time will my husband be joined to me, because I have born him three sons."

And Rachel? In a rage of jealousy she blames her barrenness on Jacob and cries out, "Give me children, or else I die!" And now we read of Jacob's anger at this woman that he loved so much. Yes, anger is not the same as hatred. He still loved her, but he was irked by her accusation as though he had been keeping her from having children.

Jacob was a miserable comforter, because he was so unspiritual about the whole matter. He did not seem to sympathize very much with his wife who wanted children and was denied them by God. Let that be understood before we go on with the matter. It was God Who did not want Rachel to have children till He was ready to give them. And Rachel's use of mandrakes (Genesis 30:14-16) did not increase her fertility. It was, as we read in Genesis 30:22, "And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened unto her, and opened her womb." When it pleases Him He gives those whom medical "science" says cannot have children the children they desire; and when it pleases Him to keep those, whom medical "science" says are in every sense capable of bringing forth children, from having children, they will not have them. Jacob did not remind Rachel of this. Jacob did not in sympathy with her suggest that they make this a matter of prayer before the God Who decides how many children we shall or shall not have. No, Jacob

becomes angry. And although he thinks of God and says, "Am I God?" all use of God's name does not manifest necessarily a spiritual attitude before Him. Be not deceived by every mentioning of His name, as though this always reveals strong faith and piety. Satan used God's name twice and seemed to believe that Jesus is the Son of God in that temptation in the wilderness at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. But it showed no faith and no piety. Jacob should have instructed his fiery tempered wife of the sovereignty of the God against Whom she was rebelling.

But that troublesome and sinful triangle is there. One man and two wives. And the trouble stems out of the sinfulness. Jesus said in Matthew 19:5, "And they twain shall be one flesh." He did not say that one man and two women would be one flesh. He did not say that three would be one flesh. He, Who is God Himself, interprets His own word in Genesis 2:24 that a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife and "they shall be one flesh." They in Genesis 2:24 means *one* man and *one* wife. Never mind the fact that the saints did not heed this and took many wives. Jesus, the Son of God, said that twain make one flesh *in God's judgment*. And with that we must deal. To Him we must *listen*; and when we *see* those who ought to know better go contrary to His Word, we must still take Him at His Word and condemn what we see in men who disregard it.

Nor must we argue from the fact that Christ came in the line of David and Bathsheba, which was a way of adultery on two counts. It was adultery since she was Uriah's wife when he went in unto her. But had she been a virgin or a widow, it was still adultery in that he had a wife, and with her he was one flesh before God. Indeed, it pleased God sovereignly to use David in his sins to bring us the Christ; but let us say then that it was sin. It was also sin that brought Christ to His cross. With wicked hands they crucified and slew Him. And that God saved us by that cross does not mean that therefore the crucifying was not sin. Neither was it a nullifying of sin that Jacob took Rachel after God had given him a wife. A triangle like that always is sin, and always produces trouble, for God is not mocked. Even though this sin also can be forgiven, and Christ went to His cross that it might be forgiven in all of God's people, we must not try to talk it right. And let us learn from the troubled life of Jacob that God does not approve of a man having more than one wife at a time, that is, two women who are his wives while both are living. Romans 7:1-3 is still in the Bible; and it was given by an unchangeable God Whose will in the Old Testament in regard to marriage was the same as in the New Testament dispensation.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE

God's Eternally Founded Word

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

This is the theme of Psalm 119:152 where we read, *Concerning Thy testimonies, I have known of old that Thou hast founded them for ever.* Here we have, I. Principle Truth, II. Permanent Foundation, and III. Personal Experience. These words appear in the nineteenth of the twenty-two octaves of Psalm 119, that section in which each of its eight verses begins with the Hebrew letter *qōth*. This octave may be entitled, "Prayer Memories," as over and over the suppliant's cry, voice, and meditation are evident throughout. First, he states *how* he prayed: I cried with my whole heart. Heart cries are the very essence of prayer. Second, he tells *what* he prayed for: Save me! Third, *when* he prayed: in the dawning of the morning. Fourth, *How long* he prayed: through the watches of the whole day; not merely of the night. Fifth, what he pleaded: Thy lovingkindness. Sixth, what happened: his enemies threateningly drew near. Seventh, how he was rescued: Thou art near, O Lord. God is nearer than his enemies. Eighth, what was his conviction and conclusion of the whole matter: I have known of old from Thy testimonies that Thou hast founded them for ever.

Testimonies are the declaration of God's mind and will to man; that is, divine revelation, the whole standard and rule of truth. The term is an amplification of v. 151b, all Thy commandments are *truth*. The ark of the covenant was also called the ark of testimonies, for there were kept the two tables of the law, or the tables of testimony. The tabernacle itself was called the tabernacle of testimony, all this testifying to the great, glorious fact that the God of truth dwells among His people.

God could speak His testimonies immediately and

directly. In fact, He did, on occasion, even calling the men He spoke to by name, as in Abraham, Abraham!(Cp. Moses, Moses! and Samuel! Samuel!). Not once, but twice, at our Lord's baptism and at His transfiguration, the Father spoke in an audible voice directly from Heaven. This heavenly testimony was well-attested by no fewer than six witnesses. But we have a more sure word of prophecy in the scripture (2 Pet. 1:17-21). We are on much surer ground with scripture than we would be with a voice from heaven. The Lord no longer guides by such a voice, but by the testimonies of holy scripture. Voices from the blue? We have a more sure word! Visions? We have a more sure word! Dreams? Who needs them? We have a more sure word! The breviary? We have a more sure word! Golden plates? We have a much more sane and sure word! Ecclesiastical traditions? Religious opinions? All tossing winds of doctrine which sweep away in deception only the child-mentality of the present age (Eph. 4:14). Hindu Puranas? the Koran? or Mormon book? All the devil's imitations, counterfeits and deceptions. Canonical scripture alone provides unerring certainty.

