

The **STANDARD BEARER**

— A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE —

The women of the world love to dress in such a way that they excite the men of the world to sinful thoughts and desires.... The Christian young woman must have no part of this at all. For her it is a grievous thing that the men of the world should be looking at her with evil thoughts and desires.... The young woman truly motivated by the love of God and also love for her brothers in the Lord will wear nothing that could possibly lead another to sin in his heart.

See "Christian Attitudes Towards Sex"

—page 397

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MEDITATION

The Spirit of the Glorified Christ

Rev. H. Veldman

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

Acts 2:2

There is a divine program, a divine schedule, and this program is minutely executed, in "nature" and in grace. There is an exact moment for everything under the sun, in the heavens above and upon the earth below. This is also true of the realm of grace. Christ is born in the moment of the "fulness of time." Jesus dies when His hour is come. He rises

the third day, ascends to heaven forty days later, and ten days after His ascension He pours out His Spirit into the church. Pentecost is the fiftieth day after Christ's resurrection, forty days plus ten. Pentecost is the beginning of the Day of the Lord, which Day will not end until it reaches its climax when Christ returns upon the clouds of heaven.

"When the day of Pentecost was fully come," or, "in the being fulfilled of the day of Pentecost." The day of Pentecost had fully come; it had been completed. The Old Testament is completed before the New begins; the Old Testament lamb is slain, the last one, when the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world. In the Old Testament the day of Pentecost was a symbol, a shadow of the New, which must make way for its fulfillment. That Old Testament shadow must run its course, must be fulfilled, but, when it is fulfilled, it must be followed by that fulfillment, the Pentecost of the New Dispensation.

* * * * *

Two matters are emphasized concerning the Holy Spirit in Holy Writ. First, He was poured out upon Pentecost. We read in John 7:39: "But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified." We read literally: "for the Holy Ghost was not yet." The word "given" appears in the translation in italics. Notice, too, what we read in Isaiah 32:14-15, Joel 2:28-32, Zechariah 12:10. And, secondly, the Holy Spirit was also in the Old Dispensation, as we may read in Haggai 2:6, Psalm 51:13, Psalm 104:30, Ezekiel 11:5, etc.

Pentecost is surely not the birthday of the church. The Holy Spirit was surely not poured out upon that day as the Holy Spirit of God. He is the Holy Spirit. This name denotes Him as the third Person of the Trinity. God is spirit, which means that He is exalted above all material, and must be distinguished from it. It means also that He is absolutely invisible, and, positively, that He is the God of all infinity and perfections. In this sense the Father and the Son are also spirit. Besides, God is holy; also the Father and the Son, however, are holy. That the third Person is called the Holy Spirit means that as the third Person of the Trinity He is peculiarly consecrated to the Father and the Son. The Father is the eternal source of the Godhead; the Son is the eternal Image of the Godhead; the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, peculiarly consecrated to the divine fulness, searching eternally the deep things in the Father and the Son.

The Spirit of Pentecost is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the glorified Christ. Jesus has come and is glorified. In the Old Dispensation He was not yet. Then He existed only typically and symbolically. The salvation of God in and through Christ Jesus had not yet been realized historically. There were then only types and shadows of Him. But now Jesus has come and is glorified. He has suffered and died, has borne the eternal and infinite wrath of God upon all our sins and trespasses, has merited

for us everlasting life and glory, and is now glorified forever in the Father's right hand.

The Spirit of Pentecost as the Spirit of the glorified Christ also explains the richness of salvation of the church of God in the Old Dispensation. Indeed, how poor, comparatively speaking, was the church in the Old Dispensation! To be sure, the people of the Lord experienced in the day of the shadows the salvation of the Lord, enjoyed the riches of that salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the love of God, and the hope of everlasting life and heavenly glory. They were surely rich! They sought the heavenly city of God, the city that has foundations. When we say that they were poor comparatively speaking, we refer to the fact that they were saved only in hope. God's plan of salvation for His people had then not been revealed as yet unto them. We read in Ephesians 3:4-5: "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." It is true that the apostle, in this passage in Ephesians 3, refers to the mystery of the will of God in connection with the salvation of the Gentiles. Nevertheless, in the Old Dispensation the church of God was saved only in hope. In those days of the shadows the Holy Spirit caused the believing saint to take hold of the shadows and look forward to their fulfillment. What the Lord had in store for His people had then not been revealed as yet. They saw this salvation only in shadow and in type. But now Christ has come and the Spirit of the glorified Christ has been poured out. Now the shadows and types of the Old Dispensation are no longer needed. Jesus has come. We now have fellowship with God through Jesus Christ Himself. To be sure, we still see in a glass darkly. Jesus is in heaven. We see Him by faith and only through the Scriptures. But presently we shall see Him face to face, when all the earthy shall be done away; then the church of God will be received up into heavenly glory and immortality; God's tabernacle shall then be forever with men.

* * * * *

How does this Spirit of the glorified Christ operate in the church of God? How important is this question? How this work of the Holy Spirit is minimized, virtually destroyed in our present day and age! First, this Holy Spirit is irresistible. How the Scriptures emphasize this truth! It is emphasized in this text. When we read that the sound came from heaven we realize that the disciples who gathered there recognized the heavenly origin of this sound. And this is undoubtedly mentioned to emphasize that the disciples recognized in this fact the fulfillment of the

promise of the risen and heavenly ascended Lord that He would send the Comforter. And notice, too, that we read of a sound as of a mighty rushing wind. There was no wind. A wind did not fill this room. The Holy Spirit filled it. Only, His coming is accompanied by a sound of a mighty, rushing wind, a sound of an irresistible gale. This, however, is also emphasized in John 3:8: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Indeed, the wind bloweth where it listeth. Hence, we cannot tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. No man is therefore able to control it.

This irresistible character of the operation of the Holy Spirit lies in the nature of the case. First, this is true because of us. We are conceived and born dead in sins and in trespasses. For this reason the world cannot receive Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. We do not read that the world does not will to receive Him — though this is also true. But the world cannot receive Him. Man, the natural man, cannot receive Him, go out to Him, pray for Him, desire Him, bow before Him, be led by Him, acknowledge and obey Him. Fact is, the world does not see Him and it does not know Him. Man does not see Him, that is, does not look upon Him with interest and desire. For, he does not know Him. This is the knowledge of fellowship. Man has never tasted Him, experienced Him. The Spirit is a total stranger to him. Hence, for the world to receive Him is a spiritual impossibility.

Does it, therefore, lie in the nature of the case that the operation of this Spirit is and must be irresistible? However, this irresistible character of the Holy Spirit is also because of the Holy Spirit Himself. He is the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit He is the living God, Who calls things into existence by His almighty word. He calls the dead to life, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the dumb to speak. He alone sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts. His work is surely irresistible. Him no man can deny entrance. He is as the wind that blows with crushing and irresistible force. Indeed, the work which God has once begun shall surely be done. This mighty work of the Holy Spirit which generally occurs in the hearts of His elect during their infancy, unnoticed by them, takes place with dynamic, explosive, irresistible force. Let us never forget: the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all God's elect throughout the ages is surely irresistible.

And, therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit is also sovereign. This, too, is emphasized in John 3:8. Indeed, the wind bloweth where it listeth, pleaseth. That this work is sovereign means that it is never dependent upon the will of the creature. It is deter-

mined solely by the living God. Of course! His work is irresistible. But then this surely means that He saves whom He wills. He does not ask admittance; He simply enters the human heart. He saves sovereignly. He passes by Athens, captures Rome by storm. Yes, some are taken but others are left. Capernaum is sovereignly rejected; Lydia's heart is opened. Indeed, it is so true: "Of all whom Thou hast given Me I shall lose nothing but raise it up again at the last day."

* * * * *

The Holy Spirit takes hold of the entire man, fills him according to his capacity, his mind and will and his desires, dwelling in his inmost heart. This is symbolized in the text: "and it filled all the house." He renews the heart, kindles therein the love of God. He enlightens the mind and causes it to discern spiritually. He directs the will, so that we may confess that we hate all sin and have a delight in all righteousness. Yes, He fills us. He causes us to hate ourselves and our sin completely; no good thing cleaves to our flesh. He makes us desirous to walk in *all* the commandments of the Lord. Christ covers, pays for *all* our sins. He protects us against *all* our enemies. He gives us the fulness of joy and hope.

Is it any wonder, then, what we read in verse 11b? Indeed, they spake of the wonderful work of God. Of course! Of what else could they speak? Of what else can we speak? Is not the operation of the Holy Spirit irresistible and sovereign? Is He not the Author and Finisher of our salvation? Is not this salvation a fulness of joy which all eternity will not be able to exhaust? Let us, then, proclaim these wonderful works of the Lord, of the God of our salvation.

Let us proclaim them individually.

Let us proclaim them as churches, in all our preaching and teaching.

And then we shall taste the blessed assurance that God is for us and nothing can therefore be against us.

*The Standard Bearer
makes an excellent
gift for the sick
or shut-in.*

Editor's Notes

Publication News

We are pleased to inform you that another RFPA publication has come from the press. *The Wonder Of Grace*, one of the most popular little books of the late Herman Hoeksema, has been reprinted as an attractive paperback. The price is \$3.95. Originally the chapters of this book, first published in 1944 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, were a series of radio addresses. Having served on the Radio Committee at that time, I recall that this was a very popular series; and when the book was first published, it had a rather wide distribution. Each step of the truth of salvation by grace is carefully explained in the light of Scripture. If you are not a Book Club member, get this book by writing to the RFPA, P.O. Box 2006, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501.

Summer Schedule

We remind you that with this issue the *Standard Bearer* goes on its summer schedule, which means that there will be only one issue per month in June, July, and August.

Reports on Synods and General Assemblies

June is the month when our own Synod and the Synods and general assemblies of several other denominations meet. In the July issue we hope to carry a report about our Synod's actions and a report on seminary graduation. This year not only the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church but also the General Assemblies of several Presbyterian churches are meeting in Grand Rapids. If possible, we will also provide coverage of the latter, especially since the matter of "Joining and Receiving" will be up for consideration at some of the Presbyterian assemblies.

