

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

"It is this same abuse and corruption of the Word of God which lies behind the current assaults upon God's Word in the Reformed community and behind such issues as women in ecclesiastical office In the bending of Scripture, in the distortion of the Word of God, in the blatant denial of its plain teaching and meaning, there is nothing new. It is but a re-introduction of Rome's error into the Reformed community, though in a new guise."

See "The Reformers' Principles of Scriptural Interpretation" — page 42

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MEDITATION

James D. Slopsema

The Good Samaritan

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

And likewise a Levite . . .

But a certain Samaritan . . . came where he was . . . and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him . . .

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?

And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus, Go, and do thou likewise.

Luke 10:30-37

"Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" asked a certain lawyer of Jesus to trap Him.

Those who would trap our Lord with their devilish questions always fall into their own traps. That also happened to this lawyer.

Jesus responded to the lawyer, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?"

Here the lawyer's training stood him in good stead. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

"Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

Now the lawyer had made a fool of himself. How obvious and simple was the answer to the question he had put to the Lord to trap Him! One inherits eternal life by keeping the law of God in love! How obvious! The lawyer was embarrassed.

To save face and justify himself the lawyer quickly came with another question, "And who is my neighbor?" According to the law we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. But who is my neighbor?

This was not such a simple question. For under the influence of the Pharisees the Jews made a distinction between one's neighbor and one's enemies. Your neighbors you loved, your enemies you hated. Who is my neighbor whom I must love? Now the lawyer had a question with which he could trap Jesus.

In response Jesus cited the parable of the Good Samaritan.

A COLD INDIFFERENCE

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was a treacherous one. Winding through mountainous terrain, it was infested with marauding bands who often ambushed and molested those brave enough to travel it.

On this road was to be found a traveler going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Suddenly he fell among thieves who stripped him of his clothes, beat him to within an inch of his life, and left him for dead on the side of the road, naked and bleeding.

Eventually there came down this same road a priest. He evidently had finished his turn serving in the Temple in Jerusalem and was now heading home to Jericho, where a large colony of priests and levites lived.

If there was to be found in all Israel any one per-

son who should stop and help this man in need on the Jericho road, it was this priest. For as a priest he was employed in the office of mercy, showing to others the mercies of God. And as priest he was also an instructor of the law, the heart of which is to love God and the neighbor as oneself. Surely then this priest, who knew the law and held the office of mercy, would stop and help this traveler in need, a fellow countryman, one who was partaker with him of all privileges of the covenant!

But the priest refused to help. Squeezing as far as possible to the other side of the road, he guided his donkey past the bleeding, unconscious figure on the road and continued his journey to Jericho. And he no doubt had many good reasons for not stopping. Why, after all, the thieves who had done this one in might still be nearby. No sense risking danger unnecessarily. And besides, this man was so far gone he might not live anyway. And besides, there were matters in Jericho that were pressing. . . .

Likewise a levite also came upon this traveler in need. He too was on his way home to Jericho, having put his time in at the Temple as helper of the priest. This one was in a better position to help the beaten man on the roadside than was the priest. For in addition to being involved in the work of mercy in the Temple, he was also strong and muscular after years of doing the heavy work of the Temple. It would have been a small thing for him to toss this bleeding, unconscious man on his donkey and take him to Jericho. Without too much effort he could have carried this traveler in need all the way to Jericho on his own shoulders!

But after taking time to examine the situation, he quickly passed on by, leaving his fellow countryman and brother to die. And he, too, no doubt, had all sorts of good reasons for not helping this man. What if the man died and he was accused in Jericho of beating him? And what if

There are many priests and levites in the church today.

How often is not the brother of the church in need! There is the brother who is poor and struggles daily to make ends meet. There is the sister who has lost her husband and is all alone. There is the fellow saint who has fallen into sin and knows not how to escape its power. There is the brother who is sick, who is infirm, who has suffered the loss of a loved one, who is depressed

And when God providentially places these dear ones of His on the Jericho path of the members of the church, many prove themselves to be priests and levites. They take one look at their brother and sister in need and pass on by. And they have all kinds of good and sensible reasons why they ought not to stop and help.

A WONDERFUL COMPASSION

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where the fallen traveler was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.

To appreciate the compassion of the Samaritan for this Jew that lay bleeding on the roadside, we must understand that the Jews had an intense hatred for the Samaritans. Every Sabbath the Jews cursed the Samaritans in their Synagogues with the prayer that the Samaritans have no part in the resurrection of the dead. Never may a Samaritan be accepted as a proselyte to the Jewish faith. To eat the food of the Samaritans was equivalent to eating swine's flesh. The worst insult one Jew could lay upon another was to call him a Samaritan.

