

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

...All want to go to heaven, especially when they think their time on earth is about expired. But they have spent life feathering a nest about as fireproof as dry tinder. They do not seek the crown of life, but play games with life for pins and match-sticks.

See "To Glorify God" — page 158

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MEDITATION

Proving All Things

Rev. H. Veldman

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thess. 5:21

1982 — what shall we say? How uncertain, from our point of view, are all things! We know not what lies before us. And yet, is there anything uncertain? Will not all things continue as they were: joys but also sorrows, laughter but also weeping, mirth and gladness but also sorrow and grief, life but also death? Surely, the wrath of God will continue to be revealed down from heaven, but the blessing of the

Lord, Jehovah, will also continue to rest upon His people. God's counsel will stand, including double predestination, also in the year that now lies before us.

In our context we have a group of tremendously significant and powerful admonitions. Strikingly they illustrate the axiom that much can be said in

few words. Notice, too, their absolute character and unlimited scope. The Word of God is so absolute. Rejoice *evermore*. Pray *without ceasing*. In *everything* give thanks. Prove *all things*. Hold fast what is good. Prove all things, also in the year that stretches out before us.

Many would use this Scripture as a pretext, either to visit forbidden places of amusement and entertainment, or to attend several churches, listening to various preachers. They would in that sense prove all things and keep the good. Now this surely cannot be the meaning of this word of God. We must *prove* all things. The word "prove" is the word constantly used for the testing of gold. To prove all things certainly cannot mean that we attend forbidden places where there is no gold which we can hold fast. We surely do not dig for gold where we know there is no gold. On the other hand, how true it is that these "loopers," never hold fast that which is good. They are drifters. To them this axiom applies: a rolling stone gathers no moss.

We read here of "all things." Literally we read: "But prove all things." There is a connection, therefore, between this Scripture and the preceding text. Strictly speaking, these "all things" refer to the prophecies of verse 20. These prophecies, God's gift to His church at the beginning of the New Dispensation, to assist the apostles in their upbuilding, edifying, and teaching activities, are not to be despised, as some in the church would deceive the people of God. Instead, prove them, holding fast that which is good. However, this expression also refers to the church of God throughout the ages, to us, and is therefore too broad to be limited to these prophecies or prophets who served the church of God during the era of the apostles. We must prove *all* things. The term refers also to everything, to all movements, ideas, activities, trends of thought, conceptions which are forced upon the Church as in the midst of the world, which we cannot evade, with which we must cope, to which we must give an answer as long as we continue in this world. Always we must separate the good from the evil, that we may hold fast to what is good.

Countless are these forces with which we must contend. This text reminds us of another word of Scripture which exhorts us to discern the spirits whether they be of God. This applies to what is called "church" and would reveal itself as such in the midst of the world. Think of what comes to us, over the radio and television, in the name of the "gospel." Think of all the religious books, magazines, pamphlets, all proclaiming in their own way the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, think of all these movements in the sphere of edu-

cation. Consider all the different conceptions, trends of thought in connection with the child, how we must regard him and approach him psychologically, whether he must be viewed as inherently evil or good, whether he should be disciplined or simply left to himself, to develop of himself. Then, consider all these forces as in the midst of the world — in the field of labor, for example. Some years ago the industrialist sat upon the throne and the government was influenced by him. Lately the working man has ascended upon the throne. Or, think of the field of music, of the magazines, of the radio and television, of songs and speeches, etc., and one is impressed by the fact that these "all things" confront us everywhere.

Besides, these "all things" are spirits, and we must discern these spirits whether they be of God. They are spirits, mighty, spiritual activities, directed by spiritual forces, Beelzebub, which have a spiritual purpose, which would either draw you towards God or away from Him; they are either pure or impure, holy or corrupt; they draw you either heavenward or earthward, to the things above or the things below.

These "all things" or "spirits" we must prove. Indeed, this is not merely an intellectual activity. The apostle here does not merely exhort us to examine them, analyze and diagnose them, fully understand them. That this does not exhaust the meaning here of the apostle is clear. Do we not read that we must hold fast that which is good? A merely intellectual analysis does not guarantee this. Of course, we understand that there is a close connection between these two parts of the text. We must *prove* these things. The apostle is using a figure here. The word used here is always used for the testing of gold. Gold is proved or tested for the purpose of separating the pure from the impure. It is for this reason that Scripture speaks of being "proved" or "tried" by fire, as gold is proved by fire. And so the meaning of the apostle is clear. Of course, an intellectual analysis is not excluded here. How shall we prove "all things," the spirits, whether they be of God, unless we also approach them with our understanding? To fight the enemy we must surely recognize him. These "all things" refer, of course, to concrete matters, concrete manifestations, songs and speeches, etc. However, this proving is also a spiritual activity. We must submit them to the spiritual test, whether they be of God, center in God, whether they be good or evil. We must reject that which is evil, that which evilly affects us, and hold fast that which is good for us. This is our calling, also in 1982. The question is: how must we do this?

First, this proving of all things is possible only

when we have the power of spiritual discernment, recognition. As stated before, the apostle is using a figure. Now we all understand, of course, that, to test gold or dig for gold, to separate the pure from the impure, the gold from the dross, it is required of us that we be able to distinguish gold, recognize it. And, whoever digs for gold must also desire it. This is also spiritually true. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. To prove all things for the purpose of holding fast what is good, we must be spiritual ourselves. We must have within us that grace of God which spontaneously reaches out to God and the things of God. To prove all things, we must apply to them this spiritual test. The longing for the things of God's covenant must be in our hearts. The love of God must prompt us; His will must motivate us; it must be our desire to be pleasing in His sight; the spiritual craving for spiritual gold must spur us on. You see, we can prove things from two different points of view. We can put all things to the test because we are concerned about holding fast that which is good. Or, we can prove these things because we would learn how we can continue in the paths of sin, how much of this present time we can have. The apostle surely means that our proving of all things must be the activity of a heart that is seeking and longing for the things of God's Word and covenant.

Secondly, this proving of all things must always occur through the Word of God. Indeed, there are things we can readily recognize whether they are good or evil. Modernism, the denial of the Divine, the humanizing of Scripture, when occurring boldly, are all quite evident and obvious. The public schools, unions, the dancehall and the theater need not be examined by us too carefully. However, to prove all things is not always equally easy; the enemy, and the things that are bad are not always immediately recognizable. The lie may put on the garment of the truth. The enemy may approach you as a friend. The devil often appears as an angel of light. Trends of thought, conceptions of God and of Christ may not, at first glance, appear to be contrary to the Word of God. Besides, we must always deal with our own carnal nature, which remains with us until the day of our death. The desire to do the will of God may be in our hearts, but we find it difficult to distinguish it from that which opposes it. And, the heart is subtle, more subtle and clever than any other thing. Even the holiest Christian has but a small principle of the new obedience. We are led so easily astray by our hearts.

Hence, we must prove all things by means of the Word of God. It is for this reason that a rolling stone gathers no moss. The Word of God, the pure presentation of that Word, is surely necessary if we are to prove all things and hold fast what is good. So,

we must study the Word of God. This we must do in our homes, at catechism, in all our societies. We must acquire and use spiritual literature. Unto that end, may the Lord bless our pastors, our elders and deacons, our parents, our young people, our children, our schools, primary and secondary.

The word "good" here means literally: to be beautiful, excellent in its nature, its kind. Something is good when it is as it should be. God is good. He is as He should be as God. He is the God of infinite and eternal perfection: the God of all light and eternal attractiveness. Evil is that which denies that living God. We are good when we are as we should be, and this is determined by our attitude and relation toward the living God. Anything is good and beautiful when it can serve as a means unto that end, the praise and glory of the alone living and adorable God. How devastating, also in this connection, is the theory of Common Grace, the theory that teaches that also the sinner can please God, that the natural sinner is not wholly depraved, can do much good in the sight of God, that he, to do good in the sight of God, need not love and serve Him, the living God.

We must hold fast what is good. Negatively, we must reject all evil. Proving all things by the Word of God, we must reject whatever is impure, whatever leads away from God, whatever hinders us in His service, in the glory of His Name. And, then, we must hold fast what is good. We must choose the good, select it, make it our own, use it, make it part of our life, walk accordingly. But we must also hold fast to it. The enemy is always around us. Always he would tempt us, seduce us, prevail upon us to lay aside that which is good. And that enemy is strong, so much stronger than we are, has access to all the resources of this world. He is never to be minimized, or treated lightly. He can be opposed only by prayer. Hence, be sober, be watchful and vigilant, hold fast that which is good, cling to the Word of God.

Prove all things.

Hold fast that which is good.

That we may be led in the way everlasting.

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

EDITORIALS

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

"Sanctified in Christ" — Real or Not?

An interesting and very significant subject is treated by the Rev. J. Overduin in the organ of the Free Reformed Church of North America, *The Messenger* (November, 1981, pp. 1, 2) under the title "Foederal Holiness." At the beginning of the article the writer quotes the second part of I Corinthians 7:14, which I here quote in full: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." The Rev. Overduin then writes as follows:

According to our Form for the administration of baptism "infants are to be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God, and of His covenant." In the same Form it is also stated that these children "are sanctified in Christ, and therefore, as members of His Church ought to be baptized." This is what the parents acknowledge. In a footnote reference is made to Ezekiel 16:21, where the Lord calls the sons and daughters of the Israelites "My children", and to I Cor. 7:14 as quoted above.

In I Corinthians 7:14 Paul gives comfort, hope, and instruction to Christians who find themselves under the burden of being married to an unbeliever. Evidently, there were such in Corinth who, because of this "yoke" felt a great disadvantage as compared with others and that because of a presumed difference in the status of their children. But the apostle said, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy". (See: The Westminster Confession of Faith, by G.I. Williamson, Page 212.)

The apostle Paul clearly recognized a distinction between the children of believers and the children of unbelievers. The children of believing parents are *holy*.

What kind of sanctification or holiness is meant here? It cannot mean: holy in Christ before God, because that kind of holiness cannot be predicated of an unbeliever (cf. 1:2; 3:16, 17). Paul uses "sanctified" here as in I Tim. 4:5, i.e., more liturgically than ethically (F.W. Grosheide, Commentary on I Corinthians).

