

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

As we continue to stare into the mirror of God's perfect law and confess our sins, we also see Christ, standing as it were behind us, and hear Him say to us, "Thy sins, though ever so many, are forgiven thee!"

See "The Law of Liberty"

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MEDITATION

The Law of Liberty

Rev. C. Hanko

Ques. 92. What is the law of God?

Ans. Here follow the ten commandments as recorded in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.

Ques. 93. How are these commandments divided?

Ans. Into two tables, the first which teaches us how we must behave toward God; the second what duties we owe to our neighbor.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 34

Free!

We are free from the bondage of sin and death, transformed into sons, enjoying the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

For the Son has made us free! He whom the Son makes free is free indeed!

Sin has no more dominion over us! Grace abounds!

Death has no sting! The grave has no victory!

Thanks be to God Who has given us the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ!

Through the power of the law!

God and His law are inseparably one.

Our God is sovereign Lord over heaven and earth. As their Creator and Sustainer He has absolute claim to them and authority over them.

His throne is in the heavens, where the myriads of angels worship Him as they carry out His will in heaven and on earth.

God has set His own law for the angels. He has also established His law for the sun, moon, and stars, as He holds them in their courses. God has determined a law for the tree, that it should send its roots deep into the earth and lift its branches toward heaven to draw its life from the soil and from the light. He has appointed that the fish should swim in the sea and the birds should soar in the air. Break those laws and the result is *death*. Springtime is God's appointed time for all creation to awaken from the sleep of winter; trees and flowers burst forth in newness of life. According to God's law we are born of our parents, we breathe, we eat and drink, we see and hear, we speak and act in our earthly surroundings. Of us as thinking, willing, consciously acting individuals God requires, Love Me! Serve Me in your daily walk of life, in every relationship to your neighbor! And He justly judges every man according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil, according to His divine standard of love!

God is the holy God. He is devoted unto Himself as the Being of infinite perfections. He delights in the dazzling brightness of His glory as God above all, blessed forever! He keeps Himself aloof from all that would contaminate His perfection. He banishes far from Him all the workers of iniquity. Bless Him, ye angels, wondrous in might! Bless Him, all His works in all places of His dominion! Bless the Lord, O my soul!

For God is love. The three persons of the divine trinity love each other in their unique bond of perfection, all three essentially one, yet personally distinct. Each seeks and finds the other, is drawn to

the other. Each lives for the praise and glory of the other as they live in intimate communion of life together. God appoints the Son to reveal His glory beyond Himself, giving Him a people to be redeemed by His blood and to be delivered from the deep black darkness of death and hell into the glorious liberty of sons in His house. Whom the Son frees is free to devote himself in love to God, even as the love of God is spread abroad in his heart!

God is the righteous Judge. He condemns sin, even the smallest transgression deserves His just punishment in everlasting hell. He hates all the workers of iniquity. "For Jehovah thy God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him, and showing mercy unto thousands of those who love Him and keep His commandments."

God and His law are one, for He is the sovereign, determining, righteous God Who must be feared! He will give His glory to no other!

God has given His law unto Israel and His statutes unto Jacob.

This is actually the second time that we are confronted with the law of God in our Book of Instruction.

The first time was in the second Lord's Day, where we learned to confess that we are prone by nature to hate God and our neighbor. We were asked, How do you know this? To which we answered, in essence, God demands of me that I love God with my whole being, and that I love my neighbor as myself. That is the basic principle of all the Scriptures. The result? I know that the law can only condemn me, for I am evil, born in sin; and accursed is everyone who does not abide in all that is written in the book of the law to do it!

In the meantime the Catechism instructed us in the truth that Christ came to fulfill the law for all those given to Him of the Father. The Son of God came into our flesh and surrendered Himself in perfect obedience to the Father. Always He confessed, "It is joy to do Thy will, O God," even though God's will required that He suffer torments of hellish agony under God's wrath to atone for our sins. He bore the curse in our stead and bore it away. He delivered us from the curse and merited for us the right to walk at liberty as sons of God!

Therefore now our Catechism once more introduces the subject of the law. This time the law comes to us as a rule of life, a directive that says: Do this and live! It is the guide to true thankfulness, *the power of God* in His redeemed saints to live humbly before their God in loving obedience!

"I am the Lord your God, which brought you out

of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Every day, especially on the Sabbath when the law is read, we are reminded that Jehovah our Almighty has delivered us from the realm of Satan and from the bondage of sin and death.

Israel lived in a picture world, being taught like children by types and shadows. Egypt was for Israel (and still is for us) a picture of the world under the dominion of sin. Sin is a cruel tyrant, even as Pharaoh tyrannized over them. Sin enslaved them, even as the taskmasters forced them to hard labor. The law condemned them, even as the cruel whip of their taskmasters cut deep furrows into their scarred backs. Every effort on their part to escape that bondage only meant greater enslavement, which ultimately could only end in their destruction. What applied to them also applies to us in our sin and misery.

With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm Jehovah brought His covenant people out of the house of bondage by executing His judgments upon their tormenters. Jehovah, their Almighty, Unchangeable, Covenant God remembered His sworn promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He prepared Moses for them as their deliverer. He instilled in their hearts the desire to be delivered, brought them out in the night in which they stood under the blood, eating the unblemished lamb. He gave to spiritual Israel the faith to look beyond this blood to the one perfect sacrifice that would be brought for their sins by the promised Messiah. God still declares to us, I am Jehovah, the Almighty, Who has brought thee out of the bondage of sin and death into the glorious liberty of sons in My House.

He does this by the renewal of His Spirit in our hearts.

Every day, and every hour of the day we stand before the mirror of God's law. Particularly through the preaching of the Word we are confronted with a reflection of ourselves in the mirror. Our best smile and nicest clothing cannot hide from us the sad reality that we are actually very ugly, worse than we care to admit. That reflection tells us, "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." It arouses in us the cry, "O God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" For "I am prone by nature to hate Thee and the neighbor!"

As we continue to stare into the mirror of God's perfect law and confess our sins, we also see Christ, standing as it were behind us, and hear Him say to us, "Thy sins, though ever so many, are forgiven thee!" For the law, which permeates all of Scripture, is always accompanied by God's promise, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy." He assures us, I will be a GOD unto thee. I take you

into my heart, into my life, into the intimacy of my covenant fellowship, to share with you the riches of My NAME eternally!

Through the atoning sacrifice of Christ we receive the right to be called the sons of God. By His Spirit of adoption in our hearts we are assured of our eternal sonship. We cry, "Abba, Father." By that same Spirit we are transformed, through the Word, into the likeness of Christ: changed even from glory to glory! We learn to confess, "O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day!"

That is what creates the tension in our lives.

Paul speaks of that in Romans 7. He confesses that he takes delight in the law of God according to the inward man. The new life in Christ assures him that the law is holy, just, and good. It is the power of God unto salvation, for it converts the heart, and teaches us to walk in wisdom's ways. Our conscience warns us against ways of wickedness, spurring us on to love God and the neighbor, for in the keeping of the law there is a great delight!

But there is still that other law in us, the power of sin, which never gives up trying to have dominion. Sin is like a sleeping lion, aroused to rage by the law, eager to tear us to shreds. With Paul I must complain, "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." I am reminded of the boy who sees the sign of "keep off the grass" and deliberately runs over it. Just as when we see a "wet paint" sign we have the urge to try it out.

In me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good. But grace abounds! For the law is in my heart as the living power of the Holy Spirit to lead me on the way of life eternal!

Before us is stretched out even to the distant horizon the highway of God's law as a ribbon of the narrow way that leads to life. Along the way the devil points out to us appealing exits that lead to destruction. The world sets up her sign posts of her lusts and pleasures. Our own flesh rebels against the narrow confines of the law, seeking the license of sin. Often we go astray. Like foolish sheep we wander off, each in his own way. Yet by the power of His law God draws us back in sorrow and repentance. That law always remains the lamp before our feet. In the darkness of our present night it shines as a light upon our pathway. It is our sure Guide to eternity!

It is the perfect rule for a thankful life in obedience and prayer!

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:1, 2).

EDITORIAL

On Synod's Agenda, 1985

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

This year's Agenda arrived just in time for me to present to our readers a brief summary of the various items on the agenda of our 1985 synod.

This year synod is scheduled to convene on Tuesday, June 11, in harmony with a decision of the Synod of 1984. This is a departure from the rules, but one which is allowed by the rules themselves. It is also somewhat in the nature of an experiment. Formerly our synods always convened on Wednesday morning. This was a rule dating back to the time when all the delegates would travel to synod either by car or by train. Now, however, the possibility of air travel makes it very well possible for the delegates to arrive on Monday and for synod to convene on Tuesday. This also implies, of course, that the pre-synodical service will be scheduled for Monday evening, June 10, at our Hudsonville church. Connected with this change is also the possibility in a year like this, when there are no examinations of graduates, that synod might be able to complete its work by the end of the week. Last year this would have been possible if synod had begun on Tuesday; and this possibility was undoubtedly one of the motives for the change to Tuesday. Another change is the change to the *second* rather than the first week (Tuesday or Wednesday) of June. This has been tried before, partly in an attempt to avoid conflicts with school graduation dates. Time will tell whether these experimental changes should be made permanent and should be incorporated in the rules.