Nevertheless, this Samaritan had compassion on this Jew, who, were he conscious, would have refused all help from him, cursed him, and spit at him.

Compassion is to be so affected by the plight of another that your stomach knots. It means that your heart goes out to another in distress and you will do anything in your power to deliver him from his woe. Compassion is really love directed to those in need.

Such compassion the Samaritan had for the bleeding, pathetic figure he found on the Jericho road.

Yes, he could have found all sorts of reasons to continue his journey, as had the priest and levite. In fact, he had the best reason of all for passing on by: this bleeding mess along the road was a Jew!

But never mind. He was filled with compassion. And in compassion he stopped to help. In fact, he did more to help than would be normally expected. For he poured oil in the man's wounds to soothe them and wine to cleanse them. Then he loaded the unconscious wretch on his own donkey and brought him to the nearest inn. All night the Samaritan cared for his charge who hovered between life and death. Come morning he paid the innkeeper two months room and board, charging him, "Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay."

Very few are like this Samaritan.

Very few show compassion to an enemy. Compassion for a friend is one thing. But compassion for an enemy is almost unheard of!

And there are very few that in compassion will go the second and third mile to help those in need. People soon weary of well-doing when it comes to helping those in need who can not repay.

Would to God there were more Samaritans in the church!

AN IMPORTANT CALLING

The lawyer who approached Jesus had tried to entrap Him with the question, "And who is my neighbor?"

The question of the lawyer, however, was not quite proper. The question we ought to ask is not, "Who is my neighbor?" but, "To whom am I a neighbor?"

Hence, Jesus asked the lawyer, "Which now of these three (the priest, the levite, or the Samaritan), thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?"

To which the lawyer responded, "He that showed mercy on him."

Then said Jesus unto him, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Certainly we are taught here with the lawyer that there is no distinction between our neighbor and our enemy. Our neighbor is anyone God in His good providence places upon our path, whether friend or foe.

And our calling is to be neighbor to him. When he is in need we are to be filled with compassion to him. And in compassion we are to do our utmost to help him. In helping him we must go the second mile, the third mile, the fourth . . .

How important this calling is!

The original question of the lawyer was, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

The response of Jesus was that only those who show compassion to their neighbor in need will inherit eternal life. For such compassion is the basic requirement of the law. Love thy neighbor as thyself. Love him even in his need and woe. Love him even if he is your enemy.

Now this compassion does not earn one eternal life. Eternal life is, as the lawyer himself suggested, an inheritance. And every inheritance is given freely as a gift. Fact is, the inheritance of eternal life has been earned by God the Father through the death of His own dear Son. But this inheritance is given only to the true children of the Father who in the power of grace are faithful to their Father, who love Him with all their heart and love their neighbor as themselves.

Would you inherit eternal life?

Go, and do thou likewise!

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

EDITORIAL

The Banner Promotes Arminianism

In an editorial entitled, "Are Christians Wretched Sinners?" (*The Banner*, Sept. 23, 1985, p. 5) the Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven takes position against the so-called "pessimistic" view of the Christian's sanctification and in favor of a view which is not really new but which in recent years has been increasingly promoted by theologians in Reformed churches. The view involves, in part, the interpretation of Romans 7. When Paul repeatedly writes "I" in Romans 7, is he speaking of himself as a *Christian*, or not? About this Editor Kuyvenhoven writes:

Romans 7 has served until today as the chapter that establishes beyond a doubt the continuing wretchedness of Christians. The Heidelberg Catechism, for instance, would not have said, "Even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience" (Q. & A. 114), if its writers had not understood Paul to speak of his Christian self whenever he said "I" in Romans 7.

He then goes on to set forth briefly the "new" view and to choose for it, as follows:

Today some New Testament scholars in the Reformed tradition, such as Herman Ridderbos and Andrew Bandstra, say that the "I" in Romans 7 is not the "I" that is set free by the Spirit of Christ. A new look at Romans and at our traditional pessimism has also been set forth by Anthony Hoeksema in *The Christian Looks At Himself*.

In the last decade of the sixteenth century an until-then highly respected Reformed minister in Amsterdam preached a year's sermons on Romans 7. He claimed that the position taken by Calvin and Beza — that we are still the wretched sinners of Romans 7 — was "injurious to grace" and "adverse to good morals." This pastor exclaimed that "nothing can be imagined more noxious to true morality than to assert that 'it is a property of the regenerate not to do the good which they would, and to do the evil which they would not.'"

