

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

But it is a fact of church history and of experience that smallness and faithfulness to the truth go hand in hand. And not infrequently has it been demonstrated in church history that outward growth in size and financial power and standing in the world goes hand in hand with a relaxing of the reins as far as doctrinal purity and faithfulness to the creeds are concerned. If you want to grow, you must not be too precise doctrinally, you must not be too insistent upon the truth, you must not enforce the creeds and the Formula of Subscription too strictly. Be content to be “evangelical.” Be content to be generally Presbyterian or Reformed. Be not righteous over much!

But remember: the end of that road is the loss of your heritage.

See “Is The OPC Next” — page 271

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MEDITATION

Calvary's Victory Cry

Rev. H. Veldman

"It Is Finished."

John 19:30b

This sixth crossword is a cry of victory. It is such in connection with the kingdom of darkness. The onslaughts of darkness near their end. Throughout Jesus' life, culminating upon the cross, these forces of sin and darkness have spent themselves in their rage upon this Jesus of Nazareth. All this now nears its end. And the world has sealed its own condemnation.

Jesus has suffered as the Righteous One. God, the Judge of heaven and earth, will surely vindicate Him. Indeed, the world's condemnation is sealed and the prince of this world has been cast out.

Besides being a shout of victory this sixth crossword is also all-comprehensive and complete. It reaches out to the full salvation of all God's people, to the entire Old Dispensation, into the eternal counsel of the Lord God. It also embraces the

everlasting future. No word is more pleasing to the Father, sweeter to the angels, more blessed for sinners, more terrible for the devil, richer for the Son. It embraces the eternal past and the eternal future, the reunion of heaven and earth. It represents for Jesus the end of all His suffering, this wonderful cry of victory.

WELL-GROUNDED

What is finished?

The cross, of course, does not conclude the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He must still descend into the grave, ascend to heaven, rule over all things in heaven and on earth (the entire New Dispensation is a coming of the Lord Jesus Christ), return upon the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead. It is true that, in a certain real sense, also all this was accomplished upon the cross. Yet, all these things must still occur.

What is finished here is all Christ's suffering effecting perfect reconciliation. Reconciliation, a legal concept, expresses a change in the legal relation between two parties in which that which interfered with their fellowship is removed and the basis is laid for the resumption of this fellowship. Reconciliation does not imply a change in God. According to the Word of God, God is never reconciled, only the world; and the world never does the reconciling, only God.

At Calvary God is not reconciled with us but we are reconciled with God. God has established eternally His covenant in Christ. He is the sovereignly appointed Head, and in Him the Lord loved a people with an everlasting love. Only, to realize this covenant of friendship, the Lord willed the way of sin and grace. Hence, according to this eternal decree, this elect people, in the way of their own willful disobedience, fall into sin. They therefore become in themselves the objects of divine wrath, although God loves them eternally in Christ Jesus. And if we are to enjoy God's covenant friendship, then a sacrifice must be brought which balances completely with sin according to the righteousness of God. Reconciliation, now, is that act of God whereby in unfathomable love and in harmony with His righteousness the Lord establishes the basis for this covenant fellowship between Himself and His own upon the cross of Calvary. Calvary is, therefore, an act of the unfathomable, unchangeable love of God.

Unto that end God determined in His counsel all the suffering of the Saviour. Every step of this suffering is divinely determined. Step by step, Christ descends into the depths. He could not be crucified immediately after entering upon His public ministry. He suffered all His life. And now His suffering reaches

its culmination at the end of His life. The betrayal of Judas, every word and all the hatred of the enemy, the driving of the nails, the prayer upon the cross, the parting of His raiment, His thirst upon the cross, all the mockery and ridicule and railing of the world — all this was divinely determined. Indeed, the Son of Man suffered and died as it was written of Him and determined by His God. How otherwise could the Old Testament be the program for Jesus' suffering?

Besides, this suffering is also pictured to us in the Old Testament prophecy. This does not merely mean that Christ simply fulfilled what was written of Him. But prophecy is Christ as He speaks of Himself as He was to come. The Old Testament needed this prophecy. Christ was not yet in the Old Dispensation, and the people of God of the old day took hold of the Christ as He was to come. And this prophecy concerning Christ proclaims to us that all things occur according to God's own sovereign will. How rich is this content of the Old Testament prophecy! We need not call attention to this in detail. Genesis 3:15; the lamentations of David in Psalms 22, 41, 69, 89; the lifting up of the brazen serpent by Moses; and the climatic presentation in Is. 50-53, all speak so vividly of the suffering Servant of Jehovah. Besides this, we have this suffering held before us in all the sacrifices of the Old Testament.

How was this finished?

The Subject of this suffering is personally the living God. Does not Is. 54:5 speak of the Holy One of Israel as our Redeemer? Only, He is the Holy One of Israel Who suffers in our flesh and blood. Our Heidelberg Catechism speaks of Him as a very and righteous man and as truly God. He must bear the infinite and eternal wrath of God in perfect love and obedience. To do this, He must be really God and also very and righteous man. He must die, not for His own sin (He had none) but for the sins of others. And He must merit everlasting life and righteousness. This was possible only by God Himself.

How did He finish this awesome task?

Indeed, He finished this work throughout His entire life. At His birth, in His incarnation, He voluntarily placed Himself in our guilty relation to God's law. He took upon Himself all our sicknesses and diseases, symbolic of the fact that He would bear the curse of God upon all our sins upon the cross of Calvary. This, however, occurred particularly at the end of His life. Voluntarily He set His face towards Jerusalem already at His baptism by John. In the upper room He commands Judas to do quickly what he was ordained to do. Although He sweat drops of blood in Gethsemane, He nevertheless reveals that He is the Lord also of His captors and they can do nothing but His will. Before Caiaphas He compels the

high priest to ask Him whether He is the Christ, and voluntarily He seals His own condemnation with the answer that He is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God. In wonderful obedience to His task, He reminds Pilate that he would have no power except it were given him from above, and He submits Himself to the governor's sentence of death upon the cross because the cross is the symbol of the bearing of the wrath of God. Upon the cross He gives His life, but not until all has been finished. The flood of God's eternal wrath rolls upon and over His soul. As the chiefest of sinners, crucified between two malefactors, and as a lamb opening not its mouth, He bears in full consciousness and in perfect love all the billows of the wrath of God. He pours out His life, body and soul, as the Thirsting Fountain.

And now hear the cry of victory: It is Finished. The entire program of suffering has been fulfilled. All the righteousness of God has been satisfied. Our righteousness has been accomplished, all our debt paid and everlasting life merited. Indeed, Calvary's victory cry is well-founded. The awesomely fearful night is past! No prophetic suffering is left unfulfilled. Sion is reconciled with God. The basis for God's covenant has been laid. All suffering is past for this suffering Servant of Jehovah! Everlasting bliss and blessedness are at hand!

TERRIBLE

Jesus' suffering and death were committed upon Him by the world. This applies, first of all, to our Lord Himself. It is, of course, true that He was crucified according to God's eternal counsel and decree. All history, we understand, is the unfolding of God's eternal decree. Nothing happens by chance. This is also true of the cross. The apostle Peter sets this forth in his Pentecostal address, as in Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." And this applies to Christ's suffering upon the cross in all its terrible details. Indeed, this is also our only comfort. Upon the cross God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

Nevertheless, Jesus was slain by wicked hands. God's counsel and Man's responsibility must always be maintained. The sinner is a moral, rational creature and he always sins willfully and deliberately. Judas betrays the Christ because Christ is light and he loves the darkness. The world crucified Him, according to God's decree, but as an act of hatred and darkness.

And this applies throughout the ages. Yes, the world will always bend the knee before a humanitarian Christ. The Christ they serve, however, is a Christ of their own imagination. The Christ of the cross, Who came to do the will of Him Who sent Him, interested solely in the cause of God's covenant, they

hate and will always oppose.

But, this also establishes the terribleness of this sixth word of the cross. This cry of victory is surely the announcement of Sion's victory and eternal salvation. The curse of God has been borne and Christ has triumphed. In all His suffering and death He was the perfectly Righteous One. Therefore He is raised from the dead and exalted at the Father's right hand. But this same shout of triumph is also the announcement of the condemnation of the world. It may appear different at the cross and throughout the New Dispensation. It may appear as though the forces of darkness are in command and have the victory. But it is exactly otherwise. God justified His Servant presently because of His perfect obedience. And the world has revealed itself in all its evil and corruption. Hence, their destruction is sealed and sure.

BLESSED

The crucified Saviour is our complete salvation. This fact is symbolised in the temple by the tearing of the veil from the top to the bottom at the moment Jesus gives up the ghost. The way is now open into the holy of holies. The sin that made separation between the Lord and His people has now been removed. All our debt is paid and our complete righteousness has been won. The Lord was indeed in Christ reconciling the world, His own elect world, with Himself. All has been fulfilled.

The result is that all work of man is vain. O, there are always those who would maintain this work of man. Roman Catholicism would maintain that our good works are meritorious. Arminianism and Pelagianism emphasize the will of a sinner as determining his salvation. However, all this is vain. Salvation is not of works. It is given us by grace through faith. And faith is a gift of God. Hence, saved by grace through faith, because of Christ's finished work upon the cross, we must look away from ourselves and to Him Who is the Captain of our salvation. No flesh may boast. Let us ever glory in the Lord.



EDITORIALS

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

A Presbyterian Amalgam?

One of our readers was kind enough to send me a copy of a letter which was circulated to all ministers and sessions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod by the Stated Clerk of that denomination. Said letter contains an important proposal from the Fraternal Relations Committee of the RPCES which in effect proposes that the denomination allow itself to be swallowed up — if it should receive an invitation — by the rather recently formed denomination known as the PCA, the Presbyterian Church in America, a denomination formed largely by separation out of the so-called Southern Presbyterian Church. The proposal is in the form of the following three motions adopted by the Fraternal Relations Committee of the RPCES:

Moved that we recommend that the RPCES, if it receives an invitation from the PCA to be received into that denomination, accept such an invitation on the basis of the inerrancy of Scripture, the Westminster Confession of Faith as held by the PCA, the doctrine of the purity of the Church, and the PCA Book of Church Order.