EDITORIALS

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

More Janus-Headed Theology

In a recent issue of the *Presbyterian Journal* (May 12, 1982, pp. 9, 10) Donald A. Dunkerley presents some more Janus-headed theology, again classifying those who disagree with it as Hyper-Calvinists. This time he writes about the subject of the death of Christ in relation to the general offer of salvation.

I suppose that on the basis of Dunkerley's explanation even John Calvin himself could be classified as "Hyper." For Calvin in commenting on one of the very passages which speak of the "world" in connection with Christ's atoning death (I John 2:2) writes: "Here a question may be raised, how have the sins of the whole world been expiated? I pass by the dotages of the fanatics, who under this pretence extend salvation to all the reprobate, and therefore to Satan himself. Such a monstrous thing deserves no refutation. They who seek to avoid this absurdity, have said that Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but efficiently only for the elect. This solution has commonly prevailed in the schools. Though then I allow that what has been said is true, yet I deny that it is suitable to this passage; for the design of

John was no other than to make this benefit common to the whole Church. Then under the word *all* or *whole*, he does not include the reprobate, but designates those who should believe as well as those who were then scattered through various parts of the world."

One could comment at length about Dunkerley's article. He comes with no Scripture and no Confessions. He plays fast and loose (even as in an earlier article) with the dirty name "Hyper-Calvinist," without any foundation or documentation. He assumes that the notion of a general offer of salvation is Reformed — an altogether unjustified and unfounded assumption. And so one could engage in a lengthy and detailed refutation of Dunkerley's position. But I am convinced that neither Dunkerley nor the *Presbyterian Journal* would be persuaded.

There is one issue, however, which Mr. Dunkerley should face.

He himself writes at the conclusion of his article: "If Christ's death has not grounded a free offer of salvation to all, then we have no offer to proclaim."

I agree!

For many years we of the Protestant Reformed Churches have insisted on this, ever since the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 adopted the heresy of the general, well-meant offer of salvation. We have posed the question a bit more concretely than has Dunkerley. We have asked: reverently speaking, how can God offer salvation to all in the preaching of the gospel when He does not have salvation for all men, seeing that Christ atoned for the elect only?

Along came Prof. Harold Dekker in the 1960's and said, "God loves all men redemptively, and Christ died for all men atoningly." However, he would not make the latter statement unqualifiedly: Christ died for all men atoningly, but only in three respects out of four. Even this, however, the Christian Reformed Church would not buy. True, they would not and could not condemn it as heresy (chiefly because they were saddled with the First Point of 1924 and its well-meant offer of salvation); and so they only declared Prof. Dekker's position to be "ambiguous and abstract." Meanwhile, the Study Committee in the case took essentially the same position as does Mr. Dunkerley, namely, that there are not only saving benefits of the death of Christ, but also non-saving, "common grace" benefits of that atonement.

Herewith I have outlined half of the position of Mr. Dunkerley with respect to the death of Christ.

You see, Mr. Dunkerley appeals to a number of Reformed theologians who take the position that there are not only saving benefits of the atonement of Christ, but also non-saving, "common grace" benefits. He cites James Oliver Buswell Jr., R.B. Kuiper, A.A. Hodge, Charles Hodge, Loraine Boettner, Morton H. Smith, and Edwin H. Palmer. The only reference to the creeds which he makes is to Canons II, 3 — a reference which he would never have made if he had understood the Canons and studied their background. This, as I said, is the same position as that taken by the Study Committee in the so-called Dekker Case in the 1960's. They wanted to condemn Prof. Dekker's position, but cling to the First Point and its well-meant offer, just as did the OPC in the Murray-Stonehouse pamphlet on the Free Offer in the Clark Case.

The other half of Donald Dunkerley's position involves the question: is it proper to say to the lost man, the unbeliever (No one speaks in this connection of the reprobate. HCH), "Christ died for you?"

Some of the theologians cited by Dunkerley say "No" to this question. They say it would be misleading, or grossly ambiguous, or technically proper but very misleading. Among these are Morton

H. Smith, R.B. Kuiper, and Edwin Palmer. Others, among them J. Oliver Buswell Jr., say that it is proper. Dunkerley quotes Buswell as follows: "I hold that the atonement of Christ actually accomplishes the salvation of God's elect and of God's elect only. But it is certain that the atonement is the basis of God's common grace, and the basis of the universal offer of salvation 'to every creature.' In the sense of the offer of grace it is certainly Scriptural to say to a lost man, 'Christ died for you.' That is, Christ died so that the offer might be presented to you."

With the latter Dunkerley agrees. He writes: "If, as we have seen, the death of Christ is sufficient for all and there is a sense in which Christ died for all, then it cannot be completely incorrect to say to a potential believer, 'Christ died for you.' It may be misleading or ambiguous, it may be an unwise thing to say, but properly understood it is not untrue."

Now remember, it is not merely a question of whether the preacher or evangelist says that which is not completely correct, that which is misleading or ambiguous, that which is unwise to say, that which is "not untrue" if properly understood. No, it is a question of God! For the preacher speaks in the name of and on the authority of God! He proclaims that God, on His part, offers salvation to all! In other words, God Himself says that which is "not completely correct," that which is "misleading or ambiguous," that which is "unwise to say," that which is "not untrue" if properly understood (this means the same thing as that which is *not true* if properly understood).

You see, after all, the free offer of salvation to all is an offer of *salvation*. And if God does not have salvation for all (and He does not — not according to His predestination nor according to Christ's atonement), how can He offer salvation to all? Setting aside for the moment the fact that the entire philosophy about non-saving benefits of Christ's atoning death is neither Scriptural nor Confessional, how can these alleged *non-saving* benefits of Christ's death be the basis of a free offer of *salvation* to all?

I agree therefore with Dunkerley: if Christ's death has not grounded a free offer of salvation to all, then we have no offer to proclaim.

But I add: Christ's death has not grounded a free offer of salvation to all.

Why not? Because Christ's death has not grounded salvation for all!

Let God be true!

Study The Standard Bearer

The 'eodem modo' Rejected in the Conclusion of the Canons (2)

[In the May 15 issue we called attention, first of all, to the meaning of this expression and to the fact that it was an Arminian slander against the Reformed doctrine of reprobation, a slander rejected and repudiated by the fathers of Dordrecht. Secondly, we began to call attention to the misuse of this rejection made by modern Reformed theologians, mentioning first how G.C. Berkouwer already in 1955 used it to undermine the Reformed doctrine of reprobation. In the present article we continue our discussion of this misuse.]

There was no fundamental change in Dr. Berkouwer's position after his book on *Divine Election* in 1955, only an increasing clarity in his repudiation of double predestination and in his re-interpretation of the doctrine of election as a "gracious election." The latter expression has increasingly been substituted for the idea of a sovereign and double predestination. A "gracious election" is, of course, a thoroughly Reformed idea; but in today's theological parlance it has almost become suspect, because it is so frequently used as a cover for the denial of the truth that sovereign election and sovereign rejection are inseparable aspects of sovereign predestination.

There have, of course, been other Dutch theologians who, like Berkouwer, repudiated double predestination. Dr. A.D.R. Polman was a Kampen theologian who early repudiated it. Dr. Herman Ridderbos does so in his treatment of Romans 9-11. Berkouwer writes about his consultation of Ridderbos in *A Half Century Of Theology*, Chapter 4. In part, he states the following:

In view of this, Ridderbos did not interpret Paul's words about Jacob and Esau as teaching double predestination. Indeed, the notion of double predestination is "an arbitrary and radical distortion of the original intention of the biblical words." The word "radical" is not an exaggeration. Ridderbos sees election connected, not with a definite number of people, but with Christ. This newer exegesis operates in another climate than did the older exegesis, and it implies another kind of pastoral opportunity as well. Ridderbos fails to find anywhere in the development of Paul's thought "the hidden decree" that might function as "the background or explanation of the separation [between people] that comes about by the preaching of the gospel..." (*Paul, An Outline of His Theology*, E.T. 1975, p. 352). Preaching, for Paul, creates a meaningful open situation; his argument

does not move toward "twofold destinies and twofold futures, but to the... way of faith as the only way of salvation in view of God's liberating grace." Here the motif and pattern of God's action are opposed to arbitrariness. (p. 102)

Berkouwer himself sums up the shift in doctrine in the Netherlands concerning predestination — and all of this stands connected with the misuse of the *eodem modo* in the Conclusion of the Canons — as follows, p. 102:

Thus the reconsideration of election has tended for several years, not in the direction of a double decree that merely waits to be executed, but in the direction of grace as the nature, the character of election. Election is seen precisely as *not* arbitrary; and this tendency is not merely an intuitive protest — however needed — against the notion of "absolute might," but one that moves from a new recognition of the character of election itself. It arises from an awareness that anyone who expects salvation from grace rather than from works is set immediately within the sphere of election; but he need not encounter alongside or over election in grace a decision that was made in a *hidden* decree. I cannot help noting that this shift within the firm tradition of the election doctrine has gained an encouraging consensus, supporting my own efforts to understand the meaning of the confession of election, and to discover in it anew the possibility for a celebration of the depths and riches of grace.

Two more items must be mentioned in this connection.

First of all, an official shift in doctrine came about in 1969-70 in the Gereformeerde Kerken. A similar shift had come about already in 1961 in the Hervormde Kerk, when they published, in response to a gravamen, some guidelines for dealing with the doctrine of election. Incidentally, Berkouwer writes about these guidelines: "The publication of the guidelines provoked a renewed consideration of the deepest intentions of the Arminians of the seventeenth century: their fear of the thought that God would be the author of sin and their fear of determinism." Note the suggestion that the Arminians had legitimate fears and good motivation in their opposition to the Reformed doctrine! But to continue, Dr. Berkouwer describes how the shift came about in the GKN:

The same problems came to expression in the gravamen that B.J. Brouwer, a physician, addressed to the Gereformeerde Synod. Brouwer was concerned about the morality of signing a subscription to the

creeds (which he was obliged, as an elder of the church, to do) while he objected to certain expressions in the Canons of Dordt, particularly their teaching of reprobation in I/6, 15 and I/8 (Rejection of Errors). The gravity of his objections is clear in the question he asked about the Canons' statement on the decree of reprobation: he asked whether the authors — unwittingly — were guilty of blasphemy, a question, he said, that he himself could not answer negatively.