If you are inclined, with me, to agree with this Reformed pastor from Amsterdam, do not change your mind when you hear that his name was Arminius.

Now, in the first place, in the abstract it is true, of course, that no one should change his mind about this matter at the mere association of the name of Arminius. That would be foolish indeed. After all, not *everything* that Arminius wrote was false even as not *everything* that Calvin said was true. The mere fact that Arminius said something does not make it heretical.

In the second place, however, we are not considering Arminius in the abstract when it comes to Romans 7. Anyone acquainted with the history of Arminius and the rise of the heresy named after him knows this, and I strongly suspect that Editor Kuyvenhoven knew this also when he penned that rather mischievous last paragraph quoted above. The antennae of any Reformed man should begin sending strong signals upon the mere mention of the name of Arminius in connection with Romans 7. Why? Because it was when Arminius was expounding Romans 7 in the church of Amsterdam that he first was suspected and accused of heresy by one of his fellow ministers, Petrus Plancius. Why was this? It was not first of all because of errant views concerning sanctification, but because of errant views concerning the natural, unregenerate man. This heresy was suspected already when Arminius preached on Romans 7:14, but it became especially clear when he applied the language of verse 18 to the unregenerate sinner.

In the third place, a Reformed man should be ashamed to make use of the argument which Editor Kuyvenhoven uses in his brief quotation of Arminius. The quotation, by the way, is not from a sermon of Arminius but from the Fifth Part of a very lengthy "Dissertation on The True and Genuine Sense of the Seventh Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Vol. II, pp. 195-452 of *The Writings of James Arminius*. It is the thesis of this Fifth Part [pp. 419, ff.), and reads in full as follows:

"The opinion which affirms, that this chapter treats about a man who is regenerate and placed under grace; and which also interprets the good which this man would and does not, and the evil which he would not but does, as referring to actual good and evil; is injurious to grace, and inimical to good morals." And if you read a few pages into this section, you discover that the argument of Arminius here is nothing but a variation of that old, thoroughly rationalistic argument which has been so often used against the Reformed truth: "This doctrine makes men careless and profane." I say: a Reformed man should be ashamed to use this argument!

Finally, is not my charge in the title of this editorial too severe? Not at all! Editor Kuyvenhoven is writing about the doctrine of sanctification in his editorial; and there is much that could be said also against the view for which he, along with the theologians whom he mentions, chooses. That view itself is contrary to Scripture and the Confessions. However, bear in mind that if you agree with James Arminius's view of Romans 7, you are inevitably saying something about *the natural man, the unregenerate sinner*. And what are you saying? You are saying, as Arminianism says: the natural man is not totally depraved! HCH

Correspondence and Reply

Correspondence

From a reader in Ripon, California we received the following letter under date of August 26:

Dear Brother in Christ:

I have a question in regard to the article on "The Preaching of the Gospel as a Sign of Christ's Coming," by Rev. Kenneth Hanko in the Special Issue of August 1, 1985.

He writes: "God will not rest, and will not let His church rest, until the word of Jesus has been fulfilled."

My question is whether that preaching and spreading of the Gospel is the sole obligation of His church, or is the church of the Devil obligated also.

Today by many preachers "Thy will" in the Lord's prayer is transformed from a noun to a verb; and they say, "We do what He wills." To change the social and political structure of the U.S.A. and the world, these preachers flood the world with Bibles and literature. During the Crusades a French monk came up with the same kind of idea; and the results were great bloodshed, the Plague, and an enduring fiasco. As far as I know, the benefits of the Crusades were the art of window-pane making and an increase in commerce.

What are the benefits of our now-a-day Crusaders?

Your brother in Christ,
(w.s.) Bart Vander Wal

P.S. I liked the Special Issue.

Reply

As is my rule, I forwarded this question to Rev. Kenneth Hanko, whose article is concerned in the question. Here is his reply:

Jeremiah 23:32 probably answers both questions: "Behold I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD."

Yet, from an altogether different point of view there is much profit to be gained from such false prophets. They strengthen the hands of evildoers (Jer. 23:14). They destroy and scatter the sheep (Jer. 23:1). They hide the piercing light of the gospel under a bushel. Because of them God's people perish for lack of knowledge, and the strong are unstable as water.

