

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Never may a believer acquiesce simply because the ministers of the church say so. This is Romish, not Reformed. In a Reformed church each believer must have spiritual judgment and must permit this judgment to operate, not out of pedantry or censoriousness, but out of spiritual obedience. The believer must do this, never on the ground of his opinion, but only according to a spiritual understanding of the Word of God.

(Abraham Kuyper)

See "'Translated Treasures'"—page 474

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MEDITATION

Final Orders To A Militant Church

Rev. M. Schipper

*"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.
Let all your things be done with charity."*

I Corinthians 16:13, 14.

Noticeably the words of this text, especially in its first part, have a military flavor.

They are addressed to the church which is militant in the world.

Those of our readers who have been trained particularly in the doctrine respecting the church of Christ will recall how that they were taught that the church may be variously distinguished. We speak

of the church as institute and organism, as church visible and invisible, as church militant, triumphant, and glorified. With a view particularly to this last distinction, we understand that the church of Christ when she has finally been delivered from the present evil world shall enter into glory being triumphant over all her enemies. This cannot mean that in principle she is not already triumphant, for the Word of God declares elsewhere very plainly

that she is more than conqueror through Him that loved her. And that signifies especially two things: that in the midst of the battle we really suffer no losses, but all things turn out to our advantage, our triumph; and that we have such a victory that even our enemies become our servants. Nevertheless, the final triumph is not attained until we have arrived in eternal glory. But as long as the church is in the present evil world, she is designated a militant, a fighting church. She assumes the garb of Christian warriors. And she is constantly beset by powerful enemies who seek always to destroy her, over against whom she is required constantly to do battle.

It is in respect to that militant church that the apostle in the text assumes the position of a general, barking out his final orders. The apostle is about to bring his rather lengthy epistle to its close. But before it is brought to its conclusion, with staccato brevity he issues the sharp commands of the text. Indeed, what we have here is the final orders to a militant church.

Regarding these final orders it is important to see not only the significance of each command, but also how they are all related to faith, the faith once delivered to the saints; and how the first four orders are all summed up in the fifth, namely, Let all your things be done in charity (love).

Watch ye!

O, how often the Word of God exhorts the believing church to be watchful! Here are just a few examples: "Watch, therefore, for ye know not in what day your Lord cometh." "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." "Let us watch and be sober." "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Watchfulness implies, negatively, that we do not become sleepy, careless, indolent, lethargic, indifferent with respect to our spiritual calling. Positively, it implies that all our senses are alert—not only that the eye sees, and the ear hears, but all our senses are sharp and at attention. One who is watching is prepared, not only to detect the enemies that surround him and are seeking to attack, but also the enemy that lurks within his own flesh. One who is watching is not caught off guard, but he is ready to meet the enemy both with proper defensive weapons and also with the offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of truth.

Stand fast in the faith!

The faith here refers undoubtedly to the objective truth of the Word of God. Briefly this is summarized in the Apostle's Creed. More elaborately this is set forth in the Three Forms of Unity: the

Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht.

In the sphere of this objective truth we are to take our stand. Of course, if we are to stand fast, we must have a place to stand. If we are to stand firmly over against the enemies of the truth, our ground must be solely the Word of God, the doctrines of our Christian faith. All other ground is sinking sand. On the foundation of the apostles and prophets of which Christ is the chief cornerstone can we have ground to stand fast.

And to stand fast implies that you stand immovably. It implies that while you stand you are pounded by the waves of false doctrines and the lie which seek to move you from your place, like the waves of the ocean that splash over the rocks extending into the sea. And like the solid rocks you remain fixed, firmly planted in the ground of the truth.

Quit you like men!

The original text uses but one word here which means: to come to manhood, to show oneself in every respect a man. In the church militant there is no room for the effeminate, or the sissy. And that applies to women and children, as well as the male sex. All must be manly, brave, able to stand in the ranks and to bear the brunt of battle.

Be strong!

Perhaps this is the strangest of all commands. For how can you say to anyone, be strong? Evidently here the apostle means to say: grow in strength, increase in strength. Not, you understand, in physical strength and stature. The apostle is not interested in having us attend a health spa where we can exercise our muscles, as for example in weight-lifting. But he refers to the increase in spiritual strength, which can be obtained only in the health spa of the Word of God, under a proper and nourishing diet of the study of the Word, and the faithful exercise in that Word. One who persistently neglects the Word of God must turn out to be a spiritual runt and weakling. On the other hand, he who is consistent in handling the Word of God will not be afraid to meet all the giants the Philistines have to challenge. He will not only have the courage to confront the enemy, but he will possess the strength to triumph over them.

What we must see at this point is the fact that all of these orders have spiritual reference, and are all connected to the faith. Not only do we stand fast in the faith once delivered to the saints; but also, we watch with respect to the faith, we are men with respect to the faith, and we are strong with respect to the faith. Such is undoubtedly the relation in which we must observe the first four orders.

Then, notice the last order: Let all your things be done in love!

Observe that in respect to the first four orders the apostle says: YE. The address is in the second person plural. But now he says: Let all your things be done in love, using the third person singular. He means to say: all of these things (watch, stand fast, be manly, be strong) which all of you are to do—let each one do in love, that is, in the sphere of love. This is, of course, the love of God. It is that love which has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit of Christ. It is the love which responds to God's love, and to all that He has revealed to us in the faith, which produces love.

Observe, too, that all of the first four orders are summed up in the fifth. All the first four, though they refer to spiritual activities, carry, as we said, a military flavor. This is because our warfare is of a spiritual nature. Our warfare, as the apostle says in another place, is not carnal, it is not against flesh and blood that we fight, nor is our weaponry of earthly material. Though it is true that our opponents may appear in the flesh, and a man's foes may be those of his own household, we do not grapple with flesh and blood, but the battle is spiritual. In that battle we watch, we stand fast, are manly, are strong, just as really as if we were in physical combat.

And now that fifth order tones them down as it were. We are to watch in love. We are to stand fast in love. We are to be manly in love. And we are to be strong in love. Such is the relation of the orders as the apostle lays them down for the militant church.

And notice, too, that all these orders are durative and refer to continuous action. To retire in any would be dangerous and even disastrous. As long as the church is in the world these orders must be carried out. God has faithfully kept with us His covenant, and most profoundly revealed to us His truth, the mystery of our salvation in Christ. He now expects us to respond faithfully to keep our part of that covenant, that is, to love Him with our whole being, to keep His truth faithfully unto the end.

That such orders were necessary for the church at Corinth we can readily understand.

By the grace of God this church had received much. Of that grace the apostle wrote in detail already in the first chapter of this epistle. They were called to be saints. They had been enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge. They had come behind in no gift. God had shown to them His faithfulness when He called them into the fellowship of His Son. They had heard through the foolishness of preaching the true wisdom of God as revealed in

the Word of the cross.

But it was evident that there was also much that was wanting in this particular church. They were not well-grounded in doctrine, particularly the doctrine concerning the resurrection. Witness the lengthy chapter fifteen which the apostle writes to this church on this subject. They had not always been watching when they laid themselves wide open for severe criticism relative to Christian discipline. Witness chapter five of this epistle. They were not adept in settling their differences on the basis of the Word of God, and they did not always live according to the Word of God in single and married life. Witness chapters six and seven. Their love did not always respond as it should have. There were schisms and party strifes evident in this church. Witness the fact that the apostle had to remonstrate, and devote a whole chapter (13) to the subject of love.

So it can be understood how the apostle found it necessary to give orders. The militant church must be alerted to her calling. She must be spiritually watchful. She must be told to stand fast in the faith. She must be exhorted to be manly and to grow in strength. And all these things she must do in love—thus making it become evident that they are standing in the love of God. And in that sphere they are doing their thing, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, fighting the good fight of faith.

But why is it necessary for us today to have these orders—for us upon whom the end of the ages is come? For us who have been so signally graced with the truth in its purist form? For us who have been enriched in the knowledge of the truth from earliest childhood, who have heard sound preaching all our lives, who have been permitted to see the revelation of God as the God of our salvation in Christ as none others? For us who have been called to be saints in a world that is steeped in sin and fast developing in sin to its destruction? For us who are living in a church-world that is fast apostatizing, being carried away with every wind of doctrine? For us who have also been called to be a militant church, not only to unfurl our banner signifying our allegiance to the truth, but armed with the most sophisticated spiritual weaponry the church has ever known? Why should we be under these militant orders?

The necessity of such orders for us should not be difficult at all for us to understand. We need only to be reminded how easily we may seek retirement after so many years of battle. Battle fatigue is perhaps the most telling letdown in the experience of the Christian warrior. When we become weary our guard is down, and we begin to neglect the doctrines of faith, we fail to sharpen our spiritual wits with consistent Bible study. And when this occurs

we cease to be manly and strong.

Nor should it be difficult to understand how that in this age of spiritual lukewarmness and indifference our flesh urges us to compromise and to go along easily with the spirit of our times. And when this condition obtains, we become spiritually dull and have no desire to do battle.

And need we be reminded how that God's prophetic Word warns us repeatedly how as time rushes to its end that the battle will become increasingly hot? Knowing this, how can we assume the lackadaisical attitude which rests on the laurels of battles past? How dare we believe that because we have overcome the enemies of "common grace" and "conditionalism," and have not succumbed to the pestering foes of "Pentecostalism," "Premillennialism," and "Liberalism," that we need not prepare for other invaders that will seek to move us from our place? Is it not possible that having suc-

cessfully battled with all these evil forces, and perhaps boasting a little that we are still Reformed, that we will not succumb to the foes of "Antinomism" and "worldmindedness"?

Whatever the nature of the opposition will be, or with what power the enemy shall assail, it is incumbent upon us that we heed the orders the apostle clearly sounds to us.