The delegates at the Synod were unanimous in their understanding of the central thrust and intentions of the Canons: the unmerited sovereign grace of God. But the question was raised as to whether this fundamental intention had not been forced into the category of the "universal causality" of God. They pointed out that Brouwer's objections were directed at the doctrine of double predestination and, therewith, against the "eternal decree of reprobation." Most deeply, then, the gravamen touched on the question of the character of God and on His manner of relating to the human race. A synodical study commission concluded that the disputed sections of the Canons did not rest on the scriptural passages they cited, but were products of another source — namely the philosophical-theological concept of the all-causative God. "They are rooted in the doctrine of double predestination, of which election and reprobation are aspects of the unchangeable and eternal divine decree, a decree that is realized in time." But the commission also had to deal with the question of blasphemy that Brouwer raised. It acknowledged the real intention of the Canons — to put all possible emphasis on the sovereignty of God's love and grace for guilty and lost mankind, with which Brouwer agreed. But then it added that the disputed passages do "not speak in a correct way of the Lord God." The Synod then concluded that it was justifiable to "entertain and to publicize such objections as Dr. Brouwer brought against the passages in the Canons of Dordt." (*A Half Century Of Theology*, pp. 104-105).

The second item is a statement of Dr. Berkouwer himself in 1974. When he and Dr. Herman Ridderbos appeared at the Synod of the Hervormde Kerk to present the "Unanimous Testimony of Faith" (a kind of condensed new confession) in behalf of the GKN, and when they ran into considerable opposition from various quarters in the Hervormde Kerk, especially from men of the Gereformeerde Bond, Dr. Berkouwer was reported to have said, "We say 'No' to double predestination." After the synodical judgment about the Brouwer Gravamen, of course, Berkouwer was entirely within his rights to say this and to say this of the GKN. But I mention this in

order to illustrate concretely where the course begun in the 1950's ended in the 1970's.

Moreover, it ought to be clear as the sun in the heavens, first of all, that if Berkouwer's position in 1955-1982 had been that of the Synod of Dordt in 1618-19, the slander repudiated in the Conclusion of the Canons would never have been made by the Arminians, would never have had to be repudiated, and would not now appear in the Conclusion. In the second place, it ought to be plain that there has indeed been a *shift* in thinking since Dordt. Berkouwer himself calls it a shift. The men who take Berkouwer's position should all admit that they no longer stand where Dordt stood.

And now we turn to the American scene. When one analyzes what has been produced on this subject by American theologians — and I have in mind particularly Dr. Harry Boer and Dr. James Daane — he finds little that is new; most of it is repetition of men such as Polman, Ridderbos, and Berkouwer.

As might be expected, in his Gravamen which was treated by the Christian Reformed Synod in 1980, Dr. Boer also refers to the matter of that statement in the Conclusion of the Canons (Acts of Synod, 1980, p. 496). But he is not satisfied with it and wants Canons I/6, 15 repudiated. He writes:

We conclude: from the viewpoint of ultimacy, the source of faith is not a mystery. It is a gift of God. From the viewpoint of ultimacy, the origin of unbelief, like that of sin itself, is a mystery. We cannot penetrate into it. The statement in the Canons, "That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree (Chap. I, Art. 6)" is in its second part untrue and constitutes a denial of the nondisclosure in the Word of God of any cause of unbelief other than the heart of man. The rejection in the Conclusion of the Canons of the charge "that in the same manner (*eodem modo*) in which election is the fountain and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety" is not a credible withdrawing of the clearly contrary teaching of the Canons in Chapter I, Arts. 6 and 15. Rather it must be seen as a drawing back at the brink from the enormity of the consequences of a theological rationalism made by men who, on the one hand, did not have the courage to stand by what they had written and, on the other hand, refused to break with the logical premise that led them to it.

(to be continued)

***Know the Standard and Abide by it.
Read and Study The Standard Bearer.***

QUESTION BOX

The Battle of Armageddon

Rev. C. Hanko

A question from our readers:

"Will the battle of Armageddon take place in the future, at the end of time, as a military conflict, or is it a spiritual battle fought throughout the ages?"

This is an interesting question.

The first reference to the battle of Armageddon in the Book of Revelation is found in Revelation 14:18-20:

"And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

"And the winepress was trodden without the city, and the blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

We note that:

1. This vision obviously refers to the end of time. The angel comes out from the altar under which the souls of the martyred saints cry, "How long Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:9, 10). That time has now come. Moreover, this vision speaks of the final judgment upon the wicked, which is already mentioned in connection with the sixth trumpet (Revelation 9:13-21), and is here referred to as a treading of the grapes in the winepress of the wrath of God. According to verses 14-16 the church is already taken up into glory.

2. The grapes represent the antichristian kingdom consisting of those nations which have always borne the name of "Christianity," and also of the pagans, both of which have filled the measure of their iniquity by worshiping the beast. Thus all nations of the earth are gathered together in one place to be cast into the winepress of the wrath of God.

3. From verse 20 it becomes evident that they have been gathered together for battle, which becomes a great slaughter, such as the world has

never known. The blood reaches to the horse bridles, by the space of sixteen hundred furlongs. Considering the arms race of today and the modern war machinery we can already well imagine that this final battle will be a bloody conflict that takes millions of human lives and brings untold devastation.

We must conclude from this that this battle will be both a military conflict and a spiritual battle.

The next reference to this battle of Armageddon is found in Revelation 16:12-14, 16. There we read:

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates: and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

"For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

"....And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

1. Also here we should bear in mind the Scriptural principle, that whatever is plainly figurative must be interpreted as figurative, and that which can be taken literally must be interpreted as such.

2. Here we read of the sixth vial, which again brings us to the end of time. The emphasis falls on the fact that Christ is carrying out the contents of the book with its seven seals, the eternal counsel of the Most High God in Christ Jesus (Rev. 5, 6). Thus the time has arrived that the river Euphrates in the Old Testament always represented the dividing line between Israel and the nations, between the church and the world. We recall that Solomon's kingdom extended to the Euphrates. The kings of the East are referred to elsewhere as Gog and Magog, the pagan nations on the four corners of the earth. In the New Testament the river Euphrates, therefore, is still the symbolical dividing line between that which calls itself Christianity and the pagan nations. This separation will be removed, maybe literally (the Euphrates could dry up as a

sign), but in any case symbolically, so that the "Christian" nations and the pagans are temporarily united and finally join in mortal conflict, which in the real sense of the word will be a *world war*. It is interesting to notice that the history of this present time ends even where it began, in the area of the Euphrates River.

3. What happens, according to Scripture, is this: The devil stirs up the anti-christian political power, along with the false church, to arouse the nations, both those that profess to be the Christian nations and those which have always served idols, with a wicked, God-defying, Man-exalting propaganda to worship the beast, in order to wipe out the name of God and of His Christ, and also His cause from the face of the earth. The people of God are the sand in the oil of the machinery of this world power, the hindrance that must first be removed to make Man successful in setting up his throne on the earth as if he were God. The nuclear power, the large oil supplies, the advances in science, in medicine, in the realm of industry through its massive factories and machinery, and in commerce through its powerful means of transportation on land, on sea, and in the air, all give promise of an abundant life, which will attract all the peoples of the earth to marvel after and to worship Man, the source of all this grand, promising, endless future. The devil will seem to have attained his purpose at last; not God, but Satan through proud Man will rule the world.

4. He Who sits in the heavens laughs; God holds them in derision, for He has already exalted the hated, crucified Christ as Lord of lords and King of kings at His own right hand in the heavens. Fools that they are, Satan, demons, wicked men, are revealing the proud rebellion of their wicked hearts and are carrying out the counsel of the living God to their own condemnation. Man transgresses the entire law of the Ten Commandments by rejecting and cursing the God of heaven, exalting his own god, ruthlessly transgressing God's Sabbath, committing murder of babes and the unwanted, openly committing the grossest forms of fornication and adultery, justifying with its own wicked excuses every form of theft, backbiting, slander, in giving vent to all the covetousness of his wicked heart. He breaks all the laws which God has established in creation, so that he misuses the animal world and the vegetation until he has polluted the soil, the air, the lakes and rivers, and even polluted the seas with his garbage and nuclear wastes. Gradually God is visiting man's sin on his own head by pouring out the vials of His just wrath. Diseases, including social diseases, break out in uncontrolled epidemics. Famines sweep the earth. The sun burns hot in the heavens, making life unbearable, but also melting the glaciers, creating floods, tidal

waves, and other devastations on the earth. Modern man who boasts that he has conquered diseases, can renew damaged organs of the human body, can "almost" overcome death, discovers that he stands helpless over against the mighty Hand of the Most High.

5. This results in a bitter disillusionment for all those who worshiped the beast. Their god has legs and feet of iron mixed with clay. They turn against the beast in bitter rage. Meanwhile, because of their deep awareness of God and of His almighty power, they curse the God of heaven. The measure of their iniquity is full, so that there is not even a semblance of repentance any more. The "Christian" nations and the pagan nations arise in warfare against each other, simply because the pagan world thinks it can destroy God by attacking "Christianity." Together they are actually at war with God Almighty, pouring out their hatred against God and the neighbor. This last battle is both a spiritual and a military conflict.

This becomes evident from Revelation 19:11-15, 19:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse: and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his hand were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but himself.

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod and iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of God Almighty....

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."