We must recognize, of course, that not all with whom we disagree are deliberately deceiving and destroying God's people or belong to the false church. Nevertheless there are in the church today many Christian pastors who emphasize Christian living to the exclusion of doctrine, who take up a cause (abortion, unilateral disarmament, etc.), or who are just simply not equipped (because of their training or their gifts) for the work of the ministry. To these I believe the words of Paul in I Cor. 3:15 apply: "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Herman Hanko

Introduction (1)

When Jesus discussed with His disciples the signs of His coming and of the end of the age (Mt. 24), He mentioned that one of the signs would be that iniquity would abound (vs. 12). The Greek word translated "iniquity" in this passage could better be translated "lawlessness," i.e., disregard for and contempt of law. The reference is, of course, finally, to the law of God, for all human laws in every sphere of life ought to reflect the law which God Himself gives as His will for the creature.

No one will deny that this sign has appeared in our time with startling clarity. There was a time, not all that many years ago, when even the laws of the land reflected, at least to some extent, the law of God. Countries and individual states in our own country had laws on their books against gambling, swearing, Sabbath desecration, pornography, homosexuality, etc. This was, it is said, the effect of our Judeo-Christian heritage. But one by one these laws have been repealed; and even, in some instances, that which was once condemned is not only condemned no longer, but officially and legally sanctioned. An example of this is the many laws which condone gambling through state-sponsored lotteries.

That such a situation has come about in this land and other Western countries has in large measure been due to the general acceptance of the theory of evolution. Evolutionism is not merely a scientific theory which is intended to explain the origin of this universe, even though most evolutionists (and even the courts of the land) insist that it is so. Evolutionism is an entire world-and-life view. It is a theory which has implications for the whole of life, and it has intruded into every area of our life to wreak havoc and devastation.

This is especially true in the area of ethics or

morality. And it is not difficult to see how this can come about. Evolutionism teaches that higher forms of life have, over vast periods of time, developed from lower forms of life. There is no fundamental difference therefore, between the lowly amoeba and a rose, between an ant and a horse, between a worm and a man: the one is simply a more complex grouping of molecules than the other. Evolutionism is, therefore, a denial of the "spiritual" in man. It is a denial of the fact that man has a soul. Man is nothing more than a complex conglomeration of atoms and molecules, controlled by various chemical reactions of one sort or another.

It is obvious that, if this theory is true, one cannot have any true and significant ethics or system of morality. Right and wrong do not exist in any true sense for man. Certainly one cannot speak of right and wrong for an amoeba; one cannot speak of right actions for a rose; one cannot speak of wrong actions for a worm. And, if man is fundamentally and essentially no different from a fish or a mosquito, one cannot speak of right or wrong for man. That is, there is no objective standard, outside of man himself, which determines for man what is right for him to do and what is wrong and must be regarded as sin, subject to God's punishment. Right and wrong have to be decided on a different basis than that of the law of God as revealed in creation and the Scriptures.

And that is precisely what has happened in our world. Not so many years ago, this sort of notion was called "The New Morality," or "Situation Ethics." One does not hear these terms very much any more, but the ideas have permeated all our lives. Not the law of God determines what is right and what is wrong, but individual opinion. What a man thinks is right, that is right for him. But woe be to him if he tries to impose his notions on others. Just because one man may think that hard pornography is wrong, he has no right to foist his opinions on others; if they want to look at pornog-

raphy in magazines, movies, and on TV, that is their business, and no one has the right to make others conform to his private and personal opinions. (There is a column which appears a few times a week in the Grand Rapids Press, written by John Douglas, which regularly promotes this kind of thinking.)

There has to be, of course, some kind of law in the land — even the wicked recognize that if this is not the case, society would sink into chaos; but such laws ought not to reflect an objective law, given by God, but simply ought to be an expression of prevailing public opinion, the current thinking of the majority, or the views of wooly-headed liberals, such as are found in the ACLU, who fight for atheism, evolutionism, and fornication in the courts of the land.

Underlying all of this there is of course the rejection of Scripture as the only rule of faith and life. Evolutionism has made the inroads that it has today only because Scripture's authority has been rejected. We ought to be clear on this point. There is a great deal of discussion about the inspiration of Scripture, whether this inspiration is infallible and inerrant, and what infallible and inerrant inspiration really means. But this discussion, in itself, is not the real question at issue. It is, in a way, a kind of "red herring," a camouflage, an attempt to divert one's attention from the real issue. The real issue is Scripture's authority. Theologians do not call into question the whole subject of inspiration as it has been traditionally held in the church in order to try to understand this doctrine better; the discussion is not an effort to come to greater theological clarity on a certain point of doctrine. The discussion has one purpose: to destroy Scripture's authority in matters of faith and life.