And be sure that there is a blessed positive fruit in heeding them. O, indeed, there will be fruit also in disobedience. That there will be disobedience we must also expect. For when the Scriptures repeatedly predict a great falling away, who are we to assume such apostasy will not affect us? But remember there is also a positive fruit of obedience. He who heeds the orders faithfully will be alert, standing in the faith, manly, and strong unto the end.

Let us be faithful, that no one take our crown!

EDITOR'S NOTES

Elsewhere in this issue you will find an ad listing various Seminary publications. We have included it in this issue with a view to the fact that the society season will soon be upon us in our churches. And we believe that among our Seminary publications there are several which may be useful to our people in their studies in Men's Society, Ladies' Society, or Mr. & Mrs. Society. Yes, and in Young People's Society, too! Meanwhile do not forget various helpful RFPA publications.

Speaking of Seminary, our school will open, D.V., on Wednesday, September 3, at 9:00 A.M. Our Grand Rapids people are cordially invited to the Convocation Program which will be announced in the area churches. Prof. Decker is scheduled to

speaking this year. We are happy and thankful to announce that we will have several new students this year, both in our seminary and pre-seminary departments. Among them is Mr. Lau Chin Kwee, who has just arrived in the States from Singapore. There will be more about the Seminary in a forthcoming special issue of the *Standard Bearer*. Please remember the school in your prayers as we begin this new term.

One more Seminary item. (You can tell I have the start of school on the brain!) Prof. Hanko informed me the other day that contributions for our Library will be most welcome! The fund is a bit depleted at the moment. Help keep our Library growing!

EDITORIALS

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

An Urgent Suggestion

As you might have learned from the news in our August I issue, we made a little tour this summer to Australia and to Singapore. The tour was a private venture, mainly in the nature of a vacation. But along the way we had occasion to renew acquaint-

tances with many friends whom we met five years ago and to make many new friends, as well as to savor the exciting work in Singapore. Several readers have already asked whether I intend to share some of my experiences in these columns.

Probably I will do this after I have had an opportunity to catch up on work which piled up during my absence and to let my thoughts and judgments concerning the trip jell a bit.

There is one suggestion, however, which I wish to bring to your attention immediately.

We spent a very enjoyable eight or nine days in Singapore as guests in the apartment-home of Rev. and Mrs. den Hartog and had much opportunity to talk with them about the work and about their new and foreign style of life there.

In the course of our conversations it became plain that there is especially one cloud in the sky of their personal and family situation in that faraway place. What is it? The fact that they receive so very few letters from the home churches! The folk of their former congregation in Wyckoff are an exception; but for the rest, they receive very few letters.

When I learned this, I promised to try to do something about it. I think few of us can fully understand what it means to be—as the den Hartog family is—strangers in a strange land, and far from the folk of the home churches. Nor can one grasp, unless he has been on the scene, the sacrifices they

are making. This is not to say that they are unhappy or that they consider themselves martyrs. Far from it! They are busy in the Lord's work and among the Lord's people, and they are deeply engrossed in the work there. Moreover, there is a thrill and an excitement about the work in Singapore which is hard to convey by mere telling.

Nevertheless, those letters from home mean so much!

It only costs 22¢ for an aerogram, and it only costs a half hour of your time. Even if you don't know the den Hartogs personally, write them. Write about yourself. Write about events in your church. Just let them hear! It means so very much!

By the way, Rev. den Hartog promised me that we will be hearing regularly from them in the *Standard Bearer*; if you don't get a personal reply to your letters, consider that he writes to all of us by that means.

Here, once more, is the address:

Rev. & Mrs. A. den Hartog,
Block C, 32-D, Pacific Mansion,
River Valley Close,
Singapore 0923

Reactions To The CRC Decision On The Boer Gravamen

As might be expected in the light of *The Outlook's* evaluation of the Study Report on the Boer Gravamen, the reaction to the synodical decision on that matter was also favorable. It appears on page 5 of the August issue in a "Report on Synod 1980" from the pen of the Rev. Harland Vanden Einde. He writes as follows:

The entire morning session on Tuesday was devoted to a consideration of the Confessional-Revision Gravamen of Dr. Harry Boer relative to the subject of reprobation. The advisory committee requested that Dr. Boer be given an opportunity to address the synod, and that privilege was granted by voice vote. Dr. Boer indicated that his strong plea before us would be directed to urging us to *put off a decision* on this issue for at least one year to give the churches an opportunity to study the report of synod's committee. He ardently declared that synod would be radically changing the basis for the teaching of reprobation by adopting the recommendations of the study committee, and would be, in fact, acting in a hierarchical way.

There was considerable discussion of this issue, as expected, and there were a few speeches pleading for a delay of decision as Dr. Boer had requested. But we were also reminded, and rightly so, that we were being asked to adjudicate a gravamen, not adopting a study report. As the hour approached noontime, the vote was taken on recommendation number one, and it was passed with less than a dozen negative votes. The recommendation basically stated that "synod do not accede to the request made in Dr. Harry Boer's Confessional-Revision Gravamen."

A second recommendation, that "synod refer report 30 to the churches for elucidation of the teaching of the Canons on election and reprobation" was also passed, with the point being made that this report was not intended to be for further study or debate, but for "elucidation." Throughout the discussion, there was a good spirit, and we can be grateful that *our confession and its teaching re: election and reprobation* was so significantly upheld by the synod.

Comment on this report and evaluation may be brief. I am sorry that it is necessary to say this, but

say it I must. The "good spirit" referred to—another way, I suppose, of saying there was no sharp conflict—was not of the Holy Spirit. He was not present, or the outcome of the whole matter would have been different. In the second place, Rev. Vanden Einde's gratitude is without foundation. For it is simply not true, as we have abundantly shown, that the confession teaching concerning election and reprobation was either "significantly upheld" or upheld at all by the synodical decision. The contrary is true. Just how many delegates were aware of the fact that the Study Report tore away all the Scriptural support in the Canons for the doctrine of reprobation and that the Report radically reinterpreted the Canons I cannot say. But some were surely aware of it and said so, and all—if they had studied the Report—could have been aware.

Meanwhile, one wonders whether the Rev. Vanden Einde is whistling in the dark or whether this is a case of the ignorance that is bliss.

Thus far I have seen no written reaction to the synodical decisions from the pro-Gravamen side. In a personal conversation I was assured that the synodical decision was certainly not the end of the matter, and that the very decision to refer the Study Report to the churches as an "elucidation" of the teaching of the Canons on election and reprobation surely opened the door to further debate: in other words, the pro-Gravamen forces are not willing to concede that the Report is an acceptable elucidation. I would expect—even though fundamentally Boer gained almost all that he wanted to gain—that objections from the Boer camp might center on one or more of the following points:

1. The recommendations adopted by Synod give the appearance of condemning the Gravamen and upholding the Canons while the body of the Report in every major respect upholds the Gravamen and condemns the Canons, be it in a very devious manner.
2. The Study Report definitely reinterprets the Canons, and that, too, in an altogether untenable manner. Along with that, it cuts away the very Scriptural underpinning of the Canons which Boer criticized. A two-pronged attack could be made here: a) Demonstrate that this new interpretation is indeed untenable. b) Raise the question how the Canons can be maintained when their underpinning has been removed. After all, though the Report itself was not treated and adopted, the Synod nevertheless recommended the report as an "elucidation."
3. In all probability the pro-Gravamen forces will attack the Study Report's use of the notion of "deficient causality." In a very weak attempt some-

how to maintain the appearance of upholding the doctrine of reprobation, the Study Report made some use of this idea. In the Report it speaks of this in connection with the alleged teachings of Beza in connection with preterition, as follows: "The sovereign will and good pleasure of God which is the efficient cause of election functions, however, as a deficient cause in reprobation in the sense of preterition. The secondary, mediating, or historical cause for the execution of the decree of reprobation understood in the sense of condemnation is man's actual sin and unbelief." In a footnote the following explanation is given: "*Deficient causality* occurs when a person who does not *make* a given thing happen could, nonetheless, have prevented it from happening but does not—when, not making a child fall off his bike, I could nevertheless have prevented him from falling off, but do not do so." (*Agenda*, p. 347). The Study Report later makes use of this notion in a couple of places. On p. 365 we read: "Reprobation is the passing over of some for the gift of faith, the consequence of which is the consignment of them to destruction on account of their sin and unbelief. But the Canons teach that this passing over is not a *cause* of their unbelief and impiety, except in the sense of a 'deficient cause.'" Again on pp. 372, 373 the Report argues that the Canons say what Boer thinks ought to be said concerning the cause of unbelief: "It's true that God, from the mass of unbelieving humanity, singles out some for the gift of faith. And when it is asked, 'What about the others?' it can be said of them that God is the 'deficient cause' of their unbelief. So far as 'deficient cause' is concerned, however—and Boer seems clearly to be working with this concept of cause—they themselves are the agents of unbelief. By contrast, God is the 'efficient cause' of faith. And that is surely what lies behind the famous denial of 'in the same manner' (*eodem modo*) of the Conclusion." Men like Dr. Boer and Dr. Daane will surely not be satisfied even with these weak statements, but will insist that every notion of divine causality in connection with reprobation be condemned and eliminated from the church's vocabulary.

4. If they are alert, the pro-Gravamen men will surely attack the way in which the Study Report tampers with the translation of Canons I/15, something which significantly affects the meaning of that article.

In conservative circles the only Christian Reformed voice raised against the synodical decision thus far is that of the ACRL (Association of Christian Reformed Laymen). In their *News Bulletin* dated July, 1980 they lead off with an article entitled "Synod Thanks Boer." They voice their criticism as follows:

Synod decided in Recommendations #5: "that synod express its appreciation to Dr. Harry Boer, and to the study committee, for their sincere efforts to help the church in coming to a clearer understanding of the Scripture and the creeds with respect to this difficult doctrine." Yet Dr. Boer in his gravamen said "I do not believe, and I refuse to entertain, that my election *'ipso facto'* requires a corresponding reprobation of others."