Ours is a rather small agenda: only 132 pages. I think lengthy agendas, such as, for example, this year's Christian Reformed Agenda of 540 pages, are a symptom of a burgeoning bureaucracy and synodical hierarchy. They are to be avoided.

Turning to the contents of this year's Agenda, we may note, first of all, that there are two appeals to be dealt with. Both of these appeals come from brethren who reside in Classis West. One concerns the matter of ministers of our denomination

preaching in churches of other denominations. Classis West takes the position in this connection that this matter has been previously adjudged by the Synods of 1977 and 1978. The other appeal has to do with our people being asked to support the work of Reformed education in Ulster in connection with the sponsoring of Mr. Deane Wassink as a teacher there. The appellant claims that it is not proper for our churches to send and support a teacher, but that we should send a missionary. Classis West sustains the consistory's position that a consistory has the right to judge a cause worthy to be supported by God's people, and "that the sending of a teacher by a committee should not be confused with the official missionary work carried on and supported by the churches of the denomination." Synod will have to judge concerning these appeals.

A large part of synod's time and energies will undoubtedly be devoted to matters pertaining to our denominational outreach in one form or another.

First of all, there is a lengthy and important report from our Committee for Contact With Other Churches. The more important items in this report have to do with our contacts with overseas churches, and several of the items stem from the visit of the Rev. D. Engelsma and Prof. H. Hanko to the United Kingdom. We cannot go into great detail in this respect, but only mention several items:

1) The Committee reports no progress in contact with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. In fact, it is reported that there are internal difficulties in that denomination, due to doctrinal aberrations of one of their ministers. It is recommended, therefore, to postpone seeking closer contact with them until their internal problems are resolved.

2) The Committee recommends continued contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North Ireland in the interest of getting to know

each other better, but it does not at present recommend any expansion of contact.

3) The Committee recommends a full sister-church relationship with the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore, with the single exception that there be no exchange of fraternal delegates at present.

4) The Committee recommends a full sister-church relationship with the Bible Presbyterian Church of Larne, North Ireland (the church of which the Rev. G. Hutton is pastor). In this connection the Committee raises the important question whether the "Reformed standards" in the Constitution of the Contact Committee includes the Westminster creeds, and it recommends that Synod decide that the Westminster standards are included. The Committee also recommends granting the Rev. Hutton license to preach in our churches.

5) The Committee also recommends several measures to promote growth of a relationship with the Measbro Dyke Evangelical Church of Barnsley, England, of which the Rev. Philip Rawson is pastor. Among these is a proposal to invite Pastor Rawson for an official visit to our churches next year.

Included with the Contact Committee's report is a report by Rev. Engelsma and Prof. Hanko concerning their trip to the UK.

The Foreign Mission Committee reports favorably concerning the work of Rev. den Hartog in Singapore. They also report that Rev. den Hartog suggests that his work in Singapore is drawing to a close and that shortly after June of 1986 his labors be terminated there. This committee also reports concerning contact with and support of Gabriel Anyigba, of Ghana. While the committee reports that it granted him \$500.00 to study at Haggai Institute in Singapore, chiefly to give Rev. den Hartog the opportunity to evaluate Mr. Anyigba's qualifications, they do not report concerning that evaluation. Nor do they have further recommendations concerning this work. They do recommend: 1) Continued collections for support of seminarian Jaiki Mahtani (though without any details concerning current support and future need). 2) Investigation by emissaries of the possibility of establishing a mission field in Malaysia, as well as of the question whether our labors will be finished in Singapore in the near future.

The Domestic Mission Committee has a very lengthy report, which it is difficult to summarize in this editorial. Suffice it to say: 1) That they recommend the continuation of labors in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania (Rev. K. Hanko), in Elk Grove, Village, Illinois (Rev. R. Van Overloop), and in Ripon, Cali-

fornia (Rev. S. Houck). In my opinion, there is a paucity of details in the report concerning this work. 2) There is a lengthy report concerning the Jamaica work which apparently points up a lack of sufficient contact and cooperation between the Mission Committee and the calling church, but which also poses many problems concerning the Jamaica work which are crying for a solution. 3) There is a report concerning Rev. Miersma's work in New Zealand, as also a report concerning the institution of the church there. However, no solution is proposed for the problem of future help for the young church in New Zealand. Synod will surely have to face the question whether, now that we have helped them thus far, we will leave them orphans. 4) All in all, the proposed Mission budget for the coming fiscal year amounts to \$169,750. This will undoubtedly also pose some problems for synod.

Another significant item is a report by the *Psalter* Reprinting Committee. This committee, appointed by Synod of 1984, was instructed to investigate thoroughly the feasibility of a new printing of the *Psalter* in connection with our desire to include the Ecumenical Creeds and historical introductions to these creeds and to our Three Forms of Unity in a new edition. This committee recommends that we contract with the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company to print 4,000 new *Psalters* in a Protestant Reformed edition. They also recommend that a committee be appointed to correct errors of translation in the Three Forms of Unity before this reprint is made. Such a committee would have to report to the Synod of 1986. This means, therefore, that the new edition is some two years in the future, that is, if this proposal is adopted.

The last major item in the Agenda is the report of the Theological School Committee. In this connection, we note the following: 1) The committee reports the enrollment of two pre-seminarians who will begin their studies in the fall of 1985. (Note: These young men, remember, are 8 years away from the ministry!) 2) The committee proposes to synod a plan for the orderly retirement and replacement of professors. The report is too long and involved to summarize here. Suffice it to say that the purpose of the plan is to avoid, in as far as possible, the crisis situation which has twice arisen in our school in which the late Revs. Ophoff and Hoeksema had to be replaced on less than 3 months' notice. 3) The committee also brings to synod, with its approval and recommendation, a proposal that synod provide space for the RFPA Publications Committee to erect a modest headquarters on the 8-acre seminary property.

These are some of the main items on synod's

docket. There are many other reports, some more important, some less important, but all requiring synod's attention.

May the Lord bless our 1985 Synod, so that all the deliberations and decisions may be fruitful for the cause of our churches and His church!

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Our Order of Worship

Prof. H. Hanko

In the last few articles which we have written on the subject of the order of worship we have been talking about those elements at the beginning and the end of the worship service in which the minister himself speaks. We noticed that the minister speaks, sometimes on behalf of the congregation and sometimes as the mouthpiece of God through Christ. Those elements are called: the salutation — "Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ"; the votum — "Our help is in the name of the Lord Who made heaven and earth"; and the benedictions — spoken at the beginning and the end of the worship services. In the salutation the minister speaks to the congregation as the mouthpiece of God in Christ. He addresses the congregation as God's beloved; but it is God speaking through him and calling the congregation His own beloved people. In the votum the minister is speaking as the spokesman of the congregation. The congregation through her minister says together as a confession: "Our help is in the name of the Lord Who made heaven and earth."

It ought not to surprise us that the minister has this twofold function in his official ministry. Surely no one will deny that he speaks as an ambassador of God, in God's name, so that God speaks through him to the church. But we are not always as conscious as we ought to be in the worship service of the fact that the minister also speaks to God on behalf of the congregation. This is true not only of the votum, but also of the congregational prayers and the recitation of the creed. With regard to this latter, that is also one of the differences between the reading of the law and the reading (or recitation) of the creed. When the law is read, the minister speaks as God's spokesman. God is then speaking to His people. When the Apostolic Creed is read or recited, the congregation through the

minister confesses her faith before the face of God. The congregation is speaking. The same is true when the congregation prays to God. It does so through the words of the minister who speaks on the behalf of God's people. So it is the congregation speaking when the minister says, "Our help is in the name of the Lord . . ."

To put it a bit differently, in this holy conversation which takes place between God and His people in the worship service, the minister plays a vital role, sometimes speaking in God's name to the congregation, sometimes speaking on behalf of the congregation to God. It is really only in the singing that the congregation directly speaks to God without the agency of the minister — and then in the words of the Psalms of the church. For the rest, what the congregation says to God is either spoken silently in the heart of the believer as he responds in faith to what the minister says, or is spoken by the minister for him.

Yet at the same time it must be remembered that whether the believer speaks to God in the quiet depths of his own heart or whether he speaks to God through what the minister says, he speaks. That is, he speaks to his covenant God and expresses what lies within his own heart. The believer is always active in the worship service. There is not one moment when he sits passively and lets the worship roll over him as the waves of the sea roll over him when he sits in the water of the ocean. When the minister speaks in God's name, he must be attentive and listen, for God is speaking to him. When the minister speaks on his behalf, he must express through the minister what lies within his own heart. He must be conscious of what the minister says and make that his very own speech to God. This takes concentration and effort, but it is essential to all worship.

Having said all this, we must now turn to the benedictions.