John Flavel calls this kind of holiness "foederal holiness". The Latin word *foedus* means: covenant. In Volume 6 of *The Works of John Flavel* the writer refers to I Cor. 7:14 and also to Acts 2:39. As long as those scriptures stand in our Bibles, he says, "we

cannot think but the foederal holiness of *children* results from the immediate *parent's* faith, or covenant interest, as well as from the remoter *progenitors*; else we cannot understand how the Corinthians' children should be holy, or how the *promise* should belong to the children of them that are afar off, vix. the Gentiles, who could derive no such thing to their children by a lineal descent from Abraham, but only as they became ingrafted branches by faith; and so suck the fatness of the olive to themselves, and to their buds, or children, as the natural branches did" (page 371).

How great, therefore, is the privilege of the children of the covenant!

Does this mean that all baptized children are "automatically" saved? Must we suppose that infants are regenerated and therefore ought to be baptized?

No, for although there can be no doubt that the children of believers are within the circle of the covenant, they are not all *in the same sense* within the covenant. There must be a two-fold relation to God within the covenant, — one relation wherein those stand who have believed in Christ and surrendered heart and hand to God, and another relation wherein those stand who are still unconverted, but have been born of parents to whom the Lord has said: "I am thy God and the God of thy children."

But no child of the covenant that has come to the years of discretion ought to be content to remain apart from God and His salvation, none should rest till they know they have entered into a living fellowship with Jesus Christ and are enjoying the full benefits of His salvation. We must all become so-called full members of the church, but this position will be of no advantage if we are not members of the spiritual body of Christ. (See: "Exposition of Reformed Doctrine," by M.J. Bosma, pp. 125-131).

After the above explanation, the writer tries to show that this is also the thinking of the Puritans and of the Scottish Reformation by quoting a section from John Macleod's *Scottish Theology* which sets forth the same view.

I called this an interesting and significant subject. It is that, in the first place, because it involves a question of the interpretation of Scripture, specifically (though not exclusively) the frequently discussed words of I Corinthians 7:14. And it is that, in the second place, because the whole subject of infant baptism and its significance is involved, and along with that, of course, the language of our

Heidelberg Catechism (Q. & A. 74) and of our Form for Baptism.

The Rev. Overduin rules out the possibility that the reference in I Corinthians 7:14 is to a real and actual holiness, holiness in Christ before God, on the ground that such a holiness cannot be predicated of *all* children of believers: it cannot be predicated of an unbeliever, according to him. And so he turns to the view that Paul speaks here of those who are sanctified "more liturgically than ethically." This is equated with John Flavel's "foederal (covenantal) holiness." The Rev. Overduin then refers to this as the great privilege of the children of the covenant. And yet, having presented this liturgical, or foederal, holiness as including *all* children of believing parents, he nevertheless wants to assert that the children of the covenant "are not all in the same sense within the covenant." However, he describes this differentiation not in terms of what they are as *infants*, i.e., at the time of baptism, but in terms of what they become when they grow up—believing and converted or unbelieving and still unconverted.

For more than one reason, it seems to me, this is an untenable position.

In the first place, the Scripture passage in question will not tolerate this interpretation. For one thing, it is at least doubtful whether in the New Testament Scripture ever speaks of such an outward sanctification or holiness. In the Old Testament this is possible, due to the fact that it was the age of types and shadows; and there was then such a thing as ceremonial cleanness and holiness. But this is not the case in the New Testament. In the second place, even the Rev. Overduin concedes that distinction must still be made between the believer and the unbeliever (I prefer to say: between elect and reprobate children, or between regenerate and unregenerate children of believers.) Only the Rev. Overduin wants to project that distinction into the future, when the children grow up. Does he not recognize that the distinction is already present when they are *infants*? Thirdly, the Rev. Overduin should take into account that he faces the same difficulty with regard to adults. Take note, for example, how the apostle Paul addresses the church at Rome: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called (to be) saints (i.e. holy ones)." Romans 1:7. Or think of how he addresses this very church of Corinth: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints...." (1:2). Now certainly this was not an outward, or liturgical, or foederal holiness. And yet it could not be stated of all the members of the church of Corinth, head for head and soul for soul. So the problem is not merely one concerning infants. But, in the fourth place, the chief reason

why this cannot be termed an outward or liturgical holiness is twofold: first, such an outward holiness is not real; it is not holiness at all. But secondly, in the text the term *holy* stands as the opposite of "unclean." In other words, the children here described are "clean," i.e., washed from the guilt and corruption of sin.

In the second place, our Catechism and the Form for Baptism are very clear on this question. The Heidelberg Catechism, Q. & A. 74, speaks of the fact that infants "as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God" and of the fact that "redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult." Let no one say that this is a general, conditional promise, and that the condition is faith. How can the Holy Ghost, the *author* of faith, be promised on *condition* of faith? Nor, by the way, does the Catechism speak of a *pre-supposition*. It speaks of facts and realities — admittedly of facts and realities which cannot be stated of *all* infants of believers, head for head and soul for soul, but nevertheless of facts. The language of the Baptism Form is even clearer. Consider what the second paragraph of the didactic section of this Form states concerning the meaning of baptism:

Holy baptism witnesseth and sealeth unto us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ. Therefore we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For when we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us, that He doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for His children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit. And when we are baptized in the name of the Son, the Son sealeth unto us, that He doth wash us in His blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins, and accounted righteous before God. In like manner, when we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost assures us, by this holy sacrament, that He will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins, and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal.

Again: facts and realities, divinely witnessed and sealed!

Or consider the language of the first question to which parents give answer at baptism: "Whether you acknowledge, that although our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself; yet that they are sanctified in Christ, and therefore, as members of His Church ought to be baptized?"

It ought to be very evident that in this first question to the parents the reference is to a *real* sanctification. Without entering into all the details of the meaning of this confession of the parents (they answer "yes" to this question), let me point out the two main reasons why it is true that this question refers to real holiness:

1) The words "sanctified in Christ" are here the diametrical opposite of "conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself." To substitute here a mere outward or liturgical holiness obviously makes no sense. 2) In this first question our Form speaks specifically of being "Sanctified IN CHRIST." The infant born in guilt and corruption is "in Christ." And to be "in Christ" is to be in the sphere of Christ. It means to be implanted into Christ, to be a member of Christ. This phrase therefore can mean nothing else than that true sanctification, regeneration, justification, and all the blessings of salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord are in the possession of "our children."

Thirdly, this is all confirmed by the strong and clear language of the Prayer of Thanksgiving, which, again, speaks of present facts and realities: "Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise Thee, that Thou hast forgiven us, and our children, all our sins, through the blood of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, and received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thine only begotten Son, and adopted us to be Thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism...."

With regard to all of the language adopted, it is

absolutely impossible to understand it as long as you try to apply it to *all* the children of believers, head for head and soul for soul. Whether you speak of presupposed regeneration, or whether you speak of a general, conditional promise, or whether you refer to a kind of liturgical or foederal holiness—none of these theories will work. And the underlying reason is, of course, that they fail to take into account the fact that the line of election and reprobation cuts right across the generations of the covenant.

But as soon as you bear in mind the Scriptural truth set forth in Romans 9:6-8, and understand the organic conception, that God continues His church and His covenant in the line of the succeeding generations of His people, although not everyone in those generations is elect and really belongs to God's covenant, but only those whom God has chosen, and as soon as you understand that the "we" and the "us" and the "our children" in the Baptism Form is believers and their seed speaking, then all becomes clear. As a river flows in a riverbed, but the bed is not the river, so God causes His covenant—the stream of His covenant—to run in the bed of the external manifestation of the covenant in the generations of His people in the world. But that stream consists always and only of believers and their seed. Thus it is in Romans 9:6-8: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

A Significant Little Book

While we are on the subject of infant baptism, let me take the opportunity to call attention to what I consider to be a very significant and instructive little book explaining and defending the truth of infant baptism and its basis. I refer to a recent R.F.P.A. publication of which my friend and colleague, Prof. H. Hanko, is the author, *We And Our Children* [*The Reformed Doctrine of Infant Baptism*].

The chapters of this paperback first appeared in our *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* as a series of articles. The occasion of the series was a rather widely hailed defense of the Baptist position by the Reformed Baptist David Kingdon in a little

book entitled *Children of Abraham*. But Prof. Hanko's book is much more than a polemic against Kingdon. It offers a simple and clear refutation of the Baptist view, but also a simple and clear explanation of our Reformed conception, which we have always referred to as the organic view. Prof. Hanko did not originally write his articles with a view to their appearing in book form. But almost from the outset I urged both him and our Publications Committee that this exposition be published in an attractive paperback. I am very glad, therefore, that this book has seen the light of day.

It is not my purpose to summarize the contents of

this book. I want you to read it for yourselves. There is no excuse for not doing so. Anyone of reasonable intelligence can understand it. The book is simple and clear, and thoroughly Scriptural and Reformed. I am afraid sometimes that there is a danger of infant baptism becoming a mere, empty tradition among us, due to sheer ignorance. God forbid that this should become true! And to prevent its becoming true, we all—and especially our younger people—ought to take advantage of this excellent opportunity to be instructed. Get this book

as soon as possible. Read it; digest it. Study it individually and as couples; or study it in the after-recess period of your Mr. and Mrs. Society. It is well worth your while.

And if you should have a Baptist friend who is open to conviction on these matters and does not have a closed mind, give the book to him. I know it will be helpful. We have had more than one response to the articles in our *Journal* by Baptists who were converted from their Baptist views through reading this book.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The So-called Proof-texts of Postmillennialism

Rev. G. Lubbers

Chapter XI

THE "ONE NEW MAN" IN THE GLORIFIED JERUSALEM

It is the Postmillennial teaching that we must make really a separation between the Kingdom of God before the final return of Christ and what is called the "Consummated Kingdom." We have shown in former chapters in this series of articles, that such a distinction is Biblically untenable. It is, furthermore, the contention of leading Postmillennial writers that the Old Testament prophets and the entire Word of prophecy is not interested in the end-kingdom of the future ages, but that it limits its vision to the bringing in of the nations into the realm of the church-world in the New Testament Dispensation, particularly in what they call the "golden age," the Postmillennial age, before Christ returns to claim this prepared kingdom which will then be world-wide, including all nations.

