

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Although the mountains quake
And earth's foundations shake,
Though angry billows roar
And break against the shore,
Our mighty God will hear us.

A new year.

An old world.

A powerful Word.

A faithful God.

See "Zion A Safe Refuge" — page 146

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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MEDITATION

Zion A Safe Refuge

Rev. C. Hanko

What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it. Isaiah 14:32

A new year: 1978.

For a fleeting moment we paused as the midnight hour struck, reminding us that the old had passed away; already we are ushered into the new.

A new year in the same old world, under the same conditions as last year. There is still unrest in the Middle East. There is still the threat of communism;

the growing power of the sleeping giant, China; the economic instability in our own country. The cost of living keeps spiraling upward, while wages struggle to keep up with it. Local problems are universal concerns.

For the believer the signs of the the times point out that antichrist is already lifting its foul head. Wickedness asserts itself in open defiance to all God's

commandments, with an attitude of "who cares?" Holy marriage has become a mockery in and out of wedlock. Gambling and lotteries are the approved pastimes of the day, as every one greedily hopes to get rich overnight. Daily newspapers report the most atrocious crimes of riot, bombing, highjacking, and murder. A man will kill another in cold blood for rape, for revenge, or for a paltry dollar. The evil world is no longer "out there," but manages to wheedle its way into our family room with its seductive influences. Apostasy seeks to undermine the very foundations of the church. Basic principles which were taken for granted for so many centuries are now boldly denied. The inerrancy of the Scriptures, the wonders of God, the atonement of the cross are challenged on all sides. Our homes are being disintegrated by our busy, affluent existence, so that family life is virtually unknown. "Who wants to dry up at home?" Unions, corporations, world counsels, world market, and government control, all point us to the rise of the Man of Sin as Satan's final, desperate attempt to dethrone God and His Christ.

In the meantime, dark clouds of judgment thicken upon the horizon. We hear the trumpet blasts of Revelation, and we see the devastation that follows. Pollution of rivers, lakes and oceans, death of fish and birds, PBB and its many bad consequences, hurricanes leaving ten thousand victims behind, earthquakes with massive destruction, and many other calamities, tell us that the end of the ages is upon us, when Christ will appear with the clouds to bring judgment upon the earth.

In times like these the messengers of the people come from all directions, asking, Where is safety for us and our children? What will come of all this? What will our children have to experience? How must we prepare ourselves for the future, or even for the new year?

There were similar times in the old dispensation, as portrayed in the prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah is standing on the prophetic mountain, beholding from afar vistas seen only by his prophetic eye. King Ahaz has died. Philistia had triumphed over Judah. These Philistines had not been wiped out when Judah took over the land of Canaan, and had always been the enemy at Judah's back door. Especially in times of apostasy, such as in the days of Ahaz, Philistia gloated in her power over Judah. But now the Lord tells the prophet that Philistia will boast no more. The Lord will give a new king to Israel, who will fear the Lord, and the Lord will put down this enemy of His people.

This is but a part of the entire panoramic view that is spread out before the prophet's wondering gaze. Isaiah sees that a great world power will arise, still unknown in his day. This world power, Babylon, will

exalt itself to heaven. As Satan's representative, he will exalt himself against God, as if he were God. Babylon will be like Leviathan, that crooked serpent, that vile dragon. He will exalt himself above the nations. Babylon will be the precursor of antichrist, that power that is still to come, of whom it is said, "that the Man of sin (must) be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (II Thes. 2:3, 4). Babylon will overthrow Assyria, the fear of all the earth in Isaiah's day. Philistia rejoices that this dread enemy will be put down. Yet the prophet warns, "Rejoice not thou, whole Palestine, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken; for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent." (vs. 29).

The prophet sees messengers approaching from every direction in Judah, coming with anxious questions that beg for an answer. If this fiery flying serpent will overcome all the nations of the world, and even neighboring Philistia will succumb to its power, what will happen to Judah, the people of God? Will this terrible monster swallow up the church also? Will God's promises fail? How shall God's people escape?

* * *

What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation?

The Lord, Jehovah, had founded Zion!

Zion was the mountain on which the temple stood. There were many other mountains on the earth, known for their covered peaks and lofty heights. Also in Palestine were mountains which were far more majestic than Mount Zion. Mount Hermon lifted its proud head far into the clouds, as if it would taunt lowly Zion with its towering grandeur. But the Lord had chosen Zion as His dwelling place. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth was mount Zion, for God had founded Zion as His abode among His people.

Zion was the earthly symbol of the true church of Jesus Christ. Of her the poet sang:

"Zion, founded on the mountains, God, thy Maker, loves thee well; He has chosen thee, most precious, He delights in thee to dwell; God's own city, Who can all thy glory tell?"

God has chosen His church from eternity in Christ Jesus as a royal priesthood, an holy people, a peculiar possession. Even as God had separated Israel from all the nations of the earth to set His house among them, and to dwell with them, so also God separates unto Himself a covenant people to be His sons and daughters, to dwell with Him, to delight in the light of His

countenance forever. The daily sacrifices in the temple spoke of the atoning blood shed on Calvary for the sins of God's people, to redeem them unto Himself eternally. Even as Israel sang in choruses concerning God's Holy Mountain, so we repeat the song today,

"Mount Zion's walls behold, About her ramparts go,
And number ye the lofty towers that guard her from the foe."

"Observe her palaces, mark her defences well,
That to the sons that follow you Her glory you may tell."

Zion's strength was vested in her theocracy. God in Christ was her King. God's representative was the God-fearing king that occupied the throne in David's royal city. No, Israel's trust was not in horses and chariots, troops and swords and spears. God was their King, the Almighty ruled over them, provided for them, cared for them and blessed them, ever focusing their attention on the eternal kingdom of Christ in the heavens. What they saw in type and shadow, we now see in its fulfillment; Christ, the mighty Conqueror, Victor over sin, death, and the grave, exalted at the right hand of God in the highest heavens. What they sang in eager anticipation, we now sing in reality,

"God is King forever, let the nations tremble;
Throned above the cherubim, by all the earth adored;
He is great in Zion, high above all peoples; Praise Him
with fear, for holy is the Lord."

Tell the messengers of the people: The Lord has founded Zion. Eternal are her foundations, resting on the sovereign decree of the living God. Rock firm are her pillars, bedded in eternal love, secured by justice; for Zion is redeemed in justice, and her converts in righteousness. Zion's safety rests in Jehovah's unchangeable faithfulness. Zion's protection is the watchful eye of the Lord, Who never slumbers nor sleeps. Zion's strength and hope are always in her God, for this God is her Almighty forever and ever, world without end.

Many may wonder at this terse answer. Some were undoubtedly disappointed. They may have asked, "Did the man of God say anything about our farms, our business, our homes, and our luxuries? Did the prophet give any assurance that the Holy City, the temple, and David's throne will remain unscathed? Did he assure us that the enemy will never invade our domain, never cause us to flee for our lives, never persecute our children? Did the Word of the Lord give assurance of a prosperous future, free from war, free from care, free from want?

No, the prophet said nothing about that. In fact, he implied that we should be ready to forsake home, and lands, and possessions, and even dear ones for the

sake of the kingdom of heaven. The man of God spoke of the poor, the oppressed. He meant those who are deprived of all earthly possessions, because they refuse to pay homage to that fiery, flying serpent, and refuse to bear his mark upon their hands and their foreheads. The line of demarcation will be sharply drawn between church and world, Zion and Philistia, believer and unbeliever. He who sets his heart on the treasures and pleasures of this world will perish with this world. For the world with its lusts passes away. He who heeds the call of God to "come out from among her and be separate," will be hated, cast out by his own neighbors, by his own relatives, by his "fellow church members." He will be counted among the "poor," the "afflicted."

These afflicted are the people who are willing to suffer for righteousness' sake. They do not hesitate to be the outcasts on the earth, mocked with cruel mockings, tortured, imprisoned, stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, wandering about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. (Heb. 11:36-40). The afflicted are willing to bear all this because they are poor in spirit. They know that they are guilty sinners, adding to their condemnation every day, yet redeemed, cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ, so that in thankfulness to God they rejoice as sons of God and as heirs of eternal life.

For these afflicted Zion is a safe refuge. They flee into its walls on Sunday to hear the Word ministered to them by Christ through His servants, to experience its power within them, to be comforted and strengthened in their daily struggles and trials. They seek the communion of saints, for the Word of Malachi 3:16 takes on real meaning for them:

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."

God's people pray much. They pray that they may be kept in the hour of temptation, that they may be able to stand in the evil day, that their children may stand in that day.

In one word, they flee into the everlasting arms of the Almighty: there to abide in safety. Blessed in life, blessed in death, blessed forevermore.

Although the mountains quake and earth's foundations shake, though angry billows roar and break against the shore, Our mighty God will hear us.

A new year.

An old world.

A powerful Word.

A faithful God.

EDITORIALS

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Dancing--Full Circle!

(2)

The Christian Reformed Church has come full circle, we saw last time, from a dancing ban in 1928, shortly after the common grace controversy, to promoting dancing by its young people on the campus of its denominational college in 1977.

Rev. John Vander Ploeg bemoans this fact in *The Outlook*, without, however, proposing any kind of realistic solution.

I also bemoan the fact that dancing is thus promoted. But I also bemoan the stand of 1928 and attribute it to principles which I bemoan even more, the principles of the Three Points of Common Grace of 1924. As I pointed out last time, the 1977 stand of the CRC on dancing (even as that on movies) was predictable, and was, in fact, predicted by the late Herman Hoeksema in 1928, four short years after he was cast out by the CRC because of his opposition to common grace. But let me emphasize that I wrote this and write the present lines not in a spirit of "I told you so." I have no interest in this; then the whole discussion becomes a matter of the pot calling the kettle black. But I am interested in the principles involved in this highly practical matter. For if we do not proceed from right principles, Reformed principles, none of us — whether Christian Reformed or Protestant Reformed — can maintain a right stand on the matter of worldly amusements.