Throughout our discussion of the various elements which make up the worship service, we have always faced the question whether each element is specifically commanded by Scripture, or whether each element is a matter of liberty and therefore left to the discretion of the individual congregation under the direction of the elders. We face the same question in connection with the benedictions. Our answer to this question is that the benedictions are indeed commanded by Scripture and are not therefore to be excluded from the worship service. The Scriptural proof of this is to be found in both the Old and the New Testaments. There are instances already in the Old Testament of those who occupied special offices in the congregation of Israel blessing the people. In Numbers 6:22-27 we read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them." It is striking in this passage that the Lord tells Moses that when Aaron and his sons pronounce this blessing upon the children of Israel, they are putting the Lord's name upon the people; and by putting the Lord's name upon the people, God is blessing them. Jacob as a patriarch blessed his sons before he died and in them the tribes which would come from them (Gen. 49). Moses pronounced a lengthy blessing upon the children of Israel as recorded in Deuteronomy 33. This blessing is introduced with the words, "And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death." Solomon, significantly, did the same at the time of his great prayer when the temple was dedicated. We read in the first verses of II Chronicles 6, "Then said Solomon, The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. But I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever. And the king turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation of Israel: and all the congregation of Israel stood."

It is a well-known fact that the apostles often began and ended their letters to the churches with benedictions. We need not refer to specific texts; one can find them by consulting the different books in Scripture. It must be remembered that these letters, infallibly inspired, were God's Word through the apostles of His church. That so many begin and end with benedictions, therefore, is clearly meant to lay down the rule for the church of all time that

benedictions are a part of the worship service when the congregation comes together to worship God.

It would seem that the raising of the hands in pronouncing the benediction also has Scriptural warrant. We read in Leviticus 9:22, "And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them . . ." The Lord Jesus did the same when He blessed His disciples just prior to His ascension: "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them" (Luke 24:50). Certainly this raising of the hands is symbolic of the fact that God's blessing comes upon the people through the minister called by God to speak in His name. There is nothing magic, of course, in the raising of the hands. No blessing flows from the fingertips of the ministers. No supernatural power runs like electricity from the outstretched hands of the minister to the congregation — as seems to be the position of some Pentecostals during healing sessions. God is speaking His word of blessing upon His congregation through the man whom He appointed to speak in His name.

So also it must be remembered that this is an authoritative Word of God. When the minister pronounces the blessing, he is not blessing the congregation. Nor is it true that he is merely expressing a pious wish on behalf of the congregation, a desire to see spiritual blessings come to his sheep. He is not expressing his personal longing to see a multiplication of spiritual virtues come to the flock. He is emphatically speaking the Word of God. That benediction is an authoritative word. In God's name, speaking on God's behalf, in a way as official minister that makes God Himself speak, the minister pronounces the blessing.

It is well to be conscious of this during the worship service. We so often become so accustomed to the worship service that we are scarcely aware of what is going on. When the minister says, e.g., "Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you . . ." this is God's Word of blessing. This is what the text we quoted above means when, in connection with the so-called Aaronitic blessing, God says, "And they (i.e., Aaron and his sons) shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them." When the minister "puts God's name" on the congregation, God is blessing them. This blessing is a fact. And the congregation must hear God bless them and appropriate that blessing by faith. The congregation must say, "Jehovah our God is blessing us through Jesus Christ. We believe this and receive this blessing in humility and gratitude."

Heyns in his book on liturgy makes a comment in this connection which strikes us as somewhat strange. He claims that the benedictions are God's

response to the congregation's confession in the votum (at the beginning of the worship service), and God's response to the whole worship of the congregation (at the end of the worship service). It is possible, I presume, to understand this properly and in the right sense if we always remember what we have insisted upon throughout these articles: All our speech is the fruit of God's speech; and never is God's speech the fruit or result of our speech. God speaks first, sovereignly and efficaciously; our speech follows as created in us by

God Himself. But it is true that God, Who creates in us by His speech even what we say, responds to that by answering us. It is better to emphasize the fact that God blesses His people as He comes to them to take up fellowship with them in the worship service. And, as they leave God's house, they leave with the blessing of God ringing in their ears.

We shall have to wait to discuss the content of the benedictions.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

The Missionary a Slave to All (2)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

In the previous issue we began an exposition of I Corinthians 9:19-23. We believe this passage has much to teach concerning the mission task of the church. Here we learn how the missionary ought to regard himself, his work, and those to whom he preaches the gospel. Continuing this exposition we pay particular attention to verse twenty which reads, "And I became to the Jews as a Jew in order that I might gain the Jews; to those under the law as under the law, [though not being myself under the law], in order that I might gain them that are under the law" (translation mine, R.D.D.).

It ought to be noted that the clause which appears in brackets is omitted in the King James Version. We have included it in our translation because it has good support in the manuscripts; i.e., the better and more reliable of the manuscripts include it. To this Charles Hodge adds, "The internal evidence is also in its favour. It was important for Paul to say that although acting as under the law, he was not under it; because it was a fundamental principle of the gospel which he preached, that believers are freed from the law. 'We are not under law, but under grace,' Rom. 6:14. It was necessary, therefore, that his compliance with the Jewish law should be recognized as a matter of voluntary concession" (*Commentary on First Corinthians*, p. 164). With this we agree. It was necessary for the Apostle to make this disclaimer lest the Gentile Christians be left with the wrong impression. Likewise the

Jewish Christians must not misunderstand and be led to think that in some sense they were still "under the law."

It ought also be noted that the second main clause of this explains the first clause. The text, therefore, must be understood as follows: "And I became to the Jews, i.e., to those under the law, as a Jew, i.e., as under the law; though not being myself under the law; that I might gain the Jews, i.e., those under the law."

By "law" the Apostle does not refer to the moral law of the ten commandments. The law of God in this sense obligates all men to love God with all their hearts, minds, souls and to love the neighbor as themselves. That the Scriptures teach that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes (cf. Romans 10:4), no one can deny. But this does not mean that the law of God summed in the ten commandments is abrogated or abolished. Not at all! The moral law of God never had any meaning or significance apart from Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament era it pointed Israel to their sin, their inability to serve God, and thus their inability to save themselves. The law for the Old Testament saint was the schoolmaster, the tutor, which led him to Christ in Whom alone he could be saved! (cf. Galatians 3:24). This same law of God as fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Who was delivered on account of our offenses and raised again on account

of our justification (Romans 4:25), is a summary expression of the will of God for the redeemed in Christ. The law is the standard according to which the people of God in Christ are called to live in obedience to the God of their salvation. As such, that law of God has become the guide for the Christian's life of thankfulness to God for the salvation graciously given him in Christ. Precisely because he is a new creature in Christ, saved by grace through faith, the child of God is called to walk in those good works which God has before ordained that he should walk in them (cf. Ephesians 2:8-10). The standard by which a work is judged to be good is the law of the ten commandments. This law of God remains in force. When the Apostle says, therefore, "though not being myself under the law," he does not mean that he is free from the obligation to love God and his neighbor.

By "law" the text refers to the typical civil and especially the ceremonial laws under which Israel, the typical Kingdom of God, was governed in the Old Testament era. That law included the tabernacle and later the temple and its service; the prophets, priests, and kings; the many sacrifices; the typical feasts (e.g. the Passover); and the typical rites such as circumcision. Included too were the laws concerning diet, the distinction between the clean and unclean animals, the latter of which were not to be eaten by the Israelite. All of these pointed to Christ, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. These laws were fulfilled in Christ Who was once offered to bear the sins of many. The types and shadows or pictures of the Old Testament are no longer necessary because the reality to which they pointed, viz., Christ, has come and redeemed the elect in His cross and resurrection. When Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover feast in the upper room in Jerusalem in the night of His betrayal it was the last Passover. In its place our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper. Why? Because Christ, the Lamb without spot and blemish, to Whom the Passover pointed was slain on the cross the very next day. When Jesus accomplished redemption for His people, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. Why? Because Christ had opened the way through His shed blood into the holiest of all. Through the anointing of the Holy Spirit all of God's people are prophets speaking God's praises, priests consecrating themselves in God's service, and kings ruling over the works of God's hands. No more sacrifices need be made because *the* sacrifice which forever frees God's people from sin and death has been made. This is what the Apostle means by "law." The Jews to whom he preached were "under" that law, which is to say, they were still observing that law. The Apostle was no longer "under" that law.

Even though he was not under the law the Apostle writes, "to the Jews became I as a Jew . . . to those under the law as under the law." What does he mean by this? Before that question be answered positively it must be understood what Paul does *not* mean. He does not mean that he accommodated himself to Jewish ritual and practice by compromising the principles of the truth of the gospel either in doctrine or in walk of life! This is something the Apostle never did. This is something no missionary or preacher may do. Consistently and faithfully, often though it meant great peril, Paul preached the whole counsel of God. He never shrank from that. The great themes of Paul's preaching and teaching were always sin and grace. The record of the Book of Acts and his Epistles bear abundant testimony to this. He did this in spite of bitter opposition and knowing full well that the gospel which he preached was to the unbelieving Jew a stumbling block and to the Greek foolishness. Even though it meant prison, torture, and even death the Apostle never compromised the truth. Missionaries must follow this example. A gospel of compromise and accommodation is a false gospel. Nothing is ever gained by such a gospel. The gospel must be preached. That gospel always condemns all that is of sin and evil. That gospel never comes with a "both . . . and," but always with an "either . . . or" — either God or the devil, Christ or Belial, faith or unbelief. That gospel always preaches the name of Jesus, the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. The gospel always demands faith and repentance. The gospel always commands all men everywhere to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. It calls God's elect in every nation under heaven to come out from among the unbelieving world and be separate. The gospel proclaims that all that is in the unbelieving world is the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. It demands, therefore, that we love not that world (I John 2:15-17). The absolute sovereignty of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and the total depravity of man outside of Christ is the message of the gospel. It brooks no compromise. This was the gospel Paul preached to the Jews. This is the gospel the church through its missionaries must preach.