The writers of this Postmillennial view refer to many passages of both the Psalms and the Prophets, which seem to teach that "all nations" *per se* shall come to join the church in this New Testament era, called the "golden age." Reference is made to such beautiful Psalms as Psalm 86:9; 22:27; 47:2-8; 72:7-11, 17; 110:1. These refer to the conversion of the nations under Zion's king. These are just a few of the Psalms referred to. And also the prophets are quoted in seeking support for the Postmillennial view. Isaiah 49:6; Zechariah 9:10; Ezekiel 47:1-5; Daniel 7:22 are referred to. Obviously, it will not be possible for us, in these

studies, to give detailed and basic exegesis of each of these passages. We will limit ourselves to the main passages quoted by the Postmillennial writers: Isaiah 2:1-5 and Micah 4:1-4.

It is our conviction, after nearly a half-century of Bible study, that if we clearly set forth a representative passage, and rightly divide the Word, we shall then basically have exegeted other passages with the same message. The prophets do not contradict each other concerning the basic teachings of the Bible, the pattern of sound doctrine; rather they complement each other, being written by the one Author, the Holy Spirit, Who moved holy men to write the more sure prophetic word (II Peter 1:20, 21). This is a sound, Biblical prejudice in interpreting the Scriptures.

With this in mind we turn to the passages we started to interpret in the former chapter, namely Isaiah 2:2 and Micah 4:2.

We ought to notice that here we are dealing with a Scripture which is really the text on which Postmillennialism stands or falls. It deals with the matter, the glorious prediction that "people shall flow" to the glorified Zion on the top of the mountains (Micah 4:1, 2). And in the prophecy of Isaiah we read that "all nations shall flow unto it" (Is. 2:2).

When one reads here of "peoples" we do not think of nations as such, having their worldly capitals, their armies, their war machines, but we think of many kinds of peoples: white, black, yellow, and red. We think of the peoples which were scattered

at the time of the building of the tower of Babel, as they lived in the time of the beginning of the New Testament era in three continents, which are basically the continents spoken of both in Genesis 10 and in Acts 2:8-11. All spoke different languages in their homeland. They were different nationalities. And, basically, they are men of Jerusalem and proselytes and strangers, Jews and Greeks. This is suggested by the Hebrew term *Amim*.

Now these people shall not *march* to Jerusalem, but they shall come together like the rivulets and small streams as they all come together in one body of water. They shall "flow" to Jerusalem, to the house of the God of Jacob. It is a remarkable thing that this verb in the Hebrew (see Gesenius's *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*) is never used simply for the formation of nations, but in each case it is used of the coming together of God's people for their salvation. (Compare Jeremiah 31:11, 12 with Isaiah 2:2 and Micah 4:1.) Jeremiah writes in this beautiful, comforting prophecy concerning the great deliverance of Israel out of Babylon by Christ, when He shall have redeemed Jacob and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. And then we have the beautiful prediction of the singing and joyful church: "therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall *flow together* to the goodness of the Lord" (Jer. 31:12). For the Lord adds "for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow." Who does not think of Jesus preaching the kingdom of heaven, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted"? (Matt. 5:4; Is. 61:2, 3).

We are certain that this "flowing together" is the Son of God gathering out of all nations a church elect unto everlasting life, in the unity of faith, one church, one new creation, making them one new man in Christ. Here we see the perfectly fulfilled work of Christ Who said "and this is the will of Him that sent me, that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose none, but raise them up in the last day." Moreover, here is the fulfillment of the Father's drawing His own to Christ, Who said "and no one is able to come unto Me, except the Father which sent Me *draw them*, and I will raise them up in the last day" (John 6:39, 40, 44).

That such is the meaning of this "flowing to Zion" is corroborated by the great longing which these "people" and "nations" have to come to the glorified Zion, on the top of the mountains. This is really a great resolution of faith and hope which is motivated by the love for the God of Jacob, Who dwells in Israel in His temple, called "The house of the Lord."

When we study the Scriptures concerning this house of the Lord we are struck by the fact that this

house of the LORD is really the "God of Jacob" coming to dwell with His people. It is Immanuel, God-with-us. He has prepared for us a city foursquare; He is the Architect and Builder of it. It is for this reason that He is not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now in these texts from Isaiah and Micah we see that God is called the Lord, the God of Jacob. And the God of Jacob is the God of His covenant oath at Bethel, the house of God. Was it not at Bethel that Jacob saw in a dream the very house of God, the gateway of heaven? Was this not a visionary theophany of God to Jacob, in which God tells him once again that He will give him the land of Canaan, and that He will cause him to be a multitude of peoples in which God will "bless all nations in him"? (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4 and 28: 13, 14.)

Now these nations are going to come to the LORD's temple, the God of Jacob in "the last days" when Jerusalem is on the top of the mountains, exalted very high and glorified, as the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God.

Listen to the strong desire and the firm resolution of faith of the "peoples" that come from afar. They really say to each other, urge each other, to come with them and go to this beautiful city of God. Why do they desire to go? Do they desire some earthly benefits merely? Do they desire to see a beautiful earthly city, a beautiful temple? Then they will stand and weep as did the elders when the temple of Zerubbabel is rebuilt on the ruins of the temple of Solomon. No, they really look for the temple which is built on the top of the mountains. It is the temple which shall be built by the Lord by shaking not only the earth, but also the heavens, when the desire of all nations has come, the Messiah in His death and resurrection (Haggai 2:7, 9). That house which Christ builds in three days shall be more glorious than the temple built by the returning Jews from Babylon, yea, far more glorious than the temple of Solomon. In the temple of Solomon God could not dwell. It could not contain Him, yea the heaven of heavens could not contain God (I Kings 8:26, 27). But the glorious temple which is on the top of the mountains is really the church herself. She is the dwelling-place of God in the Spirit. And this temple is made of living stones formed by God's own hand out of Jew and Gentile, from those far and near (Eph. 2:18-22).

And when you look at those who say, "Come, let us go up to the house of God," you see that there is here not really a Jew any more, nor is there a Greek in that multitude. They have overcome and are overcoming in the blood of the Lamb. For they are a new creation of God, created unto good works in Christ Jesus. And they have been made alive with Christ, and set with Him in heavenly places. They

are those who are blessed in Christ with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, even as they were elected in Him before the foundation of the earth.

Yes, as Gentiles they were once called: uncircumcision, foreskin. They were "afar" from the temple of God. They could not and might not draw near to the temple on the little mountain of earthly Jerusalem. They are outside of the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants and promises. Yes, the Jew might enter into the earthly temple with its ordinances and commandments—as the circumcised ones. But they could not enter into the heavenly temple, on the top of the mountains, just as the Gentiles could not. There was no difference. All came short of the glory of God. If the Gentiles were brought near to the heavenly temple to God, so were the believers of the Jews. Both were brought near by the blood of Christ. The Old Testament priesthood perfected nothing (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 7:15-19). Now both have been brought nigh. Also the Jewish believers belong to these "peoples" who say, "come let us go up to Jerusalem." They sing together in a new song to Jehovah for the wonders He has wrought. They sing Psalm 118:22, 23 and Psalm

122:1; they sing the song of degrees, "I was glad when they said, let us go into the house of the LORD, our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

They both believe with the heart and confess with the mouth and are saved. In this heavenly city there is one Lord over all. And when these nations, peoples, say: "come let us go to the house of God," it is no longer a dreadful place, but it is, indeed, the gate of heaven. For they who come in faith shall in no wise be cast out. These are drawn with cords of love, and they come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south.

They are the one *new* man. They are not the broken humanity in the nations of the world, nor are they a Jewish commonwealth with a city which is as a lodge in a cucumber patch, and has a hut in a garden, but they are Jerusalem, the Bride adorned in grace and favor of God. They are Zion which cries: all our fountains are in Thee. They sing under the chief Cantor in Israel: Christ!

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

The Westminster Confession

Rev. R. Van Overloop

Chapter VIII - Of Christ the Mediator Sections 5 - 8

The first four sections of this beautiful chapter presented us with the truths of the office of the Mediator and Christ's eternal appointment thereto, of His two distinct natures and their perfect relationship, and of His states of humiliation and exaltation.

Now we consider the remaining four sections on the Mediator.

5. The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His father;^a and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.^b

a. Romans 5:19; Hebrews 9:14, 16; Hebrews 10:14; Ephesians 5:2; Romans 3:25, 26.

b. Daniel 9:24, 26; Colossians 1:19, 20; Ephesians 1:11, 14; John 17:2; Hebrews 9:12, 15.

6. Although the work of redemption was not

actually wrought by Christ till after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof, were communicated unto the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world in and by those promises, types and sacrifices wherein He was revealed and signified to be the Seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world being yesterday and today the same, and forever.^a

a. Galatians 4:4, 5; Genesis 3:15; Revelation 13:8; Hebrews 13:8.

7. Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures;^c by each nature doing that which is proper to itself;^a yet, by reason of the unity of the Person that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the Person denominated by the other nature.^b

a. Hebrews 9:14; I Peter 3:18.

b. Acts 20:28; John 3:13; I John 3:16.

8. To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same;^a making intercession for them;^b and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation;^c effectually persuading

them by His Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by His word and spirit;^d overcoming all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.^e

- a. John 6:37, 39; 10:15, 16.
- b. I John 2:1, 2; Romans 8:34.
- c. John 15:13, 15; Ephesians 1:7-9; John 17:6.
- d. John 16:16; Hebrews 12:2; II Corinthians 4:13; Romans 8:9, 14; 15:18, 19; John 17:17.
- e. Psalm 110:1; I Corinthians 15:25, 26; Malachi 4:2, 3; Colossians 2:15.