How may we be sure where God speaks? Look into and read the standing authentic record. To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isa. 8:20). We must always go back to the testimonies of scripture. For it is "*from* Thy testimonies that I know" anything. "*Concerning* Thy testimonies" is literally "*from* Thy testimonies," indicating the source of all wisdom. Here we have: (1) the testimony of the Spirit, who testifies of Christ, and bears witness with our spirit that we are the children

of God, and (2) the testimony of Jesus. Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me. (Jn. 5:39).

Thy testimonies — Thou hast founded them for ever. Thou hast *ordained* (same word as in Hab. 1:12) them for ever, or *established* them forever. God's testimonies are, to get to the root meaning, established in "a sitting together in council" and covenant. The picture is that of the Lord and His bride on a love seat sitting together in the secret intimacy of His covenant friendship. God's word then rests on the foundation of His covenant of love.

God's testimonies are founded to eternity. So they will remain firm and unshakable through all ages. All the doctrine of Scripture, found expressed in our Reformed confessions were ordained and settled before the world began. Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven. This 89th verse of Psalm 119 might be rendered, Forever Thou art, O Lord! Thy word is settled in heaven. God's word is more unalterable than the law of the Medes and Persians and mountains of brass. Christ Himself was foreordained before the foundation of the world. All the people of God were chosen in Him before the foundation of the universe. Every event in history, every circumstance in the church is fixed in God's preordination of whatsoever comes to pass. All things were taken into account and settled, not on second thought in the fleeting seconds of time, but in the decrees of eternity. Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away. Nothing of God's word has ever changed. Impossible it is that His word should ever change. For God's word is as His mind, immutable, unshakable (Job 23:13), grounded and laid as a foundation on solid rock, forever established. He states, I change not. Therefore our prayer memories are dotted, like diamond stars on the velvet of night, with confidence in Jehovah, the Ancient of Days, the Rock of Ages.

Never mind the new school philosophies, or the new thought schools. Our stand is on the old theology. Like fizzling Roman candles, the latest pretended neology rockets up brightly for a moment to suddenly expire and merge with its proper origin and end, the world's darkness. Those of the modern church come out with their new light, which Jesus said, as compared to the old light, is as darkness (Matt. 6:23). So there are old lights and new lights. But the new lights are doomed to disappointment if they imagine the new light will extinguish the old light. There is the old side church and the new side church. The old side church is of the party of God, on His side, and is no new party or new side over against Him and His side. The new side church has a

new slant on things, having invented an effeminate god, a womanish "Christ" who offended none, except the sensibilities of the manly. The old side church is as old as the hills, more solid than Gibraltar, fixed as the eternal mountains. Canaries could peck down Gibraltar sooner than the Word of God could be undermined. The things which are eternally established on the impregnable rock of holy scripture are the delight (v. 143) of true saints. The wicked world blasphemously and thoughtlessly sings, When the "saints" go marching in! But the "saints" (those "saved" *in* their sins, not *from* their sins) shall *never* go marching in. The saints (not the "saints") go marching in! For they have not been chasing bubbles, but seek first the kingdom of God, the only solid and substantial reality with a rock bottom foundation whose Layer and Builder is God.

David said, and that when he was well on in years, I have known of old, from Thy testimonies, that Thou hast founded them for ever. Paul also knew this to be true of Timothy: From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures. What a life-enduring blessing to have been raised in a Christian home where family worship prevailed and where the sound doctrine grounded in eternity found a repository and was firmly established in our hearts and lives! In our early days, one of our ministers habitually prayed that God would write the eternal truth of His word in our hearts. God's word is grounded and founded to eternity. By grace He has founded it in our hearts. An old seminary professor, nearly four decades ago, gave me a Bible in which he had written the words, Hide thou in thine heart His word lest thou sin against Him. A treasured Bible is so because its contents are heart-treasure. David in his advanced years looked back to his childhood saying, I have known of old that Thy word is the eternal foundation of all things. This is to him familiar truth; he knew it long ago. He knew it ever since he was able to memorize a sentence of scripture. It was not an old truth lately discovered. He knew this great truth since the time that he had learned anything about God. David proved this truth over and over, not by one or two sensational experiences, which are no test of truth. But he made proof of the eternal truth of God's word not only in recent, but in old and time-tested experiences. David's place on the truth and immutability of the Word was one of long standing. David saw that the covenant was in the line of his ancestors, including his parents. He rejoices that he was born of a covenant mother. From infancy to old age David experienced the firmness of God's covenant, the certainty and comfort of His providence and the blessedness of His salvation. Thou art He that took me out of the womb; Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breast; I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou art my God from my mother's belly (Ps.

22:9, 10). Indeed, what David always knew, learned from childhood, and was also always known throughout the generations of his fathers before him. He knew the experience of the truth that goes back to his father, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers. So we possess psalters, confessions, and liturgies passed on down to us from these former generations. We, too, can say, Our fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted and Thou didst deliver them; they cried to thee and were delivered; they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded. (Ps. 22:4,5). To you are given exceed-

ing great and precious promises. Do you possess these spiritual and eternal riches? Do you greatly esteem them? Or are you so attached to this present world that your philosophy is, A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, meaning that which is to come is all conjecture and uncertainty? Or do you believe with the certainty of true faith that, Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies, and so surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever?

