

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Pilgrim church, reflect back on how you commemorated the birth of your Lord. Was it done in such a way that you were in the world but not of it? Or were you swept along with festivities of foolish men as they fattened themselves for the day of slaughter? Watch and prepare yourselves for Jesus' second coming.

See "Eating and Drinking" — page 180

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MEDITATION

The Covenant of the Day and Night

Rev. M. Schipper

"And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;

Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers."

Jeremiah 33:19-21.

The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah in the prison!

For the prophet had been thrust into prison because he had spoken the word of the Lord. He had

warned the people of Judah, not only of the pending captivity in Babylon, but also that their peace and safety lay in complete subjection to the king of Babylon. If they would not obey this word they would perish, but if they would obey it the Lord would prosper them, and return them after seventy years to their own land. However, the leaders of Judah spoke lies to the people; warning them not to be in subjection to Babylon's invading king, while they at the same time saw to it that Jeremiah be counted worthy of death. However, the princes of the people rescued the prophet from death, and instead he was thrown into prison.

From behind the bars of his cell he is called once more to speak the word of the Lord. Indeed, the day would come when Judah's captives would return from bondage to their own land. The Lord will cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and in those days shall Judah be saved and Jerusalem shall dwell safely (verses 15, 16). David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of Israel (verse 17); nor shall the priests, the Levites, want a man to offer up sacrifices (verse 18).

It is in this connection that the Lord speaks of the covenant, the covenant of the day and the night. If that covenant of the day and night shall fail — which, of course, is quite impossible — then shall the covenant which God made with David also fail — again, an utter impossibility.

As we stand at the threshold of another year, and have recently witnessed the passing of an old year; as we witness the change of the times, the seasons, the years, which is in strict accord with God's covenant of the day and night, we must be reminded that God also is realizing His own covenant of grace and peace in Christ with us the believers, and with our spiritual seed.

In the light of our text we are brought to consider, first of all, the covenant of the day and of the night, and its spiritual counterpart.

From the beginning of the creation there has continued the ordinance of the day and night (Genesis 1:14-19). God said at the dawn of creation, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night. Let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And God made two great lights, the greater, to rule the day, and the lesser, to rule the night. And He made the stars also. And God said, Let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. So the created lights were not only to rule the day and night, but also for the dividing of the times, the seasons, the years.

This is the establishment of the covenant of the day and the night!

An ordinance intended to continue so long as the world shall endure!

This cannot mean that the world is eternal, for the Word of God clearly indicates it shall perish, wax old as a garment (Psalm 102:26). And the apostle Peter informs us that the heavens shall pass away, and the earth also shall be burned up, and we are to look for a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness shall dwell (II Peter 3:10-13).

Nor does it mean that the Creator on occasion could not set aside the ordinance. For we know that at the time of the deluge it appeared that the end of the world had come. And from a certain point of view so it was. But remarkably the Lord God showed to Noah that while the earth remained, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, the day and the night shall not cease. Significantly it is to be observed that the rainbow appears to Noah after the flood as being indicative of the covenant of the day and night. We remember too the time of Joshua in his battle with the Amorites, how at his word the Lord God caused the sun and the moon to stand still until Israel obtained the victory over their enemies (Joshua 10:12,13). And at the time of Hezekiah the Lord made the shadow to go back ten degrees on the sun dial of Ahaz, to prove to the God-fearing king that his life would be extended. And, would we be entirely in error if we concluded that at Calvary, in the hour of the Saviour's deepest agony, when He perceived His God-forsakenness, that God caused the day to become as dark as night?

Yet, in spite of all these changes, which it is the prerogative of the Creator to make, He incessantly maintains His covenant of the day and the night. From the creation of the world to the second coming of the Lord Jesus, when He will cause the sun to be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, until then these heavenly bodies shall control the times. Each day the sun will rise and set. Each season shall follow the other in its proper order. Each year will be succeeded by another.

Such is the covenant of the day and of the night!

And what is so remarkable is the fact that while the covenant of the day and night continues faithfully to be realized, God at the same time and within the same circumstance is realizing and bringing to fruition His other covenant, the covenant of grace in Christ. Moreover, it should not pass our notice that the sole purpose of the former, namely, the covenant of the day and night, is the realization of the latter. Creation and time is the necessary sphere in which the covenant of grace is realized. That covenant of grace therefore is from the beginning and it stretches out to the end. A covenant of grace, not of works, or of nature. Really the Bible knows nothing of such

distinctions. They are only philosophical, sucked out of the thumb of man. There is, according to Scripture, only one covenant of sovereign and elective grace. That covenant is it which God made with Christ and His people in Him in eternity; and which is realized within the brackets of time as the divine Sovereign realizes His covenant of the day and the night. That our text speaks of the covenant of grace in terms of David, God's servant, and with the Levites, the priests, points only to the old dispensational revelation of it.

An inviolable covenant!

Not to be broken!

That is true of the covenant of the day and the night. No mere man can ever change it. Though he often attempts to monkey with the creational ordinance by setting his clocks ahead and backward to accommodate his pleasure and his business, thus attempting to change the times and seasons which God has set in His covenant of the day and night, nevertheless man is bound by the order of the Creator in the sphere of His creation. It is the sole prerogative of God, as we already pointed out, to alter the order of creation when the cause of His covenant of grace is at stake. But for the rest, the covenant of the day and night He maintains so that we may reckon with it.

How terrible it would be if this covenant should be broken! What do you suppose would happen if the light did not appear tomorrow morning? What terrible catastrophe would befall us if the present winter would continue into the coming summer? What awful consequences would follow if man's days should be extended until say a thousand years! How ridiculous the thought that the seed of corn would never stop growing!

Because the covenant of the day and night is not broken, man may freely reckon with it. So the farmer may plan to sow his seed in the springtime. So the young man may seek his virgin. So the old man may prepare his house for the moment of death. So the young child may be instructed in his youth, that when he is old he may not depart from it.

So inviolable also is God's covenant of grace!

O, indeed, the children of Judah believed that God had broken that covenant (verse 24). They actually said that the two families, that of David and that of Levi, had been cast off. And because of this misconception Jeremiah, from behind his bars, must speak the word of the Lord, the word that clearly contradicts the awful misconception of Judah's people.

God's answer is: My promise to David shall be realized in the Branch of righteousness (verse 15). He is the Branch of righteousness over against Judah's sin,

Who will grow up unto David. This is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the true seed of David, the Lion of Judah's tribe, the Son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In and through Him will the covenant with David, with the covenant fathers, be fulfilled. And as for the office of the priests, the Levites, it shall continue (Verse 18). The sacrifices of atonement shall continue to be brought, and the blood of the covenant shall continue to flow. In that atonement the children of Judah must continue to look to the Branch, the Lord our righteousness (verse 16).

How comforting, indeed!

It is the word of the Lord! The word which Jehovah, the covenant making and covenant keeping God, speaks to His people!

Not a word of mere man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and whose breath must continue to be given him or he perishes. Of man, who of himself cannot speak the truth. Of man, whose word is no more reliable than fickle man himself.

Not even is it the word of Jeremiah. Of himself the prophet had nothing to say. Always the prophet must first be filled with the word of God before he can speak, and only then does he bring the word of God.

Nay, but it is the word of Jehovah God!

The unchangeable, the eternal God! Whose word is unalterably true, and which never fails to come to pass!

Jehovah's word concerning His inviolable covenant!

Not only concerning the covenant of the day and night, but more particularly pertaining to His covenant made with Christ in the eternal counsel of peace. The word which has been spoken within the brackets of the covenant of the day and night from the dawn of creation. That word which was spoken in Paradise the first in the hearing of our fallen parents, Adam and Eve. That word which was spoken at the time of the destruction of the first world in the flood to Noah. That word which was spoken to the covenant fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; to David, Solomon, and the Levites. That word which God spoke in the fulness of the times in the Logos, the Person of the Son of God in the flesh. That word which was realized in principle at the cross of Calvary, when God sealed that covenant in the blood of the Redeemer. That word which He speaks to us now in the changing of the years.

My covenant shall stand, and I will realize it perfectly through the Branch of My righteousness.

That speech of Jehovah God is intended for your and my comfort. As it was intended to comfort the children of Judah about to go into captivity. O, how they needed that comfort! They had imagined that God

had forsaken His covenant promise to David because the priesthood had become corrupted, and therefore offered no more sacrifices for sin. To that hopeless lot God says virtually: I will multiply the seed of David until the Seed shall come, the Branch. I will keep the house of Levi until the sacrifice is brought that will bring an end to all sacrifices in the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. I will keep my covenant so long as the covenant of the day and the night endures.

That speech of comfort comes to us now!

Indeed, the times may change, for that is nothing more than the covenant of the day and night. But just

as assuredly My everlasting covenant of grace shall remain. I will be your God! And ye shall be My people forever!

Is that your comfort, dear readers?

Then all things may pass away, as do the years; but your God remains forever the same. Then your friends may leave you, but your covenant Friend remains forever at your side.

Then remember, too, that so long as night passes to day, God's friendship relation to you is in progress, and will not stop until you shall see Him face to face, and dwell in the house of His covenant forever!

EDITORIALS

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Replete With Errors

It is surely to be hoped that the readers of *The Banner* do not simply swallow uncritically what Dr. James Daane writes on the subject of reprobation and related subjects. For his writings are filled with more fiction than fact and more error than truth, and as such are very, very misleading. In fact, Dr. Daane is promoting an altogether new theology: not only new in comparison with the theology which has been traditionally Christian Reformed, but new in that it is a definite departure from all that has ever been Reformed, all the way back to John Calvin. For this reason I insist that if Daane's views are consistently held and applied to the body of theology, the result is another gospel, which is not the gospel.