Moved that if an invitation is received and accepted, we recommend that particular churches be automatically placed in presbyteries of the PCA within whose bounds they lie, with the suggestion that the PCA General Assembly be authorized to redraw presbytery boundaries without full constitutional process during a period of two years.

Moved that we recommend that the agencies of the RPCES be submitted immediately upon union to the four major committees of the PCA, and that the existing boards and agency heads negotiate with the appropriate committees of the PCA plans of transition and merger to be completed within a period of three years.

There were no grounds attached to these three proposals in the letter circulated to ministers and sessions. The proposals will be up for consideration at the Synod of the RPCES in Seattle, Washington next July 4-10.

It seems evident that this is not an ordinary proposal of merger or of discussions of the possibility of merger. It is simply a proposal to join the PCA *en masse* if the latter will have them and invite them. Or, if you will, it is simply a proposal to the RPCES to allow themselves to be swallowed up. And if this proposal meets with approval and the wished for invitation is forthcoming, the PCA will become an amalgam — or more of an amalgam than it already is — that is, a compound of various elements.

What will the RPCES bring to the PCA? I am not talking about physical assets, about funds, about educational institutions, about missions, etc. There are these, and it is evident from the proposal that some arrangements will have to be made concerning these. Nor am I talking about numbers of members or congregations. There are also these. I do not have at hand any current statistics; but although the RPCES is far smaller than the PCA, a mass joining of the PCA by the RPCES will undoubtedly result in a sudden growth-spurt for the PCA, which, by the way, has been a fast-growing denomination from its infancy. I am raising the question what the RPCES will bring to the PCA as *church*. What ecclesiastical heritage, what doctrinal heritage, what peculiar tenets, if any, will the RPCES bring along with it to the PCA?

To answer this question, we have to go back in history.

The RPCES was originally part of the separatist movement in the old "Northern" Presbyterian Church which is associated with the name of Dr. Machen, part of the same movement which is today known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. When the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was established in 1936 under the leadership of Dr. Machen and others, there soon became evident rather serious differences of views within the new denomination. These differences concerned chiefly premillennialism and matters of Christian liberty (the use of alcohol and

tobacco). Ultimately these differences gave rise to a separation in the new group, with a segment forming the Bible Presbyterian Church in 1937 – the church which still today is associated chiefly with the name of Dr. Carl McIntire. From the start the Bible Presbyterian Church has been strongly premillennial, and it even modified its confessional basis in order to provide room for its premillennial position. Particularly in the Westminster Larger Catechism, Questions 86-89 (which deal with the doctrine of the last things), several changes were made which made allowance for and even to a degree adopted a premillennial position with respect to the doctrine of the coming of Christ. I will not now specify these changes; any reader who is interested in more details can look them up in Vols. 48 and 49, where I discussed a proposed merger of the OPC and the RPCES. At its first General Synod the newly formed Bible Presbyterian Church also adopted a Declaratory Statement appended to the Westminster Confession affirming its belief in the universality of the offer of the gospel and in the salvation of all who die in infancy. As far as I know, no statement concerning the matters of Christian liberty was adopted at that time, although it is well known that the BPC and the later RPCES continued to maintain their so-called “strict” stance on the use of alcohol and tobacco.

Then in 1956 there came a further division within the Bible Presbyterian denomination. Whatever the legitimacy of this claim, Dr. McIntire asserts that this defection began in 1954 “under the leadership of the Rev. Francis Schaeffer, Dr. Robert Rayburn, and the Rev. Tom Cross, who felt that the church could get a great deal farther if it would take a softer approach in dealing with apostasy.” This new group became known as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. This new group received its doctrinal heritage from the Bible Presbyterians. This means, therefore, that it kept its premillennial views (reaffirmed at the time of its formation), its Arminian views of the offer of the gospel, and its so-called “strict” views on Christian liberty. In 1965 this Evangelical Presbyterian Church united with a segment of Reformed Presbyterians (in the Covenanter tradition) to form what is now the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod. At the time of the latter merger, it numbered about 100 congregations and 10,000 communicants. I have no current statistics at hand, but the denomination has never enjoyed phenomenal growth in numbers. Numerically speaking, it would be counted among the smaller denominations.

In the early 1970s there were official discussions between the RPCES and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with a view to a possible merger of the two denominations, a merger which would have been in the nature of a reunion, in view of the fact that the RPCES was (although separated by two separations

and one merger) once a part of the OPC. These discussions, however, involved some real discussion in both denominations concerning the differences between the two groups and involved attempts at resolving these differences. However, this attempt at merger ultimately failed. Nevertheless, both groups have remained in contact, especially through NAPARC (the North American Presbyterian And Reformed Council), in which also the larger PCA is a participant.

Suggestions for merger discussions between these smaller denominations (the OPC and the RPCES) and the Presbyterian Church in America have been turned down by the PCA. One gets the impression that the PCA, which is much larger and has enjoyed rapid growth, feels no urgent need of such merger and does not want to get bogged down in protracted discussions and negotiations, though it might indeed be willing to “swallow” them.

Now what may be said about this RPCES proposal to accept a possible invitation to be received into the PCA?

In the first place, of course, there is very little to judge by, because there are no grounds furnished along with the threefold proposal. There are, however, some presuppositions, it seems to me, which lie at its basis. Some of these are hinted at in the fourfold basis included in the first part of the proposal, namely, that a possible invitation be accepted on the basis of: 1) the inerrancy of Scripture; 2) the Westminster Confession of Faith as held by the PCA; 3) the doctrine of the purity of the Church; 4) the PCA Book of Church Order. The proposal, by the way, is somewhat ambiguous. Does it really mean that the above four bases are the basis of accepting the (possible) invitation? Or does it mean that these four items form, or ought to form, the minimal basis of the invitation from the PCA, and thus the basis of the only kind of invitation which the RPCES would be willing to accept? I understand it to mean the latter.

Without trying to define further the four items mentioned or the reasons for their inclusion, I would say that the following presuppositions are implied:

1) That the PCA does indeed hold to the inerrancy of Scripture and the doctrine of the purity of the Church – whatever is to be understood by these undefined items.

2) That the PCA does in fact and in truth hold to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and does not merely hold to it in form and in name. This, of course, ought to be the crucial question. There are many Presbyterians who have the Westminster Confession as their creedal basis but who do not in fact

and in truth hold to it. And it is indeed a question precisely in how far the PCA holds to its confession.

3) That the RPCES also holds to the Westminster Confession in fact and in truth. This should be the question which the PCA confronts seriously before it issues an invitation. However, this appears to be the presumption with respect to both denominations in this proposal.

4) That the RPCES is willing to waive the peculiar tenets to which it has formerly held as a denomination. I refer to the Declaratory Statement attached to the Westminster Confession concerning the offer of the gospel and infant salvation. I refer also to the revisions of the Larger Catechism, Questions 86-89. Under the proposal the latter will be avoided as an issue for the PCA because the Larger Catechism will not be a part of the confessional basis, only the Westminster Confession. It must be that the committee of the RPCES feels that the PCA is a large enough umbrella to cover premillennialists along with postmillennialists and amillennialists. For I cannot conceive of it that the RPCES is suddenly going to give up its premillennial views. That the PCA is a large enough umbrella I do not doubt. But the only basis on which pre- and post- and amillennials can co-exist, it seems to me, is on the basis of all being little frogs in a big pond, and then agreeing not to make an issue of their millennial croakings.

In the second place, it seems to me, that underlying this proposal, which practically *asks* for an invitation from the PCA, is a willingness on the part of the RPCES to give up all that it has ever stood for as a separate denomination over the years, and to do so in the interest of being a part of a much larger and fast-growing denomination. Presumably, in the past the RPCES felt that it had good reasons for separate existence, even to the extent that *twice* in a span of about twenty years it went the way of separate existence. Just how truly Presbyterian the RPCES was in its stance is another question. But it would appear that its stance in the past could be classified as exclusivist, at the cost of being relatively small and slow-growing. Is this now changing to an inclusivist policy, at the cost of whatever distinctive positions they have held?

Meanwhile, from what I know of both the PCA and the RPCES, I can see no overwhelming reason why this new kind of merger should not go through. The PCA would appear to have nothing to lose and something to gain. The RPCES appears willing to be swallowed up; in fact, if this proposal of the fraternal relations committee is at all representative of the trend in that denomination, they would appear to be eagerly waiting for an invitation to let themselves be swallowed up. In that case, the PCA could continue on its way of being rather broadly Presbyterian, but not distinctive over much.

Is the OPC Next?

It is not impossible that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church will also be involved in the discussion of a similar merger with the PCA as is the RPCES. While I do not now know of any official proposal to this end, there has been mention of this in OPC circles. Since the demise of the *Presbyterian Guardian* last year I have not been able to keep abreast of developments in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and so I do not know if anything is actually being proposed concerning merger to their General Assembly. However, there was a significant article by the Rev. Edmund P. Clowney, President of Westminster Seminary, in the very last issue of the *Presbyterian Guardian* which strongly urged Presbyterian unity.

Incidentally, the *Presbyterian Guardian* was not an official church paper of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but ever since 1935 has been the paper that served OPC interests. Officially, it has merged with the *Presbyterian Journal*, which for years served the conservative element in the Southern Presbyterian Church (PCUS) but now serves especially the PCA. As

a separate magazine, therefore, the *Presbyterian Guardian* is dead.