Even though synod maintained its public facade of orthodoxy and did not tamper with the official text of the Canons as you have it in the back of your Psalter Hymnal, it most certainly altered forever for the CRC, its binding and clearly expressed doctrine when it says this in Recommendation #3: "that synod recommend report 30 (Committee Report on Harry Boer's Confessional Revision Gravamen) to the churches for elucidation of the teachings of the Canons on election and reprobation."

The ACRL then proceeds to cite several pertinent excerpts from the Study Report. What they have underlined we have italicized. The excerpts are quoted respectively from pp. 380, 386, 387, 389, and 389 & 390 of the *Agenda*. They write: "We reproduce for you just a few excerpts of the committee report which are now an elucidation (literally a making clear the meaning) of the Canons of Dort. Underlining indicates objectionable teachings."

The second question Paul answers with a theological argument. The sovereignty of God, which defines God as God, grants him the right to deal with his people as he pleases. This sovereignty, however, must not be construed in a crass or despotic way. Rather, two considerations must be kept in perspective regarding this: (1) God's selection is an act of grace and love; and (2) *those not selected have disqualified themselves through their sins*. On the one hand, God could exercise his sovereignty as a potter exercises control over the clay he manipulates. In fact, God even did so in the history of Israel in his use of Pharaoh. However, this gives man no occasion to challenge or blame God. *On the other hand, in all of his dealings with mankind, both with the elect (vessels of mercy) and the nonelect (vessels of wrath), he exercises great long-suffering and mercy.*

As was shown earlier, the salvation-history or Heilsgeschichte approach to Romans 9-11 is a valid and preferred interpretative framework for these chapters. Furthermore, the focus on the historical and limited dimension of "hardening" which Boer suggests is a proper interpretation of this concept, as indicated in the interpretation of Romans 9-11 given above. *Hence, it is improper to cite "having mercy" and*

"hardening" as "firmly decreed" in Romans 9:18, as is done in the Rejection of Errors, I, 8.

To cite Romans 11:33-36 as referring to the "mysteries" of election and reprobation is improper. This doxology is an expression of faith and hope for the believer as he reflects upon his election.

It must be observed that the Canons rightly use Romans 9:11-13 in I, 10 to substantiate the doctrine of election. It is also noteworthy that this passage was not used elsewhere in the Canons to substantiate the doctrine of reprobation. *Boer rightly objects to a popular use of the Esau reference to support reprobation.*

Some may question Boer's emphasis upon the corporate meaning of Jacob and Esau in the Malachi passage quoted in Romans 9:13. Recent exegesis has also focused on this collective sense. However, this collective sense need not negate the individual and personal element in election. In conclusion, Romans 9:13 (with Malachi 1:3) clearly displays God's great displeasure regarding Esau. The passage does not motivate this attitude of God, *but from the context it is clear that God's attitude is a consequence of the unbelief and rebellion of the sinner (Esau) and is not due to an eternal decree.* On the other hand, the context clearly indicates that God's love for the elect (Jacob) is motivated by his grace and kindness, not by the actions of the individual.

Alongside the above quotations from the Report which is now recommended as an "elucidation" the ACRL adds the following sharp comments:

These statements reflect the very ideas that the Synod of Dort convened to condemn and now these statements (and more like them) are officially recommended to the CRC as an elucidation of the Canons. The conservatives who were so jubilant in their "victory" at synod '80 will undoubtedly have time to be sorry. And Harry Boer, like other heretics that have been tested and emerge exonerated in the CRC, is not only in the clear but officially thanked! It's sickening!

The attitudes of CRC officialdom are backwards. The heretics are praised and the concerned ones barely escape official admonition. We can't help but remember how the synod of 1979 was asked by its study committee to "caution it (Dutton CRC) not to continue to make unwarranted and unsubstantiated charges against Dr. Verhey." It's a matter of record.

We can only commend the ACRL for their discernment. They at least recognize the fact that the Study Report is a contradiction of the Canons and essentially an upholding of Boer.

Now they should take another step, and recognize that all of this roots in the First Point of 1924!

Know the standard and follow it.
Read The Standard Bearer

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Galatians 6

by Rev. G. Lubbers

**PAUL'S GREAT AND EXEMPLARY CONFES-
SION** (Galatians 6:14-15) Continued

2. This Cross is the Cross of the risen Savior, the Lord of glory (I Cor. 2:8). He is now made of God both Lord and Christ by His resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:36). All the house of Israel must know assuredly that God has made this crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ, Who is placed over all things. He is *our* Lord! He is Lord of Paul and has absolute lordship over the entire household of faith. O, how often Paul speaks of Jesus, the risen and glorified Christ, as being "*our* Lord" (I Thes. 1:3; 2:19; 3:13; 5:9; Gal. 6:14; 18, etc.). He is given to us to be the head of the church over all things (Eph. 1:22). He is legally our Lord because He has bought us with His blood and has made us His own precious peculiar treasure forever (Gal. 2:19,20). We were crucified with Him. We were given to Him by the Father from all eternity, and it is the will of the Father that He should lose none of us, but that He should raise us up in the last day (John 6:39, 40).

3. Emphatically He is "Jesus Christ." He is the historical Jesus, born from a woman under law in a lowly cattle-stall, a truly humble birth. And He was named JESUS by the angel Gabriel to Mary (Luke 1:31). Of the kingdom of this Jesus there shall be no end. He shall truly and surely save all His people from their sins. He is Immanuel, God-with us (Matt. 2:21,22). And this is the name which was blazoned on the Cross of Jesus, while He was numbered with the transgressors. It was written in three languages, that all the world might read it as they passed by! Savior of the world, Light of the nations is He! He is also "Christ" the Lord, the promised Messiah, the One to come. He is the anointed of God to sit upon God's throne in Zion forevermore (Psalm 2:6-8).

4. In this Cross of Jesus will be Paul's own ground of boasting. It is a glorying in *Jehovah-Tsedaquanu*, the Lord our righteousness (Jer. 33:16). He will place this boasting over against all the hollow and vain boasting of those who are really not the circumcison at all (Phil. 3:3), but who are the

"concision," a mere mutilation of the flesh. Paul will make his boast on the solid ground of the "rock" on which Christ builds His Church, and against which the gates of hell will never prevail. He will boast of the outer and chief cornerstone on which the entire building of the Church rests in all her bulwarks and palaces. For in the Cross of Christ Paul's legal and spiritual relationship to God, to the Church, and really to all things has changed. He is not a slave any more, but a son, and heir of all things! What a boast on solid ground, a boast which will not be put to shame in the day of Christ (Matt. 16:16-19, Eph. 2:20).

Now all things have become new. He now knows no one according to the flesh any more, nay, not even Christ Jesus Himself (II Cor. 5:16, 17). God was in Christ reconciling the world (kosmos) unto Himself. Now we stand under the ministry of reconciliation. And, therefore, Paul makes no overstatement when he cries out triumphantly, of the Cross of Christ, that "through which the Kosmos (world) is crucified to me" (Gal. 6:14). Paul stands in a new relationship to the entire kosmos of God, both in heaven and on earth. In the Greek text Paul places "me" on the foreground. The world is crucified to me. This indicates that the crucifixion of Christ has Cosmic proportions. It will result in the city four-square, where heaven and earth shall be united: the tabernacle of God with man! Therefore it indeed entails heaven and earth and all the relationships of God, angels, and men. From now on the starting-point, the center of all things in heaven and earth, is the Cross of Jesus Christ. This was not only an earth-shaking event, an act of God's grace, but it also shakes the heavens to its very foundations and present structure (Haggai 2:6; Heb. 12:26-28). The entire curse and vanity which is upon all creation in heaven and earth is removed, so that now all things have a *right* to be renewed with eternal youth and pristine freshness and beauty of God's grace.

Yes, all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily. Through this Christ, Who has the pre-eminence *over all things*, God has reconciled all

things by the blood of the Cross, and thus Christ has made the peace of reconciliation (Col. 1:19, 20). Christ came to take away *the sin* of the world, the one great world-sin which started in heaven (John 8:43, 44) and which entered into the world (kosmos) through one man, Adam (Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:21). *Thus* the world was crucified to Paul, and to all the multitude of the children of Abraham, the free-born sons of Sarah, born from above.

But the text here adds: "and I unto the world." Paul is also crucified unto the world. He is no longer under the law-principle, the weak and beggarly principles of this world. This worldly ethics and moral standards, aims and purposes are his no longer. His is the privilege to stand on higher ground and on holier ground. His is not, we repeat, the position of a servant, but it is that of being a son, an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ. What a sure ground of boasting which calls for a *new norm* of measuring. What Paul now lives he lives by the faith of the Son of God, Who lived and died and arose again. He stands in the new world of the heavenly in the midst of the earthly (Eph. 2:1-10).

THE NEW NORM "KANON" ACCORDING TO WHICH WE WALK (Galatians 6:16a)

Paul not only himself walks according to the new "norm" in Christ, but he would have all the saints walk according to "this rule." Are they not created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before prepared that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10)? The free-born sons of Sarah do not walk in a balance-act between antinomian licentiousness of the would-be-righteousness justified boaster, and the righteousness of the legalistic neonomist, the free-born sons walk in newness of life both legally (justified) and spiritually (sanctified). That newness of life is the entire goal and aspiration of their life (Phil. 3:12-14). The great aspiration is to be found in Christ, not having one's own righteousness, which is so much refuse and dung, but constantly to press forward to grasp that unto which they have been powerfully and graciously grasped of Christ Jesus. Such is newness of life which calls for a new "rule," more exalted than mere circumcision of foreskin. It is to bear fruit unto God, in which He as our heavenly Father is glorified (Rom. 8:4; John 15:5-8).

This is the *new Canon*!

Flesh means nothing! The spirit gives life. Let it always be remembered (John 6:63)! And if any man teach something else than this new rule for Sarah's free-born children let him be anathema, even though he were Paul or Gabriel from heaven (Gal. 1:8, 9).