Here our attention is called to:

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ coming to judge the nations of the earth. His entire appearance is one of a mighty Conqueror Who already has attained the victory. He is the Lord of glory Who has conquered over Satan, hell, sin, and death by His victory on the cross and His powerful resurrection from the dead. He has ascended to heaven where He has all power in heaven and on earth as Lord of lords and King of kings. He has already gone forth upon the white horse, conquering and to conquer (Rev. 6), causing His Word to be a power unto salvation for those given to Him by the Father, and causing that

same Word to be a savor of death unto death to those who reject the gospel in the hardness of their hearts.

2. The battle of the ages begun in paradise is now finished (Gen. 3:15). God has set enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Evidences throughout the Old Dispensation appear plainly in the fact that God gathers His people in the line of continued generations and causes the Christ to be born, even in spite of all the wicked attempts of Satan to prevent the Savior's birth. God defends His cause on the earth as is evident from the various references to Armageddon already in the Old Testament. Deborah and Barak are sent of God to destroy the Canaanites. According to Judges 5:19, a glorious victory is attained at the waters of Megiddo. God destroys the house of Ahab, who introduced the Baal worship as the national religion of the ten tribes. In the process of that destruction Ahaziah, king of Judah, is killed at Megiddo (II Kings 9:27). It was also at Megiddo that Josiah, the last good king of Israel, fell in battle. II Kings 23:26-29 tells us that the wrath of God turned against unrepentant Judah, because of their unfaithfulness and hardness of heart. Therefore God would deliver them over into the hands of Babylon and thus preserve His people, the remnant according to election of grace.

3. Through His victory on the cross Christ ascends to heaven to carry out the counsel of the Most High God, whereby Zion will be delivered through judgment. This is the theme of the Book of Revelation. The nations make themselves ripe for judgment by making warfare against God, His Christ, and His cause upon the earth. This reaches

its climax in the rise of antichrist. The church is persecuted, because that church is considered to be the sand in the oil of Satan's machinery. The nations are aroused to pay homage to the beast and to rejoice over their seeming victory over God and His Christ. But in the meantime the nations have abused God's creation, have corrupted the rivers, the soil, the air, and the seas with their greed and wicked use of God's creatures. Thus they bring upon themselves, to a great extent, their own destruction as the vials of God are poured out upon the earth. Sorely disillusioned, the nations arise in battle against God, ultimately blaming God for their obvious failure to dispose of Him, and thus they arise in warfare against each other.

4. It is very well possible that history will end, at least symbolically, where it began, at the Euphrates, of which we read that it will be dried up to open the way for the pagan nations to go to battle against "Christianity."

5. This battle results in a severe devastation upon the earth and the destruction of millions of people, maybe through nuclear warfare or something very similar. In that hopeless situation Christ appears, showing the whole world how useless was the battle of the ages in trying to fight God and His Anointed. Fools that they were, they have only shown their own hatred against God, have served His cause instead of destroying it, and have filled up the measure of their iniquity, so that God is justified in His righteous judgment.

The battle of Armageddon is the culmination of the battle of the ages, begun in paradise and carried on until the end of time.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missionary Methods (12)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

Crucial to the methodology of Dr. John L. Nevius are a number of factors: 1) There are to be as few paid native preachers (helpers) as possible. 2) The converts ought to build and maintain their own places of worship. 3) Leaders of individual mission stations ought to remain in their station and calling in life. 4) Ideally every convert ought to be the pupil of one more advanced in the faith than he and the teacher of one less advanced than he. By following these methods, Nevius argued, truly indigenous

churches can be planted and developed. Nevius himself, mind you, after some twenty years of labor in China, had only two paid helpers to assist him in the care of some one hundred fifty mission stations and young churches. (Cf. *Planting And Development of Missionary Churches*.)

Nevius continues by facing the question: "How shall we most effectually carry out the command of our Saviour, 'Feed My sheep,' 'Feed My lambs' " (p.

35). Many, perhaps most missionaries and church leaders, would reply: "by training native preachers." At the time; this work was being done by the leaders of each mission station. Nevius argues that "no other plan is possible" (p. 35). It would be impossible to obtain native preachers for teaching and preaching in the one hundred and fifty stations already established. At the time, according to Nevius, there were only less than a dozen candidates for the ministry in the entire field. All the while, Nevius reports, the number of stations is increasing. Still more, even if the ministerial candidates were available it would be impossible for the converts to support them. And, writes Nevius "...if the foreign Boards were able to assume this burden, their doing so would establish a precedent which would add very much to the difficulties of making native churches independent and self-supporting in the future" (p. 35).

Nevius continues: "In my opinion we may go a step further, and say that the introduction of paid teachers in each station, even if it were possible, would not at present be desirable. The leaders understand better than a person from a distance could, the individual peculiarities of the neighbors, and also the tones and inflections of the local dialect, local expressions, illustrations, and habits of thought. They are likely to be more interested in those about them, most of whom may be called their own converts, than any one else could be, and are more disposed to give them the care and attention necessary in instructing beginners. In teaching they set an example to others, a larger number of teachers is thus secured than could be obtained in any other way, and learning and teaching go on together, the one preparing for the other, and the teaching being an important part of the learning, perhaps quite as useful to the teacher as to the taught. Though the knowledge of the leaders may be elementary and incomplete, they are quite in advance of the other church members and inquirers, and what they do know is just what the others need first to learn. The leaders are especially fitted to communicate this knowledge, simply because they are not widely separated in intelligence and sympathy from those who are to be taught" (pp. 35, 36).

Nevius continues his argument against using paid, native preachers on practical grounds. Preaching, "in its specific sense of logical and more or less elaborate dissertation," simply would not be effective in the China of his day (p. 36). In other words, preaching as we experience it in our churches, a forty-five to sixty minute exposition of a specific text or passage of Scripture, simply would not be an effective means of reaching the Chinese. Nevius writes: "We should remember that contin-

uous discourse is something which is almost unknown in China. Even educated Chinamen follow it with difficulty. A carefully prepared sermon from a trained native preacher or a foreign missionary, such a sermon as would be admirably suited to an intelligent educated Christian congregation, is out of place in a new station. From the fact that it is adapted to another kind of congregation, it is by necessary consequence unsuitable here. An attempt at formal preaching by those who have neither the Scriptural knowledge nor the intellectual and practical training to fit them for it is still more to be deprecated. We who are accustomed from childhood to instruction by lectures and sermons, naturally and very properly introduce them in the mission centers where we (the missionaries, Dr. Nevius and his paid helpers) are located; and our personal teachers and pupils trained in our schools become accustomed to them and are profited by them. In the country stations a few of the more advanced Christians may be benefited by a sermon, but to the great body of hearers who most need instruction it would be like listening to utterances in an unknown tongue. This kind of preaching gives rise in the Church from its very infancy to a kind of formalism which is almost fatal to growth and progress. The congregation rises, or sits, or kneels as directed, and may maintain a reverent attitude and listen, or have the appearance of listening, to what is said: in a word they have a service and go home with their consciences satisfied, but their minds not enlightened. Even the Quaker method of sitting before God in silent meditation or mute reverence would be preferable to having the mind distracted by allusions to something they have not heard of, thoughts beyond their reach and processes of reasoning which they cannot follow. I am far from saying no good is accomplished. Those who engage in such a service, as many of them do, feeling that they are offering homage and worship to the true God their Heavenly Father, though they may only catch an occasional idea from a prayer, or an exhortation, or a sermon, will be benefited, and their worship will no doubt be accepted. Most of the persons in our congregations are, as regards their mental development, in the condition of children and have to be treated as such" (pp. 36, 37).

This is the heart of Nevius' argument for his plan or method of mission work. Much of what Nevius says about the Chinese not being able to benefit from a "formal, logical, and more or less elaborate dissertation" is true. Not only so, but this is true of any mission field including even domestic fields. The church in its mission work is reaching out to the unconverted elect, and is preaching to and teaching recently converted people of God. These

people are "novices" to the faith. They are unfamiliar with the Bible, the Creeds of the church, the history of the church, Biblical concepts and doctrines. But this is certainly no reason to minimize or discard preaching! For all of the good in Nevius' method this is the weakness of his plan. All agree that the goal must be self-supporting, self-governing, indigenous churches. All agree that the converts must be taught to be witnesses of the gospel and that they must teach others by word of mouth and by the example of their Christian lives. All agree that there should be no native preachers paid by the mission and no churches or schools built by the mission. But there must be the preaching of the gospel!

There must be preaching, for the simple reason that Scripture demands it. The clear testimony of the Word of God is: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). In order to call upon the name of the Lord one must believe in Christ. In order to believe in Christ one must hear Christ. The only way one is able to hear Christ is through a preacher who is sent (cf. Romans 10:14-15). The simple fact is, it pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them who believe (I Corinthians 1:17-31). Whatever else the missionary does on the field he must preach Christ crucified. By this means the sheep of Christ hear His voice, are known by the Good Shepherd, and follow Him (cf. John 10).

We still face the practical problem which Dr. Nevius cites and which is faced by every missionary. How can the missionary preach to those who have never heard the gospel and to those who are novices to the faith? Nevius claimed that to the "great body of hearers who most need instruction it (preaching, R.D.D.) would be like listening to utterances in an unknown tongue" (p. 37). This would be true if one understands preaching to be a forty-five minute sermon as preached in the sending churches. It is the unanimous testimony, for example, of the ministers who have labored in the

Protestant Reformed Mission in Jamaica that one cannot preach *there* as he preaches in the churches *here*. This is just the point, and this is what mission work is all about! If we understand preaching to be the exposition of the Word of God as it applies to the lives of those who hear it by one who is called by Christ through the church, there is no difficulty. The point is that the preaching must be *adapted* to the peculiar needs and situation of the people to whom it is addressed. The problem is not new, nor did it first surface in China in Nevius' day. The Apostles, especially Paul, faced the same problem in their labors. This is what he wrote to the Corinthians: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (chapter 3:1, 2). One cannot feed an infant a piece of steak. Neither ought a missionary attempt to feed spiritual babes a diet of the solid meat of the gospel. They need the milk of the Word. When the spiritual babes have grown by means of the milk of the Word they may be nourished by the meat of that Word. This is the teaching of Hebrews 5:13, 14 as well: "For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Mission preaching must be simplified. Great care must be taken in the exposition of the Word to explain every concept, every doctrine, in language the people can understand. This may take the form of several ten minute expositions, interspersed by questions and answers and/or singing. Whatever the particular format, the missionary must preach the gospel, for "it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). For this reason too the missionaries must look for and train those converts whom the Lord calls to the ministry. About this we shall have more in future articles.

