

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

. . . The Christian man has especially the responsibility to be the spiritual head of his home. He must make the spiritual welfare of his wife and children his chief concern. He must be an example of godliness and righteousness to his family unto whom wife and children can look with respect. How many even Christian homes are grievously languishing because father does not take up the spiritual leadership in the home.

See "The Christian Family: The Role of
Husband and Father" — page 473

CONTENTS

Meditation —	
Serving God Alone	458
Editorial —	
Whence Have You Come?	461
My Sheep Hear My Voice —	
Our Order of Worship	463
Taking Heed to the Doctrine —	
The Apostles' Creed (3)	465
The Lord Gave the Word —	
The Missionary a Slave to All (4)	467
Guest Article —	
Christian Liberty	469
Bible Study Guide —	
The Pentateuch	471
In His Fear —	
The Christian Family:	
The Role of Husband and Father	473
Guest Article —	
Likened to a Deceitful Bow	476
Book Reviews	478
News From Our Churches	479

THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August.

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.
Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Editor-in-Chief: Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema

Department Editors: Rev. Ronald Cammenga, Rev. Arie den Hartog, Prof. Robert D. Decker, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman C. Hanko, Rev. Ronald Hanko, Mr. David Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. J. Kortering, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Thomas C. Miersma, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. James Slope-
ma, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman.Editorial Office: Prof. H.C. Hoeksema
4975 Ivanrest Ave. S.W.
Grandville, Michigan 49418Church News Editor: Mr. David Harbach
4930 Ivanrest Ave., Apt. B
Grandville, Michigan 49418

Editorial Policy: Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Question-Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten, and must be signed. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

Reprint Policy: Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles in our magazine by other publications, provided: a) that such reprinted articles are reproduced in full; b) that proper acknowledgement is made; c) that a copy of the periodical in which such reprint appears is sent to our editorial office.

Business Office: The Standard Bearer
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr. PH: (616) 243-2953
P.O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506New Zealand Business Office: The Standard Bearer
c/o Protestant Reformed Fellowship
B. Van Herk, 66 Fraser St.
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$10.50 per year. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

Advertising Policy: The Standard Bearer does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 1st or the 15th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

Bound Volumes: The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume; such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume. A limited number of past volumes may be obtained through the Business Office.

MEDITATION

Serving God Alone

Rev. C. Hanko

*Ques. 94. What doth God enjoin in the first commandment?**Ans. That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul, avoid and flee from all idolatry, sorcery, soothsaying, superstition, invocation of saints, or any other creatures; and learn rightly to know the only true God, trust in him alone, with humility and patience submit to him; expect all good things from him only; love, fear, and glorify him with my whole heart; so that I renounce and forsake all creatures rather than commit even the least thing contrary to his will.**Ques. 95. What is idolatry?**Ans. Idolatry is, instead of, or besides that one true God, who has manifested himself in his word, to contrive, or have any other object, in which men place their trust.*

Let us arise and go up to Bethel.

Bethel is the House of God. For us that means that we go to our weekly place of worship, or to our inner chamber to commune with God in prayer, adoring Him in His beauty, worshiping Him in His holiness, pouring out our hearts in prayer and supplication before Him with thanksgiving.

At Bethel we are in the presence of God: a small foretaste of heaven.

We are reminded of the prophet Isaiah, who saw the glory of the Lord filling the temple and cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

We call to mind the angels who cover their eyes in the dazzling brightness of God's presence as they sing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, heaven and earth are full of thy glory."

We anticipate the time when we will join that blessed throng and mingle our voices in ever blessed adoration: "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen."

At Bethel we hear more clearly than ever God's assuring word: "I am Jehovah, your Almighty, who brought you out of Satan's realm, out of the bondage of sin and death!"

I am your God! I claim you as my very own, my choice possession, above all that is in heaven and earth, in Christ Jesus! I have formed you in sovereign wisdom and almighty power to hold your own unique place in my creation, to carry out my purpose in Christ, to the coming of My kingdom and the eternal effulgence of My glory. I am your almighty God and your merciful Father. I have made you and enabled you to serve Me alone. You are Mine!

For I am God! The one, only, true and living God! Besides Me there can be no other, for all holiness, righteousness, truth, love, and infinite goodness belong to Me alone. I am Light, the only Light of life. I am Life. In Me you live and move and have your very being. To know Me is eternal life, for intimate communion of life with Me is your only blessedness, your joy, your peace, now in this present time and into endless eternity!

Let us draw near to God. Let us go to Bethel.

But before we go, let us take heed to His Word!

He has given us His law as our sure Guide through life. He shows us the straight and narrow way that leads to His eternal dwelling place, our true and heavenly Home. What the rails are for a train, what the compass is for a ship at sea, what

the radio beam is for an airplane that is preparing to land on a dark, fog-packed night, that is what God's law is for us.

It is even more than that, for it is the power of God working mightily in our heart and conscience to lead us along the everlasting way, consciously to love and to serve our God with our whole being.

It is the law of liberty, the guide to true thankfulness.

First and foremost among the ten commands that God gives us is this: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Other gods are vain gods, a mere sham, a wicked caricature of our God!

It is hatred against God that causes sinful man to seek an idol, to prostrate himself before it, upon the ground, or to scream at the top of his voice, or to mutilate himself, or destroy his children, only to be heard by that which he calls god.

Isaiah points to the irony of it all by saying that a man takes a piece of wood, splits it in two, throws one half in the fire as worth no more than to warm himself by it, and takes the other half to form some monstrosity that represents his god. He will say that this image only represents his god. God say that his god is nothing more than the lifeless image he has made.

But it is still worse when those who profess to be God's people forsake Him, the Fountain of living waters, and hew out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13). This is nothing less than spiritual adultery, following one's carnal lusts.

Before we go to Bethel let us search our homes and examine our hearts, bring out the false gods and bury them, as Jacob did under the oak at Mamre (Gen. 35:1-4).

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; which hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

Do you, do I, lift up our souls to vanity, to idols?

One idol that immediately comes to mind is our big ego, that proud I. It appears to be so very humble. It was pride, the ambition to be like God, that brought ruin upon our first parents and ourselves. Rulers of the world, like Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, the Herods, the Caesars, the Antichrist all exalt themselves as if they were God. But I? If only every one were like me this would not be such a bad world to live in. Yet, on second thought, every false doctrine, every sin is a defiance of the living God, a choosing of our own rebellious way. I hang my head in shame!

Another idol is the god science. Science has made amazing discoveries and inventions during the past century. We marvel at the advancements in medicine, in electronics, in delving into space. Man exalts himself as if he were God. How readily we put our trust in the arm of the flesh, in doctors and medicines, rather than in our God!

Mammon is still a very popular god. Scripture warns us that, not money, but the love of money is the root of all evil. Yet we crave it, strive for it, always secretly wishing for more, possibly some sudden windfall through lottery or some mere chance. Unless God guards our souls we readily think of *my family, my house, my fields, my barns, my resources, my soul!* Often reluctantly we give a small bit of *our possessions* to the Lord!

An increasingly popular god is sports. Radio and television have brought this god into our homes, demanding much of our precious time, destroying our family life, crowding our church meetings into as little time as we can possibly spare.

But why mention more? There is the goddess of fashion, styles that are streamlined to hug the figure, styles that have their own strong sex appeal. And also many more, as we all well know!

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (I John 5:21).

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:27).

That includes, as our Book of Instruction teaches us, that we "learn to know the only true God." Not merely learn about God, but learn to know Him. Where better can we learn to know Him than from His self-revelation in the Scriptures. The Bible is the divine Word of God. Prayerfully we must read it, study it, meditate on it, always with the prayer, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." We must have time for our personal devotions, our family devotions and for communing with the saints.

"Trust in Him alone!" Some trust in horses and chariots, but our trust is in Jehovah, our Almighty. We think of a child that unconcernedly goes along

with his parents, leaving it up to them where they will bring him. Or the child that sleeps peacefully in its mother's arms while the storm is raging round about. Or the little boy who puts his little hand in father's big hand, safe from the angry dog that growls at him. God knows best, for He has eternally planned every step of our way, even when we are led through deep, dark valleys, through rushing streams of water or even through the flames of fire. We are always safe in the palm of His hand, under His watchful eye, with His ear attuned to our weakest sigh.

"With humility and patience submit to Him." Then we dare not venture out anywhere, or do anything without our God, without a prayer on our lips, seeking His help, His approval and blessing. We become very dependent, even helpless and needy. We begin to understand what it means to pray without ceasing.

"Expect all good things from Him alone." We profess to believe in God's providence, that is, that all that befalls us in this vale of tears comes to us from the hand of our Almighty God, who is our Merciful Father. Yet we are concerned about tomorrow, next week, next year. We pray, "Thy will be done," and we go our own way that brings us into untold difficulties. We complain about so many things, even while we know very well that our God withholds no good thing from those who fear Him.

Unbelief says that God helps those who help themselves. Faith says, "Without Thee I can do nothing." Yet on the other hand, "I can do all things through Christ who empowers me."

Only through faith can we learn to "love, fear, and glorify Him!" Only then can we learn to pray as our Lord teaches us: "Our Father, which art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Only then do we walk with God in the confidence that, "Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou wilt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

We meet our GOD at Bethel. Let us make that our home.

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

EDITORIAL

Whence Have You Come?

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

In *The Outlook* (July/August, 1985, pp. 4-7) there appears a transcript of a recent address by Dr. W. Robert Godfrey, entitled, "The Bible In The Christian Reformed Church: Where Are We Going?" Dr. Godfrey attempts to analyze the current trends and problems in his denomination and to offer a solution and some hope of renewal. With regard to his analysis, there is undoubtedly a large measure of truth in what he writes. However, with regard to the solution he proposes I must disagree. And while it is not my intention to criticize in detail all that Mr. Godfrey writes, I do wish to touch on a few crucial items.

