

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

...if God had not united Himself to us and become Emmanuel, none of the work of salvation could ever be possible. Indeed, in the wonder of the virgin birth, in the marvel of the incarnation, we see the beginning of the realization of God's covenant with us.

See "Born of a Virgin" — page 122

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MEDITATION

Born of a Virgin

Rev. M. Schipper

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Isaiah 7:14.

"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

Matthew 1:22,23.

Prediction and fulfillment!

In these words is described quite adequately the relation of the two texts cited above, which contain the Word of God respecting the virgin birth of

Christ.

In the one we have the prophecy of Isaiah as delivered to wicked king Ahaz, that must serve as a sign. In the other, Matthew informs us that the pro-

phesy is realized in the virgin Mary, who was espoused to Joseph, and who was great with child. In the first, the predictive Word of God comes as a sign to Judah's king, who in the day of trouble sought his help in the arm of flesh, refusing to look to the God of Judah for his aid, and refusing to bow the knee before the God of the Wonder. In the second, we see the fulfillment of the prophetic sign as it is interpreted to a troubled Israelite, who saw his espoused virgin great with child, while he knew he was not responsible for her conception, and was mindful to put her away privily, in order that she might not become a public example.

Together, these passages of Scripture reveal to us the mystery of the incarnation, the virgin birth of Christ, Whose birth the church again celebrates in this season of the year.

As we prepare to contemplate this central event in the scheme of our salvation, it is urgent that we consider this Wonder of Wonders with profound reverence.

As we meditate on the virgin birth of Christ as described in the passages cited above, it is necessary that we observe, first of all, that the virgin birth was intended as a sign.

A divine sign!

In general it may be said of signs that they are visible realities which are intended to portray hidden, invisible truths. In our world there is a vast number of them, and in Scripture the Word of God abounds with them. In a sense one may say all things are signs. And the reason is that God with design made all things visible in the creation that they might speak of the eternal and heavenly realities. Thus the sun in the heavens, which gives light, heat, and life to the creation, is a sign of the Son of righteousness Who comes with healing in His wings. The stars, which appear in vast numbers in the firmament, speak of the host innumerable that constitutes Abraham's seed. Bread and water, the lowly vine, the lamb and the lion . . . all utter speech, all point us to the Word of God concerning His Son, the Saviour of His people.

In Scripture, signs are generally intended for the believers. They accompany the Word of God to them, to confirm that Word, and to strengthen their faith.

This cannot mean, however, that signs are not given to unbelievers, or that they have no significance for them.

Jesus said on more than one occasion, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matt. 12:39; 16:4). The apostle Paul wrote, "For the Jews require a sign, and the

Greeks seek after wisdom" (I Cor. 1:22). In the context of the latter passage it is plain that both Jew and Greek categorically belong to the wicked and adulterous of whom the Lord was speaking. Accordingly, therefore, the wicked unbelievers seek after the sign, and signs are given to them.

But notably the wicked cannot, nor will they receive the signs relative to the kingdom of heaven. As it is with the preaching of God's Word, so it is also with the multiplication of signs, they always reject them to their own condemnation. Such was also the case with wicked Ahaz, as we shall see in a moment. Jesus also said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, "O, ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye discern the signs of the times?" (Matt. 16:3). The answer, of course, to this question is negative.

In Scripture, signs accompany the Word of God, and always with a twofold purpose. In respect to the wicked, it is that they may, with better knowledge, sin to their own condemnation. And in respect to the righteous, it is that they may be confirmed in their faith in the God of their salvation. As we said, in Scripture the divine intention is positively for the believers. This is true not only of the signs which are sacraments, such as baptism and the Lord's Supper, but also of the multitude of signs which have no sacramental significance, such as, the sign of the rainbow to Noah, the sign of the dew on the fleece to Gideon, the signs which accompanied the out-pouring of the Spirit on Pentecost to the disciples; and, according to the text, the sign of the pregnant virgin to Joseph and the believing church.

Always the sign is from the Lord!

This truth is very emphatic in the case of Ahaz, as recorded in Isaiah's prophecy, "Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord" (Isa. 7:10-12).

Ahaz, so it appears in the context, had been threatened by a powerful union of Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Damascus (Syria). They had united with the intent to besiege Jerusalem, to slay Ahaz, and to set on the throne in his stead another king, even the son of Tabeal. Ahaz was sore afraid, not only for his own life, but also for the future of his kingdom. Did all this move the king to seek the God of Judah for His help? Nay, rather, he planned to call to the king of Assyria for his aid. It was in this situation that the Lord sent Isaiah to him, to inform him that the threat of Israel and Syria would not succeed, but also to ask for a sign of Jehovah God. Ahaz refused to believe the Word of the Lord, and to ask for a sign. He did not want

the Lord to help him, choosing rather to place his hope on an arm of flesh. And with apparent piety, but also in wicked unbelief he refuses to ask for a sign. Consequently Isaiah is instructed to say unto him, "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. . . ."

Jehovah God, Who remembers His covenant with the house of David, and Who will preserve the seed of David forever, He will give the sign. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name, Immanuel."

Nothing is too hard for the Lord when it comes to keeping His Word. He will do the impossible!

Behold, a virgin, not a married woman, shall conceive and bear a son. And this Son shall be called Immanuel, God with us.

That prophetic sign will be fulfilled in the birth of the Son of God from the virgin Mary, of the seed of David.

There are those who admit that the sign given to Ahaz points ultimately to the conception of the Son of God in the womb of the virgin Mary, but who further state that the sign, in order to have significance to Ahaz, must have had reference to an historic fact to be realized in the days in which Ahaz lived. With this latter explanation we cannot agree. They contend that, as far as Ahaz was concerned, the sign found its historic fulfillment according to Isaiah 8:1,3 in the son Maher-shal-hash-baz, conceived and born of a prophetess. They also point to Isaiah 8:8 where Immanuel is addressed; and to Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born. . . ."

An explanation of these passages here would take us too far afield in this Meditation, nor is this necessary.

What we must see is the fact that what was said in our text in Isaiah 7:14, relative to the divine sign, should have been and was perfectly clear to Ahaz to whom it was given. That Word of God by the mouth of the prophet was that God would destroy Judah's enemies, and that Ahaz must believe in the God of the Wonder. And the Wonder is, that a virgin conceives without co-habiting with man. Ahaz must see, and he does, that the God Who will perform such a Wonder, is the God in Whom he ought to put his trust. The fact is, however, that Ahaz will not believe in that God. Rather, he will seek an arm of flesh for his help.

In the second place we must also note in the text concerning that Son.

A divine Son!

Mary's first-born, but God's only begotten!

Of Mary, the last of the long line of David. For the generations of the house of David end in a vir-

gin. A virgin, who as yet knew no man by co-habiting with him. Who, before they had come together was found with child of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1:18,25). And Joseph, being a just man, and not wishing to make her a public example, was mindful to put her away privily. Indeed, so he opined, if she had committed fornication, as it seemed to him at the moment, she must be exposed publicly before all according to the law. But this he hesitated to do because of his great love to her.

And so it was, as he thought on these things, that the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, informing him that he should not fear to take unto him Mary to be his wife, for that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, the angel revealed to Joseph that she would bear a Son, Whose name should be called Jesus, Who would save His people from their sins.

And Matthew explains how all this came to pass in order that the prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled—"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

Verily, He is Mary's first-born! Not her only son, as some have concluded, for we know there were other children to be born to her. But her first-born Son, Who opened the womb and prepared the way for others to follow.

But Wonder of wonders!

God's only begotten!

Emmanuel, God with us!

Through the conception of the Holy Spirit, Mary conceives and brings forth God's Son, His only begotten. "In the fulness of time God sent His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (I John 4:9). The Person of the Son of God united Himself to our flesh in the virgin, and dwelt among us.

Thus the sign, and that which was signified in that sign, was realized, fulfilled in the conception and birth of the virgin Mary, who brings forth the God of our salvation, Who alone is the Saviour of His people.

This is the truth which Ahaz, and all the wicked, whether they be of Israel or of the world, rejected, and always refuse to embrace, to their condemnation. And this is the truth which Joseph, and all who seek for salvation of the Lord, cling to with faith. This is the truth we confess with our lips each

time we recite the Apostle's Creed in our churches: "And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary."

Notice lastly, on the basis of our text, that it speaks not only of the divine sign, and of the divine Son, but also of a divine purpose. This is suggested especially in the first part of the text in Matthew, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled..." In these words is indicated divine intent.

And that means, first of all, that the wonder of the incarnation, of the virgin birth of Christ, is central in the fulfillment of God's covenant. This may be disputed in favor of other wonders in the scheme of our redemption, such as, the resurrection of Christ from the dead, or the miracle of Pentecost, when the work of salvation is applied to the hearts of God's people. Yet we must see that, marvelous as these wonders may be, and indispensable as they are in the realization of our salvation, none of these could ever be possible without the incarnation and the virgin birth of Christ. Though it is true what the apostle Paul later wrote, that if Christ be not raised from the dead, we are yet in our sins, and most miserable; though it is also true that without Pentecost, the dispensation of the Spirit, we also are spiritually dead and hopelessly lost; yet if God had not united Himself to us and become Emmanuel, none of the work of salvation could ever be possible. Indeed, in the wonder of the virgin birth, in the marvel of the incarnation, we see the beginning of the realization of God's covenant with us.

And, secondly, we see in close connection with the foregoing the fulfillment of the promise.

The promise given at the very dawn of history—the so-called mother promise of Genesis 3:15, that, of the seed of the woman, one would rise up to crush the serpent's head—of that promise, the incarnation, God come in the flesh, is the beginning of its fulfillment.

It is that promise which was foreshadowed all

through the old dispensation in sacrifice and ceremony, which was the central message of all the prophets, major and minor, which not only confirmed the promise that salvation would come through the Servant of Jehovah, Who is God Himself in the Person of His Son, but also clearly identifying Him, so clearly, that no doubt could remain, as to what God had in mind for us. Such utterances we find in the text of Isaiah 7:14, which Matthew informs us is fulfilled in the virgin Mary of the house of David; or, that uttered by the same prophet in Isaiah 9:6,7 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder . . . the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Or attend to the prophecy of Micah (5:2) where he not only speaks of the tribe of Judah from which the promised Saviour must be born, but also gives us in most literal terms the place of His birth. "But thou Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Indeed, in the birth of Jesus, Who shall save His people from their sins, is the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise. And that Jesus, Who is Emmanuel—God with us—suffers and dies in our stead, and rises again from the dead as a testimony of our justification; and by His Spirit, the Spirit of Pentecost, sanctifies to our hearts His saving efficacy, and brings us at last into the house of God's covenant forever. Then the promise will be perfectly fulfilled.