It is because the church wants to adopt evolutionism in one form or another that the church has called the truth of inspiration into question. God, the Creator of heaven and earth, cannot and does not tell us how He formed His creation; science has to do this for us. It is not enough to accept the truth that "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3); worldly scientists know better than God and must give us this information. It is not difficult to see that when Scripture is rejected on such a fundamental matter as this, Scripture is also rejected when it lays down for us fundamental rules of conduct and gives, objectively, God's will for our lives.

This sort of godless thinking pervades not only society in general, but also the church. In fact, in some instances, the church, apostate and corrupt,

has led the parade to discard God's Word and substitute this word of sinful man. How many of the evils in the church cannot be traced directly to this scoffing mockery of God's infallible Word, our rule for faith and life?

The devil always works in subtle ways. He does not always attack the church head-on; he comes obliquely, under cover of being an angel of light, from unexpected directions; he uses "salami tactics," eroding the faith of the church little by little, forcing a small compromise here and a seemingly insignificant concession there — until, to her utter chagrin, the church discovers she has lost her heritage. In this way the church is affected in her life bit by bit, almost without realizing it; adopting the theories and practices of the world about her without seeming to know what is going on, without giving account of herself before God and in the light of His Word.

But there are other complicating factors. This is especially due to the tremendous advances in our day in the field of technology. The advances in technology have been so rapid and extensive that things done in our day were undreamed of just a few short years ago. We are not only talking about the whole field of electronics and microcircuitry, which has produced amazing scientific wonders — even the computer on which I am writing this article, but also the tremendous advances in the fields of medicine, genetic biology, biomedicine, and the like. Organs are being transplanted, life is being prolonged, babies are conceived in test tubes, the most fundamental elements of life are being manipulated by scientists to improve, so it is claimed, the quality of life, and the air is filled with talk of surrogate mothers, donor parents, artificial insemination, and the like.

Many of these advances in these fields raise difficult and agonizing questions for the child of God. I am not speaking now of the man who openly and arrogantly rejects God's law as his rule for life; I am talking about the humble child of God who desires humbly to bow before His God in obedience to His will. I am referring to the saint who wants to do God's will, but who finds it difficult to find his way through the maze of today's thinking and the advances of science. This difficulty is, of course, due to the fact that the Scriptures, to the child of God a lamp unto his feet and a light upon his pathway, do not speak directly to all the questions which arise out of today's discoveries and inventions. The Scriptures do not say in so many words whether organ transplants are right or wrong; whether *in vitro* conception is to be condemned out of hand or received as a gift from God to give children to parents who cannot have children in the normal

way. What are we to do? How are we to find our way through the thicket of questions which crop up out of the field of scientific and technological discovery?

For these reasons, the staff has decided to include in *The Standard Bearer* a rubric which will deal with these matters. While in our next issue we hope to include one more introductory article, in future issues, the Lord willing, it is our purpose to

discuss many of these things.

We would like to have reader participation in this rubric. There is no doubt about it but that many of our discussions will stir up in our readers additional questions, debate, disagreements, and ideas from God's people who have faced some of these matters in their own life. We hope and pray that our readers will write to us and give us their views on these things.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

John A. Heys

Eternal Thoughts of Peace

Mention the name Jonah, and those who hear you most likely will think of the prophet in Israel who experienced a violent storm at sea when he took a ship to Tarshish in his attempt to flee from the duty assigned to him, namely, to preach in Nineveh, and who was thrown overboard by the sailors. His story is well known, and he is mentioned in other books of the Bible, as well as in the book bearing his name. He is mentioned in II Kings 14:25. And there are no fewer than nine references to him in the New Testament, all nine coming from the mouth of Jesus. He was therefore no fictional character. It is a true story of which we read in the book that bears his name. Jesus refers to what happened to him as historical fact. And Jesus spoke the truth every time He opened His mouth. We sin then when we open our mouths to deny the fact that this book deals with a man of real flesh and blood, and that what is recorded concerning him is absolutely true.

There was however another jona^h that sailed on a very stormy sea, and that in the very first ship built by man, when God opened the windows of heaven, and broke open the fountains of the deep. What is more, even as Jona^h the prophet was sent by God to bring a message to the people of Nineveh, this jona^h was sent to bring a message to Noah and his family in the ark. You see, the

Hebrew word for dove is jona^h. And the prophet Jona^h in a sense served as a messenger of God, even as that dove did from the hand of God. This we hope to make plain in subsequent contributions to this department.