By the way, in a recent issue of *The Banner* Dr. Harry Boer, in what impressed me as a rather snide and sarcastic article, also does some bemoaning of his own. As I read him, however, he bemoans not the introduction of dancing in his denomination, but apparently the hypocrisy of his church in so radically changing its policy over a span of fifty years without so much as a "by your leave" and without so much as a note of repentance for this complete about-face on a matter which has surely affected thousands of young people's lives. He has a point, from his CRC viewpoint. But Boer, of course, is a thorough-going common grace man: he does not even do lip service to the Reformed doctrine of reprobation, as is plain from his recent gravamen. Hence, he has no real solution to the problem, except, perhaps, "Let 'em dance!"

The editorial in *The Outlook* (Sept., 1977) seems to suggest that maintaining the position of 1928/1951 is simply a matter of being a "conservative," and for some unexplained reason it takes pains to repudiate a possible charge of legalism against those who want to maintain that old 1928/1951 position on worldly amusements. Editor Vander Ploeg writes as follows:

Although I am thankful and even proud to profess to be and also to be classed by others as a *conservative* (if only the term be rightly understood!) I do refuse to be branded as a *legalist*.

There is a difference. A *conservative* is one who clings tenaciously to and seeks to *conserve* whatever he believes to be valuable and good in his heritage or tradition, whether it be religious or otherwise. For the bona fide conservative there are basics that are simply not negotiable. A *legalist* is one who would lay down, for himself and also for others, laws for conduct that are not clearly prescribed as such in Scripture.

For example. In 1951 the CRC Synod wanted a clarification of the thrust or import of the stand the CRC Synod of 1928 had taken on "Worldly amusements." It was my position as a member of the 1951 committee then and still is that 1928 was not to be read and employed as a piece of legalism. In certain matters room must be left for Christian liberty while, at the same time, *this may never be abused to tolerate sinful license*.

Now it is not my intention to enter into this discussion about legalism versus conservatism. I only touch on it to lead up to the real issue. In this connection, I wish to point out, in the first place, that for many years the popular notion of the 1928 decision was indeed legalistic. For years the three worldly amusements specified in the 1928 decision were rather mockingly referred to as "the three no-no's." Students and some faculty-members alike used this language already in my college days in the early 1940's. Accordingly, in the second place, the *attitude* of not a few was also legalistic. The law was there, so to speak, to be broken — if you could get by without being caught and, possibly, disciplined for the mere act of breaking the rules. One had to "sneak it," of course — lest he be hailed before the college

authorities and lest his parents and/or his pastor and consistory be informed of the violation. For students this was not too difficult; and already in my youth the young man or young woman who never indulged in movie attendance was a rarity. For faculty members this was somehow more difficult: it was common knowledge among the students, however, that there were certain faculty members who "sneaked it" when they were out of town. I could still mention names if necessary, though now this would serve no purpose, since the men are deceased. In the third place, this whole atmosphere of legalism, as I recall it, played a considerable part in the amusements question as it was revived in 1951. I do not have the record of the 1951 history before me at the moment. But as I recall it, there was no little element of pressure at that time to repeal the 1928 decision and to relax what were considered to be stringent rules. Some wanted to give the church a more liberal appearance. Others were tired of the strict laws. Still others felt the hypocrisy of rules which were widely disobeyed and which were impossible of enforcement; they wanted to legitimize the widespread indulgence in the three "no-no's."

Nevertheless, to speak of "legalism" is not to touch directly on the real problem of the CRC "Worldly Amusements" stand of 1928. Yet if we understand legalism correctly, we will eventually also get at the basic problem involved in the 1928 decision, a problem which constituted a guaranteed and built-in failure of that decision — a failure which became manifest in 1966 and 1977. For legalism is not merely the laying down of laws for conduct that are not clearly prescribed as such in Scripture. This ought to be clear as the sun in the heavens. It is entirely possible, in fact, to lay down rules for conduct which are literally spelled out in Scripture and yet to be a legalist in the full-blown sense of the word. It is entirely possible to lay down as laws for conduct the Ten Commandments — literally prescribed in Scripture — but to be a legalist. In the objective sense of the word, when you promulgate a set of rules which have to stand by themselves as mere rules, as a code of regulations, without any foundation in the principles of the love of God, of light versus darkness, of grace versus sin — then you have legalism. It is precisely in this area that the 1928 stand on amusements failed: the recommendations (which were at least better than the body of the report) did not follow from and were not based on the principles of the report. They were not based on the principle of the antithesis. And in the subjective sense of the word (as far as actual life and conduct are concerned), you have legalism when you have the observance of a mere code of precepts without the heartbeat of the love of God and the hatred of sin in it, the observance of precepts under constraint. Ultimately such ob-

servance will always fail, exactly because it is under constraint and without any principal basis and without any inward, spiritual motivation. It is observance of the letter, not of the spirit. Sooner or later, such observance begins to constitute a heavy, unbearable burden; and when that comes to pass, it will not be long before people begin to violate the precepts more and more, to clamor for their removal, and ultimately to move from legalism to libertinism, from strict law to no law, from nomism to anti-nomism. Thus it has come to pass that the CRC of today has repudiated the recommendations of such once revered and respected stalwarts as E.J. Tuuk, H.J. Kuiper, R.B. Kuiper, H. Schultze, and H. Hekman, the Study Committee of 1928.

Hence, the important question is not whether there was any degree of legalism in the now repudiated decisions, but rather: where did those legalistic decisions go astray as far as Reformed and Scriptural principles were concerned?

It is in this connection that I promised to demonstrate that the false principles of common grace are the root of the problem.

To keep this promise I will go back, first, to the Report of 1928. In discussing that Report, I will rely heavily on the article by the late Herman Hoeksema to which I referred already last time. It is found in Volume 4, pp. 393, ff. It is a pity that this article was in the Dutch language: for there is a wealth of instruction in the article not only with respect to the specific question at hand, but with respect to the entire amusements question and also for both grown-ups and youth of today. I shall therefore either paraphrase or quote pertinent sections of this article in translation.

First of all, let me briefly sketch the Report of 1928. After an introductory section about the mandate, the Report proper is as follows:

I. General Principles which lie at the basis of the amusements-question:

A. Also our amusements must be of such a nature that they can serve the glory of God. From this main principle it follows:

1. That our amusements at the very least should not conflict with any commandment of God.

2. That the Christian shall deem it a matter of loyalty to his God and Savior not to further the interests of an institution which in its general influence is an unmitigated evil.

B. Our amusements must not be in conflict with the interests of human well-being.

1. There is indeed a legitimate place in life for such amusements which are recreative for body and mind.

2. No physical recreation or mental diversion should be tolerated which is in any way or degree subversive of our spiritual and moral well-being.

3. Even when our amusements are not spiritually and morally harmful, they should not be allowed to occupy more than a secondary, subordinate place in our life.

C. Our amusements may not conflict with the Christian's proper relation to the world.

1. The Christian need not form separate communities or shun all association with ungodly men. Proper fellowship with unbelievers (page 19) is based on common grace. "This principle can be applied to the sphere of amusements. In his general grace God has (1) given certain joys, diversions, pleasures to men. There are no amusements in hell! By that same general grace He (2) restrains sin in the hearts of the ungodly so that the diversions and amusements which they devise are not always and necessarily tainted with sin. Even their manner of participating in them may not be so manifestly sinful that a Christian cannot join in with them. Is it not possible for Christians to play a game of ball with non-Christians without denying their christian principles? We do not advise Christians to seek their amusements in mixed company. This is often dangerous. But the mere fact that they meet on a *common* ground is no proof that the Christian is on *forbidden* ground."

In this connection Rev. Hoeksema inserts the following comment in his article: "We cannot pass this by without remarking that the common grace men have indeed a 'silly' presentation of God. Not in

hell, but on the way to hell God takes care that the ungodly can still amuse themselves a little. What a cruel grace which lets men go playing to hell!"

And we remark that the reader should note carefully how at this crucial point in the report common grace has wormed its way into the picture.

2. But separation from the world forbids and excludes friendship with evil men.

Rev. Hoeksema inserts this comment under point 2: "What a Judas-like relation the Christian then assumes. He can in a very friendly manner play ball with worldly people, but nevertheless not be friends with them."

3. Separation from the world consists in shunning all the evil which is in the world.

At this point Rev. Hoeksema says: "Wrong, committee! The true antithetical relation of the Christian consists in this, that he as a child of the light not merely shuns the evil, but that he testifies against all wickedness in the world's manifestation of life. Let the Christian do that once, and then let him still ask the world to play ball with him!"

4. Separation from the world includes the weaning away of the heart from the transient things of this present earthly sphere.

C. Also our amusements must remain within the bounds of Christian liberty. The Christian cannot simply do everything, even though it be in itself good. Thus, he may have to refrain from something because it may offend the brother and cause him to stumble.

(to be continued)

The New R.F.P.A. Book Club

Several weeks ago I mentioned in an editorial on Publications News that I had a secret. We are now ready to tell the secret.

During the next few weeks you will be receiving a letter from the R.F.P.A. Publications Committee about the formation of the new R.F.P.A. Book Club. This letter is being sent to all *Standard Bearer* subscribers. We urge you to respond promptly. By joining our Book Club you will be helping tremendously in the work of publishing our Protestant Reformed literature, and you will be helping yourself at the same time because of the attractive discount on our books which will be available to Book Club members.

Here are the details:

1. The Book Club is open to all *Standard Bearer* subscribers.

2. There is no membership fee. The only obligation will be that you must agree to purchase every *new* book which we publish at a price of 20% off the regular price, plus postage. If you are a member, you will receive such new books automatically, will be

billed, and will be expected to pay promptly by return mail. Incidentally, we hope to publish at least two new books during 1978.

3. Membership, however, also entitles you to order any of our previous publications at that same handsome discount of 20%. This means a saving of \$1.99 on a book like "When I Survey. . .", which normally retails for \$9.95.