Rejoice then, O believing church, with unspeakable joy!

God come in the flesh!

Emmanuel!

Born of the virgin!

Amen!

EDITORIAL

The Faces of Semi-Arminianism

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Sometimes when I read articles which engage in unfounded criticism of our Protestant Reformed Churches and their doctrinal position, I am inclined both to laugh and to cry.

One must be able, amid the pressures of conflict and controversy, to retain a healthy sense of humor. If he fails to do so and is unable to see the humor in and laugh at the ridiculousness of false

charges and far-fetched and even desperate criticisms, he will not be able to endure the pressures and maintain his equilibrium. This was my first reaction to an article by Donald Dunkerley on "Hyper-Calvinism Today" (*The Presbyterian Journal*, Nov. 18, 1981, pp. 14, 15) in which he repeats the worn-out charge that our Protestant Reformed Churches are hyper-Calvinist. Writes he:

Hyper-Calvinism in this technical sense is the official theological position of certain denominations, such as the Gospel Standard Strict Baptists in England and the Protestant Reformed Church (of Dutch background) in our own country.

I thought to myself, "The poor man has made absolutely no progress since he made the identical unfounded statement about our churches in *The Banner of Truth* several years ago. He knows so little about our denomination that he does not even know we are 'Churches,' not 'Church.' And apparently he is unaware that our 'official theological position' is none other than the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht, and that by implication he classifies as hyper-Calvinist all others who have the same confessions. He has apparently never taken any instruction from David Engelsma's excellent treatise *Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel*. He knows nothing of the sharp difference between our position and that of the Gospel Standard Strict Baptists, also set forth clearly in the Rev. Engelsma's book. And yet he holds himself forth as an expert on the subject, able to be a teacher of babes and an instructor of the simple." What can one do, really, but laugh when such ignorance rushes into print?

And yet it makes me cry.

It makes me cry, first of all, because it is slander, and that, too, from the pen of one who is a minister of the gospel and who himself purports to be a Presbyterian and a Calvinist. And slander hurts! It hurts its target, the more so when it is perpetrated in a religious magazine and publicly. It also hurts its author—if not before men, then before God. It makes me cry, secondly, because it perpetuates a myth about our Protestant Reformed Churches in the minds of those who read the *Presbyterian Journal* but who will never see the *Standard Bearer*. Mr. Dunkerley's statement will likely be accepted as gospel truth by many, though he offers—nor can offer—a scintilla of evidence for his charge. And thereby the myth that was begun years ago by Christian Reformed opponents is continued and spread abroad among many who do not and cannot know any better.

But it makes me cry, most of all, because the Rev. Dunkerley offers as a proper and Calvinistic substitute for this alleged hyper-Calvinism

something that is not Calvinism at all, something that is worse than Arminianism, something that ought to be utterly despicable to a Reformed believer—Semi-Arminianism.

From my earliest childhood I can remember that my father had on his study desk a tobacco humidor with four faces carved, or molded, on its sides. Especially some of those faces I did not, as a little boy, like to look at immediately before I went to bed or if I had to walk down the darkened hallway from his study. They tended to give one a fright. Today I still have that humidor as a memento on my library shelf. And when I look at those faces, I can well understand that they tended to give me nightmares when I was a lad. There is a smiling face; but there is also a cynical face, an angry and threatening face, and a snarling face. And the cover is a silly, half-witted face. The whole thing reminds me a bit of the idol of Roman mythology, Janus, the god of doorways. Janus was originally an idol with two bearded faces, looking in opposite directions. But a good encyclopedia will inform you that in the time of the Emperor Hadrian, Janus was represented as having four faces.

And this reminds me of the Rev. Dunkerley's monstrosity which he calls Calvinism.

Two of the faces are faces of the love of God. The one is the face of a special love of God for the elect. But wait a moment! God's love has another face: it is the face of a general love of God for all. And as you might expect, some of the usual passages of Scripture (which true Calvinists have explained a thousand times over) are cited as proof, such as Ezekiel 18:23, II Peter 3:9, Mark 10:21, and Matthew 23:37. Mr. Dunkerley writes: "As Reformed (Calvinistic) Christians see it, the Bible teaches that, while God has a special love for His elect, there is also a general love of God for all.' And following this he goes on to assert that it is not "'un-Reformed' and wrong to say to an unbeliever, 'God loves you' or 'Jesus loves you.'" And he claims that to say this is wrong is hyper-Calvinism.

But there are two more faces on this four-faced sculpture of the Rev. Dunkerley. They are the faces of Christ's atonement. The one is the face of particular atonement; the other is the face of general atonement. Writes he:

Again, the orthodox Reformed faith teaches that, while the death of Christ was offered with special reference to the elect, it looks beyond, for it effects a free offer of the Gospel to all, it is sufficient for the sins of all and it removes all legal obstacles against anyone's coming to God.

If I may mix my metaphors for a moment, notice the linguistic sleight of hand that is necessary

seemingly to get the doctrine of definite atonement and that of general atonement into one sentence. And notice how contrary this is both to Canons of Dordrecht II, 8 and to the Westminster Confession, Ch. III/IV and Ch. VIII. But notice, too, that in Dunkerley's view of evangelism it is the face of general atonement that is displayed: "Yet there are those who tell us it is 'un-Reformed' and wrong to say to an unbeliever, 'Christ died for you.' Is this not Hyper-Calvinism?"

Now how does the Rev. Dunkerley achieve this monstrosity, this four-faced Janus-head, with two Reformed faces and two Arminian faces?

There is more than one explanation possible.

One element of explanation, as you might expect, is that he completely ignores and is silent about sovereign reprobation. This is, of course, telling. For no genuinely Reformed man will do this. But, of course, a reprobation-face would not fit on this monstrous head at all.

Another element of explanation is the fact that Mr. Dunkerley does not proceed from the Reformed creeds—neither his Westminster Confession nor our Canons of Dordrecht. True, he makes some reference to the Westminster standards; but he yanks this reference out of context and uses it for his own end, but meanwhile does not *proceed* from the crucial teachings of the creeds concerning particular love and particular atonement. He cannot find in the creeds the materials to sculpt his four-faced Janus-head.

But let us get Mr. Dunkerley's own explanation.

He arrives at this position, basically, because—without any evidence—he first re-defines hyper-Calvinism. He writes:

Hyper-Calvinism, then, refers to such an exaggerated emphasis on God's sovereignty that the effect is to cripple evangelism.

Strictly speaking, this is the view that, because God has an elect people He will infallibly save, therefore He does not love all, there is no offer of salvation to all and so there is also no obligation on us to proclaim an offer of salvation to all.

A little later he writes:

On the other hand, to say we are not Hyper-Calvinists in the formal sense because it is rejected by our creeds, does not mean that we have altogether escaped its influence. The spirit of Hyper-Calvinism is infectious. A person may still exaggerate God's sovereignty so that his evangelism is crippled, even though he knows better than to say there is no free offer of the Gospel.

Now if the above paragraphs furnish a true description of hyper-Calvinism, then I plead guilty. This is not even hyper-Calvinism as described in

the limited quotations by Dunkerley from John MacLeod's *Scottish Theology*. But it is plain that the Rev. Dunkerley finds these elements in hyper-Calvinism:

1. An exaggeration of the sovereignty of God.
2. A denial of the general, well-meant offer of salvation.
3. A denial of the obligation to proclaim such an offer.
4. A resultant crippling of evangelism.

Just a few remarks about this.

In the first place, I do not understand how it is possible to exaggerate God's sovereignty. To exaggerate is to present something as greater than it really is. How is this possible? God's sovereignty is infinite and absolute. How can one ever present that sovereignty as greater than it really is?

In the second place, what folly! It is true, of course, that in the course of church history there has been, and still is, a phenomenon that is genuine hyper-Calvinism. The Rev. Engelsma makes this plain, too, in his book on this subject. But, in the mainstream of church history, has the battle been about that? Has the great and ever-threatening danger from the time of Paul to Augustine to Calvin to the fathers of Dordt to today been that of hyper-Calvinism? Has the danger ever been that men, so to speak, make God too sovereign? Anyone who knows anything at all about the history of doctrine knows that the contrary is true: the battle has always been to leave God GOD, absolutely sovereign!

In the third place, the corollary of Dunkerley's position would seem obvious: to do evangelism one must make God a little less sovereign. To mention this to a Reformed man is to condemn it.

But, you see, this is Semi-Arminianism. And when something is "semi-", it is always more deceptive. The reason is that one never knows what one really has in such an inconsistent mixture.

This reminds me of a little ditty I remember from my childhood, one line of which ran: "Half swan, half goose; Alexander was a swoose."

Thus it is with Semi-Arminianism. Is it Calvinism? Is it Arminianism?

Or is it Calminianism?

Or is it Malcinianism?

It all depends which faces you look at!

But they give a Reformed man nightmares!

*Take time to read
The Standard Bearer*

CONTRIBUTION

Non-Functional by Reason of Losing the Marks

Dear Prof. Hoeksema:

You quote Rev. Kuyvenhoven in the *Standard Bearer* of Nov. 15, 1981 as having said in the *Banner* editorial of Oct. 26, 1981: "The views of the Reformers are no longer ours. And the kind of thinking about the church that is recorded in the Belgic Confession is no longer functional in the Christian Reformed Church." Further, you quote Kuyvenhoven that "the church had an artificial unity before" the time of the Reformation, but that "it has suffered a genuine disunity ever since."

Now really, after all these years of apostasy in the CRC is it any wonder and isn't it very clear what is taking place? After all, when Kuyvenhoven tells us that Articles 27-29 are no longer functional for him and his church, it ought to be as plain as the sun in the heavens that they are fast losing the marks of the true church. The CRC has for 58 years been in the process of losing those marks that identify the true church. It is exactly what our fathers said would happen because of 1924.