In the final issue of the *Guardian* Dr. Clowney writes under the title, "Toward The Future Of The Presbyterian Church." In this article he reflects, first of all, on the fact that the early leaders of the OPC were optimistic as to numerical growth. He quotes Dr. Machen as writing, "With what lively hope does our gaze turn now to the future! At last true evangelism can go forward without the shackle of compromising associations." And the editor of the *Guardian*, H. McAllister Griffiths, is quoted as having written in an early issue: "We believe that in a generation it (the new OPC) will compare numerically with the body whose light has gone out."

Secondly, Dr. Clowney calls attention to the fact that this optimism met with disappointment. He writes:

The generation has gone by and that prediction has not been fulfilled. The Presbyterian Church of America was soon divided, The heirs of that division

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod; and the Bible Presbyterian Church would scarcely equal in numbers a score of the largest evangelical congregations in the United Presbyterian Church. That denomination, in spite of declining membership, still reports almost two and a half million members, and has more enrolled elders than the entire membership of the other churches just named.

Yet Clowney does not see only gloom in the development of American Presbyterianism. For one thing, he still sees glimmers of hope for the United Presbyterian Church. For another, he writes:

Further, the situation has changed radically with the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in America as a result of division in the southern Presbyterian Church (PCUS). The PCA is growing vigorously, establishing mission works here and abroad and is increasingly reaching out in fellowship with the other Presbyterian churches that take the Westminster Confession of Faith seriously.

Mr. Clowney then goes on to make mention of the cooperation among churches of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council and to mention specifically areas of cooperation between the OPC and the PCA and between the RPCES and the PCA. Then, after explaining and justifying the merger of the *Guardian* with the *Presbyterian Journal*, he makes the following plea:

The cause of Christ's kingdom surely demands that the genuinely Presbyterian denominations in this country unite without delay. That cause also demands that the revealed will of Christ for the faith and life of his church be faithfully and lovingly communicated to the thousands of true Christians who are in denominations that are being led astray by leaders who set themselves above and not under the written Word of God.

One can readily detect that notes such as the above could easily lead eventually to a merger of the OPC with the PCA. In fact, if there are many OPC leaders

who speak Dr. Clowney's language, the merger will be inevitable.

And again, from the point of view of size and numbers and financial power and even name, why not merge? And if the OPC desires to be no more distinctively Presbyterian than the PCA, and the latter desires to be no more distinctively Presbyterian than the former, what obstacle is there?

But there is a lesson in all this.

It is, of course, not pleasant to be small, not to enjoy much growth in size, to be limited in financial power and in the ability to accomplish things. The OPC knows something of this by experience. We of the Protestant Reformed Churches certainly also know something of this by experience. We know what it means to struggle, to fight for survival, to sacrifice, to be despised, to be ostracized for the sake of the truth. We know what it means "not to count" in the ecclesiastical world.

But it is a fact of church history and of experience that smallness and faithfulness to the truth go hand in hand. And not infrequently has it been demonstrated in church history that outward growth in size and financial power and standing in the world goes hand in hand with a relaxing of the reins as far as doctrinal purity and faithfulness to the creeds are concerned. If you want to grow, you must not be too precise doctrinally, you must not be too insistent upon the truth, you must not enforce the creeds and the Formula of Subscription too strictly. Be content to be "evangelical." Be content to be generally Presbyterian or Reformed. Be not righteous over much!

But remember: the end of that road is the loss of your heritage. All the large denominations which today are modernist and completely liberal have trodden that same path before!

The church has but one calling, regardless of the consequences: maintain the marks of the true church!

The Lord will take care of the rest!

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Letter to Timothy

H. Hanko

March 15, 1980

Dear Timothy,

We began, in our last letter, a discussion of the

conscience and what Scripture teaches concerning the conscience. I consider this a most important subject, and I hope that you will, if you have any questions,

respond to what I have to say about this matter.

The English word "conscience" comes from a Latin word, *conscientia*, which means, literally, "to know with," in its verb form, and, "knowledge with," in its noun form. The Greek word for "conscience" has exactly the same basic meaning. The main question which this etymology of the word brings up is this: If "conscience" is a knowing with, *with whom* does one have this knowledge of which the word conscience speaks? The answer to this question, according to Scripture, is, emphatically, *God*. In some sense of the word, the fact that we have a conscience means that we know something *with God*.

Now it is clear from Scripture that this does not refer to all knowledge. It is certainly true that all the knowledge which a man has he receives from God. This is implicit in the truth of revelation. Whatever knowledge we have, we receive through revelation. But the word "conscience" does not have this broad meaning and does not refer to all knowledge; it refers only to knowledge in a more restricted sense. And, to put the matter as briefly as possible, it refers, undoubtedly, to *knowledge of right and wrong*. This is, e.g., the clear teaching of Romans 2:14, 15 (an important text which we shall have to discuss more in detail a bit later): "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." The idea is, therefore, that God testifies in the consciousness of every man what is the difference between right and wrong.

Now there are several things which we must say about this if we are to have a clear concept of this idea.

In the first place, this testimony of God in the conscience of every man is a testimony of absolute right and absolute wrong. I mean by that that God Himself, just because He is God, determines sovereignly for the creature what is right and what is wrong. He determines this according to His own eternal and perfect being. He is God. He is, in Himself, perfectly good and holy, perfectly just and right. He is, in His own being, the full reality of all that is just and right and good; and He is, because of His own essential goodness, opposed to all that is wrong, unjust, sinful, and bad. His testimony is, therefore, His own sovereign determination concerning this matter. It must be remembered that He is God and that we are only creatures. He has created us and He upholds us every single moment by the Word of His power. In Him we live and move and have our

being. And because He is the Creator and we are but creatures, He has the sovereign and absolute right to determine for us, His creatures, what is, for us, right and what is, for us, wrong. He has this right for His rational and moral creatures just as He has this right for a tree or a star. He has the right to determine that a tree shall live only when it is planted in the soil, receives nourishment from that soil, and, because it receives the gift of sunshine, is able to manufacture food for itself and live. He sets the stars in their place in the heavens and moves them as it seems good to Him. This same right He has over us as rational and moral creatures.

However, He not only possesses the right to determine for us what is right and what is wrong; He must, as God, do this. He must maintain His own righteousness and goodness. He must maintain Himself as the sovereign God. And He does this by determining for us that we conform to His determination of rightness and wrongness; and by insisting that we conform our lives to this determination upon pain of death should we disobey. He would no longer be God if He simply let man determine all these things for himself.

Yet it is precisely man's arrogance and pride which prompts man to say: "I will not pay attention to what God has to say on this matter. I will make all these determinations for myself." Man has nothing which he has not received. The very breath that he breathes is given him as a gift. His every moment of life is given from his Creator. He is utterly and totally dependent. And yet, paying no attention to this, he determines that he will deny God the right to tell him what is right and what is wrong and he will determine all this for himself. When he does this, he pushes God out of his life, denies the most fundamental fact of his existence, and sets himself up as God. This was the lie of Satan in Paradise: "Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil." We listened to this lie, and we have been trying ever since to be as God.

God would deny Himself if He let man get away with this. God cannot allow man to sin this kind of sin. And so God always solemnly tells man: if you do as *you* please and do not do what I tell you to do, you will surely die.

Man's conscience is, therefore, the testimony of God concerning what is right and what is wrong. But, along with this, man's conscience is also God's testimony that the right brings with it God's favor and the wrong always ends in God's wrath and everlasting death. This too is part of the conscience.

Now it must be understood that this testimony of God in the consciousness of every man does not come as some kind of direct testimony through the agency of some kind of inner voice. There is no separate and distinct speech of God which is whispered

in the inner recesses of a man's consciousness and which is totally apart from God's speech in creation and the Scriptures. This would be false and contrary to all God's work. This testimony comes also through the objective speech of God, whether that be in creation or in the Scriptures. Every man has a conscience. This is the clear teaching of Romans 2:14, 15. Paul is talking here about Gentiles which have not the law. That is, he is, in the historical context in which he wrote this, talking about the Gentiles of the world of Rome in which the Church of the Romans lived. These Gentiles were the ones who had never heard the Scriptures or the preaching of Christ. They did not, in other words, receive the law as it was given to Israel from Mount Sinai. Nevertheless, even they received this testimony of God in their consciousness concerning what is right and what is wrong through the speech of God; only this speech of God was given to them through the creation.

Paul speaks of this literally in Chapter 1 of this same epistle, vs. 18ff. One could perhaps say that the theme of this entire section is the statement of vs. 18: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness. . . ." That Paul is talking here about the Gentile world, the pagan world which had never heard the gospel, is clear from the following verses. He tells us that the Gentiles are the objects of the wrath of God because they suppress the truth — they hold it under in unrighteousness. vs. 18. But the question is: where do they get the truth which they hold under? The answer, according to the apostle, is that they get this truth through the means of the things of the creation: "For the invisible things of him (i.e., of God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." vs. 20. According to this verse, therefore, God makes two things clear through the creation: that He alone is God and that, because He alone is God, He alone must be worshipped and praised. This, then, is the fundamental determination which God gives to all men concerning the difference between right and wrong.

It stands to reason that for this cause all men have also a conscience. Because of this Paul writes in chapter 2:14 and 15 that, although the Gentiles do not have the law, they nevertheless do by nature the things contained in the law and are a law unto themselves. The idea is not that they are able to *keep* the law. Paul himself tells us that this is not his point when he writes, in 3:9b: "for we have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." The idea is rather that, although the Gentiles do not have the law in the sense that Israel had it from Sinai, they have the essence of the law through the things that

are made. And, because they have this law of God, they are able to make laws which govern every part of their life and which are a reflection of the law of God. Adultery is considered wrong in the most uncivilized parts of the world. The same is true of stealing and murder. In this way the Gentiles also show the *work* of the law written in their hearts. The principle of the law is indelibly impressed upon them. They know with total assurance that God demands conformity with His will and that disobedience will surely be punished by the Judge of heaven and earth.