IN HIS FEAR

Christian Attitudes Towards Sex (Part II)

Rev. Arie den Hartog

The urgent calling of the Christian young man and young woman is to live chastely before the Lord. We are exhorted by the Word of God to flee fornication and uncleanness in all of its forms.

Knowing that the Lord hates the sins of immorality, as we saw in our last article, we must keep ourselves pure and holy and undefiled. We must maintain absolutely that God has ordained the use of our

sexual nature only for marriage. Our calling as young people is to exercise self-control and self-restraint so that we might keep ourselves holy and undefiled for the marriage partner that the Lord will give to us. In living this way we shall surely be radically different from the world. But the whole Bible calls us to be different in all areas of our lives. As the world grows more and more immoral and all restraints on the sins of fornication and adultery are removed, it becomes increasingly urgent that we live opposite to the world. Also it becomes increasingly urgent that we do not allow our moral sensitivity for the holy commandments of God to be in any way dulled. We must steadfastly guard against the great danger of conforming our attitudes to the world, because almost everyone around us is living in immorality. The apostle Paul by the inspiration of the Spirit of God urges us: "But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you in vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:3-6). This is plain language. You young people can easily understand it. It speaks very loudly and forcefully. We could well underline each phrase of these verses separately. When we adhere very strongly to moral principles we will be counted square in the world but we will stand firmly upon the clear teaching of the Word of God. Many are the vain talkers in the world who are saying that fornication among young people before marriage is perfectly innocent. Many teachers of our day are encouraging young people to experiment with sex before marriage. Many are saying that it is wrong to deprive young people of the pleasures and excitement of sex. Be not deceived by all this wicked worldly philosophy. There is a fearful and dreadful judgment from the holy God of heaven and earth coming upon all those who live in immorality and uncleanness.

The motive out of which we are to keep ourselves holy and pure must be first of all the love of God. We as Reformed Christians know that all our doctrine must be God-centered and God-glorifying. But let us also remember that our lives must be God-centered and God-glorifying. We must love holiness and purity because our God is the holy God and this is pleasing in His sight. We must be constrained in this area of our lives by the great motive of the love of God. The wicked world in which we live is entirely man-centered. Therefore

the motive of the man of the world is strictly that which is pleasurable and beneficial to himself, that which satisfies his own passions and lusts. It is said that as long as something is pleasurable and does not hurt anyone else then it cannot be wrong. Now it is simply not true that when one engages in fornication with another person he does not hurt that person. That is simply impossible. When you sin against someone, you always hurt him. When you sin with another person you bring down upon yourself and that person the awful wrath and judgment of God. Nevertheless the absolutely most important question for the Christian in all of his life must be what is pleasing unto the Lord and what is an abomination in His sight and an offense against His holy majesty. May we as young people always live out of this motive, then we will be strong and we will keep ourselves holy.

We have a great example in the godly young Joseph. You will remember when he was severely tempted by the wicked wife of Potiphar. Surely humanly speaking this was a great temptation for Joseph. Joseph was a young man with like passions with all of us. Surely he could have been flattered by the proposition of this woman of high standing and honor. Humanly speaking he could have been overwhelmed by his mannish passions. Furthermore the advances of this woman were so persistent. There was opportunity to commit the sin of fornication in complete secrecy from human knowledge. But Joseph said to the wife of Potiphar: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" What a powerful answer that was. May we as young people have the grace of God in our hearts to answer every temptation to fornication with such words.

Another passage that brings out very wonderfully the motive out of which we are to live chastely before the Lord is found in I Corinthians 6:18-20: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Wonderful things are told us in these verses about who and what we are as Christians. Imagine, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit! What a tremendous thing this is! God, the Holy God Himself, dwells in our bodies. What great reason that is for keeping our bodies pure and holy! Ought we not to be filled with holy zeal to keep the temple of the Lord pure? We have been purchased with the precious blood of the Son of God. What a tremendous cost our Lord paid for our redemption. He redeemed us from all of the

corruption of sin. Ought we then not keep our bodies from the awful defilement of immorality? We belong to God. We are His possession. He owns us. He is the Lord of our life. Considering this surely ought to constrain us to keep from giving our bodies over to lust and sin, and to use them rather for the service and glory of God. Let us present our bodies, also the sexual aspect of our bodies, as a holy sacrifice unto the Lord which is our solemn obligation and calling.

In I Thessalonians 4:3 and 4 we read: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." It should be our greatest desire in our life to do the will of God. To use our sexual nature in holiness and sanctification is the will of God for us; this is pleasing in His sight, in this He takes great delight. Surely there is no greater good imaginable, young people, than to have the favor and blessing of the Lord upon your life.

The great beauty of the godly woman according to I Peter 3 is not to be found in outward adornment of any kind. Her great beauty is to be found in that she has a chaste conversation coupled with fear. As a young woman you want to be beautiful. Strive to possess true spiritual and lasting beauty. Strive to be beautiful first of all in the sight of God and then you shall also be truly beautiful before men.

Though the love of God must surely be the highest motive for living chastely, it is also true that when we live chastely with our brothers and sisters in the Lord we love them in the highest sense of the word. It is not love in any sense of the word to commit fornication together. It cannot be love. To do this is to defraud and dishonor one another in one of the profoundest ways imaginable. It is love always to exercise restraint and self-control in dealing with one another. It is a hateful disregard of one another's honor to give way to temptation and lust and to go on to use and abuse one another. It is love in the true and holy sense of the word to keep yourself undefiled for your God-given marriage partner. It is pure and holy and wonderful love so to keep your bodies that you can give yourself for the first time and only to your beloved on the marriage bed. This kind of love is entirely unmatched by all of the lust and fornication that the world calls love. Let no man deceive you with vain words.

There is no need for sexual experimentations before marriage. Fornication will not train you to live in holy and faithful love with one another after marriage. The best training for marriage is the training of lovingly honoring one another and

exercising self-control and restraint. You need not know all the techniques of sex before marriage. The best place to learn these techniques is upon the undefiled marriage bed in which you give yourself in faithful love to each other.

Many practical questions have been asked relating to the proper use of our sexual nature before marriage. What is proper activity for Christian young people when they are dating? Certainly dating is a very wonderful and exciting activity for young people. It can by the grace of God be a holy activity if it is not spoiled by the great evil of fornication. It is the time when a young man and young woman come really to know what the opposite sex is like. It is a time for you to experience the great thrill, excitement, and mystery of boy/girl relationships. Times of courting can be some of the happiest and most exciting times of your life. How sad when all that is spoiled by sin. It is urgent that you prevent this from happening. It is urgent that you always seek the blessing and favor of the Lord upon all your activities together. Be aware of the power of your sinful nature. Be steadfast and strong against the temptation to sin. Do not place yourself in tempting circumstances. Today most of the world is saying that heavy petting is perfectly innocent activity for Christian young people to be engaged in. Some who want to seem to be a little less liberal suggest that such petting is permissible as long as there are agreed upon restraints. The vain talkers of the world say today, let young people enjoy some of the great excitement and pleasure of sex. Do not restrain them from heavy petting, passionate embracing and kissing, playing with each other's bodies. Be not deceived, this is great sin in the sight of God. Young people must know that they have committed the great sin of fornication long before they lay with each other in bed. Furthermore, our sexual nature is such that petting and fondling is the prelude to sexual intercourse. It is unnatural when it is not and it will cause all kinds of strains and frustrations. It is simply the case that when young people engage in petting they will go deeper and deeper into sin. They will more and more and more give themselves over to use and abuse one another. This is a great evil. When a young man touches the private parts of a young woman to whom he is not married he has already grievously violated her honor and defrauded her. We as young people must keep ourselves far distant from this great evil.

Another prevalent sin, especially among young men, is the sin of masturbation. We find that there are many vain talkers in the world and also in what calls itself the church concerning this sin. Many today are suggesting that this is a purely harmless activity. The more liberal are saying that young

men should be encouraged to find sexual release in this manner rather than to engage in "antisocial behavior." Many suggest that to restrain such activity and to denounce it as sin will only cause great psychological frustration and maybe even do permanent damage. The Bible condemns this activity as sin. In the first place it involves the perversion of our sexual nature for a use which is contrary to nature and to the ordinance of God. God ordained that we must use our sexual nature only in the holy loving relationship of marriage and not for the gratification of our own sinful passions and lusts. Secondly, this practice always involves the sin of adultery in the heart which our Lord condemns. It is simply impossible that the Christian man engaged in such activity could be using his body in the service and glory of God.

According to the Word of God we must keep ourselves pure, not only in our outward actions, but also in our hearts and in our thoughts. Our Lord Jesus states in the Sermon on the Mount that "who-soever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." This word of the Lord has also been much gainsaid in the wicked world today and also by the apostate church. The world in which we live is filled with things that are intended to fill the heart and mind of man with all kinds of immorality. Much of the world's pleasure and entertainment is found in watching immoral films that openly display nudity and the sex act and all kinds of adultery and fornication among men and women. Many in the church today suggest that this is good art and acceptable entertainment for the "Christian." If the Christian finds pleasure in watching these things there is something very seriously spiritually wrong with him. In almost all places of the world today one can obtain books and magazines that portray nakedness in the grossest imaginable way. It is a great evil for Christians to read and look at these. It will surely fill his heart and mind with great sin.