An example in point is Dr. Daane's second article on "Tuininga and Reprobation," (*The Banner*, Nov. 16, '79, pp. 16,17). That article is replete with errors. We cannot take the space to refute them all in detail. But permit me to list a few and to comment briefly.

1) "... although our creeds are infralapsarian rather than supralapsarian, one cannot hold to decretal theology and be an infra-." Our creeds are indeed infralapsarian (especially the Canons), but they are all thoroughly "decretal," and there have been many Reformed and decretal theologians who were infralapsarian.

2) "One cannot hold to Cornelius Van Til's and Herman Hoeksema's view of God's decree, and with consistency be an infralapsarian." Cornelius Van Til can speak for himself. As far as Herman Hoeksema's view is concerned, a statement like this is sheer nonsense. Why? Because Herman Hoeksema was a

supralapsarian. So the statement comes down to this: one cannot hold to a supralapsarian view of God's decree and with consistency be an infralapsarian. It is like saying that one cannot be a cow and with consistency be a horse!

3) "A second consequence of decretal theology's shaping of the Christian Reformed mind is that anyone who articulates non-decretal, infralapsarianism gets a heavy-handed treatment and large variety of heretical labels from the supralapsarian, hyper-Calvinist theologians in our Reformed community." The errors here are numerous: a) There is no such thing as a non-decretal infralapsarian. b) Supralapsarians are not to be identified with hyper-Calvinists, especially not in the Reformed community. c) Supralapsarians have historically not given infralapsarians heretical labels. One gets the impression that Daane does not know the difference between supra- and infra-, and even that he identifies infralapsarianism with Arminianism. But whatever may be the case, notice that Daane merely makes a claim but offers no evidence.

4) "They (decretal theologians) sometimes seek to soften this (that God must be regarded as the ultimate cause of all things, including the fall and reprobation) by urging that man is the secondary cause of the fall and of reprobation." No decretal theologian would make man the cause — even secondary cause — of reprobation. This would amount to conditional reprobation, which is anathema to decretal theologians (both supra- and

infra-), even as is conditional election.

5) “. . . reprobation is the ultimate expression of individualism.” Reprobation is indeed individual, but not the expression of *individualism*. According to God’s decree, the body, the church, the elect race, the organism, is saved, while some individual branches are reprobate and go lost. Reformed theology is never individualistic: Pelagianism and Arminianism are individualistic to the core.

6) “. . . our view of election . . . is dominated by our view of reprobation.” Then why, pray tell, does reprobation have such a small and limited place in the Canons? A statement like this is sheer nonsense.

7) “. . . no Reformed theologian in all the centuries since the Canons of Dort has been able to construct a theology which shows the Biblical relation of your and my election to the election of Jesus Christ.” This is simply not true. I am well aware that Dr. Daane likes to present himself (as in his *The Freedom of God*) as a theologian who stresses the election of Christ and the relation of our election to it. But Daane’s view is both unbiblical and confused. Fact is that Herman Hoeksema stressed the primacy of the election of Christ in relation to our election and in relation to the covenant for many years. It is high time that Dr. Daane should come to grips with this view of Hoeksema instead of forevermore misrepresenting his views. Isn’t it strange that the man whom Daane regards as the epitome of decretal theologians is the very one who has done for years what Daane says no Reformed theologian has been able to do? Daane can find this view very clearly set forth in the first chapter of Hoeksema’s *Christology in Reformed Dogmatics*.

There are more errors, but it would require extended discussion to enter into them.

Let me conclude by calling attention to Daane’s contention that it is individualism which has made Reformed churches easy victims of an “American evangelicalism that is characterized by its individualism.” There is truth in this contention. It is true, as Daane also states, that “many of the more ‘conservative’ Reformed and Presbyterian churches

have a theology which is far more evangelical, in the typical American sense, than Reformed.” Let it be noted, however, that this “typical American sense” is the characteristically Arminian sense, the sense of crusade evangelism and decisionism. Daane is even correct when he fears “that this process is also going on in Christian Reformed churches.” But he is wrong, dead wrong, as to the cause. He ascribes this to the “basic individualism that lies so deeply in the Reformed doctrine of election.” This is both doctrinally and historically incorrect. When does it happen that Reformed and Presbyterian churches begin to become victims of American evangelicalism (Arminianism)? It happens exactly when they begin to veer away from the Reformed doctrine of election and reprobation and to teach in one degree or another that salvation or the possibility of salvation is universal, that the gospel is a general, well-meant offer of salvation, that there is a love of God revealed in the gospel to all men, etc. This is what happened in the Christian Reformed Church in 1924. It is what happened in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in this country in the crisis of the Clark Case. It is what has happened repeatedly in other forms and at other occasions in other denominations. Why, doctrinally speaking, does it happen? It happens not because the Reformed doctrine of predestination is individualistic. But it happens because the incipient Arminianism toward which they veer and with which they compromise the doctrine of predestination is, like all Arminianism and Pelagianism, inherently individualistic. When once these churches turn in the direction of such individualism, it becomes impossible to stem the tide. Some fifteen years ago the Christian Reformed Church was powerless to condemn the error of universal atonement (a typically American evangelical doctrine, to use Daane’s expression). Today the Christian Reformed Church — regardless of what their synod’s decision is going to be on the Boer Gravamen — is showing itself powerless to maintain the doctrine of reprobation. When did all of this begin? Fifty-five years ago, when the Synod of 1924 attempted to say “both . . . and” with respect to the truth of sovereign, particular grace versus Arminianism.

An Old Argument in New Garb

There is one segment of Dr. Daane’s evaluation of Tuininga’s view of reprobation which demands special attention. In writing about decretal theologians’ insistence that God must be regarded as the ultimate cause of all things, including the fall and reprobation, Daane writes:

Some of my readers may perhaps back off and say that these matters are too deep for them to evaluate. But there is a very simple and valid way to evaluate decretal theology. Would you dare, or have you ever heard a decretal theologian, say such things in prayer? Can you conceive of anyone confessing his sins and saying to God, “But You, God, are the ultimate cause

of my sins"? Decretal theology betrays its unbiblical character by its inability to come to expression in our prayers and in our worship of God. But what cannot be said in prayer and worship is surely not good theology. The view of God's sovereignty which says that God is the ultimate causation of everything and thus also the ultimate cause of reprobation is not a part of the content of your Christian faith or mine. If it were, we would express it in our prayers and worship of God. But who does? Not even those who argue for this kind of theology!

What about this argument, or test, proposed by Dr. Daane? We may leave aside the precise terminology, about which there may be difference of opinion. Not everyone may agree, for example, on an expression like "ultimate cause." The basic question is whether the facts and events of sin and the fall have a place in the sovereign decree of the Most High. On this all decretal theologians (including infralapsarians, who prefer to speak of "permission") agree. Against this Dr. Daane proposes the test described in the above paragraph.

In the first place, let me point out that Daane's argument, if you analyze it, proves to be nothing but a very old argument in a new garb. What is that old argument? It is the argument that decretal theology makes God the author of sin. Or, in another form, it is the argument that decretal theology denies the responsibility of the sinner and — for this is its corollary — ascribes the responsibility to God instead.

In the second place, what is the uniform answer of confessionally decretal theologians to this argument? They repudiate it! In connection with reprobation (Canons I/A/15) they say: "... which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought of which is blasphemy). . . ." And in the Conclusion of the Canons they state that "the Reformed Churches not only do not acknowledge, but even detest with their whole soul" such a doctrine. Scripture deals with principally the same argument in Romans 9:19,20: "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

In the third place, Daane ought to be ashamed of his scholasticism. For the argument proposed by Daane is essentially rationalistic and thus scholastic. And that from the man who so often rebukes decretal theology for its scholasticism! Any Reformed man should know that the "very simple and valid way to evaluate decretal theology" is the time-honored test of Scripture and the creeds. And since the creeds themselves are in question in the basic issue here (the Boer Gravamen), the test becomes that of Scripture directly. Besides, even in his rationalistic test Daane makes a very serious logical error. He makes an

illogical jump from the specific to the general: 1) We cannot say in the particular instance of confessing our sins that God is the ultimate cause of our sins. 2) We cannot say this in prayer and worship in general (an unproved assumption). 3) What cannot be said in prayer and worship is not good theology. 4) Conclusion: decretal theology is not good theology.

In the fourth place, we may apply the test of Scripture and ask the following questions: 1) Does Scripture itself ascribe the facts and events of sin to God's decree? 2) In Scriptural prayers and worship are the facts and events of sin accomplished by sinful men ascribed to God's decree and providential activity? 3) Does Scripture in any way in prayer attribute the sins of God's people to the sovereign God?

The answer to all three questions is Yes.

Numerous passages of Scripture might be cited in answer to the first question. But let me cite one which refers to the central sin of the ages, the crucifixion. By the way, it took place in worship: Peter was preaching! I refer to 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."

In answer to the second question, I refer you to Acts 4:24-30, where we read in part: "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is . . . For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. . . ."

In answer to the third question, I refer the reader to Isaiah 63:17, which is part of a prayer of Isaiah and the remnant: "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?" In this connection I want to point out, too, that according to the original Hebrew the idea of causation is plainly present here. For both the verbs in this text are in the hiphil degree, the degree of the verb in Hebrew which plainly denotes causation.