The emphasis of the fifth section is on the completeness of the work of salvation. Christ did not die simply to make salvation possible. But He died with the purpose and effect of actually obtaining salvation for those given Him of the Father. And once that salvation is secured it is not wasted; it is graciously bestowed. All those for whom the Mediator died will receive this completed and complete salvation.

The work of salvation performed by the Mediator consists of the two aspects of reconciliation and eternal righteousness. The Confession does not speak of an active and passive obedience of Christ. Rather it emphasizes that the perfect obedience of Christ accomplished *complete* salvation. Salvation is not merely reconciliation, i.e., that the anger of God against sin is removed. That would leave the sheep of Christ in an unconceivable, neutral position before God: no longer evil, but on the other hand not deserving of any blessing. The completeness of the salvation wrought by the Mediator is revealed in the gracious bestowal upon the elect of "everlasting righteousness" (Daniel 9:24), "eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12), with the "promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:14) and "eternal life" (John 17:2). The mere thought of such a complete salvation staggers us. The meditation of the thoughts of our hearts on such is our joy now as well as forever.

This complete redemption Christ accomplished by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself. He consciously stood always before God and His demand of all-encompassing love. It was that perfect love of God that abode within His heart and led Him in His perfect obedience and sacrifice. With all of His heart, mind, soul, and strength He loved God and He loved to do God's will. Thus He obeyed. Without love, obedience is not only imperfect, but it is only a white-washed sepulchre. Love of God is what made Christ's obedience perfect. The same holds true for us. Only with the love of God as the motive are our works acceptable in His sight.

One more thing does this fifth section bring out: that this complete salvation is for a limited number. This is in harmony with that taught in chapter II on

eternal predestination. The vicarious sufferings of Christ were definite as to their object. The other side of this coin is that one who does not receive this salvation is not one for whom Christ suffered. Therefore, to all those for whom Christ suffered and died He does "certainly and effectually apply and communicate" redemption (cf. section 8 of this chapter). How sad that this comforting truth is so rampantly denied today. To be so foolishly bold to say that Christ died for more than those actually saved, profoundly lowers the conception of Christ's atonement. Christ did far more than merely gain the possibility and opportunity for salvation. He actually took upon Himself the sin and punishment of His people. Thus we condemn the action of the United Presbyterian Church of North America which in 1925 added to chapter XIV that Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all." We would hold to the creed as originally adopted.

Section six harmonizes with section five, for it states with crystal clarity that the redemption of Christ is actually and efficaciously applied to all of the elect. To receive the benefits of this wondrous redemption it is not necessary that one live after the salvation is actually accomplished by Jesus Christ. In chapter VII we saw that in both dispensations salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ. In all ages the salvation is the same.

The reason for this lies in the very nature and Being of God. He is not limited; He is changeless. His determination to save in Christ has no beginning and no ending. Time does not contain or limit Him in His works, for it is His creature. He is pleased to work within it, but that certainly does not bind Him to it (cf. II Peter 3:8). Therefore "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Therefore, it may be said that the Lamb was "slain from the foundation of the world." How marvelous are His ways! Who can be His counselor? O the depth of the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge!

Section seven touches on the unfathomable relationship of Jesus Christ's two natures (human and divine) as they are united in the Person of the second Person of the Trinity. In section two we say that He is true God and true man with one Divine Person; the two natures remaining distinct and unchanged, but also inseparable. Section seven points out first that in the work of redemption both natures of Christ were active, each contributing that which is proper to itself. The work of the Mediator was performed not just in one nature, but in both; each being necessary for obtaining the salvation of sinful men. The human nature was necessary to be the just object of God's wrath for man's sin. The divine nature was necessary to bear fully and to satisfy that wrath of God. What a wonder is

the salvation so earned!

Additionally this section states that because of the inseparable and intimate unity of these two natures, Scripture at times will ascribe to the Mediator a name which emphasizes His human nature when it is describing an activity which is properly the activity of the divine nature, and vice versa. Consider the proof texts given.

All that man can do and say before such a Savior is stand in awe and sin not, but praise and thank God with all our heart and strength.

The last section of this chapter relates to the application of redemption. First of all, this redemption is certainly applied. Again the Confession brings out with irresistible force that Christ does not come to make the salvation of all men possible, but to make certain the salvation of some men. The mere possibility of salvation for all means the certainty of the damnation of all, because of the totality of man's fall into sin. The Confession presents

the certainty of salvation in Christ for all those given Him of the Father.

This certainly is based on the means of the application of salvation, i.e., Christ Himself. The work of the Mediator is not completed in the meriting of salvation. Christ Himself applies that redemption He earned. In the lifetime of each elect He applies salvation effectually and certainly. This He does, the Confession says, in four ways. 1. He makes intercession for them. 2. He reveals to them salvation in His Word. 3. By the effectual operation of His Spirit within them Christ works in them to believe and obey. This is an irresistible persuasion, which does not ignore man's will, but uses it. 4. And by all the administration of His providence He so governs and controls them and all things about them in order that everything works for their salvation. Therefore, it is a terrible sin to doubt one's salvation. In the meditation of this blessed and comforting truth the praise of God and of the Lamb flows from our hearts and mouths.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Bible: Right or Wrong?

Rev. R. Flikkema

As time goes on and as the day of our Lord Jesus Christ comes ever nearer, the Bible as the infallibly inspired Word of God is increasingly attacked. It is attacked by means of asking a very simple question. Is the Bible as it is held in the hand of the individual child of God, God's Word? Is it trustworthy? Is it accurate? Can it be believed? May the individual child of God take his Bible, read it, study it, and conclude that what it says is what it means? Or is it the case that the Bible is not God's Word; that it is not trustworthy; that it is not accurate; that it can not be believed; and, therefore, that the individual child of God may not take his Bible and conclude after reading and studying it that what it says is what it means?

This question has been and it is still today being asked. And more often than not the answer that is given to that question is a most emphatic no! No, the Bible is not trustworthy. No, the Bible is not accurate. No, the Bible can not be believed. And, therefore, most emphatically no, the individual child of God may not conclude after reading and studying the Bible that what the Bible says is what it means and what it means infallibly!

This answer has often manifested itself through the means of the argument that what is found in the Bible is nothing more than a collection of myths. What is found in the Bible, so the individual child of God is told, is nothing more than a collection of stories or old wives' tales that arose somehow, someway over the years. And that somehow, someway these myths, stories, or old wives' tales have found themselves in what we call today the Bible! The Biblical account of the creation of the heavens and the earth as it is recorded in Genesis is a myth. It is a myth that Moses borrowed from some Babylonian creation narrative. The Biblical account of the fall of man is a myth. Whoever heard of a serpent talking, anyway? The Biblical account of the flood is a myth, at least in so far as its universal scope is concerned. Simply the thought of a universal flood is altogether preposterous. If there was a flood it had to be located in the region of the fertile crescent and the Mesopotamian river valley. The Biblical account of the sun standing still during the battle which Joshua fought is a myth. Everyone knows that if anything stood still that it was the earth, and that notion is so ridiculous that it is hard-

ly worth talking about. And so we could go on and on. The Bible, so we have been and are told, is simply filled to overflowing with myths!

By the word myth is meant among other things the fact that the content of that myth can not be proved. It can not be verified. And, therefore, when the individual child of God is told that the Bible is filled to overflowing with myths, he is told that the stories found in the Bible can not be verified from the record of secular history.

But wonder of all wonders it is that, as the day of our Lord Jesus Christ comes ever nearer, what has been declared in the Bible as myths/stories that can not be verified, are now in fact being verified. That reality struck me very forcibly as I was reading the September 21 issue of *Time* magazine. In its department on religion you will find an article entitled, "New Grounding for the Bible?" This article deals with new archaeological findings of ancient tablets that have been discovered recently in northern Syria. It seems as though there existed in the third millenium B.C. an ancient city-state named Ebla. Today this city has been excavated, and among a vast number of other tablets, tablets that have bearing on the Bible have been discovered. Although there is a difference of opinion as far as the significance of these tablets is concerned, nevertheless, it is striking to note that names of people found in the Bible are also found on these tablets. Names such as Adam and Eve, David, and, most noteworthy of all, that of Abraham. And in that connection there is also found on these tablets references to the cities with which Abraham had to do — Sodom, Gomorrah, and Zoar. Reference to these cities is striking because of the fact that it was long believed by scholars that these cities never existed, but were merely mythological. Now it seems the so-called myth of Sodom and Gomorrah will be put to rest amongst those scholars. Now it appears that at least there is some historically verifiable material in the Bible to which those scholars must hold for fact. In fact, as a result of this archaeological discovery of the tablets of Ebla, one of those scholars who has much to do with these tablets stated exactly that. In his words:

After Ebla, we've got to take the Bible much more seriously as a historical document. The people who wrote those books had a long literary tradition behind them.

Ah, yes! Indeed they must take the Bible much more seriously as a historical document. It is a historical document. When the Bible speaks on historical matters it speaks with infallible accuracy. But the question is, do they? Do they, especially now after the discovery of the tablets of Ebla, take the Bible much more seriously as a historical document, as an infallibly accurate historical document?

The answer to that is no! They do not! Yes, they now take Abraham seriously. Yes, they take the Bible's reference to Sodom and Gomorrah seriously, and that on the basis of these same new-found tablets. But on the very basis of these new-found tablets whereby they confess a historical Abraham and a historical Sodom and Gomorrah they proceed to deny the Bible's reference to the fact that Abraham lived in "Ur of the Chaldees"! You, as an individual child of God, can pick up a Bible and read in language that even a little child can understand that Abraham did come out of Ur of the Chaldees. And you, as an individual child of God who believes that the Bible is infallibly inspired, know beyond a shadow of a doubt that what the Bible says is correct and accurate. But the only problem is that these scholars, on the basis of these tablets, will tell you that maybe it is true that Abraham did come out of Ur. But it is most unlikely that he came out of Ur of the Chaldees. Rather, it is far more likely that Abraham came out of an Ur situated near the city of Haran. The Ebla tablets speak of such an Ur. Hence, Abraham came out of that Ur. The Bible on that particular score is wrong.