And that is why their consciences also bear witness of all the deeds which they do, and their thoughts accuse or else excuse one another.

All this does not mean that there is a certain common grace which operates among the pagans. This is far from the truth. After all, the theme of the whole passage in Romans 1:18ff is: The revelation of the *wrath* of God. Paul is explaining the wrath of God, not some general and universal grace. The whole point is simply that all men justly experience God's wrath, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, because they are all "under sin." And the Gentiles are under sin as well as the Jews because God makes Himself known through the creation in such a way that Gentiles too know that God is God and that He alone must be served and worshipped. And this testimony of their own conscience is, therefore, in connection with and never apart from the speech of God through the creation.

But it is also true that those who hear the preaching of the gospel and know the Scriptures have a much more definite and precise conscience than the pagan. After all, they have the law of God spelled out in all its details on the pages of Holy Writ. And they have that speech of God which speaks of the fact that God has fulfilled the whole law for His elect people through the perfect work of Jesus Christ. So, their consciences — consciences which also operate in connection with the Word of God — now through the Scriptures are more precise and definite, and such people have a much clearer understanding of what God's will is. Hence also the wrath of God comes upon them with greater judgments when they sin. After all, it is more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah and for Tyre and Sidon than for Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum. Matthew 11:20-24. The closer one stands to the pure light of the gospel, the clearer is the speech of God, the more definite and precise is the voice of the conscience, and the greater the responsibility of those who are disobedient.

But we must continue this subject in another letter.

Fraternally in Christ,
H. Hanko

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Last Time: How Are We Living

Rev. R. Flikkema

The last time: how are we living? That we live in the last times means that we must live our lives in complete separation from the world. As we walk in the midst of this world we must be distinct. We must manifest in our lives that there is indeed something different about us; something so completely different that we have absolutely nothing in common with the world of sin and iniquity which surrounds us.

That we live in the last time means that we must stand antithetically on the side of Christ Jesus our Lord. As we walk in the midst of this world we must walk as He walked. We must live as He lived. The words which we speak must be the words which He spoke. In short, we must live in these last times in unconditional obedience to Him Who performed the will of the Father to the very letter. We must live in such a way that we manifest in our lives the marvelous truth that we are not our own, but that we belong with body and soul to our faithful Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that too, in the face of almost certain persecution. Yes, that is also what it means to live in the last times. If it is the case in our lives that we live in complete separation from the world; if it is the case in our lives that there is something different about us, something so completely different that we have absolutely nothing in common with the world of sin and iniquity which surrounds us; if we stand antithetically on the side of Christ; if we obey Him and His Word unconditionally; if we show forth the fact that we are not our own, but that we belong to our faithful Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall face almost certain persecution. The world of

ungodly men will scoff at us. The reprobate seed of the serpent will hold us in derision. They will hate us, and in their hatred they will seek their vengeance upon us who stand firmly upon the side of Christ Jesus.

Is that the way in which we live? Do we live our lives distinct from the world? Can the world see by the way we live and how we act that we have absolutely no common ground with it and all of its wickedness? Do we stand antithetically on the side of our Savior, knowing that we are not our own? Do we stand in faith, nothing wavering, clinging by grace to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do we live with the consciousness that, though we are persecuted for righteousness sake, our Savior, to use the words of our Heidelberg Catechism, "will make whatever evils He sends upon me in this valley of tears turn out to my advantage"? Is that the way in which we live?

That by the grace of God is the way in which Daniel's three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah lived. And that fact we must notice in this article as we consider the Word of God as that is set forth in the Book of Daniel, chapter 3. Daniel chapter 3 presents to us a very vivid picture. It describes for us the fact that King Nebuchadnezzar had made a great image. Concerning that image we read that it stood some 60 cubits high and some six cubits wide. That is, it was an image that stood some 90 feet high and some 9 feet wide. A great image it was. However, not only was it great from the point of view of its size and dimensions, but it was also great from the point of view of its costliness. It was made, we read, of gold. It was a golden image. And with respect to that

fact, it really does not matter whether we conceive of that image as being an image of solid gold, or whether we conceive of that image as being an image of wood overlaid with gold. It really does not matter. It was indeed a great image.

That great image Nebuchadnezzar erected on the plains of Dura. No one really knows where exactly the plains of Dura lay, nor is that important. But what is important is what took place on those plains of Dura. What took place there was this, namely, that to those plains and before that great image, Nebuchadnezzar called all the mighty men of his realm. He called everyone and anyone who was somebody in his realm. After they were gathered there, all of a sudden the voice of a herald rang out with a message — a message which amounted to this: when ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye shall fall down and worship this great image. No sooner had the herald spoken when the sound of all those instruments were heard. And all fell down in worship before that great image which Nebuchadnezzar had made.

All fell down in worship! All, except Daniel's three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Oh, yes, they too were gathered there on those plains of Dura for they also were important men in Nebuchadnezzar's realm. They too heard the herald say that when the sound of all of those musical instruments was heard, all must bow down in worship before that great image. But Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah did not bow down. They would not fall down in worship before that great image. Imagine that! All those men were gathered there on the plains of Dura and all bowed down before that great image, but Daniel's three friends did not! How conspicuous they must have looked! Three out of hundreds, or maybe even thousands, remained standing.

Now, the question of course is: why? Why did they do that? Does not the Bible say that we must obey those in authority over us? Does that not mean, therefore, that Daniel's three friends were violating that authority, the word of King Nebuchadnezzar, when they refused to bow down before that great image? Yes, indeed, the Bible says that we must obey those in authority over us. But the Bible also says that we must obey God rather than men. And it was exactly that fact that Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were doing when they refused to bow down before that great image. We must not obey that which is not God. But most emphatically, we must obey God! Clear to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah was this truth, that that which stood before them represented all that which is not God. That image was nothing other than a glorious tribute to man. As it stood there shining in the noonday sun, it was a glorious

reflection of all that man had done, and all that man had accomplished. As it stood there it spoke volumes! It said to all those who were gathered at its feet: Look all ye peoples! Look at me! I am the very embodiment of man: of all man's power and strength, and all man's wisdom and learning, and all man's achievements! By me nations are conquered and people are subjected! And who is like unto me? Look at me and bow! Fall down and worship! That is what that image spoke to those who were gathered at its feet. But that, however, is not all. For not only did that image by virtue of its greatness command all to bow down before it, but it also said that those who refused to bow would die! And not only that, but having spoken that word of death to all who refused, that image also mocked God. We must notice that. It said, "And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hand?" I know that those were words spoken by Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar spoke those words when he discovered that Daniel's three friends had refused to bow down to his image. But what we must understand is that when Nebuchadnezzar spoke those words, that image also spoke those words. Nebuchadnezzar made it. It was his image. And therefore, all that he said and did, and all that which was not God which Nebuchadnezzar represented, his image also represented. Imagine, it said, "And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hand?"!

That is not too difficult to imagine, is it? It was not too difficult for Daniel's three friends to imagine. They were there. They heard it. And having heard it, they refused. But the point is, that all that that image represented, and all that that image spoke, yes, even its horrible word ("And who is that God who shall deliver you out of my hand?") is not too difficult for us to imagine. We hear those words every day. We are in the world — not of it, but in it. And because we are in it, we hear those words. We stand with Daniel's three friends in the plains of Dura before that great image and its horrible speech. The plains of Dura with its great images are everywhere. We cannot escape them. No matter where we go, no matter where we turn, there are those plains of Dura, and there are those great images with their horrible God-defying speech.

And the question is: what do we do when we are confronted with that speech? Do we listen to that speech? Do we bow down before those great images? As we stand before them do we determine how we are going to live and what we are going to do by looking and seeing how everyone else is living and what everyone else is doing? And do we determine that if everyone else is bowing down before the great images of this world, that we will do likewise? I submit to you that if Daniel's three friends had done that, they would have bowed. But they did not bow.

Why not? Because they knew in their heart of hearts that it was their calling to live their lives distinct from the world and separate from the world. They knew that it was their calling to stand upon the side of Christ, come what may. Do we know that that calling is also our calling? And, even more importantly, are we obedient to that calling, come what may?

That is our calling. It is none other than the calling given to us by Christ. And to us who have been given that calling, Christ gives the grace to obey, yes, even in the face of persecution and death. I ask you, how could Daniel's three friends have obeyed their calling? Not by virtue of their own strength. They did that because Christ Jesus their Lord stood beside them,

upholding their faith every step of the way. He did! Even when they were thrown into the fiery furnace, He did. And the wonderful testimony of the Scriptures is that so also does Christ Jesus our Lord stand beside us. He upholds our faith as we stand in the plains of Dura with its great images every step of the way. The world says: who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hand? By faith we say: He is Jesus, Jehovah Salvation, the Son of God in our flesh, our King and our God. He shall deliver us.

May it be true of us that we live our lives with that wonderful testimony in our hearts and on our lips. Remember, these are the last times. But the question is: how are we living?

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

News From Lansing

Rev. Steven Houck

I am thankful for this opportunity to report the progress of our Mission work in Lansing, for I believe that God is working here, through the ministry of His Word. No, it is not that we are experiencing a growth in numbers; it is not that new families from the community are joining us; and it is not that people are breaking down the doors of the church to hear the preaching of the gospel. Nevertheless, God is working here and through His Word is accomplishing His purpose. For the Lord tells us through the prophet Isaiah, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). God's Word which He sends forth never returns to Him empty, but always brings about just exactly what He has purposed. This we firmly believe with respect to our work here in Lansing. Although sometimes it is difficult, if not impossible, to see that Word do its work, yet our comfort and encouragement is that this work is not, first of all, our work but God's work. We indeed preach the gospel, but only Christ can gather His people into the Church.