There may be many questions which we cannot fully understand about the relation of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. But two things are abundantly plain from Scripture: 1) Scripture frequently teaches both truths, but never places them in contradiction of one another. 2) Scripture itself does not hesitate to employ far stronger expressions concerning God's sovereignty and sin than many a theologian, even Reformed theologian, dares to employ.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

The Principles of Missions

(From The Perspective Of The Pauline Epistles)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

There is a good deal of material in the Epistles generally which has a direct bearing on the Principles of Missions. This is especially true of the Epistles of Paul. This is to be expected for several reasons, the first of which is that the Apostle Paul was *the* missionary to the Gentiles. This being the case, the Epistles of Paul are emphatically missionary epistles. Quite in general it may be said they were written while Paul was on the mission field. Those Epistles addressed to churches were in every instance addressed to congregations rather recently converted out of heathendom. These were concerned with problems encountered by "young" mission churches. Those written to individuals were concerned with the office and task of the preacher-evangelist, as well as with proper relationships among the believers in society.

There are three principles which emerge in the Pauline Epistles. There is the Apostle's deep-seated consciousness of his office and the urgency of his task as an Apostle who is called, sent, and qualified by Jesus Christ. Paul gives expression to this especially in the salutations of the various epistles. This is what he writes to the church at Rome: "Paul, a servant (slave, R.D.) of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had afore promised by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and

peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 1:1-7) Note how strongly the Apostle expresses his consciousness of his office. He identifies himself as the servant or slave of Jesus Christ. He is consecrated entirely to the service of Christ. He is called to be an apostle, and that means he is separated unto the gospel of God. By the crucified, resurrected Son of God he has received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations. These are the credentials with which the Apostle comes to the saints at Rome. This same consciousness of office and calling must characterize every faithful missionary of the gospel. So deeply did the Apostle feel this that he went so far as to write to the Corinthians: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16) Paul says necessity is laid upon him, he must preach the gospel. If he does not preach the gospel he is damned! "Woe is unto me!" The missionary or minister who cannot say that had better tender his resignation immediately! In a strikingly beautiful and profound passage the Apostle speaks of this consciousness in somewhat different terms: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." Paul thanks God who always causes the Apostle and preachers to triumph in Christ. By them God makes manifest the sweet smell of His knowl-

edge everywhere. That is true both in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the former the Apostles and preachers are a savour of life unto life and to the latter a savour of death unto death. No one but God Himself is sufficient for these things! Now, why is that true? Because, the Apostle answers, we do not corrupt the Word as do so many. Out of sincerity, out of God and in the sight of God the apostles and preachers speak in Christ. In another passage in the same epistle the Apostle expresses the same consciousness: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (II Cor. 5:18-21) In this passage the Apostle speaks of the fact that God committed to the Apostles and preachers the ministry of reconciliation. Thus they are ambassadors for Christ. An ambassador is the official representative of the king. He speaks the official word of his sender. This means that God beseeches the people of God through the preachers: "be ye reconciled to God." Finally, when speaking to Timothy of Jesus Christ: "Who gave himself a ransom for all," the Apostle testifies: "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." (I Timothy 2:6, 7)

From these same passages it is obvious that according to the Pauline epistles the missionary-preacher is an ambassador of God in Jesus Christ. He is one who is *sent* on an official task by God through Christ. This certainly means that the work is entirely God's. It does not depend upon the preacher. God calls the missionary. God appoints him to the task and qualifies him for the work. God sends him according to His own good pleasure. Through the preaching of the Word by the "sent" preacher God through Christ "gathers, defends, preserves unto Himself, by his Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life." (Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. XXI) Concerning his being qualified by the grace of God the Apostle writes to the Corinthians: "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (I Cor. 15:10)

In the third place, the Apostle is deeply conscious of his utter dependency upon God. This certainly

must characterize every missionary and preacher of the gospel. The Apostle writes to Corinth: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." (I Cor. 16:9) If God had not opened that great and effectual door the Apostle could not have preached and could not have withstood those many adversaries. Likewise the Apostle testifies that when he came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, "a door was opened unto me of the Lord." (II Cor. 2:12) So conscious of his dependence upon the Lord is the apostle that he instructs the Ephesians: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." (Eph. 6:18-20) The Apostle is keenly aware of the fact that, apart from God's giving him boldness, he is not able to proclaim the gospel as it ought to be proclaimed. Thus he made the same request of the Colossians. (Cf. Col. 4:3) In this same connection the Apostle instructs the Corinthians that in the preaching of the gospel God must give the increase or the work is futile. (I Cor. 3:7)

It is perfectly clear from the Pauline Epistles that God through Christ accomplishes the work of gathering His elect out of the nations by one means and one means only, the preaching of the Word. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice." (Cf. John 10:16, 27) This is what distinguishes the sheep from those who do not belong in the fold. Unbelievers do not hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and that is because they do not belong to the sheep of Jesus. For this reason they believe not. But, says our Lord, "My sheep hear my voice." Notice they do not hear about Jesus or concerning Jesus from someone else. They hear His voice. They hear Jesus Himself and Jesus knows them in all His saving love and they follow Him and find pasture for their souls. How is that possible? How can the sheep hear Christ now? The answer is by means of the preaching of the Word. This is the plain teaching of Romans 10:13-15: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?..." From this passage it is unmistakably evident that the hearing of the gospel is indispensable to faith and, therefore, also unto salvation. "How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard?" Because hearing the gospel is indispensable to faith the gospel must be preached. If the gospel is to be

preached in the proper sense (authoritative proclamation) the preacher must be sent (appointed and qualified) by Christ. Through the preaching by the one sent, Christ Himself is heard. This means most emphatically that not the word of the preacher or merely something about Christ is heard. Christ Himself is heard through the Word preached. Thus, hearing Christ, the sheep believe, and believing they call upon His name and are saved. This is why too the only proper preaching there is is expository preaching. The Scriptures must be explained and applied for therein is the Word of God in Christ which alone is able to save our souls.

The Scriptures teach the same truth in I Corinthians 1:21ff. The question is not: *Can* God (is He able to) save in some other way than preaching? The question is: *Will* He? The answer of Scripture is, no. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe and to make of no effect the wisdom of this world. That is God's eternal good pleasure; that is the way He is pleased to do it. His foolishness is wiser than men. And, the reason for this, according to I Corinthians 1, is, "That no flesh should glory in his presence."

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Galatians

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE APOSTOLIC VERDICT ON THOSE WHO PRACTICE WORKS OF THE FLESH – continued. (Gal. 5:21)

Paul binds this matter once more upon the consciences of the Galatian churches. He reminds them of the judgment to come "before" it comes. He will be free of their blood as a preacher (Ez. 3:16-21). He had before warned them when he was in their midst. And now he warns them again. In each case it was "forewarning," that is, it was warning "in advance." It was looking in both cases to that great day when the world shall be judged by one man, Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31). The preposition in the Greek "pro" anticipates the Day of Christ, when He shall come in his Kingdom with all His holy angels, and in the midst of the saints. These are the warnings we need, and which warnings the Holy Spirit employs to keep us in the ways of obedience. Had Paul not given these warnings in the church he would have presumed to tempt God by separating what God in His good-pleasure has most intimately joined together (Canons, III, IV, 17). We should flee from the works of darkness and walk as children of light! The

battle cry is: Rise, shine, and Christ shall give you light! (Eph. 5:14)

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

Paul had been speaking of the titanic battle in the redeemed saints, as long as they are in the flesh, in verses 16, 17. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit operates mightily against the flesh, so that in this battle we are not overcome, but evermore and anon give strong resistance (H.C. Question 127). And this we do by God's grace and Spirit until at last we have the complete victory; then we shall have apprehended (grasped) the prize of the upward calling, unto which we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus, our Lord. Then we shall have come to the complete and full resurrection from the dead in body and soul (Phil 3:10-14).

Meanwhile the elect, called, justified believers do experience with holy joy the infallible *fruits of election* in our life as these are pointed out in the Word of God (Canons I, 12; H.C. Questions 64, 86, 87). Compare also II Peter 1:4-11, and Matt. 7:17. For

our faith is such that it is energized by love in Jesus Christ, as the fulfilment of the law (Gal. 5:6).

Paul singles out a list of virtues, Christian fruits, fruits of the Holy Spirit of Christ, the head of the Church, which we bear in Christ as branches in the true Vine (John 15:1-10). To be sure, these are all but a small beginning in us; all is imperfect and polluted with sin. We do not ever do what we will to do perfectly (See Questions 5, 60, 62, and 114 of the H.C.). Nevertheless, those who are led by the Spirit have the fruits of the Spirit in their lives *here upon earth*, which is fruit upon their lips and in their lives; these are fruits upon the altar of consecration as King-Priests of God. His seed remains in us (Heb. 13:15; I Peter 2:5; I John 3:9, 10).

With the foregoing in mind, we undertake to look into these fruits of the Spirit here mentioned. The list here too is not exhaustive; however, it is abundantly representative! Paul lists these Spiritual fruits in three successive triads. We will consider these in the order given by Paul.