Positively, what the Apostle means is that when he labored and lived among the Jews, he lived as a Jew. In matters indifferent (*adiaphora*) Paul observed Jewish custom. The Apostle taught in the Jewish synagogues every time he had opportunity. He upon occasion went to the temple in Jerusalem. He preached Christ crucified out of the Old Testament Scriptures. In matters of food and drink, circumcision, etc. Paul lived as a Jew. Though he was free to eat whatever meat he wished he abstained

from eating that which according to Levitical Law was unclean. According to Acts 16 Paul had Timothy circumcised so as to give no offence to the Jews. On the other hand, because of false brethren who insisted on the necessity of circumcision, Paul refused to compel Titus to be circumcised. Over this issue he had to "withstand Peter to his face" (cf. Galatians 2). To the Jew he became as a Jew even though he had been made free from all of those laws by God's grace in Christ Jesus. In this way the Apostle took great care not to offend the Jews, "his kinsmen according to the flesh." After this example missionaries must conduct themselves. In matters indifferent, in customs not for-

bidden by the Word of God, they must live as Jamaicans or Singaporeans. They must give no unnecessary offense.

Paul's purpose in so conducting himself among the Jews was this: "in order that I might gain the Jews, i.e., them who are under the law." The verb "gain" must be taken in the sense of "save." The Apostle desires the salvation of those to whom God sends him to preach. He knows only the elect will be saved and the rest damned. Let that be because he does not corrupt the Word of God (cf. II Corinthians 2:14-17).
(to be continued)

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Old Testament Introduction (concluded)

Rev. J. Kortering

The Holy Spirit guided all the events that led to our receiving the inspired record of the Old Testament. Even though we do not have any of the original manuscripts (some were written as long ago as 1500 B.C.), we do have some copies through the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and we have the Massoretic text which was drawn from the copies available about the ninth century A.D.

We follow this history given by Merrill Unger in his *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament*. He writes on page 116:

The Old Testament being an ancient document, some parts of which were written as early as the fifteenth century B.C., naturally underwent a long process of development before it attained its present form. It is not easy for us moderns, to whom writing is such a simple process, to understand this. But writing in the ancient world was far from the simple thing it is now. Not only were writing materials and implements woefully inadequate from our modern point of view, but many baffling difficulties existed of which the ancients were not even aware. That which to us seems so obvious, the necessity of separating letters into words, sentences, paragraphs and chapters for the sake of clarity, dawned upon them only gradually Imagine then, an ancient text consisting of one unbroken string of letters and to make matters worse, only consonants. Ancient Old Testament texts

employed only consonants. Not a single vowel was indicated till centuries after Moses and a full system of vocalization was not devised until 600-800 A.D. Think then what the task of the reader and the copyist was!

THE HEBREW LANGUAGE

The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language except for brief passages in Daniel (2:4-7:28), Ezra (4:8-6:18; 7:12-26), and Jeremiah (10:11) which were written in Aramaic. Hebrew belongs to the Semitic group of languages. The differences between them were determined by their location. East Semitic included Babylonian-Assyrian, South Semitic-Arabic, and both North and Northwest Semitic-Aramaic and Hebrew.

There is no reference in the Old Testament to the Hebrew language itself. We read of the Hebrew people. Abraham was called, "The Hebrew" in Genesis 14:13. His descendants were known as Hebrews (Genesis 40:15 and Exodus 2:11). Their language was referred to as, "the language of Canaan" (Isa. 19:18), and "the Jews' language" (II Kings 18:26, 28 and Nehemiah 13:24).

According to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Hebrew in the earliest period no doubt resembled the classical Arabic of the seventh and following centuries. The variations found between

the strata of the language occurring in the Old Testament are slight compared with the differences between modern and ancient Arabic. Abraham evidently spoke an Aramaic dialect while in Mesopotamia and then settled in Canaan and adapted to a local Canaanite form of language which taken together makes the Old Hebrew very close to the Phoenician language.

THE HEBREW TEXT

All during the Old Testament period, copies of the inspired books were available. Some may have been individual books, others, especially as time went on, complete manuscripts of the entire Old Testament canon. Many copies disappeared and wore out simply because they were so fragile. Some of the oldest copies made by Moses were probably written on clay tablets, the common form of material used during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries before Christ. Later the skins of animals were used and sewn into scrolls of about seventeen inches wide by a hundred or more feet in length. Books of pages were not used until the second or third century A.D. The most common material used for writing was papyrus in the form of rolls usually about ten inches high by about thirty feet long. By pressing the pith of the papyrus into layers, sometimes as many as three layers, and using a pen fashioned from a reed and ink from soot or lampblack diluted with water, the writer was able to preserve his thoughts in written form. Even then, they usually lasted at most a century or two and then were worn out or destroyed by aging. A Biblical reference to this method of writing is given in Jeremiah 36 when Baruch wrote down the words of Jeremiah.

Whatever was available during the Old Testament period soon disappeared. The translation of the Old Testament into Greek by the seventy scholars (The Septuagint) around 350-150 B.C. was taken from such manuscripts which were available. Our Lord in all probability did not have original manuscripts of the Old Testament Hebrew. He used the Septuagint version. All this time there were copies of manuscripts hidden away in caves and preserved by the Rabbis who continued to study them. During the years from the Septuagint to the Massoretic scholars, the manuscripts underwent some change. Probably it was divided into verses during this period (also paragraphs), chapters came much later. Some punctuation marks and editing took place. It was in the seventh century A.D. that a revival in Jewish learning took place in the Palestinian schools. Tiberias, on Lake Galilee, which was built by Herod the Tetrarch, became the center for a flourishing school of Jewish scholars. These Rabbis were called Massoretes, because they were rigid adherents of the traditional

reading of the Hebrews test and compilers of the Jewish tradition (Massora) and transmitted them by writing.

God used these Rabbis, for they had deep respect for the Holy Scripture as God's Word. Their task was carefully defined so as to transmit the exact text as handed down and pass it on to the future generation. This careful use of existing manuscripts and precise writing of the correct text produced the Hebrew Bible as we know it today. During the seventh century, vowel signs were added as well as accent marks for easier reading. Careful instructions were given in how to make their copies. These were recorded in manuals or handbooks which contained detailed grammatical notes. Soon these copies followed certain approved and autographed copies of certain ones which were considered the standard of all the rest. Some of these old copies have survived (we have about 1,700 partial copies and fragments preserved). The oldest complete manuscript goes back to A.D. 1100. The most reliable text was by a Rabbi named Ben Asher which formed the basis of an edition published by Jacob Ben Chayyim at Venice in 1525-1526. This forms the "received text" as it is commonly called today.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 was noteworthy, for in that cave in Qumran near the Dead Sea was found, among other writings, a complete copy of the prophecy of Isaiah which dated back to about 125 B.C. This became the oldest copy of any manuscript of a book of the Old Testament. Its discovery has not confirmed our faith in the Bible and the reliability of the Massoretic text, for true faith in God doesn't require such proof. Rather, we rejoice in God's providential care for His written Word that we may be certain that what we have is in truth the Word of God!

THE HIGHER CRITICS

Having set forth in our previous article the simple truth that we believe God inspired the authors to write their books, we do not intend to get into a long and technical debate with the critics who insist that the Old Testament was a composite of different documents, e.g., that the Pentateuch had at least four authors and Isaiah had two authors. According to them the authors also wrote considerably later than usually thought. These notions came about by a school of thought that rejects the evidence of the Scripture itself. Beginning already in the seventeenth century, through the influence of a Roman Catholic priest, Richard Simon, a gathering of men began to criticize the Bible because they considered the historical books as quotations from public annals. And since the text

was poorly preserved, one had to judge for himself whether it agreed with church doctrine. This kind of thinking became fodder for the fire of the "Enlightenment" which followed. Since human reason became the highest standard of all truth, man had to judge for himself whether to accept the Bible or not. Out of this movement came forth the well known Graf-Kuenen-Wellhausen school of Biblical criticism. It is rationalism applied to the Bible.

In our course of dealing with the Bible books, their authors, dates, etc. we will simply state in this introduction, that we reject this influence of evil upon the understanding of the Bible. We agree with Rev. G. Ophoff in his introduction to the Old Testament,

We are not going to argue with these higher critics. We are not going to carefully weigh their arguments and refute them. In the first place there is no time for that in this course. Secondly, it is a sheer waste of time. We know before hand that they can have no argument. It would be interesting to examine their arguments just to see how true it is that they have no argument. Their eyes are so completely blinded by their theory that they cannot even see to read. Life is too short to waste even one moment on these people

and their theories. Let us rather spend time in discovering God's thought in the Bible. That will pay us large dividends. Nevertheless, these critics are hailed as the scholars and all who oppose them are derided as nincompoops whose attitude is thoroughly unscientific. Let us then be nincompoops and be proud of it. Wellhausen himself admitted and even insisted that we have to choose between this theory and Christ. Says he, "We must either cast aside as worthless our dearly bought scientific method, or must forever cease to acknowledge the authority of the New Testament in the domain of exegesis of the Old." Quoted from Keunen's book, *Prophets and Prophecy*, page 487.