We are encouraged by the fact that Christ has given to us a fairly solid group of people who are firmly committed to the Reformed Faith. Including my own, there are seven families and one individual who

worship together here. We conduct worship services twice on Sunday (10 A.M. and 6 P.M.). After the morning service I teach two catechism classes while the adults have a Bible study and the young children have Sunday School. Every Wednesday we meet together at 7:45 P.M. for studies in the Canons of Dordt.

We are very grateful to God that He has provided for us a very nice building in which to worship. We rent a Seventh Day Adventist Church which is located near the University in East Lansing. It is a small building which is very well suited for our needs.

Although we have not gained, as of yet, any new regulars, we have been getting a good number of visitors. In fact, lately we have had at least one visitor attend one of our services just about every Sunday. Most of these visitors are college students who come from various parts of the country and who vary greatly in their religious affiliation. We have had visitors who are members of the Reformed Church as well as those who belong to the Roman Catholic Church. There have even been some from the "fundamentalist camp."

The reaction of these visitors to the preaching of the gospel has been just as varied as their religious affiliation. Sometimes they are very attentive and seem to be drawn by the Word of God. They nod

their heads in approval. Oftentimes after the service we have some interesting talks with them. But then, too, some have come who seem to be bored with the Word. Our hour and a half service is too much for them. It has happened, too, that the Word of God offends some. I have preached to people who reveal by the expressions on their faces that they do not like what they hear. In fact, on one occasion the preaching of the gospel drove a man out of the service. In the middle of the sermon, he got up and walked out. It is at times like that, that we are reminded of the fact that the word of God has a two-fold effect upon its hearers. It both softens and hardens, for "to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life" (II Cor. 2:16). But whatever the reaction we know that God's Word is working what God wants it to work, and our responsibility is to preach the Word.

Most of our visitors come because they have read our ads in the paper. Every Saturday we advertise not only the time and place of our services, but we also tell them what we believe. We have run a series of ads on the five points of Calvinism, as well as on the Apostles' Creed. In this way we tell them who we are and what we believe and preach. We take care to emphasize that we stand upon the Scriptures as the sole authority for our faith and practice. Along with our regular church ads we also advertise the literature of our Reformed Free Publishing Association. At first we did not get a very great response to this. But lately more and more people have been writing for this literature. It is difficult to judge how effective this witness is. We do not know how many actually read this material. But it does seem to be a witness. On two occasions now, people have visited our worship service because they had previously received and read our literature.

It is especially with these people who ask for literature and who visit our services that I later make contact. I ask them what they think of the literature and tell them more about our Churches and what we believe. If they do not agree with what they have read, I seek, through the Word, to show them the preciousness of the truths of the Reformed faith and how these truths can give a man comfort and peace in the troubled world. Up to now, this contact has resulted in no immediate positive fruit. We are, however, confident that God has called us here, not only to be a witness, but to be used to gather His people. In His own time and in His own way He will gather "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" here in the Lansing area.

And yet, from the perspective of a missionary laboring here, I must confess that the work is very difficult. Difficult in the first place, because the natural man does not like to hear the preaching of the

Word and does not want the Reformed Faith. Now I realize that this is true of all men everywhere. However, here in the Lansing area, I have been struck by the fact that there seems to be very few who really seek the truth. The people of this area seem to be very liberal in their thinking and in their beliefs. There are few that I talk with who are sincerely interested in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They will tell you in no uncertain terms that they don't believe what you say and do not want what you have. They stumble over the Gospel.

Then too it is difficult because of my own weaknesses as missionary. Because I have not had the previous experience of being a minister of the gospel, I have much to learn with respect to the work of the ministry. The tasks that would be routine for a veteran minister are still struggles for me. And yet, in all of this I am not discouraged, because we have in a very wonderful way experienced the grace of God. I can say with the apostle Paul, "when I am weak, then am I strong" (II Cor. 12:10); for when I am weak I experience the strength of Almighty God Who upholds His people and gives unto us all that we need to fulfill our calling. And even as He removes the difficulty of my own weakness, so too He removes the first difficulty. For the heart that is hard He can soften, and the man who is dead He can make alive; the Lord God Almighty sovereignly rules "all the inhabitants of the earth." He can put "a new spirit" within them; He can "take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh" (Dan. 4:35 & Ezek. 12:19). This is our confidence.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is building His Church in spite of all the opposition and resistance of the world. He is gathering His people, and we as Protestant Reformed people are privileged to have a part in that great work. God has called three of our ministers to the specific task of mission work. We have the opportunity to spread the Reformed Faith, the faith of the Scriptures which we hold so dear, to places we have never been before. The doors are open for us to preach of the Sovereign God who by sovereign grace alone saves His people. I trust that we are excited about that and eager to share in that. Do all you can to support your missionaries. Support us with your interest, support us with your financial help, but most of all support us with your prayers. Pray for us that we might receive of the Lord all that we need to carry on this most wonderful work. I ask you, as the Apostle asked the Ephesian Christians, "pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watch thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador, . . . that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:18-20).

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

The Incarnation*

Rev. David Engelsma

The incarnation was the wonder of all the wonders of the wonder-working God. All of the other wonderful works of God, both before and after this miracle, are so many satellites about this great star, or, more accurately, so many rays of light emitted by this glorious sun. "Great is the mystery of godliness," the Church confesses in I Timothy 3:16, "God was manifest in the flesh."

For this reason, the incarnation is known only by faith — unbelief has no eye for the dazzling light of the revelation of God's greatness and goodness in the world; and even for faith this wonder is incomprehensible. This, of course, is not to say that faith cannot understand the incarnation, or that it cannot explain what it believes, or that it cannot defend what it believes — faith certainly can do these things; but it is to say that faith cannot exhaustively understand — cannot plumb the depths of — this work of God which we name the incarnation, and that faith adores the greatness of God that surpasses understanding, even as it seeks understanding.

The words quoted from I Timothy 3 begin, "Confessedly." "Without controversy" in the King James is really "Confessedly — Confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness." The manifestation of God in the world is a confession. It is a confession of faith. Faith is expressing what it believes.

Like Christ Himself, the incarnation is truth that is always spoken against. The great struggle for this truth was fought in the last part of the 4th century and the first half of the 5th century A.D., although the mopping-up operation lasted late into the 7th century. The decisive blow for the incarnation was struck by the church council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. This council set forth the faith of the Church on the incarnation in a creed, the Symbol of Chalcedon.

This is the creed which requires Christ to be acknowledged in two natures, "inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably."

But the opposition was not annihilated in A.D. 451, or, for that matter, in A.D. 680. Nor is this opposition limited, in our day, to the outright denial of Jesus' Deity by modernist-Protestantism. Rome today is confronted by a challenge to her dogma of the incarnation on the part of certain of her own notable theologians. In my own tradition — the Dutch Reformed — men are questioning the Chalcedonian Christology, and questioning it in such a way as to raise the question, whether they deny the incarnation.

Opposition to the incarnation had the effect in the 4th and 5th centuries and has the effect today that it drives the Church to search the Scriptures for the living knowledge of Jesus the Christ.

Who is Jesus? Who is the Jesus revealed in Holy Scripture?

In the doctrine of the incarnation, we are concerned with Jesus; and our concern is exactly that of the question which Jesus Himself once asked about Himself in conversation with the Pharisees: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" (Matthew 22:42) This was also the controlling question in the trinitarian controversy that preceded, and gave rise to, the struggle over the natures of Christ and their relationship to each other.

In her careful formulation of the truth of this doctrine, not only was the Church responding to various heresies, but she was also expressing the living faith of the saints (and let it be emphasized, it was

*A speech given at the University of Chicago for the University of Chicago Christian Fellowship.

not only the faith of the theologians and bishops, but also, and especially, the faith of the *saints*) as to Who and what Jesus is, on the basis of the clear testimony of Holy Scripture. We may not for one moment suppose that the doctrine of the incarnation as it is set forth in the creeds is the theoretical speculation of the theologians. Rather, it is the statement (and if you take the time to read it, you will discover that the statement is characterized by simplicity) and defense of that which the whole Church read in the Bible.

She read that her Saviour, Jesus, is a real man among men. She read that this Savior is, as well, God Himself come down to her from heaven. She read that He is, nevertheless, one Christ, not two Christs. And this is the doctrine of the incarnation.

The Church of Christ believed this from the first; the heresies did not lead the Church to believe something she had never believed before. All that the heresies did was to stimulate the Church to understand more clearly and sharply what she believed; to express more definitely what she believed; and to formulate her faith carefully.

Apart from this, it would be impossible to account for the steadfastness of the orthodox over so many years, in the face of so many adversities, and despite so many bewildering deviations.

Amid all the din of Arianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, monophysitism, and monothelitism, to say nothing of the noise of the subtle variations on all these errors, besides the usual confusion contributed by the civil powers, there was the clear, certain, powerful sound of the Word of God, Holy Scripture; and the Church listened intently and obediently to the Word of God.

The Church heard Scripture say, "And the Word (Who was in the beginning, Who was with God, and Who was God) — And the Word became flesh" (John 1:14).

The incarnation was the act of the Word, Whom John identifies in John 1 as the eternal Son of God, of becoming flesh; it was the event of the union of the Word and flesh. It was the act, or event, of a moment — one, definite, particular moment of time (time's fulness, according to Galatians 4:4), the moment that Jesus was conceived in the womb of the virgin, Mary, in Nazareth, Galilee. The word, *incarnation*, means this: 'becoming flesh,' or 'coming in flesh.' God became man; and this God-become-man is Jesus.

This was an act of real union. How this union was effected, in what it consisted, we put off explaining for a moment. But it was the union of God and flesh. The incarnation was not a close contact between God and a human being, a conjunction of the Divine and

the human, a dwelling side-by-side of God and a man in the temple of the body and soul of one Jesus. The incarnation was not the turning of God the Word into a man, so that what we have as a result is one who is only a man, but no longer God. On the other hand, the incarnation was not the absorbing of the human into the Divine Word, so that what we have is one who is only God, but no longer man. Nor was the incarnation the mixture of Divine and human to form a third kind of being: a *super-man* or a *demi-god*. None of these is *union*. But God united to Himself flesh, so that He is now both God and flesh.