The first triad is: *love, joy, and peace!*

It is indeed perfectly clear in the light of all of Scripture why Paul first calls attention to the fruit: *love!* Had Paul only spoken of this one fruit, which is called love, he would in essence have said it all. For love is the root, the fountainhead of all other Christian virtues. Good works proceed out of true faith in Christ as a spiritual tie. And this true faith is a gift of God which works by love. And this faith fulfils the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It fulfils the law as the expression of the will of God for our life to reveal the fulness of the glory of God's image in us His children! And thus by love we serve one another here in this life imperfectly, but presently in glory perfectly. Then shall the law be fulfilled in its last jot and tittle in all the saints in glory. Here we will see the fulness of the glory of Christ's grace, which fills all in all (Matt. 5:17-21). Such is the new commandments in Christ's blood, the covenant in our hearts. For this reason all shall know that we are Christ's disciples if we have love one for another (John 13:34,35). This is the love which we cherish toward one another because of God's great love for us in the propitiatory sacrifice of His only begotten Son. This is the love of the Cross in which God established His love to us when we were yet sinners. We love so much because much has been forgiven us, in the justifying free gift of grace (Rom. 5:8; I John 4:16-18, 19,20). This is the love concerning which Paul sings his grand anthem of praise in I Cor. 13:1-7. This love is greater than faith or hope, since it is basic to both and is eternal. When we see God presently face to face, and no longer simply know in part, then shall it be seen in all its glory that we are completely

"under grace," and that this love is indeed the bond of perfectness (I Cor. 13:8-13; Col. 3:14). But now it is already the fruit, the basic fruit of the Spirit in our heart, where it has been shed abroad, so that we stand and rejoice in the hope of glory (Rom. 5:2). This is, therefore, the basic fruit in which all other Christian virtues are summed up in one word! Therefore it is placed first!

The second fruit of the Spirit mentioned is "joy." Those who inherit the kingdom of God in Christ inherit joy in the Holy Spirit. For the kingdom is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and *joy* in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). Jesus often speaks of this joy to His disciples. This joy is really "the joy that was set before him" as a beckoning, and cheering future in His way of suffering, as the Man of sorrows (Heb. 12:20). Thus He endured the Cross and despised the shame and dealt very prudently as Jehovah's Servant (Isaiah 52:13-15). And in this prospect of joy He is very highly exalted at God's right hand. This is the same joy which a woman has after she has travailed with child, and rejoices that a man-child has been born. It is the eternal joy of heaven, of which we now, in hope, have a foretaste. Thus we have joy unspeakable and full of glory (I Pet. 1:8; John 8:56). Yes, this is the full cup of joy and bliss which is the portion of those who have fellowship in the Spirit with the Father and the Son (I John 1:1-3). Such walk in the light as God is light, and in this way their joy is "full," as legally adopted, freeborn sons and daughters of Sarah, the heavenly Jerusalem. They are justified and, therefore, also sanctified in the complete redemption in Christ. This is a joy not only in days of prosperity, but also in days of extremely long adversity and affliction for Christ's sake (James 1:2). Yes, truly we have not seen Jesus the risen and glorious Lord after His ascension into the most holy place, in that temple not made with hands, but God grants us this joy now in the love which he gives us for the brethren, so that by love we serve one another! Outside of such love for the neighbor and the fellowship of saints in the Spirit there is no joy. Joy is found only in the more excellent way! The Spirit is not divided against Himself!

The third perfection in this first triad is "peace." Also peace is an essential quality of the kingdom of God! It is really a kingdom of peace in the city of peace, Jerusalem, from whence all the freeborn sons of Sarah are born in contradistinction from the sons of Hagar, the bond-woman (Heb. 7:2; Gal. 4:24-31). Such is the mystery of godliness in the fruits of the Spirit. Wherefore Jesus does and can speak of "my peace." This is the peace which He became for us on the Cross (Eph. 2:14; Col. 1:20; John 14:27; 16:33). This is a peace which He left us as His legacy, as the

church, and which He gives to us in a way which the world can and does never give it. He does not give it by vain and impotent promises as do worldly men, teachers, politicians, psychologists, and worldly psychiatrists of every hue and color. This is the peace of the justified saints, the adopted sons, who have received the Spirit of the Son, the Spirit of adoption, which cries Abba Father in their heart. It is the peace of those, who are not servants any longer, but sons, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:14-16; Gal. 4:6,7). It means that we are turned from warmongers into peacemakers, living in the peace of Christ, living in peace with our neighbor, not devouring, consuming one another any longer. And then it means the inner peace of heart and contentment with God's way with us, a peace of God which passes all understanding (Phil 4:6,7). It means that we abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and under the blessing of Christ's nail-pierced hands, that blesses us now from heaven, even as He blessed His disciples in the upper room in the evening of the resurrection day (John 20:19). Here we experience God in Christ as the God of all peace, in which love and joy flood our souls in the firstfruits of the full harvest. All torment of hatred and unrest is gone forever. This is the crowning of the love and joy in the infallible fruits of election in blessed peace, to be finally worthy to stand before the Son of man (Luke 21:36).

We now come to the second triad of fruits of the Spirit: *Longsuffering, gentleness, goodness*.

We begin with discussing the fruit of the Spirit called *longsuffering*. This, too, is a fruit of the Spirit which is only found in the sons of adoption, who

have the firstfruits of the Spirit, and who live in the ardent hope of the reception of the full harvest, and the final adoption of sons, to which the entire creation looks to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of Sarah. Such have received justifying grace by faith and have peace with God. They walk in their liberty with a free and good conscience (Rom. 8:18-23; 5:1; Gal. 4:31; Heb. 9:13-15).

We know that longsuffering is an attitude of love and tender mercy on the part of God to His adopted, justified children, freely by His grace. They are the apple of His eye, His peculiar treasure in all the earth. God is merciful, gracious, and longsuffering only upon Israel. Such is His very clearly revealed Name, which shows us the "his glory" as it passed before Moses, while he was in the cleft of the rock (Ex. 34:6). That is His glory in the saints, that He is longsuffering over His elect who cry unto Him day and night, in every land and age (Luke 18:6; Rev. 6:10). His was a great longsuffering over Israel in Egypt under the persecution and tyranny of Pharaoh; here He cherished them as vessels of mercy in the midst of the vessels of wrath, which were being upheld in God's "forbearance" in this awful and painful history, wherein Jehovah shows that He is the "I Am That I AM." He heard the "cry of my people" (Ex. 3:7,9). Here is no general love and mercy displayed, which also includes Egypt as the objects of His longsuffering, but here is elective love, for a people whom He "foreknew" in sovereign mercy, and whom He could and would never "cast away" (Rom. 11:1-6).

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Eating and Drinking

Rev. Kenneth Koole

The world has just passed through a sign of the times. Did you notice?

The western world does so on an annual basis.

Our Holiday Season is a sign of the times.

That this is true is evident when one reads Matthew

24:37-39 "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall

also the coming of the Son of man be.”

These words which Christ spoke come at the conclusion of a list of the signs in the world’s history that would precede His second coming. And one of these indicators of Christ’s return is the manner in which the world would and now does ignore the signs of coming judgment and impending doom. The world, said Christ, would busy itself in “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.” The striking thing is that while man ignores the signs, he does not do so ignorantly. He does so on purpose. He, in his pride, is determined to refuse the church the satisfaction of seeing his fear of the return of Christ, that most righteous, awful Judge.

That this is so is evident from the phrase of the text that states that the wicked will take the same attitude in the end that they took in the days of Noah. And the fact is, the wicked in that day did not perish in ignorance. Noah was a preacher, his pulpit was the ark, and his audience was the whole wicked world as it passed by to gawk at this monstrous boat he was building on dry land in those days before rain. Noah called it an ark, but the world must have named it “Noah’s Folly.” For 120 years the theme of Noah’s sermon was “The Coming of Destruction upon the Earth,” and his three points were these: I. How This Destruction Shall Fall; II. Who Shall Be Destroyed; and III. Why This Judgment Must Come. No doubt his sermon could be placed in the Guinness Book of World Records under the various headings — Same Sermon Most Frequently Preached; Sermon Heard By the Greatest Percentage of the World’s People; and Sermon Most Universally Despised and Ignored. And I might add, while God did not use this sermon to make so much as one new convert, it was, without a doubt, the most effective sermon ever preached. It served to make the world ripe for judgment by water, and so to bring salvation to the church. The effectiveness of preaching can not be measured always in the number of converts, you know. Billy Graham’s fans might not recognize this, but the church of these last days had better.

But the point that must be made is this: the world which ate and drank and married in Noah’s day was not ignorant of the gospel which testified of their impending destruction. It is simply that they so despised this gospel that they refused to let it interfere with their way of life. The more they heard Noah preach, the more they sought their pleasure through the lusts of the flesh. In direct proportion to their hardening of their hearts against the preaching of coming judgment they gave vent to their digestive and sexual appetites. Their knowledge of God’s word through Noah intensified the carnal manner in which they lived. Their self-confidence over against the words of coming destruction must have increased as

the 120 years went by and there was nary so much as one drop of rain. The very length of time it took from Noah’s first declaration of the impending destruction by a flood until it actually fell bolstered the world in its vain hope that creation would escape all consequences of man’s frivolity and their defiance of God. By the time 120 years passed by, mankind was quite secure in its conviction that all things would continue as they had from the beginning. They banqueted and were jolly and reveled in festivities until the day Noah entered into the ark. Seeing all the wild animals gather themselves and enter the ark two by two must have given them pause. This was out of the ordinary. But when nothing happened after six days their self assurance must have returned. One can imagine them shouting out asking Noah how he liked being cooped up with his zoo. And they went back to their merry making — until the seventh day. Then the windows of heaven opened, dropping a tidal wave of water, and the fountains of the deep burst asunder. The wicked never knew what hit them until they opened their eyes in hell. Then they knew the word of God’s judgment was not to be mocked with impunity, and they knew they had laughed for the last time.

Now, look about you. Consider the season, with its festivities, through which we have just passed. The manner in which the world gears itself up for the holidays is itself a sign of the times. Christmas is a time of eating well; New Year’s is considered a day for drinking. Gluttony and winebibbing become the way of life. And the way of life during the holidays is simply a reflection of what man craves for the whole of this life — the satisfying of fleshly lusts until one wants no more. Indulging the body, that is the goal of man. We have passed through the climax of man’s year, a small preview of the utopia man hopes to establish. And all this is done with no thought of the end. Man has every expectation that life will continue as it has always done.