As we take up our study of the Old Testament, may the Holy Spirit lay upon our hearts these words, as the Word of God! Rather than setting up so-called historical evidence against the contents of the Old Testament, we will read the Old Testament for its historical and spiritual truth. Through the events in the lives of the patriarchs and the nation of Israel, God speaks to us the gospel, the good news of our salvation in Jesus Christ. In Christ both Jew and Gentile are one, both being the true children of Abraham by faith.

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

The Baptism Form

Rev. James Slopsema

Understanding The Sacraments

Baptism is one of the two sacraments Christ has instituted in the Christian church.

There are many erroneous views that have arisen concerning the sacraments.

There are those, for example, who claim that the sacraments themselves work salvation. The water of baptism itself has the power to wash away sin. The bread and wine of the Lord's Supper themselves nourish the soul to life eternal. Those who hold these views also elevate the sacraments, particularly the Lord's Supper, to the place of prominence in worship, even above the preaching.

Then there are those who go to the other extreme, attributing to the sacraments little if any im-

portance at all. According to some the church receives no blessing at all from the sacraments. The sacraments are not means of grace but mere memorials ordained in the church to remind us of the great work of salvation in Jesus Christ. Consequently you find among some that the sacrament of baptism is no longer administered or is optional. Then again there are others who in their zeal to emphasize the primacy of the preaching have de-emphasized the sacraments to the point that they are of little significance for the church. We definitely need the preaching; but we could almost do without the sacraments.

Before we discuss the baptism form as such it would be well for us to come to a clear understanding of the sacraments. Certain questions ought to be

answered, such as: what are the sacraments? how are they related to the preaching? what do the sacraments accomplish? how are the sacraments important? These questions we will seek to answer in this article.

For a definition of the sacraments we turn to our Heidelberg Catechism.

Q. 66. What are the sacraments?

A. The sacraments are holy visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof, he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz., that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross.

Notice that in this definition the Heidelberg Catechism speaks of the "promise of the gospel." This expression indicates that the gospel or good news of God is essentially a promise. According to the Catechism this promise God makes in the gospel is "that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross." Now if we bear in mind that whenever the Catechism speaks of "us" or "me" it speaks of us or me the believer, then we may summarize the Catechism by saying that in the gospel God promises full and free salvation in Jesus Christ to all and every believer.

This great gospel of salvation is what forms the content of all true preaching. In the same Lord's Day in which the Catechism speaks of the sacraments, the Catechism also speaks of the preaching of the gospel (cf. LD 25, Q & A 65). It is through the preaching of the gospel, we are taught, that the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts. The expression "preaching of the gospel" indicates that the gospel of salvation forms the proper content of all preaching. The preaching is not the proclamation of the word and will of man. It is the proclamation of the gospel of salvation recorded in Holy Writ.

Of this great gospel the sacraments are signs and seals.

There is therefore a very definite connection between the sacraments and the preaching. And the connection is this: what is proclaimed in the preaching is signified and sealed in the sacraments. The same gospel proclaimed in the preaching to the ear is in the sacraments presented visibly to the eye of God's people and placed within the reach of their taste, smell, and touch. The preaching and sacraments are inseparably connected.

According to the Catechism's definition the sacraments are first of all signs. A sign is very simply a picture. It is something visible that represents what is invisible to us. Thus, for example, the badge of the police officer is a visible sign of the

authority with which he has been vested. The flag of our country is a sign of our country and all for which it stands. In like manner the sacraments are signs. They are signs which depict for us in visible form the great work of God's salvation in Jesus Christ. Baptism symbolizes the work of God to wash away our sins in the blood of Christ. In the Lord's Supper the work of God to nourish our souls to eternal life with the body and blood of Christ is symbolized.

But the sacraments are more than signs. They are also seals.

A seal is a pledge or a guarantee. In Bible times the king's seal was affixed to all official documents that came from the king. This seal consisted of wax imprinted with the king's signet or ring. This seal was the guarantee that this particular document was from the king and that the king stood behind it ready to enforce any proclamation the document contained.

In like manner the sacraments are seals. They are guarantees and pledges that God makes to His people. Through the sacraments God pledges to give to His people the salvation He has depicted for them in the sacraments. Thus, through baptism God pledges to wash away the sins of His people. Through the Lord's Supper God pledges to nourish the souls of His people with the crucified body and shed blood of Christ. The sacraments are God's guarantees of this.

In our day it is well to emphasize that the sacraments seal or guarantee salvation only to the believer.

It is widely held in Reformed circles that the sacraments guarantee salvation to all who partake of them. This is applied especially to the sacrament of baptism. We are told that through baptism God guarantees or promises the washing away of sins to all children of believing parents. However, not all who receive the guarantee of salvation in baptism receive that salvation. This is because the guarantee is conditional. There is so to speak a string attached. The condition that must be met is faith. God will grant the salvation pledged in baptism only on condition that the child later on believes in Jesus Christ. And so it is that many receive in baptism a guarantee or promise of salvation that is never realized. This view of baptism and the sacrament is to be condemned. Among other things it leads us into the murky waters of Arminianism, as does all conditional theology.

Over against this it must be emphasized that the sacraments seal salvation only to the believer. Both believer and unbeliever may receive the sacraments. But the sacraments serve as a guarantee of

salvation only to the believer.

This certainly is in harmony with the Heidelberg Catechism. The Catechism in Q & A 66, which we quoted earlier, definitely limits the promise of the gospel to the believer. According to the Catechism the promise of the gospel is "that he grants *us* freely the remission of sins, and life eternal . . ." This *us*, we have seen, is the believer. The promise of the gospel is not a general promise to all, but a particular promise to the believer. Quite in harmony with this the Catechism in this same Q & A also teaches that through the sacraments God "more fully declares and seals to *us* [again the believer] the promise of the gospel."

This is important to understand and maintain. It does little to comfort, encourage, or strengthen our faith to know that through the sacraments God pledges salvation to many who never receive that salvation. The pledge or guarantee of God in the sacraments is then rather empty and hollow. However, it is altogether different if the guarantee of salvation made in the sacraments is sure in every instance, if everyone who is guaranteed salvation receives that salvation. That's a guarantee we can lay hold of, that can comfort and strengthen our faith. And that's the kind of guarantee we have in the sacraments once we understand that through the sacraments God guarantees salvation not to all but only to the believer, who as a believer will certainly receive that salvation.

We are now ready to understand what the sacraments accomplish and how they are important.

In light of all we have discussed it is quite obvious that the sacraments themselves do not save. Contrary to the teachings of some, the water of baptism itself does not wash away sins. Neither do the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper nourish the soul to eternal life. It is the blood of Christ alone that washes away sin. And it is Christ alone as the Bread of Life that nourishes our souls to life eternal. The sacraments are but signs and seals of these spiritual realities.

However, the sacraments do accomplish something very important. For they strengthen our faith. This we are taught in the Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 65. There we read that faith comes from "the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments." The sacraments confirm or strengthen our faith. They do that exactly because they are seals, guaranteeing our salvation. The faith of God's people is definitely strengthened when through the sacraments God guarantees them full and free salvation in Jesus Christ.

Finally, we must see that the sacraments

strengthen our faith in a way that the preaching can not and does not.

The Catechism teaches that it is through the preaching that the Holy Spirit works faith. This is unique to the preaching. The sacraments do not work faith as does the preaching. The sacraments presuppose faith and merely strengthen that faith. The preaching alone works faith. However, the preaching also strengthens faith. The preaching does two things therefore. It works faith and strengthens it; whereas the sacraments only strengthen faith. For that reason the sacraments are often called the secondary means of grace.

However, the sacraments strengthen faith in a way that the preaching can not. This is suggested by the Catechism in Q & A 66 when it teaches that through the sacraments God "more fully declares and seals to *us* the promise of the gospel." The idea here is that through the preaching God declares to *us* the promise of the gospel, but that He more fully declares to *us* this gospel through the sacraments. How is this so? This is true because through the preaching the gospel is proclaimed verbally to *us* and brought to our ear. However, through the sacraments this same gospel is brought to *us* in visible form so that we can see it, taste it, touch and handle it. In this way the great gospel of salvation is brought to *us* more forcibly than just by the preaching. If, for example, someone describes to you a foreign land he has visited, you certainly are able to come to some understanding of what that land is like. However, if he shows you pictures he has taken on his trip, your understanding is much better and clearer. Better yet will be your understanding if various articles from this distant land are available to touch and handle. In like manner must we understand the sacraments in relation to the preaching. When the great gospel of salvation proclaimed in the preaching is set before *us* visibly in the sacraments so that we can see, taste, and touch, then the gospel is declared to *us* in a way that the preaching alone can not present it. And for that reason the sacraments are also able to strengthen our faith in a way that the preaching alone can not and does not.