Accordingly, Jesus is a real man. "Consubstantial with us according to the manhood," confesses the Symbol of Chalcedon. He is flesh; and "flesh" is human nature, humanity. He derives His manhood from the mother in whom He is conceived and of whom He is born; and, thus, He derives it, as do we all, from Adam.

He is a complete man; the flesh taken to Himself by the Word is full flesh, lacking nothing. Chalcedon had to contend for this against Apollinaris, who held that, although Jesus had a human body and a human soul, He lacked a human spirit (in the language of the day, a "reasonable soul"). In place of this supposedly highest part of man, said Apollinaris, was the Divine Word Himself. Chalcedon, therefore, was at pains to assert that Jesus was "perfect in manhood" and that He possessed a "reasonable soul," i.e., a spirit.

What all this amounts to is the simple insistence that Jesus is a *man*. If He is a man, He is completely a man. Whatever makes up human nature composes Him. He is "in all things . . . made like unto his brethren" (Hebrews 2:17).

In one respect only does He differ from us, and that is that He is sinless: "without sin" (Hebrews 4:15); "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26). But sinfulness is not of the essence of humanity.

At the same time, Jesus is very God. "Consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead," Chalcedon says. He is, and remains, the Word, the eternal *Logos* Who is God and by Whom all things were made in the beginning. He has His Deity of God the Father by being begotten from the Father from all eternity. According to John 1:14, He is the only begotten of the Father — the Son, therefore. Having His Being from the very Being of God the Father, He is, as the best reading of verse 18 puts it, "the only begotten God." Jesus claimed Deity, and forgave sins; the disciples recognized His Deity, and Thomas said to Him, "My God."

In other words, Jesus has two natures. We understand by "nature" (or substance) the sum total of all the powers and qualities that make up a certain

being; or, more simply, what someone is. Jesus is God; and Jesus is man.

These two natures always remain distinct. One of the teachings rejected by Chalcedon as an error was that known as Eutychianism: the flesh was so taken up into the Word as to be absorbed by the Divine Word. Even the body was deified. Hence, on this

view, Jesus is one nature, the Divine. Chalcedon spoke against this when it wrote, "inconfusedly, unchangeably." As has already been noted, the confusing of the natures can take other forms.

(to be concluded)

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Galatians

by Rev. G. Lubbers

It ought not to be overlooked that the first ten verses of this sixth chapter of Galatians are a continuation of the admonitions contained in verses 25,26 of the former chapter. Paul applies to two particular matters the content of the truth that living by the Spirit calls for a consistent walk by the Spirit of Christ. For they who walk by the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, do not ever fulfill the lusts of the flesh. That is like a great beacon light shining upon the path of our earthly pilgrimage until the day of Christ. (Gal. 5:16).

Particularly these verses, which we are about to study, illucidate the orderly walk ("*stoichein*" Gal. 5:25) of the power of the Spirit of Sanctification. This is the Spirit, Who shed God's love abroad in our hearts, so that we have a faith which works (is energized) by love.

Paul singles out two aspects of the life of the congregation in which this walk by the Spirit must be evidenced as a good fruit of practical thankfulness, which is the keeping of the commandment of love for the brother. Firstly, he shows in a "case study," how walking according to the Spirit is evidenced in the merciful restoration of a man (*anthropos*) who is overtaken by a transgression of the law (verses 1-5). And, secondly, he exhorts to the loving care, which members of the church must show for their teachers, and for all those who are the poor in the household of faith (verses 6-10).

THE TENDER AND MERCIFUL RESTORATION OF A FALLEN SAINT (Galatians 6:1-5)

Full of earnest and apostolic appeal, Paul addresses the Galatian saints as "brethren." These "brethren" include also the sisters in Christ. In a sense the entire admonition is couched in this term: *brethren*. A somewhat hasty perusal of the Scriptures indicates that the term "brethren" does not refer to natural ties of blood ("Blood-brother" sic) but refers to the new relationship which is ours through the regeneration in Christ Jesus. It is the new birth by which we have the power, the right, and the authority (*exousia*) to become the children of God (John 1:11-13). In the household of faith (Gal. 6:10b) all things are basically and radically new. The household of God is the family of the freeborn sons of Sarah, born from above (John 3:3,6,7,8.). How pregnant with meaning the term "brethren" is in the book of Galatians may be seen in all the places where Paul speaks of the saints as brethren: Gal. 1:2,11; 3:15; 4:12,28,31; 5:11, 13. Paul has never lost confidence that these brethren, "through the Lord," will be wooed back to the faith, that Christ be once more formed in them (Gal. 4:19; 5:10). How much of Paul's travail of soul is in each of these texts, where he calls them "brethren," may be seen in the fact that the last word in this entire epistle is "Brethren" (Gal. 6:18).

The Bible never speaks of a brotherhood of fallen mankind, the so-called "brotherhood of man" of

which deniers of the Christ speak. This is the language of those who would deny the truth that the church is gathered "out of every tongue, tribe, people, and nation." Such deny the reality of the enmity which God Himself has made between the seed of the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 7:9,10). The term "brotherhood" is used in Zechariah 11:14 and I Peter 2:17. In both of these cases the term definitely refers to the peculiar tie and relationship between the members of the household of faith. In Zechariah the Lord speaks of the unity between the tribes of Judah and Israel. This tie was symbolized in the one staff which is called "Bands." When this band is symbolically broken, it refers to the Lord's sovereign breaking of the "brotherhood between Judah and Israel" (Zech. 11:14). On the other hand, in I Peter 2:17 the term definitely refers to the church of the reborn saints in Christ, the eldest brother, the firstborn brother amongst the brethren, as an eternal abiding family in the Father's house (John 14:1-3). Here is a brotherhood which is separated from the rest of mankind by God's sovereign election and reprobation. They are an elect nation, a holy priesthood, a peculiar possession, called out of darkness into God's marvelous light.

Thus we must view the number of the "brethren" here, as the freeborn sons of Sarah, with the rights to the eternal inheritance in the Fatherhouse with its many mansions.

We should notice that Paul speaks here of *a man* (*anthroopos*) in the church, that is overtaken in a fault. Such a man is one of the saints, a chosen one of Christ. He falls into a sin, is overtaken in a transgression. He fell into this sin rather unawares. He is a brother or a sister in Christ, one who professes to be a living member of God's church. But he (she) is but a man, *homo*! His breath is in his nostrils. Yet, he is a member of the household of faith. It was by the precious blood of the Lamb, without spot or blemish, that his new status was brought about (I Pet. 1:18). Such brethren call God their Father (Gal. 4:6,7; I Peter 1:17). Such are partakers of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). The term "partakers" (*metochoi*) does not suggest the idea of personal fellowship (See Heb. 10:33) but rather the participation in some common blessing and privilege. (See Westcott on Hebrews on Heb. 3:1) In this communion of saints, saints in all their imperfection of lust warring against the Spirit, we must see this "man" who is overtaken in a fault, a transgression!

Here in the midst of the redeemed brotherhood, in the household of faith, it happens (yes, in the divine wisdom and pedagogy!) that a man is overtaken in a fault. We are ever surrounded by sin which so easily besets us (Heb. 12:1). The pitfalls of Satan against us are many and various, are they not? Daily we must

pray, according to the instruction of Him, who was tempted in all things, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (evil One)" (Matt. 6:13a). This is a prayer in the household of faith. The children of our heavenly Father pray thus for themselves and for all the saints, with whom they know the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love of Christ (Eph. 3:14-19). Here we have the intense battle against Satan, the world, and our own flesh, do we not? We must pray lest we be overcome in this battle, must always give strong resistance until, at last, in glory we have the complete victory, and the victor's crown! And for this battle we heed the power of the Holy Spirit of Christ (I Peter 1:5; II Peter 1:3). This battle is not a proud Pelagian-humanistic effort, a legalistic work-righteousness, but it is of the battling saint. And he is but a "man," who was overtaken in a fault.

Yes, Paul says, he was overtaken in a fault!

I believe that we must be cautious not to minimize the "fault" of this saint, this "man," and conceive of it as being a rather insignificant sin. It is much more according to Scripture to conceive of this sin as being rather grievous, such as "overtaken" both a David, a man after God's heart in the sin of adultery, and Peter in denying his Lord (II Sam. 11:1-5; Luke 22:54-62). Yes, even father Abraham, whose footsteps of faith we must press as sons of adoption, lied, once and again, in moments of weakness (Gen. 12:10-13; 20:2). He was overtaken in a fault. Even Isaac was overtaken in the same "fault" (Gen. 26:7-9). And God is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is He not? He is not ashamed to be called their God as the great city-Builder (Heb. 11:16). It ought not be glossed over that the term in Greek for "fault" is "*paraptoomati*," and that this term is translated some seven times in the KJV as "offence," referring to the Fall of Adam in Paradise. It also refers to our "offence," for which Christ was delivered to the accursed tree (Rom. 4:25; 5:15-20). The term in the Greek is also translated "trespasses" in Eph. 2:5, Col. 2:5, referring to our being legally and spiritually dead. And, therefore, we believe this to be not merely a minor sin, a mere "fault," which Paul presents as a possibility for a christian, a man, to be overtaken with. Paul is speaking of a transgression by the christian of the royal law; he is overtaken by such a "fault"; he falls into sin. He was tempted and succumbed. What a sad spectacle: a fallen saint for whom Christ died. Yet, for him there is the comforting word: I have prayed for you that your faith fail not! (Luke 22:32)

The verb "overtaken" does not mean, as we already suggested, that a fellow-saint found him out. No, it means that "he through weakness fell into sin." (See "FORM OF BAPTISM") The German transla-

tion of Luther here translates the term overtaken "*proleemphthee*" by the verb "*ubereilt*" which is akin to the Holland translation "*Overvallen*." The poor saint fell before he realized it. Hence, here is not the case of a hypocrite, who masqueraded as a saint and is found out, but he is one who has walked in the commandments of God by a true faith in thankfulness but who, at a given time and in an hour of unwatchfulness, was overcome of a transgression. Now his conscience is injured, he is mortified as was a David and Peter by their sin and transgression. He does not feel that he has a rightful place among the brethren anymore, or that he shares in the love of God in Christ Jesus, and that, too, with the hope of eternal in his heart. All is now dark and distressing for him. He is undone, or at least he must be brought to see the greatness of his sin before a holy God and Father. He lies prostrate in the dust before God. Or he still tried, as did David (Psalm 32:3,4) to shield himself in the hope that he will not be found out. Such a man must be restored!