We wish to emphasize that for the R.F.P.A. the success of this venture is dependent on having an OVERWHELMING response. We would like to have EVERY subscriber join the Book Club. As I have mentioned before, we need *cash* in order to publish books. Much of our money is tied up in our inventory of books. But a guarantee in advance of a large market for our new books through this Book Club will enable us to produce new books regularly.

We urge you, therefore, to respond IMMEDIATELY when you receive our letter, and mail us your membership card PROMPTLY.

MAY WE DEPEND ON YOUR COOPERATION?

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of the Book of Galatians

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE BLESSINGS OF ABRAHAM IN CHRIST FOR THE GENTILES (Galatians 3:14)

There is something triumphant in this statement from the inspired pen of Paul. It is the triumph of the Gentiles and the islands of the sea. The fulfillment of the proclaimed Gospel, "in thee shall all nations be blessed." (Gal. 3:8; Gen. 18:18) The very divine purpose of the promise to Abraham was not that Abraham would be the progenitor of a Jewish nation, as the Chiliast holds so very zealously, but it was that there might be a church of new-born saints, whether Jew or Greek, in one body in Christ! And this purpose and design of God can be attained only in Christ's becoming a curse and hanging on the tree. That removes the curse and breaks down the middle-wall of the commandments, contained in ordinances of the law. The middle-wall of the law must be taken away, a new temple must be built in Zion where both Jew and Greek, all the elect of God, will be the one new manhood in heavenly perfection as the free-born sons of adoption. (Eph. 2:14-17). Thus peace can be preached to those who are near and to those who are far off. It is the triumph of grace, the triumph of the Cross over sin, death, and hell.

Yes, *the* blessing of Abraham must be in Christ Jesus. It must become in him. The verb "*geneetai*" means become a reality. It is the same verb used by John when he says, "Grace and truth *became* through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17, 18) And God was revealed in all His glory in this Christ, in grace and truth for all the elect in all nations. This means that the Cross is a historic happening, the very crux of the bringing of Salvation. Here the curse was cursed; it was nailed to the Cross as the handwriting which was against us. (Col. 2:14) Thus God loved the world. He loved the world in the Cross as the expression of love through wrath and the curse upon us. This was the Divine "must" of the Cross in bringing many sons to glory. (Heb. 2:10) This Cross and the salvation of the Gentiles in Christ is no afterthought. Such is the blind and stupid error of the Pre-millennialists. God never loved the Jews as Jews, but only loved them as many as were elect in Christ together with the elect out of the Gentile world. Christ is in that sense the propitiation for the "whole world." Let not Jewish zealots

now disturb the peace and faith of these Galatians, with their corruptions of the basic terms of the promises of God!

And this implies that we receive "the promise of the Spirit," that is, the *promised* Spirit by faith. The Spirit does not promise here, but the Spirit is promised by God in the Old Testament for all nations. If the nations are to be *blessed* in Abraham, it means that they shall receive the Spirit of the risen and glorified Christ. (John 7:37-39) Joel prophesied of this Spirit and promised it to all flesh. (Joel 3:1-5; Acts 2:16-21) Does not Peter say on the great day of Pentecost, "the gift of the Holy Spirit"? This is not what the Spirit gives, but it is the "gift" which is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the risen and glorified Christ, who was made both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:26) This Spirit is the Comforter who is sent by Christ so that the church, Jew and Greek, would not be comfortless orphans in the world, but well-provided children.

THE BASIC PREMISE IS PROVEN IN VERSES 1-14 OF CHAPTER 2.

1. The basic premise is proven that *all* who are under law are under curse, and not under the loving blessing of the free gift of grace and salvation. There is no exception to this dictum of the Bible. For this is the clear teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures. And these Scriptures cannot be broken. This should shut the mouth of *all* evil speakers.

2. This is not some philosophy but is the explicit and clear teaching of Moses in Deut. 27:26. "Cursed is every one that does not remain in all things of the book of the law to perform it."

3. Besides, the opposite is clearly taught in Habakkuk 2:4. The sense of this passage is that neither the Assyrians nor the men of Judah are righteous. Both go down under the curse of God, except those who believe. These are justified by faith in the Lord, faith in the Christ to come, in a righteousness which is without law. (Rom. 1:16, 17; 3:20-25) All boasting is excluded by the law of faith, which establishes the law. (Rom. 3:31)

4. And now the blessing of Abraham is for the

Gentiles. It is made sure to them by the death of Christ, by which Christ merited the *promised* Spirit.

5. Surely this Spirit is received by faith's hearing and not by law-works. That stands as the rock. And this Rock is Christ, the stone laid in Zion, the chief corner-stone. Let not these Galatians nor we be moved from this hope of the Gospel, which is as an anchor in the holy place, for all who take refuge to God in Christ.

6. The Church is, therefore, not Jewish. Circumcision or uncircumcision both avail nothing. It is only the *new creature!* The man born from above, born by the Spirit.

THE PROMISES OF GOD UNALTERABLY RATIFIED BY GOD (Galatians 3:15, 16)

Paul now will take another viewpoint of the matter here under consideration. He begins a little different type of reasoning. He is so sure that he has now established his argument from Scripture that he can now proceed in a bit more conciliatory tone of voice. Wherefore, now he does not say once more "you foolish Galatians," but he says "brethren." He gathers them as it were about him in a circle to look together in the sacred Scriptures on a certain point. This point is the basic preeminence which the promises to Abraham have over and above the law-giving to Israel at Sinai by the Mediator, Moses. This is a very crucial point to understand. And when this is once understood profoundly, believers will indeed revere the law for its pedagogical intent, but will never let it usurp the place of the Promises made to Abraham. We do well to include also ourselves among these "brethren" whom Paul here addresses.

Paul will now make his point crystal clear by the use of a legal example, a case in law among men in the courts of the land. He will speak "according to man," merely on the human level; he will see what is binding among men and in the courts by the judges of the land, when they are honest and upright judges. And this language ought to be clear to the Galatians. Paul does not doubt but that he will make his point clearer that salvation is by hearing of faith and not by works of law.

He uses the case of a "Covenant," a testament which is merely a human document and not given by God from heaven. Such a document containing certain gifts and bequests is ratified by the courts. In the case of a "will" the terms stand after the testator has died. These wishes *must* be executed. After the document has been ratified, no additions can be made, and no terms can be changed by anyone, not even by the courts. This is an argument in which it is reasoned from what is less certain to that which is more certain, that is, from man's sure documents to

God's more certain terms in His promises to Abraham. We call this reasoning *a fortiori*.

Now how does Paul very carefully and surely climb from the human plane of realities to that of the Divine-heavenly plane of the realities of the promised salvation in the Spirit of Jesus Christ? Here we must listen carefully and discern. He will compare the promises made to Abraham in Christ with the law-giving in Sinai. He then asserts that the latter (the law-giving) could not add or change the terms that salvation is in Christ alone! We read "the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul that it should make the promise of none effect." Legally, the law cannot change the position of the promise. This is a very basic point to understand. The promises are "confirmed" before the highest tribunal of God with solemn oath. God, who cannot lie, swore by Himself, because He could swear by none greater, to Abraham. The promise is confirmed by oath! Hence, they stand fast forever and ever. His mercies fail never, and they are without repentance. (Rom. 11:26-29)

Now the law surely "became" afterward. The term in the Greek, translated "was," is more expressive than the English translation indicates with the simple past tense "was" of the verb "to be." The term indicates that the law then came to stay as a rather permanent institution. The perfect participle is "*gegonoos*." It came at Sinai, when Israel was enroute to Canaan from Egypt, and it is still with the people of God till the time when the Seed should come. It is a long period and epoch in Israel's history. Fact is, that this period is some fifteen hundred years. A long time indeed this was. Israel was so much under this law and so long that they had to be reminded that they had been under the promise longer, that is by the space of four hundred and thirty years. Both are points in history, in the history of the dealings of God with Abraham and with his seed. And, we may add, that both deal with God's dealing with His people in Christ. For the covenant was before confirmed in Christ by God Himself. So that in both of these dealings of God, whether under promise or under law, it has reference to the Christ to come. Both are history.

How do they relate?

Negatively, the law could not make the promise of none effect. No matter what the law demanded, the law was not the way in which a man could redeem himself from sin and death. Under law meant to be under a ratified curse in the land. Paul makes it crystal clear that the law by historical reckoning in years came later by four hundred and thirty years. Paul, to be sure does *not* say, "The *exact number of years* from the time that God promised to Abraham

in his sojourning in the land as a stranger till the law-giving is four hundred thirty years!" Paul is not determining dates in chronological exactitude! He says that his law-giving was a long time after the giving of the promise, at least four hundred and thirty years. That is a matter of the knowledge of Moses, who stood nearer to that period of history than did the translators of the Septuagint Greek of the Old Testament Scriptures. These translators engage in a bit of daring interpolation of the text in Exodus 12:40. There we read in the KJV, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." The Greek Jews of Alexandria, who translated the Old Testament Scriptures into Greek, insert in their translation something

into the text which is not in the original Hebrew written by Moses himself. They insert the phrase "and in Canaan." The four hundred and thirty years of which the text speaks must be spread over the entire period from Abraham's time till the date of Israel's departure from Egypt in the night of the death of the firstborn of Egypt when Israel kept the Passover.

How must we think of this?

It is the conviction of this writer that Paul is not interested in chronological exactitude at all in this statement here in Gal. 3:17. He is comparing two great epochs of God's covenantal dealings with Israel in Christ, asserting that the promise still has the priority even when the law was superimposed upon it.

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Our Father and Our Dads

Rev. Ronald J. Van Overloop

Jesus taught His disciples and us how to pray to God. All of you are very familiar with the Lord's Prayer.

Look at the first two words of that prayer, "Our Father."

Why did Jesus have the prayer begin in this way?

It tells us to whom we are praying. We are praying to God. But we are praying to God Who is our Father.

* * * * *

One thing Jesus is teaching us is that when we pray, we should begin with a form of address.