ALL AROUND US

Creation and Biology

Rev. G. Van Baren

It becomes increasingly true that the faithful child of God has no place in the world — and especially in the world of education. While government maintains a “neutrality,” it is a neutrality which allows only for secularism and atheism. An article in *Liberty*, a Seventh-day Adventist magazine, January 1980, makes this plain:

LEMMON, South Dakota — A high school biology teacher, Lloyd Dale, may lose his job for exactly the opposite reason that John Scopes was tried in Tennessee a half century ago.

Mr. Dale continues to teach creation in his sophomore biology classes as an alternative to the theory of evolution, which became standard in biology textbooks since the Scopes “monkey trial” in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925.

“I maintain that evolution and creation are both philosophical views,” said Mr. Dale. “Neither is provable.”

School board members, fearing the curriculum could violate a student’s First Amendment right to religious freedom, have tried to fire Mr. Dale, a fundamentalist preacher.

“Churches and parents have the right to teach their children religion,” said Ruth Berg, board president. “And that’s what we’re trying to protect.”

Mr. Dale teaches his students that a superpower created life about 10,000 years ago, a concept that he said is better supported by scientific evidence and fossil records than evolution.

Last spring, the board voted to fire Mr. Dale, who has taught at Lemmon High School for fifteen years. They rehired him, but changed textbooks, adopted guidelines for the course, and warned the teacher to follow the guidelines or face the loss of his job.

The guidelines allow Mr. Dale to spend one week presenting creation and evolution theories.

To be a Minister

Now-a-days one wonders just what is required to become a minister — at least within the major denominations of our day. It appears that the heretic is accepted and honored — but one who still insists on maintaining some of the principles of Scripture is rejected. But such is also the testimony of Christ that this should be in the last days. Two reports are given in the *R.E.S. News Exchange*, December 4, 1979:

Conservatives in the United Presbyterian Church

USA (UPCUSA) are growing increasingly restive as their denomination moves toward openly tolerating the denial of Christ’s deity. The specific case is the reception of the Rev. Mansfield Kaseman by Capital-Union presbytery after he openly denied that Jesus is God. An appeal to the Synod of the Piedmont was turned down by the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod. The issue will now come before the General Assembly’s Permanent Judicial Commission which is expected to render a final judgment

sometime after the first of the year. Meanwhile the presbytery has proceeded to install Mr. Kaseman.

Commenting on these developments, Dr. John H. Gerstner, professor of Church History at Pittsburgh Seminary, feels that the possibility that the denial of the deity of Christ may be upheld by the UPCUSA's Permanent Judicial Committee threatens the very essence of the Church. By permitting the denial of a central Christian doctrine, the denomination formally will have made apostasy legitimate. That may well lead — if it happens — to the "legitimate withdrawal of a block of conservatives from the UPCUSA."

Dr. Gerstner sees this issue as potentially far more threatening than the issue of women's ordination. With such an issue conservatives can live. The open espousal of the denial of Christ's deity, however, constitutes apostasy. And though the conservatives are a minority, pressures arise within congregations to throw off their UPCUSA affiliation. The 2.7 million member church has 8,600 congregations.

The same periodical presents the opposite extreme: a refusal to ordain a man who holds to the historic, and we believe Scriptural, position of ordination of women to office:

On a vote of 50-47 the Presbytery of East Toronto of the Presbyterian Church in Canada refused to license Mr. Daniel MacDougall for ordination. The applicant, a graduate of Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, indicated that, while being able to affirm the Ordination Vows and to work with ordained women, his conscience did not permit him to participate in the ordination of women as ministers or elders.

Those opposing Mr. MacDougall's application argued that his stance might lead to an attitude of discrimination against women. Those supporting him argued that since he could answer the ordination questions affirmatively the Presbytery had no right to deny him licensure. The decision will be appealed and stands to become a test case on the issue.

Christian Rock Music

The *Outlook*, December 1979, quotes from Calvin College *Chimes* that treats the subject of "Christian rock." The subject arose in connection with the cancellation of a "public relations tour" of a Calvin musical group called "Kyro." It appears that the "rock music" of the group was the cause of this cancellation. An interesting discussion on "rock music" is presented by Calvin Stapert, of Calvin's music department. Those who might have inclinations towards this sort of music ought to read the entire article. Occasionally, one finds that our young people find pleasure in this sort of "music." The professor concludes by stating:

I will approach the question from three different angles. First, I will list some of the adjectives which must immediately come to my mind when I hear rock music. Second, I will call to attention those segments of our culture which have most readily embraced rock music as their own. Third, I will mention the most prominent stylistic features of rock music. I think the reader will notice some connections among the results of these three approaches.

Adjectives that come to mind when I hear rock music are frenzied, violent, angry, sensuous, vulgar, and so on. Of course, all this might merely be in the ear of the listener; another listener might hear something quite different in the music. Clearly we will not get very far with this approach alone. We need some way to check on the reliability of the ears doing the hearing.

My second approach is through association. Although this is hardly an infallible way of getting at the ethos of music, I think something can usually be learned about music by, if you will, the company it

keeps. Rock music has been fostered and embraced by those segments of our society which are "into" drugs, illicit and perverted sex, and rebellion. Another kind of association includes movements, postures, and facial expressions. These are usually sensual and obscene, sometimes subtly so, more often blatantly so. I see a fittingness in both kinds of associations with rock music, a fittingness which makes it unlikely that the associations are accidental and which says something quite clear about the ethos of the music.