Such a man must be restored in the spirit of meekness!

The verb in the Greek for "restored" is *katarizete*. The term means: to adjust thoroughly, to knit together, to unite completely. Once again the "man" must be joined together again in the same mind of Christ (I Cor. 1:10; 2:16). The joy and peace which Christ gives to poor and filthy sinners, must, once more, flood his soul with inward and constant delight. He must sing with David of the blessedness of the man whose sins are forgiven (Psalm 32:1). He must experience with holy delight that where sin abounded grace does much more abound (Rom. 5:20). He will then say far more emphatically than before his "fault": shall I continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! (Compare Canons of Dordt, Fifth Head Of Doctrine, Articles 4,12,13) Yes, everyone who is perfected (*kateerismenon*), who is wholly restored and amended, shall be as his master (Luke 6:40). Here is the fulfilment of the law written upon the fleshy heart of the fallen saint!

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Chapter IV - Of Creation

Rev. Ron Van Overloop

As many readers will recall, chapter III of the Westminster Confession treats the subject of God's eternal decrees. Whereas the Confession simply proceeds to a treatment of creation, the relationship between God's decrees and creation is given in the Westminster catechisms. Question 14 of the Westminster Larger Catechism asks, "How doth God execute His decrees?" That question is answered briefly in the Shorter Catechism, "God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence. Rev. 4:11; Eph. 1:11." This answer is amplified in the Larger Catechism. "God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will. Eph. 1:11; I Peter 1:1,2."

Hence, chapters four and five of the Confession treat the subjects of creation and providence, follow-

ing the decrees of God in chapter three.

In this issue let us consider Chapter IV – of Creation.

1. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,^a for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom and goodness,^b in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.^c

a. Hebrews 1:2; John 1:2,3; Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Job 33:4.

b. Romans 1:20; Jeremiah 10:12; Psalm 104:24; 33:5,6.

c. The whole first chapter of Genesis; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16; Acts 27:24.

2. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female,^a with reasonable and immortal souls,^b endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image,^c having

the law of God written in their hearts,^d and power to fulfil it;^e and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change.^f Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil;^g which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.^h

- a. Genesis 1:27.
- b. Genesis 2:7; with Ecclesiastes 12:7; and Luke 23:43; and Matthew 10:28.
- c. Genesis 1:26; Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24.
- d. Romans 2:14,15.
- e. Ecclesiastes 7:29.
- f. Genesis 3:6; Ecclesiastes 7:29.
- g. Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:8-11,21.
- h. Genesis 1:26,28.

The first section establishes the fact that the world and all within it are not self-existent, nor eternal. That they exist is because of the creative power of the one, only, true God.

This applies equally to that which cannot be seen as well as to that which can be seen. "Visible and invisible" is the language of Colossians 1:16. By things invisible is meant space and time, concepts, and spirit being.

That all things within the world had a beginning is proven by the Scriptural references which speak of a "time" (we call it time for the obvious lack of better terminology) when the world was nonexistent. "Before Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Psalm 90:2). Also Jesus speaks of the glory "which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:5,24).

Also, the Scriptures never imply the presence of anything pre-existing or anything without God's creation. "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6). "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3).

That to God is attributed the creation of the world and all therein is contrary to the findings of ungodly science. Such, so-called, science concludes with an evolutionary process which determines the age of the world to be in the millions and billions of years.

What difference does it make that the Bible and the Confession were written long before the science of geology came into existence? The truthfulness of the facts and/or theories of science is determined only by their agreement to Scripture. It is the Word of God alone which serves as the basis for *all* truth. God's Word is not to be reconciled to a discovery or theory of man.

Through faith we believe that the record in Genesis has been given by divine revelation and, therefore, is

infallibly true. The Scriptures and the book of creation (nature) are both of God and perfectly agree. If it appears that these two do not coincide, then the facts or theories supposedly derived from creation are imperfectly understood.

As the motivation of the eternal decrees of God is "the manifestation of His glory" so, we are told immediately, it is for the execution of those decrees in creation.

Creation took place not of itself in an evolutionary manner. Nor were things created by a power other than the one true God. He is THE Creator. And He created for Himself. Romans 11:36 tells us that all things are "of Him." "All things were created by Him" (Colossians 1:16).

Not only is it a Biblical truth that all things are of Him, but also all things are "to Him" (Romans 11:36) or "for Him" (Colossians 1:16). Proverbs 16:4a states it explicitly, "The LORD hath made all things for Himself." Revelation 4:11 gives us more of the same: "Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

Let us look about us and examine creation from this perspective! Let us look for the glory of God's power, wisdom, and goodness in creation. See His glory in the heavens. See it and marvel in the human body. Wonder in awe as you see it in animals, fish, and fowl. See it in a leaf and blade of grass. And return to God the glory.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

We record here without comment the interesting reference to angels found in the Larger Catechism, but not found in the Confession.

Q. 16. How did God create angels?

A. God created angels, spirits,^a immortal,^b holy,^c excelling in knowledge,^d mighty in power;^e to execute His commandments, and to praise His name,^f yet subject to change.^g

- a. Psalm 104:4; Colossians 1:16.
- b. Luke 20:36.
- c. Genesis 1:31.
- d. Matthew 24:36.
- e. II Thessalonians 1:7.
- f. Psalm 103:20,21.
- g. II Peter 2:4.

Section two deals with the creation of man, the crowning work of creation.

Last of all, God created man. Man's place is last to indicate that he is the end and crown of all creation. In the creation week God was building up to the climactic creation of the king of creation: man. All of creation serves man, that he, in turn, might serve God.

Evolution denies that man was created by God. It makes man the last in a long chain of gradual and successive developments from the lower and more simple.

That man was created directly by God is positively given to us in Genesis 1:26,27 and Genesis 2:7.

God created man one human pair, male and female. From this couple the entire human race in all its varieties has descended by generation. This is taught explicitly in Acts 17:26, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." The genealogies of Genesis 10 shows clearly the same. Also this is implied in the Scriptural doctrine of original sin. Job 15:4, "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?"

A reservation must be expressed against the use of the term "immortal." The same criticism applies to the same use of this term in the Belgic Confession, article 37. It seems that this philosophical conception was current at the time of the formulation of these creeds. What is meant is that there is existence after death. But the term "immortal" very poorly expresses this idea, first, because the word itself means "not able to die" and man, body and soul, certainly came under the penalty of death at the fall into sin, and secondly, the Scriptures use the term only to refer to the glorified state of the believer after death (cf. I Corinthians 15:53).

The confession continues its description of man as God created him by stating that God created man after His own image, namely, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Man resembled God in a creaturely way, i.e., he reflected creaturely God's perfections. That means that he possessed a reasonable soul; he was a rational, moral being. As God created him, man stood in a positive relationship to God. He was capable of a right apprehension of all things, including God, and also he was capable of doing that which was right, being within himself also right with God.

The fathers continue to describe man's original position by saying, "Having the law of God written in their hearts." We do not question this description as being apt, but we seriously question the use of Romans 2:14,15 as Biblical support for this. Romans 2:15 speaks of the "*work of the law* written in their hearts," not of the law itself being written there. That in the first place. Also, the reference in Romans 2:14,15 is to those who are not believers. It is the work of God's re-creation within His chosen people in

regeneration that gives us insight into how God originally created man. Confer Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10. We concur with Martin Luther's exposition of Romans 2:15 in his commentary on this text.

Now it seems to me that it is one thing to say "that the work of the law is written in their hearts" and another that "the law is written in their hearts." For the apostle did not intend to say here (even if he could have done so on the basis of knowledge) that they had the law written in their hearts, but he wanted to say only "the work of the law."

I believe, therefore, that "the law is written in their hearts" means the same as "love is shed abroad in their hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5). But "the work of the law is written in their hearts" means that the knowledge of the law is written in them, i.e., the law written in letters concerning what must be done but not grace which enables one to do this. Hence, those who have had only the work of the law written in their hearts must necessarily have remained confined until now in the letter that kills.

Better proof would have been Ezekiel 11:19,20; 36:26-28; II Corinthians 3:3.

Although Adam was created holy and capable of obedience, he was at the same time capable of falling. The terminology of the Confession is being left to the liberty of their own will. This does not mean that Adam and Eve were sovereignly free, for they were always within the bounds God had set for them. Nor was their liberty that they could determine what was good for themselves. God told them to obey Him by eating of the Tree of Life and not eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God commanded them to choose the good and reject the evil.

Rather, the liberty of their own will means that they were morally free. They were able to do good, but they could fall; they could entertain sin. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil placed them concretely before this choice of good or evil, of obedience or disobedience. If they obeyed, they would know good and evil in the love of God: loving good and hating evil. But if they disobeyed, they would know good and evil in enmity against God: loving evil and hating good. God placed them concretely before the Tree of Life which represented joyful fellowship with God in the way of obedience.

So it pleased God for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness to create the world and all things therein, and all very good.