Man looks to the future with concern, to be sure, but still optimistically. He is determined to live as though there will always be a world for his children’s children. That is the point of the phrase “marrying and giving in marriage.” Not only does man marry with the idea of satisfying his sexual appetite, but also with a view to having children to perpetuate his name (though not so many to interfere with his indulging in eating and drinking). And man gives his children in marriage so that his children will give him grandchildren, and thus his name will continue after he dies. No, man does not want to think of the end. That is the whole idea of his New Year’s hope for peace. A nuclear holocaust would make the continued existence of his generations impossible. So man looks with unfounded hope to the future, and in the midst

of his frivolity refuses to consider that the Lord of glory is going to return to reward him as his works have been. He puts away the thought of his temporal sins bearing eternal consequences.

When Christ returns to the earth in the flesh the second time, this time as the Lord of glory with great power, man shall not be prepared, no more than he was in the day of Noah. And the lack of preparation will not be due to ignorance, but rather to willful negligence. Neither will it be due to lack of warning. In the end the whole world will know that the Lord of glory is coming the second time, this time upon the clouds, not bringing rain but lightnings and fire. Regardless, they will ignore the rumblings; they will turn to their tables; and they will fatten themselves for the slaughter. They will assure one another that all things must continue as they have from the beginning. (They do not even remember the flood, despising the first judgment as well as the second.)

That the world is not ignorant of Christ's return is manifest by the way in which men celebrate the year-end holiday. The highlight of the year for both church and world is Christmas. The name of Christ is on everyone's lips. The same silly voice that croons "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" and that belts out "Deck the Halls," also sings "Silent Night, Holy Night," and "O Come All Ye Faithful," and even the Hallelujah Chorus. Tell me the world is ignorant of Christ the King. Tell me the world is ignorant of who the Savior is. Tell me they have no knowledge of His promise to come again. The fact that they sing of His first coming testifies that they are aware of His promise to come again. All nominal Christendom knows that the historical Christian church speaks not only of His birth and subsequent death, but also of the Savior's coming again to make a full end of all iniquity, to establish an everlasting kingdom of peace, and to create new heavens and a new earth. The fearless, profane manner in which godless men make the songs of the birth of Jesus their own shows that there is no part of the Savior's history hid from them. It is just that looking for Jesus the Judge Who is

coming again to destroy wicked men is hardly something men want to sing about. Interesting, is it not, how boisterous the world is when remembering the birth of Jesus as a helpless little baby, and how silent that world is about the glorious ascension of that same Jesus as the Universal King to the throne of heaven? That Jesus is too much a threat to their merry making.

The manner in which the world celebrates the Christmas season is not a passing fancy. Over the years it has developed, becoming more and more commercial, and involving more and more madness. So deeply has it become entrenched in men's lives that they cannot imagine the year without it. In fact those who do not participate are called "Scrooges" and "Grinches." It is becoming a universally accepted way to end the year..

In part, all of this is a side effect of the gospel as it goes forth and reaches the ears of all people. Through it the remnant is saved, but also by means of it all become acquainted with who Christ is and with the saints hope for His return. And while the promises do not appeal to most men, the curious mixture of pagan and pseudo-christian practices of Christmas introduced right along with the gospel appeals to everyone. The "christian" holiday gives man the occasion to do precisely what he desires most, namely, to indulge in satisfying the flesh. We can expect the growth of men's carnal appetites to continue to snowball as the gospel goes out to the ends of the earth.

So in this sign too there is development as mankind, in the spirit of self-seeking brotherhood, joins hands and waltzes its merry way to hell.

Pilgrim church, reflect back on how you commemorated the birth of your Lord. Was it done in such a way that you were in the world but not of it? Or were you swept along with festivities of foolish men as they fattened themselves for the day of slaughter? Watch and prepare yourselves for Jesus' second coming.

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

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE

Apostasy: Its Sinister Nature

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

I Tim. 4:1-3

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrine of devils" (v. 1). Or the words may be rendered, "Now the Spirit speaks distinctly that in the later times some will apostatize from the faith, holding the mind toward deceitful spirits and doctrines from demons." We live in days of departure and defection from right. Men are prone to the left, to the evil, corrupt and dishonest. This is prominently so in government and politics, where one looks till eyes are sore to find adherence to Christian principle. True this is also in the social sphere which has largely degenerated to a prurient, festering, Canaanite community. Especially is there defection from the right in the area of religion, in the once orthodox churches, in doctrine and in manner of life. This is an ancient evil; it is nothing new. Always there was first a period of spiritual progress, then defection followed. In Seth's day, men called on the name of the Lord, but then, soon, all flesh corrupted its way and the earth became filled with violence. (Violence is dealing with the left hand, as in the modern sign of the raised left fist.) Then the sons of god, Sethites, began to amalgamate with the daughters of men, with apostate Cainites. There was spiritual progress in Noah's day when God's people walked in His covenant and in defiance of the Babel-builders. Then came their complaining wilderness wanderings and entering into Canaan to forsake Jehovah and worship Baal. Finally, Christ came to His own nation. A few followed Him, but the nation at large apostatized to the false anti-christian church. Paul warned of this apostasy.

I. In Its Departures. This text is one of the many prophecies of apostasy in holy scripture. As to its source, it originates not in man, not in Paul, but in the Holy Spirit. Paul maintained this. So did Peter: "No prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20, 21). So the Spirit prophesies of apostasy to come in later times. He utters the prophecy in verbal, plenary, infallible inspiration. Paul, the writer, claims that what he writes is under such inspiration. So his writings are divinely inspired scriptures (2 Pet. 3:15f). "Now" the Spirit speaks through Paul. He had said, "For I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29f). The Spirit also speaks these words to His church today and to us. He speaks expressly, or distinctly, clearly, so that men, though fools, shall not err as to His meaning.

He states distinctly that in later times this defection will occur. No date is set as to when this will be. But, as it gets later and later, there will be increasing indicators of a continuing falling away until *the* falling away (2 Thess. 2:3, marg.), as the Dutch Bible has it, *Dat eerst de ofval gekomen*. These later times were not long in coming, for only about a year later Jude reports them as then present. "There *are* certain men crept in . . . (already) *turning* the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and (now) *denying* the only Lord." Apostasy has already sprung up and the apostates presently despise dominion, currently speak evil, are found at the moment feeding themselves

without fear, foaming out their own shame. This, says Jude, is all going on now. These wretches *are* dirt spots, *are* murmurers, complainers, who are walking after their own lusts, and are not manifesting themselves as having the Spirit.

Some will depart. It begins with some, but increases to many (Matt. 24:12). So it continues, down to the very end, when apostasy is "cured" with no less than its total destruction (2 Thess. 2:8; 1:8-9). Some will apostatize from the faith, from the whole Christian faith, from the creeds and confessions of the true churches, and from the therein outlined doctrine, discipline, worship, and godly living (1 Tim. 6:3). They will (now do) depart *from* the faith, so that they were once of the true church. But they departed from it, did not continue with it, and so showed they were not of it (1 Jn. 2:18-19).

Consequently, we find them giving heed, or holding the mind toward seducing spirits. This is not so much a lust of the flesh as a lust of the mind, an intellectual, spiritual-ethical lust in which they are offering up, abandoning their minds to enticing spirits. They deliberately devote their minds to the influence of *deceitful* spirits. (The same word is found in 1 Jn. 1:8). Deceitful spirits lead astray from the truth. There are many such spirits in the world. The political world is infested with them; so the military, civic, and religious communities, according to Rev. 16:13. But these deceitful spirits are not the same as the spirits of the occult; they are not demons. According to the Apostle John, they are false prophets (1 Jn. 4:1). They lead astray, being wandering planets (Jude 13), causing those they lead astray to wander off into oblivion. They are impostors, and both their spheres of operation and their names are well known to us. Beware of false prophets. From such withdraw thyself.

They are also holding the mind toward doctrines of, not devils, but demons. Actually, these are not doctrines *about* demons. The scriptures themselves contain that. But these are doctrines *from* demons, indicating their *source*. So that these teachings are *from* a wisdom which is from beneath, which James brands as demoniacal. Demons are behind the occult, the mediums with their gods (the heathen sacrifice to demons, 1 Cor. 10:20), behind astrology, witchcraft, spiritism, Satanism, palmistry, phrenology, the demonism of Haitian voodoo, of Jamaican obeah and the ridiculous UFO fantasies. (Take note of where the UFO books are located in the stores — in the 'Occult' section.) All this low Animism is made respectable under "scientific" studies in "parapsychology," as it is called, delving into the psychic, or contact with the dead (the very possibility of which the inspired Job flatly denies, chap. 5:1). All of these ancient, revived dalliances with the devil are evil rejections of divine

providence. This latter comforting truth is deemed outmoded. Man can find his own comfort; so he rejects heaven for the dark spirit-world, and goes trash picking in the world's garbage dumps. Still, superstition is the "in" thing. Superstition and the great heathen religions are inseparable. This is true not only of Hinduism, Romanism, and Theosophy, but also of apostate Protestantism. Next, consider the theme,