And not only that, but on the very basis of these same tablets, so those scholars will tell you, the Bible, at least as we have it in our present day English translations, is probably wrong in a host of instances. To use the words of the same scholar that we quoted above, "not a single one of the Old Testaments in English is up to date." And they are not up to date, so we are told, because of the fact that many of the words in the Old Testament are used only once, and too, that these words often have a variety of meanings, and that it is difficult to grasp just exactly what meaning these words have in a given passage. The tablets of Ebla will help us clarify what the precise meaning of the words in the Old Testament is. Therefore, with the tablets of Ebla as our guide we ought to reexamine the Hebrew manuscripts and devise a new translation. And when we do we may discover a few surprises. We may well discover that what we thought the Bible said and what our parents and our grandparents thought the Bible said for many years is wrong. We and the whole of the Church of Jesus Christ in ages past are and were sadly mistaken!

But are we? Is it the case that we and the Church of Jesus Christ have for years been sadly mistaken? Obviously, the answer to that question is no! Perish the thought! Just imagine that! Think about that for a moment! Just imagine that we have been sadly mistaken for years and years with respect to various statements in the Bible, and that now, finally, after hundreds of years, and that on the basis of some newly discovered tablets, we have been given the means to correct our misconceptions!

What would that mean? That would not only mean that we have been ignorant concerning certain matters found in the Bible, but that would also mean, most of all, that God, Whose Word the Bible is, has for years and years kept us ignorant. And not only has He kept us ignorant, but in the final analysis, He has even *lied* to us. Here we thought that Abraham was from Ur of the Chaldees, but now we discover that that is a lie. Abraham was not from Ur of the Chaldees, but from a different Ur! Just imagine that! God has lied to us on that point. And if it is true that God has lied to us for years and years on that point, maybe in a few years we will discover tablets that inform us that there never was a Jesus Who as the Son of God in our flesh died upon the cross and is coming again at the end of the ages!

Maybe God lied to us on that point, too! Just imagine that!

Can you? No, we can not. We know better. God, Who can not lie and Who does not lie, has given to us the Bible, His Word, which is true. Yes, even on the point that Abraham came out of Ur of the Chaldees. How do we know that? On what basis is that our confession? Certainly not on the basis of some old tablets that some scholars have discovered. But most emphatically that is our confession on the basis of God's own Word and the testimony of the Spirit in our hearts. Let us hold to that confession. Let us be assured that the Bible which we hold in our hands is God's Word. Let us do that until our Lord Jesus Christ returns to put to nought forever the unbelief and foolishness of man's wisdom.

GUEST ARTICLE

To Glorify God (2)

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

When we say that man's chief end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him forever, we are speaking of our constant and conclusive aim held in view. Our far-reaching view is to God. He is our end. Looking to that end we also keep in view our own earthly end. For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. This we must consider while we have health and strength. The Lord had said of the nation of Israel, "Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. 32:29). This means that we should give some thought to what we shall do and say on the occasion of our death, when we then immediately appear before God; as Job put it (31:14), "What shall I do when God riseth up? And when He visiteth, what shall I answer Him?" When dying, a saint is more troubled and tempted by the devil. At such times, the only comfort of the gospel will alone be of use and help. From now until death, therefore, we must live "rejoicing in this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity of godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation (behavior) in the world" (2 Cor. 1:12). At the end of life, what comfort will it be that we have been practicing the ways of the heathen, indulging in berserk lusts, in swill parties, wild revels, gorging contests, wife-swapping, and occult idolatries! "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when

we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings (carousings), and abominable idolatries" (I Pet. 4:3). If we too long have lived contrary to the chief end for which we were created, dishonoring God, serving the devil and destroying our own souls, then in the day of judgment, what in the world will we do? But if in days gone by we have been careful to glorify God, when we come to die we can review the past with comfort, and be able to pray, "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before Thee in truth with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight" (Isa. 38:3).

For the Christian, what is it which brings glory to God? It is worshiping and serving Him. That takes hard work. You can't worship with a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. Mere profession of religion without action in a work of faith is like using an air-freshener to disguise the whole city's high mass of air pollution. The Lord is puffed and praised in flowery profession, but the spiritual atmosphere is polluted by smelly behavior. The lives of many professing Christians are a scandal to their religion. Therefore, what glorifies God is not wishes, but work. Yet so many would have God glorified who don't work at doing so themselves. They are rather passive about it, would do it by proxy. The office-bearers represent the congregation, so let the minister do it, or let

the elders and deacons do it. Their concern for God's name may bring them to repeat ultra-piously Joshua's words, "Lord, what wilt Thou do for Thy great name?" But you never catch them saying, as Paul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" They are more troubled about what the Lord should do than what they should do.

This glorifying of God is the whole scope and end of our lives and conduct, of all that we have, all that we are, all that we do, and all that we desire. God must be first, second, last and the living end. Take our common, everyday activities. The Word of God counsels us concerning them. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). If we do not make this our aim, our "homework," then we slip into idolatry to offer meal-offerings and drink-offerings to the belly-god (Phil. 3:19). When we have the most on our tables, then we are the most liable to unthankfulness. If he can, the devil will bring his dish to our tables: murmuring over slender portions or mere basic staples; family quarrels; constant complaining (the complaint button controls the unleashing of a whole computer full of things to find fault with); criticizing God's people and endless gossip. How we need to work hard at bringing glory to God in our common activities! If we do not, then the creature, not the Creator becomes our ultimate end. There is more than just hard work involved. First Corinthians 10:31 involves *battle*! Neglect to put this word of God into practice and we fall into atheism! So we battle against atheism. Modern atheists tell us that man's ultimate end is his own happiness. The self-improvement shelves in the secular bookstores are full of works on egoism, individualism, and self-love. Our chief end principles and practice these books call "puritanism," "mysticism," "fundamentalism," and "fanaticism." Yet they will admit that "God" is a "good God" on the basis of how happy He keeps some of His devotees. This makes man his own end, his own idol, and makes his own interests the standard of good and evil. But if we would be truly happy, then it is most assuredly to be found in the way of obedience to God. Doing God's will and promoting His glory is the end and aim of all holy obedience. Failure in this is to put, not the creature subservient to God, but God to the creature, so making the creature better than God and the creature even the ultimate end for God Himself. God's goodness is then made to serve the happiness of the creature. How easy it is to become ensnared in pure humanism!

They never do glorify God who run lotteries, operate casinos, open up "adult" book stores, manage massage parlors, place on the market amulets, good luck charms, idol-images, statues of saints, rosaries, and crucifixes. Nor do loan-sharks,

industrial pirates, cult quacks, comedians, stage-players, pimps, whores, homos, lesbians, and trans-vestites. The heathen, belonging to all this crowd, had guilds or unions for every trade and a god for every union. They glorified man. The same is true of the whole retinue of patron saints and the TV revivalists who are ostensibly protestant preachers but are crypto-Jesuits. These all rob God of His glory. Their intrusions into the field of religion are like Uzza putting his hand to the ark of the covenant. They should know that they are out of their calling and how dangerous it is for Uzzas and Uz-ziahs to meddle with the glory of the Almighty God of Zion and of His holy temple. A man is as his end or purpose is. He is base because he pursues base ends by base behavior. His eye is evil, so his whole body is full of darkness. He is as worldly as his worldly end. He is like Bunyan's "Muck-raker." He sometimes talks of heaven. All want to go to heaven, especially when they think their time on earth is about expired. But they have spent life feathering a nest about as fireproof as dry tinder. They do not seek the crown of life, but play games with life for pins and match-sticks.

Because God is God, He will be glorified by all His creatures, by His rational-moral creatures either willingly or unwillingly, either by them or upon them. God will not give His glory to another, or actually be robbed of it. For "the Lord hath made all things for Himself," for His own end (margin), "yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. 16:4). He "will be sanctified in them, and," as well, be glorified *before* all the people (Lev. 10:3). Even the wrath of man, including his refusal to glorify God willingly, shall glorify Him (Psm. 76:10). God will have the glory of His grace in the day of His longsuffering and mercy. He will have the glory of His justice and of His wrath, both in everlasting hell and in the day of judgment. So either He will be glorified by us, or His glory will shine against us. If He does not receive the glory of obedience to His will, He will have the glory of His providence working all things according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:11). The saints give Him all the glory. Mere sinners are in the position of serving no other use than setting forth the glory of His vindictive justice. The saints respond obediently to the command, Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the peoples, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. . . Psm. 96:7-9. From this word of God you see that God cannot be glorified apart from worshiping and serving Him. This is done by faithfully attending in His courts the preaching of the Word, by receiving instruction in the catechism and Reformed

confessions, by using the Bible class and the young people's and other societies, by spiritually preparing for the worship service, by study, by discussion of the truth, and by fellowship of the saints.

God is glorified also by our offerings in the grace of giving. Do we faithfully give to the Lord as He has prospered us? (I Cor. 16:2). Do we train our children to do the same, not only by placing a quarter or a dollar in their hands before the collection plate comes around, but by having them bring an offering into His courts out of their own earnings? Smaller children earn money in odd jobs, peddling newspapers, cutting lawns, or whatever. Do they lay by in store an offering as the Lord has prospered them? The older children and young people have a regular or part-time job. They now earn more money than they ever saw before in their whole lives. This enables them to buy a car, or to save for college tuition. Do they also give to the Lord a portion of their earnings as the Lord has prospered them? Or do they assume, "Well, Dad pays the church budget figure, and that takes care of every-

thing!"? God is glorified in our offerings, which must not be given superficially, spasmodically, and without a concern. Rather, let it be, as in every aspect of godliness, "in holiness and righteousness before God all the days of our life" (Lk. 1:75).

All this means that in our aim to glorify God we will glorify His Son (Jn. 5:23). God's aim in all nature, redemption, and providence is to glorify His Son (Jn. 13:31ff). We glorify the Son by more than a moral life, by a Christian life. There is more to the Christian life than that which comes out of a school of philosophy. We glorify Him by bowing to the truth, "without Me ye can do nothing"; by living in the hearty confidence of, "I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me"; and by always having His interest and holy will the great end of our lives, as in, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). As a regenerated man I want to live not as my own man, but as the Lord's. And that is how I hope to die (Rom. 14:7, 8).