The splintering and the suffering of genuine disunity of the true church is not true. To prove that this is correct, we have the very articles of the Confession which Kuyvenhoven says are no longer functional for his church. Article 27 says that "this holy church...is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one spirit." Article 28 says "that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it; maintaining the unity of the church." The true church is certainly not genuinely disunited. Those splinters Kuyvenhoven is looking at and calls "disadvantaged" are the splinters of reformation that are left behind when the church reforms and when those splinters finally realize that the confessions are no longer functional and

relevant. I believe that Articles 27-29 of the Confession are functional for God's people; and Kuyvenhoven ought to take the instruction to heart and look where he may find those marks of the church. There is no unity where the pure preaching is not maintained, the sacraments are not administered as appointed by Christ, and discipline is not exercised. Kuyvenhoven, as Prof. Hoeksema quotes him, is talking about the Confession, Artt. 27-29. He takes these Articles and reduces them to "views" and "thinking" of the Reformers. The Confessions are not merely views and thinkings about the true and false church. They are the Confessions that have been loved and held by God's people to be true on the basis of God's Word. Kuyvenhoven does not have the "right" to call them "views" and "thinking." On the basis of these Confessions the people of God not only can distinguish, but these two churches "must be distinguished." (Art. 29) They are binding and correct. If this is "absolutist thinking," we have these Confessions, nevertheless, as the expression of our faith.

Your brother in Christ,
Bill Kamps

Editorial comment:

As is plain from my editorial of 11/15/'81, I am in agreement with the thrust of this letter. Nevertheless, I must caution that my statement stands: "The views and statements of the Reformers are not necessarily correct in every instance; and they certainly do not constitute binding doctrine in any Reformed church." The Confessions are binding, not the statements of any Reformer. The latter are binding only when they coincide with Scripture and the Confessions.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Church Extension and Evangelism (2)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

In the recent special issue of the *Standard Bearer* we began a survey of what each of the Protestant Reformed Churches is doing in its locale in church

extension and evangelism. With this article we conclude that survey.

SOUTH HOLLAND, ILLINOIS

South Holland, through its Evangelism Committee, is very active in this work. Tapes are made of every sermon preached and lecture delivered. Efforts are currently underway to expand this aspect of the work and distribute these tapes as widely as possible. For the past ten years South Holland has been broadcasting one of the Sunday sermons over a local F M station. In this connection Edward Stouwie, secretary of the committee, writes: "Speaking of radio broadcasting, at the time of this writing (Sept. 26), we have just been the recipients of a most unusual largesse. A lover of the Reformed faith in an Eastern state has offered to sponsor Rev. Engelsma's series of thirteen 15 minute radio messages on The Fundamentals of the Reformed Faith over a powerful A M station in his area. With anticipation we look forward to this hoping that the station has the time segments and a suitable day available to us."

South Holland gratefully reports that they receive requests for their literature from all over North America and even overseas. Many of their publications are distributed through the R.F.P.A. (Henry VanderWal). Over the past ten years or so South Holland has published some eight pamphlets. The first and most popular one is the series of brief meditations written by the late Herman Hoeksema entitled: "God Is Our Refuge And Strength." This pamphlet proved to be the beginning of South Holland's publishing efforts. Over ten thousand copies of this have been printed. The newest pamphlet is "Remembering The Lord's Day," by Rev. Engelsma. This and all the pamphlets are free upon request. Other pamphlets are in the planning stage.

As is the case with several other of the churches, South Holland sponsors a Reformation Day lecture annually.

In all this work, the secretary writes, the committee has the "loyal, spiritual, and financial support" of the congregation.

COVENANT CHURCH, WYCKOFF, NEW JERSEY

Covenant is limited in its work because of small size. Nevertheless the little congregation and its pastor do what they can. Two lectures (spring and fall) are sponsored every year. Pastor Hanko is privileged to preach on the average of once per month in the People's Park Reformed Church (RCA) of Paterson. There are a few families in Vermont to whom sermon tapes and literature are sent. These people have been active in distributing our literature and books in the communities in which they live.

FIRST CHURCH, HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

In addition to sponsoring lectures, Holland distributes cassette recordings of the sermons upon request. *Standard Bearers* are also mailed to interested people outside of our churches. The Worship services and sermon titles are placed in the Saturday newspaper along with a brief declaration of the Reformed Truth. Holland's committee is presently investigating the possibility of airing a fifteen-minute radio program to be presented by its pastor.

FAITH CHURCH, JENISON, MICHIGAN

In addition to cooperating with the other Michigan churches in lectures and radio broadcasting, Faith mails "Studies In Bible Doctrine" (written by Rev. B. Woudenberg) to 1200 addresses. These are mailed for six months and then a response is sought. Those who respond are placed on a permanent mailing list. The study sheets are then mailed to another group of 1200. Faith intends to do this until every home in Jenison has been reached. Faith also distributes literature from the R.F.P.A. in restaurants, doctors' offices, etc. The newest project is placing an ad, "In Love Of The Truth," in the local shopping guide. Faith's pastor, Rev. W. Bruinsma, will be writing brief articles in this ad explaining various truths of Scripture over against prevalent errors and misconceptions.

HUDSONVILLE CHURCH, HUDSONVILLE, MICHIGAN

Hudsonville, now our largest congregation, mails about three hundred bulletins to addresses mainly in the Hudsonville area. This attractive bulletin has a picture of the church, together with Pastor Van Baren's name, address, and phone number on the front cover. The back cover contains a brief statement of the history and doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (we shall have to change this to *North America* now that there is a congregation in Canada). Inside, the bulletin contains an essay on some aspect of the Reformed faith. The sample sent to me carries an essay by Rev. Woudenberg on the subject, "The Bond Of Marriage."

Hudsonville underwrites the cost of the Reformed Witness Hour over WJBL, a Holland radio station. Sermon tapes are sent to Family Radio, a network of nine non-profit religious stations. Nine of the sermons have been broadcast this year. Those who respond to the radio sermons are sent, at their request, cassette copies. These people are placed on the mailing list for the bulletin mentioned above. In addition, they are sent sample copies of the *Standard Bearer*, as well as other literature. An ad is placed in the local "shopper" expressing a point of our faith and listing the time and place of the worship services. The consistory has

scheduled a biweekly "catechism" class in the Byron Center Library (a small town south of Hudsonville where there once was a Protestant Reformed Church) where Prof. Hoeksema teaches the Canons of Dordt. A number of Hudsonville families committed themselves to attend these meetings regularly to form a "core" group. Others are invited to attend through personal contact and through advertising.

KALAMAZOO CHURCH, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

With the Rev. Bernard Woudenberg as its pastor it comes as no surprise that Kalamazoo (with First, Grand Rapids and Hope, Walker one of the "mother churches" of the denomination) is active in evangelism. The pastor's letter to me is of such a nature that it is probably best to quote it in its entirety:

"We publish our regular study sheet, 'Studies in Bible Doctrine,' every two or three weeks. These are sent through the mail to anyone desiring them (several hundred at the moment, R.D.D.). At present we are starting a series on the growth of the Church.

"These sheets are followed a week later by a study tape enlarging on the subject. These are sent out on a loan basis and without charge to be listened to and returned for reuse.

"For a while now we have been using the Reformed Witness Hour radio time to experiment with different approaches to broadcasting. At present we are holding an open line type of broadcast with questions and comments taken from the listeners by telephone. It is proving quite interesting.

"We are presently publishing several small tracts which can be used for handout distribution.

"We regularly conduct a number of Bible study classes to which outsiders can be invited.

We hope to hold a number of lectures through the course of the coming year in our new church building."

HOPE CHURCH, WALKER, MICHIGAN

Hope Church does its church extension work mainly through its "Reformed Witness Committee." Cassette tapes of the Reformed Witness Hour and of the Sunday Worship services of Hope are mailed to about sixty addresses on a permanent mailing list. The recipients are from the states as well as from Korea, South Africa, Tanzania, Malaysia, and the Republic of China. Many of these write periodically, informing Hope of their deep appreciation for these tapes and requesting other reading materials. Prof. Hanko's pamphlet series, "Covenant Witness," is being reprinted for distribution. Recently Hope printed a pamphlet,

"Christ's Predetermined Death," authored by Rev. R.C. Harbach.

FIRST CHURCH, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

As many of our readers know, standing in the heart of what once was the Dutch ghetto but now is the Black ghetto of Grand Rapids is First Church. As is true of her sisters in the denomination, so from First too goes forth the command of the gospel to repent and believe. We quote the letter received from the church extension committee:

"The Reformed Witness Hour originated in the Young Men's Society of First Church, and soon came to function under the sponsorship of the Consistory of this church. For many years the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema, pastor of First Protestant Reformed Church, was the radio speaker for the program. Over the years many other of our clergy have recorded radio sermons, many new stations have been added, and many other churches have become involved in the financial support of the radio broadcast. But the Radio Committee remains responsible to the Consistory of First Church and remains dependent on it for the largest single contribution to the cost of maintaining the broadcast.

"First Church has a library of tapes which are used in its 'Recording Ministry.' Sermon tapes are made available on a loan-free basis, both to shut-ins...and to others at their request. The cassette library includes a number of titles of lectures. The Church Extension Committee is currently trying to establish a working relationship with a Christian Bookstore chain in order to provide for a wider distribution of our tapes."

In addition First is the calling Church for Jamaica. "Progress is sometimes disappointingly slow, but the Consistory's Jamaican committee continues to work long and hard in this very complex aspect of our mission endeavor."

First, with the help of Southeast Church and with some Synodical Funding, supervises the work being done in Bradenton, Florida.

Finally, many of the pamphlets advertised in the brochure of the R.F.P.A. originated with the Sunday School of First Church. The Sunday School, with supplementary funding from the congregation, continues to publish new pamphlets and reprint older ones as the need arises.

Thus it is that from twenty-one little churches who bear the name Protestant Reformed, scattered from Wyckoff, New Jersey in the shadows of New York City to Redlands, California and Lynden Washington on the shores of the Pacific and from Houston, Texas to Edmonton, Alberta there goes forth the pure and sweet sound of the gospel of the

sovereign grace of God in Jesus Christ. All this in addition to the work of the churches in common in East Lansing, Michigan; Birmingham, Alabama; and Singapore and Jamaica. How thankful we must be for the work God has given us to do and for the grace to do it. Let us be zealous in our efforts and

labor while it is day, ere the night comes in which no man can labor. The fields are white with harvest.