The most obvious stylistic features of rock music are incessant repetition and consistent use of extremely high levels of volume. I have already indicated that I think this is symptomatic of its artistic impoverishment, but I also think it reveals something fundamental about the nature of rock music. It is a music which bombards the senses to the point of insensitivity; it is an incantation; it is a drug.

I have stated my case forcefully in the hope that it will stimulate more discussion of a crucial problem. The contemporary music scene needs transformation. Are we transforming the contemporary music scene when we simply accept it and baptize it with Christian words? Can we enter into the job of transformation assuming that in music surgery is never necessary?

The apostle Paul said in II Cor. 6:14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" Living out of that principle, the Christian ought to have no difficulty with the kinds of music which this world now produces. Are we living out of that principle?

QUESTION BOX

About the Fifth Commandment

Rev. C. Hanko

Allow me, first of all, to offer an apology to those who have sent in questions and have not yet received an answer. Although the *Standard Bearer* appreciates receiving questions, and always invites more, circumstances forced us to delay in answering. We appreciate the patience of those who have had to wait, and sincerely hope to answer your questions as soon as possible in the future.

A reader writes,

I would like to ask a few questions on the 5th commandment, Honor thy father and thy mother. . . .

I would like to ask the following questions based on Exodus 20:12, Ephesians 6:1-3, Proverbs 20:20 and Lord's Day 39.

1. Can we teach our children in our homes and schools that if they are obedient and honor their father and mother, as a general rule, it will be well them and they will live long on the earth?

2. Why is this the only commandment that has a promise? Could it be that it is the hardest of the ten to follow?

sincerely, an interested parent and teacher.

To answer these questions I prefer to refer to a significant passage in the Old Testament that speaks emphatically of the promise of God to covenant parents, in the light of which the promise of the fifth commandment must be understood. In Genesis 18:19 God says of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." A few remarks,

1. This is a part of the divine soliloquy in which God speaks of His covenant love for His

friend-servant whereby He is impelled to reveal to Abraham the secrets of His heart.

2. God had appeared to the father of all believers in the form of a Lord with two of his servants, that is, as the Angel of Jehovah with two angels; had feasted with Abraham and had revealed to him that the promised son Isaac would be born within another year.
3. The Angel of Jehovah, which is the Old Testament manifestation of the Christ, also informs Abraham of the destruction of Sodom because of its great wickedness, arousing in him the prayer for righteous Lot, and teaching him that the church is delivered through judgment.
4. In that connection God declares that He *knows* Abraham as only God can know, with an eternal love, to take Abraham into His covenant fellowship and bless him with every spiritual and eternal blessing, to be his God and the God of His seed forever.
5. The purpose of God's knowing Abraham is, that Abraham may receive the grace to command his children and household after him; an instruction which God will use to cause Abraham's true spiritual seed to do justice and judgment, that is, to maintain God's law both in their hearts and their lives.
6. The outcome will be that God will bestow on Abraham that which He has spoken of him. That is, God will use the covenant training to be the God of Abraham and of his spiritual seed even throughout the ages to come, until the multitude as large as the innumerable stars of the heavens is brought into glory.

In answer, then, to your first question, we certainly can teach our children that if they are obedient and honor their father and mother they are

walking in the way of God's covenant, and a sincere, godly walk is blessed with spiritual blessing both in this life and in eternity. It is not true that rebellious children who heap dishonor on their parents die young, and that God-fearing children live to a ripe old age, not even as a general rule, and not even in the old dispensation. It may be said that Israel did not remain long in the land of Canaan, the typical land of promise, because of their disobedience, but that again has its typical significance for the spiritual and eternal covenant faithfulness of our God.

In answer to the second question, this commandment carries the promise just because of its rich spiritual significance in regard to God's grace and covenant. God uses God-fearing parents to instruct the covenant seed, and that covenant seed experiences the blessing of God's promise through a loving obedience to God and thus to all those whom God places over them. The opposite is also true. Exodus 20:5, Proverbs 20:20.

I hope I may have succeeded in clarifying this matter a bit.

About the Keys of the Kingdom

From a reader in Australia we received for Question Box:

"Please give an explanation of Matthew 16:19, Matthew 18:18, John 20:23. I have heard a number of views expressed on the above verses, and none seems to satisfy completely the texts; they either fall short or go too far. I would appreciate some help."

Matthew 16:19 reads, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Compare also Matthew 18:18 and John 20:23.

In the context of this passage in Matthew 16 Peter had made the confession "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." With a play on the name Peter, which means Rock, Jesus answered that upon the Rock of that confession He will build His church, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Thereupon Jesus informs Peter, as spokesman of the rest of the apostles, that He will entrust to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In John 20:22, 23 Jesus endows the apostles with the gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby they were able to speak the Word of God infallibly even as the Spirit of Christ would give them utterance. Thus the power to remit and to forgive sins was entrusted to all the apostles as Jesus declares, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." The power to open and close the kingdom of heaven was given into the hands of the apostles as ambassadors of Christ.