We must not therefore conclude that the sacraments are of little importance, simply duplicating what the preaching already does. No, the sacraments are added to the preaching to accomplish what the preaching alone can not do. They strengthen our faith above and beyond what the preaching can. Our faith, our spiritual life, our enjoyment of God's salvation are much enriched through the sacraments.

Read & Study The Standard Bearer!

GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

"The Illumination of the Spirit in the Church"

Rev. Thomas Miersma

The Word of God is clear and understandable to the believing child of God. This is the position of the Reformation. Over against Rome, which set aside Scripture's sole authority and clarity in order to teach the doctrines of men, the Reformers exalted the Word of God to its proper place as the all-sufficient rule of faith and life. This objective principle of truth was the guiding principle of the church's reformation. It does not stand by itself, however; the Word of God must be spiritually appropriated and its meaning understood. And this is a matter of the inner principle of understanding and interpretation.

On this point also, as we have already indicated, Rome and the Reformers disagreed. Rome limited the right and ability to understand and interpret God's Word to the hierarchy of the church. This they did in a particular way. Rome took the position that the Spirit of truth was not given to all believers, but only to the special priesthood of the church. The ordinary members of the church were bound to receive the authoritative pronouncements of the church's hierarchy, councils, and papacy, as the authoritative declaration of the truth of God's Word. The believers might not search or study the Scriptures for themselves to interpret or expound them, for no one had the right to disagree with the church's interpretation or to teach anything contrary to it. By so doing Rome sought to impose from above the opinions of men and to compel the consciences of men, demanding blind acceptance and obedience. The will of the majority, the opinions of councils and decrees, the vanity of men, were set above the truth of God's Word.

Rome's opinion is clearly expressed in the decrees of the Council of Trent, 1546, which is Rome's answer to the Reformation. In the fourth session we read the following:

Furthermore, in order to restrain petulant

spirits, it decrees, that no one, relying on his own skill, shall — in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, — wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church, — whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures, — hath held and doth hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers; even though such interpretations were never (intended) to be at any time published. Contraveners shall be made known by their Ordinaries, and be punished with the penalties by law established.

In the light of this position Rome charged the Reformers with schism and error and persecuted the Reformation with fire and sword.

It is to the answer of the Reformers that we must now direct our attention in our study. Before we focus upon the teaching of the Reformers in detail, however, it might be well to set before our minds the broad scope of their teaching.

The Reformers took the position that it was the Spirit alone Who illumined the heart and mind of man to understand God's Word. Not the church therefore, but God Himself, Who gave His Word of truth, is the expounder and interpreter of His Own Word. Scripture interprets Scripture. This is the principle of all Reformed exegesis. Truth therefore is not a matter of opinion, but under the leading of the Spirit, a matter of certainty, for God's Word of truth is clear and certain in its meaning. It is objectively and concretely knowable in itself, and the Spirit given to the church, consisting of all believers, leads the believer to know and understand that Word of God for Himself. That work and operation of the Spirit is not limited to one person

or group within that church, but is given to every believer, who is anointed with the Spirit to understand God's Word for himself. Denying the restriction of the priesthood to the clergy of the church, the Reformers taught the principle of a priesthood of believers, all anointed by the Spirit to know and understand God's Word. This principle is embodied in Lord's Day XII of the Heidelberg Catechism which speaks of the anointing of Christ and the believers' partaking of it. Thus, the Word of God set forth in Scripture and addressed to the heart of the believer by His Spirit makes that Word spiritually clear and understandable.

Thus Zwingli writes in his sermon on the clarity of the Word,

When the Word of God shines on the human understanding, it enlightens it in such a way that it understands and confesses the Word and knows the certainty of it. This was the inner experience of David, and he spoke of it in Psalm 119: "The entrance of thy words, O Lord, giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple, . . ." (Zwingli and Bullinger, tr. G.W. Bromley, *Library of Christian Classics*, Volume XXIV, The Westminster Press 1953, p. 75)

In this is embodied the right of the believer to study the Word of God for himself, to know it. This is a right which is guaranteed to the least of all believers in the church. The conclusions of faithful Bible study by believers are not the opinions of men, but are knowledge given by God Who is the Teacher of truth. Such Bible study requires an attitude of spiritual submission to the Word of God, in which we come to it to hear what God has to say to us, for it is a matter of the Spirit's illumination and not men's wisdom. This principle necessarily stands in opposition to the idea of Rome which would exalt the wisdom of men above the Word of God, and which would manufacture out of the papacy and its pronouncements a new head for the church other than Christ.

Zwingli writes in his sermon on the clarity of God's Word,

Away then with that light of your own which you would give to the Word of God with your interpreters. In John 3, John the Baptist says: "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above." If we are to receive and understand anything it must come from above. But if that is so, then no other man can attain it for us. The comprehension and understanding of divine doctrine comes then from above and not from interpreters, who are just as liable to be led into temptation as Balaam was. See

II Peter 2.

The Samaritan woman was clever enough to say to Christ (John 4): "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he cometh, he will tell us all things." And our theologians have not yet learned that lesson. Ask them if they understand the words: Christ is *caput ecclesiae*, that is, Christ is head of the congregation or church which is his body. They will answer: Yes, they understand them very well, but they may not do so apart from the official pronouncements of men. What poor creatures! Rather than allow themselves to be vanquished by the truth, they deny that they are men, as if they had no ordinary intelligence and did not know the meaning of *caput*. And all that in order to subject the truth to the Caiaphas's and Annas's, its official interpreters. It is not of the slightest account to them that Christ Himself said (John 6): "They shall all be taught of God," in the words of Isaiah 54. But if all Christians are taught of God, why can you not leave them the certainty and freedom of that teaching according to the understanding which God himself has imparted? And that God himself is the teacher of the hearts of believers we learn from Christ in the words immediately following, when he says (John 6): "Every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." None can come to the Lord Jesus Christ except he has learned to know him of the Father. And note who the teacher is: not *doctores*, not *patres*, not pope, not *cathedra*, nor *concilia*, but the Father of Jesus Christ. And you cannot say, we are taught of men as well. No, for just before he says: "No man can come to me, except my heavenly Father draw him." Even if you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ from an apostle, you cannot act upon it unless the heavenly Father teach and draw you by the Spirit. The words are clear; enlightenment, instruction and assurance are by divine teaching without any intervention on the part of that which is human. And if they are taught of God, they are well taught, with clarity and conviction: if they had first to be taught and assured by men, we should have to describe them as taught of men rather than of God. (Ibid. pp. 79-80.)

This principle of the spiritual illumination of the believer to know and understand the truth of God's Word is fundamental. It is the inner principle and subjective foundation upon which the study of

Scripture is possible. By it, the Word of God is clear not only in itself, objectively, but also to the believer. And he, being taught from above, may know and understand it aright.

On the basis of this truth our creeds call us to discern out of the Word of God for ourselves the marks of the true church; we have both the right and calling to do so. For the same reason we have embodied in our whole system of church government the right to correct the church when it errs, by bringing matters to its attention in the way of protest and appeal. Likewise, we do not set the creeds above Scripture but under it, giving the believer the right also to bring to the church's attention by way of gravamen, errors in the creeds. This right of believers to study and search God's Word, to know and understand it, is fundamental and sacred. The Spirit is given us to illumine us that we might know God's Word, believe the truth, and discern the truth from the lie. As God Himself gives His Word of truth, so also it is His work by which we understand that Word and that is not limited to

only a select few, neither to the clergy, nor to a special priesthood, nor to so-called scholars.

Do not misunderstand the Reformers however, concerning this illuminating work of the Spirit in the office of believer. In teaching this, Zwingli and the other Reformers were not opening the door to chaos and confusion in the church. Nor were the Reformers sanctioning a spirit either of lawlessness or individualism. This was the error of the Anabaptists which the Reformers also soundly condemned. The illuminating work of the Spirit belongs to the believer as he stands in organic connection with the church, in the communion of the body of Christ, manifested in the church institute. The union of the church to Christ and of the believer to Christ are the same union, by faith, through the Spirit. The church's anointing and the believer's are one and the same and may not be separated. But that illuminating work of the Spirit extends to the whole church and every believer and is not limited, as Rome would have it, to just a holy few.

IN HIS FEAR

God Is Love (II)

Rev. Ronald Hanko

In forbidding murder, the Sixth Commandment gives us a lesson in love and its duties. As with all the Commandments, the negative prohibition of the Sixth Commandment implies a positive requirement. And in the case of the Sixth Commandment, that positive requirement is the same as the basic demand of the whole second table of the Law, that we love our neighbor for God's sake. This Sixth Commandment, however, requires the highest possible expression of that love when it demands that we preserve the life of our neighbor and seek his well-being.

We must show this love for our neighbor because God Himself is love. Through obedience to the Sixth Commandment we have the God-given opportunity to praise Him as a God of love in deed as well as in word. This, as we have seen, is the teaching of God's Word in the first Epistle of John. There both murder and hatred, the deepest cause of

murder, are forbidden. They are forbidden not only because love is of God, but also because God is love (I Jn. 3:15, 4:7, 8, 20, 21).

That the ungodly neither know nor understand the love of God is evident from their widespread and perverse disobedience toward this Commandment. Not only do they practice murder wholesale, through abortion and other forms of birth-prevention, but they preserve the lives of those whom God commands them to kill, the murderer and the blasphemer, all the while piously speaking of love, even of the love of God.