IN HIS FEAR

The Call to Obedience

Rev. Carl Haak

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

God speaks these words and He speaks them to you, children, and to you, young people, who are under the care and authority of your parents. The awesomeness and seriousness of the call of obedience to parents is found exactly in this: God commands us to do this; it is right; it is well pleasing to Him (Colossians 3:20). Whether you are three, ten, thirteen, or twenty years old, God says to you that you must obey your parents by submitting to their rule and by showing honor and reverence in your conduct and speech. You must do this because you are children of the heavenly Father, standing opposed to the children of the Devil, who are disobedient to their parents.

As was mentioned last time, it is a clear teaching of Jesus Christ that children must obey their parents. We noted that disobedience to parents cannot be taken lightly, but is a basic sign of the develop-

ment of the man of sin, Anti-Christ. Not only that, but problems in the Church, school, and home all stem from sins committed against this law of God. We wish now to look at some of the facets of the truth of obedience to parents as revealed to us in Ephesians 6:1-3.

The very fact that children are specifically addressed in the Word of God should not escape our notice. It has beautiful implications. It means that God considers children to be members of His church. Obvious you might say, but do not take that for granted. It is a wonderful truth!

That God addresses a specific word to children implies the whole truth of the covenant, "That the promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). This is a comfort for parents who are engaged in the daily work of child rearing. This reveals God's attitude toward the children of believers. Out of them He gathers His Church, and He accounts them to be members of His Church. Paul in this letter to the Ephesians addresses the Church. According to chapter one they are the

faithful in Christ Jesus, chosen from before the foundation of the world. Still more, in chapter 5:26 Paul says that Christ has washed His Church in His blood so that it is a glorious Church which He takes to Himself. Now, children are included in that Church! They are not excluded; they are not on the periphery of the Church. But God accounts the children of His covenant as members of His Church who belong to the body of Jesus Christ and who are heirs of His promises. They are the lambs of His flock, and God in tenderness and compassion addresses them as well.

Very practically, this means that our children must be present with us when we go to Church. May God deliver us from the evil notion prevalent today that Church is for adults alone or that children are to be left home or shuttled off to their own special children's service because the sermon and the worship of the Church are over their heads. The Apostle Paul, when he wrote this epistle to the Church at Ephesus, expected that when his letter was read in the Church, children would be present. He labored under the assumption that families would come up to God's house and worship together! And this is a Biblical assumption! We repeatedly read in the Old Testament that the "little ones" were present when the law and the Prophets were read (Joshua 8:35). In those days entire families would travel together to come to the Pass-over Feast celebrated in Jerusalem, as for example when Jesus came with His parents to Jerusalem (Luke 2:41). One of the implications of the truth of God's covenant with us and our children is that we worship as families worshiping together. That is when fathers and mothers lead their little ones, their pre-schoolers, to Church and teach them how to worship God! That is when fathers see to it that their older children pay close attention to the preaching and then speak with their children and question them concerning the Word of God which they heard. That is when sons and daughters sit at their parents' side in the worship service as joint heirs of the promises of God. That is when fathers in a real sense may repeat the words of Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." And that also means that children must pay attention in Church. They *can* understand the minister, and no one may tell them that they cannot. Do not hand them picture books and toys, but prayerfully teach them to listen to the Word of God. They can do that. God will see to it that by the Spirit they will hear and understand what they need to know.

The Word of God addresses to children is that they obey their parents. "Children obey your parents....Honor thy father and thy mother." To understand this command, we must keep in mind the entire context of the last part of the book of Ephe-

sians. The instruction of the Apostle Paul in the last part of Ephesians five and the first part of Ephesians six hinges upon his exhortation found in verse 18 of Ephesians five: "Be not filled with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." This command, positively and profoundly, is the Christian calling in all of its parts, "Be filled with the Spirit." Paul goes on to teach us in verse 21 that being filled with the Spirit of Christ means for us this: "In love submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ." To be filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ means that in humbleness of mind we will submit to one another, or, as Jesus said, we shall be servants one to another and wash each other's feet. This is the commandment that He left with us, and by our obedience shall all men know that we are His disciples. Being filled with His Spirit we submit ourselves one to another in His fear.

Now, the Apostle Paul applies this fundamental principle of being filled with the Spirit and thus submitting ourselves one to another, to every sphere of life. He begins with marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33). Therefore the wife who is filled with the Spirit of Christ will submit herself to the will of her husband in all things lawful according to the gospel, and the husband who is also filled with the Spirit of Christ will love his wife as he loves himself and will submit to Christ's will for him in marriage. Then Paul naturally proceeds to the home in chapter six: to the relationship between parents and children. And again he simply sets forth the same great principle, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Children, are you filled with the Spirit of Christ? Young men and women, does the Spirit of Christ dwell within you? This is His word to you; submit yourself to your parents in the fear of Christ!

The teaching of the Apostle Paul is therefore plain and consistent. We must take hold of the principle of Christian life to be filled with the Spirit and thus "submit ourselves one to another in the fear of Christ." We must begin here, whether this is in marriage or in the home, in the Church or in the school. Be dominated by and be under the control of the Spirit in all of life and thus submit yourself one to another. And to children this means, "obey your parents."

Before we go on to look at the obedience to which Christ calls us, notice that all of this brings out another fundamental principle of the law of Jesus Christ, namely, the principle that we show our love for Christ and show submission to Him in the Spirit, first of all within our own families. Paul applies to us a great truth! You are filled with the Spirit, now submit yourselves one to another! But to whom are you to submit yourself? To whom are you to show the love of Christ? And the answer is,

first of all to the person closest to you. Husbands, you do not have to go around looking for someone to show the love of Christ to. You begin with your wives. And, wives, you begin with your husbands. Children and young people, how do you display the love of Christ within you? Must you first go out into the world, or should you begin with your closest friends? No, not first of all. But you begin with the people closest to you, your father and mother who bore you! The Christian life begins in the home. Christian homes must by grace fall under the dominance of the Spirit of Christ, and you are first of all to submit yourselves to one another in the love of Christ there. Before you can go on and live in obedience to Christ in the Church, school, or in all of society, first of all you must submit yourselves to Him in the home.

Children who are filled with the Spirit are called to obey their parents. That word "obey" which Paul uses is a very descriptive one in the original Greek language. It means literally "to listen intently and then to hearken to do as you have heard." The word obey means two things: first, to listen attentively to what your parents say, and secondly, to hearken to do as they tell you. To obey is to listen and then to do as you are told. And Paul in Colossians 3:20 says that you must do this "in all things." The idea is that as children we are under our parents' authority and must submit ourselves to that authority in all things. You are not left to decide when you will obey and when you will not, but you are called to listen and then to do. (We must understand that these words, "in all things," do not mean we may do that which God forbids. Parents may not command their children to sin, and children may not do sinful things when wrongly told to do so by their parents. Parents must remember they have a Master in heaven and that they must do His will in the home.)

This obedience must especially be seen by submitting to the correction and reproof of our parents. It brings shame to the gospel of Christ when as children we respond in anger to the correction of our fathers. Many children and young people today think it is wise to go against the word of their parents and become resentful when corrected. Solomon, in the book of Proverbs, has much to say about such children. The son who resents his father's word and who disobeys his parents has no love, but is self-centered. He brings shame and bitterness to his parents, and he himself shows himself to be a fool. Wisdom's way is seen when a son hears instruction and correction and when a son sees in the correction of his earthly father the correction of his perfect heavenly Father. It is a foolish son who mocks his father and who despises obeying his mother. The eagles of the air shall pluck out

his eyes, and he inhabits the place of darkness reserved for fools.

As children of the heavenly Father you are called to obey by honoring father and mother. Paul quotes the fifth commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother." And the point is this: you can outwardly obey your parents and still be guilty of violating God's law. Mechanical obedience is not enough, but the obedience you are to render must proceed out of a heart that reverences your parents and respects them. Obey from your heart, and thus honor your parents very highly in love! That too is flagrantly violated by the children of the Devil. The world today ridicules fathers and mothers in their television programs and sadly, these programs do rub off on our children and upon us. A father is presented as a silly, incompetent ninny who is the laughing stock of his children. And mothers are painted as naive and light-headed, who are amusingly endured by their children. All respect is gone, all honor vanishes, and scorn and ridicule takes honor's place. The parents who allow their child to watch this corruption on television should not be overly surprised when they begin to see the same attitude in their child toward themselves.

God calls us to honor our parents and submit to them in the love of Christ! As Christ honors His heavenly Father, so we must honor our human father. Obedience to parents is not the farce rendered by the Pharisees who obeyed their parents outwardly, all the while grumbling within and having contempt in their heart. Pharisees are hypocrites, and those who obey in anger or scorn are hypocrites. The obedience to which we are called must proceed out of a born-again heart, willing, joyful, whole-hearted obedience as to the Lord and not to men. Children, God says to you, "I call you to obey your parents, to listen and to do. And you must do this as filled with the Spirit of Christ, showing honor to them."

Next time, the Lord willing, we wish to examine the reason for our obedience, as Paul states it in Ephesians 6:1-3.

*The Standard Bearer
makes a thoughtful
gift for the sick
and shut-in.*

QUESTION BOX

True Calvinistic Revivals

Rev. C. Hanko

A reader asks:

"Why do we not hear of Revivals today? I mean, of course, true Calvinistic Revivals."

Most of us shy away from the term "revival," especially because it so often refers to something that is purely the work of men and not originated by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the church. Many of our modern crusades, like that of Billy Graham, serve to create no more than an emotional excitement, which produces no lasting fruit, but leaves the "converts" in a worse state of false security than before. Where are the thousands who were supposed to have made a decision for Christ under the visits of Billy Graham to many parts of the world? Even the Pentecostals appeal to the gifts of prophecy and of speaking in tongues, which are evil attempts to add to the revelation of the Scriptures, and are condemned strongly in Revelation 22:18, 19.