We as Christians know that God judges not only our outward actions but also our heart and our mind, our thoughts and our desires. It is quite possible for man to put on an outward show of being righteous and holy while in his mind and heart he is wicked. We know that our hearts are by nature desperately wicked. The Christian has the calling to keep his mind and heart pure. It is necessary for us to fight against every evil thought and desire that comes into our mind and heart. We do great evil in the sight of God when we allow evil thoughts and desires to reign freely in us. We must flee every temptation to evil thoughts and desires. We must turn our eyes away from the sexy girls of the world. We must exercise utmost spiritual care and watchfulness over our thoughts and heart to

keep out the great immorality of the world. We must fill our minds with "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, we must think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). What a tremendous calling this is and what a far cry it is from the world and what is advocated in the apostate church.

We must still say something about dress, especially to young woman. The women of the world love to dress in such a way that they excite the men of the world to sinful thoughts and desires. They find great excitement in wearing clothes that will turn the eyes of all men towards them. The Christian young woman must have no part of this at all. For her it is a grievous thing that the men of the world should be looking at her with evil thoughts and desires. The Christian young woman knows the wickedness of man's heart and she knows the great power of the woman's body to entice and suggest evil. Therefore she must be deeply conscious of the manner in which she dresses. There is no need of long lists of what a young Christian woman may wear and what she may not wear. She well knows that she must not wear clothes that are unusually revealing and suggestive. She must not wear clothes such as small two-piece bathing suits and skimpy shorts. To wear such is a great evil. It does not matter if all the rest of the world is wearing them and even professedly Christian young girls. The young woman truly motivated by the love of God and also love for her brothers in the Lord will wear nothing that would possibly lead another to sin in his heart.

For young people to live chastely is a very difficult calling. It is becoming increasingly difficult in the world in which we live, a world filled with adultery and fornication. You are faced with tremendous pressures and temptations to sin. Perhaps your life is more difficult than that of any generation before you. Many young people in your day have given themselves over to great evil. Your sinful nature is such that you too can easily come under the dominion of this powerful evil. The answer is to stand fast and to stand strong in the grace and Spirit of God. The answer is not to relax the standards; the answer is not to remove restraints and to allow the "freedom" of lust and fornication and adultery. The answer is to be strong in the power of His might, knowing that by this power you can and will be preserved also from this great evil of the world. The answer is to have the courage to be different and to be ready to stand against the whole world. By keeping yourself holy and pure you will bring great glory to the name of God. By keeping yourself holy you do much to pre-

pare yourself for a happy and blessed marriage and also for proper fulfillment and sanctified use of your sexual nature.

Keep your thoughts pure.

GUEST ARTICLE

The Responsibility to Make Confession of Faith

Rev. Ronald Cammenga

Making public confession of faith has been called the Christian's Mount Sinai. What Sinai was for the children of Israel, that confession of faith should be to the Christian. At Mount Sinai the children of Israel did not *become* the covenant people of God. They *were* God's covenant people already. It was only because they were the covenant people of God that God had delivered them out of the land of Egypt. But it was at Mount Sinai that the children of Israel willingly assumed their full responsibility as God's covenant people. There they received God's Word and Law. And there they willingly responded, "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:8). So it is with the believer who makes confession of his faith. At the moment of confession of faith he does not become a member of the church. The young person who makes public confession of faith is not by his confession "joining the church." Too often this seems to be the understanding of confession of faith. But this view is essentially Baptist and ought not be the way in which confession of faith is viewed in Reformed churches. The fact is that by virtue of their baptism the infants of believers are members of the church. That's brought out in the first question asked parents at the time they present their children for 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?" Reformed believers hold that, already in their earliest infancy, even while they are yet in their mother's womb, the children of believers are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. For this reason God's Word in I Corinthians 7:14 speaks of the children of believers as "holy." By virtue of the work of the Holy Spirit within them, already as infants and children, they are members of God's church. Yet, by making public confession of faith,

like Israel at Sinai, they assume the full responsibilities for members of God's church and covenant. At this occasion they not only profess faith in God, but they say too, "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do." A baptized member of the church, therefore, is an undeveloped, immature member. During his childhood and youth he matures and grows. Ordinarily, as he grows physically and psychologically, he also grows spiritually. At the time when he arrives at spiritual maturity, the time when he understands the privileges and obligations of church membership and is ready willingly to assume these, he ought to make public confession of faith.

Confession of faith is a momentous occasion. It is a momentous occasion in the life of the young person who makes confession of faith. It is a momentous occasion for his parents and pastor who have labored with a view to and prayed to God for his confession of faith. It goes without saying that no young person ought recklessly to make public confession of faith. The seriousness of confession may not be trifled with. And certainly no young person ought to dare to make confession of faith for a wrong reason. You may not make confession of faith because everyone else your age seems to be doing it. You may not make confession of faith because some of your friends are doing it. You may not make confession of faith because your parents are pressuring you, or because you want to get out of going to catechism, or from some other ulterior motive. Confession of faith demands sincerity. The young person who is considering making confession of faith must be thoroughly convinced that he will make confession before the very face of God and that God will certainly hold him responsible for his confession. He must be impressed with the fact that confession of faith amounts to swearing an oath before God and His church. It is serious business, to be sure.

And yet, the young people of the church must be impressed with the fact that confession of faith is also a solemn responsibility. This aspect of confession of faith must never be lost from sight. Confession of faith is a great privilege. The young person who makes confession of faith ought to count it a great privilege that he may make confession of faith. He ought to count it a great privilege to have been born of believing parents, to have been brought up in the truth of God's Word. He ought to count it a great privilege that God has seen fit to work faith in his heart, under the preaching of the Word and in the church. No question about it, it is a great privilege to be able to stand up in the congregation and confess our faith in the Lord Jesus. But besides being a privilege, confession of faith is also a responsibility.

Sometimes I fear that the young people are not sufficiently impressed with that. Is it perhaps because you fail to see this that some of you hesitate making confession of faith? And not only the young people themselves are to blame. Have we as pastors and officebearers and parents done all that we should to impress this upon our young people, their responsibility before God to make confession of faith? Have we explained carefully to them why this is their responsibility? Has this responsibility been laid before them in the sermons?

There are those who question or deny this responsibility of making public confession of faith in the church. There are many denominations which maintain that the church does not have the right to require this confession. A few centuries ago, the Arminians in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands denied this authority to the church. These people point out that nowhere does Scripture explicitly require this confession when the young people arrive at years of discretion and before they are allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. How can this practice in our churches be maintained, therefore? And on what do we base the responsibility of making public confession of faith?

The responsibility to make public confession of faith is based, first of all, on the general calling that the Scriptures place upon the people of God to confess God's name in the world. Many passages of Scripture bring out this calling. Christ Himself says in Matthew 10:32, 33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." Not only does Christ lay before us our calling publicly to confess Him, in this passage, but He also makes plain here that there are only two alternatives. If we are not confessing Him, we are guilty of

denying Him. Not to confess Him is to deny Him. In Romans 10:9, 10 we read: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Surely there is nothing strange or un-Biblical in the fact that the church should require of adult members a confession of faith. This is something to which the Word of God everywhere calls us. Confession of our faith is simply part of our life. It ought to be as spontaneous as breathing.

But, secondly, there is another reason why Reformed churches insist on a confession of faith by the young people when they arrive at years of discretion. This reason has to do with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The question whether the church has the authority to demand a confession of faith is closely bound up with our view of the Lord's Supper. Those in the past who denied this authority to the church maintained what is called "open" or "free" admission to the Lord's Table. They maintained that attendance at the Lord's Table is exclusively a matter of the personal conscience of the individual attending. Whether or not he would attend was his decision alone. Those who maintained the authority of the church to require public confession of faith did so because they also maintained that attendance at the Lord's Table is not only a personal matter, but subject to the jurisdiction of the church. Responsibility for the Lord's Supper is a responsibility which the church has. This is the Reformed view of the sacrament. This is the view which we, as a Reformed church, have. The Scriptures teach that the Lord has entrusted the sacraments to the church. The church administers the sacraments. And the church has been given by God the responsibility to guard them against misuse and desecration. (Cf. a passage like I Cor. 11 and the Heidelberg Catechism, Q.A. 81, 82.) The practice of requiring a public confession of faith is based upon the church's responsibility to guard the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Since the time of the Reformation, Reformed churches have exercised control over the Lord's Table by means of public confession of faith. Insisting on a public confession of faith before admission to the sacrament is one way in which the church fulfills her responsibility before God in regard to the sacrament.

Ultimately, therefore, the responsibility of the young people to make public confession of faith is just their responsibility to partake of the Lord's Supper. In instituting the Lord's Supper, Christ said, "*Take, eat, this is My body. Drink ye all of it.*" Those were commands, imperatives. Christ

obligates every adult believer to partake of this means of grace, the Supper. The Apostle Paul, in I Corinthians 11:29, teaches us that when we are able to discern the Lord's body in the sacrament, we ought to partake of the sacrament. We must be impressed with the duty that is ours to use this means of grace. And being impressed with our duty

to use the sacrament, we must also be impressed with the attendant duty of making public confession of our faith.

This is your responsibility, young people. Don't neglect your responsibility before God. Don't hesitate; don't draw back. But prayerfully, by His grace, carry it out.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Spiritual Submission to One Another

Rev. G. Lubbers

There are certain terms in the Bible which we need to study with great care, and they must be interpreted in the light of the immediate context, as well as in the broader context of all the Scriptures.

The Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter both speak of the *spiritual submission* which all Christians, be they men or women, owe to one another in the fear of God.

It is well that this be noticed in this day in which we live.

This is a day in which there is a very great evil under the sun. It is the evil that women in the church aspire to be officebearers in the church, to be ministers, elders, and deacons. And there are many denominations which fall into this error. And, it is true, that we who stand must beware lest we fall. And may the Lord of His church Himself keep us in His ordinances.

There is a sobering word from the pen of Paul in Ephesians 5:21 which we ought to take to heart in these days, lest we give foolish and ill-advised directions in the battle. We all are inclined to one-sidedness when we take up the cudgel to defend the ramparts of God's church. And we must warn each other against the evil of one-sidedness, lest we not preach and teach the whole counsel of God.