PEACE AND MERCY UPON THE ISRAEL OF GOD (Galatians 6:16b)

Paul makes here an illusion to Psalm 125:5, where we read "...but peace shall be upon Israel. They are like mount Zion which cannot be moved forever." There are those who turn aside to crooked ways. They do not put their trust in Jehovah in the *sacrifice* on mount Zion. These do not overcome in the blood. Hence, they turn aside to crooked ways, and will be led forth to perdition with the workers of iniquity. Upon these comes the anathema of God, just as upon the false preachers who disturb the Galatians (Gal. 1:7-9). They are not *the Israel of God*, and upon such is not the blessing of peace with God, neither in the Old nor in the New Testament. For the Israel of God are not the sons of the flesh, sons of Hagar, but the sons of Sarah, Jerusalem above.

Upon this true Israel is "peace and mercy." Here is the mercy, which God shows in thousands of generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments. These love the Gospel and walk in newness of life (Ex. 20:6; 34:7; Ps. 89:34-37; Romans 11:28). It is the never-failing mercy of which Israel sang in their choicest music (Ps. 136:1 ff). It is new every morning (Lam. 3:22, 23). And the fruit of this mercy is the peace of God which passes all understanding. It is peace with God in justifying grace and mercy (Rom. 5:1). It is peace in the blood of the Lamb, Who was delivered for our offenses and Who was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:23-25). It is peace with God in the knowledge that if we are saved by Christ's death, we shall much more be saved by His life. For we are never separated from the intercessory prayers of our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Such is the peace upon Israel, the Israel of God.

PAUL IS JESUS' BRANDED SLAVE-SERVANT (Galatians 6:17)

Paul gives firm notice that no one shall trouble him as the God-called gospel-preacher any more, henceforth! The phrase in Greek translated "trouble ye" is a peculiar term in Greek. It is *kopous*—*parechetoo*. It means to be the author of, or to cause one to have evil. It is simply evil: intent to hurt. And there is devilry back of it. Thus Judas was such an instigator against Mary when she anointed Christ with very precious ointment against his burial (Matt. 26:10; Mk. 14:6). See also Luke 11:7; 18:5. Paul is here speaking as an apostle, who was called not from men, nor by a man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, Who raised His Son from the dead. He stands in the service of Jesus, Who has been made both Lord and

Christ at God's right hand (Gal. 1:6-9; 5:11, 12). There must come an end to this seemingly needless, endless defense of his apostleship, and the discrediting of his approved credentials. This is nothing less than an attempt to assassinate him as a bona fide preacher of the Gospel of Christ.

Paul uses a great argument of fact to convince his hearers and to shut the mouth of evil agitators. He is an old battle-warrior for the Gospel's sake. He is a marked man, a branded man, as was a runaway slave whose master had put on him with hot irons the "stigma" of a slave. Paul bears in his body the "marks" of the Lord Jesus (II Cor. 11:24, 25). These were great welts and deep scars from the scourgings, beatings, and stonings which he had endured for the Gospel's sake. In him was being filled up

what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ (Col. 1:24). Paul endured all things for the elect's sake (II Tim. 2:10). These scars are marks of honor of a real preacher of the Gospel, who was persecuted for the sake of the Gospel, and whose steps were hounded everywhere. Yes, these "marks" which Paul bears in his body show him to be the earthen vessel, weak, discouraged, pressed down, bearing in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus Himself. And through his preaching, which was a stumbling-block to the Jew, God's power to save those who believed was revealed (I Cor. 1:18, 25; Gal. 5:11). Henceforth, let no man trouble him by denying his apostleship or his message from Christ. Paul utters here the holy impatience of a weary yet genuinely sent preacher (Rom. 10:14, 15).

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof

Rev. Ron Van Overloop

The previous two chapters of the Westminster Confession have dealt with creation and providence. The Confession next treats, in Chapter VI, the fall of man into sin. God's relationship to man before the fall is saved for Chapter VII, sections 1 and 2.

Let us now consider, with the Westminster Confession, man's fall into sin.

1. Our first parents being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit.^a This their sin God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, being purposed to order it to His own glory.^b

- a. Genesis 3:13; II Corinthians 11:3.
- b. Romans 11:32.

2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God,^a and so became dead in sin,^b and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.^c

- a. Genesis 3:6-8; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 3:23.
- b. Genesis 2:17; Ephesians 2:1.
- c. Titus 1:15; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18.

3. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed,^a and the same death in sin and

corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.^b

- a. Genesis 1:27, 28; and Genesis 2:16, 17; and Acts 17:26; with Romans 5:12, 15-19; and I Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45, 49.
- b. Psalm 51:5; Genesis 5:3; Job 14:4; 15:14.

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good,^a and wholly inclined to all evil,^b do proceed all actual transgressions.^c

- a. Romans 5:6; 8:7; 7:18; Colossians 1:21.
- b. Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Romans 3:10-12.
- c. James 1:14, 15; Ephesians 2:2, 3; Matthew 15:19.

5. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated:^a and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.^b

- a. I John 1:8, 10; Romans 7:14, 17, 18, 23; James 3:2; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20.
- b. Romans 7:5, 7, 8, 25; Galatians 5:17.

6. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto,^a doth in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner,^b whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God,^c and curse of the law,^d and so made subject to

death,^e with miseries spiritual,^f temporal,^g and eternal.^h

- a. I John 3:4.
- b. Romans 2:15; 3:9, 19.
- c. Ephesians 2:3.
- d. Galatians 3:10.
- e. Romans 6:23.
- f. Ephesians 4:18.
- g. Romans 8:20; Lamentations 3:39.
- h. Matthew 25:41; II Thessalonians 1:9.

It seems to be with care that the fathers of the Westminster write this chapter on the fall of man into sin, and the effects of that fall, describing also the nature of sin and defining the punishment brought against sin by God. Undoubtedly the reason for this care is its importance in relationship to the subject of salvation. According to one's conception of sin will be his conception of grace. If sin is a light matter, so is grace. Anyone who makes light of sin, sees little accomplished upon Calvary. Is that your problem? And mine?

Once again the readers of the Confession are told that the glory of God is involved. God decreed the original sin "to His own glory." No one can deny that the Westminster Confession is theocentric. It is from that perspective that one must understand the word "permit." To keep from repeating ourselves we refer you to our previous article on chapter V (Of Providence), particularly section 4. Thus, Adam's original sin was not a mistake. It was not something God did not plan. Woe to those who think such. God, from eternity and already at the very beginning of time, was making way for the second Adam. All is planned. To God be the glory.

God made man perfect, yet "subject to change" (Chapter IV, section 2). In this state Adam and Eve were to show their love of God in the way of obedience to His command not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Obedience proved their allegiance and submission to God.

The dreadfulness of the original sin was disobedience. They doubted the wisdom of God's prohibition to eat of the fruit of that tree. They set their will in opposition to His will. God did not cause or approve of this sin. God forbade it. He gave the penalty of death as a deterring motivation.

Although the Confession states that sin is disobedience to God ("eating the forbidden fruit"), the Westminster Assembly defines sin in the catechisms.

Q. 24. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature. (I John 3:4; Galatians 3:10, 12)

The definition comprehensively defines sin by showing the negative as well as the positive. Sin is

not being and not doing what God requires, besides being and doing what God forbids. Not being conformed to God's law is as much a sin as committing a crime. A lack of love toward our neighbor is as much sin as hating him. An absence of right as well as the presence of wrong is sin.

Why did God determine such a fall? All we *may* say is, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matthew 11:26).

Section two gives the effects of the sin upon Adam and Eve. "They fell from...communion with God." Notice that before the fall the relationship which man had with God is described as communion. That communion is the essence of the covenant. Loving fellowship with the Divine Being was lost. That is the essential effect of sin. Man was created in a covenant relation to God and the instantaneous punishment for disobedience was exclusion from the source of all moral and spiritual life. That is death.

Consequently our first parents lost their original righteousness. They lost the image of God. Immediately they fell from allegiance to God (holiness). Love of God no longer dominated their hearts (true knowledge of God).

The Confession goes on to describe the totality of their fall and depravity. The fathers of the Assembly use language which many of today's Presbyterians should heed. Nothing is left untouched by the fall. In fact, everything is completely defiled: "*wholly* defiled in *all* the faculties and parts." Not just the heart became totally depraved (Jeremiah 17:9), but also the mind, the will, the conscience, the emotions, every part of man was defiled. And that defilement of every part was "*wholly*."

Theologians have tried to change the language of Scripture and of the Confession on this, but they fail miserably for all their verbal gymnastics. Fallen man is "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually" (Larger Catechism, q. 25).

Simply stated, man by the fall into sin "became dead in sin."

Sections three and four explain the sinfulness of sin as it affects the descendants of Adam and Eve. Because they stand as the root of all mankind their original sin affects their posterity in a two-fold way: guilt is imputed and corruption is conveyed. This is the reason why all mankind, with only one exception, fell in the first man.

"Guilt" is the just liability to the punishment of sin, namely, death. "Impute" is the act of God of laying to one's charge or credit as a ground of

judicial punishment or justification (cf. Romans 4:6 and II Corinthians 5:19). The Confession states that the guilt (just liability to the penalty) of Adam's disobedience is by God imputed to (judicially laid to the charge of) each of his descendants. Adam was divinely constituted to represent and act for all his posterity. This is because "the covenant being made with Adam, as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mindkind" (Larger Catechism, q. 22). This truth of original guilt is taught in Romans 5:12ff and I Corinthians 15:21, 22.

Besides original guilt, there is original corruption. Death in sin and a corrupted nature is conveyed to all mankind. Every human being by nature comes into existence morally and spiritually dead, i.e., without communion with God. Our actual sins and miseries occur as the natural consequence of our being conceived in sin. The "same death in sin" is being "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil."