Looking at it all we say: "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Romans 11:36).

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

A Bitter Cry of Unbelief

Rev. John A. Heys

With heavy hearts, because they had to leave Simeon behind in one of Egypt's prisons, the nine brothers of Joseph mounted their beasts of burden. And yet with a sigh of relief they headed northward for the land of Canaan. How wonderful to be out of prison and away from rough speech!

The relief, however, was soon replaced with increasing anxiety, so that their hearts became heavier each step that they took homeward. For now a new trying situation began to impress itself upon their consciousness. They must face their father and explain to him Simeon's absence, the fact that they found a sack's worth of money in the sack of grain that they had opened, and that they must take Benjamin along, if they are to return and get food again out of Egypt. What troubled them especially was the fact that they had to persuade their father, who now looked upon Benjamin as his most beloved son, to let them take this youngest son along on their next trip.

Now, ordinarily, to find a sum of money brings elation. To get a large discount on the things you buy does not move to tears of sadness. To come home from the grocery store with a large bag of the necessities of life for which the owner refused to let you pay, and said that it was on the house, will not bring frowns and grumblings. More likely your step will be quicker and lighter; and you will want to hurry home and tell others of your "good fortune." But the nine brothers did not look forward to telling this to their father after they opened one of their sacks and found to the last penny the cost of that sack of corn lying on top of the food. They were filled with consternation to find this money, and with stark fear looked at each other in dismay. We read that their hearts failed them. The treatment that they had received in Egypt gave them no assurance that this was a gift of kindness—even though it was—or the deed of a good friend. Going home to get proof that they were true men, they knew of not

one man in Egypt that was a friend to them. And what about Simeon being kept in prison? Is it any wonder that, when they did return with Benjamin, one of the first things that they did was to explain that they had found this money and were bringing it back? And is it any wonder that, upon being brought into Joseph's house, they first said among themselves, "Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses"? Note, by the way, how averse these brothers, who sold Joseph as a slave, are to becoming slaves themselves. But they can find only one explanation for the money in their sacks, and that is that it is an attempt to prove that they are spies, and thieves as well.

Imagine then their consternation, and their father's, when arriving home they open all the other eight sacks, and find in each one the money they gave for the contents! What is more, we may believe that each brother recognized the fact that he got exactly the *same* money—not merely the equivalent of what he bought the corn for—and in the same purse or package in which they brought it! If you will turn to Genesis 42:35, you will find this, "And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid." Now this word bundle is elsewhere translated three times as bag, and it is not the same word as sack. There was a bundle or bag of money in each sack. The word bundle or bag means that which is compressed; and it gives the idea of a sum of money that is not loose but in some way wrapped up together. And "every man's bundle" means that the same bundle, bag, or wrapping is there with the exact coins that they had brought to buy the corn. No wonder they were afraid and that their hearts failed them, and said,

"What is this that God hath done to us?" There was everything to give circumstantial evidence that they stole the money they brought down to Egypt.

Fear, although it may not leave entirely, does tend to lessen after a period of time during which no evil befalls one. But the fear of the brothers became far more intense when they opened all the other eight sacks upon arriving home. In Genesis 42:28 in connection with opening only one sack, we read that their hearts failed and they were afraid. The word afraid here means troubled. That their hearts failed we would probably explain as skipping a beat. However, the word means to go out or go forth. And the idea more closely then is that their hearts pounded with fear, and seemed almost ready to break out of their chest cavities because of the fierceness of the pounding. But upon opening all the sacks they are gripped with even greater fear. The word fear, or the statement that they were afraid when they opened the eight sacks means that they trembled, could not control their limbs. And the word is the same one that is used of fallen Adam when he heard God coming in the cool of the day, and when Moses was *afraid* "to look upon God" at the burning bush. This is a dreadful, overwhelming fear.

Jacob also was afraid. The sons had already told him of their experiences in Egypt. Now such fear grips him that he cries out, "Ye have bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." Note how Jacob blames it all on his sons, even that Joseph "is not." He knew not the details. He believed Joseph to have been slain by a wild beast; but he harboured in his soul all these years the suspicion that they had something to do with that tragic "death." For he knew the vehement hatred that they had for Joseph.

Surely Jacob was not walking by faith here in this outburst. The smouldering dissatisfaction which he had with these ten sons through the years, the painful loss of Joseph, and now because these sons had told Joseph so much in Egypt that it resulted in Simeon being held as a hostage, and Benjamin being required to be brought to Egypt, as undeniable evidence that they were true men, moved him to express that which was pure unbelief. He cried of all these things being against him, while faith declares that all things work together for good to those that love God, and that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God.

Once again it may be stated that we can pity the man, that we can understand how trying and disappointing all these events must have been for him. But we must not defend him in it. For what he said simply was not true. All this was working for his

good; but it will take some time yet before God will make this plain. God's calendar and clock are seldom our calendar and clock. And God's way is the best way because it is the only way. The salvation of these sons of Jacob demanded all this history. They must be brought to conviction and confession of their sins. Joseph must go ahead to spare the lives of his father's house during those seven dreadful years of famine that the covenant line die not out, and the Christ in due time may be born in the line of Jacob and his son Judah.

The trouble with us (and the trouble here with Jacob) is that we look at things instead of looking at God Who is behind all that which happens. And we look at the work of one particular thing or event and quickly come to a conclusion, while God has an eternal, unchangeable counsel or plan wherein all things work *together*, and are not just so many separate works. We must get that truth and hold fast to it, that all things work *together* for good. Alone they may work us physical harm and be very distasteful and hard to bear. And taken all by themselves and failing to see God behind them working out a good and wonderful plan, we will so often cry out with Jacob that all is against us.

A little experience from every day life will show us how to judge what God sends us, and help us to see that all things work *together* for good to those that love Him. While your wife or mother is baking a cake that calls for many ingredients, one of which is flour, take a tablespoon of that flour and put it in your mouth. It will not taste good to you. It will work no good in your mouth, as far as your taste is concerned. It, even as bitter medicine may cure you of your ailment, will provide your body with nourishment, in spite of its unappetizing taste. But by itself you are not going to enjoy it. It will go against you. Now let your wife or mother, or the baker down the street, mix that flour in the right proportion with the other ingredients, bake the mixed ingredients for the right length of time at the proper temperature and then serve it to you. Together with the other ingredients and the heat, that flour will work together for a delicious cake. The end product is very delightful, even though at any stage of the preparation, and alone, the elements may bring discomfort rather than joy.

And the reason why all the ingredients in our lives, all our experiences and every historical event in the history of this world from creation onward, work together for our good is that God works them all together. He, the All-wise Chef, knows just what ingredients are necessary and for how long a period of time we are to be exercised by them. He knows how hot it must get for us. And His measurements are always exact. His mixture of the bitter with the

sweet is always in the most complete sense of the word according to His perfect recipe.

No, Jacob, God did not give you something that was against you. All these things occurred at the time that they did take place because there is a great good toward which the God of all mercy was working. Leave out any one of these things which Jacob called against him, and there will be no happy, delightful end. How foolish to go to a bakery and watch a renowned baker make a cake, and then, not knowing what kind of cake he is preparing, begin to criticize the adding of this or that ingredient and question the oven temperature and time of baking.

And yet with God we do that time and time again. We do that even though we do know, for God reveals it in His Word, what He is preparing for us. We even know from His own mouth that there will be bitter ingredients and that our light affliction works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Yet we quickly say, "Oh, no, all these things are against us!"

From the Psalms we sing, "Let children thus learn from history's light to hope in our God and walk in His sight, The God of their fathers to fear and obey, And ne'er like their fathers to turn from His way." But one of the biggest mistakes we make when we trace the history of God's people in the Old Testament is to fail to see ourselves in all the

sins and weaknesses of the saints and sinners recorded on those pages that cover *the day of shadows*.

Looking at Jacob here we quickly say, "Oh, Jacob, do not talk that way," and hardly have we spoken these words and we dare to speak of our own "bad luck," ruling God completely out of our lives and denying that this present inconvenience is working together with the rest of God's works upon us and round about us for our everlasting good. Looking at the ten sons of Jacob we want to shout at them, "Tell your father the truth! Do not let him for one more second carry that grief; and go down into Egypt and see if you can find his beloved son and buy his freedom again." And yet are we not just as reluctant to confess our sins? If Asher, Dan, or Judah do it, it is bad. But we had a good reason for doing the same thing. After all this is a different day and age!

How comforting to know that God works all together for our good, and that we do not need to depend upon each other. How wonderful that in God's eternal plan, and because of it, the cross of Christ is a historical fact! What Joseph told his brothers, many years later, is so true of that cross, "Ye meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." For Christ's brethren meant to destroy Him, but God meant that cross that we might live forever in the kingdom of His Christ.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Letter to Timothy

December 15, 1981

Dear Timothy,

In the last letter to you I mentioned, somewhat in passing, that our attitude towards the preacher and our attitude towards the preaching were inseparably related to each other. I want to say a bit more about that in this letter, especially from the viewpoint of what is involved in listening to a sermon. I wonder sometimes whether we have not lost the art of listening. Or, if I may repeat that passage from Ecclesiastes which I quoted last time, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy

words be few." Do we really know how to do this?

It is, it seems to me, elementary that how we listen to the preaching in Church is determined by other important and related matters. I refer, in the first place, to the fact that our listening to the preaching will be determined in large measure by our attitude towards and interest in spiritual things. This is not something which ought to characterize our lives only on the Lord's Day, but something that persists through all of life. Jesus points to the very heart of the matter in His sermon on the mount when He says: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). If our treasure is upon earth and not in heaven, then we will not listen very attentively to the preaching, for the preaching is all about spiritual treasures. It

may be that a very interesting sermon delivered by a very gifted speaker captures our attention and holds our interest in spite of the fact that our treasures are on earth; but this "hearing" of the Word will be like the seed that fell upon thorny ground. "And the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22). Nor can one "lay up" treasures on earth during the week and expect to lay up treasures in heaven on the Lord's Day. And this is simply because a person cannot "serve God and mammon," as Jesus points out in the following verses.

This is important to remember too. There are so many people who leave God's house unmoved by the sermon and untouched by the Word as it is preached and dissatisfied with the preacher and his message. But the trouble lies with themselves. Their treasures are really on earth. They are basically and fundamentally uninterested in the treasures of heaven. But rather than admit this, they are quick to blame the preacher and his preaching for their own disinterest. They prefer to blame someone else rather than their own carnal-mindedness.