Turning to Matthew 18:18 we find that this power is entrusted to the church. In the context of this passage Jesus is speaking of the calling of the individual believers to forgive the sins committed

against them. If anyone sins against us we must tell him personally of his fault. If he fails to listen and to confess his sin, we must approach him, possibly again and again, with witnesses. If he fails to confess his sin, even after repeated admonitions, we must tell it to the church, that is, to the ruling body of the church, the consistory or session. To that the Lord adds, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

This can only mean that to the ruling body in the church, the elders, is entrusted the key power of Christ. Christ preaches the Word through His ordained office bearers. Christ also administers the sacraments through the office in the church. And likewise Christ opens and closes the kingdom of heaven through His ordained office bearers. The preaching of the Word declares to the sincere believer by the testimony of the Spirit in his heart that he has his own place in the kingdom of heaven as citizen and heir of the world to come. By that same preaching of the Word all unbelievers are declared outside of the kingdom by the testimony of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. The proper Christian discipline, which is also one of the three earmarks of the true church of God, assures the repentant and confessing sinner that his sins are forgiven him through the blood of Jesus Christ, and that same discipline declares to the unrepentant sinner that he is outside of the kingdom and is excommunicated from the church of Jesus Christ until he shows sincere repentance of his sins. Thus Christ exercises the key power through His church.

If you have any other questions, be sure to contact us again.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Last Time: How Are We Living?

Rev. R. Flikkema

Are we, you and I, living in these last times with hearts that are filled with fear? Are we afraid: afraid of what the future might bring; afraid of what lies in store for us who are members of the body of Jesus Christ? Are we? I dare say we so often are. If we read the headlines of our daily newspapers we discover that there is much unrest in the world: nation is rising up against nation and people against people. If we glance at the cost of material things, food and clothing, etc., we discover that the cost of those things is ever and always going higher and higher. And we say to ourselves, when will it ever end? It seems as though there is no end in sight. Things are getting worse and worse. The future looks very dark, very dark indeed. We are afraid.

To be sure, the future looks very dark. And too, not only is it true that the future looks dark, but it is also true that the future is dark and will be getting ever darker. We know that. For the Bible-believing child of God there is simply no question about that. And there is simply no question about that because the Bible tells us that the future will be getting ever darker. The Bible tells us that the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, the Antichrist shall be manifest in all his fulness. He shall unite all people under his sway. For a time there will be no more fighting amongst the nations of this world, but all shall be subject to his bidding. And then for the Church of Jesus Christ things shall be dark indeed. For you understand, when all fighting amongst the nations of this world ceases, when all nations are subjugated to the bidding of the Antichrist, then the fury and wrath of the Antichrist and all nations shall be loosed upon the

Church of Jesus Christ, you and me. We shall be persecuted. No longer will we be able to worship our God as we have in the past. No longer will we be able to buy or sell. That will all come to an end. That is what the Bible says. Does what the Bible says make us afraid? Many times our answer to that question is yes. Yes, of all that we are afraid.

But wait! The Bible tells us more. Not only does the Bible tell us that things will be getting ever darker. Not only does the Bible tell us that the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, the Antichrist shall arise to make all nations subject to him. Not only does the Bible tell us that we shall be persecuted and that we shall not be able to worship or buy or sell. But the Bible also tells us about a little stone: not a very big stone, but a very small stone. Well, you say: what of that? What is so important about a stone? Oh, that stone is so very important. It is the most important thing imaginable. For it is exactly upon that stone that all our hope in the midst of the darkness that surrounds us rests. It is exactly that whereby all our fears that rise up within us as we live in these last times are dispelled. What of that stone, you say? What is so important about that very little stone, you say? That stone is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ Who has come and Who is coming to dispel the darkness of these last times and the fears that rise up within us as we live in these last times. That stone is Jesus, Who, having removed all our fears, shall set us upon the rock which the Bible says is higher than you or I. Where do we read of that stone, you ask? Turn with me to the second chapter of the Book of Daniel. There in the second chapter of the Book of Daniel

the Lord our God tells us about that stone. How striking it is that the Lord our God tells us about that stone by means of a dream which God sent to Nebuchadnezzar: Nebuchadnezzar we must remember who was himself an Old Testament manifestation of the Antichrist.

We read in the first verse of the second chapter of the Book of Daniel this: "And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." If there is one thing that that verse says to us, it is this, namely, that there came a night in the life of mighty King Nebuchadnezzar when Nebuchadnezzar was utterly afraid. As he did every night, so also on this particular night, Nebuchadnezzar had gone to sleep. He had gone to sleep filled with confidence: confidence in his own arm of strength; confidence that simply nothing or no one could frighten the mighty King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He was, after all, king. By his hand, so he thought, he had subjected nations and conquered them. By his hand, so he thought, he had established a glorious, invincible kingdom that would last forever. Confident Nebuchadnezzar was.

But then one night God sent to Nebuchadnezzar a dream. Or more accurately, God sent to Nebuchadnezzar a whole series of dreams. All of which dreams culminated in the most real and the most vivid and the most fearful dream of all. All of a sudden in the dark of night Nebuchadnezzar awoke. And he had good reason to awake, for that last dream which he dreamed had frightened him. He was, the text states, "troubled" as a result of that dream. Literally, we read that Nebuchadnezzar was "agitated," all shaken up as a result of that dream. So shaken up was Nebuchadnezzar as a result of that dream that he simply could not get back to sleep.