II. In Its Utterances. "Speaking lies in hypocrisy." Or the verbal expressions of apostates are "in hypocrisy of lie-speakers." These hypocritical liars are the false prophets and teachers of the false church. Their constituency is in the posture of holding the mind toward these deceitful and deceiving spirits. These dupes yield their empty minds as offerings to their empty gods. They do this in connection with hypocrisy. The word 'hypocrisy' has the idea in it of wearing a mask. It means 'to talk down under' a mask, as does a stage actor. It means to put on an act. These hypocrites aim at palming off their lies on the unwary and deceived. They have so long believed their own lies that they would no longer recognize the truth if it hit them in the face. Lying comes natural to those "having their conscience seared with a hot iron." Lie-speakers have a burnt-out conscience; it is seared, cauterized, burnt hard. They have not only grieved the Spirit, resisted the Spirit, but have quenched the Spirit, which puts them in an irremedial condition (Prov. 29:1). Their conscience is violently forced, hardened with the hot iron of false doctrine. So they are callous. They shut the kingdom of heaven against men. They themselves go not into the kingdom, nor do they allow others in. Now consider this theme,

III. In Its Super-Pietism. In their hypocrisy they are "forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (v. 3). In v. 1 we have their activity, v. 2 their character, v. 3 their teaching. Negatively, their teaching prohibits marriage; positively, it commands abstinence from "meats," foods. The reference is not to meats as such, but to abstinence from certain foods and drinks. This is the ascetic "taste not, touch not, handle not!" philosophy. Such heretical teaching crept into the church in monasticism and asceticism. Some may wish to follow the old dispensation's ban against such foods as oysters, shrimp, lobster, etc., doing so in the interest of what is believed to be the best nutrition. This in itself is tolerable; so also if it is simply a matter of personal preference. But if done for religious reasons, it becomes untra-pietism, unless one desires to make such practices a matter of his faith, keeping such faith to himself, and does not press it on others, which would be extremism and

fanaticism. God created both marriage and foods. To forbid either is against both the creation ordinance and the revealed will of God. The biblical ordinance concerning foods, as found in Gen. 1 and 9, includes divine sanction of both the vegetarian and the meat diet. God created vegetables and meat to be received with thanksgiving. The natural man is unable to so receive them. He is by nature unthankful (2 Tim. 3:2). Only believers can do this, those who know the truth. They have come to knowledge of truth (1 Tim.

2:4). To know the truth is to have thorough, precise recognition of it. Truth recognized is cherished, relished, loved, stored in the heart. You eat, drink, sleep and breathe the truth as your total way of life. Nothing in your life is merely secular. All of life is the spiritual activity of a prophet, priest, and king. The purpose of God's once-for-all delivering the faith to the saints, is, negatively, not to depart from it, and, positively, to earnestly contend for it, and (2 Tim. 1:13) hold it fast.

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Of God

Rev. Ron Van Overloop

In our continuing consideration and study of the Westminster Confession we now turn to Chapter II which deals with the Being of God. The Confession has considered the subject of the Holy Scriptures in Chapter I. The valid assumption is that any true knowledge of God as well as of any subject comes from the Scriptures. Again let us notice the abundance of Scripture texts given as proof for the statements made in the Confession. I would urge you to look up these texts. To do this as a part of your personal or family devotions would prove enlightening and valuable.

This second chapter of the Westminster consists of three articles, the first two of which we will consider together now.

Chapter II – Of God, and of the Holy Trinity

1. There is but one only^a living and true God,^b who is infinite in being and perfection,^c a most pure spirit,^d invisible,^e without body, parts,^f or passions,^g immutable,^h immense,ⁱ eternal,^k incomprehensible,^l almighty,^m most wise,ⁿ most holy,^o most free,^p most absolute,^q working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will,^r for His own glory;^s most loving,^t gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;^u the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him;^w and withal most

just and terrible in His judgments;^x hating all sin,^y and who will by no means clear the guilty.^z

- a. Deuteronomy 6:4; I Corinthians 8:4,6.
- b. I Thessalonians 1:9; Jeremiah 10:10.
- c. Job 11:7-9; Job 26:14.
- d. John 4:24.
- e. I Timothy 1:17.
- f. Deuteronomy 4:15,16; John 4:24; with Luke 24:39.
- g. Acts 14:11, 15.
- h. James 1:17; Malachi 3:6.
- i. I Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23,24.
- k. Psalm 90:2; I Timothy 1:17.
- l. Psalm 145:3.
- m. Genesis 17:1; Revelation 4:8.
- n. Romans 16:27.
- o. Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8.
- p. Psalm 115:3.
- q. Exodus 3:14.
- r. Ephesians 1:11.
- s. Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36.
- t. I John 4:8,16.
- u. Exodus 34:6,7.
- w. Hebrews 11:6.
- x. Nehemiah 9:32,33.
- y. Psalm 5:5,6.
- z. Nahum 1:2,3; Exodus 34:7.

2. God hath all life,^a glory,^b goodness,^c blessedness,^d in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He hath made,^e not deriving any glory from them,^f but only manifesting His own glory, in, by, unto, and upon them: He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and

to whom, are all things;^g and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever Himself pleaseth.^h In His sight all things are open and manifest;ⁱ His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature,^k so as nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain.^l He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands.^m To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, He is pleased to require of them.ⁿ

a. John 5:26.

b. Acts 7:2.

c. Psalm 119:68.

d. I Timothy 6:15; Romans 9:5.

e. Acts 17:24,25.

f. Job 22:2,3.

g. Romans 11:36.

h. Revelation 4:11; I Timothy 6:15; Daniel 4:25, 35.

i. Hebrews 4:13.

k. Romans 11:33, 34; Psalm 147:5.

l. Acts 15:18; Ezekiel 11:5.

m. Psalm 145:17; Romans 7:12.

n. Revelation 5:12-14.

Without considering whether He is, the Confession begins with a consideration of what or who God is. The Scriptures in Genesis 1:1 assumes the Being of God and so the standards of the Church of Christ must do the same. Only a fool says there is no God and demands argument or proof that God is (Psalm 14:1; 53:1).

It is not necessary to prove that He is. It is difficult enough for us creatures of the dust to know who and what He is. It is only by the Spirit, Who searcheth the deep things of God, that we can know God (I Corinthians 2:10,12). Such things are foolishness unto the natural man because he *cannot*, is not able, to know them (I Cor. 2:14). Does that mean that those who are spiritual can know everything? No. Those with the mind of Christ can know spiritual things, including God, but this spiritual knowledge is limited, and then especially when it comes to the Being of God. Although we have been made responsible for a study of the Westminster Confession, we must diverge slightly. The Westminster Assembly, besides producing the Confession, also wrote two Catechisms, the Larger and the Shorter. An interesting human interest story is reported by many authorities of the Westminster Assembly. It seems that they were struggling to find a simple answer to the question, "What is God?", for the Shorter Catechism. Many attempts failed. In one of the prayers during the labors the Assembly found the answer. Listen to this most impressive answer, "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." Beautiful in its simplicity!

Let us consider some of the elements mentioned in these articles.

1. There is but one living and true God. There have been an untold number of false gods. Satan is called the "god of this world" in II Corinthians 4:4. The final man of sin, that son of perdition, shall as God sit in "the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (II Thessalonians 2:3,4). In opposition to the claims of all false gods, it is to be affirmed that there is but one true, one living God. "There is one God" (I Tim. 2:5) and "unto thee it is shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside Him" (Deut. 4:35).

2. This one God is a Spirit, without bodily parts or passions. When natural man finds it impossible to deny God, he will strive to demean God, so He is but a man. God is then defined in terms of this world, or limited to the laws of nature. Even believers can easily fall into this evil when in their mind's eye they make literal the figurative (anthropomorphic) language of Scripture.

The very nature of matter and of human passions is inconsistent with the infinite and absolute perfections which are of God's essence. God is not material, corporal, or mortal.

Therefore, He is not subject to limitation of any kind. He is absolutely and perfectly free in His Essence and attributes. Because He is without limitations, His attributes must be perfections.

3. As the Perfect One, God is Self-existent, Self-sufficient, and absolutely independent. As the One Who has life, He is the Giver of it. That it exists in anyone or in any creature is only because He has given it to them. "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:35b). To determine what life is, look not at it and study not it as it exists in man, but look to Him Who is THE living One. The same holds true for glory, goodness, blessedness, etc. If we define goodness only in terms of Him Who is truly good, and stick to that definition, we would be compelled to broaden our conception of sin.

Because He is Life and the Giver of life and breath and all things, then it must follow that He needeth nothing from man (Acts 17:25). As Eliphaz, the Temanite, said, "Can a man be profitable unto God, . . . ? Is it . . . any gain to Him that thou makest thy ways perfect?" (Job 22:2). No, "for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Romans 11:36).

God is Self-existent and Self-sufficient. All other beings of right belong to Him. They are absolutely dependent upon Him in their being and subject to Him in all their actions. A more literal rendering of Acts 17:28 would be, "For in Him we live, and *are moved*, and have our being."

This leads us to God's sovereignty, i.e., His

absolute right to govern all the works of His hands according to His own good pleasure. It is an infinitely good, wise, powerful, holy sovereignty, which is not limited by anything outside of His own Being and perfections. What a great God!

4. Let us briefly consider some of His attributes.

God is infinite, without limit in His Being and virtues. He not only does not, but also cannot exist within the limitations of time and space. When we apply God's infinity to time, then we say that God is eternal. He shall "endure for ever" (Psalm 9:7). He had no beginning and He can have no end. There is no succession of thought, feelings, or purpose. There can be no increase of His knowledge, no change in His purpose. "The counsel of the LORD standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalm 33:11). The unchanging knowledge of God eternal sees us as we are ever changing. There is, therefore, no need for Him to react or to change His mind. The past, present, and future are all alike to Him.

When we apply God's infinity to space, then we must say that He is omnipresent or immense. The entire indivisible Godhead in the whole of His Being is present simultaneously every moment at every point of space and beyond. Space does not restrict God to be within it. He is not merely quantitatively greater than space, but is qualitatively above it. Therefore (and Yet), He is omnipresent in every point of space (Acts 17:28).