We must understand, of course, that the Sixth Commandment does not forbid killing, but murder. Killing in itself is not wrong, though the right to kill others does not belong to any private citizen, but to the magistrates and rulers; and even their right is closely bound by the Word of God which gives

them their positions of authority. Rulers have the power to kill, first of all, in executing the demands of justice. In fact, they have the express command to kill every murderer (Gen. 9:5, 6, Num. 35:31, Rom. 13:4). They also have the power to kill in waging war. This power is often abused by ungodly rulers, but the power itself is given by the Word of God, which never condemns war in itself as evil (Num. 31:2, Luke 3:14).

The world professes a great horror of war and killing today, to the extent that in most cases they will not put even the worst murderer to death; but this is not out of any desire to keep God's law, nor even out of natural affection, but a matter of convenience at best, and at worst a symptom of their continued rebellion against God and their refusal to do anything God says. Their hypocrisy is revealed in the practice of abortion. Herod's murders and the bloody deeds of other great tyrants pale into insignificance when compared with the slaughter that is legally practiced in our country today.

The Sixth Commandment, therefore, is designed especially for the people of God — those in whose heart the love of God has been shed abroad through Jesus Christ. Only by that great work of grace by which God reveals the power and glory of His own love to them are they able to understand love and know what the Sixth Commandment forbids and requires as far as loving the neighbor for God's sake is concerned. This Commandment is given to them that they may show their love for Him Who first loved them.

As we know, the Sixth Commandment speaks only of murder, but outright murder is not the only sin forbidden. Murder is only the worst form of sin against the Commandment, and in forbidding murder God also forbids all other ways in which we might dishonor, wound, or kill ourselves or our neighbors. This is clear from Christ's sermon in Matthew 5 (vss. 21, 22), where anger, rash and hurtful words, and hatred are all counted as murder (cf. I Jn. 3:15).

As far as our own lives are concerned, then, the Commandment not only forbids self-murder or suicide, but forbids us to abuse our bodies, to expose ourselves wilfully to danger, or even to neglect the proper care of our bodies. We must not only love our neighbor but we must also love ourselves, and care for our lives as gifts from God, and for our bodies as temples of His Spirit (I Cor. 6:19, 20). Drunkenness, gluttony, drug abuse, and all kinds of dangerous sports and amusements must therefore be condemned and shunned by us. Nor may we be hypocrites in condemning these sins. We must be just as quick to condemn our own gluttony as we are to condemn another man's drunkenness.

We cannot in good conscience abhor abortion, while we ourselves freely participate in other forms of violence, or enjoy the murder and mayhem that is fed to us via the television set and radio.

As far as others are concerned, the Commandment forbids not only murder, but also all violence against our neighbor, including all thoughts and words with which we might dishonor, hurt, or kill him. The tongue especially is an instrument of murder. Solomon says that the words of tale-bearers are as wounds (Prov. 26:22), and Jesus reminds us that the first murder was not in deed but in word when our first parents were murdered by Satan's lies and slander (Jn. 8:44). Too often this is also the case in the church, so that the whole church is filled with whisperings and gossip, back-biting and slander, until the communion and life of the church is destroyed. For the safety of the church and the glory of God we must put away these works of the flesh.

The opposite is also true. Not only must these sins against the Sixth Commandment be rooted out of our lives through constant watchfulness and prayer, but we must "put on charity," and walk in love as God for Christ's sake has loved us (Col. 3:14, Eph. 5:2). That is the positive requirement of the Sixth Commandment.

In the church, among the saints, that love is the bond of perfectness of which we read in Colossians 3:14. It is the glue which binds the people of God together and makes them one, just as it binds the three Persons of the Holy Trinity together in the unity of the Godhead (Jn. 17:23). That love is the bond of perfectness because it is the perfect work of God's grace in the saints that draws them together in love, just as God's own perfection is that which He loves and seeks in Himself, thus living in perfect unity as the three-Personed God (Jn. 17:21-23).

We must learn, therefore, to look for that work of grace in one another. That is the first duty of love. We so often fall down in all the other duties of love exactly because we see only the faults of our brethren and are blind to God's work in them. All the other duties of love are part of a constant effort to encourage and build up that work of God's grace in them. This we do "by kindly words and virtuous life."

In love we do not ignore the sins of a brother. Love cannot ignore sin because it is the bond of perfectness. But in love we deal with the erring brother as a fellow heir of God's grace. We do not use his faults and sins to murder him in the church as far as his name and reputation are concerned, nor wound him by tale-bearing and gossip, but seek his salvation in the way of love which Jesus teaches

us in Matthew 18. Even if, in the way of Matthew 18, a brother must finally be excommunicated from the fellowship of the church, the Word of God still requires that we do not count him as an enemy, but that we admonish him as a brother (II Thess. 3:15).

Nor may we ever forget that that love of the neighbor which the Sixth Commandment requires is first of all a love for the brethren. It must be that way, because only with them can love be a bond of perfectness. They only have that perfect work of God's almighty grace, and only with them can we be one. It is wrong that the officebearers and members of the church attempt to fulfill the demands of love through all sorts of social endeavors, to the complete neglect of their own members. It was for such conduct that Jesus condemned the Pharisees, who compassed heaven and earth to make one proselyte, while their own people wandered as sheep without shepherds (Matt. 23:15, 9:36).

My neighbor is always the man whose life is part of my life. That neighbor is not even first of all my fellow saints in the church, but the wife and children or parents and husband that God has given me. To speak with honeyed tongue in the church and walk softly among the saints while my home is filled with violence and wounding words is also hypocrisy and sin. The closer my neighbor is to me, the more difficult the duties of love become. It is not so difficult to perform the duties of love to those who are relative strangers. That is why so many forsake their duties in the church and in the home for various social causes. To love my brother in the church, who so often sins against me, to love the wife who often is intractable and rebellious, or the husband who seeks only himself, to love and refrain from murdering in thought or word the disobedient and rebellious children God has given me — that is the difficult part of obedience to the Sixth Commandment. That is the part of obedience which truly shows the power and wonder of the

love of God.

Nevertheless, though our duties are first toward family and church, the Sixth Commandment also governs our relationship to our unbelieving neighbor. Once again it must be emphasized, however, that even here my neighbor is not some needy person in another country to whom I send gifts of food or clothing through some social or church agency, but the man whose life is intertwined with mine. That is the point of the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). In answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus makes it clear that the man who lies weak, wounded, and needy across my life's pathway is my neighbor. He may be and often is one who calls me a dog, who hates me and refuses to have anything to do with me, just as the Jews treated the Samaritans, but he is nevertheless my neighbor.

My love for him can never be a bond of perfectness, unless he repents and turns from his wicked ways, and in that measure my love for him is also incomplete and unfulfilled. Nevertheless, I must love him, and the great duty of that love is that I show him the love of God, not just by the confession of my mouth, but by the witness of my whole life. Thereby I show to him the power of God's love in me. In doing so, I can neither disregard his sin nor walk with him in his sin. Yet by kindness, charity, timely assistance in need (I John 3:17, James 2:15, 16), as well as by separation from his wicked ways I bring to him the very means that God promises to use for the salvation of his people — the witness of a godly life. Love can do no more.

In these things the children of God are manifested (I Jn. 3:10), and in this they know that they have passed from death into life by the power of the love of God (3:14). Thus God, Who is Love, is glorified, and the wonders of His love revealed through Jesus Christ are magnified and exalted.

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QUESTION BOX

Bibles in the Worship Services

Rev. C. Hanko

A reader asks:

It is being proposed in the church to which I belong to give all our Bibles away. The argument is: People *should* bring their own Bibles to church, then they can underline and make notes in their own Bible in the service.

Do any of the churches in the Prot. Ref. denomination have this custom of bringing their own Bibles, with no Bible in the church pews?

Is this desirable?

First of all, my apologies for not having answered this question sooner. For various reasons, one that I was away from home for four months, second that I do not like to enter into problems being discussed in a local church, I did not give an answer until now.

Whether there are other churches that follow the practice of members taking their own Bibles to church, I do not know of any in our denomination, but that does not mean that there are none.

As to the general question of the propriety of this practice, something can be said for both sides of the question. It is really a matter of preference, since I see no principle involved in this matter. Therefore I can make a few general remarks. Possibly Prof. Hanko will say more about this in his articles on worship services.

To me the main question is this: What can serve best for the solemnity of the worship service and for the edification of the saints through the preaching of the Word?

Years ago, when our services were still held in the Dutch language, it was a common practice for the members to take their own Psalmbooks to church. Small children received Psalmbooks as incentive to learn their texts for Sunday School. The older people usually had the New Testament included in their Psalmbook, as well as the psalms and the liturgical forms. I certainly do not favor carrying around less than half of a Bible, but this was likely done to avoid making the Psalmbook too large and too bulky. My parents were very reluc-

tant to mar their book in any way, but they did have a ribbon or a small card at certain passages which they wished to remember. In the transition from the Dutch language to the English many carried with them a New Testament with parallel columns of the Dutch and the English. Again, too bad that this was limited only to the New Testament, but that was done likely for the same reason mentioned before.

I have seen Bibles that were underscored and had marginal references.