First of all, interestingly enough, Mr. Godfrey introduces himself as somewhat of an outsider:

This is a question that I approach with a bit of hesitancy, because I come to it as something of an outsider. I was not reared in a Christian Reformed Church. I am not of Dutch background, am not a mid-westerner and was not educated in any of the institutions of the Church. But I think that sometimes an outsider's perspective can be helpful, because sometimes an outsider can see a little more clearly . . .

On this same basis, I may also qualify to comment: I am an outsider. For while I was born and baptized Christian Reformed, I was cast out in 1924 and have been an "outsider" ever since. And while I have little hope that the men of the Reformed Fellowship will give heed, in the light of their past refusals even to enter upon open discussion, I will nevertheless bear testimony.

At the same time, it must be remembered that Dr. Godfrey has not remained an outsider, but since the sixties has become very much a Christian Reformed insider. And to that extent he has himself become part of the problem. I refer not merely to the fact that Dr. Godfrey is a minister in the Christian Reformed Church, but more especially to the fact that he himself actively contributed to the doctrinal decline and apostasy of his denomination. I was reminded of this in connection with Dr. God-

frey's answer in his article to the question, "What is 'Reformed'?" Among other things, he writes:

The Canons of Dordt are particularly precious to me and I spent two years studying to write a doctor's dissertation on them. They are part of the great heritage of the church, as they unfold for it the doctrine of God's sovereign elective purpose. But we are told in *The Banner* that for most of the Christian Reformed Church the Canons' teaching about the doctrine of election and reprobation is a dead letter. Is the Biblical message of the canons living in the teaching of our churches and in the hearts of our people as it should?

When I read this, I was reminded of the fact that Dr. Godfrey was chairman of Advisory Committee III at the Synod of 1980. This was the committee which advised Synod concerning the Gravamen of Dr. Harry Boer against the Canons and concerning the Report of the Study Committee on Dr. Boer's Gravamen. This committee was the one which advised synod to reduce the doctrine of election and reprobation to this: "The Scriptures do teach a doctrine of election and reprobation in that they teach that some but not all have been elected to eternal life." A far cry from the teaching of the Canons! This committee advised synod to refer Report 30 (the study report) to the churches for elucidation of the teaching of the Canons on election and reprobation. And what did this Study Report do? For one thing, it agreed with Dr. Boer almost totally in contradicting the Canons' appeal to Scripture for proof of reprobation. For another, that Study Report deliberately distorted the translation of Canons I, A, 15, the article on reprobation. And, as stated above, that Study Report emasculated the Canons' doctrine of election and reprobation. For all this Dr. Godfrey is co-responsible, both as chairman of Advisory Committee III and as delegate to Synod. And that makes him part of the problem, despite his professed appreciation of the Canons.

But it is when Dr. Godfrey considers the reasons

for what he calls the "drift" of the Christian Reformed denomination that he, wittingly or unwittingly, comes close to the truth. Writes he:

I believe that the real cause of all such drifting is worldliness. In church a couple of weeks ago we sang the familiar hymn, "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" My attention was especially caught by the third stanza, "Is this vile world a friend to grace, to help me on to God?" It struck me that many people are answering that question, "Yes," and "It's old-fashioned to call this world 'vile'." When you see all the positive characteristics of this world, you see how it is a friend to grace to lead us on to God." But, brothers and sisters, I don't believe that this is true. The evil one is still "a roaring lion seeking to devour." The world is vile and an enemy to grace. We need to beware of worldliness in our hearts, in our homes and in our churches.

Perhaps it would be too much to expect that Dr. Godfrey would be aware of this, since he is neither by birth and heritage nor by his education for the ministry Christian Reformed. But when I read these lines, I could not help thinking not only that there is a large degree of truth in what Dr. Godfrey states here, but also that this whole process of drifting due to worldliness is to be traced directly to 1924 and the Christian Reformed adoption of the Three Points of Common Grace. I am not now referring to the error of the general, well-meant offer taught by the First Point, but to the doctrine of *common grace* as such. According to this doctrine: 1) God is gracious to the reprobate as well as the elect with a common, non-saving grace, in the things of this present life. 2) God restrains sin in the wicked by a general operation of His Spirit, without renewing the heart. 3) The unregenerate, by virtue of common grace, is able to do that which is truly good in the sight of God.

Dr. Godfrey poses the question of the hymn, "Is this vile world a friend to grace, to help me on to God?" And he claims that many are answering that question, "Yes." And he spells out the answer of many in detail:

1) It's old-fashioned to call this world "vile." Well, that has been old-fashioned ever since 1924. This "vile world" is relatively good, due to a common grace of God. Sin is restrained in the hearts of the unregenerate by a non-saving operation of the Holy Spirit.

2) When you see all the positive characteristics of this world, you see how it is a friend to grace to lead us on to God. This "vile world" can do much that is genuinely good, due to common grace. This "vile world" is not an enemy to grace.

3) This "vile world" is a friend to grace! It must be, because it is a recipient of God's common grace. And, according to some, common grace is even a steppingstone to saving grace.

Now there may be some question, as there often is, whether a departure in doctrine or a departure in life (worldliness) is first. But one thing is certain: the two go hand in hand.

Not only so, but the Synod of 1924 itself was aware of the danger. For it also decided to send a Testimony to the churches (one which was never sent!) about the danger of worldliness because of a "possible misuse of the doctrine of Common Grace."

In other words, it is as *The Standard Bearer* has emphasized again and again over the years: the root of all the problems troubling the Christian Reformed Church today is the departure of 1924. It was then that the CRC officially decided that "this vile world is a friend to grace!"

Unless and until those who are troubled about the current "drift" of the Christian Reformed Church recognize this fact and face it honestly, there is no solution for all their problems.

It is basically for this reason that I cannot agree with Dr. Godfrey's suggestion of a possible solution for the ills of the CRC, namely, "renewal of our confessional orthodoxy, a restoration of our Reformed heritage." To my knowledge, it has never happened in church history that a denomination has succeeded in "turning back the clock," so to speak. And certainly it could not happen today in the CRC, given the present conditions in that denomination, without a wrenching split.

But I especially want to call attention, in conclusion, to a very mistaken appeal to what has happened in recent years in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, where there was a severe controversy about the doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture. It is claimed rather often that here you have an example of successful turning back of the clock and of renewal and reformation from within. This is, however, utterly mistaken. In the first place, anyone who reads Rev. Herman Otten's *Christian News* will know that this renewal in the LCMS has been far from successful. Issue after issue contains reports of those who are in violation of the church's stand on Scripture, but also of the fact that the authorities fail to discipline and expel these violators. In fact, there are those who are calling upon the conservatives in the LCMS to leave and affiliate with more orthodox Lutherans. And, in the second place, the return in the LCMS was a partial return with respect to but one doctrine, not a 100% return to the truth. And genuine reformation is always principally an all-or-nothing matter.

Hence, *The Standard Bearer* says again, as so often over the years: Repent and return, and stand where we stand!

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Our Order of Worship

Prof. H. Hanko

As the appointed ambassador of Christ, the minister functions in the worship service in a two-fold capacity: at certain times in the worship service, the minister speaks to the congregation in the name of God with the authority given to him by virtue of his office. He does this when he reads the law, administers the sacraments, and preaches the gospel. At other times he speaks to God on behalf of the congregation. He does this when he leads the congregation in prayer and in the recitation of the Apostolic Confession (if the congregation does not recite the creed audibly). In our last article we were discussing the benedictions as a part of the worship service. We noticed that in these benedictions the minister is speaking also in the name of God as he pronounces the blessing upon the congregation.

This is worth stressing for a moment. Only an ordained minister can, therefore, pronounce the benediction. This is the reason why students who "preach" in the church may not do this. They are not yet called to the office and do not yet speak in the name of Christ as an official ambassador who comes with the words, "Thus saith the Lord."

But also the benedictions are not a pious wish on the part of the minister in which he expresses what he hopes will be given to the congregation. He does not express a personal desire to see the congregation blessed. He speaks authoritatively in God's name. God is speaking through him in such a way that God is blessing the congregation when the benediction is pronounced. This is a fact which takes place at that moment when the minister raises his hands and speaks the words of the benediction.

All of this does not mean, however, that this blessing is somehow automatic. The churches of the Reformation have never maintained this essentially Roman Catholic idea. Roman Catholicism has always taken the position that grace is inherent in

the activities of the priest. There is an automatic transfer of grace in the liturgical motions of the priest so that blessing comes independent of the spiritual state of the hearer. For example, when the sacrament of the mass is administered, the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, and the result is that the partaker who eats the bread automatically receives the grace of Christ — regardless of his spiritual state. But the Reformation repudiated all such "magic" works of grace. Grace is bestowed always through faith in the hearer. There is no grace in the sacrament (or in any liturgical functions of the minister) in such a way that this grace is automatically conferred regardless of the spiritual frame of mind and heart of the one who is in the audience. Faith alone lays hold on the blessing of God as faith is worked in the hearts of God's people through the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So it is also with the benedictions. There is no grace flowing from the fingertips of the minister which, apart from the faith of the hearer, mysteriously and magically becomes his possession. Rather, the congregation, when it hears the benediction pronounced, receives this by faith as the blessing of her covenant God. And it is in this way, through faith, that the blessing of God actually comes upon the congregation.

It is well to remember this. We can sometimes become so accustomed to the "routine" of the worship service that we go through the motions without any active participation of faith. We scarcely hear the benedictions pronounced because our minds are elsewhere, wandering into other areas of thought while the familiar words of the minister roll over our head. There is no blessing in this. But when the congregation, humbly bowing before the Lord, receives this blessing by faith, that blessing is actually hers.