There are many different names of God which we may use to begin our prayers. When we want to think of God as the One Who is perfect and has all perfections in Him, then we use the name "God" to begin our prayer. When we think of Him as the Sovereign Ruler over all things, then we use the name "Lord." When we want to be intimate with Him, then we call Him "Father." When we are reminded of how God is faithful to His people, then we address Him as "Jehovah."

Jesus taught the disciples to give God a form of address. To pray to God without any form of address is disrespectful. Do you know of any prayers recorded in the Bible which do not have a form of

address? If not every prayer, then the vast majority do contain a form of address.

The reason why an address is so important in prayer is because the address of the prayer determines our attitude throughout that prayer. Thus the address of our prayer is to us a reminder of Him to Whom we are praying. What we will say and how we will say it is determined by our attitude. That attitude will be, by the grace of God, corrected and/or directed, if we listen to the address of that prayer.

* * * * *

Some say that it is too formal to include an address in prayers. They say that prayers are to be intimate. They are the expression of our heart and we should not let anything get in the way of that expression. These people believe that to include a form of address makes the prayer too formal. To include a form of address takes away the spontaneity of the prayer so that it can no longer be the expression of their hearts.

The opinion described above is like a young man who wanted to be a great artist. But he wanted to be a great artist without learning how to paint. He did not want to take any art lessons or go to any classes. The reason he gave for this refusal to attend any art classes was that he wanted his paintings to be a reflection of himself. He was afraid that painting lessons in which he would be taught how to paint,

would hinder and prohibit all creativity and all free expression of his feelings.

Well, that young man became an old man, but he never became a great artist. He never learned that there is a right way and a wrong way to paint. He wanted his paintings to be an expression of himself, and they were. They revealed an undisciplined and rebellious man who was a poor artist.

* * * * *

There is a right way and a wrong way to pray. The wrong way is to deny that God exists. Also it is wrong to think that we are equals with God.

To refuse to learn the right way is rebellion and sin.

The right way does not keep one from expressing his innermost thoughts. It does not keep one from telling God what is in his heart. In fact, it helps him to pray.

The right way to pray does prohibit and hinder self-expression. To give God a form of address does hinder self-expression. But do we not want our sinful self-expression to be hindered?

If we are reminded that the One to Whom we are praying is the Perfect One, Who can have no sin before Him, we will be careful and keep sins from our prayers.

If we are not reminded by the name "Jehovah" that God is faithful to us in all things, will we not question the way He deals with us? Will we not be inclined to ask rebelliously, "Why?", if we are not reminded that Jehovah is faithful to His covenant?

And will we not refuse to judge God's fairness, if we call Him "Father"?

To learn the right way to pray is to give ourselves guidance in the spiritual art of prayer.

* * * * *

Another thing Jesus teaches us with the Lord's Prayer is to address God as our Father.

God IS our Father. If Jesus did not give God that name we would be afraid of Him. Is there any more intimate way to speak of our relationship to God than with the name "Father"?

Jesus made us God's children and God our Father. He did so by cleansing us from the guilt of our sin. Our adoption papers are signed with the blood of the Lamb of God. And we actually become God's children by regeneration. We are children of God.

We look like children of God. The effect of the death of Jesus Christ was such that we are given righteousness and holiness. By walking in that righteousness and holiness we look like our Father.

So far this is all very comforting. In the midst of

every trial and problem we know that God is for Jesus' sake our Father. Therefore He will provide us with every good thing. Therefore He will avert all evil or turn it to our profit. Therefore He so cares for us that we know that we are perfectly safe.

The hard part is that when we realize that God is our Father, that makes us children. Or maybe it would be better to say: little children. A little child has child-like faith.

Now who wants to be a child? Who wants to be called a little child?

As young adults we like to reason. A young person has flexed his mental muscles and has found out that they work pretty well. And so he prefers to use his reason. He prefers to figure things out and thus decide for himself. Usually this is good, but sometimes it can get him into trouble. Often reasons gets in the way of child-like faith.

A little child does not challenge the position of his father or mother. In his mind there is no question as to who is superior and who is inferior.

When he becomes older he begins to argue. He begins to challenge the wisdom of his parents and to criticize their judgment. He doubts their good intentions and desires to seek his own welfare.

No more child-like faith!

No more respect!

It is impossible to separate respect from faith.

* * * * *

Our Father puts our fathers over us. Our Father puts over us all who are in authority.

Our attitude towards those in authority over us shows what our attitude is towards Him Who has placed them in authority over us. When we have no attitude of respect for them, then we must not have any respect for Him.

Jesus teaches us to address God when we pray. We must address Him. It is an expression of our attitude, of our respectful attitude. It is an acknowledgement on our part of our humble position.

If we must address Him, should we not also address our earthly fathers, whom He places over us? Do not our fathers represent to us our Father? Would not an expression of respect and faith to our fathers also be an expression of faith and respect to our Father? If we express our proper attitude to our Father by addressing Him, is not the same required in our relationship to His earthly representative?

* * * * *

Is a form of address necessary every time we speak to our fathers?

We know that our day is characterized by much

disrespect. In fact, there is more disrespect today than there ever was before. And does not that disrespect also affect us?

Would it not be a constant reminder to us just who our fathers are? To be in the habit of addressing our earthly fathers (and mothers) (and teachers, who stand in the place of our fathers), would help us to keep a proper attitude towards them. It would always remind us that they stand in the place of our Father Who is in heaven.

It is so easy to rebel. It is so easy to speak against our fathers. Without even thinking we can talk back and argue wrongfully.

Would it not help us to be respectful to our fathers to address them as fathers before we say what is on our mind? Should we not use every help we can find to aid us in a proper walk on this earth?

Not to address our fathers can give us the unconscious impression that we are their equals. Or worse

yet it can deny their position of God-given authority.

* * * * *

Think about it. I am sure that you never thought of it this way before. In fact, I am sure that most of you never thought of it at all.

Could it be that the refusal to address our Father and our fathers is just another way the devil works? Without our being conscious of it he undermines, even in the smallest ways, God and His authority. I think that the devil is happy when he hears young people refuse to speak respectfully in every possible way of their Father and of their fathers. I think he delights to hear us say that a form of address to them is not important.

Jesus taught us the proper way to speak to our heavenly Father. Does He not at the same time tell us how to speak to those on earth who stand in the place of our heavenly Father? Let us so pray and so speak.

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

Jesus Christ, Our Merciful High Priest

Prof. Robert D. Decker

"We believe that we have no access unto God, but alone through the only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous, who therefore became man, having united in one person the divine and human natures, that we men might have access to the divine Majesty, which access would otherwise be barred against us. But this Mediator, whom the Father has appointed between him and us, ought in no wise to affright us by his majesty, or cause us to seek another according to our fancy. For there is no creature either in heaven or on earth who loveth us more than Jesus Christ; who, though he was in the form of God, yet made himself and ro reputation, and took upon him the form of a man, and of a servant for us, and was made like unto his brethren in all things. If then we should seek for another Mediator, who would be well affected towards us, whom could we find, who loved us more than he, who laid down his life for us even when we were his enemies? And if we seek for one who hath power and majesty, who is there that has so much of both as he who sits at the right hand of his Father, and who hath all power in heaven and on earth? And who will sooner be heard than the own well beloved Son of God? Therefore it was only through distrust that this practice of dishonoring, instead of honoring the saints, was introduced, doing that, which they never have done, nor required, but have on the contrary steadfastly rejected according to their bounden duty, as appears by their writings. Neither must we plead here our unworthiness; for the meaning is not that we should offer our prayers to God on the ground of our own worthiness but only on the ground of the excellency and worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is become ours by faith. Therefore the apostle, to remove this foolish fear, or rather mistrust from us, justly saith, that Jesus Christ was made like unto his brethren in all things that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted; and further to encourage us, he adds, seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. The same apostle saith, having boldness to enter into the

holiest, by the blood of Jesus; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, etc. Likewise, Christ hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. What more can be required? since Christ himself saith, I am the way and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. To what purpose should we then seek another advocate, since it has pleased God, to give us his own Son as an advocate? Let us not forsake him to take another, or rather to seek after another, without ever being able to find him; for God well knew, when he gave him to us, that we were sinners. Therefore according to the command of Christ, we call upon the heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our own Mediator, as we are taught in the Lord's prayer; being assured that whatever we ask of the Father in his name will be granted us."

Article XXVI, *The Belgic Confession*

In this article the *Confession* faces the question, how may we approach the presence of God? Or, how may we enter into fellowship with our Father in heaven? The answer given by the *Confession* is: "... alone through the only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous, who therefore became man, having united in one person the divine and human natures, that we men might have access to the divine Majesty, which access would otherwise be barred against us. . . . Therefore according to the command of Christ, we call upon the heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our Mediator, as we are taught in the Lord's prayer; being assured that whatever we ask of the Father in his name will be granted us." In this fashion and with this beautiful confession our creed concludes its discussion of the work of Jesus Christ in salvation. This rather lengthy article at the same time is directed against the evil practice of Roman Catholicism in praying to saints. While this certainly indicates that the *Confession* is the child of its times, what it has to say applies with undiminished force and significance for the Reformed believer today. As such the article really contains two subjects: the work of Jesus Christ as our Advocate and Intercessor; and, the prayers which we are commanded to offer to God through Jesus Christ, our Mediator.

The Roman Catholic church taught (and for that matter still teaches) that there are men who have lived here upon the earth who, because of their good works, have arrived at perfection. These saints have an honored place in heaven above the ordinary people of God, for their self-mortification and accumulation of good works. These saints are honored and ought to be honored by us especially by our prayers to them. This is especially true of the Virgin Mary who is the "Queen of Heaven" and "Mother of God." But this is also true of the other saints. By praying to Mary and other saints the believer has access to the Father. This is all very necessary according to Rome because of the unworthiness of the believer. The believer is not worthy to appear in the presence of God or the presence of Christ. He may go to neither directly. Rather, he must go to the saints first and seek for their cooperation and influence in petitioning God. The saints will pray for us and intercede for us before God and before Christ.