The next morning came. Still shaken up by that dream Nebuchadnezzar called all his wise men before him. He told them that he wanted them to tell him the dream and the interpretation thereof. Yes, not only did Nebuchadnezzar want his wise men to tell him the interpretation of the dream, but he also commanded his wise men to tell him the very dream itself in all its details! No, it was not the case that Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten his dream, and that now he wanted his wise men to tell him what he had forgotten. With respect to a dream the likes of which Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed, how could he possibly forget? But rather, it was the case that Nebuchadnezzar remembered his dream, and that now he wanted his wise men to tell him what he remembered, and if they could not do that they would be put to death. But no dream could the wise men relate to Nebuchadnezzar. They simply could not. They were all to die. And that necessarily included Daniel.

Daniel was also to die. But such was not according to the good pleasure of our God. Daniel according to the good pleasure of God was not to die. But rather, he was to be used by God exactly to interpret the dream which Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed.

Daniel is brought before King Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel tells and interprets the dream. He says to King Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou o king, sawest, and behold a great image". A great image! That image stood before thee! Its brightness was very great! Its size was tremendous and the form of it was terrible to behold! The head of that image was of gold. The breast and the arms of that image were of silver. The belly and thighs of that image were of brass. The legs of that image were of iron. And the feet of that image were of part iron and part clay. It stood there before your eyes dominating and subjugating everything and anything. But soon you looked and behold a stone! Not a big stone, merely a small and apparently insignificant stone! But a stone that was cut out without human hands! That stone came rolling down and smote the great image. That great image toppled over. And not only did it topple over, but that image was crushed by the stone. The stone ground that image to powder, causing what was once so dominating to be made like unto the chaff of the summer threshing floor which the wind driveth away. And then, having crushed that image to powder, that stone grew! It grew into a great mountain which filled the whole earth.

That is what Daniel said to King Nebuchadnezzar. What does that mean, you ask? Who and what did all of that represent, you ask? With respect to that image, that image represented as a whole the kingdom of the Antichrist. And with respect to its parts: the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet of iron and clay, those parts represent so many historical manifestations of the one great kingdom of the Antichrist. The Babylonian Empire, that head of gold; the Persian Empire, these breast and arms of silver; the Empire of Alexander the Great, the belly and thighs of brass; the Roman Empire, those legs of iron; and the one final manifestation of the Antichrist which yet shall be, those feet of part iron and part clay. And the point is that as representations of the Kingdom of the Antichrist, all of them without exception stand in the place of and overagainst the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ. They hate Christ. They hate the cause of Christ. And therefore, they hate the Church and the people of Christ. By means of their wealth and riches; by means of their technology and learning; by means of their earthly might and strength, all of them without exception seek to destroy the Kingdom and people of Christ! They seek to cause us to be afraid. They want us to

be afraid. They desire that we, the Church and people of God, may grovel in the dust in our fear, and that we may lose all hope and comfort. That is what the Antichrist desires.

But wait! We see a stone. And as we live in these last times, with the eyes of faith we see that stone ever more clearly. We see a stone cut out without human hands. We see Jesus. Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith! Jesus the mighty conqueror Who goes forth conquering and to conquer! Jesus Who was born in the fulness of time without human hands! Jesus Who went to the Cross to crush forever the power of sin and death! And Jesus Who is coming again to judge the quick and the dead! That Jesus,

that little stone, but oh such a wonderful stone, we with the eyes of faith see.

He is coming! He is rolling down the mountain, and in His path the kingdoms and the times in which we live which seek to cause us to be afraid, are as nothing and less than nothing. He comes to establish a mighty kingdom which shall fill the whole earth, the likes of which the world has never seen.

Are we still afraid? How can we be when we have the firm assurance of the coming of that little stone? And that assurance we have. What is that assurance? That assurance is Jesus' promise to us who live in the last times. We live in the last time. But the question is: how are we living?

Book Reviews

GOD'S MAN (a novel on the life of John Calvin), Duncan Norton-Taylor; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 298 pp., \$8.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema)

This reviewer has a partiality for historical novels. In this instance it was possible to combine work and relaxation, and during the Christmas recess from school I read this book for personal enjoyment and relaxation as well as in preparation for writing a review.

This is not a biography, but a novel. It could be called a biographical novel, because it traces the life of John Calvin from childhood to death. But it is more than biographical; it is a historical novel as well, due to the fact that Calvin was so deeply involved in the history of the Reformation. The author himself states in a note of explanation: "Few biographies can be wholly true, while novels may wholly bear their own truth. In the events I have described I have not deviated significantly from history; and except for one or two minor characters and a fanciful Hans Hoch, all the people in this book existed and in their various ways impinged on Calvin's life. How much of John Calvin himself have I imagined? I have 'filled in' what was not recorded yet appeared to me to be truthful or at least plausible. He had no con-

temporary biographer, and in his writings, prodigious as they were, disclosed almost nothing of an intimate nature about himself. But between the lines, especially of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, he revealed much."

People's tastes in novels differ. To me, this is a well-written, interesting, fast-moving story. An indication that to me this is an interesting and well-written story is the fact that I read the story through in two sittings.

My one negative criticism is the fact that there seems to be an undue and, I think, inaccurate stress on Calvin's character trait of a hot-tempered man, difficult to get along with.

Our schools and our homes would do well to add this volume to their libraries. Recommended.

THE FINAL CURTAIN, Studies in Eschatology; by John H. Bratt; Baker Book House, 1978; 118 pp., \$1.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This brief book is a part of Baker's "Contemporary Discussion Series." For that reason it is particularly suited for discussions in discussion groups, societies, catechisms and Sunday Schools. It deals in short

chapters to which questions for discussion are appended with all the subjects in the doctrine of the last things. While generally speaking the book is quite sound, there are some elements in it with which we are not satisfied. To cite a few examples: death is said to have been present in the original creation; a wrong view of immortality is included; there is only doubt expressed concerning the salvation of pagan children who die in infancy; the refutation of premillennialism is weak and indecisive. The book must be used with caution.