There is something very beautiful and comforting in this. The congregation comes together on the Lord's Day weary with the burdens of life, the sins and guilt of another week pressing heavily upon her, the cares and toils of her earthly pilgrimage weighing heavily upon her heart. Sometimes indeed, the child of God, deeply conscious of his great sins and guilt, scarcely dares to enter God's presence, wondering whether God will receive him once again. He hardly dares to lift his eyes heavenward, and with hesitant steps makes his way into God's sanctuary. It is a great comfort therefore, when, at the very beginning of the service, he hears the words of his God come through the minister: "Grace, mercy, and peace be granted to you from God the Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, by the operation of the Holy Spirit." God says this to him; and his heart is lifted up once again in joy and thankfulness. God blesses him!

While the individual member of the congregation receives this blessing of God by faith, it also remains a fact that this blessing comes upon the congregation as a whole. This too must never be forgotten. The congregation is the church of Christ, the gathering of believers and their seed, the earthly manifestation in institutional form of the body of Christ. Upon that congregation (of which the individual member is a part) comes God's blessing. It comes authoritatively upon him who receives it by faith, upon his fellow saints who are one with him in the body of Christ, and upon his children, the seed of the covenant, with whom he has come to church. He as an individual is blessed in his fellowship with those who are one with him in the household of faith. In fact, it cannot come upon him except in his fellowship with the church. This is exactly why the benediction cannot be pronounced on the mission field where as yet there is no gathering of the church.

There are different forms of the benediction used in our churches. The ones most commonly used at the beginning of the worship service are these.

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Amen.

The first is the common benediction which is found in almost all of the letters of Paul, although he adds the blessing of mercy in his letters to Timothy. Sometimes is added to this benediction,

"through the operation of the Holy Spirit." The second is taken from the first chapter of the book of Revelation and is the benediction which John uses in his address to the seven churches of Asia Minor.

The benedictions most commonly used at the end of the worship service are:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

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. Amen.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The first is the concluding benediction with which the apostle Paul ends his second letter to the Corinthians; the second is the well-known Aaronitic blessing found in Numbers 6:22-27; the last is the concluding benediction in the epistle to the Hebrews.

It makes no essential difference which benediction is used, for the minister must be permitted some freedom in the use of these benedictions. The important principle is that the benedictions which are used are found in Scripture and are the very words of God Himself in His inspired Word.

What is important is that the truth be clearly seen that God blesses His church when it comes together to worship. If God's blessing is not present, all the worship service is in vain. The congregation can just as well get up from the pews and go home. All depends upon the blessing of God.

And this blessing comes to the church out of the fountain of God's rich grace and love for His people, through Jesus Christ Who has merited all these blessings by His suffering and death on the cross, and by the Spirit Who dwells within the church as the Spirit of Christ. The congregation must know and confess that these blessings are hers only out of free grace through Christ; they are not given because they are merited or because they are in some way deserved. They are given out of free grace to the church which God has chosen as His own possession.

This is why benedictions both at the beginning and at the end of the worship service are so appro-

priate. At the beginning the congregation is assured that God blesses her in spite of her many sins and her undeservedness. At the end of the worship, the congregation leaves with God's blessing upon her

as she resumes her calling in the midst of life. God's blessing is upon her throughout her sojourn in the world, and will finally be her full inheritance when she is taken into the everlasting joy of heaven.

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

The Apostles' Creed (3)

Rev. H. Veldman

In our preceding article we were calling attention to the necessity of believing all things promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us. And we were calling attention toward the close of this preceding article to the truth of God's almighty, irresistible grace.

Finally, it is necessary to believe all these things of the gospel, also this thing or truth: we are preserved and therefore persevere. If we take hold of the truth as set forth in the Apostles' Creed, that Christ is risen from the dead, has ascended into heaven and is even now seated at the right hand of God, how, now, can we believe and continue to believe even until the end? Are we preserved because we persevere? Is it after all of him that runneth and of him that willeth, and that even until the end? Can we endure temptation, engage in this spiritual warfare (see Eph. 6:12) in our own strength? Will God ever share His glory with another? Are we ever strong in ourselves? Are we not strong only in the Lord? This is, after all, the all-important question. Indeed, is also this truth of Christ's exaltation necessary? O, let us look unto and upon the Captain of our salvation and the Finisher of the faith, our one and only Saviour, and that even unto the end.

One more observation: all these wonderful truths must be believed, must be appropriated by a true and living faith. How well we know this! Merely know all about God, all about His Christ, all about sin, all about His cross, His love and grace and mercy, and not take hold of them personally and spiritually? Why, this would mean that all the treasures and pleasures of Egypt, which are but for a season, are worth more to us than all the glory of

God's everlasting covenant. How profane is the sinner! How carnal he is! How the holy and righteous God will indeed destroy him forever; it were better for him had he never been born.

All these truths we must believe, appropriate by a true and living faith. How wonderful it is to receive all these blessings of salvation in God's eternal love, mercy, and grace! How wonderful it is to receive the forgiveness of sin, to taste the love of God, so free and sovereign, to experience the blessedness of God's covenant, the fellowship of God's own covenant of friendship and appropriate this to ourselves by this living faith, to be assured of and look forward to the day when we shall be saved, fully and perfectly, only because of God and through God and unto God are all things, now and forevermore. How blessed is the truth of God's sovereign love and grace!

Our Faith in God Triune (1)

We are trinitarians, not unitarians. Unitarians believe in a one-person God. Unitarians are unbelievers because they do not believe that Jesus is God, co-essential and co-equal with the Father and the Spirit. As trinitarians we believe that God is triune. This implies, on the one hand, that we believe that the Lord our God is one Lord. And, on the other hand, it implies that this one Lord is triune.

The doctrine of the Trinity is surely significant. This is apparent, first of all, from Scripture. That God is more than one (maintained by the Unitarians who deny the Trinity) is clearly set forth in Genesis 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." God said this to

whom? He said this, of course, to Himself. And notice the plural pronouns in this scripture. Scripture speaks of the three Persons in the baptism formula, at Christ's baptism (Jesus standing in the water, the Voice from heaven, and the Spirit descending upon the Christ in the symbol of the dove), and in the apostolic benediction (2 Cor. 13:14). According to Scripture Jesus is God Who alone can forgive sins (only God can forgive sin, and Jesus forgives the sin of the man stricken with palsy), and to the Holy Spirit are ascribed divine attributes and honors and powers and works. Concerning this God we read in Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord," or we could read: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is an only Lord." And notice that Israel is commanded to hear this, receive this truth into their heart and mind, conform their life in all its phases to the one overwhelming fact that the Lord our God is one, an only Lord. And in Mark 12:29 and 30 Jesus refers to this expression in the book of Deuteronomy as the basis of the first and the great commandment that we love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and strength. This God, our God, the triune God is one, is an only God. He alone is God and He, the only God, is triune. Indeed, we are trinitarians.

However, the significance of the Trinity is also apparent from our Confessions. On the one hand, this doctrine is the first article of our Confession of Faith, our Belgic Confession. This article refers to our faith in the one only God. We read: "We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God, and that He is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fount of all good." It is true that the Trinity itself is not treated here. Only one phase of it is treated: the one only God. Remember, this is the first article of our Confession of Faith. Hence, this doctrine must be the object of our faith. To be sure, the truth concerning the Trinity and that God is one is itself incomprehensible, unfathomable. But as a dogma it can and must be embraced. And that it is an article, yea the first article, implies that it must not become for us merely a dead dogma, something which hardly affects our spiritual life, but it must be believed; in it we must trust and confide. However, the significance of this truth also appears from its place in our Heidelberg Catechism. Our Heidelberg Catechism, as we all know, is characteristically a subjective and practical book. To say that it is subjective means that, in its presentation of the truth, it presents the truth as it is experienced consciously by the child of God and through the operation of the Holy Spirit. And it is a very practical book. And, yet, we have in the eighth Lord's Day

which begins the Catechism's explanation of the Apostles' Creed, a brief synopsis of the truth drawn up in the early Christian church and as based upon the teachings of the apostles, and especially upon such texts as the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19), that we must teach and baptize all peoples in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In answer to Question 25: "Since there is but one only divine essence, why speakest thou of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost?" we read: "Because God hath so revealed Himself in His word that these three distinct persons are the one only true and eternal God." Our Heidelberg Catechism begins its treatment of the Apostles' Creed by treating the doctrine of the Trinity.

First, we believe that God is one. There is only one God. This truth, thoroughly scriptural (Deut. 6:4), is denied by the heresy known as polytheism. Each nation, then, has its own god — Chemosh, Baal, Astaroth, Baalim, Bel, Moloch, etc. Also, each nation has its own set or system of gods, such as the American Indian. That there is only one God is a wondrously blessed truth, this truth known as Monotheism. Polytheism (many gods) is hopelessly dualistic. Whereas it presents each nation as having its own god, it, of course, sets peoples over against peoples. Besides, it also creates a hopeless dualism in the life of the individual. Sickness, drought, war, etc., are regarded as sent to us from different gods, and the result is, of course, that the individual is constantly in conflict with himself. Monotheism (one God), however, unites the people of the Lord. This is generally true. Wherever you meet a Christian, even in the darkest recesses of Africa, whatever the color of his skin, whatever his origin or background, he worships with you the same God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Besides, the truth that there is only one God also unites the Christian himself. All things come to him from the same God. All things, therefore, work together for his good. Because the Lord is for him, nothing can possibly be against him.