All this is sharply condemned by our *Confession*. It is true that the *Confession* does not *specifically* condemn the whole Romish error of sainthood and the doctrine of good works implied in it. At the same time, however, it makes the telling remark: "And if we seek for one who hath power and majesty, who is there that hath so much of both as he who sits at the right hand of the Father, and who hath all power in heaven and on earth?" In other words, we need not and may not seek for another mediator to bring us to the Father than our Lord Jesus Christ. Concerning the teaching of Rome that prayers to the saints honor them, the article answers that it rather dishonors them, for it is a practice of "doing that which they never have done nor required, but have, on the contrary, steadfastly rejected, according to their bounden duty, as appears from their writings." Still more, although it is true that the believer who prays and thus enters the sanctuary of God's presence is and must be deeply conscious of his own unworthiness, this is no reason for him to go to the saints first of all. To do the latter would be to display a false humility, for it would indicate that we really distrust Christ! Thus we confess: "... this Mediator, whom the Father hath appointed between him and us, ought in no wise to affright us by his majesty, or cause us to seek another according to our fancy." Neither ought our unworthiness frighten us from Christ's presence, for "there is no creature, either in heaven or on earth, who loveth us more than Jesus Christ. . . . If then we should seek for another Mediator, who would be well affected towards us, whom could we find who loved us more than he who laid down his life for us, even when we were his enemies?" We must not, therefore, plead our unworthiness: "... for the meaning is not that we should offer our prayers to God on account of our unworthiness, but only on account of the excellence and worthiness of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is become ours by faith." Finally, this article at least implies that praying to saints has degenerated into idolatry, which indeed in actual fact it has.

Thus Christ is our only Advocate before the face of the Father. He is our only Advocate because He united in one person both the divine and human natures. Only because He is divine and human can He inter-

cede on our behalf before the throne of God. He became our Advocate because of His highpriestly work as our Mediator. He was eternally appointed by God as our Mediator. To accomplish this work Christ came into our flesh as our merciful High Priest and gave Himself as the perfect Lamb of God in the perfect sacrifice for sin on the cross. Even as the High Priest of the Old Dispensation, Christ carried the blood of atonement into the Most Holy Place of God's Tabernacle. Only Christ did so by shedding His own blood on the tree of the cross and by arising from the dead and taking, not the blood of a bull or goat, but His own precious blood, to lay it before the face of His Father. (Cf. Hebrews 9:11, 12, 24ff.) On the basis of this perfect sacrifice, our Advocate continually pleads with the Father, asking the Father to bless His people with all the spiritual blessings which God has prepared for them. God answers His prayer by bestowing all these blessings upon Christ, which He in turn pours out upon His church through His Spirit.

Christ is our perfect Mediator and merciful High Priest because He loved us so much that He was willing to go the dark way of the cross for us. He was made like unto us in all things except our sin and, therefore, knows all our infirmities. In all points tempted as we are, Christ as our merciful High Priest is able to succor (come to the aid of) those who are tempted. (cf. Hebrews 2:16-18; 4:14-16) Furthermore, our High Priest is exalted in the highest heavens, clothed with power and glory and, therefore, able to give us all that is necessary to our full and complete salvation. (Cf. Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:5-11) We may also be certain that Christ is surely heard of the Father, because He is the only begotten and beloved Son Who has finished all that the Father sent Him into the world to accomplish.

Thus we may confidently pray to the Father in the name of Jesus, our merciful High Priest. Thus the Saviour has instructed us. (Cf. John 15:7, 16) To pray in Jesus' name means that we base our prayers

on His merits. It implies that we are deeply aware of our own sins and unworthiness and that we know that God can never receive us as we are in ourselves. Thus we base our prayers and all our petitions on the fact that Jesus Christ died for us to remove all our sin and guilt and to merit for us the blessings of salvation. Thus Christ prepared the way for us into the Father's presence. Formerly, in the Old Dispensation of types, the way to God was closed by a veil. But when Jesus died, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom. And this did not simply mean that the old order of things had passed away, but also that through the rending of the veil which is His flesh, Christ prepared a new and living way for us into the sanctuary of God's presence.

This means too that even though our prayers are imperfect they are always heard. This is true because Jesus Christ our merciful High Priest makes intercession for us. He purifies our prayers. If we ask for something we should not, He tells the Father not to grant it. If we fail to ask for that which we need He presents our needs to the Father so that we receive all things necessary to bring us to glory.

Finally, this means that we must always pray in faith. To pray in the name of Jesus means we must pray in harmony with His will. (Cf. I John 5:14, 15) WE must pray for grace to live new and godly lives of thankfulness. WE may not impose our carnal wishes upon God. We must pray in the consciousness that we belong in life and in death to our faithful Savior and are, therefore, sons in our Father's house. And when we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, we know that the Spirit within us prays for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Praying thus and coming thus to the Father in the name of and according to the will of our merciful High Priest, Jesus Christ, we may be absolutely sure that our heavenly Father will give us all things whatsoever we ask. This we believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths to the salvation of our souls.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

January 1, 1978

Dear Timothy,

Before we return to our discussion of the offices in the Church, I want to take this opportunity to extend to you the sincerest blessings of the Lord in your work in the year which lies ahead. We, in distinction from the world, do not see the beginning of a new year as a time to make a fresh beginning after a year filled with much failure and disappointment. It is not a time for "New Year's resolutions." Insofar as we

look back, it is for purposes of reflecting on God's great goodness which He has shown to us. But we look ahead. And, while we do not know and cannot tell what the new year has waiting for us, we do know that the beginning of another year points ahead to the beginning of the rule of Christ with His Church in His kingdom of everlasting glory — just as the end of a year reminds us of the end of all things which is at hand. And because we labor by grace in

God's kingdom, we labor in the confidence that our work, under God's blessing, will serve to bring about the day of final victory for the Church. In this assurance, I pray for a blessed new year for you.

In our last letter we discussed the various ways in which God took special care for the office which Adam lost through sin in the Old Dispensation. We talked briefly about the fact that the three-fold office of prophet, priest, and king was concentrated in the patriarchs prior to the formation of the nation of Israel. It is interesting to notice, however, that while the patriarchs really held all three offices in their families and clans, the offices were only dimly reflected in these men. Even in the Old Dispensation the offices came to clearer and fuller expression when the nation of Israel was brought into existence. We also talked about the unique office which Melchizedek held and how he pre-figured Christ in a unique way. But it was especially during the time of the history of Israel that the offices came to their highest typical manifestation. That is what now needs to be discussed.

Now the first point that needs to be emphasized is that the two offices of king and priest were kept rigidly separate in the time of Israel's history. Kings and priests functioned in different offices and were not permitted to encroach upon the office which was not theirs. There are some instances of this happening in Israel, and Scripture tells us that this was a very great sin. One instance is recorded for us in II Samuel 13. Saul was fighting against the Philistines. Saul had been instructed to wait with entering the battle until Samuel had come to make the appropriate sacrifices. (By the way, Samuel could properly make these sacrifices because he was of the tribe of Levi, I. Chron. 6:16, 23. This was why Samuel could serve in the tabernacle during the days of Eli. Sacrificing was limited to the tribe of Levi. Jeroboam committed a terrible sin when he "made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi." I Kings 12:31.) But the people were deserting him because the battle seemed unnecessarily postponed and they were increasingly afraid. And so Saul made these sacrifices himself. "And (Saul) tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came." I Samuel 13:8-10.

This was a grievous sin for which Saul lost the right to be king. "And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within

the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." I Sam. 13:11-14.

We have another instance of this in the case of Uzziah, king of Judah. Although he was a God-fearing king, we read of him that he attempted to take over the office of the priesthood. "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him."

The point of these incidents is that the office of king and priest were kept strictly separate in the nation. We may perhaps ask the question why this was so necessary. The Scriptures do not give us a direct answer to this question, but we may perhaps deduce at least a partial answer from what we know of these offices and their functions in the dispensation of shadows. In the first place, God had ordained that Christ should be a priest only after the order of Melchizedek. And He was a priest after the order of Melchizedek because Christ alone united in His person the offices of priest and king. It was uniquely Melchizedek's prerogative to point ahead to Christ in this unique way. The second reason is that the whole development of types in the Old Testament must be looked at organically. We cannot go into this in detail, for it would carry us far afield. But it must be remembered that types developed. And they developed

because through the various periods of Old Testament history, God caused the light of His promise to shine more and more clearly. He was constantly showing His people in a fuller way the riches of His promise soon to be realized in Christ. Thus, the patriarchs could, in a sense, hold all three offices. But these offices were only dimly reflected in the patriarchs. When the offices came to clearer typical manifestation, they had to be separated from each other. And they had to be separated from each other because it had to remain clear always that these offices were only types. They pointed ahead to Christ, but they were not the reality. They could not accomplish what Christ did. They were inferior. They were pictures. And because of their inferiority, the richness of the promise in Christ could only be shown by dividing the offices. David could scarcely (if I may put it that way) serve as a proper picture of Christ in the office of king. This was so true that he was refused permission to build the temple because he was a man of war and had blood on his hands. He could, at best, as king, reflect only one aspect of Christ's work as king. It was impossible then that he also reflect Christ's work as priest. His place in the organic development of types was very limited because of his inferiority.

At any rate, this was the truth of the matter. No king might function as priest and no priest might function as king.

The second element which was true of the idea of the office in the days of the nation of Israel was the fact that the office of prophet was both a separate office and was an office shared by kings and priests. The first idea hardly needs any proof. There were prophets in Israel from the very beginning of the history of the nation. And these men functioned exclusively in the office of prophet. They were not priests and they were not kings. We have to mention only such names as Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, etc. to show how true this was.