How can anyone talk about the natural man being able to think, will, desire, or do good? Man's moral corruption is so radical and deeply rooted that he is disabled from right, moral action. This is the teaching of Scripture in Romans 3:1-19 and Ephesians 4:18, 19. Man by nature is dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1 and John 3:4, 5). Sin reigns, has dominion, and makes man its servant (Romans 6:12-16).

Sin is not merely in actual deed. The actual transgressions are the most evident and obvious, but they are neither the majority nor the most serious. The greatest burden of sin is not in what we have done, but in what we are. "O wretched man that I am!" This is the root of actual sins.

Such depravity is not removed easily. Moral reformation or change of purpose accomplishes nothing. Only the Almighty in regeneration can cause a change in such men. Recall the forcefulness of the language of Scripture in speaking of regeneration: a new birth, a new creation, and a quickening from the dead.

The fifth section of the Confession deals with the corruption that remains in the regenerated. As we just saw, the only escape from death in sin is by regeneration. But the corruption of nature remains with the regenerated and forgiven saint as long as he lives in this life.

Innate moral corruption remains with the believer in this life, contrary to what perfectionists might say. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 2:8).

Let none of us let our flesh find here an excuse

for unlawful activities. Although this section is simply recognizing the fact of our sinful flesh remaining with us all our earthly life, notice the perspective taken in this section. There is no other way one might describe this activity of the believer's flesh than by the word "sin." Let us not use other terminology than that of Scripture to describe this activity of the flesh: sin. No excuse is given here, but rather continual reason for humiliation and constant fleeing for refuge to the cross of Christ. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Sin, corruptible, damnable sin remains in us until death. No *true* believer finds an excuse for sin here.

In the last section of this chapter the Confession treats the subject of the punishment of sin.

Notice that it is emphasized that sin is "the transgression of the law" of God (I John 3:4). Sin is not something one commits only against his fellow-man. A man in flirtation does not merely do something against his wife. A mouthy child is not only offending his parents. The horror of sin is that it is "committed against the most high majesty of God" (Heidelberg Catechism, q. 11). God establishes the rule of the perfection of His "most high majesty" in the Ten Commandments. This is the sole standard for good and right conduct. Anything less is sin.

Therefore, any sin deserves the curse of the law. God is described in Chapter II, section 1 of the Confession as "most just and terrible in His judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty." Therefore men are "by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). Hence, too, salvation comes in no other way than by Christ redeeming "us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

The wrath of God for sin brings upon man death, "for the wages of sin is death."

Also the wrath of God against sin brings upon the unbeliever "all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal." Consider the terrible consequences of sin as stated in the Larger Catechism.

Q. 28. What are the punishments of sin in this world?

A. The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments; together with death itself.

Q. 29. What are the punishments of sin in the world to come?

A. The punishments of sin in the world to come,

are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire for ever.

After reading of such punishment let us repent and believe in Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for One Who bore such punishments for us.

QUESTION BOX

More On Benevolence

C. Hanko

In the March 1, 1980 issue of the Standard Bearer a question was answered in regard to the statement in our Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons, which reads, "And ye poor, be poor in spirit, and deport yourselves respectfully towards your benefactors, be thankful to them, and avoid murmuring...." In that answer I agreed with the one who had sent in the original question, that I did not like the idea that the poor should be thankful to the rich, as if they owe a special gratitude to the benefactors who give out of their abundance. The thanks should be directed to Christ, Who inclines the heart of the willing giver.

One of our readers feels that more could and should be said about this entire matter of benevolence within the church of Christ. He writes as follows:

"You state in your answer that the rich are stewards of the gifts which God gives and that also the poor must be charitable, while, at the same time they must be thankful. I fully agree with you and I fear that many people do not understand the full import of Lord's Day 10. However, I sense in the language of the form something else and I would like to hear your comments and/or criticism of it. (Pardon the imposition!) Is there not a wrong ecclesiology presented here? The rich do not give to the poor. They give to the Church, i.e., the Body of Christ, and that body distributes to its members as they have need. The way the form reads now this idea is excluded and in its place is something which fosters individualism and, as you pointed out, the idea of a caste system. Both of these errors are so foreign to the Word of God, especially as it expresses the beautiful truth of the corporate idea of the Church, that I wonder whether it is not time to consider a correction in the form. I, too, fear making changes. Apart from anything else, the "spiritual climate" is not right. "Men kon het hek

wel eens van de dam halen." (One could open the sluices of the dam-C.H.) But must such an error be kept because of other considerations? Could the offending phrase not simply be elided? Do your churches have a "Liturgical Committee"? Or put Prof. Decker's Liturgical class to work."

It is most encouraging to hear from our readers, especially when they give evidence of having read the Standard Bearer and supply material for our Question Box. I also sincerely appreciate the remarks of the reader concerning the individualistic strain in our form when it speaks of the rich giving to the poor and of the poor being grateful to their benefactors.

It is so very true that "the rich do not give to the poor." On the one hand, it is only the grace of God that prepares the hearts of the believers to be cheerful givers. Paul writes in II Cor. 8:1, 3, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; ... For to their power, I bear record, yea, beyond their power they were willing of themselves (to abound unto the riches of their liberality)." God does not appreciate those who send a trumpet before them when they present their gifts, but God loves the cheerful giver, who gives evidence of God's grace working mightily in him. On the other hand, we owe our thanks, not to the rich, but to God who bestows every good and perfect gift upon us and cares for us, either directly or through the grace bestowed on others. It is still blessed to receive, even though it is more blessed to give.

Another important truth that is brought out here is the fact that we should give, not as individuals, but as members of the body of Jesus Christ. When one member suffers we all suffer. The needs of one member are actually the needs of all of us, for we are members of the same body (I Cor. 12:26, 27). It is exactly for that reason that the office of deacons

has been instituted in the church. To them God entrusts the relief of the poor and the distressed (John 12:8, Matt. 26:11). Through this office deacons are called, according to our Form for Ordination, "that they in the first place collect and preserve with the greatest fidelity and diligence, the alms and goods which are given to the poor: yea, to do their utmost endeavors, that many good means be procured for the relief of the poor. The second part of their office consists in distribution, wherein are not only required discretion and prudence to bestow the alms only on objects of charity, but also cheerfulness and simplicity to assist the poor with compassion and hearty affection: as the apostle requires, chap. 12; and II Cor., chap. 9. For which end it is very beneficial, that they do not only administer relief to the poor and indigent with external gifts, but also with comfortable words from Scripture." The deacons must visit the needy, speak with them, read the Scriptures to them, pray with them and care for them in the Name of Christ as ambassadors of our High priest in Heaven.

This has many implications. For example, it has long been a commendable practice in the churches to receive an alms offering at least once on every Sunday, and also to take a special offering for the needy at every communion service. When we do

this we have in mind that we are not merely giving to the poor and indigent, but we are presenting our gifts to Christ as good stewards in His house. And those who receive these gifts from the church receive them from *Christ*. As needy we do not go to Philistia or to Moab for aid, that is, we do not appeal to medicaid or other government welfare, but we appeal to Christ, in order that Christ may say to His faithful servants, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

This does not prevent the individual members of the church from performing deeds of mercy. There are so many ways in which both men and women can fulfill the office of believers by helping the poor and distressed. We can possibly prepare a meal, lend a helping hand in some manner or another, read to those who are unable to read for themselves, speak a word to the weary, or even discover many other ways which an observant person can soon detect. Also in this instance a visit must not be an occasion for a mere chat or to spread some neighborhood gossip, but must serve to comfort and strengthen the weary in their trials. This also God will bless, not only in the one who receives the visit, but even more in the one who remembers any one of Christ's little ones in love and in the mercies of Christ.

ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

Another "Victory" Like This.....

Our editor has been commenting on the study committee report to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. I have no intention of duplicating that. I would only present part of the report as found in the *Grand Rapids Press*, June 18, 1980:

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church Tuesday turned back a challenge by a Grand Rapids minister to a 350-year-old church tradition concerning salvation.

The ruling body of the C.R.C. in North America, meeting this week at Calvin College, refused a request by the Rev. Harry Boer...to proclaim the theory of reprobation—concerning the divine election and rejection of persons for salvation—nonbinding in church doctrine.

The change is a fine, theological point, and as the Rev. Carl Tuyl of Toronto put it, reprobation is "not something people talk about over coffee." But the change would have meant rejecting a basic tenet of the Christian Reformed Church which dates back at least to the 1600s.

The 152 delegates spent Tuesday morning discussing Rev. Boer's official grievance—known as a *gravamen*—and then rejected it by a voice vote.

The idea that some persons are elected to faith is basic to Christian Reformed belief. Rev. Boer contends that election implies that God rejects others out of hand, without regard to their merits or demerits.

But Rev. Tuyl, who spoke for an advisory

committee on the issue, maintained that the idea of rejection does not necessarily follow from the idea of election. He said a person must earn rejection or condemnation by God...

Note especially that last paragraph. Let anyone compare that with the traditional teaching of the Christian Reformed Church, let him compare that with Berkhof, let him compare that with what the Canons actually teach. A certain general is

supposed to have said, after losing half his army in a victorious battle, "Another victory like this, and we will have nothing left." So in the C.R.C.: apparently the Canons are vindicated—but at the cost of a new interpretation which effectively destroys what the Canons teach concerning reprobation. One more such victory, and the whole cause would be lost—if it is not already.

Dr. Daane recalls.....

It seems that when our books are reviewed in the *Banner*, inevitably Dr. James Daane is asked to write the review. This is true again in the June 13, 1980 issue of the *Banner* in which he reviews the recently published book, *God's Eternal Good Pleasure* by Rev. Herman Hoeksema. His comments are not only interesting with respect to the book itself, but also some of his recollections of the past. The review is interesting, too, from the point of view that it comes precisely at the time the Christian Reformed Synod was treating Boer's Gravamen concerning reprobation. Dr. Daane fully supports Boer's position—and rejects the teachings of Rev. H. Hoeksema as these appear in the book. This he has to say:

By any standard, these are sermons of substance, and quite unlike much current pulpit fluff. In the late 1930s, Herman Hoeksema preached a series of sermons on the Epistle to the Romans. I recall hearing many of them, a fact that so disturbed the Christian Reformed classis from which I was being supported at the rate of \$200 a year that a committee visited me to inquire whether I was using CRC money to prepare for ministry in the Protestant Reformed churches. What disturbed them then theologically, disturbs me now but seems to disturb them no longer.