This one and only God is also Himself one. This truth, of course, is scriptural. In this connection, we call attention merely to the relation between Deuteronomy 6:4 and the first and great commandment. The Lord our God is an only Jehovah. He alone is Jehovah. There is no god besides Him. Now we must love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. Because God is one, unchangeable, perfect, a Rock, never divided, therefore our service of Him must also be undivided, and we must serve Him, alone and always. And then there is the use of the personal pronoun "I" as in Isaiah 43, emphasizing, of course, the unity and uniqueness of the alone living and blessed God. How wonderful this is!

God Himself is one. He is one within Himself, in His own life and being. He has one will, one mind, one heart, one desire, one divine nature. There is in God no conflict, no division, no discord, for He is the Rock, the Perfect One, the unchangeable, the eternally Self-Sufficient One. Fact is, He is Jehovah, the "I AM," eternally therefore the same, never changing, varying, never accommodating Himself to varying circumstances — He is the God of eternal and infinite goodness and perfection. God is also one in His counsel and will. His counsel is one because it is characterized by but one goal, one objective, and this goal is the greatest glory of His Name, in the way of sin and grace, positively in the elect and also in the reprobates, and that in and through Jesus Christ our Lord. His counsel is also one because it is irresistible. No man hath ever withstood, frustrated the will of the Lord. There is no need for the Lord to change His plans, to adapt Himself to changing and varying circumstances, inasmuch as He does as and what He pleases, and nothing can resist Him. How can anything possibly frustrate Him, when everything has been sovereignly determined and willed by Him? How can anything ever take the Lord by surprise? All things have been sovereignly willed by the alone living

God.

What a glorious, comforting truth is also this truth! Now all things are controlled by the Lord, even from the very beginning. Now sin and the fall of man, Satan and all his host are no accident but means in God's hand to realize His own will and counsel. Now the will of God is never frustrated, and the position of the church in the midst of the world is always safe and secure, and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Now all things work together for our good. Now the Lord reigneth, He alone, and God is the Rock of our strength, of our salvation, now and forever. Can you conceive of anything more comforting and conducive to the blessed assurance of peace and safety? Indeed, we read in 1 Corinthians 3:22-23, all things are ours, we are Christ's and Christ is God's. To God alone be all the praise and all the glory.

The Lord willing, we will continue with this discussion in our following article. God is one but He is also triune, three in divine persons. And we must also call attention to the relation between this divine essence and the three divine persons, and also the relation between these three divine persons.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

The Missionary a Slave to All (4)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

With this article we conclude our brief series on I Corinthians 9:19-23. The passage reads: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to

all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

This passage teaches a number of truths applicable to the office of the minister of the Word, especially the missionary pastor. Though he was under obligation to no man the Apostle Paul has made himself a slave to all (vs. 19). The Apostle's credentials were impeccable. God in Jesus Christ had called him to preach the gospel, and this he has faithfully done. In all his preaching and work the

Apostle has provided for his own earthly needs even though he had every right to the support of the churches. He has given his entire life to the cause of the gospel and of the church of Jesus Christ. Freely he has made himself a slave to all classes of people. To the Jews the Apostle became as a Jew. He conformed to Jewish civil and ceremonial law, living as a Jew. On the other hand, when the Apostle labored among the Gentiles ("them that are without law" — vs. 21) he became as a Gentile. He refused to be encumbered by Jewish tradition, custom, and law and he refused to burden the Gentiles with Jewish law. To the weak (i.e. those who could not in good conscience eat meat sacrificed to idols, cf. chapter 8) the Apostle became as weak. In all of this the Apostle never compromised the truth of the Gospel. Both in doctrine and in life Paul insisted on the truth of the Gospel. He was not as many who corrupt the Word. Rather he faithfully preached Christ crucified to whomever God led him. Publicly and privately, in synagogues and streets, in private homes and by the river's side, to the common people and to the learned on Mars' hill, from Jerusalem to Rome, the Apostle as a slave to all declared the whole counsel of God. In matters indifferent, matters not affecting the truth of God's Word, the Apostle lived as those to whom he was preaching. His purpose was to give no offense. His heart's desire was to save those to whom he preached.

In verses 22b and 23 the Apostle sums the whole matter. He writes: "... to all I have been made all things, in order that by all means I might save some. But I do all these things for the benefit of (or for the sake of) the gospel, in order that I might become co-partner of it with you" (translation mine, R.D.D.). That the Apostle was made all things to all men does not mean that he compromised the truth of the Gospel or excused or ignored ungodly living. Nor does this mean that Paul ever "watered down" the message of the Gospel. Certainly the Apostle adapted his preaching to those to whom he preached. When, for example, he preached in a Jewish synagogue he expounded the Old Testament Scriptures. To the Jews he preached Christ from the law and the prophets showing them that Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfillment of the types and shadows, "the end of the law to everyone that believeth." But when Paul stood on Mars' Hill in Athens preaching to the learned philosophers he pointed out the foolishness of their idolatry, proceeding from the truth that God is the Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the universe in whom "all men live and move and have their being." He fed those not able to bear the strong meat of the Word the milk of the Gospel. But, let it be emphasized once more, the Apostle never compromised. He

was adamant in all his preaching and teaching. In the sharpest of terms and without fear Paul pointed to the sins and weaknesses of God's people. He insisted on the sound doctrine of God's infallible Word. He commanded those to whom he preached to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in the way of forsaking their idols and ungodly ways. His preaching always presented Christ crucified as the only way, truth, and life. In all matters indifferent and with all classes of people Paul was made all things.

This Paul did "for the benefit of the gospel" (verse 23). He lived and labored and literally spent his entire life for the sake of the gospel. The cause of the gospel dominated the entire life of the Apostle. No sacrifice was too great for the sake of the gospel. To these same Corinthians Paul wrote: "Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice I was beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not" (II Corinthians 11:22-31).

Let every missionary and minister take to heart this confession of the Apostle. It came from the Spirit-inspired lips of one who received not a penny in salary from the churches though he had every right to "live by the gospel" which he faithfully preached! Sometimes, perhaps often, we who are called to preach the Word are inclined to complain. (The "we" is not editorial, I include myself.) Our workload is too great, or so we think. We do not appreciate living in the "glass house." Our congregations expect too much from us. We have all kinds of meetings and classes to lead and teach during the week, yet the congregation expects two very good sermons Sunday after Sunday. There are sick to be visited, sorrowing saints to be comforted, weddings to perform and funerals, those in trouble or distress

of one sort or another need pastoral care. There is other work such as writing for the church papers, serving on denominational committees, attending classis and synod, etc. All this and more is expected of us. And our salaries barely cover our needs. In the light of the example of the Apostle and the teaching of Scripture itself, dare we complain? As ministers, whether serving congregations or on the mission field or teaching in the Theological School, we are slaves (*douloi*) of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. As slaves of Christ who laid down His life for His sheep we are slaves of those whom we serve. This means that our lives as ministers are not our own. We belong to Christ and to His church. Let us put away our complaining and make ourselves all things to all men for the benefit of the gospel. Let us do so even if it means we must lay down our lives for the sake of the gospel. For many of God's faithful servants in the past this is the price they paid for the sake of the gospel. Think of the Apostles, the early church fathers, Martin Luther, Calvin who did much of his work in Geneva in bed because he was too sick to be up and about, Guido de Bres, De Cock, Van Raalte, Machen, *et al.* All these and more were by God's grace slaves of God and His people for the gospel's sake. They were willing to stand alone for the sake of the truth of the gospel. Where would the church be today had not God raised them up? The same may be said for our own Protestant Reformed fathers: Ophoff and Hoeksema, Vos, and the other older ministers who fought valiantly for the truth at great personal sacrifice. Shall we today complain?

God forbid! Let us upon whom God has laid the sacred charge *preach the Word*. Be slaves of God and His church. And let us become all things to all men for the gospel's sake.

The Apostle's purpose in becoming all things to all men was twofold: "that by any means I might save some" and "that I become a co-partner of it (the gospel) with you." This simply means the Apostle would do nothing to offend those to whom he preached. His overriding concern was that God would use him to save some to whom he preached. Along with that he was concerned that he himself in the way of faithfully preaching the Word would become partaker of the benefits of salvation with the saints.

This must be the attitude, the concern, the purpose of all of God's servants in the ministry. When by the grace of God it is, God's servants confess with the Apostle: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Philippians 3:8-11).

GUEST ARTICLE

Christian Liberty

Rev. Kenneth Hanko

God created Adam free. This does not mean that Adam was free to obey or not as he chose, for the power to choose sin is not freedom. It means that Adam had the right, the power, and the will to obey. Man's freedom is always found within the bounds of the law. The fish is not free to live on the land, and the tree is not free to live apart from the soil. Just so man was not created free to obey or not

as he chose, but to obey. In disobedience there is, not freedom, but death and bondage to sin.

When Adam sinned he lost his freedom. He (and, because of him, the human race) had no longer the right, the power, or the will to serve God. He became the servant of sin instead of the servant of God. He, having been found guilty, received from

the judge of all men the sentence of death, and became the servant of him whom he obeyed. Death was his master, not only by power, but also by right, for God gave him (and therefore us) up to it.

Christ makes us free.

He frees us from the right of sin over us. By His precious blood He removes from us the sentence of condemnation. By dying our death, by Himself coming under the law and its curse on our behalf, He pays the price necessary to free us from the authority of our cruel taskmaster.