But that the office of prophet was shared by the kings and the priests needs perhaps a bit more proof. We must remember in this connection that the office of prophet is particularly the office through which God's Word is revealed. Thus Rev. Hoeksema writes in his *Dogmatics*: "In general, we may say that a

prophet is one that has the knowledge of God, speaks in His name, and thus declares his praises." p. 366. But anyone who was an officebearer in Israel spoke this Word of God. Oftentimes the priests were consulted that an individual might know God's Word. Sometimes this was through the Urim and Thummim and sometimes through the ephod. I Samuel 23:9-12, I Samuel 28:6, in connection with Exodus 28:30.

When Saul received the Spirit at the time of his anointing, he prophesied, so much so that it became a saying in Israel: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" I Samuel 10:6, 10-13. David could not have written the Psalms unless he possessed the Spirit of prophecy, for the Psalms are not simply poetry for singing in the temple and are not only autobiographical, but are Messianic as they speak of the Christ Who was to come. In fact, it is a striking thing that Jesus quotes the Psalms as if they were His very own, as if He Himself had written them. And this is true, for it was the Spirit of Christ which inspired David to write them to begin with. The same, of course, is true of the writings of Solomon. We have a very striking instance of this truth in John 11:47-53. Jesus had raised Lazarus from the grave and this had had a profound effect upon the people. The leaders of the Jews were frightened by Jesus' popularity with the people and gathered together in counsel to ponder what could be done. In the course of the discussion, Caiaphas became impatient with the members of the Sanhedrin and suggested a course of action which would result in Jesus' death. He said, "Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." Then John adds the significant words: "And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." The point is that Caiaphas, though a wicked man, was able to prophesy because he was high priest. As high priest he was able to function in the office of prophet.

But we must discontinue our discussion for this time and continue it at a later date.

Fraternally in Christ,
H. Hanko

TRIUMPH THROUGH TRIALS

Plagued All the Day Long

Rev. J. Kortering

Poor Asaph.
SULKING!

"For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning," Psalm 73:14.

In all likelihood it is true that Asaph must have known a great deal of trouble, though we do not know much about Asaph the seer. He shared in the afflictions of David the king, and David was known to cry out, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all," Psalm 34:19.

Certainly, we can point out the difficulties of God's people in any day. Perhaps you can say now, "For all the day long have I been plagued." You know what pain is like; you have experienced the anguish of suffering; you know the burning tears of grief; you wrestle with life's problems alone and are sometimes afraid. Yes, many of you know this first hand.

Asaph, however, was not just expressing a fact, he was complaining. More correctly, he was sulking! Do you know how he got that way? He compared his life to that of others. Not just anyone else's — he compared his life to that of the wicked. His wicked, unbelieving neighbors seemed to have an easier life than he did.

He speaks of them as "foolish" and "wicked," verse 3. "Pride compasseth them as a chain and violence as a garment," verse 4. They are "corrupt and speak wickedly," verse 8. This leads them to say, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge in the most high?" verse 11.

Yet, these very same people seem to prosper. There are "no bands in their death, their strength is firm," verse 4. "They are not in trouble as other men nor plagued as other men," verse 5. "Their eyes stand out with fatness," verse 7.

Start comparing, look over the fence, and you are bound to see others as much better off. "I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked," verse 3.

Inevitably you will sulk.

ANGRY

Listen to Asaph: "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency," verse 13.

His sulking led to anger.

That anger was kindled by rebellion, rebellion against God Who sends rain and sunshine upon the wicked and the just.

If God loves His children, should not His children have it easiest? If God hates the wicked, should not they suffer all the plagues of His holy wrath? God has things mixed up. It is not fair. God has things backward.

Start comparing your place in life with the ungodly on merely human terms and you will sulk and become angry.

And that's dangerous. "My feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped," verse 2.

SHAME

Asaph was led into the house of God and he saw things spiritually. He learned two truths which saved him.

First, the prosperity of the wicked is not God's favor on them. It is judgment. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castest them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors . . . when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image," verses 18-20. What appeared to be blessing was in actuality a terrible curse. Their riches, their health, their prosperity which God gave them became the occasion for their increase in sin and judgement.

Second, the afflictions of God's people are good. "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart," verse 1. That goodness of God includes the plagues He sends them all the day long. As prosperity destroys the wicked, so the hand of affliction saves His people.

RESOLVE

A wiser Asaph wrote, "Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand, thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory," verses 23, 24.

You see, Asaph went through a learning experience.

He looked at others: he sulked.

He reasoned humanly: he became angry.

He went to the house of God: he was overcome with shame.

He turned to his place in life and he said, "Lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works," verses 27, 28.

Draw near to God!

God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Even in the plagues.

Have a Blessed Christ-Centered New Year.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Gathered to His People

Rev. John A. Heys

Although we may not like to think of it, we cannot deny it, and Hebrews 9:27 declares it so emphatically: "... it is appointed unto men once to die..." And the main reason for our fears of that day is expressed in the next phrase, "But after this the judgment." Separation from loved ones through death is painful and not to be coveted. Even for the most devout child of God, who with Paul is convinced in the bottom of his soul that "to die is gain," and is thoroughly convinced that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1), that matter of leaving loved ones behind is not a pleasant experience to contemplate. But the fear is there concerning that judgment.

Come, though, that day surely will, whether we be children of God or children of the devil. We may face it differently than do the children of the devil because of our faith in Him Who entered death for us, rose triumphantly out of it, and now is our Good Shepherd to lead us while in the valley of the shadow of death and to be our guide through death. But that day of death is just ahead; and so is the judgment. We can stop them no more than we can stop tomorrow from coming. And because tomorrow is coming, so is death and the judgment. Though our faith sustains us as we see it coming, our flesh, in which are still the motions of sin, gives us constantly the evidence that we not only deserve the death but also that we cannot stand in ourselves in the judgment.

And if we today, on this side of the cross and with all the powerful writings of the New Testament, have a fear of death, we ought to marvel at the faith of the Old Testament saints who faced it calmly and with confidence, even though they had lambs instead of The Lamb of God, sinful priests instead of our holy High Priest, and pictures instead of Him Who was pictured so faintly in that day of shadows. Of them we read that they died in faith, that they embraced the promises and walked as pilgrims and strangers who knew that they had a better city and were going to it.

Living in the day of shadows they were also taught

by God by means of shadows. We know today that when God declares and promises to them that fear Him that they shall see their children's children (Psalm 128:6), we cannot be sure that this will happen in this life; but we know that this will surely be the case in the new Jerusalem. We see though that Abraham, the father of believers, was given to experience that in his earthly life before death swallowed up and carried him away. Even though his son Isaac did not marry until he was forty years old and Abraham himself was now 140 years old, and even through Abraham and Isaac with Rebekah had to wait another twenty years before the grandchildren were born, God caused him to see his children's children at the age of 160 years. And then God gave him another fifteen years to live with them and see them grow up and approach the age of becoming young men.

Those were good years for Abraham. We may believe that Abraham enjoyed good health until the day of his death. We read no word about blindness such as came upon Jacob, nor of any other weaknesses that characterized his last days. We do read that he died "in a good old age, an old man and full of years." The whole expression leaves not the slightest suggestion of a senile, frail man who hardly knew he was alive. His days were good and full. The expression "full of years" does not mean that the days were heavy, weighty with problems and difficulty of getting around. In fact the word "years" does not even appear. Some translations even make it "full of days." And would we need this addition after the statements of "a good old age" and "an old man"? No, he had a good life that was full of wonderful experiences from a spiritual point of view. He saw, when he was as good as dead, the promised son. His concern for a wife for his son that would have interest in God's covenant was rewarded with a divinely appointed woman from his own relatives. And now he had seen his children's children and God's faithfulness to His promises.

Incidentally, the first few verses of Genesis 25 refer to that which took place before the birth of Isaac and not afterward. Abraham took Keturah as a wife and

she bare him six children. And to read of this in chapter 25, after Abraham had procured a wife for Isaac, makes it look as though the power which God gave Abraham to father a son at the age of ninety nine, in a wife who was eighty nine, continued and that he was able to father six more children and obtain a host of descendants. This definitely was not the case. The birth of Isaac was a miracle wrought by God in Sarah. It was also a miracle realized through sexually dead Abraham. And God did not continue this miracle in Abraham. He enabled Abraham for that one time to fertilize that which He for the first time gave to Sarah for the sake of bringing forth in her a son.

It is certainly true that had he taken Keturah after the birth of Isaac there was still plenty of time for these children to be grown enough to be sent away from Isaac, as Abraham did and as is pointed out in Genesis 25:6. There were forty years before Isaac received a wife; and those forty years were certainly sufficient time for children to be born and to mature. But this puts Abraham in a worse light than he deserves. It is bad enough to read that he took another wife after God showed him in the case of Hagar that this was not His way of fulfilling the covenant promise. It is bad enough to read of both Hagar and Keturah, who represent unfaithfulness on Abraham's part to his God-given wife, Sarah. That he was disappointed that God gave him no children through Sarah is understandable. Many a husband has had that experience. But it is no excuse for unfaithfulness and for adding new flesh. But consider once what it would mean that, after receiving the child of the promise, Abraham would get himself a concubine to raise up more children. He would hardly appear as the father of all believers. But how it appears to us means little. He would certainly be walking in a way of despising this great mercy and wonder of God that gave him Isaac. And Scripture gives us no such picture of Abraham. He looked to the Christ as that Christ was still in the loins of Isaac. Before the promise of Isaac he did look elsewhere. After Isaac's conception and birth Abraham looked at Isaac and through him to Christ Himself.

The reason why Moses places this taking of Keturah here is that he intends in this chapter to bring us to the death of Abraham. And before he does so, he will give the full account of these children of Abraham who became enemies of Israel in later years. The reason why he did not place this element in Abraham's life in its chronological setting is the fact that he wishes, as guided by the Holy Spirit, first to trace the covenant line and how God realized it. This required the telling of Abraham's and Sarah's foolish attempt to help God along by the conception of Ishmael. But these children which Abraham begot through Keturah have no place in the telling of the

story of God's unfolding His covenant promises to Abraham. So the detail of their birth and of Abraham's sinful deed in former years of taking Keturah is added here at the end before Moses closes out the account of his earthly life. And we do better to translate, "And also Abraham took a wife . . ." rather than, "Then again. . . ." "And also" then means that he also took Keturah to be his wife, without stressing the time when he did so.