"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13b). The infinite intelligence of God includes omniscience (knowing all) and absolutely perfect wisdom. Whereas we know things as they come to our perception, God knows them immediately and in their essence. Acts. 15:18. While our knowledge is in bits and pieces, God's is total and complete. Whereas we can forget, God's knowledge is permanent. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Psalm 139:6).

Wisdom is the ability to use one's knowledge to achieve the highest end in the best way. The manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10) is present in all of His works (Psalm 104:24). God's highest end towards which He directs all is His own glory. To that end He chose Christ and elected in Christ, (Ephesians 1:10-12). Hence He works all things together for the good of those predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:28,29).

God's power is omnipotence because of His infinity. He is infinite in what He can do and is perfect in all He does. His power is independent of all that is outside of His own perfect Being. "Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased" (Psalm 115:3). But this omnipotence cannot be

directed against His nature. His power is manifested, but never exhausted. Nothing can ever separate us from His love.

God's absolutely perfect goodness is the sum total of all His perfections. Included is God's love, grace, mercy, and longsufferingness. This goodness is never in conflict with His righteousness. Nor is it manifested alternately with His justice. Nor is God partially gracious and partially just. Both are equally good and right. Both are perfectly harmonized by His infinite wisdom.

God is absolute truth. He is true within Himself so that His grace and justice are perfectly true to the standard of His own nature. His knowledge is absolutely accurate and His wisdom is infallible. Also God is true in all His revelations, both promises and threatenings.

God is perfectly righteous, i.e., He is in perfect agreement with His own Being. "He cannot deny Himself" (II Tim. 2:13). He is so pure He cannot "behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). It is this purity which causes God to regard all that is contrary to Himself and His righteousness to be a sin worthy of punishment. "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you" (II Thess. 1:6). The perfect judgment of the righteous God is that "they which commit such things are worthy of death" (Romans 1:32).

We now consider the last article of this chapter.

3. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.^a The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father;^b the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.^c

a. I John 5:7; Matt. 3:16,17; 28:19; II Cor. 13:14.

b. John 1:14,18.

c. John 15:26; Galatians 4:6.

The Westminster Confession is more brief on the subject of the Trinity than the Belgic Confession, which uses four articles (8-11) to cover this subject matter.

God is one, yet three; three, yet one. God is not one *and* three, but three *in* one. He is not three in the same sense that He is one. God is one in His Being and nature. The divine essence cannot be divided. And so all divine perfections belong to each of the persons in the same sense and degree. God has one life, one will, one purpose, etc.

Within that one nature there is a three-fold personal distinction. Each is 100% God. Each person possesses all of the attributes 100%. Therefore, each is absolutely equal with the others. The Larger

Catechism goes further than the Confession.

Q. 11. How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?

A. The scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names,^a attributes,^b works,^c and worship,^d as are proper works to God only.

a. Isaiah 6:3,5,8; Compared with John 12:41; and with Acts 28:25; I John 5:20; Acts 5:3,4.

b. John 1:1; Isa. 9:6; John 2:24,25; I Cor. 2:10,11.

c. Col. 1:16; Genesis 1:2.

d. Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14.

Personally the three Persons within the Trinity are distinct. Attributes the three Persons have in common, whereas properties are peculiar to the Persons. The names of each Person give their property, that is, the peculiar order of operation which determines the relationship of each to the others. The property of

the first Person is fatherhood, or begetting or generation. That of the second Person is sonship or being begotten. And the property of the third Person is procession or spirited.

These distinct properties do not separate, but are indicative of how the three Persons work together in the One Being. There is mutual love and mutual dependence. They work together in a perfectly harmonious operation. This threeness of Persons makes fellowship within the Trinity possible.

We love the humility and expectancy of the Belgic Confession expressed in the following sentence from article nine. "And although this doctrine far surpasses all human understanding, nevertheless, we now believe it by means of the Word of God, but expect hereafter to enjoy the perfect knowledge and benefit thereof in Heaven."

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

The Call to Separation

Rev. Rodney Miersma

The life of a Christian young person is not an easy life. A young person is at an age at which he begins to assume more and more responsibility for himself. No longer are parents simply making decisions for you, but you are called upon to make decisions by yourself with your parents' guidance.

Decisions must be made with respect to one's everyday activities, about work, schooling, and many other areas of one's natural life. Decisions must be made regarding one's spiritual life as well. For many years already you were instructed in catechism, in church, in school, and at home in the fundamental truths of the Word of God. Now more than ever before you are learning to apply these Scriptural truths to your life. Consciously you are becoming more and more aware of the close relationship between what one believes and what one does.

In this connection you realize that your life would not be so difficult if there would be no opposition.

But there are opposing forces in this world that try to make you walk a different path than the one pointed out in the Holy Scriptures. This opposition exists because there are two kinds of people in the world. On the one hand there are the people of the world who hate God and the truth, are children of wrath, and love to walk in sin. On the other hand there are people of God who are the temple of the living God who principally walk in the light.

Spiritually these two people are worlds apart, having nothing in common with each other. Your calling then is to be separate from them. That is the difficult part of your life, to remain separate from those that walk in darkness. But that it is your calling there can be no doubt, for Scripture is very clear on this point.

Through the hypocrite Balaam God said in Numbers 23:9, "For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people

shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." God says the same thing in Deut. 33:28 where we read, "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone." And years later the prophet Isaiah spoke the same Word of God in Is. 52:11, "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord."

It is sometimes argued that this applied only to Old Testament Israel as a nation. Such argumentation does not present the truth. The apostle Paul in II Cor. 6:17, 18 writes, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." This certainly can mean nothing less than that we too must be separate. God's ethics do not change, for His people are one people, whether they be manifested in the Old Dispensation or in the New. The apostle John emphasizes this in Rev. 18:4, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

The question that now rises in your mind is somewhat like this, "How do I apply this truth to my personal life? What does this mean for me?" This is a good question which deserves consideration since many have answered the question incorrectly. Monks, hermits, the Amish, and the Mennonites interpret this to mean a physical separation. Therefore, they seclude themselves in a monastery, or in an isolated cave, or in a closed commune. What they have tried to establish is their own little kingdom in their own little corner of the globe.

Is this God's will for us? Is this the meaning of the Scriptural passages quoted above? Should we as Protestant Reformed Churches buy up huge sections of farmland with a Protestant Reformed city as a business center providing jobs for only Protestant Reformed people?

If you would answer "yes," would that solve your problems as young people? Would such a separation help in any way toward a more godly life? Would such a style of living fulfill the mandate to be separate, to stay away and touch not the unclean thing? The answer is very simple, "No!" Wherever you would go you would take the world with you. By nature it is possible to be separate locally, but spiritually to be one with the world. Physical separation, then, is not the answer.

Let us look at the problem from a different angle. Does the separation of Scripture then mean that we may live as we do now, not physically separated from the world, but that we must abstain from working in

certain spheres? Is it possible as a young person to seek the goal of being a Christian politician, or a Christian lawyer, or a Christian artist, or a Christian scientist? Or is this a contradiction in terms? The Anabaptists believe that children of God may not enter into such vocations. They believe that such occupations are in themselves not compatible with a Christian life.

Young people, the separation is a spiritual separation. You stand before your God in a relation of love and covenant freindship. This is true no matter where you are and no matter what you are doing. All things must serve His glory. This is the basic difference between you and the world. You can labor within the same sphere together, but in a God-glorifying manner. Hate sin and love God; flee from the corruptions of the evil world and walk in a new and holy life. You and every child of God must cast off everything that would lead us to apostasy and everything that would imply that we are one with the world spiritually.

You must reveal that you are a different people. You have a God different from those served by the world. You have different goals and ideals. This is revealed in your speech, thinking, reading, and singing. This is also manifested in the amusements that you seek, the friends with which you associate, and in your social life.

Think about this for a moment. So what if you separated yourself from the world physically? Would that make you spiritually better if your mind is still defiled with the dirt of the world? Have you really separated yourself from the world if you take its smut and read it in the privacy of your home? What about the songs that you sing? Are they to God's glory or are they the suggestive and passionate songs that appeal to your flesh? You see, physical separation does you no good if you carry the world in your heart. You must stand out as children of God, recognizing what is unclean and refusing to touch it. In other words, you and I are not called to come out of the earth, but to forsake the kingdom of darkness.

The apostle Paul in II Cor. 6:14 gives a very good illustration of what is meant. He says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." In the Old Dispensation God expressly forbade the yoking together of an ox and an ass (Deut. 22:10). One might not yoke together in this fashion a clean animal with an unclean. The two animals would have to labor side by side in order to accomplish the same task since they were bound together by the one and the same yoke. Thus, in a figurative way, Paul warns us not to have fellowship with unrighteousness. Does this mean that you may not work side by side in the factory or at a desk in the same room with an unbeliever? No, Paul does not mean this. Paul says

that the unbeliever's yoke may not be upon us. The standards of the unbeliever must not serve as the rule under which we labor.

Soon you will be seeking a job, if you do not already have one. Following Paul's exhortation we do not let the union serve as our yoke whereby we work with the ungodly. In the field of entertainment we must not let the world tell us that we may go to the movies because there may be some good there by which we can learn how to fulfill our cultural mandate. All very high-sounding and pleasing to the ear, but straight from hell, you can be sure. Never may the unbeliever be our direction determining our thoughts and deeds. We must separate ourselves from the unclean thing.

Why must this be so? Not because I say so. We obey this admonition because "Thus saith the Lord." He has the absolute right to require that the creature shall serve Him and separate himself from all that is not according to the purity of His sovereign will.