The word revival is defined as "a term widely used among Protestants since early in the 18th century to denote periods of marked religious interest, when church members are quickened to a new sense of responsibility and privilege and others are for the first time brought openly to profess their faith" (*New Encyclopedia*, vol. 21, pages 135, 136).

It is in that sense that our reader refers to revivals. For, besides speaking of "Calvinistic Revivals," he mentions in his letter such revivals as took place under the Calvinist George Whitefield (1714-1770), who preached as an itinerant preacher in Wales, Scotland, and in England, and who made seven trips to America, where he was in contact with the well-known Jonathan Edwards, also mentioned in this letter. Jonathan Edwards was used by God to bring about the "great awakening" (1840-41) in the New England States, and is probably best known for his sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," and other writings.

Therefore the question could be recast in this form, "Why does God not bring about revivals today?" No reference is being made to the various reformations that have taken place from time to time within certain denominations, but the question refers to revivals or reformations that

would awaken the entire Calvinistic church world out of its spiritual lethargy, would oppose the prevailing heresies that run rampant in the churches, and would arouse the sincere believers to contend for the faith once delivered unto the fathers, as well as draw others into the sheepfold of Christ.

The answer to that question must be that the hour has grown late, the end of the ages is upon us. When we consider the signs of Christ's return as described in various parts of the Scriptures, we realize that perilous times have arrived, in which men are lovers of self, even lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, I Timothy 3:1-5; in which false prophets and false teachers have arisen among us, who privily bring in damnable heresies, through covetousness and vain words making merchandise of the members of the church, II Peter 2:1-3; in which we hear of wars and rumors of wars, false prophets who show great signs and wonders; in which iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold, Matthew 24:3-25.

I like to refer to a lecture of Rev. G. Van Baren, which appears in pamphlet form under the title of the lecture, "Shall There Be Reformation No More?" He writes: "I have worded my theme very deliberately in the way I have: 'Shall there be reformation no more?' By this I mean to express the almost hopeless despair of many who think that reformation is now impossible. We live in a time in which liberal trends develop rapidly, false doctrines increase on every hand. One can read quotations in newspapers and magazines which reveal the latest theological fads—all of them contrary to the Word of God. . . ."

"No wonder that the faithful child of God feels lost. He does not know where to turn. And he asks, (if he can find another sympathetic to him) 'Do you think there's going to be another reformation? Do you think there'll be another Martin Luther? Somewhere? Some place? One who will lead once more the church back to the truths of justification by faith alone, and to the truths of the infallible Word of God?'"

"But when one studies Scripture, especially

those many passages that speak of the apostasy of the church, one can legitimately come to the conclusion that there is not going to be a reformation again as was seen in the days of Luther. There is not going to be another Martin Luther nor another John Calvin to inspire thousands to follow again the principles of the Word. . . .

Should we then perhaps despair? Or should we say that it's no use—no use to oppose the corruption within the church? Should that be our attitude?

"What is your calling? First of all, it is to know for yourself, and instruct your children, in the truths of God's Word. Know the Word thoroughly; study it carefully and diligently. . . .

"But what must members in rapidly apostatizing

denominations do? . . . Where the church rapidly departs from the Word of God, where there seems no hope anymore of its reform, the calling of this child of God is to come out. That is the instruction of Revelation 3:10, where Christ addresses the church of Laodicia. . . .

"And when Christians do come out, they should seek to reform completely. Their reform ought not to be half-hearted or partial, as in some instances has been the case in the past. Children of God, called out of the apostate churches, are called to hold fast once more to the principles of the Reformation: justification by faith alone; and Scripture interprets Scripture—for Scripture is the infallible Word of God."

TRANSLATED TREASURES

A Pamphlet Concerning the Reformation of the Church

Dr. A. Kuyper

(Kuyper is discussing in some detail the deterioration of the church. He has discussed this deterioration in various aspects of the church's life. In the last paragraph which appeared in the *Standard Bearer*, he discussed this deterioration in the government of the church.)

48. Concerning Deformation By Means of Parasitic Plants on the Ecclesiastical Stem; or, Concerning Sects.

Sects almost always originate because of the fault of the church. This happens in a three-fold way. It happens, first, if the church permits a part of the truth to be obscured; this obscured truth seeks an outlet in a sect. Secondly, this happens when the church does not satisfy the need of the communion of the saints—a lack which in a sect finds satisfaction in a different way. Finally, this happens when the church lets the reins of discipline slip and by this lets false doctrine reign. The church permits its roots to shoot out for its own benefit, so that the church lives almost exclusively for itself. This is one of the most dangerous deformations of the Church of Christ which usually manifests itself in the milder form of a *tendency* towards sectarianism. Sectarianism compels each group which is already in the church of Christ to form a separate circle, and in this way to choose another rallying point than that of the church itself. The rallying point of the church is the whole truth as it lives in Him Who

said, "I am the truth." A group formed around another rallying point in the church, even though it might temporarily oppose the church, always in fact remains a church and can never be called sectarian. But if a group forms a narrow circle which lifts out of the body of the truth a single point of doctrine and sets that up for its rallying point; or if that group finds its common basis in a certain person who is either still living or already dead; or if that group seeks its real communion of the saints outside the means of grace; then this group is sectarian in nature and essence and must pass over by inevitable development into the formation of an individual sect.

Mention must briefly be made of schismatic groups which mostly originate from grumbling dissatisfaction over ecclesiastical administration of justice or which originate by exaggerated attachment to ecclesiastical externals. This kind of shoot has no root, quickly withers, and dies out. In the estimation of the church, a schismatic becomes a dissatisfied person when he works in a carnal way and indulges in unholy anger; while sectarian persons and the sects which come forth out of their unrest are almost always misled individuals who depart in good faith. They are serious persons who are heavenly-minded, but who, partly by the fault of the church, partly by their own carelessness and

stubbornness, do not listen to admonition. Thus, e.g., at the present time, perfectionism, just as the Ethicists,¹ is only a sectarian movement in the church, while Darbyism, Irvingism, etc., are sects which already attempt to organize themselves independently and now live as parasites on the ecclesiastical stem.

49. How the Church Finally Becomes a Sham Church Through Deformation.

If one adds up all these departures in members and in ministers, in the Confessions and in the means of grace, in discipline and works of mercy, in the worship service and in church government, by sectarian groups and by sects, then everyone feels how these varied illnesses at last can affect the life of the church in such a way that deformation takes over completely and the church dies. There is then nothing more in the church to be deformed because all life is gone. Thus the sham church comes into existence; i.e., the absolutely deformed church which is leprous from the top of the head to the sole of the foot; entirely white deep into the skin; all the living color gone without a trace of healthy flesh upon which the poison of sickness can still work in a destructive way. In such a sham church is peace, rest, quiet; but it is the quiet of the cemetery. It is like a burned-out harp which is reduced to white ash and grey cinders. It is a corpse though not yet decomposed. Such a sham church would be unthinkable if the church existed by itself. But it is sustained in that form for a long time, either by connections with other churches or by connections with the state or by its property, possessions, rights, or titles. If it existed independently of these things, then it would simply disappear after her candlestick is taken away and would pass into a state of decay. But now through such church connection, state connections, or legal connections, this sinking away and decay is restrained; and such an institution, which is no longer (in any respect) a church, can yet maintain the appearance of a church. One finds a skeleton, but a skeleton still neatly clothed, although with torn and soiled ecclesiastical clothing. Such a sham church one finds, e.g., in our East Indies colonies where governmental authority and state money keeps the churches going. One finds them in North Brabant² where they, artificially cultivated, can never shoot out roots of their own, but by the means of state salaries remain hanging like a withered flower on a nearby supporting stick. Finally, one finds them also in North Holland, in Groningen and Drenthe, perhaps also elsewhere in

those places where there is no longer any person who confesses the truth, no ecclesiastical ministration which still brings the means of grace, and where each morning the sun rises and each evening the sun sets without a single knee bowing before King Jesus or a single tongue confessing Him.

50. How the False Church Arises.

It is proper to distinguish, finally, between this sham church and that most appalling of all deformations which ends in the appearance of the false church or the church of antichrist. Still always the doctrine of antichrist is little developed in the church and most people suppose that antichrist is of the same tenor as Satan. This is most positively not so. Satan sets himself over against God and imitates, in the desperation of his impotence, all that God does, to see if he is able to succeed in destroying God's kingdom with God's own instruments. The antichrist, on the other hand, refers to such a person in whom Satan allows something similar to appear as the Lord God allowed to appear on earth when He sent us the Mediator. Such antichrists are many in number and rise throughout all ages in so far as the unsuccessful and weak attempts of Satan to create an antichrist are called by the apostles with that name. But also the real antichrist is he in whom Satan shall be successful for awhile in carrying out his deceitful appearance and criminal performance. Even as Christ has His church and King Jesus His subjects, so Satan also attempts, always imitating the work of God, to form a church for his antichrist and subjects for his false king. From this proceeds a continuous effort of Satan to reveal an antichurch and an antichristian or false church. Now Satan cannot do this by new institutions. He is too powerless for this. And so it happens that Satan again and again lies in wait to sneak into an existing church and to set up that church under a false appearance into its opposite. Just as in a naval war the enemy is sometimes on the lookout to board a defenseless ship of the enemy, to throw the crew on this ship into irons, and to set its own people on it; and then with the battering ram or the artillery of the enemy's own ship, under a false and deceitful flag, to sink the remaining ship, so also is the design of Satan. For this reason he does not destroy the church but rather makes it powerful. He does not take away its holiness but misuses it. They are indeed devouring wolves which he lets in, but these devouring wolves appear from outside to be lambs; thus apparently in innocence they walk around in lambs' clothing. This false church is then operated by devils, but nothing of its devilish character appears because they present themselves as angels of light. This church is, to take an example of a sick person, not like the one suffering from consumption, who sinks into exhaustion, but much more

¹The ethical movement in the Netherlands was a movement in the last part of the Nineteenth Century which stressed obedience to the law almost to the exclusion of grace.