And having informed us of these descendants of Abraham Moses gives us to understand that Abraham did, after the birth of Isaac, walk according to the truth that God spoke to him that, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." For we read that he gave gifts to all the sons of Keturah, and "sent them away from Isaac." These were his flesh and blood as surely as Ishmael was, and as surely as Isaac was. But Abraham is not moved here by the flesh but by the Spirit of Him Who was in Isaac's loins. It is a simple statement: "Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away." But it speaks of faith in God. We do not, as the world warns its citizens not to do, "Put all our eggs in one basket"; but we do in implicit trust in God expect Him to keep His word and realize His promises. Be it but one son that Abraham has left, because God has said that all these rich promises will be filled in him, they will be fulfilled. And we are to look in only one direction. We are to look at the only begotten Son of God. We need nothing more than Him. We need nothing that is not in Him. And all the glories and blessings promised God's Church are in Him and come out of Him.

It is for that reason also that Moses declares of Abraham that he, ". . . was gathered to his people." For it is through this only begotten Son of God that we are gathered at the moment of death to our people. It is through this only begotten Son of God, and through Him alone, that we have a people. When God gave the first promise of the gospel, when fallen man stood trembling in the garden, knowing his guilt before God, He spoke of restoration of His favour. He spoke of a Kingdom of Heaven wherein man would know the sweetness of God's love upon him, and wherein man would live in perfect love before God. But He also spoke of one Seed who would realize all this in the way of the bruising of His heel on the cross of Calvary by the Serpent, but also in the way of crushing that Serpent completely and of delivering a people from his power and out of his kingdom of darkness.

There God spoke already of two peoples. There already He divided the whole human race into two groups. There He drew the sharp line of the antithesis wrought by sovereign, eternal election. There He spoke of a spiritual difference which HE would realize in the human race. There He spoke of a seed which the believer may call his people in distinction

from another seed and people to which he does not belong. There He put reborn Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, and Shem, and the other unnamed believers who died before Abraham did, all in one class. Yea, there He put all these in one place, the heavenly abode of the souls of the redeemed. For to be gathered to one's people means that these are all in one place. And Abraham was by God gathered to where God had already gathered the elect who had preceded Abraham into death, or, as Enoch, had gone into this place without death.

So you see Moses believed not only in life after death, he believed in a conscious life of glory immediately after death. Abraham was about a thousand miles or more away from the place where the bodies of Adam and Noah and Shem were buried. Bodily they were not gathered. Their bones were not gathered into one place. It is the soul of which Moses speaks here. His soul was gathered with the souls of the elect who one by one were gathered before God's face. And the expression "his people" rules out any idea of soul sleep. So does the word gathered. Souls were gathered, not bodies. And these souls were not

unconscious realities stacked somewhere on shelves, or still in their bodies in their graves. No, they are a people. Abraham was gathered unto his people. And we may believe that the expression implies that when he closed his eyes in death to see Isaac and his sons no more in the flesh, he saw Adam and the saints from him till Shem and *knew them to be his people*. He felt quite at home in the heavenly glory; and he did not enter as a stranger. These were his people, even though he had not known them in the flesh and had never seen them before.

Who are your people? With whom do you expect to be gathered when your time comes to close your eyes in the sleep of death? How amazingly wonderful that we know where we are going and with whom we will spend eternity. In Christ all the saints are our people. Because we belong to Him, and they likewise belong to Him, and both by God's sovereign grace, we can point to the most wonderful people that ever lived, the redeemed children of God who have enmity in their hearts for all evil and love only for God, and we can say with conviction and joy, "*These are my people.*"

ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

Television Addiction

There appears a review of a new book in *The Christian News* which may also be of interest and concern to us. The book, *Telegarbage*, written by Gregg Lewis, published by Thomas Nelson, Inc., \$2.95, presents some serious objections to television programs presented today. In the review of the book, some sobering thoughts are presented. Perhaps we do well to consider these — and also the question whether we also are failing in our responsibilities to remain properly separate from this world.

"If this book does nothing else but make the Christian more aware of what his children are viewing on television and what he himself is viewing — the ugly, sordid, denigrating garbage — then a big step has been taken in the right direction."

Author Lewis takes that one step with timely certainty, cataloging example after example of how television is running — and in some ways ruining — our lives. In the average American home the tube blares for more than six hours a day. Teenagers log 15,000 slack-jawed, eyeball-searing hours in front of the set by the time they graduate from high school — 3,000 more hours than they spend in the classroom. Engineers design city water supply systems to allow

for pressure drops caused by toilet-flushing during commercials.

Of course, far worse things result from too much viewing. Violence is so prevalent that, at best, we become insensitive to it and, at worst, we imitate criminal behavior. One maximum security inmate claims that TV actually teaches prisoners how to steal cars, rob stores and roll drunks. Network programmers insist that violence is true to life and that, anyway, that's what audiences crave; therefore, little or no attempt is made to delete the blood and death.

Sex plays a more explicit television role than ever before. In the long ago of the fifties, married partners slept in separate beds and wore pajamas. In the heated seventies, Mary Hartman grapples with the problems of impotence, venereal disease, and open marriage.

Lewis seeks to jolt apathetic Christian viewers with the realization that networks produce shows for the sole purpose of selling advertising time. Copywriters push the gospel of materialism: the more you have, the happier you'll be, which is contrary to the Christian philosophy.

Even though many viewers insist they can't remem-

ber who sponsored a program they watched 15 minutes ago, nevertheless a thought, a sentence, or a word has been subtly planted in the subconscious mind, i.e. "Have it your way," "Things go better with Coke," "Grab all the gusto you can get." The J. Walter Thompson Company, one of the country's largest advertising agencies, predicts that future TV spots will be a rapid-fire three seconds long — possible because home audiences are being conditioned to accept images at a faster and faster rate.

The reviewer continues by reminding of the recommendation of the author to join protest groups and write many letters to sponsors and networks or their stations. Perhaps some of this is effective. But for us, Christians by profession and presumably by walk, there ought to be a careful review of our own position toward television and its viewing. That the invention is not itself wrong has been repeated correctly many times. But what is it doing to our homes?

Let each family list the number of hours that TV is viewed during one week by each member of the family. How many hours are spent there by children who are too "busy" to finish catechism lessons or school work? How much time is spent there by parents who are too "busy" to attend societies? How much time is spent watching TV on Sunday — God's day of rest? What is being watched? Do we condone certain violent programs — because it is simply a report of "police files"? Do we condone swearing, sex, stealing — because this is "realism" — and we can read the same things in books? Are we growing hardened and insensitive to sin because of its constant portrayal on TV? And do we wonder why our children oftentimes do things and say things which shock us? Or, why is there such a growing emphasis on materialism in our own lives? The book, which I have not yet obtained, is surely very accurate at least in its title: *Telegarbage*.

Children's "Rights"

Much has been made in recent years of one's "rights." An editorial in the *Presbyterian Journal* of Nov. 2, 1977 warns how far this has already gone in our country with respect to the control of government over our children.

Over a long period of time and in almost imperceptible stages, the trend in modern thinking has turned away from the traditional view that parents have some sort of inalienable right to the last word in the discipline, control, nurture and education of their children.

Parental control over the education of their children disappeared long ago. Today the state not only tells parents how much education their children must have and what kind of education it must be, the state has even begun to tell parents where their children must be educated.

Private schools continue acceptable in the eyes of the state — but only if they meet increasingly rigid specifications. Never mind that a child in public school may very well graduate uneducated, if not actually illiterate; parents who try to set educational standards of their own based on religion or other conviction can count on running afoul of the law in almost every state in the U.S.

Where a child's "rights" seem threatened by pa-

rental policy or discipline, the state today brusquely intervenes. A 16-year-old girl may have an abortion, according to various court decisions, without her parents' consent or even their knowledge.

Nor may parents any longer instill their own religious values into their children beyond a certain age. In North Carolina recently, a court told the parents of a 16-year-old girl that she could select her own friends, and choose her own religion and church over their objections. The court also ruled that the girl should be free to participate in school activities of her choice, including school parties, dances and clubs.

The fact that the girl's parents are strict Jehovah's Witnesses does not alter the importance of the alarming doctrine laid down by the court: Family wishes do not matter if, in the eyes of the state, those wishes impinge upon a minor child's "freedom."

We readily recognize that some parents are unfit, others incompetent. Laws against child abuse, child neglect and child labor belong on the books and should be enforced.

The trouble is that — as in the case of other areas where the border lines are painted in grey rather than black and white — when government gets a toe in the door, the time comes as certainly as night follows day that government will shoulder its full way into the house and take over, if it can. . . .

Physical Education

An editor in the *Reformed Journal*, R. Dirk Jellema, expresses a concern about high school athletics which contains much for serious thought.

In the park down the street the boys (sexual freedom hasn't gravitated to this level yet) from the local Christian Middle School are playing soccer in

the dwindling afternoon. Their vigor and enthusiasm and sincerity are beautiful to watch. Like their coach they are patient and encouraging in their attitudes.

Those waiting along the sidelines are talking about the team and about soccer. Tomorrow, they say, the coach will put a list on the board naming the ones

who will report to Dr. Vander X's office the following day for physical examinations. Those whose names are not on the list will have been informed, after reading the list twice, that they have been cut from the team.

The team will practice for nearly two hours every night after school, except for catechism on Wednesday, and play perhaps a game each week. Those who do not make the team will play an intramural game once each week, during noon-hour, and many will turn up to cheer their team at its games.

Although the sport of soccer is new in Christian junior high schools, other things haven't changed much in the past thirty or forty years. You can't have forty-five kids on a soccer team, or basketball team, if you want to keep your budget down, if you want to play competitively with Zeeland or Hamilton or whoever.