We read in Ephesians 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

There is a difference of opinion concerning the proper interpretation of the participle "submitting." In the Greek text we read *Hupotassomenoi*. If this cannot be read as "an imperative" and the beginning of a new paragraph as is suggested by A.T. Robertson in his *Word Pictures* on this passage, then it is a participle in line with the former participles, "speaking, singing, giving thanks," in verses

19 and 20. And then it is an activity and manifestation of being "filled with (in) the Spirit."

The meaning of the verb "to submit" is very clear in its current usage in the Scriptures. The term is used in Classic Greek in a military sense, of a soldier submitting to his general and superiors. However, in the Bible the term is not used merely of such a relationship among men. Basically it is used of our deepest attitude toward God. That is the use of the term in James 4:7. In the context we read that God resists the proud and lofty and that He gives grace to the lowly. Only by being lowly will we avoid "wars and fightings" among us (James 4:1-5).

And so James says, "Submit yourselves therefore unto God."

This takes us out of the clutches of the Evil One.

In our basic attitude toward God we are to submit ourselves unto the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. This unbelievers refused to do and therefore they perished in their sins, submitting to their own righteousness (Rom. 10:3).

Yea, we are to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Only thus do believers submit to God Whose servants they are (I Peter 2:13; Rom. 13:1-4). We are not to be wiser than God, nor are we to be revolutionaries. There were ever, and there are ever, zealots who disobeyed God and came to ruin by the dictum of Jesus: He that uses the sword perishes with the sword (Matt. 26:52). They did not submit to God, no more than would the Jews in Jeremiah's day, who refused to receive the prophecy that Israel must prepare for seventy years of captivity in Babylon (Jer. 25:1-14).

This is the strong word which Paul employs here in the text, be it in a participle construction, "be ye

filled with the Spirit," or whether it must be read as an imperative. In either case it falls under Christian admonitions, and a precept of the Gospel, for the Spirit-filled believer.

For it must not be overlooked that this is a "submission" in the fear of God. The term "fear of God" may sometimes be taken in the objective sense of the term. Fear then refers to the godly teaching. This hardly seems to be the meaning here. This refers to subjective, godly fear, which is the very beginning, the principle of wisdom. A man who seeks for and finds such wisdom is a happy, a blessed man indeed (Prov. 3:13).

Now it ought to be observed that whether this is an imperative verb mood, or whether it is a participle depending on "filled with the Spirit" (vs. 19), the simple truth of the matter is that this is to be a universal, reciprocal submission to "one another." This, of course, refers to the members of the body of Christ. It is the manifestation of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-3). It is a walking worthy of our calling in Christ Jesus in all meekness.

In this way we buy out the time in these evil days.

Submit yourselves to one another in the fear of God.

Does Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Who leads into all truth, mean that there are exceptions and relationships in life where this is not true? Notice that in the very next verse he writes, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord." Does this veto the injunction of the Lord to husbands to submit to their wives in the fear of God? Does Paul mean to say: husbands, you only rule over your wives; they only submit? Paul does not say: wives submit — husbands rule. Look carefully what Paul writes here. The injunctions are: wives submit and husbands *love*! Yes, love even as Christ loved the church. Here is not some worldly male chauvinistic dominion on the part of the male believers in the church. Both men and women are under their Lord in heaven!

Both are told to walk in the fear of God!

And this is not some mere "principle" arrived at by human deduction, but it is the declared, explicitly declared will of God. This is just as clear and explicit and exalted as the fifth commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother" (cf. Eph. 6:1-3).

There is a sense, therefore, in which the man in the church is to be submissive to the woman in the church. Paul does not teach that only women are to be submissive in the Lord, but also men are to be in such godly submission in the Lord.

That Paul teaches this in this text is really beyond

dispute, isn't it?

Perhaps an instance from Scripture will verify this point for the reader.

We all know the classic passages from I Peter 3:1-6 which will teach us what the will of the Lord is in this matter. And we are interested what the will of the Lord is; that alone can be binding on our conscience. And then I would have you notice how Peter points to Sarah, the free woman, as the great example of meekness. She was really a princess of a woman; she must have had remarkable grace and beauty, even at an advanced age. Twice her weak husband had allowed her to fall into the hands of adulterous kings (Gen. 20:5 and Gen. 12:19). Only the intervention of God Almighty had spared Abraham disaster. Yes, Sarah was submissive to her husband, when she connived with him. But neither were obedient to the Lord in these sad incidents in which Abraham sought to save his own life, by speaking half-truths concerning his good-looking wife.

Yes, Sarah had internal beauty before the Lord. In her was the hidden man of a meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price. That is the Sarah which Peter says the women, the frivolous and vain women must emulate. With such women Paul was dealing. The beauty parlor beauties!

But there is another Sarah, too, to whom Abraham is told to subject himself in the fear of God. And well might Abraham fear, and well may any husband fear if his wife speaks to him as did Sarah to Abraham. I am not referring to that very bad advice of Sarah to Abraham to raise up seed on her knees from Hagar her Egyptian handmaid, her slave-girl. That backfired badly for both of them. That was not walking objectively in the "fear", in the revealed will concerning God's promise (Gen. 15:1-6). Abraham did not here walk in the revealed will concerning the promised seed, in whom all nations would be blessed. They were both disobedient. Neither one submitted to the other in the fear of God. Both were disobedient. And Abraham should have firmly resisted this temptation and walked "in hope against hope" (Rom. 4:18). And then a son is born, but he is to be forever the picture of the people who are brought forth unto eternal bondage (Gal. 4:24).

But there is another Sarah.

It was really a happy moment for this aged ninety-year-old wife of Abraham, childless, barren! And now the word comes that she shall have a son at the set time. This is told her while both she and her husband are dead (Rom. 4:19, 20; Heb. 11:11, 12). And when told of this son she thinks of her impotent husband. Old man that he is become,

ninety and nine years old. And she laughs with a very quiet, doubtful laugh in her heart. And she speaks of her husband and calls him "my adonai," my lord! That is the incident Peter refers to when he says, "Calling him her lord."

Now you might say: Sarah was submissive. Yes, she was in the Lord, as later Elizabeth, the mother of John must have been. And Abraham too was submissive in the Lord, as was Zacharias, after he had been smitten with dumbness. And when Zacharias intervenes in the naming of the son, whom the neighbors would name Zacharias, and when he writes and says, his name is John, Jehovah is gracious, that was submission in the fear of God.

But that does not tell the complete story of all the Scriptural ramifications of this submission unto God in the fear of God on the part of Abraham and Sarah!

There is more to be said if we are to preach the full counsel of God. And let the wise take it to heart: *Sapienti sat!*

There came a time when Abraham had really to submit to his wife in the fear of God. And well may

every Christian husband take this to heart for his salvation's sake. It was at the occasion of the weaning of Isaac. Abraham was very happy in having an heir son. And this must have galled Hagar and her son, Ishmael. For Ishmael mocked Isaac and reviled him and *persecuted* him (Gal. 4:29). And it is at this feast that we see Sarah rise as a woman in Israel and she rebukes her husband saying, "cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac" (Gen. 21:10).

Abraham did not desire to submit. The Lord must come and take the side of Sarah. She submitted herself to her husband in the fear of God, but in such a way that Abraham must submit to her in the fear of God.

She spoke the very oracles of God.

May we have many mothers in Israel who speak the oracles of God to their husbands and to their children.

Let us all be submissive to each other in the fear of God, being filled with the Spirit of Christ.

Open Letter of Thanks

To: The Saints of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

From: Mr. & Mrs. Lau Chin Kwee
Singapore Address:
Apt. Block 99, 170-G, Whampoa Drive
Singapore 1232.
Republic of Singapore.
May 17, 1982

Dear brothers and sisters,

Greetings to you in the Name of our Almighty, Sovereign God of Heaven and Earth; the Covenant God Who has done wondrous things in ages gone by and even now in our midst! Amen.

By the time we leave for Singapore, the Lord willing, on June 9, 1982, we would have spent our profitable 22 months in your midst. As a denomination of 58 years old, you certainly have a lot to teach us over the pulpits, at the seminary, in your private homes, in the schools and in your individual lives. For all these we are thankful to our Covenant God and to you, His people, without whose prayer and financial support this dream would never have come true. The truth which we have seen and heard of you, we are most eager to impart to our own people in Singapore. But, who is

sufficient for these things? So remember to pray for us that we may not corrupt His Word, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God we may speak in Christ.

Soon, we will be going home and the thought of saying 'farewell' brings to memory the many countless incidents of kindness and hospitality shown to us, unworthy creatures. We are indebted to so many of you that to list all your names is an impossibility in this short letter, nor is it wise seeing that the praise of God is to be desired rather than the praise of men. But, we especially want to thank the 3 professors of your seminary who had helped me to accomplish that which the church in Singapore sent me here to do, that is, to study for the ministry of the Word of God.

Good-bye, then, our friends and brethren in Christ! If we do not meet again on this side of Jordan, we will on that other, by His grace. Meanwhile, let us be faithful on our part to "cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in Him, and love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life."

Good-bye and thank you!

Book Reviews

EERDMAN'S HANDBOOK TO THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS, R. Pierce Beaver et al, Consulting Editors; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 448 pp. (cloth) \$21.95. [Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema]

This is an excellent reference work. It is loaded with information concerning the ancient religions of Egypt, Greece, Rome, and northern Europe. It has a very interesting and informative section on religions of the Orient, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc. It contains a large section on Judaism and Islam. The book has over two hundred photographs, one hundred of which are in full color. It contains numerous charts and maps. And at the end of the book is a section called the "Rapid Fact-finder section," in which one can very quickly find brief information concerning various aspects of one or another religion. All in all, this very beautifully published book can serve as a good addition to one's reference shelf.