This stands closely related to another matter—that of spiritual preparation. This too is an important matter. There are many in the Churches today who remember days when preparation for the Sabbath began already on Saturday. There were many homes in which it was a common practice to have all the work finished by late Saturday afternoon or early Saturday evening. Not only was the house itself spick and span, but the clothes for Church were laid out, the potatoes for dinner on the Lord's Day were peeled and standing in a pan of water, the work on the farm was finished for the week, and the thoughts of the family could turn to the Sabbath. No one might, except under extraordinary circumstances, leave the house on Saturday night because the parents firmly believed that it was impossible to get ready to worship God by gallivanting all over the country. This has all changed. There is not that sense of getting ready for the Sabbath that once there was. Work continues at its normal pace all day Saturday and on into the evening. Or, if one can escape the work, then Saturday is a time to go visiting until very late in the evening, and little or no thought is given to the Lord's Day. The result is that many come into God's house on the Lord's Day with absolutely no thought at all given to the fact that they have entered God's presence and that they are now to hear what God has to say to them. There is no surprise then when such people receive little or nothing from the preaching. And, once again, as often as not the blame is shifted to the preacher, in an effort to cover the frailties and lack

of spirituality of the listener.

Always listening is an act of worship. The whole of the church service on the Lord's Day is worship, of course. Fundamentally, worship, according to the Scriptural idea, is "bowing the knee towards" God, for that is the most basic meaning of the word which is consistently translated as worship. Worship is, therefore, an act of adoration and praise. It is an acknowledgement of God as the sovereign Lord and as the One Who alone is worthy of all honor and glory. All worship basically involves this. Whether we sing or pray, whether we confess our faith or bring our offerings, this is the essence of worship. But listening to God's Word is also worship. It is an act of adoration and praise at bottom and an acknowledgement of the absolute Lordship of Almighty God.

Listening to the sermon is an act of worship, however, in its own unique way. Listening is worship because our listening must be an inward confession that the almighty God of heaven and earth, our Jehovah Who saves us, has the sovereign right to speak to us and require of us that we listen to what He has to say. There is an element here of listening as acknowledgement of God's absolute sovereignty over us. We *must* listen because God has authority over us. Listening is acknowledgement of that. But there is also the aspect of praise and adoration because we listen to Him Who tells us what great things He has done for us.

There are illustrations which help make this clear. If a parent is giving his child instruction in a certain matter and is using that instruction as a basis to admonish the child, the parent expects the child to pay attention. If the child does not pay attention, lets his mind wander while the parent is talking and assumes an attitude of indifference, then the child, by such conduct, refuses to acknowledge the authority of the parent in his life and the parent has the right to say: "Listen to me; I am your father." The other aspect can also be illustrated. Supposing that I am a very poor beggar who has nothing in the world and who can survive only by eating out of garbage cans, fighting with wild dogs for a place to sleep, and struggling to keep warm in cold weather by lying near doors of locked buildings where a bit of heat may seep under the door; supposing further that the king of the land, for some reason known only to himself, calls me into the palace and begins to tell me that he intends to give me a very important place in his kingdom where I will have riches and influence, and opportunity to join in policy discussions and decisions, and the rule over others; supposing that while the king is talking about all this I am so unmoved by what he says and so indifferent to what he is talking about that I simply pay no attention and do not

even hear what is being said—such conduct is an insult to the king and brands me as the crassest of fools.

To listen with thankfulness and joy, with adoration and praise to what God tells us of the salvation He has graciously given in Christ is the worship of listening. To listen with humble submission to the authority of our heavenly King is to worship in listening.

Paul tells us in II Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God. But He tells us too why God gave the Scriptures: they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for in-

struction in righteousness. If we listen to the preaching of the Scriptures we will be profited. We will learn doctrine, we will be reproof and corrected, we will be instructed in righteousness. And, according to vs. 17, this is all that we need that we, as men of God, may be perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

All of this requires that our listening be *spiritual*. But I think it best to discuss this with you in a subsequent letter.

Fraternally in Christ,
H. Hanko

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

"Anything Goes"

Rev. R. Flikkema

As the end of time approaches us the cup of sin and iniquity becomes more and more full; the violation of God's holy law becomes more and more pronounced, and the horror of sin, as sin develops, is simply beyond belief. As the end of time approaches us, sin is no more called sin but acceptable practice, and almost anything goes.

Yes indeed, almost anything goes! What is that anything to which I refer? What is the sin which is simply deemed acceptable practice, but which is in reality so horrible that it is beyond belief? That sin you can read about in the September 7 issue of *Time* magazine. It is a sin that has to do with sex. Not, you understand, sex between a man and a woman with whom he is not married, or sex between a woman and a man with whom she is not married. That horrible sin the Bible calls adultery and fornication, and it has been deemed acceptable practice, or if not acceptable practice, at least practiced for many years. Nor do I refer to the sin of homosexuality, the sin described thus in Romans 1: "...men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly...." That sin too has been practiced for many years; and today, even in the so-called church it is becoming acceptable practice. But I refer to sex as today it is being deemed acceptable amongst children. Not men with men, not women with women, but children with children, and even parents with their children, which is incest! That is that acceptable practice—that "anything goes" sin—that is being advocated today.

That that sin is being advocated today the above mentioned article gives ample proof. In that article, entitled "Cradle-To-Grave Intimacy," you will find a picture of a book that goes by the title *Show Me*. Directly under that title you will find the picture of two children sitting naked. Directly under that you read these words, "A Picture Book of Sex for Children and Parents; Photography and Captions by Will McBride; Explanatory Text by Dr. Helga Fleischhauer-Hardt." And you also discover that that book is a national bestseller for the meager fare of only \$7.95. In the article itself various quotations are given which represent the views of various people who openly advocate this horrible sin. Allow me to present a few of those quotations.

According to the argument, (the argument for child-sexuality—R.F.) children are sexual beings who need to develop skills early in life. The child has a fundamental right, says Mary S. Calderone, head of the influential Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S., "to know about sexuality and to be sexual."

And stranger is the theory that children will grow up askew if they do not have early sex. As Sexologist John Money of John Hopkins wrote in *The Sciences* magazine: "It is almost certain that human beings, like the other primates, require a period of early sexual rehearsal play."

One of the more intellectually dishevelled of the new apostles of child sex is Family Therapist Larry Constantine of Acton, Mass., whose views would like a satire on how to raise children. Says he: "Children really are a disenfranchised minority. They should have the right to express themselves sexually, which

means that they may or may not have contact with people older than themselves." What about older men preying on four- and five-year olds? Constantine would argue that if children were properly educated about sex, a child could always say no.

Wardell Pomeroy, co-author of the original Kinsey reports, says incest "can sometimes be beneficial" to children. Dutch Psychologist Frits Bernard, author of numerous articles and books on pedophilia, (abnormal sexual desire in an adult for children—R.F.) says adult-child sex is basically innocent.

Another common theme is that adult-child sex must be judged by the quality of the relationship involved. Sociologist Floyd Martinson of Minnesota's Gustavus Adolphus College thinks adults involved in affectionate sexual relationships with tots should not go to jail. "Intimate human relations are important and precious," he feels. "I'd like to see as few restrictions placed on them as possible." Psychologist Douglas Powell of the Harvard Health Service says: "I have not seen anyone harmed by this so long as it occurs in a relationship with somebody who really cares about the child."

Valida Davila of the Childhood Sensuality Circle, a far-out sex group in San Diego welcomes the new writing: "We believe children should begin sex at birth. It causes a lot of problems not to practice incest."

Now, as far as the article in which all these quotations are found is concerned, a few observations are in order. In the first place, as is evident from the very quotations themselves, the article is not at all in favor of this "anything goes" form of horrible sin. That is simply obvious from the quotations. And too, that is obvious from the fact that this article quotes from various individuals who stand opposed to such a sin. So that what we have in this article is really the world condemning (at least after a fashion) what the world itself is advocating. However, it must be clearly understood that this condemnation, on the part of the world, of what the world itself is advocating is only "after a fashion"! The world's condemnation of what the world itself is advocating has to do only with the reality that if sexuality is practiced amongst children, and that if sexuality is practiced between parents and their children, untold psychological damage and hurt may be done to the children. The article quotes a psychiatrist by the name of Edward Ritvo who says this concerning this child-sexuality: "Childhood sexuality is like playing with a loaded gun." That is, it can have a horrible effect upon all concerned. But nowhere in the article does the article condemn this horrible sin to be exactly that, sin! A filling up of the measure of iniquity! A horrible abomination in the sight of God! The article does not do that. The Bible does. Read for example the eighteenth chapter of the Book of Leviticus. (And we must have nothing of those who say that what we have in Leviticus 18, or in any of the other chapters of the Old

Testament for that matter, is an ancient relic of the past that applied only to the day and age in which it was written, but which does not apply to our day and age.) There God says in verse six, "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the Lord." That is what God says. God, and we with God, must call such abomination, sin! A sin it was, so God told the children of Israel, that the Canaanites who dwelt in the land before them openly advocated and practiced. God says in verses 24 and 25, "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants." Evidently the Canaanites who dwelt in the land of Canaan had practiced all the vile sins that are described in this chapter, including the one with which this article deals. And for those sins God spued forth His wrath, His judgment, His fiery indignation upon the ungodly world of the Canaanites of that day. And we must make no mistake, God will surely do so again! God is not mocked! Upon a world which condones such sins, and yes, even upon a world which condemns such sins merely on the ground that such sins do psychological damage, God will come in judgment! And when He does, the sin of child-sexuality will not be like playing with a loaded gun, but on the contrary, it will be playing with fire—the fires of everlasting hell!

That first of all. But the second observation that must be made concerning this sin and this article is that the article points out that this sin is rarely advocated openly and directly today. It says:

The idea (notice, it calls child-sexuality, and along with that, incest, an *idea* and not a *sin*—R.F.) is rarely presented directly—most of the researchers, doctors and counselors who believe it have the wit to keep a low profile and tuck the idea away neatly in a longer, more conventional speech or article.