Something bothers me about this, the system of interschool sports that I approved, even wallowed in when I went through it. I don't like it. I suppose somewhere there's a physical educator whose goal is to provide the maximum amount of exercise, training, coordination, team play, and education for the maximum number of kids. A physical educator who believes in physical education, believes in it enough to resist the formidable pressures of parents and students and board members and alumni to field a team. But he's not here.

This coach will follow precedent. Kids will be cut from the team, and they will take their cuts with more equanimity than I could have mustered at their age, or even now. And they won't know why. They'll assume they weren't good enough, but whether it's their competitive spirit that's lacking, or their speed, or muscle, or dexterity, they just won't know. It's as though their teachers would give them failures in their homework but never mark wrong answers, never inform them of their weaknesses in math or history or science.

I believe in physical education, support it as necessary to the formation of the whole man. And it strikes me as ridiculous if not sinful to take the best-educated eighth-graders and give them eight or ten hours each week of advanced physical education, while those who need the education worse and worst are limited to a lunch-hour's worth of intramurals.

It's as though a teacher of English composition would tell his forty-five students that only twenty of them are good enough to work with, that the other twenty-five, being less talented, will have to get their education on their own, during lunch hour on Friday. I want to think that physical education is as important to a school's curriculum as composition, and if that's true it follows that as composition teachers spend more time helping weaker students, so should physical education teachers. . . .

Book Reviews

C.H. DODD, INTERPRETER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, by F.W. Dillistone; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977; 255 pp., \$11.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

Since we cannot review this book in any kind of detail, we offer a rather lengthy quote from the flap of the book to inform those of our readers who have not heard of C.H. Dodd who he was.

. . . He was a scholar who spent a lifetime devoted to New Testament study and to teaching at the Universities of Oxford, Manchester and Cambridge. He was author of more than twenty books . . . and was Shaffer Lecturer at Yale, Ingersoll Lecturer at Harvard, Stone Lecturer at Princeton, Sarum Lecturer at Oxford, and Bampton Lecturer at Columbia. . . .

To the public at large he is perhaps best remembered as the Joint Director of the New Translation of the Bible (New English Bible). But here is also a portrait of the riveting lecturer and the Congregationalist minister described by a visitor to his church as "a small spare figure of a man. Always spruce and immaculate in his dress and appearance. A good sense of humour and a ready laugh. A great and natural appearance of vitality."

A student of music, coins, drama, languages, archeology, all aspects of the classical world, he was

too concerned with the central task of communicating the Gospel to his fellow-men for it ever to become possible for him to surrender himself to disciplines almost completely related to the past. . . .

Although recognized throughout the world as New Testament scholarship as an outstanding scholar, and although hailed even in conservative circles for his accomplishments in the field of New Testament studies, C.H. Dodd was, after all, a member of the circle of higher critics who have done untold harm to Scripture.

He possessed a Congregationalist, thus Calvinist, background, but spent most of his productive years in Anglican and American liberal circles. He was deeply influenced by Harnack, Frued, and German higher criticism which led him to adopt the position of literary-historical criticism of the New Testament text. He worked with the ecumenical movement, especially the World Council of Churches and, as mentioned in the quote above, labored in the translation of the New English Bible.

This rather lengthy biography gives many details of his life and labors. It has in my judgment two glaring weaknesses. It does not sufficiently explain his views

of Scripture and his literary-historical approach to the Bible, and it presents Dodd as a man who has no faults. The biographer left "the warts" out of the portrait of Dodd, and the result is less than a human figure.

The book will be of interest to those who have made an acquaintance with Dodd through his writings and who have delved into the murky waters of Biblical criticism.

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE, An Exposition of Ephesians 6:10-13, by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones; Baker Book House, 1977; 373 pp., \$8.95 (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

This is the third volume published by Baker on Lloyd-Jones' exposition of Ephesians. The book is not, strictly speaking, a commentary. It is rather a series of 26 printed sermons on this passage of Ephesians. In fact, it is not really even an exposition of the four verses of Ephesians 6 which speak of the spiritual battle of the saints; it is rather an exposition of the phrase "the wiles of the devil" which is found in this passage. The author has devoted the entire book to a discussion of this one subject.

It is but natural that many different subjects are discussed. A few chapter titles (or sermon topics) will show how varied the subject matter is: "The Origin of Evil," "Heresies," "Cults," "Philosophies and Vain

Deceits," "Faith and Experience," "True and False Assurance," "Quenching the Spirit," "Temptation and Sin," "Discouragement," "True and False Zeal."

There is a great deal of worthwhile material in the book. Lloyd-Jones' discussion of the cults, e.g., is excellent, and his lengthy treatment of the many forms which temptation takes is of great spiritual benefit. Lloyd-Jones writes well and is always interesting reading. While his material is not always the type of expository preaching to which we are accustomed, it is, for the most part, thoroughly Biblical. We have recommended before the writings of this English preacher who preached for so many years in Westminster Chapel, and we recommend also this book as a valuable addition to the libraries of our readers. It makes wonderful devotional reading, and it will be of great help in understanding the nature of the spiritual battle against sin which God's people are called to fight. By all means, buy the book. It also makes a worthwhile gift.

The chief weakness of the book in this reviewer's opinion is that it belabors the subject of the wiles of the devil. Nearing the end of the book the subject itself became somewhat tedious. But this danger can be avoided if the book is read leisurely, a chapter at a time, when the opportunity presents itself. There are many sections of such value that the reader will want to read them again and again.

Know the standard and follow it. Read THE STANDARD BEARER.

ADDRESS/PHONE CHANGE

Note change of address and telephone number:

Rev. Gise Van Baren
5101 Beechtree
Hudsonville, Mich. 49426
Tel. 669-0755

NOTICE

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, January 11, 1978 at Southeast Church. Material to be treated in this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk no later than ten days prior to the convening of the session.

Jon J. Huiskens
Stated Clerk

ANNIVERSARY

On January 8, 1978, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fredrick Huizinga, will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to God for the many years of Christian love and instruction they have given us. It is our prayer that God will bless them in the years which lie ahead of them.

Their children
Rick and Terri Huizinga
Jennie and Melissa
Jack Huizinga
Daniel Huizinga
Daryle and Janis Kuiper
Brent and Rebecca
Ruth Huizinga

News From Our Churches

Candidate Kenneth Koole has accepted the call from our congregation in Randolph, Wisconsin, to be their pastor. Randolph requested a special meeting of Classis West in order that Mr. Koole might receive his classical examination prior to his being installed as Randolph's pastor. Classis was scheduled to meet in special session on December 13 for this purpose.

The council of Hope Church prepared a short program in commemoration of their pastor and his family's leaving to labor in Christchurch, New Zealand for about nine months. This program was held after the evening service on Sunday, December 11. Rev. Van Overloop and his family planned to leave on December 17, spend the weekend in Redlands, California, with our congregation there and depart from Los Angeles for Christchurch on December 20.

Rev. Bekkering sent a notice of a special office-bearers conference which is to be held in connection with the regular meeting of Classis West convening in Randolph, Wisconsin on March 1, 1978. The conference subject is "Postmillennialism." The reasons the committee has given for choosing this subject are threefold. One, postmillennialism is being set forth by some as being the historic-Reformed position on the return of Jesus Christ. Two, some of the books of earlier postmillennialists are being reprinted. Three, beside the above and closer to home is the fact that in the A.A.C.S. movement there is a strong leaning toward postmillennialism if not an overt expression of it. The conference will be held on Tuesday, February 28, 1978. Two papers are planned for presentation. One in the morning giving a critique of Chalcedon's position that the historic-Reformed position on the return of Christ is postmillennial. Another paper will be given in the afternoon setting forth a Biblical defense of the amillennial position. Those interested should contact Rev. Wayne Bekkering, 722 Wild Horse Valley, Katy, Texas 77450 for further information.

At their annual congregation meeting, the brethren of our church in Hull, Iowa, decided to change the time of the second Sunday service to 7 PM on a regular basis during June, July, and August. The remainder of the year their second service is scheduled for 1:30 P.M.

At the annual congregational meeting of our Faith Church in Jenison, Michigan, the congregation gave

her unanimous approval to go ahead with the construction of a new church sanctuary at a cost of \$240,000. The bulletin announcement ends with these appropriate words: "May the Lord bless us in this endeavor to build Him a house of worship."

The Men's Society in Randolph sponsored a special lecture given by Rev. Marvin Kamps of Doon, Iowa, on the topic of "Limited Inerrancy, Right or Wrong" on Thursday, November 17.

A rather interesting report of historical interest was received from a member of our Hudsonville congregation. It seems that a senior member of that congregation, Mr. Ed Vander Werff, was present when Hudsonville's former pastor Rev. Cornelius Hanko, preached his farewell sermon there. Mr. Vander Werff was a member of our church in Hull, Iowa, in 1929 when Rev. Hanko was ordained into the ministry and installed as pastor there. Not only was Mr. Vander Werff present during the occasions marking Rev. Hanko's ordination and retirement from the active ministry, but he was also a member of our congregation in Redlands, California during Rev. Hanko's pastorate there.

Our congregation in Redlands has formed a rather active library committee which is busy gathering a collection of books, tapes, and periodicals for use by the congregation.

The Redlands Christian School scheduled a chapel program at the school on November 22. All parents and friends of the school were invited. Rev. Kortering spoke, the school children gave some special numbers, and, after the chapel, a lunch sponsored by the 9th grade was served. A similar chapel was scheduled by our schools in Northwest Iowa, while in Grand Rapids, Adams St. Christian School held a 'Visit Adams Day.'

Randolph, Hull, and Isabel sponsored 'work-days' recently. Hull for church cleaning (bring your own cleaning supplies, but dinner is furnished), Isabel to insulate the church ceiling and cover the windows, and the ladies of Randolph were asked to come and help paint in the parsonage. It seems the men had their turn earlier in the season when they had the task of painting the outside.

A Quiet Thought from Loveland's bulletin: "Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them."