He also frees us from sin's dominion. He removes the sentence of death from our consciences, so that we have peace. He takes us out of our depravity, and makes us dead to sin. Sin is no longer our master; we are no longer his slaves. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

But there is more. Christ also frees us from the schoolmaster under which the church lived in the O.T. In the O.T. the church was like a child who has to be taught obedience by a consistent application of the rod. In order to drive the church to Christ (that is, in order to give His people forgiveness and teach them to obey) God added to the law of the ten commandments what we know as the civil and ceremonial law. These were either minutely detailed applications of the law of the ten commandments to various aspects of the church's life or living pictures of the work of Christ which the people of God themselves were required to act out. Because the laws were numerous and strict the people of God found it constantly impossible to obey, and fled for refuge to Christ. But now Christ has come, and faith with Him, and we are no longer under the schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24, 25). This does not mean that we no longer have to obey the ten commandments (for we do), but we no longer need (or at least ought not to need) the application of the rod (the civil and ceremonial laws) to teach us obedience. We who have received the inheritance (Gal. 4:1) are no longer little children. We have the law written in our hearts (Heb. 8:10) and are continually looking into it (James 1:25). We are old enough now to know both the law and ourselves. We have no more need of tutors and governors to teach us: we are free from that grievous, though necessary, oppression.

And even that is not all. For Christ not only frees us from condemnation, sin, and the schoolmaster, but He also frees us unto the service of God.

As we saw above, freedom is not license. It is not the right and the power to do whatever we please, to ignore the law. The most glorious aspect of our freedom in Christ is a new and blessed slavery: we are the servants of God and of righteousness. For

liberty is, as we have said, the right, the power, and the desire to serve God.

Fallen man has no power to serve God, for he has been deprived, by God's righteous justice, of the image of God in which he was created: righteousness, holiness, and knowledge. But, as a sinner he does not have either the right to serve God, for the Thrice Holy One will not, cannot, permit sinners to stand in His presence. Therefore, though God still commands sinners to obey, He will not, except in Christ, give them that glorious privilege.

The liberty which we have in Christ is so perfect a liberty that it is utterly impossible that we lose it again. And it will become so perfect in heaven that it will be impossible to sin. In heaven it will be our joy, the perfection of our liberty, that we will serve, and glorify, and love (for love is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. 13:10) our God perfectly world without end. Perfect liberty is perfect service. We are bound and free by the perfect law of liberty.

We must be careful to abide by these principles when we talk about the area of Christian liberty.

This "area of Christian liberty" is frequently misunderstood. Many Christians today understand this to be the freedom to do anything we please as long as we do not offend the brother. They say we are not bound any more by the ten commandments, but only by the law of love. That is not liberty but death. Others say that when we talk about the area of Christian liberty we are talking about things which are neutral, things neither right nor wrong in themselves. Some Christians then are able to do these things without sinning, but certain other Christians, who are weaker, cannot. Some Christians therefore are "free" to do things which others are not, though not at all times lest they offend the weaker brethren. This is not a wrong explanation of Christian liberty, but it is hard to discern the connection between it and the idea of liberty in Christ as outlined above. If we look at the whole question of "the area of Christian liberty" from another point of view the connection between it and liberty in Christ becomes much clearer.

There are some actions which are in themselves wrong: lying, stealing, committing adultery, etc. Christians may not do these things. There are other actions which are not in themselves wrong. Christians may do these, and their liberty in Christ means that they can do them in a manner which is pleasing to God, that is, by faith (Rom. 14:23) and to His glory (I Cor. 10:31). But there are some Christians who, because of previous sinful contact with these things or because of a besetting sin, cannot do these things in a manner which is pleasing to God. In addition there are some unbelievers who do not

understand that "the earth is the Lord's" (I Cor. 10:26), who see as sin certain things which Christians are indeed free to do. It is important that these not be offended. Therefore, and here is one of the important points, our liberty is restricted not only by the law of God, but also by the consciences of other men.

But, and here is the other important point, this restriction of our liberty is also liberty, in fact as perfect a liberty as the restriction of our liberty by the law of God. Why? Because liberty is service not only to God, but also (according to the second table

of the perfect law of liberty), to the neighbor, and especially to our brethren. It is our joy, our perfect liberty in Christ, to serve others in whatever way we can. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." "For, brethren, we have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

The Pentateuch

Rev. J. Kortering

Before we take up the study of the individual books of the Old Testament, we will say a few words about the first five books. Taken together they are called the Pentateuch. By doing this, we will not have to repeat ourselves concerning authorship, possible date, occasion for writing, etc., but when we examine the books individually, we can concentrate on the specific message and outline.

THE LAW

The word Pentateuch is derived from two Greek words, one *penta* which means five and the other *teuchos*, meaning volume or book, hence, taken together, five volumes. These five volumes then are the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These five books are grouped together for two reasons, first they bear a common subject, and second they have one author.

You recall in our introduction to the Old Testament, we mentioned that the entire Old Testament canon is divided into three groups, the law, the prophets, and the writings. Keeping this in mind, the Pentateuch makes up the first division called the law or *Torah*. This word is derived from *yarah*, meaning to throw, shoot, hence direction, law, instruction.

All five books have some bearing on the law which God gave to Israel: Genesis forms the historical setting; Exodus tells us of the actual giving of the law and some of its contents; Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy give us more details on the contents of the law. It is not clear from the information we have, whether Moses actually wrote the Pentateuch as one large book with five divisions or whether he wrote it as five separate books. Actually, it makes very little difference. Unger in his *Introduction to the Old Testament* suggests that if he wrote it as one large book, the transmission would have required five separate scrolls, "Ancient 'books' were in the form of rolls. The Hebrews using the standard size roll, about thirty feet in length, and not the huge rolls sometimes employed by the Egyptians, like the Papyrus Harris and the Book of the Dead, could conveniently accommodate the unvocalized Hebrew text of Genesis or Deuteronomy, for instance, but no more. Hence, for practical reasons the book would automatically have come to have a five-fold division, if indeed that form was not original" (pages 183, 184).

The Pentateuch is referred to throughout the Scripture and repeatedly called, the law, the Torah! E.J. Young gives us a listing of these references in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*.

In the Old Testament, the Pentateuch is called:

1. the law: Joshua 8:34; Ezra 10:3; Nehemiah 8:2, 7, 14; 10:34, 36; 12:44; 13:3; II Chronicles 14:4; 31:21; 33:8.
2. the book of the law: Joshua 1:8; 8:34; II Kings 22:8; Nehemiah 8:3.
3. the book of the law of Moses: Joshua 8:31; 23:6; II Kings 14:6; Nehemiah 8:1.
4. the book of Moses: Ezra 6:18; Nehemiah 13:1; II Chronicles 25:4; 35:12.
5. the law of the Lord: Ezra 7:10; I Chronicles 16:40; II Chronicles 31:3; 35:26.
6. the law of God: Nehemiah 10:28, 29.
7. the book of the law of God: Joshua 24:26; Nehemiah 8:18.
8. the book of the law of the Lord: II Chronicles 17:9; 34:14.
9. the book of the law of the Lord their God: Nehemiah 9:3.
10. the law of Moses, the servant of God: Daniel 9:11; 5:13; Malachi 4:4.

It will be noted how aptly these phrases characterize the Pentateuch. They stress its legislation, the *law*; they indicate that it is in permanent form, the *book*; they call attention to its human author *Moses*, and they point to the Divine Author, the *Lord* who is *God*.

In the New Testament, the Pentateuch is called:

1. the book of the law: Galatians 3:10.
2. the book of Moses: Mark 12:26.
3. the law: Matthew 12:5; Luke 16:16; John 7:19.
4. the law of Moses: Luke 2:22; John 7:23.
5. the law of the Lord: Luke 2:23, 24.

AUTHOR AND DATE

We set aside the higher critical notion of the Graf-Kuenen-Wellhausen school which developed during the 18th and 19th centuries. They claim at least four different authors, and the Pentateuch is made up of at least four separate documents pieced together by an unknown redactor quite a bit later in history (For details of this view, see the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* article entitled, Pentateuch). Faithfulness to the Scripture itself requires us to recognize Moses as the author.

Drawing from the books mentioned above, we summarize the textual evidence for Mosaic authorship.

First, from the Pentateuch itself: Exodus 17:14, "And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in the book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." Exodus 24:4-8, "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord," a reference to the book of the covenant. Similarly in Exodus 34:27, Numbers 33:1, 2, Deuteronomy 31:9, and Deuteronomy 31:22. In these writings both historical as well as legislative portions were recognized as written by Moses. The Lord revealed to Moses by personal communication that he had to

inform the people of this; and repeatedly he wrote it down for them. Hence Deuteronomy begins, "These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel" (Deut. 1:1).

Secondly, from the Old Testament: Joshua 11:15, "As the Lord commanded Moses His servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses." The Law of Moses was the guide for Joshua. Hence there are also references made to Joshua keeping what Moses wrote, e.g. Joshua 8:31-34; 23:6; and Joshua 22:9, "the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses." There are also references to the book of the law of Moses, II Kings 14:6, and the book of Moses, as in Ezra 6:18, Nehemiah 13:1. Malachi also speaks of the law of Moses my servant (Malachi 4:4).

Finally, in the New Testament: Christ repeatedly quoted from the law of Moses, "Shew thyself (the cleansed leper) to the priest and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto thee" (Mark 1:44). To the travelers to Emmaus, Christ "expounded unto them all the scriptures beginning at Moses and all the prophets the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). Similarly, the apostles also considered Moses the author of the Pentateuch. Paul testified before Agrippa, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead" (Acts 26:22, 23). In glory, the saints sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:3).

Moses was particularly qualified to write the first five books of the Bible. He was trained in all matters of writing in the schools of Egypt. He received revelation from God concerning the contents of the book of Genesis, creation having taken place some 3,000 years before. This does not eliminate the possibility that Moses drew knowledge from oral tradition handed down or that he referred to written accounts. Fact is that the truth of inspiration covers all these things. The end result was that he wrote exactly what God wanted him to write, historical facts and details of the law.