A note of caution is necessary, however. The approach of the book to the development of religion is evolutionistic. The book's treatment of Judaism is very faulty because of a serious failure to take into account the unity of the old and the new dispensations and the fact that the religion of the Old Testament and that of the New are one and the same. And the book's approach to the subject of Christianity also leaves very much to be desired. All of this means that one's use of the book must be strictly limited to the information and the facts furnished. One has to ignore the evaluations given and the explanations of origin. Naturally, this also detracts from the value of the book.

Nevertheless, if one uses a book of this kind with discretion, it can be a valuable reference work.

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH (New International Commentary On The Old Testament), J.A. Thompson; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 819 pp. (cloth) \$22.50 (Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema)

This large volume is one of a projected series on the Old Testament. In this series, now under the General Editorship of R.K. Harrison, various Old Testament scholars contribute commentaries on the various books of the Old Testament. It stands to reason that the quality of the commentaries differs with the quality of the commentators.

This is a rather helpful volume. Perhaps its strength lies in the large introductory section,

which covers one hundred thirty-eight pages. The remaining six hundred-plus pages are devoted to an explanation of the fifty-two chapters of this lengthy prophecy. It is, of course, no small undertaking to write an adequate explanation of this long prophecy in the space of a little more than six hundred pages. This is also, in this reviewer's opinion, the weak point of this commentary: it is too scant. The seminarian or pastor who wants to preach Jeremiah will discover that while this commentary may be helpful in some respects, he will have to do considerably more exegetical work before he has sufficient material for sermon-making.

With these strictures, we recommend this volume as a suitable addition to one's library.

TRUMPETER OF GOD, A Biography of John Knox, W. Stanford Reid; Baker Book House, 1982; 353 pp., \$8.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hanko]

John Knox is usually considered to be the father of the Reformation in Scotland. Much has been written about Knox both by his spiritual heirs and by his enemies. Reid justifies the addition of another book on this Reformer with the words: "The present work, however, is not a complete story of John Knox's life. It could not be within a book of this size. Rather it is a biographical study which seeks to interpret Knox in order to provide a better understanding of one who has not infrequently been misrepresented both by his adulators and his critics."

The book, in this reviewer's opinion, is only partially successful in attaining this goal. The book is an interesting biography, filled with a great deal of factual data concerning the life of this Reformer. But it does not do the interpreting which one would ordinarily expect. It has very little to say about Knox's theology and its influence on subsequent Presbyterian thought in Scotland; it does not enter into an evaluation of the great issue of the relation between Church and State which dominated in the Reformation in Scotland.

Nevertheless, this is a good book. It is well researched and written in a scholarly, though easily understood style. It is packed with many details of the life of this great Reformer and gives a sense of the tension and importance of the times. Its style is rather pedantic at times, but this is difficult to avoid in a biography filled with so much information. We recommend the book highly to all those who have

an interest in the great battles fought on behalf of the truth and in those heroes of faith who have now joined the company of just men made perfect. It should have a place in every Christian school library and in every home where the people of God have a love for the heritage of the truth given us from the Reformation.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Our parents, MR. AND MRS. ANTHONY DE YOUNG, celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary on May 23, 1982. We are thankful to our Covenant God for having kept them for each other and us. May they experience God's richest blessings in future years.

"Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel." (Psalm 128:6).

Their grateful children and grandchildren,
Mr. and Mrs. Jozef Postma
Phillip, David, Daniel and Stephen
Rev. and Mrs. Meindert Joostens
Faith, Timothy, Steven, Joy and Paul

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Faith, Hope, and Love Society of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church expresses their Christian sympathy to Mrs. Carole Holleman in the death of her grandmother, MRS. CLARA AMPTMEYER. May our God strengthen her and her family by His word and spirit.

"The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy" (Psalm 33:18).

Rev. David Engelsma, Pres.
Mrs. Denise DeJong, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Faith, Hope, and Love Society of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church expresses their Christian sympathy to Mrs. Martha Regnerus in the death of her step-mother, MRS. WIERENGA. May she find comfort in the words expressed in Psalm 37:18, "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be forever."

Rev. David Engelsma, Pres.
Mrs. Denise DeJong, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Faith, Hope, and Love Society of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church expresses their Christian sympathy to Mrs. Sarah DeJong in the death of her step-father, MR. CARTER. May our God strengthen her by His word and spirit.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4).

Rev. David Engelsma, Pres.
Mrs. Denise DeJong, Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

In gratefulness to our Heavenly Father we acknowledge His blessing these many years through Godly instruction by our parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM SWART, who celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary on June 20, 1982.

"Except the Lord built the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

Rev. and Mrs. Ronald Van Overloop
Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Kalsbeek
Judy Swart
12 grandchildren

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 20, 1982, our parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. STUART LOOYENGA will celebrate, the Lord willing, their 30th wedding anniversary. We give thanks to them for their loving guidance and covenant instruction and to our Heavenly Father for His many blessings upon their marriage and family.

"The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy" (Psalm 147:11).

Russ and Carole Dykstra
Heather, Heide, Christopher, Ryan
David and Sue Looyenga
Lisabeth, Brendan, Brianna
Jane Looyenga
Don and Kathy Knott

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

We announce the joyous occasion of 50 years of marriage for our parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. THEODORE ENGELSMA, on June 27, 1982. An open-house for family and friends will be held Wednesday, June 23, 1982, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Village House of New Amsterdam Village, 7905 Cottonwood Dr., in Jenison, MI.

We thank our heavenly Father for giving us God-fearing parents who have brought us up in the fear of the Lord. It is our prayer that God may continue to bless them through their walk in life together.

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

Ron and Betty Selvius
Cathy and Curt, Doug, Rhonda
Ron and Dena Engelsma
Steve, Sheila, Marsha
Chuck and Pat Engelsma
Denise, Tom, Susan, Paul
Marie and Al De Young
Laura, Lisa
Phil and Joyce Kraima
Patricia, Andrea

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 10, 1982, our parents, MR. AND MRS. EDWARD CAMMENGA, celebrated their 31st wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, are deeply grateful to God for the years He has given them together. We are also grateful for the instruction they have given us in the fear of His name. We pray that God will always be near them and sustain them in the years to come.

"The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion; and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel" (Psalm 128:5, 6).

Rev. Ron and Rhonda Cammenga
Randy and Joyce Cammenga
Rev. Ron and Nancy Hanko
Sandy Hildore
Bob and Tom Cammenga
and 10 grandchildren

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 31, 1982, our parents, MR. AND MRS. EGBERT GRITTERS celebrated their 25th anniversary.

We pray that God will always continue to bless them and keep them in His care in the years to come.

"For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting and His truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

their children,
Brian, Roxanne, Brenda, Loren, Marvin,
Rhonda, Valerie, Susan and Sharla

News From Our Churches

Most *Standard Bearer* readers do not receive the *Beacon Lights* (a Protestant Reformed publication designed especially for Christian young people) and therefore are not aware of the many activities with which the young people of our churches busy themselves. Generating funds for the annual young people's conventions and providing opportunities for spiritual growth and Christian fellowship motivate much of their planning. Incidentally, their 1982 Convention is scheduled for August 16-20 at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Following is a partial list of recent and not-so-recent activities that the young people's groups of our churches around the country have had: Last December the young people of our South Holland, Illinois congregation held a Christmas party where pizza and pop were served. In February a sliding party was held at Johnson Park in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area. On March 4 a Spaghetti Supper was held at our Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School in Walker, Michigan. Also in March the young people of our First Church in Grand Rapids sponsored a "breakfast of eggs, bacon, juice, muffins, grapefruit and coffee." A Family Night, including volleyball games and a baked goods auction, was held in Loveland, Colorado on March 22. On April 3 our Houston, Texas young people sponsored a recreational outing which included "volleyball and other games." The annual Spring Banquet of the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies was held on April 23 at our Hudsonville, Michigan church. On that occasion Rev. Engelsma spoke on the topic, "Sharing One Another's Burdens."

In addition to these and numerous other activities, the young people in the Grand Rapids area conduct young people's mass meetings in connection with Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, and Easter. Also, singspirations are held once a month on a rotating basis at the various Grand Rapids area churches.

Obviously many of our young people busy themselves with these worthwhile activities; and that's to be encouraged. Also to be encouraged is their regular reading of the aforementioned magazine: the *Beacon Lights*. If you do not receive the maga-

zine, I highly recommend it to you. In addition to staying current with the young people's activities, you will find a lot of worthwhile reading. For a complimentary copy or to subscribe, send to *Beacon Lights*, 1401 Su-Lew S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

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An "All Day Mission Conference" was held on April 22 at our church of Kalamazoo, Michigan. The conference was advertised as follows: "The morning session will begin at 10:00 A.M. with an introduction by Prof. Robert Decker on 'The Protestant Reformed Churches In Their Mission Work' followed by Rev. Steven Houck on 'The Problem of Presenting The Gospel to Strangers.' Lunch will be served for those who wish to stay during the noon hour. The afternoon session will begin at 1:30 P.M. with Mr. Dewey Engelsma on 'The Mission Work in Singapore' and Seminarian Lau Chin Kwee on 'The Function of Cell Groups in Singapore Work' followed by 'The Mission Work in Jamaica' by Rev. Heys." The conference was climaxed with an evening lecture by Rev. Ronald Van Overloop, missionary pastor of our Birmingham, Alabama mission station, on the topic: "The Responsibility of the Christian in Mission Work." As nearly as this reporter could detect, the conference was very well attended and received. Cassette tapes of the conference sessions are available by writing to: Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church, 427 North Fletcher, Kalamazoo, MI 49007.

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The church visitors to our church of Wyckoff, New Jersey did more than just visit while they were there in April. Rev. J. Heys showed pictures concerning the recent work in Jamaica, and Rev. C. Hanko lectured on the subject, "The Keys of the Kingdom." In addition both ministers conducted a worship service on the 18th of April. Incidentally, during the morning service, Rev. C. Hanko baptized his great-grandson, infant of the pastor of the Wyckoff congregation, Rev. Ronald Hanko. (Speaking of the baptizing of great-grandsons, Rev. M. Schipper recently did the very same thing in our Southwest Church of Grand Rapids.)

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