Know the standard and follow it.
Read The Standard Bearer

Book Reviews

STUDIES IN EXODUS, F.B. Meyer; Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 476 pages, \$9.95 (cloth). (Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema)

Since the author of this commentary is probably unknown to most of our readers, we will quote the following biographical note from the dust jacket:

"Frederick Brotherton Meyer (1847-1929), the English Baptist pastor was born in London to a wealthy family of German ancestry. He was educated at London University, graduating in 1868 and completed his theological training at Regents Park Baptist College between 1870 and 1895. He held seven successful pastorates throughout England. Meyer was President of the National Federation of Free Churches (1904-05). He was a very popular and beloved Conference speaker and Bible teacher. While at York, between 1872 and 1874, Meyer met D.L. Moody and these two godly men formed a life-long friendship." From this biographical note it is evident that F.B. Meyer does not stand in the Reformed tradition. It may be expected, therefore, that this will also be reflected in his commentaries.

If you are looking for solid exposition and help in understanding the book of Exodus, this is not the commentary to purchase. It does not furnish a careful explanation of the Scriptures, and it does not trace the line of Old Testament history as set forth in the book of Exodus.

I am not certain what a "devotional commentary" is supposed to be. I am certain, however, that any commentary, devotional or otherwise, should be a faithful exposition of Scripture. I am certain, too, that it cannot be properly devotional if it is not thoroughly exegetical. In these respects this commentary falls short. For example, the entire significant passage of Exodus 4:18-26 receives a treatment of five and one-half pages' length; and in that treatment no attention is paid to the very significant fact that before Moses ever went to Pharaoh, the Lord told him, "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart. . . ."

This is not to say that this commentary is not evangelical in the broad sense of the word. Nor does it imply that there are no nice thoughts presented in the book, although even the devotional material is sometimes marred by improper spiritualizations.

BIBLICAL AND NEAR EASTERN STUDIES, Essays in honor of William Sanford LaSor, edited by Gary A. Tuttle; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978; 300 pp. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

This Festschrift was dedicated to William LaSor, professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, on his 65th birthday. It is divided into three parts: the first dealing with New Testament Studies, the second with Old Testament Studies, and the third with Near Eastern Studies. A partial sampling of the authors and articles will give the reader some idea of what this book contains. Its authors include among others: F. F. Bruce, Eldon J. Epp, Ralph P. Martin, Cyrus H. Gordon, Meredith G. Kline, and D. J. Wiseman. A few of the titles are: Jews and Judaism in *The Living Bible New Testament*; The Canonical Shape of the Book of Jonah; Oracular Origin of the State; The Tower of Babel Revisited; The Date of Nehemiah Reconsidered; They Lived in Tents; A New Look at Three Old Testament Roots for "Sin"; Case Vowels on Masculine Singular Nouns in Construct in Ugaritic."

Most of the articles are written for scholars who are acquainted with the ancient languages of Scripture; and many of them are written from the viewpoint of form-literary criticism.

JESUS OF NAZARETH IN WORD AND DEED, By Charles C. Cochran; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979; 133 pp., \$4.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

This very brief book discusses a few of the events in the life of Christ. It is difficult to determine its underlying theme, but the Introduction states: "The purpose of this modest volume is to set forth an orderly statement of who Jesus of Nazareth was and is which will prove intelligible to the learner and the learned alike. To do this, I have chosen the Gospels of Mark and Luke as primary sources, with such confirmation from other biblical sources as may be required for clear understanding. The selection of circumstances and incidents recorded in these Gospels has been made with a view to our main theme: to enunciate in a manner faithful to the New Testament the identity of Jesus 'who is called Christ.'" The book, while written generally from a conservative viewpoint, is rather shallow in its discussions of the significance of the events in Christ's ministry.

CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY

All young men desiring to begin studies this fall in the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches, located at 4949 Ivanrest Ave., S.W., Grandville, Michigan 49418 are hereby notified of the Theological School Committee meetings to be held on March 20 and April 16, 1980 at 7:30 P.M. in the Theological School Building.

Pre-seminary Department:

Permission to pursue the pre-seminary course of study shall be granted by the Theological School Committee. A transcript of grades from High School and College (if any), a letter of testimony from a student's pastor or consistory, and a certificate of health from a reputable physician shall be submitted along with the student's application.

Seminary Department:

Permission to pursue the Theological course in the seminary shall be granted by the Synod, upon recommendation of the

Theological School Committee, to such an aspirant only who comes supplied with a testimonial of his consistory that he is a member in full communion, sound in faith and upright in walk, and also a certificate from a reputable physician showing him to be in good health.

A complete high school education and the equivalent of a four year (125 hour) college education are required for entrance into the seminary department. Moreover, each entrant into this department must produce evidence that he has credit for the required college courses. Requirements are listed in the school catalog, available from the School.

All applicants for enrollment in the seminary department must appear before the Theological School Committee for interview before enrollment. In the event you cannot be present at these meetings, please notify the undersigned secretary of your intentions, prior to these meetings. Mail all correspondence to the Theological School.

John Buiter, Secretary

The League of Eastern Men's and Ladies' Societies will meet at Hudsonville Church at 8:00 on Wednesday, April 9. Prof. Decker will speak on "The Signs of the Times." Everyone is welcome.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!!!

The Standing Committees, as well as the Special Committees of Synod are reminded that all materials for the Agenda of the 1980 Synod must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk on, or before April 15, 1980.

Stated Clerk of Synod
Rev. Meindert Joostens
2016 Tekonsha S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, mourns the loss of a faithful member, MRS. ALICE KOOIENGA, whom the Lord took home on February 10, 1980. We hereby express our sympathy to the bereaved family.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:14).

Dorothy Decker, Pres.
Jean Pastoor, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Lanning in the loss of Mrs. Lanning's step-father, MR. WILLIAM WIERENGA.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." (1 Thess. 4:14).

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 8, 1980, our parents, MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM LENTING celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. We thank our heavenly Father for preserving them for each other and for us, and pray that He will continue to bless them in the years to come.

their children,

Marv and Carolyn Davis
Hank and Marcella Lenting
Bill and Jan Lenting
Ade Lenting
and 8 grandchildren.

News From Our Churches

Our church in Redlands, California has extended a call to Rev. Kenneth Koole of Randolph, Wisconsin. The Redlands trio also included Rev. Marvin Kamps and Rev. Richard Moore.

A review of calls declined recently is as follows: Rev. Kamps from Lynden to serve as home missionary; Professor H. C. Hoeksema from Hudsonville to serve as minister-on-loan to Christchurch, New Zealand; Professor H. Hanko from Redlands; and Rev. David Engelsma from Hope, Walker, Michigan.

There has been quite a bit of activity of late involving church buildings our congregations use or plan to use in the future. A new church building is under construction in Wyckoff, New Jersey, for our congregation there. The masons have now completed the second (upper) half of the foundation. The lower half of the foundation is buried, the block for the lower part of the basement is laid, plastered, and tarred. The next part of the project is the framing and also some further excavating.

The congregation in Isabel, South Dakota approved the building of a new addition to their parsonage. Redlands approved the building plans presented by the consistory at a special congregational meeting on January 21. The building committee is now working to obtain a building permit in order that construction can begin on the new church in Redlands. South Holland has scheduled a collection to be taken the first Sunday of each month for their Future Expansion Fund. Our church in Kalamazoo, Michigan, is in the process of finalizing plans for a new church building. Construction is scheduled to start this spring. A sketch of their new church is on the Kalamazoo Bulletin — and an attractive one it is. Loveland has also appointed a committee to examine the future needs of the congregation.

A milestone of sorts was achieved recently. The first news in four and one-half years was received from our Kalamazoo Church. Thank you! A news column tends to be rather skimpy with no news to report — and gathering of the news depends for the most part on a far-flung network of unsung pastors, bulletin clerks, and others who take the time and the postage to send in copies of their bulletins.

In addition to news of their building plans, Kalamazoo had more to report. Four young people recently made confession of their faith. This is always a special event in any congregation, but especially

meaningful in a small congregation. On Thursday evening, February 21, Professor Herman Hanko lectured in Kalamazoo on the topic, "Interpreting the Bible." A sizable group of visitors attended the lecture and showed interest.

Rev. Engelsma, pastor of our church in South Holland, Illinois was invited to speak on "The Incarnation" for the Christian Fellowship of Students at the University of Chicago on February 8.

Recently the Young People's Federation Board published a booklet containing a series of articles by Rev. C. Hanko, originally printed in the *Beacon Lights*, entitled "Leaving Father and Mother." The booklet addresses many of the questions young people face in choosing a life-mate and making a life for themselves. Copies may be ordered for \$1.50 from Miss Grace Faber, 4190 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. You may also be interested in the *Beacon Lights*, a monthly publication intended for and published by young people. A subscription is \$5.00 per year and can be entered through Miss Faber.

The consistory of First Church in Grand Rapids purchased a supply of the booklet "Leaving Father and Mother" and sent a copy to each of the young people in the congregation between the ages of 14 and 20, as the consistory felt that these well-written articles could be read with profit by the young people.

Mr. Dewey Engelsma has been busy of late bringing his program of slides on Singapore and the work our churches have undertaken there to many of our churches. Mr. and Mrs. Societies seem to be especially active in bringing this interesting program to their respective churches. A future program is scheduled in Faith Church, Jenison, Michigan on March 19.

A Singspiration, directed by Mr. Roland Petersen, was held on Sunday evening, February 17, in First Church. One of the things the director asked us to sing was Psalter 424 — but not in the style we are accustomed to singing these tunes taken from the Geneva Psalter dating from the time of the Reformation. Usually we sing these in chorale style with all notes of equal length — and quite slowly. Try singing one of these songs as written — and about twice as fast as 'normal' — you might even like it as it was originally intended to be sung!

K. G. V.