As usual, it is difficult to determine a date of writing. Did he begin in the quiet of Midian, prior to his return to Egypt? Much must have been written during the wilderness sojourn, after having received the details of the law of Sinai and prior to his death at Mt. Nebo. This would place the approximate time around 1300 B.C. Evidently a copyist added the account of his death recorded at the end (Deut. 34).

THE SIGNIFICANCE

As is generally true with any book, the opening chapters are crucial for the entire book. The Bible is not just another book. It is the revelation of God, the God of our salvation. Hence it begins, "In the beginning God." It sets forth the grandeur and holiness of God. Man cannot come into the presence of such a God, alone. He is a sinner bound over to spiritual death. He is that, not because God made him that way. The creation account tells us that God made heaven and earth beautiful, and man and woman were made in His image. Man chose sin and listened to Satan. Death is God's curse upon a disobedient creature. The need for a Savior is immediately established. The gospel was preached in Paradise and amplified in God's dealing with the patriarchs and the nation of Israel. All through Old Testament times, God unveils the details of His work of salvation in the coming Messiah.

Into the sacred history of redemption, God sets forth by His own revelation the importance of the law! The very first part of God's sacred Scripture is called the LAW! This is important for us to understand. Yes, God is a moral God; He has a sense of right and wrong. His friendship does not extend to

all and everyone without regard to their morality. God is a God of righteous judgment to workers of iniquity. He has set forth the boundaries of His love. We are to love God, love ourselves, love our neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40). As was true for Israel, so is true for us as Paul expressed it, "I had not known sin, but by the law" (Romans 7:7). The law prepared Israel for Christ, it was their schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24). Now that Christ is come, we are the free-born sons of Sarah, God's spiritual inheritance (Gal. 4). The law is written in our hearts. It still convicts us of the knowledge of sin, and by the gospel we are led to the mercy seat of God at the foot of the cross. Our righteousness is not in the keeping of the law, as the Pharisees taught. Rather Jesus calls, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden (with the burden of guilt before the law) and I will give thee rest (forgiveness and righteousness)" — Matthew 11:28, 29. In Christ the keeping of the law is easy and the burden light, for it is a love response to the God of our salvation.

Such a gospel of law is set forth already in the first five books of the Bible. May God give us eyes to see and hearts to believe as we study this together.

IN HIS FEAR

The Christian Family: The Role of Husband and Father

Pastor Arie den Hartog

The Christian family is a wonderful creation of God. Its order was established according to the infinite wisdom of God at the beginning of the creation of the world. This order is fundamental to the order of both the state and the church. According to His wonderful covenant of grace the Lord has given a very central place to the Christian family. The Lord's particular blessing rests upon the Christian home where He is feared and worshiped. Husband and wife who live faithfully in marriage according to the holy ordinance of the Lord experience the richest blessing which God gives to man in this

earthly life. The Christian home is a blessed spiritual haven in the midst of this wretched miserable world of sin. The blessedness of God's covenant is experienced there in the most wonderful way as husband and wife and children live in communion with the Lord the blessed God of salvation and in close warm blessed communion with each other. The Lord is pleased to continue His church chiefly from Christian families. He did that with the Patriarchs of old and continues to do that today in the New Testament era, realizing His covenant promise with believers and their children.

Ideally the Christian family is the place where each new generation of the people of God are brought forth, taught the knowledge and fear of the Lord, and nurtured in the totality of their being, physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually. According to the purpose of the Lord the Christian home trains the succeeding generation to become servants of the Lord in His church and kingdom. So the Lord prepares each succeeding generation of His saints to live with Him in eternal glory. What tremendous things these are. Each generation is conceived and brought forth in sin. They are brought forth into a wicked and evil world yet by the wonder of God's grace God raises up, saves, and preserves His people, and for this He uses especially the Christian home.

The Lord has given us a tremendous calling and responsibility to establish and maintain strong and truly Christian homes. As Christians we must seek out God-fearing partners to marry. As Christians we must diligently search out the scriptures to learn God's principles for the Christian home. Since the Christian home is so extremely important God has given many directives in His word for how we are to live in our homes. We need no worldly psychologist or marriage counselors. We need to know and put into practice the word of God in our homes. Above all we need from the start to realize that the responsibility that is before us in the home is so great that we cannot fulfill it by ourselves. We are entirely dependent upon the grace and Spirit of God.

God has created a certain order for the family, an order of authority and obedience. It is His purpose that this order be maintained. This is for the welfare of every member of the Christian family, the blessing of the Lord, and the glory of His name. It is not only foolhardy when men seek to overthrow that order but it is rebellion and great wickedness against the Lord. Doing this will only create confusion in the family, which will in turn bring forth rebellion and misery and confusion in the world.

In God's creation order He has made man to be the head of the Christian home. Headship implies first of all authority. For there to be order and blessing in the Christian home there must be authority. God's authority must govern the home. The Lord Himself has given this authority first of all to the husband and father. This authority that the Lord has given to man does not give him the right to rule his house with tyranny and cruelty for his own advantage and glory. There is no doubt about it that fallen man has through the history of the world done this. He has sought to make a slave out of the woman that God has given to be his loving com-

panion and help meet. He has used and abused her for the gratification of his own lust and the boosting of his own ego. He has often neglected or cruelly mistreated his children. This does not mean however that we should abandon God's order of things for the family and give authority to the woman and maybe even to children in the home, imagining that the more there is a sharing of authority the less evil there will be in the family. The man of the house must see his great responsibility to take up the authority which God gives him and exercise it. He may not let his wife or his children rule in his home.

Of utmost importance it is that the husband and father exercise this authority in a right way according to the Word of God. This means in the first place that he recognize and acknowledge that all his authority is from the Lord. He has no authority in his own right. As the head of the home he must first of all be the servant of the Lord. He may not rule his home according to his own whim and fancy. He has no other authority than that which God has given to him. His authority must be exercised strictly according to the word of the Lord. He may not lead his wife and family in the way of his pleasure and only for his own advantage. He must lead his family in the nurture and admonition and fear of the Lord.

The exercise of authority for the man in the home involves a grave responsibility. The man must always seek the welfare of his wife and children in his exercise of authority. The husband and father is responsible for the total welfare of his wife and children. He must lead and guide them, he must protect them, he must provide for them. This goes much further than merely providing for them physically, giving them the shelter of a home and protection from physical evils. The Christian man has especially the responsibility to be the spiritual head of his home. He must make the spiritual welfare of his wife and children his chief concern. He must be an example of godliness and righteousness to his family unto whom wife and children can look with respect. How many even Christian homes are grievously languishing because father does not take up the spiritual leadership in the home. The husband and father must lead the family in the worship and service of the Lord. He must lay down the standard and law of God for all that transpires in the home. He must insist on and maintain obedience to the Lord. The wife and children are dependent for their spiritual welfare upon husband and father. If they are spiritually unwell, depressed, or discouraged, if they are unfaithful to the Lord or wayward from His commandments, this must be the great concern of the husband and father. Any husband and father who neglects to pay

attention to this is worse than an infidel. The Christian father must be able to direct the family according to the Word of God when decisions have to be made. He must be able to comfort his family with the comfort of the Lord in times of fear and distress and trouble. He must know how to bring his family to the throne of grace in times of need, in times of confession of sin, and in times of sickness and death. How many men are grievously lacking in this. When we as husbands and fathers think on what authority in the home really means, it ought to make us amazed with great fear and drive us to the throne of grace for help and strength.

Everywhere the Bible calls the Christian husband and father to love his wife and children. In fact this is the great admonition given to the men of the Christian family. All of his exercise of authority will work for evil if it is not exercised in love. The love that God requires of men is not mere romantic love or natural affection, much less mere sexual passion. The latter is possible even in animals. The love wherewith husband and father must love his wife and family must be the love of God in Christ Jesus which can only be worked in his heart through the operation of the Spirit of God. Christian love always means that one seeks the good of others, even when these are in themselves wholly unworthy of that love. The Lord Jesus is the standard and pattern of that love. Paul in Ephesians 5 exhorts husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. What a tremendous thing that is. So great must the husband's love be that he is willing to sacrifice himself for the well-being of his wife. That is the greatest sacrifice that anyone can give. Few husbands however know that this is required of them by the Lord. Most of them refuse even to sacrifice small things such as their own pursuits and pleasures in life. They give themselves wholly to their careers, and their family soon becomes very secondary. The time and energy that he should be giving for his wife and family is instead given to other things. He imagines that he is justified in that he is providing well materially for his family. But in our age of materialism and advancement in one's profession many husbands neglect the real needs of their wife and family and are in actuality seeking their own glory and wealth in the world. Very often husbands would do far better to spend a little more time with their families.

Fathers have the great responsibility to train and discipline their children. Everywhere scripture makes this chiefly the responsibility of fathers. Yet in this world and even in many Christian homes the men imagine that the matter of raising and disciplining the children is solely the responsibility of the mother. How many fathers in Christian homes

today spend time giving formal spiritual instruction and guidance to their children. Discipline cannot be administered hastily and in frustration and anger when children get in the way of our pursuing our own ends or when they bring shame to our honor.

Fathers have the responsibility of maintaining the communion and fellowship of the Christian home. Marriage is first of all intended to be a communion of life between husband and wife. Peter admonishes the husband to dwell with his wife as a man of understanding. How easily communion breaks down in the busy and selfish world we live in. Husband and wife in the Christian home must live in close companionship one with another. They must share their life together. They must share their purposes and goals to serve the Lord. They must appreciate and have sympathetic understanding for one another. How many husbands today are cold and unsympathetic to the real needs of their wives. Their whole life is wrapped up with their own pursuits and they hardly have the time to have meaningful interaction with the one with whom they are to be living in closest covenant fellowship. Meanwhile poor wife and mother languishes, in the drudgery of the household chores and with the great difficulties and problems of raising the children. Husbands must see their urgent calling to dwell truly with their wives and fulfill their deep need of love and friendship and companionship in life.