Perhaps! But I wonder about that. I wonder if it can even be said that such an idea is rarely presented directly and advocated openly. The reason I wonder about that is that if it is true that such an "anything goes" sin like child-sexuality and incest is rarely presented directly and advocated openly, why then is it that a book entitled *Show Me*, a picture book of sex for children and parents, is a *national bestseller*? Why is that?

Let us not be deceived. Such sins are openly advocated. They are advocated in a world that is rapidly becoming ripe for judgment. The cup of iniquity is almost full. The day of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He shall come to do judgment and justice, is not all that far off. It can not be, when we live in a world, a wicked world, where anything goes.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Romans—Justification by Faith (Conclusion)

Rev. J. Kortering

We continue with our outline of the book of Romans. So far we have seen that in chapters 1:16-11:36 the Holy Spirit led Paul to set forth the exalted theme of justification by faith. This we call the doctrinal part of the book.

3. We now come to the next main division of the book which deals with the practical application of the doctrine of justification by faith (12:1-15:12).

We must demonstrate our gratitude for this justification by walking in holiness in all areas of our life (12:1-21). This is accomplished by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice through the renewing of our mind. By the grace given us we are to think humbly and soberly (12:1-3). All the gifts which God bestows upon us must be used for the welfare of the whole body of Christ (12:4-8). This requires a sincere love for one another (12:9, 10), kindness, industry, patience, hospitality, compassion, and a willingness to take abuse but return only good, "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (12:11-21).

The believer has a duty regarding civil magistrates (13:1-7). The higher powers (civil rulers) are ordained of God (13:1). The believer may not resist them (13:2). The calling of civil rulers is to protect the citizen by punishing evil doers, even bearing the sword—exercising capital punishment and fighting wars of defense (13:3,4). Our response as citizens must be to honor them, obey them, and pay our taxes (13:5-7).

The apostle now explains how the believers are to deal with each other within the church (13:8-15:13). We are to love one another and so fulfill the law (13:8-10). This is necessary, for the night is far spent and we have the Word as an armour of light (13:11, 12). By doing this, we will put on the Lord Jesus Christ (13:13, 14).

There were in the church then, as there are also now, weaker brethren who considered it sin to eat certain foods (probably food offered unto idols), or they thought all eating of meat was wrong. Others were preoccupied with the observance of festal days (14:1-6). Paul does not warn as severely as he did in the epistle to the Colossians. The reason is

that the view of these people was not an attack upon the heart of the gospel as it was before in other places. Here it is more a matter of "weaker brethren." We must be charitable in dealing with these people. We must not judge them harshly, but rather deal with them as Christ would have us do. We must be careful not to offend, that is, to cause our weaker brother to fall into sin because of our example. We must do all things by a true faith (14:7-23). The strong must bear with the weak (15:1-7). Once again Paul exhorts the believers to recognize that in the church there must be room for both Jews and Gentiles because Christ came to die for both (15:7-13).

4. Conclusion of the epistle (15:13-16:27). Paul expresses a prayer that God may fill the Roman congregation with joy and peace. He expresses confidence in them that they will receive and act upon the things he wrote in this epistle (15:13, 14). He assures them that he is an apostle to the Gentiles and that God confirmed this with many signs and wonders (15:15-21). He expresses his desire to come to see them after he is finished in Jerusalem. He seeks their prayers on his behalf that God may spare his life in the face of opposition (15:22-33). Paul then extends his personal greetings to many individuals whom he knows in the Roman congregation and also gives the greetings of many who are with him in Corinth that desire to be remembered to the Romans as well, (16:1-24). He closes with the apostolic blessing (16:24-27).

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Upon reading the entire letter of Romans, one cannot help but appreciate the close relationship between doctrine and life. Frequently, in our day, we hear a clamor for less doctrine and more emphasis on the practical side of the Christian's life. This comes to expression in evaluating the preaching of the gospel. How often ministers are criticized because there is too much doctrine and not enough practical material! This criticism may be directed against the selection of a text used for the sermon, or it may be directed against any one sermon that contains too much doctrinal emphasis over against

the practical application. We do well to examine the book of Romans from this point of view. Here the inspired apostle sets forth a strong doctrinal basis (justification by faith) upon which he builds the structure of a holy Christian life. We should keep this in mind at all times, for life without a foundation will surely fail. The holy life must be thoroughly grounded in the finished work of Christ. Within the doctrinal section of Romans, we find many important truths emphasized: we are righteous, not by the works of the law, but by faith; Christ's work of redemption constituted the only basis for our righteousness before God; by grace we are freed from the law of sin and death and brought forth unto the liberty of Christ; God is sovereign in our salvation; He determines who will be saved (predestination) and He applies that salvation by grace. Only when we understand these doctrines are we able to go on to the holy life. We will never boast in our works, rather we will glory in the God of our salvation.

A second feature to be noted is that the emphasis on doctrine applies to mission work of the church as well. We stated before that Paul considered the Roman congregation crucial to the spread of the gospel. This is true, in the first place, because the congregation was typical in that it was made up of Jews and Gentiles. Both had to learn to cooperate and rejoice in the one gospel of Christ. Secondly, it was strategically located in the world. Out of Rome the gospel would literally be spread to the ends of the earth. Hence, while Paul wrote to this mission church, he did not down-play the doctrines of grace. He didn't say to them that he had much to tell them, but they had to wait awhile because they had to mature before they were ready to be instructed in, e.g., the profound doctrine of predestination. No, the holy apostle considered the gospel as *one* whole, and all its elements to be presented to the entire church. True, some could understand the "milk" better than the "meat"; yet, he did not *withhold* the meat. The gospel must not be divided up. Rather it must be set forth in its entirety, and the Holy Spirit will apply it as He sees fit. Surely, when Paul *established* the churches in the truth, he did just that, and we do well to follow this example.

Because this letter is so explicit in doctrinal instruction and in the practical Christian life, we derive a great deal of our ecclesiastical vocabulary from this epistle. The question often arises about the words we use in preaching and in discussion. Do people who are not acquainted with the Scripture even understand the terminology? To be sure, one unfamiliar with the Bible must consider the language we use as Reformed believers difficult to understand. Yet, the solution for the Christian church is not to abandon Scriptural terms. Rather

we should gradually teach new converts their meaning. In this way they will find not only the Bible open to them, but also our Reformed confessions and writings of our church fathers. Reformed vocabulary is Scriptural vocabulary. The book of Romans is rich in this, and we should make use of such a letter as this in our teaching.

The above points explain why there is little direct application of the word of this epistle to the Roman situation. Most other letters of Paul to individual churches include references to special problems in the congregation and how to deal with them. This letter doesn't do that. We should remember that Paul had not personally visited Rome. He was not, therefore, directly acquainted with the situation, as he was in other churches. Paul's intent was to set forth the principles of the faith for all saints. Hence the letter is well reasoned, systematic, and orderly developed. Any would-be opponents that Paul brings up are interjected as typical objectors in order that by answering them, the truth may be set forth understandably. The Holy Spirit used Paul, who already now had much experience in preaching the gospel and dealing with opponents, to set forth this mature statement of the faith for the benefit of the church of all ages.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. We pointed out that this letter was written as a "mature" statement of faith. Look in the book of Acts and other letters that Paul wrote and find evidence that Paul wrote this letter after much experience as a missionary.

2. As Reformed believers we hold to the Heidelberg Catechism as one of our confessions. The well-known division of this catechism is: first, how great my sin and misery is; second, how I am delivered from this sin and misery; and thirdly, how I show gratitude to God for such great deliverance. Make reference to this letter of Romans and show that the doctrinal part of this letter follows this same order.

3. Discuss the relationship between doctrine and life and point out from this letter of Romans that God gives us direction in a proper understanding of this.

4. How do we explain the extensive introduction (1:1-15) and conclusion (15:13-16:27)(which includes reference to 35 different people) if it is true that Paul had not been to Rome before and did not know the church personally.

5. Make a list of ten doctrinal terms used in this letter. Indicate where they are used in this letter, and define their meaning on the basis of what you learn about them from the letter itself.

6. Review the passages that deal with the relationship between Jew and Gentile withing the

church. Show that Paul did not *separate* them as the dispensationalist does, but rather united them together in one faith in Christ Jesus. See 1:1-3:20; 3:21-31; 4:12-25; and chapters 9-11.

7. Make a list of the different areas of Christian life in which the apostle gives specific instruction.

Be sure to write down where they are found in this letter. What can you conclude from this list?

8. Make reference to passages from the letter that shows that the Christian life consists of liberty not slavery. How do we explain that we are *free* to obey God's law?

ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

Voting on Sunday

The idea of rest for Sunday has well-nigh disappeared from the land. There is seen hardly any observance of this special day any more. There is buying and selling on Sunday. Entertainment and other activities are available and used on Sunday. Yet the Christian could continue still in observing this day of rest. The temptations to abuse it are great. But the child of God understands that the fourth commandment still applies.

But now we have been hearing of various reports of an attempt to change the day for voting in our country from the traditional Tuesday to Sunday. This represents an attempt to force faithful Christians to choose: to honor their responsibilities as citizens of the country, while violating the fourth command—or honor the fourth command even when he is excluded from the privilege of voting thereby. It comes down to the choice of honoring God or man.

Some thoughts on the problem are given in the *Herald of the Covenant*, October 23, 1981, a paper of the Covenant Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America. The writer states:

...A new bill has been introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives by Mario Biaggi, a Congressman from New York. His bill would move all general elections from Tuesday to Sunday on a six-year trial period. He believes where Sunday elections have been used in some European nations, the voter turn-out has been traditionally higher than in the United States.

This bill is receiving increasing support from some of the most influential politicians in this country. Recently, in the *Atlanta Constitution* dated May 8, 1981, in an article entitled, "Sunday Voting Proposed," it is reported that three former presidents back this bill introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator S.I. Hayakawa of California...

The article concludes with the following encouragement:

Write your Congressman today regarding H.R. 84. It is urgent that you do so. Politicians respond to letters written to them. ...The march towards secularism is set by those who have been made to believe that Sunday is just another day. Sadly, many Christians nod assent through silence. Write your letter today!

Gospel According to *Reader's Digest*

Christianity Today, Oct. 23, 1981, reports on a new project of *Reader's Digest*:

Editors of the *Reader's Digest* are nearing the completion of a major book-condensation project: the entire Bible. Publication date is September 1982, but so far, *Digest* editors are saying little about it.