One of them was owned by a girl of Baptist persuasion, and was very neatly underscored, with references written in fine letters in the margins. The underscoring must have been done with a fine pencil and a small ruler. I can see where this can well be done in a catechism class with the Bible lying on the table. One thing struck my attention. There were so very many passages underscored, and so many references in the margins, that I wondered how anyone could keep track of all of them? I also wonder whether all these references will interfere with the private reading of the Scriptures for personal, spiritual edification.

Another Bible was marked with pencils of various colors, crudely underscored and carelessly scribbled, sometimes with large letters, making the notes almost illegible. In one word, it was a very messy Bible, which I would not care to own, much less to take in public. Markings, like friends, should be few and well chosen. Besides, they should be done with utmost care.

In this connection I might mention that there are some who feel that they are benefited by taking notes of the sermon. They say that hereby they can give their full attention to the message, are spiritually edified in a greater measure, and can retain the contents of the sermon much longer. All this seems to be a matter of personal preference.

In any case, we should not lose sight of the fact that the worship services must remain a solemn worship in the communion of saints!

Book Review

BORN SLAVES, Clifford Pond; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, N.J.; 93 pp., \$3.50 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema)

This little book offers a summary of Martin Luther's classic work, *The Bondage of the Will*. In a brief preface about "The question" the author, or compiler, of this work tells us the gist of the book: "The question is—does man have something called 'free-will'? Can a man freely and without help turn to Christ for salvation from his sins? Erasmus answers: 'Yes!' Luther says a resounding: 'no!' Luther was convinced that 'free-will' strikes at the heart of the biblical doctrine of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone. We must have the same conviction. We must fight against 'free-will' as vigorously as Luther did. Erasmus said: 'I can conceive of "free-will" as a power of human will by which a man may apply himself to those things that lead to eternal salvation or turn away from them.'

To this we also must give a resolute 'No! Man is born a slave to sin!' He is not free."

As a rule I do not favor books which are only summaries of larger classics. It is much better to read and digest the larger classic itself. Along this line, this book has its shortcomings, too. For one thing, it is obviously a severe condensation of Luther's large tome. For another, it does not follow the same order as the original work of Luther. But the author-compiler does not hide, but rather admits, these facts.

Hence, if this small volume will give the reader a taste of Luther's work and thus an incentive to digest the original work of Luther, it can serve a good purpose. Besides, in spite of the shortcomings mentioned, the book is both interesting and accurate: a good taste of Luther.

Recommended.

News From Our Churches

May 15, 1985

Rev. Joostens has asked for a two-week extension to consider the call to be pastor of Lynden Church in Washington. Rev. Dale Kuiper has received the call to be minister at Isabel Church in South Dakota. Rev. M. De Vries has accepted the call to Edgerton, Minnesota.

Rev. Bruinsma writes that a few aspects of the work which need much time and labor are the need to begin a consistent and solid program to teach the young children the Bible and the truths of our Protestant Reformed Churches. Hand in hand with this is the difficulty of maintaining the interest of the youth, especially young men. It seems that a sin engrained in the very culture is that church is a necessity for small children as well as for old men and women. But for a young man to attend church is to them a shame and a sign of weakness.

In another paragraph he writes, God is a God of means and He uses His Word and the preaching to change the hearts of His people from darkness to light. For this reason we are beginning to set up a catechism program in the churches. At present we

are testing out the use of our own catechism books. If this seems to go well enough we may start using these books in all the churches. We have also planned for this coming July a Youth Conference on the subject of "Friendship, Dating, and Marriage."

He closes with, "There is much work to be done in our churches here before they are solid enough to stand on their own. Let us pray that God will strengthen His people and the churches here in order that in the future they can stand on their own by God's grace."

The construction of First Church's sanctuary is going well. The heating, plumbing, and electrical sub-contractors are busy roughing in their respective work. The brick-layers are also progressing on the exterior of the building. More room has been provided for the kitchen counters. They are waiting for design proposals for the rose window from the Rainbow Art Glass Company. The cornerstone contents have been removed from the old building.

The contents which were stored in a copper box consisted of decisions relative to the church struggles of 1924. The laying of the cornerstone for the new church building is planned for Saturday, June 1, at 10:00 AM.

The Singapore Camp-Day is planned for June 14 & 15. The first night Rev. den Hartog will speak on "The Reformed Faith In Singapore." On the following morning, Francis Quek will speak on the "Christian Witness" and Jackie Mahtani on "Singapore Prayer Meetings." Then, in the afternoon, Lim Kokeng will direct a "Cell Meeting." This camp-day is sponsored by the combined efforts of the Byron Center, Faith, and Kalamazoo churches in Michigan. If you want to know what cell groups are, how a prayer-meeting is conducted, and how the Singaporeans present their beliefs to others, then come to the Singapore Camp-Day.

The Reformed Fellowship of South Holland Church in Illinois heard a speech by Rev. Engelsma on "A Comparison of the Presbyterian and the Reformed Faith."

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema spoke to the high school and college age young people of Faith Church on our Seminary and the need for students.

The Young People's Convention will be from July 29 to August 2 at Grand Valley College in Allendale, Michigan.

The Summer mini-course for our teachers will be held at the Crossroads Restaurant in Grandville, Michigan on August 7 from 2:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M., dinner included. Mr. John Kalsbeek, Mr. Gary Van Der Schaaf, and Miss Agatha Lubbers will speak on "Practical Approaches To Interdisciplinary Writing." DH

Report of Classis East

Classis East met in regular session on May 8, 1985 at the Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church. Each church was represented by two delegates. Rev. B. Gritters chaired this meeting of classis.

The main item of business was the treatment of an appeal of a brother who maintained that his consistory did not thoroughly treat his protest. Classis decided that the consistory did in fact thoroughly treat the protest and thus the appeal was not sustained.

In other action, classis approved the ministerial credentials of Rev. M. De Vries who has accepted the call to Edgerton. Because of his leaving, Southwest Church requested a moderator and classical appointments. Rev. Kortering was appointed as the

moderator for Southwest. The following schedule was adopted for classical appointments: June 2 - W. Bekkering, June 9 - R. Flikkema, June 16 - B. Gritters, July 7 - C. Haak, July 14 - M. Joostens, July 21 - R. Miersma, August 4 - R. Hanco, August 11 - J. Kortering, August 18 - G. Van Baren, September 1 - B. Woudenberg, September 8 - R. Flikkema.

Rev. W. Bekkering was elected to serve on the Classical Committee to replace Rev. De Vries. Classis also dealt with discipline matters presented by three consistories.

Expenses of this classis amounted to \$563.00. Classis will meet next at Hope Church on September 11, 1985.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon J. Huiskens, Stated Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 26, 1985, our parents, MR. & MRS. ROBERT HOVING celebrated their 35th Wedding Anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, are thankful to God for the Christian love and instruction they have given us. We pray that God will continue to bless them in the years ahead.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praise unto thy name, O most High." (Psalm 92:1)

Robert Jr. & Cheryl Hoving
Daniel & Jennie Boone
Roger & Judith Brands
Gerald & Theresa Dykstra
Albert & Claire Sorensen

Stephan Hoving
John & Grace Ozinga
Timothy Hoving
Sarah Hoving
16 grandchildren

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 17, 1985, our parents, MR. AND MRS. CHARLES PASTOOR will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our Covenant God for them and for the love they have shown us. We pray for God's continued blessing upon them.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children." (Psalm 103:17)

Cornelius C. and Joyce Pastoor
Harry and Thelma Boonstra
Carol Ann Pastoor

7 grandchildren
2 great-grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 24, 1985, our parents, MR. AND MRS. MARVIN HAVEMAN, celebrated their 40th Wedding Anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, are thankful to our Heavenly Father for God-fearing parents, and the Christian instruction and guidance He has provided through them. May God continue to be near them and bless them in the years ahead.

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

Brent and Wilma Overway
Lester and Joyce Haveman
Clarence Haveman
Calvin and Eunice Yonker

Doug and Marlene Haan
Deane and Donna Wassink
John and Debra Haveman
and 21 grandchildren

IN LOVING MEMORY

On May 1, 1985, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our beloved wife, sister, sister in law, step mother and grandmother, MRS. GRACE (HELMUS) GEELHOED, at the age of 80 years. We rejoice that she is in glory with her Lord and we pray that

Jehovah, our covenant God will uphold us by His grace and give us the peace that passeth all understanding.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1)

Mr. William Geelhoed
Mrs. Lucy Johnson
Mrs. Jim (Fanny) Dekker
Mrs. Janet (Pastoor) Ohlman
Mrs. Helen Helmus

Mrs. Donald (Martheen) Griffioen
Mrs. Arnie (Shirley) Snoeyink
Dr. Glenn W. Geelhoed
Mrs. Doug (Mildred) Holtvluwer
grandchildren

ATTENTION TEACHERS!!!

Covenant Christian School of Lynden, Washington, is in urgent need of teachers. Positions are available for one elementary and one high school teacher. For more information please contact Albert de Boer, 7235 Hannagan Road, Lynden, WA 98264, phone (206) 354-5825. Or call H.W. Kuiper at the school, (206) 354-5436.

Albert de Boer, Sec'y.



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