THE TIME IS FULFILLED, by F. F. Bruce; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978; 128 pp., \$2.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

The contents of this book were originally given as the 1977 Moore College lectures in Sydney, Australia. The book contains five examples of Old Testament themes which are fulfilled in the new: 1) The Time is Fulfilled; 2) It is They That Bear Witness to Me; 3) Abraham Our Father; 4) A Shadow of Good Things to Come; 5) The Spirit of Prophecy.

F. F. Bruce is a New Testament scholar of international reputation and of great ability. His writings are usually worthwhile. Nevertheless, the approach to the Scriptures is not always that of a man who is determined to learn from Scripture the meaning of the Holy Spirit; there is too much of the meaning of Paul, John, Peter, etc.

The book is somewhat technical and is mainly for ministers.

STUDIES IN GENESIS, Expository Messages, by Robert S. Candlish; Kregel Publications, 1979; 844 pp., \$14.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

Robert Candlish was a Scots pastor and theologian who lived from 1806 - 1873. He was part of the movement in the Scots Churches which resulted in the Free Church of Scotland and he served, towards the end of his life, as principal of New College in Edinburgh. Kregel Publications has made this relatively old commentary available as a part of its "Kregel Bible Study Classics" Series. It is indeed a worthwhile addition and Kregels is to be commended for making this volume available once again in a new reprint.

The book is not in fact a commentary on Genesis but is rather a collection of a lengthy series of sermons which the author preached during his ministry. The disadvantage of this is that the book does not offer a verse-by-verse explanation of Genesis. But there are also certain advantages in this type of book. It is more warmly pastoral than a commentary can

really be; it has much more homiletical application than a commentary usually has; the scope of the thought is much more extensive than a verse-by-verse exposition can be. This latter advantage is especially evident from the fact that constant attention is called to other passages in Scripture both in the Old and New Testaments which deal with the historical material related in Genesis. This immeasurably enriches the exposition.

The book is a thorough treatment of the material. It is written in an interesting way. It is conservative in the sense that it is not affected by the destructive teachings of higher criticism and the devastating influences of evolutionism. It will be of help to those who wish to have a good volume to study in connection with Society discussions; but it makes also for fine devotional literature. We highly recommend it to our readers.

TO BE NEAR UNTO GOD, by Abraham Kuyper; Translated from the Dutch by John Hendrik De Vries; Baker Book House, 1979; 679 pp., \$8.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This is a translation of Kuyper's popular book (popular, at least, to those who read the Dutch), "Nabij God te Zijn." It contains 110 meditations which have as their unifying thought the expression in Psalm 73: "As for me, it is good to be near unto God."

These meditations present a side of Kuyper with which most people who know anything about him are not familiar. Kuyper is known as a profound theologian, a mighty preacher, a leader of church reformation in the Netherlands, the founder of an important political party, editor of a Dutch newspaper. But few know that Kuyper had what I would almost call a mystical side to him. It is this which comes out so clearly in this book. I do not think that Kuyper's "mysticism" is of the wrong and sickly kind — although you may not always agree with what he has to say in this book. Kuyper's "mysticism" is more balanced. But here it is set forth in clarity in these meditations. One who has read a lot of Kuyper will be surprised that such writings as these could also come from his pen.

It is good that these writings too are made available in the English language. These too have to be read to understand the man. But they make for fine reading. You will not read the book without being profited by it. His observations are often astute and his meditations on the Christian life are often a spur to godliness. They will give the reader a desire to read more of this kind of literature which came from Kuyper's pen. Perhaps more will be translated in the future.

JESUS AS THEY SAW HIM, by William Barclay; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978; 429 pp., \$4.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

This book was originally published in 1962 in England and is now published for the first time in this country. The author treats the doctrine of Christ from the viewpoint of the many names given Him in Scripture. He discusses more than forty of Christ's names and uses this as a means (as the title itself indicates) to indicate what, in the author's opinion, Jesus' contemporaries thought of Jesus. It is quite obvious that, because the source of his information is Scripture, the approach of the author is the approach of higher criticism. It is not surprising then to find many errors in the book; but it is surprising to find the author denying Christ's divinity. Although it is not easy to tell with certainty, it seems the author comes closest to the position of Arianism. This puts him in the camp of those heretics of whom Scripture says that they belong to antichrist. About the only value of the book is that it contains some interesting word studies.

THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER, An Exposition of Ephesians 6:10-20; by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones; Baker Book House, 1977; 363 pp., \$8.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

Dr. Lloyd-Jones continues in this book his studies on Ephesians by treating the section in chapter 6 which deals with the Christian warrior. As with all his books on Ephesians, the chapters are reprints of sermons originally preached in Westminster Chapel. The book is interesting reading, for the most part written from a Calvinistic viewpoint, and is an insightful examination into the Christian's life and calling in the world. The book must not be purchased and read as a commentary — although it is that too. It must be read as good and sound devotional literature which will enable the reader to understand better the Scriptures and understand himself as the truth of the Scriptures is reflected in his own spiritual consciousness. We urge our readers to purchase the book. It will bring many rewards.

NOTICE!!!