Jack Walsh, who is overseeing the Bible project, did say that work on it was being done under the direction of "one of the world's most respected Bible scholars...."

Walsh said *Reader's Digest* editors who had professional knowledge of condensing procedure were "specifically trained to work on Bible text...."

Walsh said that though the condensing technique developed by *Digest* editors for the Bible was basically the same one used for other books, there were some differences. "We had to adapt it to some extent because of the nature of the Bible," he said. As an example, he said, editors will change a word or phrase to clarify or shorten it. In working with the Bible, how-

ever, unlike other books, "we could not use any words that came from our editors. We used only words that actually appeared in the RSV, preferably in the same book we were working on...."

Walsh explained why *Reader's Digest* undertook this project. "The original full-length Bible is very long and tends to be obscure in many places," he said. It is not easy to read the full, original Bible in any version. Other Bibles made to simplify the text are always either full-text versions or simple abridgments.

"Of course, these have their own purposes to serve," he said. "But the *Digest* Bible offers the whole Bible, reduced by 40 percent...."

"It does not cut out whole blocks of text, but is instead a line-by-line cutting process. True condensation never interferes with the essential substance of a text."

There have been condensed Bibles in the past. But this condensation might become the most popular and better known than any of the preceding ones—if only because it has the backing of the marketing techniques of the *Digest*. (And, incidentally, I can well imagine that the *Digest* will include in its offer of this Bible to the public the opportunity also to enter one of its "drawings"—a form of gambling which has made its other publications more attractive and appealing.)

What must one say of this attempt? Is it correct to state, as one did, that it is "a hellish plan.... It's censoring God"? First, we must be aware that often in preaching and teaching, we present summaries of what Scripture teaches. These are indeed "condensations" of a passage. However, this is not set forth as the "Bible," nor is it implying that there is extraneous material in the Bible, but clearly the summary is presented of a selected passage in connection with teaching. The *Digest* project could well lead into the error of selecting the "condensation" as one's Bible—while neglecting or ignoring the Bible as God Himself infallibly gave it to us. A

condensation, however good it may be, is not the Bible as God has given it.

Secondly, though it is difficult to judge the content of a condensation which has not yet appeared, there is an obvious danger here: man condenses out of the Bible also those doctrines, thoughts, or practices which he does not appreciate. Whether the *Digest* condensation will do that, remains to be seen.

In the meantime, let us remember that God gave us His infallible Word to use faithfully. Those who constantly want to "cut corners" in their study of Scripture, find decreasing interest in continuing study. If there is not to be that "lack of knowledge" against which Scripture so strongly warns, then the child of God ought faithfully to study Scripture as God has given it to us. He may make use of proper "helps," but let him turn to Scripture itself as the final and reliable authority. To rely on "crutches" instead of the Book God Himself gave, would be dangerous and utter foolishness.

Nor can this kind of condensation serve a useful purpose in mission work, I believe. It is argued, of course, that the unbeliever might be "turned off" at the length and difficulty of the Bible, while, perhaps, he would be attracted to a "condensation." Now it is also true that God uses excerpts and quotes from Scripture, written in other books and pamphlets, to bring His people to desire the reading of the whole Word of God. However, we ought never to minimize the power of God's work in the hearts of elect sinners. Where God works repentance, there He also works a hungering and thirsting for things spiritual—including diligent reading of Scripture as God gave that to us. Such a one would never be content with man's condensation of that Word, but surely will want to hear from the Mouth of God Himself.

"Christian" Rock?

The Christian News, Oct. 5, 1981, contains a number of articles treating the subject of "rock" music. Much of what is there written, emphasizes the point found in the articles recently of our *Beacon Lights*. Our young people ought to pay close heed to what is said.

One short piece in the *Christian News* treats "Christian" rock. It merits careful study and serious thought. The writer, Carleton Toppe, states:

The drug theme and the revolution theme are not as prominent in rock music today as they were in the late sixties when they were shrieked and dinned by the rock stars and combos; but the sex has stayed in. It may not be as raw as it was when Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Mick Jagger, Jim Morrison, and their ilk sang and mimicked fornication to worshipping audiences, and when they delighted to "turn on" thousands of young girls to "dancing with the ceaseless enthusiasm of bottled lust."

The rhythmic, pounding beat, especially when it is loud and driving, is primarily sexual and physically hypnotic. Quite frankly, in its pulsations if not in shameless lyrics, it appeals to sex and desire. Jan Berry of the singing duo, Jan and Dean, freely admitted, "The throbbing beat of rock-and-roll provides a vital sexual release for its adolescent audience." *Time* writes: "By its very beat and sound (rock) has always implicitly rejected restraints and has celebrated freedom and sexuality." A former writer and singer of rock states simply, "Rock is sex."

Now what is "Christian" rock or "gospel" rock music? Essentially it is the attempt to unite Christian words to beat music. Thus it is a yoking together of the spiritual and the carnal. The words intend to glorify God; the beat appeals to the flesh, even to sensuality. The words say one thing, but the music says something else.

Some music is neutral regarding good and evil, and it can be used for either good or evil; but rock is not neutral. It appeals to man's baser nature, to his sensual pulse beat.

The Christian worships the Lord in the beauty of holiness, and angels join that worship. Vulgar, sexual rock beat was always part of pagan worship; it has no place in the Temple of God.

The young people especially ought to be aware of the fact that one does not accept as "good" and "pleasurable" what everyone seems to find attractive. The question must always be faced, "Do I desire this because of that old, sinful nature of mine?" And the kind of music that "everybody" of the young people listens to, and seems to enjoy, of which the above quotation speaks, seems clearly to fit into the category of the "fleshly" and "lustful." "Flee youthful lusts," states the Word of God.

GUEST ARTICLE

Man's Chief End

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

"My aim in life is in finding happiness!" It seems almost everybody these days says this. There is nothing really wrong in wanting happiness, is there? No, indeed; not if you want to obtain it in the right way. On this note there is much to be said. But pause for a moment and consider that the word "happiness" is not found in our King James Bible. Yet it is still the world's "best seller" book. (I wonder how that "grabs" modern joy-seekers!) The word "happy" is found in the King James Bible about twenty-eight times. But the word "obey," in all its forms, appears there about one hundred forty-six times. Why is that? Isn't the Lord telling us something in this comparative word emphasis? He sure is! For one thing, as the "happy" texts show, happiness comes to us only in the way of doing right. For example, it comes: in showing mercy to the poor (Prov. 14:21), trusting in the Lord (16:20), keeping His law (29:18), in knowing and doing the word of Christ (Jn. 13:17), by enduring patiently (Jas. 5:10, 11), and suffering for righteousness' sake (1 Pet. 3:14) or for Christ's sake (4:14). Further, to be happy, would you be willing to sell all that you have and give to the poor? One rich young man could not do that, and, consequently, went away sorrowful and unhappy. Do you imagine that you could be happy in any enterprise in which you would not be trusting in the Lord? Is there happiness in any way of sin or transgression of the law of

God? Could you be happy in ignorance, in not knowing anything of God's truth? (Is ignorance bliss?) Could you be happy intellectually knowing the truth, but never having a lick of godly conformity to truth? David has said, "Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk . . . Teach me to do Thy will" (Psm. 143:8, 10). Happiness comes by *knowing* the way, plus an obedient *going* in the way. Knowledge without obedience is lame; and obedience without knowledge is blind. Therefore, for lasting happiness, divine knowledge and holy obedience may not be separated. Could you be satisfied with a temporary happiness, one which does not endure? Do you imagine happiness would be obtained if only you could succeed in removing all suffering from your life? If happiness comes in the way of suffering for righteousness' sake and for Christ's sake, then are there, after all, many, or any, happy people in the world?

It is plain that everybody wants to be happy. But do we realize that we can never attain to happiness by trying to be happy? Make happiness your aim and you will always miss it. For happiness is the child (fruit) born of the inseparable union of its parents, knowledge and obedience. Then happiness is not a goal in itself, but the result of pursuing the right goal. So that that pursuit is not the pursuit of happiness as such, but the pursuit of

that which results in happiness. Nor is it according to scripture that all men are endowed by God with an inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness. Like sleep, keep pursuing it and it keeps eluding you.

Put happiness first and we think like neither Calvinists nor Christians. For the Christian puts first God and how best to worship and serve Him. Cain did not do this. He supposed God could be worshiped and served as he felt was good enough for Him. Actually, though not literally, he offered God the lame and the blind. No wonder he did not know happiness! For Cain's face fell and he was miserable. He would have done well if only he had sought God's chief end for man. "What is the chief and highest end of man? Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy Him forever" (Westminster Larger Catechism). Glorifying God must be my chief and only good. When it is, then I shall enjoy Him, and *that* will make me happy. That, too, is the order of the gospel. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). The glutton has it all wrong—seeking happiness in gorging and swilling. Happiness is to be found in these common and necessary activities only if we enjoy God in them. What is it to glorify God? It is to honor Him, to praise Him, to boast of His wonders, of His lovingkindness and tender mercies, to extol the praises of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Pet. 2:9). It means to make great, to magnify all His magnificent attributes. It means to show God in His essence. Of all the multitude of God's attributes, they are comprehended in the mass of them we call His *glory*. For just as the seven hues of the rainbow are the manifold beauties which belong inherently to the one essence, light, so all the attributes of God *are* His essence, and are summed in the one all-embracing attribute, *glory*. Scripture calls Him the God of glory, the Father of glory, the Lord of glory. Also it strikingly informs us that the heavens declare (show) the glory of God. We glorify God by showing forth His excellencies, that is, the attributes of His Being, by honest behavior and good works (I Pet. 2:9, 12). "Happy is that people that is in such a case!" (Psm. 144:15).

We are really, here, speaking of God's chief end, which is the purpose God had in creating man, and also the ultimate purpose man must always have in conception and conduct. God's purpose for man is one, with two aspects, namely, to glorify Him and to enjoy Him forever. The catechism does not speak of "all men," although all men shall certainly glorify Him, whether willingly or unwillingly. Rather, it speaks of *man*, that is, mankind, namely, elect mankind. Therefore, God's purpose that man should enjoy Him forever shall surely be realized.

It is *man*, in the Man Christ Jesus, that is ultimately crowned with glory and honor, to have dominion, with all things under his feet (Psm. 8:5-6). It is man as chosen in Christ before the foundation of the universe to be holy and blameless before Him who shall in the way of a holy life enjoy God forever. In this lies the happiness the world neither knows, gives, nor is able to remove.