This book contains H. Hoeksema's sermons on Romans 9 through 11. They reveal a concept of divine sovereignty which still lies deep in the CRC soul, namely, that God's sovereignty *explains* all that happens in this world and the dual outcome of the world's history. Even the 1980 Study Committee's report on Dr. H. Boer's gravamen cannot wholly shake loose the idea that God is at least the "insufficient cause" of the reprobate's unbelief. Somehow deep in the CRC and the PR theology lies the notion that in Biblical thought divine sovereignty means that God is, in one fashion or another, the cause and thus also the explanation of man's sin and unbelief.

These sermons also reveal the theologically dominant notion in both CRC and PR theology that

election is individualistic and thus excludes the Biblical idea of *corporate* election. Hoeksema with a sweep of the hand dismisses the idea that Jacob and Esau can stand for nations, and that in Paul's thought they are *not mere* individuals. After all, says Hoeksema, "Is not a nation composed of the sum total of its individual members?" This sounds much more like the Baptist John Locke, or American individualism thought, than that of the Bible. In Biblical thought, election is *always informed by the structure of the covenant*, the interconnection between "Abraham and his seed," and the unity of Christ with the nation of Israel. When Paul says that "They are not all Israel," the second "Israel" refers to unbelieving, rejected individuals, but the first "Israel" is obviously more and something other than a number of Israelite individuals, namely, the elect nation of Israel is no more merely the sum of its parts than the Church, as God's elect, and the Body of Christ, is the mere sum of its parts. (In Biblical thought, even ordinary marriage in which two become one flesh is not the mere sum of its parts. In a recent *Standard Bearer*, its editor, the Rev. Homer Hoeksema, expressed his total inability to understand what I meant by the corporate election of Israel as a nation.) But until this is recognized, both the CRC and the PRC can reduce election to a numbers game. Had the PRC played this game more diplomatically and less belligerently, I think they would have made serious inroads into the membership of the CRC.

I recommend this book to the CRC readership. It may learn something about itself from which it may wish to rid itself.

Interesting! It may be also that the CRC readership might find in this book that which attracts—for it does indeed emphasize the old Reformed truths which once were held in high esteem in the CRC as well. Obviously, Daane recognizes within the CRC many who still believe the traditional Reformed truths—which we believe to be Scriptural. But Daane considers these, obviously, to be in the minority. Perhaps he is correct.

One wonders, too, what might have happened

had Daane not been reprimanded by a classical committee about too frequent attendance at the

Protestant Reformed Church. He seemed attracted then to that which now constantly disturbs him.

Toorak's Church "marriage".....

A reader in Australia sent in a clipping from a paper there which points out the growing unity within churches—but a unity not based on oneness in the faith. The article states:

Three Toorak churches yesterday confirmed a unique ecumenical agreement which brings close co-operation between the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Church congregations.

The agreement, which is believed to be the first of its type in Australia, allows for regular joint-worship, monthly meetings of ministers and combined community work.

A joint meeting of the congregations in St. Peter's Catholic Church yesterday formally accepted the scheme.

The three congregations have been working together for some time, but the formal agreement established guidelines for local ecumenical agreement.

...The minister for the Uniting Church...said yesterday that the agreement put into practice what had been discussed at higher levels of the church. It was the first time he knew of it happening in Australia.

"We are sharing our convictions and moving closer together in human terms. We recognise and accept each other."

"There were probably 600-700 people there in St. Peter's. It was standing room only," he said.

"We have now affirmed our intention to continue and deepen our relationship."

Further Threats for Christian Schools.....

From *Liberty*, May/June 1980, published by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the following interesting article appeared (written by Gordon Engen):

I can hear it now:

"All right, fifth grade. Today we are going to cover word meanings and usages by two groups you find on pages 547 and 654 of Volume XIX of your manual from the state department of education. The first part of your assignment was to develop a list of words used only by women. Then you were to list usages by women that differ from those used by men. You were to do the same for the religious minorities in the world from the list you found in appendix WZ. Now, how many of you have completed-----?"

This is no hare-brained bit of speculation dreamed up by some fanatic or reactionary or inventor of wild rumors.

If Michigan Senate Bill No. 358 should become law, stranger things than the above fantasy could take place. Mind you, S.B. 358 seeks only to *amend* a law (Section 380.1174 of the Compiled Laws of 1970) that already provides for such an assignment.

The current law says, "The state board *may* develop

guidelines for expanding the existing school curriculum to include materials on the culture of ethnic, religious, and racial minority peoples, and the contributions of women, as defined by the state board...for grades K to 12 in every public or nonpublic school. The guidelines shall include (a) History and heritage of,...living conditions, beliefs and customs of,...problems and prejudices encountered by,...word meaning and usages as employed by,...culturally-related attitudes and behavior of ethnic, religious, racial minorities and women."

Bill No. 358 would change *may* to *shall* in the introduction and mandates that "the guidelines shall be incorporated into a regular course of instruction in which every pupil shall be involved for not less than two years."

Can you imagine a kindergartner in a Michigan Catholic parochial school learning about the beliefs, customs, and word meanings and usages of the Hare Krishnas, or the Moonies, or the Hindus?

...What would high school seniors be taught regarding the living conditions and beliefs of religious minorities? Which religions would be chosen? Which left out? Who would be certain they were correctly

portrayed? How would so-called cults be treated? Who would distinguish between so-called cults and "legitimate" religions?....

Some of these laws, long on the books, now being amended (often without our being aware of what is being done), are of a nature that could soon make it

impossible to continue to operate our Christian Schools. Let us use wisely and diligently what we have while we may—before those days come when the state makes such demands which might make continued operation of our schools impossible.

TRANSLATED TREASURES

A Pamphlet Concerning The Reformation Of The Church

Dr. A. Kuyper

(Dr. Kuyper has finished his discussion of the special offices in the church: minister, professor, elder, and deacon. In this paragraph he turns to a discussion of the office of believer.)

26. The Office of Believers in the Church of Christ.

In Article 28 our Belgic Confession states, among other things, that there is an office of all believers. In this way the Confession reproduces clearly and accurately what Scripture means when it adorns the people of the Lord with the honorable title of kings and priests. This honor comes to all, without the character of the office being lost. What you do by virtue of your office you do, not out of your own person, but as a result of a dignity laid upon your person. On the other hand, that which I do outside of my office is done by me as an outflowing of my personal good pleasure without any reference to a delegated power. In the United States of America, just as in France, a common right of voting belongs to the citizens, but between both lands this right exists with a definite difference. The Frenchman says, "I vote because this is my right as a man, a right which I possess and for which I have no one to thank." The American who understands his Constitution would say, "I do not vote by virtue of my right as a man but by the grace of God because God has loaned me this office." This same difference now exists between the ideas of the fanatics and those of the Reformed. Both recognize that power rests in the church with believers. But, while the fanatic shouts, "I, I as personal believer have to decide in Jesus' church," the Reformed man testifies, "As believer I have nothing but the obligation to thank eternally my God for His grace. Because King Jesus has laid an office upon me, I possess in the church a responsible power."

This office of believers exists first of all in this that where the ruling office falls away, the office of believers takes its place. In a church on a solitary island, where a plague drags all the office bearers to the grave, the believers themselves, by virtue of their office, would have to take the place of these office bearers and execute the official work of the church. Further, they would have to choose new office bearers. The one office, by falling away, pushes its task over to the next office. If the minister of the Word falls away, then the ruling elder takes his place. If the elder falls away, then the deacon takes up his task. And if also the deacon falls away, then the office of all believers enters in its place. This rule, as we shall see, also holds where the office bearers are not taken away through death nor through moving to a different place, but apostatize through unbelief or unfaithfulness, or are deficient through neglect or pride. Unfortunately, this is so broad an area that, as an accusation against office bearers and parents, the Sunday School or some other organization (unnaturally and, therefore, unlawfully) sometimes took the place of office bearers. Yet this did stand as an unmistakable corrective and is, because of this, to be appreciated with thankfulness. Yet this official work of other organizations is a product of the more common task which is locked up in the office of all believers, to wit, the obligation to exercise constant control in matters of confession, church rule, liturgy, and the activities of the other office bearers. Never may a believer acquiesce simply because the ministers of the church say so. This is Romish, not Reformed. In a Reformed church each believer must have spiritual judgment and must permit this judgment to oper-

ate, not out of pedantry or censoriousness, but out of spiritual obedience. The believer must do this, never on the ground of his opinion, but only according to a spiritual understanding of the Word of God. Thus all that is confessed within the church, decided, and carried out, must have its constant support in the spiritual enlightening of the conscience of believers. And if strife arises between this enlightened conscience of the believer and the decisions or acts of overseers, then it is the office of believers to form a judgment concerning this, to deal secretly with this judgment; first, out of respect for the ruling office, then to bring the matter in as a complaint, and finally, if need be, to make it generally known as a public witness. This is a very serious task out of which another official obligation follows. This other official obligation is to join the true church or to reveal the true church anew when it appears that every attempt to keep the ecclesiastical ruling body faithful to the truth is fruitless. Then one must sever himself from overseers who prove to be no more of the church.

Yet also in normal times there is in this office of believers another very active and positive calling. Not only is the office of believers (as we touched on a moment ago) to be constantly filled by the youth who, short in knowledge, are trained by Sunday Schools and other organizations, but the office also involves the obligation to proclaim the gospel where this has not taken place or where the gospel has been preached in pretense. This happens only when God gives the gifts for it; provided that (and everything hinges on this) one does this officially, by virtue of his office, and not in a fanatic way. One must not have a lust for this work as one imagines he feels an impulse of the Spirit.