TEACHER NEEDED

Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of a teacher for Grades 4, 5 and 6 for the 1980-81 school year. Teachers interested in filling this position should contact Mr. William Kooiker, Route 1, Box 39, Hull, IA 51239.

NOTICE!!!

All students enrolled in the Protestant Reformed Seminary who are in need of financial assistance are asked to contact the Student Aid Committee, Mr. David M. Ondersma, Secretary, 6761 Brookwood Dr., Grandville, Michigan 49418 (phone 616-457-1417). This contact should be made before the next meeting of the Committee on March 10, 1980.

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on Tuesday, March 4, 1980, in South Holland, Illinois at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. Delegates in need of lodging should notify the Clerk of the South Holland Council.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 20, 1980, the Lord willing, our dear parents, MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM C. STURSMA will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

May our heavenly Father, in His grace, continue to bless and keep them and fill their remaining days with joy and happiness.

It is our prayer that they may confess with the Psalmist: "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Psalm 16:5, 6).

Their children,

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Stursma
Mr. and Mrs. Vernon De Vries
Mr. and Mrs. Gene Kamerick
13 grandchildren
8 great-grandchildren.

Pella, Iowa

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of the Randolph Protestant Reformed Church mourns the loss of its beloved member, MRS. JEANETTE SOODSMA, whom the Lord took to be with Himself on January 12, 1980. We express our sympathy to her children in their grief and pray that the Lord of all comfort will bless them in His Everlasting mercy.

"For the light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (II Cor. 4:17).

Rev. Koole, Pres.
Barb Fisher, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hull, IA, expresses their sympathy to our fellow office-bearers, Elders Alvin Kooiker and Tim Kooima in the passing of their father and father-in-law, MR. NICK KOOIKER.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." (Psalm 48:14).

Rev. Ronald L. Cammenga, Pres.
Mr. Henry Hoekstra, Sec'y.

Report of Classis East

January 9, 1980
Holland Prot. Ref. Church

Classis East met in regular session on January 9, 1980 at Holland. All the churches, except Kalamazoo, were represented by two delegates. Rev. C. Haak had his initiation as chairman as he was called upon to preside.

The business of classis centered about four main things: voting, the impending retirement of Rev. Heys, overtures to synod re student aid from Mr. LaVerne Casemier and Holland Consistory, and subsidy requests.

Classis did grant approval to the request from Holland for the emeritation of their pastor, Rev. John A. Heys, effective June 1, 1980, on the grounds of age (which even at this time was not divulged) and health (Rev. Heys has had heart surgery recently and his doctor has advised him to slow down a bit). The request will be forwarded to synod for approval. It is significant to note that the "older" generation of ministers has now retired. God has been good to us as churches in giving us these men all these years, many of which have been years of "sturm und drang," and they continue to be a blessing to the churches by reason of the fact that all are still preaching some and teaching catechism classes in various churches in the Grand Rapids area.

Classis also considered two overtures re seminary student aid. The first was submitted by LaVerne Casemier via Holland's consistory. Mr. Casemier's proposal is to abolish the synodical student aid committee and that these funds be distributed instead by a classical committee. The motivation for his overture was the increasing practice (because of the limited funds available to students from synodical committee) of individual congregation's establishing their own student aid funds, a practice which Mr. Casemier believes to be contrary to the presbyterian form of church government. Mr. Casemier's overture was sent to synod with the disapproval of classis. The grounds cited were these (summarized): 1) it would be difficult to classify students from Classis West since all students eventually hold membership in the churches of Classis East, 2) the overture does not solve the problem of supporting married students, 3)

implementation procedures for the establishment of classical funds does not exist, since all funds are synodical. Holland Consistory, as a result of the overture of Mr. Casemier, and through its responses to him, also submitted an overture to synod re student aid. The concern of the Holland overture is for the increased support of married seminary students. Holland requests the revision of Article 5 of the Constitution of the Student Aid Committee to allow for the increased financial support of married students. Holland's overture was forwarded to synod without prejudice.

Classis also expended a good deal of time in voting for membership on the Classical Committee, for delegates *ad examina*, and for synodical delegates. Elected to the Classical Committee was Rev. M. De Vries; elected as delegates *ad examina*: Rev. C. Hanko (three-year *primus* term), Rev. G. Van Baren (two-year *primus* term), Rev. C. Haak (three-year *secundus* term); synodical delegates elected are as follows: **MINISTERS:** *Primi*: M. De Vries, J.A. Heys, M. Joostens, G. Van Baren; *Secundi*: W. Bruinsma, C. Haak, C. Hanko, B. Woudenberg; **ELDERS:** *Primi*: G. Bouwkamp, J. De Zeeuw, J. Kalsbeek, G. Kuiper; *Secundi*: H. Boer, E. Cammenga, R. Van Baren, H. Vander Vennen.

Subsidy requests for 1981 were submitted and granted for Kalamazoo for \$9000.00 and for Covenant for \$7500.00. These requests must be forwarded to synod for approval.

Hope requested classical appointments for the evening service only. The following schedule was adopted: January 20 - Woudenberg, January 27 - Bruinsma, February 3 - Van Baren, February 10 - Joostens, February 17 - Haak, February 24 - Houck, March 2 - De Vries, March 9 - Heys, March 23 - Woudenberg, March 30 - Bruinsma, April 13 - Van Baren, April 20 - Joostens, April 27 - Haak, May 4 - Houck, May 11 - De Vries, May 18 - Heys.

Expenses for this session were \$658.94. Classis will meet next on May 14, 1980 at Southeast.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon Huiskens, Stated Clerk