Does this chief end imply that there are other ends which are subordinate? May man live and strive for the subordinate ends? May we speak of subordinate ends, proper in themselves, as: (1) the earning and procuring of temporal support; (2) the acquisition of knowledge; (3) the indulging of lawful tastes; and (4) helping forward the welfare of society? Making a living is a necessity, but that activity does not necessarily glorify God. But procuring and maintaining temporal support must be done only in such a way as to glorify God. Then this is not a subordinate end, but the chief end kept prominent and held in reference to the matter of a livelihood. Neither does the attainment of knowledge necessarily glorify God, since more often than not in this way man is glorified. The acquisition of knowledge which glorifies God alone has His approval. Any acquisition of knowledge without glorifying God is a form of ignorance. As for the indulgence of lawful tastes, what can they be but only those which glorify God? As for furthering the welfare of society, it must first be known what is the welfare of society. What is the good of society? Not the greatest good of the greatest number (whatever that is), but it must be that which is done in faith, and according to the Word of God, and for the praise of God rather than the usual laudation of man. Repeal of the death penalty for murder does not further the welfare of society, and is not God-glorifying. It only pampers and idolizes the dregs of society. The so-called sociological experts who know nothing of what it takes to glorify God are not competent to propose anything for the welfare of society. Therefore, "chief end" is to be understood in the sense of "exclusive end."

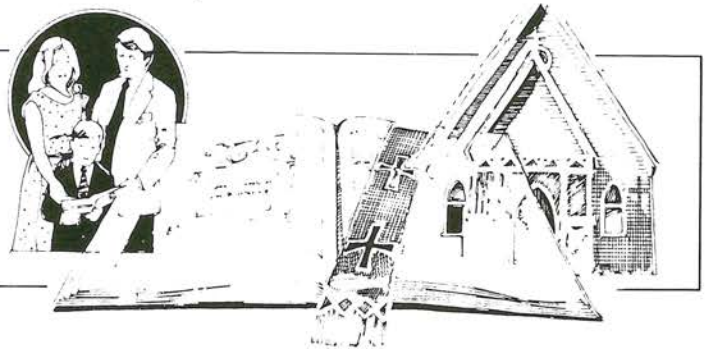
The other aspect of man's chief end is the enjoying of Him forever. What is it to enjoy God? To worship and serve Him, always striving to do so more perfectly (Psm. 27:4; 96:6; Acts 27:23; Rev. 23:3, 9). For never could anyone enjoy God apart from worshiping and serving Him (Psm. 43:4). Those verses in the Revelation show that the happiness of heaven consists in worshiping and serving God there. They also reveal how long God is to be enjoyed, namely, forever. If this enjoyment of the eternal God should or could come to an end, it would so spoil present enjoyment as to turn it into nothing more than a forlorn hope. So the glorifying and enjoyment of God are to be considered one, not

two ends. There are two aspects of one end, the relation between them being that of cause and effect. Enjoyment of God is the effect of glorifying Him. These two aspects are inseparable, so that we may not seek, neither can find the one without the other (I Pet. 4:11; I Cor. 15:58).

If life oriented to the glory of God and the enjoyment of Him is what really motivates us as Christians, so that we desire no more on earth or in heaven than to worship and serve Him, we ought not to be plagued with bitterness, wrath, anger, resentment, envy, jealousy, foolish talking, jesting, rotten words, quarreling, evil speaking, yelling, sharp envenomed language, the fang of malice with its vicious intent to hurt, coldness, indifference, apathy, impoliteness, lack of love, lack of discipline, lack of shepherdizing. This is a black catalog of wickedness, but it is only a preface to the cult of the ungodly. What is so sad is that we are all capable of every bit of it. In many of these things we all

offend. We continually stumble and fall into sin. But may we keep short accounts with God to repent, confess and forsake our sins, ask forgiveness for them, and then on our knees give thanks to the Lord for His pardoning mercies. Thank Him that He causes us to know the way in which we should walk. Give thanks that He answers the prayer, "Teach me to do Thy will" by giving us His good Spirit to empower us to do His will. Thank Him that because we are so dead, dull, and slow, He will quicken us to righteousness and bring our soul out of trouble (Psm. 143:8-11). That way we immediately get back on the track to the life motivated to glorify God and to enjoy Him. This way we give heed to the command, "My son (daughter), forget not My law, but let thine heart keep My commandments" (Prov. 3:1). Then our life in the Lord's service will be characterized by calm, fruitful, and happy activity.

Know the standard and follow it. *The Standard Bearer*



ATTENTION GIFT GIVERS!

In the Sanctuary, an exposition of the Lord's Prayer, by Herman Hoeksema, is available in time for Christmas. Price is \$3.95 (add 20% postage). Mail your orders to:

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P.O. Box 2006
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501

ANNOUNCEMENT

The faculty of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches announces that Messrs. Barry Gritters, Kenneth Hanko, and Lau Chin Kwee have been licensed to speak a word of edification in the churches under faculty supervision.

H.C. Hoeksema, Rector

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On December 19, 1981, our parents, REV. and MRS. H.C. HOEKSEMA, will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, thank them for the covenant care they have given us. Above all, we thank our Father in heaven for our parents and pray that He will show mercy on them in the years to come.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them." Psalm 103:17, 18

Mark and Ruth Hoeksema
Stephen, Michael, and Sarah
Kenneth and Eunice Kuiper
Jonathan and David
Carey and Lois Kamps
Matthew, Timothy, and Kyle
Candace Hoeksema

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, Michigan, expresses its sympathy to elder John Buiters in the death of his father, MR. JOHN BUITER and to deacon Milo De Wald in the death of his mother and elder Alvin Rau in the death of his mother-in-law, MRS. ELLA DE WALD.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the sea." (Psalm 46:1, 2)

John Kalsbeek, Clerk

IN LOVING MEMORY

On October 29, 1981, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our beloved husband, father, and grandfather, ARTHUR DE JONG. We are grateful to God for the instruction and guidance given unto us through him. We pray that Jehovah, our Covenant God, will uphold us by His grace that we may walk according to His Word all the days of our lives.

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life...shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." — Phil. 1:21

Mrs. Arthur De Jong
Frank and Joyce Antczak
Arthur H. and Sarah De Jong
Harold and Carol Brands
Kenneth and Marilyn De Jong
Wayne and Vicki De Jong
James and Becky Hanemaayer
George and Denise De Jong
Homer and Evelyn De Jong

Donald and Cindi De Jong
William and Patricia De Jong
Anita De Jong
Lewis and Janet De Jong
Esther De Jong
John De Jong
Ann De Jong
Henry De Jong
and 34 grandchildren

News From Our Churches

Since a news editor merely writes *about* events that happen and does not make them happen, the news in our November 15 column concerning the newly elected members of the Reformed Free Publishing Association Board is of no effect. John N. Dykstra, Cornelius Pastoor, and Robert Garvelink are the *retiring* board members rather than the newly-elected ones as was erroneously reported. My apologies to you gentlemen, and to the following *real* newly-elected board members of the R.F.P.A.: Gerard Bylsma, William Corson, and Arnold Dykstra.

Concerning our calling churches we learn that Rev. Houck, who is presently home missionary in East Lansing, Michigan has declined the call of Isabel, South Dakota; and from a trio of Reverends Bruinsma, Kamps, and Kuiper, Redlands, California extended a call to Rev. Bruinsma of our Faith Congregation in Jenison, Michigan.

Recent bulletins indicate that the annual process of selecting new office bearers is again in full swing. While in most of our churches this means replacing the retiring office bearers with an equal number of men, from a bulletin of our Trinity Church Houston, Texas we learn that: "The Consistory has decided to add a third elder to aid in our time of adjustment and assimilation." What is referred to here is, of course, the large increase in their membership which we reported in our November 1 news.

Apparently quite a large number of the membership of our churches participate in what is called "Discussion Groups." For the most part this activity takes place on a once-a-month basis with those involved gathering in homes in small groups after the evening worship service to fellowship with one another by means of a discussion on a predetermined topic. The informal setting lends itself to lively, spiritually uplifting discussions on a variety of worthwhile topics, e.g. "The Signs of Christ's Return," "Christian Giving," "Singing as part of our Worship," "Bible Translations," "Prayer," "The Sabbath Day and Its Observance and Preparation," "Christmas Observance," "Church Extension," "Self Examination," "Discipline in the Home and School," and countless others. Some groups have also discussed various pamphlets and books.

In the school news department we learn that, prior to the beginning of 1981-82 school year, our Hull, Iowa school held a "Teachers Welcome." Apparently more than teachers were welcome, however, because the bulletin announcement concerning this activity concluded by saying: "*Everyone* (emphasis mine, C.K.) is welcome to come and enjoy an evening of fellowship."

On November 18 our Adams Street Christian School in Grand Rapids, Michigan invited parents, grandparents, and friends to attend a Visit Adams Day.

Our Hope School in Walker, Michigan presented an all-school program in our Hudsonville Church on the evening of November 20. The theme of their program was, "Thanks be to God."

The Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of The Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute was held at Covenant Christian High School of Grand Rapids, Michigan on November 5 and 6. Schools from Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, and Texas were represented. Those interested in a detailed account—with pictures—of that activity should be sure to obtain a copy of the winter edition of *Perspectives in Covenant Education* (a publication of the P.R. Teachers' Institute).

While attending the above-mentioned convention, a discussion with Mr. Sugg of the Houston, Texas school confirmed what Rev. Bekkering had written on a bulletin which he sent to me a few months ago, namely, that due to an increase in student enrollment, Miss Anita De Jong from South Holland, Illinois is now "helping with kindergarten and 1st grade." Rev. Bekkering also wrote that, "the little house in the pasture is rapidly taking form as the future school house." Apparently additional students have made plant expansion necessary as well. Pictures that Mr. Sugg brought to the teachers' convention verified that it is indeed a "house in the pasture." According to Mr. Sugg, one feature of their new school is a built-in—or should we say, live-in—school entrance test: all students must be able to get past the cow to attend school.

We conclude this column with some wonderful news: Our brothers and sisters in Singapore plan to organize as an earthly manifestation of the Body of Christ on December 27. We rejoice with them! CK