Fathers must maintain the relationship of love and concern and fellowship with their children. Strong bonds between father and children which are so absolutely essential for instructing and disciplining children can only be fostered when father spends time with his children, finding out their concerns in life, sharing their experiences, their joys and sorrows. How little time fathers in many homes spend with their children. This is very serious and will contribute to the decline of the Christian home. Being too busy at work is a very poor excuse. Soon the children will be grown up and all opportunity to give them guidance and to enjoy the blessing of having them in the home will be gone forever.

The great calling of husbands is to be faithful. It is simply a fact that many more men than women are unfaithful to their partners. How many evil men of this world have sought after other sexual partners after their wives have become old and unsatisfactory. What a dreadful evil this is. How man's pride is aroused if he can get a younger girl to be interested in him. How many yield to the many evil temptations of this world. How many continue to live in loving devotion with the wife of their

youth all their lives? Even among so-called Christians unfaithfulness is becoming more and more common. The Lord abhors it and we as Christian husbands ought to abhor it. What dreadful consequences unfaithfulness has for children and for Christian homes. The truly Christian husband will be constrained by the love of Christ for his wife and

children to remain faithful to them all his life long. He will be an example of love and godliness to his children. That will make a lasting impact upon them and give them the strongest impetus themselves in turn to build by the grace of God truly Christian homes.

GUEST ARTICLE

Likened To a Deceitful Bow

Rev. R.G. Moore

In this article our attention is drawn to the prophet Hosea's word to an apostate Israel. The message in Hosea seven verse sixteen is one which Israel had to hear in the day of the prophet, but also is a Word of God to us today. It is one to which we do well to give ear. The prophet uses in his verse a very demonstrative figure: "They return, but not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt."

This figure of a "deceitful bow" is the climactic figure of a series of three figures the prophet uses to characterize the apostasy in Israel, in the church of his day. And the figure of this text is the most severe judgment of the three. The first figure was of the unturned cake, and spoke of a spiritual mixture within the people. From the heart they were spiritually inconsistent, confessing to be God's people they desired the heathen ways and goals. The second figure of the "silly dove" revealed to Israel that their spiritual admixture also led to an outward turning to evil ways in the seeking of strength from outside of God and His word. This was pointed out to be utter foolishness. Now in this third figure, we find the accusation of deceit and hypocrisy leveled against Israel. This is especially true from the point of view of the turning of Israel.

The church and her members ought to find that repentance and conversion are essential to her life and her manifestation in the midst of this world. Our calling is to be turning daily to the Most High.

But it is exactly at this point, the prophet says, Israel turns, but not to the Most High, and is become as a "deceitful bow." It behooves us, therefore, to hear this word of warning and sharp condemnation. And to do so not by saying, "shame on Israel," but rather, to see in how far this applies to the church today, and in how far it applies to us. May we by grace receive these words of rebuke that we may return unto the Most High God!

The figure of the bow which the prophet uses is one that was familiar to all of those who heard these words, for the bow was a common and often used weapon by the armies of his day. For the archer in the armies of that day it was very important to have a dependable and accurate bow to use as his weapon. This bow must shoot true, and it must be able to send an arrow that would penetrate the enemy. But the deceitful bow is one that did not satisfy these requirements of the archer, yet it looked as though it would be a trustworthy instrument for his purposes. This could have been because the bow lacked the power, or because of imbalance or uneven limbs that would cause the bow to send its arrow on a course that was errant no matter how skillful the archer.

Now the prophet makes comparison of Israel to the deceitful bow. Mind you, the comparison is not made between Israel and the archer, but between Israel and the bow. If the first would be the case, then the responsibility of Israel for her deceit would be taken away. The result would be that God would receive the blame for Israel's missing of the

mark. How often we would like to do this, by saying, "God gives us defective means," and blame the preacher, the elders, the husband or wife, the parents for our walk in sin. But, not so, says the prophet, Israel is like the deceitful bow.

Spiritually, Israel had the appearance of being a good bow, but they were deceitful. Israel lacked the spiritual ability to reach the target. And this exactly because they sought the wrong mark. For, mind you, there is a difference between Israel and the deceitful bow. The bow is not responsible, for it is an inanimate thing. But Israel, the church, is responsible. Her members are moral-rational creatures. And all moral-rational creatures (men and angels) have the calling with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength to aim at the mark of the glory of the Most High. The calling is in love to serve Him alone! And although the fall has come to pass, it does not change this calling before God. He must receive all glory! In Christ does God reveal Himself as the Most High, and at no other mark may the church aim. All that does not serve this end is sin. For to God alone belongs all praise and glory. Therefore, we are called continually to turn to Him Who is the Most High.

Now, the prophet says, Israel turned, but not to the Most High. Thus our attention is drawn to the need for conversion in the church. In this connection, when we consider conversion our thoughts often turn to the unchurched, or the outright pagan peoples of the earth. And we may say, "indeed they need conversion!" But it is easy to be filled with blindness of mind in foolish pride, and forget to look inward to ourselves. We might assume we have attained unto faith and salvation, and then assume falsely that the need for conversion, for turning, does not apply to us.

Yet the prophet's words make it plain that the church must be characterized by turning: Israel turned, but not rightly. Of course Israel, as well as much of the church in our day, walked in great apostasy, departing from the true service of Jehovah. She had substituted her own idea of proper worship, even serving heathen idols and gods. And our text surely speaks of turning from such abomination. But, further, this is possible only if Israel be a turning people from the heart, in repentance serving God according to His precious Word.

God is Most High! He is the infinitely exalted Lord. He is the absolutely Sovereign God. He is dependent upon no one. On the other hand, all His creation is dependent upon Him. This means that God is not simply the greatest, that others are comparable to Him, but rather that He is the Great One, to Whom none can be compared, Who cannot be judged. He alone is Lord, outside of whom there are

no authorities, except He make them to sit in authority. He is the law, and all law and authority is His to give and exercise. God is the only criterion for right.

This means that we are low compared to the living God. His is perfect righteousness, faithfulness, love, mercy, knowledge and glory. If any of these virtues be in us, it is only because He works them in us by His Spirit and Word. Thus all of our glory and all of our service is to be rendered only unto Him. This is the constant theme of the Scriptures. Take time to look up Psalm 2:1-4, Isaiah 40:25, Isaiah 42:8-10, I Timothy 6:15, as examples of this testimony of God's Word. Our calling indeed is to turn to the Most High, to render unto Him all glory and honor.

The prophet says that Israel did not. They turned, but to devices of their own making. It sounds like our day, when we find the Scriptures overruled in favor of allowing homosexuals and divorced and remarried people membership in the church, to allow women in the offices of Christ in the church, etc. But, again I say, we must be careful not to be puffed up in pride, thinking this warning is only for others. We must be a turning people, for we yet struggle with a sinful flesh. That turning must be from sin unto righteousness, from the ways of natural corruption unto a life of sanctification and holiness, from following the lie to the seeking of the truth, from death unto life, fleeing Satan to seek and serve the Most High God.

This means that by our place in the body of Christ, in the strength of God's grace and in true faith we must put off the old man and put on the new man in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is also true of the church as institute. Trusting in the promises of God, standing faithfully upon His Word, the church does not rely on the philosophy or reason of man, but will turn ever anew to the old ways of the word of Christ. The concern then of the church will not be on size, nor outward unity, but she shall be concerned with faithfulness to the will of God. Certainly this must be true of the preaching, of doctrine, and of the exercise of Christian discipline within the church.

But to whom do we turn? This question we must answer as the institute of the church, and as individual members of the body of Christ. Is it to be said of us as it was said of Israel, "She is like a deceitful bow — she turned, but not unto the Most High?" Do we sincerely and truly turn? Do we turn to God as He has revealed Himself to His people in the infallibly inspired Scripture, or do we turn to another, to a god of our own imagination, or to a Word which we believe to be conditioned by time or culture? If we faithfully turn to the God of the

Scriptures, we truly turn; but if not, then we do not! And it makes no difference to what else we turn, whether as Israel to idols of wood and gold, to Baal or Molech; or whether we turn to the target of man, to the god of materialism, or to a christ or a god that is foreign to the Scriptures. O, indeed we would be turning, but not to the Most High, and we would then become as a deceitful bow.

Next we should ask the question, Why do we turn? Do we turn because we desire to escape the consequences of sin? Do we turn because we merely want a nice place after death? Do we turn, go to church, because our girlfriend or boyfriend goes there, or because there may be some social benefit from such turning? Then we turn, but not to the Most High.

Or on the other hand, is our turning motivated by a hatred of sin, by the deep spiritual knowledge that all that is of sin is displeasing to our covenant Father — and this too because you realize that your place in life is absolutely to serve and glorify God? This latter is indeed a turning — a turning to the Most High.

Further, he who truly turns does not presume with proud imagination that his turning is the work

of man. We have no strength to turn in whole or in part of ourselves. If we were to think this, then our turning would be false, empty. But he who turns to the Most High acknowledges that his turning is from the Lord. We may not turn with the arm of flesh.

But over Israel God's judgment was that they are like a deceitful bow. Today too, how little does the church aim with singlemindedness to the high mark of the Most High. The gospel today is polluted, even poisoned by the vain imaginations of man. Anything seems to go in the church and is justified by some reasoning of man. And how complacent so many members of even the most orthodox churches are become, as their churches depart from the pure doctrines of God's Word and from the true exercise of Christian discipline.