The old Reformed Churches, following the example of the early church, forced this even to the extent that they instituted what were originally called prophecies, i.e., gatherings within the congregations in which common believers, under the guidance of the consistory, attempted to edify the congregation out of the Word of God so that all the gifts put in the church by Jesus might be used for the benefit of the church. It has been said that Comrie encouraged this ministry of the Word by virtue of the office of believers. With this also stands connected the idea that the way to the office of the ministry of the Word is open for men of "extraordinary gifts" who obviously were qualified for this by the Lord without university training.

27. Concerning the Church's Possessions.

Ownership or possession of property is not indispensable for the essence of the church. Even without a fixed church building a church of God can come together in the open air, in a barn or warehouse, without the nature of the church being

abridged in any way. As the church expands in peaceful times, on the other hand, especially in our climate, the possession of one or more church buildings is indispensable. A definite place is also indispensable for smaller gatherings of office bearers or meetings of the congregation. Besides these buildings, a church usually possesses a fixed capital of movable or immovable possessions, donated by testators or donors, the income of which is intended for the maintenance of buildings, public worship, or the salaries of church ministers. And if the income of these fixed possessions is not sufficient to take care of the rent of buildings and the salary of the people who work for the church, to maintain the worship services and to pay a proper salary to the office bearers, then the church ought to make up the difference by collections of free gifts or by a head tax.

The management of these possessions and incomes belongs to the church itself. They are her goods, her money which must be used for her benefit and for which she is responsible. The manner in which the church can carry out this management differs. In former times this was usually left to the Reformed magistrate. Now that the Reformed magistracy has disappeared, the church has appointed its own guardians and managers and they take care of these things partly directly and partly through the consistory. As a matter of principle, the following rules are helpful. 1) In very small churches this management can be given over to the deacons as part of their common service of tables, i.e., of all the money and not only the money for the poor. 2) In larger congregations this is neither practical nor advisable. It is not practical because the deacons, due to their faulty organization, must already leave two-thirds of their own work unfinished. And, in similar fashion, it is not advisable because the spiritual character of the diaconate suffers when this is done. 3) One does better by not permitting the consistory to do the providing in this matter because the consistory, as an official group, has its own calling, and church finances are not official work but only a matter of a commission. 4) One proceeds in a better way, therefore, if one names a special group of church trustees taken from the membership of the church at large and which is under the direction of the consistory to do this work. Further, other church members, in addition to these, ought to be appointed to do the auditing.

The budget does not rest upon the principle of love, but on the principle of obligation, according to right. An assessment such as the budget must never be used to take up alms and to provide for the poor in their need. It must be used to pay the expenses which people as a church incur. A church which

uses a building, hires church personnel, permits an organ to be played, and binds itself to pay a preacher, incurs each year a joint expense and joint costs, and thus acquires a yearly debt. All that which is expense for its own use, its cost for its own enjoyment, and debt for its own expense, never comes under the heading of alms, but is and remains a tribute, i.e., what one is rightly indebted to pay. The people can bring this money up by free-will offerings, or, if that does not work, then the people must make a reckoning and divide the cost among themselves. And even when people bring this money up by free-will offerings, the money is not yet alms, but always is payment for that which has been or will be enjoyed. He who imagines that with the practice in our churches the collections for the church and for the poor are on a par is in danger of ascribing to himself a good work which is not his due. Even he who gives more in the church

collections than he is obligated proportionately to give does not in any way contribute to the church alms, but pays, in addition to his own indebted part, another part in the debt of less willing payers.

If the church is to function, well people should, in ordinary churches and times, have to pay about five dollars per person or twenty-five dollars per family per year. The rule in this matter is that one should pay according to his ability. But, even though the enjoyment of the things of the church is for all alike, nevertheless those who are unable to pay, pay nothing while the more ordinary citizens must pay as much as thirty or forty dollars per family per year and the more able as much as one hundred or more dollars per family per year. (We must remember that this was written in the latter half of the 1800's, H.H.)

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Jacob Refuses Protection

Rev. John A. Heys

The Prince of God, Jacob, had met the enemy, Esau, face to face, and had walked away without a scratch, even though the enemy had made known his intent to kill this Prince of God. Both men after this meeting parted without a drop of blood being shed, even though the situation was tense for a time. Esau had come with four hundred men to meet his brother, who was now a cripple and was encumbered with, and held back from fleeing by, two wives, their handmaidens and twelve children, none of which was a teenager yet—though the oldest was very close to it.

This Prince came with great riches in the form of oxen, asses, flocks, menservants, and womenservants. Anyone who wanted to become rich in a dishonest way would find this group an easy prey in this open country near the River Jabbok. Jacob and his family sat there like sitting ducks. There, alone and without bodyguards, they could easily be robbed of all that which they had. And for a man seeking revenge, things could not be more suitably arranged.

To get even with Jacob—and why do we speak of getting even, when we always mean doing more

harm to one than that one did to us?—Esau was in a position not simply to kill him, but to destroy the whole family. He could have made his brother suffer tremendously before taking his life. He could have killed all of his children, one by one before Jacob's eyes, and then slain Jacob as well. A time for revenge, a setup that would satisfy rage and bitter hatred was there. And yet Jacob walks away without a scratch; and instead Esau offers to help him on his way back to their father.

We must not, however, fail to see that this amazing turn of events is not due to a mellowing of Esau over a period of twenty years. It was not because of the abundant gift that Jacob pressed upon the man who threatened to kill him. It was not because Esau now believed that Jacob was harmless and could be trusted. It was because there is a God in heaven Who is faithful to His promises, and protects His people in a mercy that faileth never and in a grace that abideth ever.

Proverbs 21:1 applies here: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." No, Esau is not a king, even though Jacob bowed so often before him

and called him his Lord. But the principle is there. God had Esau under complete control. Esau could not lay one finger upon God's Prince. God stood between Jacob and Esau. And Jacob was as good as ten thousand miles away from Esau, as far as Esau's power to hurt, and the strength of these four hundred men, are concerned.

And let us take hold of that truth for ourselves. We tend to quote it and think of it when we get marvellous deliverances like Jacob did. When the enemy of the Church is frustrated, when his intent and attempt to destroy is thwarted, we say that God is on the throne and fighting for us. And that surely is true. But let us understand that every king, every authority, every temporal ruler over us on the local, state, or national level is, as far as his heart is concerned, in the hand of God, and is turned by God whithersoever it pleases Him. When they bungle things, when they show ineptness for the duties of their offices, when they squander the money they demand unnecessarily, when they lead the nation to ruin, all this also is because the Lord has their hearts in His hand as rivers of waters. These are not above His power. These do not act apart from His sovereign, eternal counsel. Solomon makes no exception, and we ought not make any exception to the truth that all men in authority over us are in the hand of God as far as their hearts are concerned; and what they do, that hurts as well as benefits, must be understood in the light of this truth that the God of our salvation has them in His hand to execute what He in His wisdom, and love for His Church, has planned so that the day of Christ may come. All too often we look at the ruler, the man in authority over us, and in spiritual near-sightedness fail to see the hand of God upon him. No, we are not atheists, and we confess God and pray to Him, worship Him in the sanctuary on the Sabbath, and insist that our children be taught the things of their natural life in the light of His Word. And yet in many instances we are practical atheists in that we rule Him out of the works which He does through men.

And it must be admitted that Jacob did exactly that here in this incident. He had prayed a very earnest prayer when he heard that Esau was coming with four hundred men. He sought God's help. He lifted his eyes up to Him Who has the heart of every man in His hand to turn him whithersoever He pleases. There is not atheism to be found in Jacob in his prayer in Genesis 32:9-12. There was no atheism in Jacob when he threw himself upon God after he had been touched in the thigh and crippled. Then he cried out for a blessing from God. But find one word in Genesis 33 that indicates that before unbelieving Esau Jacob is confident with implicit trust in God. Indeed, in verse

10 he mentions God by name. In verse 11 he confesses that God had dealt graciously with him. But his old man of sin manifests itself so clearly, and so plainly has the upper hand here, that before Esau Jacob does manifest much practical atheism. Would you commend Jacob for telling Esau that seeing him face to face was "as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me"? Was Jacob there declaring that he did see the face of God in this complete turn about on the part of the man who intended to kill him? Jacob saw Esau, and that Esau was pleased with him. He is tremendously relieved to find himself in the good graces of Esau. And though he speaks of God, he does not confess God to have turned Esau's heart, because he, Jacob, was the one in whom God was pleased. And that God blessed him and had dealt graciously with him is language that an atheist can and often does use. Many of them in our land sing, "God bless America" rather than "God bless His Church in all nations, tongues, and tribes."

But what particularly shows that the old man of sin in Jacob has the upper hand here—even while there is that undercurrent of faith of the new man in Christ—is the fact that he behaves as one who must turn the heart of Esau as the rivers of water by his own ingenuity. Esau offered protection to Jacob there on the way to his father's house. And Jacob refused it. Understand well, that protection of the unbeliever is not always to be rejected. Besides, did Jacob know Esau to be an unbeliever? He knew of his sins of spiritual carelessness, of marrying heathen wives, and of his threat to kill. But did he have anything concrete on which to base a conviction that Esau was an unbeliever? It is true that Esau does not utter one word in this whole encounter that shows any faith. But is that not true of us so often; even though we are believers, and have the new principle of life in us?

It is what Jacob does not say that is as important as what he says. He gives an excuse for not traveling in the company of Esau. And his reason is a legitimate one. The children, the women, the cattle could not travel at the speed that Esau and his four hundred men would want to travel. Esau felt the reasonableness of Jacob's objection. He did not flare up with anger and call Jacob a tricky old customer with which to deal. No, there was logic in Jacob's answer. He spoke the truth, and Esau was convinced of it. But was this Jacob's sole and chief reason for wanting to go it alone? Was this a manifestation of his faith in God, and an evidence that he was trusting in Him to turn the hearts of his enemies, so that he could have that protection that God had promised?