Do not shrug this off as the impossible. Do you actually think that the Lord would require of you the impossible? You are a believer, are you not? You do confess that you are righteous, do you not? Are you not of the light, and of Christ, and the temple of the living God? Did not God say "I will dwell in them and

walk in them?"

But on the other hand do not say that you are above this admonition because you already obey it. Come now, do you not find yourselves often contaminated by the world? The songs on the radio are appealing; the influence of TV is anesthetizing (mind-deadening); the colorful pages of worldly magazines cause us to drool, sometimes even to foam at the mouth. The young people of Satan seem to have such an attraction because of all their worldly goods and glitter. However, heed the Word of God, **TOUCH THEM NOT!**

To walk the life of a child of God you will need grace because the life of a Christian is a constant struggle. Certainly, you are righteous, but right in the middle of unrighteousness. You are the light, but in the midst of the darkness of sin and death. You have been recreated in Christ Jesus into a new man, but the old man still has plenty to say.

In all this you must remember that you *are* children of God. You will, in the way of obedience to His Word, experience in all its riches that you are His sons and daughters, and that His lovingkindnesses are upon you forever. Of this you can be sure because the same God that says "Be ye separate" also says as the Almighty Lord "And I will receive you."

Book Reviews

GOD'S ULTIMATE PURPOSE, An Exposition of Ephesians 1; by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones; Baker Book House, 1979; 447 pp., \$9.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

This is now the fifth volume Baker has printed of the sermons on Ephesians by Dr. Lloyd-Jones. The other volumes reprinted sermons on Ephesians 2, 5, and 6. This volume contains 37 sermons on the first chapter of the book which were preached when Dr. Lloyd-Jones was still minister at Westminster Chapel.

We have reviewed other of these books and have found them uniformly good and interesting, valuable additions to one's library. They are full of fine exegetical and homiletical insights. Lloyd-Jones is a careful expository preacher and his ability to elucidate the text and make the Word of God live for God's people comes through clearly in these books.

In many respects, this book is no exception. Ephesians 1 is one of the greatest and most beautiful chapters in the whole Bible, for it treats of the great work of salvation which God works through Jesus Christ for His elect people. Lloyd-Jones has caught the central truth of this chapter and has brought it home with unusual force and beauty. The book is well worth the rather modest price and will be useful and enjoyable for ministers who contemplate preaching on this chapter or on the whole book; but it is also a book which anyone can and ought to read with profit and edification.

Nevertheless, we were somewhat disappointed with this volume. Dr. Lloyd-Jones seems to be at his best when treating the more practical sections of Scripture, but seems to be somewhat less satisfying when dealing with doctrinal sections. This is not to say that the many doctrinal truths which are

contained in this chapter of Ephesians are not carefully treated. But some of the more important truths are not as fully expounded as one would like to see them. Surely, one of the great themes of Ephesians 1 is the truth of sovereign election and predestination discussed by the apostle in vs. 4 & 5. Yet the treatment of these truths is sketchy at best. In the one chapter in which vs. 4 is treated, only a couple of sentences actually deal with the exposition of the truth of election. The rest deals with peripheral though related questions. In fact, in his treatment of this truth Lloyd-Jones discusses the whole doctrine of conditional election which was repudiated by the Synod of Dort, but writes concerning this view:

There, then, are some of the facts which we should bear in mind before we begin to argue and to make sweeping statements. However, let us be clear about the fact that we are not saved by the view we take on this question. As I have already explained, there are two possible views. One is that God has chosen us in spite of ourselves, the other is that God has chosen us because He has foreseen that we would exercise faith. But I repeat that the view you take on this question does not determine your salvation. We are not saved by our understanding of these things, but by a simple childlike trust, and absolute faith and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on our behalf. The view we take does affect our understanding, our intellectual apprehension; but thank God, that is not what saves us. We can be as certain that John Wesley is in heaven as that Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield are there.

It is disturbing that Lloyd-Jones does not sharply condemn this heretical view of conditional election, does not even say with certainty what is his position. This is all the more disturbing when we consider that he is a professed Calvinist.

One other element was somewhat disturbing. In his rather lengthy exposition on vs. 13, especially the whole concept of sealing, the author shows his deep indebtedness to the Puritans and particularly the more mystical writings of the Puritans. He, after interpreting this matter of sealing as the assurance of

salvation, writes at length about the fact that this assurance often comes through extraordinary mystical experiences which are so intense that they almost destroy the one who has received them. After quoting many Puritan divines who described such experiences, he speaks of the fact that such experiences ought to be the experience of every Christian. He thus sows doubt in the minds of many people of God who have never had such deeply mystical experiences, for he makes those experiences the hallmark of Christian assurance.

While perhaps not the best of this series on Ephesians, we recommend the book to our readers to be read with caution, but with great profit.

STORY BIBLE FOR OLDER CHILDREN, by Anne De Vries. Paideia Press, 1978, 346 pages. (Reviewed by Gertrude Hoeksema)

This book, also translated from the Dutch, is designed for older children – that is, older than eight years – and contains many more stories than Mr. De Vries' earlier book, and covers the Old Testament only. Basically, it is similar to his first story Bible, with added details and a more sophisticated vocabulary.

Mr. De Vries takes some liberties with the Scriptural narrative by adding his own description of circumstances or surroundings, and I do not think they are always accurate or justified. For example, he writes about Adam after the fall and expulsion from Paradise, "When storms or earthquakes struck, they shook with fear. During the long, dark nights, they sought shelter in a hole in the ground or in a cave – two frightened, lonely people clinging to each other." p. 17. About Adam, the man whom God had created perfect, this is sheer speculation.

By the time children are older than eight years old, they need insights and interpretations of Scripture, and instruction in its doctrinal truths as they affect their lives. Possibly this book of Biblical narratives, superficially treated, is not necessary for them.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 1, 1980, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. AND MRS. HENRY T. KIEL will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, give thanks to our heavenly Father for the Christian love and upbringing they have given us.

Our prayer is that He will continue to bless them in the years ahead.

Their children and grandchildren

Thomas and Kathleen VerBeek
Kristine
Jeffrey and Barbara Steenholdt
Amy and Mindy
Thomas Kiel
Sandra Kiel
Daniel Kiel

NOTICE!!!

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

Material for the agenda of Classis must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk thirty (30) days before Classis convenes. Delegates in need of lodging should notify the Clerk of the South Holland Council.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

News From Our Churches

Professor Herman Hanko has received a call from our church in Redlands, California, to serve as their pastor. The Redlands trio also included Rev. James Slopsema and Rev. George Lanting.

Rev. Dale Kuiper, pastor of our church in Lynden, Washington, declined the call extended to him by our Hope Church in Walker, Michigan.

Rev. James Slopsema has declined the call to be missionary in the Mt. Vernon, Washington area. Our church in Lynden is the calling church for this field. Lynden has formed a new trio consisting of Rev. Kenneth Koole, Rev. Marvin Kamps, and Rev. John Heys.

Again we observe that news travels a long way to go a short distance. The news that Rev. John Heys has announced to his congregation in Holland, Michigan that he, with the approval of his consistory, has decided to seek emeritation at the next meeting of Classis East was printed in bulletins of our churches on the east and west coasts, but not in any bulletin of our Michigan churches received thus far.

The work of erecting a new church building for our congregation in Wyckoff, New Jersey has begun. The December 23 bulletin of our Covenant Church reports that visible progress is finally being made on the building project. The excavation has been completed and the footings poured. The carpenters will probably be at work framing the building by the time this issue appears in print.

The Annual Congregational meeting of our church in Pella, Iowa was held after the morning worship service on Thanksgiving Day. Each of our churches has some unique practice or custom. The scheduling of their congregational meeting seems to be unique to Pella.

Rev. Engelsma spoke at the annual Christmas Chapel of our Christian Day School in South Holland, Illinois on December 20. The congregation of our South Holland Church was invited to attend.

The Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation Board sponsored a Christmas Singspiration after the evening service in our Hudsonville Church on Sunday, December 23.

The Covenant Christian High School Alumni Choir presented a Christmas concert in First Church on Sunday evening, December 16. The program was titled "A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols." Each of the nine sections of the program began with the reading of an appropriate scripture passage (beginning with Genesis 3 announcing the Redeemer's work and concluding in the 9th lesson with John 1) and following with one or more songs by the choir. The audience was asked to sing with the choir on several of the songs. The printed program was actually a booklet containing some original art work and the text of each of the songs. This beautiful program was a fitting and appreciated addition to the Christmas season.

The congregation of our Covenant Church in Wyckoff has scheduled their annual potluck supper for January 11.

Rev. Meindert Joostens, pastor of First Church in Grand Rapids, was unable to preach on December 16 because of a severe sore throat. The doctor later thought he had mono. On December 24 the doctor diagnosed the illness as hepatitis and prescribed four weeks of complete rest. During all of this, one of the Joostens children had the chicken pox, and Mrs. Joostens is due to give birth to a child very shortly.

First Church in conjunction with the Mission Committee of our churches is sending Rev. and Mrs. Wayne Bekkering and Mr. and Mrs. Clare Prince as emissaries to Jamaica in January of 1980. The primary reason for this visit is to make preparations for the calling of a missionary to Jamaica after the 1980 Synod. Rev. Bekkering is making the trip in order that he may acquaint himself and his wife with the Jamaican mission field. He will then be better able to decide a call to Jamaica should he receive one. Rev. Bekkering and Mr. Prince will be investigating housing and transportation for a missionary. In addition, they will attend the Classis meeting of the Jamaican Churches, visit the various churches and attend to the needs of the people. This visit will be from ten days to three weeks in duration.