But God is not mocked! He shall have them in derision who turn not unto the Most High. May we have grace to be watchful and to be sober. Holding fast the Word of God, humbled by its testimony, may we truly turn to the Most High. Thus, too, we shall by the grace of God taste the richest blessing of God's fellowship.

Book Reviews

POP GOES THE GOSPEL, by John Blanchard; Evangelical Press (distributed in this country by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing), 1984; 160 pp., \$1.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanks)

The rather strange title of this little book ought not to obscure its worthwhile contents. While it has as its goal an examination and critique of the use of entertainment in general and religious rock in particular as a tool of evangelism, it is also a well-written and carefully documented examination of the entire rock culture.

Sad to say, the whole perverted and Satanic world of rock music has had influence within the church, not only among young people, but also in covenant homes. Perhaps worse yet, some of these thoroughly ungodly productions of base men are being introduced into the church with a religious coloring to be used in worship and as a tool of evangelism.

The book examines closely the whole rock scene, exposes its wickedness, its rebellion against all

authority, its explicit sexual perversion, its close connection with the occult, and its corruption of music. After having completed this section, the book goes on to examine the religious rock movement and weigh it all in the light of Scripture. The worthwhile part of the book is the fact that close attention is given to what constitutes the worship of God, what the Scriptures have to say about singing in worship, and why religious rock and entertainment in general cannot be used by the church.

The book is written in England and looks at the problem from the viewpoint of the situation in that country, but is nevertheless completely applicable to what is happening in our own land.

While our readers will certainly not agree with all the author says about worship, nevertheless, the book is recommended as one of the better treatments of this subject. We urge not only parents with teenagers to read the book, but also teenagers themselves if they are tempted to listen to this wholly hellish music of the world. The book is well-

written, easy to read, and particularly aimed at the young people of the church.

ON FIRE FOR GOD, The Story of John Hus, by Victor Budgen; Evangelical Press (distributed by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing), 1983; 323 pp., \$11.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

John Hus is sometimes called, along with John Wycliffe, the morning star of the Reformation. This name suits him admirably, and because of this his work has a special place in the memory of God's people who look with gratitude to God towards the great Protestant Reformation of the 16th century.

John Hus lived in the latter part of the 14th century and the early part of the 15th. He was ordained a priest in Bohemia (a country which is now Czechoslovakia), but came early in his work into contact with the writings of the great English pre-Reformer, John Wycliffe. A preacher of unusual ability, he taught thousands those basic truths which were later to be emphasized so strongly by Luther and Calvin and the other reformers: such truths as the sole authority of Scripture, justification by faith alone, the priesthood of believers, the elect church as the body of Christ. It is understandable that his life was a constant struggle as he sought to maintain his principles against the opposition of the Roman Catholic authorities. That struggle was to end with a martyr's death: Hus was burned at the stake by order of the Council of Constance, at the relatively young age of 43.

This book is an unusually fine biography of Hus's life, with fairly detailed accounts of his work and beliefs. It is well-researched (from many original sources), detailed and excellently written. It contains a great deal of information about Bohemia politically and ecclesiastically. It describes the life and doctrines of Hus in such a

way that the reader can catch the drama of the situation in Hus's day. It pictures Hus fairly and does not hesitate to point out in what respects Hus was wrong in his conduct and his teachings. In two excellent appendices it connects Hus and his teachings with Martin Luther, who in his debates with John Eck shortly after the Reformation began, was driven to admit that indeed he held to the same views which Hus believed; and the book shows the relevance of Hus's work to today's world by showing how current movements to unite with Rome are denials of all Hus stood and died for.

The book is not a simple biography which can be read by young children; but it is sufficiently well written that it can and should be read by high school students as well as adults.

We highly recommend this book for high school, college, and home libraries. It will help to understand the Reformation itself and it will steel the soul of the child of God, by Hus's courageous example, to be faithful — even unto death — to the glorious truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ONE STEP AT A TIME, by Hester Monsma, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506, 1984; 88 pp. (Reviewed by Gertrude Hoeksema)

Written by a Christian school teacher primarily for fellow teachers, but also for the benefit of Christian parents and pupils, this small book contains forty short devotions on a wide range of subjects. Each two-page meditation is introduced with a text from Scripture, and the subjects for the devotions are taken from the observations and experiences in the life of Miss Monsma. The devotions capture a certain amount of interest, but do not reflect the idea of the Scriptural heading. Many are artificial and superficial, especially those on the concept of prayer.

News From Our Churches

August 15, 1985

What special occasion will take place, D.V., on the twentieth of September? The consistory of Grandville Church in Grandville, Michigan, has set aside this date to commemorate Rev. J. Kortering's twenty-five years in the ministry. Rev. Kortering has been a pastor in Hull, Iowa, from 1960-66 and 1970-76; Hope, Michigan, 1966-70; Redlands, California, 1976-79; Loveland, Colorado, 1979-84; and Grandville, Michigan, 1984-. The place of commemoration will be Southwest Church, Michigan.

In the months of August and September, Rev.

Bruinsma and his family will be home on furlough. They plan on returning to Jamaica sometime in the middle of September. Since the Jamaican culture is different from ours, there are many unique ways of Jamaican life. So, now is a good opportunity to learn not only about the missionary work in Jamaica but also the Jamaican ways of life.

I am counting on this issue being in your hands before September 4. Why? Because on that date, at 8:00 P.M., in Hope Church, Michigan, our

Seminary Convocation will take place. And, that date is probably the beginning date for our schools in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area. So let's show our children a good example by coming out to this important occasion. Prof. H. Hoeksema will give this year's address. There will be two pre-seminary students and four returning seminary students doing course work this year. The seminary needs your support!

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Committee of Contact has, for the past few years, had some limited contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North Ireland. The Synod of our Churches meeting in June of 1985 authorized the committee to make the paper of the RPCNI more widely available to our people for purposes of getting to know their denomination somewhat better. Their paper, *The Covenanter Witness*, is available to anyone who would like to read it on a loan basis from the Seminary Library. Or, if our readers wish to subscribe to it, they can do so by writing: Mr. T. Strahan McCune, 357 Doagh Road, Newtonabbey, Co. Antrim BT36 6XD, North Ireland.

Committee of Contact

IN LOVING MEMORY

On Monday, June 24, 1985, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take to eternal glory our very dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, MRS. ELLA BYKERK, at the age of 82 years.

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

Mrs. Winnie Saurman
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Bykerk
Mr. & Mrs. Arie Bykerk
Mr. & Mrs. Cornelius Bykerk

Miss Lubertha Bykerk
14 grandchildren
21 great-grandchildren

NOTICE!!!

ATTENTION ALL R.F.P.A. SOCIETY MEMBERS!!!

The Annual meeting of the STANDARD BEARER PUBLISHING SOCIETY will be held, the Lord willing, on September 26, 1985, at 8 P.M., at the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church. Our speaker will be Rev. W. Bekkering. The topic - OUR REFORMATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. We urge all those who are members and all who would like to become members to be there!

The following men are up for election: Richard Bos, John Cleveland, Peter Faber, Gerritt Holstege, Henry Kamps and James Van Overloop. From these men three are to be chosen.

James Koole
R.F.P.A. Board Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 5, 1985, our dear parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. PETER LUBBERS, will celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to them and to our faithful heavenly Father for the years of dedicated instruction and guidance which they have given us. We pray that the Lord may richly bless them in the years which lie ahead.

Jason and Carolyn Redder
Richard and Gloria Smith
Larry and Sandy Lubbers
Klaire and Pat Berends

Rog and Kathy Berends
11 grandchildren
5 great-grandchildren

Southwest Church, Michigan, is planning on connecting together the church and parsonage water systems at a cost of \$700. Doon Church, Iowa, way back in July, adopted, and filed with the Secretary of the State of Iowa, a new Articles of Incorporation which will give the church a permanent status as a corporation.

Prof. Decker's new address is: 1333 Chevelle Dr., Jenison, MI 49428. DH

NOTICE!!!

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Prof. R. Decker and his family have moved. Their new address and phone number are: Prof. Robert D. Decker, 1333 Chevelle Dr., Jenison, MI 49428. Phone - (616) 457-6618.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church wishes to extend its sympathy to their fellow office bearer, Mr. Menno Smits, in the loss of his sister, MRS. BEN KAMSTRA, whom the Lord took unto Himself on July 15, 1985. May he and all his family rejoice in the awareness that, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psalm 116:15

Rev. David J. Engelsma, Pres.
Louis R. Regnerus, Clerk

CASSETTE AVAILABLE

The Evangelism Committee of First Prot. Ref. Church, Holland, Michigan announces that a tape recording of the lecture by the Rev. George Hutton on "The Benefits of Christian Companionship" is available for \$3.00. Write to: Clare Haveman, 1695 South Maple, Zeeland, MI 49464.

We at the



3505 Kelly
Hudsonville, Michigan 49426
669-6730

would like to help you with your new season's Bible studies.

Our

BOOK OF THE MONTH

For September is a KJV hard cover Bible,
a textbook edition, with maps, charts,
and concordance. Reg. - \$14.95, Sale - \$7.95

We also carry dependable, Reformed study helps,
such as commentaries, concordances,
doctrinal expositions, and study guides.
These are all 20% off during the month of September.

COME AND SEE OUR SELECTION

If you do not find what you are looking for,
we can have most special orders in three days.

We also stock syllabi from the seminary, valuable aids
in the areas of Old Testament History (creation through
judges), some New Testament History, Ancient and Medieval
Church History, Notes of the Canons and Belgic
confessions, and Biblical and Religious Psychology.