There is a matter here also that we can learn from, and that we do well to note. We, sometimes,

try to find and give "good" reasons for our deeds which are contrary to the teachings of the Word of God. How often do we not hear of the joining and yoking of believer with unbeliever on the basis of the calling of man to provide food and clothing and shelter for his family? The Word of God in no uncertain terms and in unmistakable language in II Corinthians 6:14-18 not only warns against unequal yoking with an unbeliever, but emphatically insists that there can be no fellowship, no harmony between them. The only way that believer and unbeliever can agree and work together is that the believer walk in unbelief. The unbeliever cannot meet the believer on holy ground. The believer will have to leave the principles of the Word of God to get along with and work together with the unbeliever.

The unbeliever says, "Let us break the fifth commandment. Who cares about honouring those in authority over us? The things of this earth are more important than God's law. Let's go on strike. Let's get the owner over the barrel so that we can make more money fall out of his pockets and into our hands." And the believer, unequally yoked with him, as a member in his organization, has either to say, "I cannot go along with breaking of God's law," or, to retain his membership and benefit from the coercion and dishonouring of the God-ordained authority, he must say, "I agree with you. There is concord between us. I will drop my Christian principles. I will with you break the fifth commandment for the sake of my flesh." It is the believer who has to give in, not the unbeliever. The leopard cannot change its spots, and so the lamb has to take on spots to be like the evil-doer with whom he is unequally yoked.

And then it is that so often we find the same tactics as used by Jacob. Men will say, "But it is my God-given duty to provide for my family." A principle of God's Word is presented as a reason for not walking according to the principles of God's Word. Our statement before men, our reason, is in itself legitimate. But does it hold before God?

The allotted space is almost filled, all too early. But let me make one necessary observation yet. Will it be any different when the mark of the beast is demanded in the days of the Antichrist? Will not that calling of the father and husband to provide for the needs of his family be MORE pressing and painfully real? Now, in this day, a man can get another job with less pay, and live on a lower standard of living in order to live on the standards of God. Now a man can become poor in this earth's goods to be laying up for himself treasures in heaven. But in these days not too far ahead of us, there will be no way to buy or sell without unequal yoking with the unbeliever.

Let it be clearly understood therefore that, although it is man's calling to provide for his family, it is not his calling to do so in a sinful way. He may not do so in the way of denying his faith. And understand well that in the days of the Antichrist, we will not be dealing with a man like Esau who leaves Jacob unscratched. We will be dealing with a cruel instrument of Satan who desires and seeks our complete ruin. And we will not have to satisfy either Esau or Antichrist but stand before a holy God with our reasons for our behaviour. That we satisfy men—yea even the spiritual leaders in the Church—is not what counts. Will God agree with us as to the reason for our behaviour in this vale of tears?

Book Review

INSPIRATION, by Archibald A. Hodge & Benjamin B. Warfield, (Introduction by Roger R. Nicole); Baker Book House, 1979; 108 pages, \$2.95 (paper); (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

Both A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield wrote extensively on the doctrine of Scripture when they were professors at Princeton Theological Seminary in the latter part of the Nineteenth and early part of the Twentieth Centuries and when they were the leading Presbyterian theologians in this country. This brief book contains a small but important part of their writings and demonstrates clearly how tenaciously they held to the doctrines of infallibility and inerrancy. Because the doctrine of Scripture and its inspiration is once again a critical issue in the Church, the reprint of these articles is a worth-

while endeavor. Their writings are completely relevant to the present debate. The book is especially interesting because it has been maintained that Hodge especially deviated significantly from the doctrine of infallible inspiration (cf. Vander Stelt's book, "Philosophy and Scripture"). This book proves conclusively that such charges are false.

It must be remembered in reading this book that the Princeton theologians were not adverse to bolstering their arguments in theology by appeals to rational lines of argumentation in addition to appeals to Scripture. This appears also in this book. Nevertheless, the book is well worth the price and is a worthwhile addition to the libraries of those who do not already have the works of Hodge and Warfield in them. We urge our readers to purchase it.

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WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 1, 1980, our parents, MR. AND MRS. EDWIN GRITTERS, celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary.

We are grateful to our heavenly Father for giving us God-fearing parents who have brought us up in the fear of His name. May they continue to experience blessings in abundance in the years to come from the hand of our faithful God.

"Blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel." (Psalm 128:1, 5, 6).

their children and grand-children,
 Jerry and Shirley Vander Kolk
 Brian, Brent, Jared
 Ed and Jeanne Karsemeyer
 Shaun
 Barry and Lori Gritters
 Mike and Brenda Gritters
 Roger Gritters
 Ricky Gritters

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory and congregation of the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids expresses their sincere sympathy to Mrs. Henry Helmholtz and her family in the passing of her husband, MR. HENRY HELMHOLDT.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21).
 Rev. Carl Haak, Pres.
 Gerald De Vries, Sec'y.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association will be held on Thursday evening, September 18, 8:00 P.M., at Faith Protestant Reformed Church.

Nominees, three of which are to be chosen, for new board members are G.E. Bylsma, George De Vries, Arnold Haveman, Dale Mensch, John Vander Woude, and William A. Lafferty. Rev. M. Schipper will speak to us on the topic, "The Standard Bearer as a Responsible Witness." Mark your calendar now and plan to attend this important meeting.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 5, 1980, the Lord willing, our parents, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Lubbers will celebrate their 40th year of marriage. We, their children and grand-children, are thankful to our covenant God who has given us God-fearing parents, Christian education, and a home where we may know the fear of the Lord.

Our prayer is that God may bless them with His grace in the way that lies ahead, and that in all their experiences they may enjoy that perfect peace which is only found in the cross of Christ.

Their grateful children,
 Jason and Carolyn Redder
 Richard and Gloria Smith
 Larry and Sandy Lubbers
 Klaire and Pat Berens
 Rog and Kathy Berens
 Jim Lubbers who went to be with his Lord in 1971
 and 10 grand-children

News From Our Churches

Our congregation in Redlands, California has extended a call to Rev. Marvin Kamps to "Come over and help us" at a special congregational

meeting held on Monday, July 14. Professor Robert Decker preached in Redlands for six Sundays, concluding with Sunday, July 20. Rev. Herman

Veldman plans to preach in Redlands for six Sundays, July 27 through August 31. It is interesting to note that Redlands has called Rev. Kamps for the second time. Redlands was Rev. Kamps first pastorate.

At the time this page was written (August 9) two other calls were outstanding: Holland, Michigan called Rev. James Slopsema, and Hope Church in Walker, Michigan has extended a call to Professor H.C. Hoeksema.

While Rev. Ronald Hanko was absent from his church in Wyckoff, New Jersey, on vacation in Michigan, Seminarian Dean Wassink took his place on the pulpit at our Covenant Church.

The new address of Rev. G. Lanting is 1040 W. 8th St., Loveland, Colorado 80537.

Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Engelsma, members of our Hope Church in Walker, Michigan, returned home on July 18 after spending about two and one-half months in Singapore. The following report from the Engelsmas was printed in the Hope bulletin on June 8; "We greet you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ from hot and humid Singapore. Even the natives state that it is unseasonably warm. The work of our churches with the GLTS is progressing very well. The Reformed Truth as held by our Protestant Reformed Churches is eagerly received in the preaching, also in the several study classes that are taught by Rev. den Hartog, and in many private conversations. We are thankful to be of assistance to the GLTS and Rev. den Hartog."

Rev. Rodney Miersma, pastor of our church in Pella, Iowa, conducted a Bible class once a week during the month of June in the Pella Nursing Home.

A special congregational meeting was held the last week in June in our First Church in Grand Rapids. The pastor, Rev. Joostens, Rev. C. Hanko, and the consistorial Church Extension Committee reported on the history, progress, and future plans of the church extension (mission) labors conducted by First Church in Bradenton, Florida. All of these reports were optimistic that with continued intensive labors a church can be organized in Bradenton. The Committee plans to resume work

in November and continue, if possible, through 1981. The consistory requested financial assistance for this work from the Mission Committee of our churches. Funds were granted by the Mission Committee but later denied by Synod.

The siding was being applied to the new church building of our Covenant Church in Wyckoff, New Jersey the last week in July.

Our congregation in Kalamazoo, Michigan, received final approval on their bank construction loan. Construction of their new church building was to begin on June 17. Their new building is scheduled for completion in about six months - or about Christmas time.

Our Southwest congregation planned to hold their church picnic at Palmer Park. The rain forced a change in location to Hope School gym. In spite of the weather, all present seemed to enjoy themselves.

As the fall society season will soon be upon us, it may be of interest to review some of the special topics discussed in some of our society meetings during the past season. The Reformed Fellowship in South Holland, Illinois viewed Dr. James Dobson's series of films on the Family. The Summer Society in Hudsonville viewed slides taken by deacon Marvin Lubbers of the recent visit of the deacons to Jamaica. In a previous meeting the society saw slides of the work of Dr. Richard Kreuzer in Ethiopia several years ago. Paul Griess introduced the subject, "Is there a place for Fasting," in a Loveland Men's Society meeting. Covenant's discussion group discussed "Prayer" in their June gathering. Rev. DeVries spoke on "Our Personal Witness" for the combined meeting of the Ladies and Men's Societies of Southwest Church. Redland's young people discussed the special topic introduced by Dave Buiter, "Should we enlist in the Armed Forces?" John Kalsbeek introduced the topic, "Human Engineering: A Christian's Concern," for the Redlands Men's Society.

Convocation Services for our Seminary will be held in our Southeast Church in Grand Rapids on Wednesday, September 3, at 8:00 P.M. Professor Decker will be the speaker.

K.G.V.