²A province in the Netherlands.

like one possessed, who strongly and maliciously, while you try to help him, flies at you, grabs you by the throat, and kills you if God does not prevent it.

Therefore there must be a sharp distinction made between real churches of Christ who become deformed; between sham churches who cease to be churches of Christ because deformation has run its course; and between false churches in whom deformation only serves to call into existence a Satanic counter-reformation.

Our fathers confessed concerning this false church that, "She ascribes more power and authority to herself and her ordinances than to the Word of God, and will not submit herself to the yoke of Christ. Neither does she administer the sacraments as appointed by Christ in His Word, but adds to and takes from, as she thinks proper. She relieth more upon men than upon Christ; and persecutes those, who live holily according to the Word of God, and rebuke her for her errors, covetousness, and idolatry."

In the meantime this false church has also distinct degrees of falsity. Just as a possessed person can be possessed by one or by one million demons, so also a church can be diverted by greater or lesser subtleties of Satan. And in the same way, just as there were possessed people who could still call to Jesus and whom Jesus loosed from their demons at their prayer, so there can be churches which can be in part and for a time instruments of Satan and which the Lord can yet set free from Satan's work at a humble prayer.

We must also on this point be on our guard against hasty judgment. Undoubtedly the church of Christ, in the day when Luther arose, lay almost en-

tirely bound in the chains of Satan, and when Rome drank the blood of God's saints, there was very positively an antichristian power in her church organism. It would be cowardly and unspiritual not to dare to express this. On the other hand, whether the Romish church as such was so entirely and lastingly forsaken by the Holy Spirit, whether the Pope was actually the antichrist, was a question which was answered in 1603 by the French Church at her Synod in the affirmative; but the Reformed churches, here and elsewhere, would not incorporate this idea into her confession at Dordrecht, even though they knew what the French Church had done. Clearly our fathers did not want this absolute expression even though they were inclined to it; and, on the contrary, continued to recognize the baptism administered in the Romish church as a valid sacrament; and because the sacrament is nothing without the working of grace, they therefore confessed that also in these entirely degenerate churches the grace of the Lord was still working.

If we take the position of our fathers then it follows from this that there are partly falsified and to this extent, false churches; but the absolutely false church, i.e., the complete manifestation of the church in which Satan shall attempt to celebrate his final triumph over Christ, has thus far tarried.

May God Almighty preserve us that our churches never serve as an instrument of Satan and that Satan never animates our churches with his demonic influence. Never become yourselves confessors of the Lord, possessed by the evil one, but may our heavenly Teacher and sweet Comforter, God the Holy Spirit, live, work, and pray in us as in His lawful temple!

Book Reviews

THE CHRIST OF THE COVENANTS, by O. Palmer Robertson; Baker Book House, 1980; 308 pp., \$9.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko).

It is rather striking that in theological circles, perhaps especially among Presbyterians, there is an increasing awareness of the truth of Scripture that the covenant of grace is a bond of friendship and fellowship. More and more the traditional view of the covenant as an agreement between God and man is being criticized and abandoned. While Rev. Hoeksema maintained for over fifty years that the idea of a covenant as an agreement was contrary to Scripture and while he did pioneer work in the idea of the covenant as a bond of friendship and fellow-

ship, it has taken many years for other theologians to catch up with him and recognize the Scriptural soundness of his view.

This book, written by the associate professor of Old Testament theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, is such a book. It is in most respects an excellent book and ought to be purchased and read by anyone who is interested in the truth of the covenant of grace. It is clear, concise, and easily read, though it deals with many profound truths.

Some of the elements of the book which make it particularly worthwhile are these: his rejection of the idea of the covenant as an agreement and his definition of it as a bond (p. 15); his clear descrip-

tion of the unity of the covenants in chapter three; his repudiation of the traditional view of the *pactum salutis* (p. 54) and his criticism of the traditional view of the covenant of works (p. 55); his emphasis on the unilateral character of the covenant in connection with the establishment of the covenant with Abraham as recorded in Genesis 15; his detailed discussion of the development of the covenant in the history of Israel, the prophets and the New Testament fulfillment; his treatment of the sign of the covenant in the Old Testament (circumcision) and its fulfillment in the New Testament (pp. 148ff).

If there are any weaknesses in the book, they are relatively minor. In a footnote on page 123 the author brings up the question of the offer of salvation in connection with II Peter 3:9 — a context in which such a discussion scarcely fits. It seems as if the author is intent on showing that he holds to the offer, even when there is no need for him to make a point of it. On pages 263, 264 there is a serious historical error: the author says that Elisha the prophet "had been relaying the secret counsels of the king (of Israel) to the Syrian adversary." The historical record will show that it was exactly the opposite. Elisha was revealing to the king of Israel the secret counsels of the Syrian king; and, as a result it was the Syrian king who surrounded Dotham in an effort to capture Elisha.

While perhaps not the main purpose of the book, it would have been well if Dr. Robertson had spent

more time in developing the positive idea of the covenant as a bond. The book is very sketchy in this area. While there is a great deal of apologetic against Dispensationalism (and most of it very good), the positive truth of Scripture gets somewhat short attention in the process.

Nevertheless, we welcome the book and recommend it to our readers.

SHE SHALL BE CALLED WOMAN, by Francis Vander Velde; Kregel Publications, 1980; 258 pp., \$4.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

First published in 1957, this book has gone through eleven printings and one revision. It is a book which treats, rather briefly, the chief women in the Bible. It is generally faithful to Scripture and should prove of inspiration and help to many of our covenant mothers. It is not strong in doctrine, but emphasizes, rather, moral precepts. Its greatest weakness is probably that there is insufficient emphasis on the *faith* of these godly women—the chief reason for their place in Holy Writ. Recommended if read with proper caution.

*Take time to
read and study the
Standard Bearer*

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On December 14, 1981, our beloved parents, ALVIN AND JOAN GARVELINK, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to God for the privilege of sharing this joyous occasion with them and for the years He has given them together and with us. May the Lord bless and keep them in the remaining years of their earthly pilgrimage.

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation." (Psalm 68:19)

Rev. Julius and Joan Vanden Hoek
Robert and Ruth Garvelink
Leon and Terri Garvelink
Richard and Sandra Honholt
15 grandchildren
11 great-grandchildren

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of the Ladies Society of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church wish to express their Christian sympathy to Mrs. Elizabeth De Jong, Sarah, Denise, Marilyn, Janet, Pat De Jong and Becky Hanemaayer in the sudden loss of their husband, father-in-law, and father, MR. ARTHUR DE JONG.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15)

Rev. D. Engelsma, Pres.
Mrs. J. Lenting, Tres.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, January 13, at the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk three weeks prior to the convening session.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Study Class of the Pella Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere sympathy to one of its members, Jake De Vries, in the passing of his wife, JEANETTE.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Psalm 116:15

Rev. G. Lanting, Pres.
Mrs. Catherine Vander Wiel, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses their sincere sympathy to a fellow member Mrs. Irene Holstege in the loss of her mother, MRS. VAN FAROWE.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death." (Psalm 48:14)

Rev. G. van Baren, Pres.
Mrs. G. Hoekstra, Sec'y.

News From Our Churches

The first part of this news column will be devoted to correcting an error, and reporting a change of previously reported news items. First, in the December 1 news we reported the availability of the monograph, *Reformed Education*, written by Rev. D. Engelsma. All the information about that little book was accurate; however, when we got around to telling you how to obtain it, we erred by giving an incorrect address. Please send those orders to: Reformed Education, 4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. Second, there has been a change in the date for church organization in Singapore. They have now set January 24 as the date for that special occasion. In this connection we have since learned from a Hull, Iowa bulletin that, "The name they have chosen is the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore."

As most of our readers know, one of the members of this group of God's people in Singapore is currently studying in our seminary, i.e., Mr. Lau Chin Kwee, who will be completing his studies this school year. Concerning the seminary activities of Mr. Lau we quote the following from a bulletin of our Hope Church in Walker, Michigan: "We welcome the brethren who supply our pulpit this Sabbath, and a special welcome to Mr. Lau Chin Kwee. This morning Mr. Lau delivers his first sermon since coming into the fellowship of our churches. Although this will be a first for him in our land, he has for several years been the shepherd for his beloved group in Singapore, the GLTS. May we experience God's blessing today, and thank and praise Him for His goodness." The occupation of one of our pulpits by one of Oriental background is, to my knowledge at least, a historical first for the Protestant Reformed Churches. We may rejoice in this concrete evidence in our midst of the catholicity of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally in this connection we have learned from numerous bulletins that more than enough money for the physical provision of Mr. and Mrs. Lau Chin Kwee for the duration of their stay in the United

States has been received. The Foreign Mission Committee, whose responsibility it was to see to this provision, closed their letter to the congregation by saying, "We would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your congregation for your liberality in supporting this cause. We covet your prayers for this work in Singapore."

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Our young people continue to be active. Those in the Grand Rapids area gathered on November 22 at Southeast Church for a Thanksgiving Mass Meeting. Rev. Haak was the speaker. The Young People are planning a similar activity in Hudsonville on December 20 with Rev. VanBaren scheduled to speak. The Doon, Iowa young people sponsored a hayride, to which they also invited Hull's young people. And, on November 28 the young people of our South Holland, Illinois congregation sponsored a pancake breakfast. This fund-raising project was for the 1982 Young People's Convention.

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In a recent discussion with the S.B. Business Manager, a number of interesting subscription facts came to light: For one thing, we have *three* Jim Dykstras that currently subscribe to *The Standard Bearer*. Further, I was informed that four houses in a row on Moelker Avenue in Walker, Michigan, receive our magazine. By the way, three of these have a last name of Dykstra and they are not closely related to each other. Finally, I learned that members of *one* home in South Holland, Illinois receive *four* copies of the S.B. Apparently our publication is so popular in that household that each member receives his own personal copy. Maybe others of us should consider this multiple-copy approach. It might help solve the problem of who gets to read the S.B. first in our homes, and at the same time bring *The Standard Bearer* closer to self-support status. Incidentally, one wonders what the mailman thinks each time he puts those four copies of the S.B. in that South Holland mailbox.