These two messengers differ greatly in that Jona^h was a human being belonging to the creatures God created in His own image, while the jona^h that Noah let go from the ark, and God sent back with a message to the church of that day, was a creature brought forth by God on the fifth day of creation week and out of the water, one day before man was created out of the dust of the ground. Then too the dove made no attempt to avoid bringing the message to Noah, while Jona^h did his best to keep from preaching in Nineveh. The message the dove brought was in sign language — an olive leaf — while Jona^h's message was spelled out in clear human language.

We read at the very beginning of the book that "the word of the Lord came unto Jona^h." And that word came in human language. They were not words in sign language that might or might not be interpreted correctly. It was a word for the people of Nineveh, and a word that was very clear as to its meaning. This becomes evident in the reaction to Jona^h's preaching. They understood it, and understood it as word coming from no one less than Jehovah.

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In both instances it was the hand of God that directed these two messengers. His hand led the dove to find the olive leaf, to pluck it off, and to bring it to Noah. It was the hand of God that in an amazing way brought this disobedient prophet to bring God's message to the Ninevites. What is more, both messengers were sent with messages to God's people. Members of the church of Christ were there in Nineveh, those whose names were eternally written in the Lamb's book of life, even though they were not of the fleshly seed of Abraham.

And for those who wish to believe that the church of Christ was born on Pentecost, let it be pointed out that Scripture does NOT speak that way. We may qualify the statement and say that the New Testament church was born on Pentecost, but we may not say that the whole church had its birth that day. It is certainly true that you do not find the word church even once in the Old Testament Scriptures. But then from Genesis 1 through Malachi 4 you do not find the word regeneration either. Would anyone dare to say that therefore there was no regeneration during the whole Old Testament dispensation? It would take an unregenerated heart to say that! The word faith appears in the Old Testament Scriptures only twice. Shall we say that during that period of time there was hardly any faith? Do we not read of the "heroes of faith" — better called the giants of faith — in Hebrews 11? And that chapter covers the Old Testament from creation through way beyond the days of David.

What is especially striking is that Stephen in Acts 7:38 speaks of the "church in the wilderness." Those who want to maintain that the Jews are the Kingdom of God, and the Gentiles are the church of God, in order to get around what God says here, translate Stephen's words as, "the congregation in the wilderness." The word plainly is church, or, if you will, *ecclesia* in the Greek. And there is a Greek word for congregation that is not used here. You will find it in Acts 13:43. Why did God not give Stephen that word, if He wanted us to believe that there was no church yet in the Old Testament dispensation?

And does not Paul speak in Ephesians 2:14 of the middle wall of partition being broken down between Jews and Gentiles? And that does not mean that the Gentiles can now come into the kingdom, and the Jews can come into the church, even though there is an element of truth in this. But note that in verse 19 Paul states that the Gentiles are fellow citizens with the Jews in the kingdom. The Jews are not the only citizens in the Kingdom. And the Gentiles alone are not the church. Note that the Gentiles are in verse 20 called the temple of God

together with the Jews. Turn then to Revelation 21:1-3 and note that the tabernacle, or temple, of God is with both Jew and Gentile, with all the saints, all those who believe from Adam onward. We must insist that Jonah was sent to Gentiles who in God's counsel were from eternity members in the church of Christ, and in time were brought into that church through the work of Jonah.

Part of Jonah's problem stems from this very fact, even though he knew that in Abraham's seed ALL nations would be blessed. As a prophet he knew that Genesis 18:18 meant that there could be Ninevites in the Old Testament church. And as we shall see, the Lord willing, God showed him that these Ninevites shared in the same blessings that the believing seed of Abraham enjoyed. All the members of the body of Christ enjoy the same blessings, for as members of ONE body they all receive from the Head the blessings of His cross.

Now to return to what we began to set forth. The jonah or dove that served the church in the ark was a symbol of peace and gentleness. It is contrasted with the raven in the account of the flood. Men today contrast it with the hawk, which is used as a symbol of war, while the dove symbolizes peace. And although there are several other characteristics of the dove presented in Scripture, here on the foreground the dove, namely Jonah, is, as pointed out, a messenger of peace. The jonah that brought Noah the olive leaf — another symbol of peace — is presented in Matthew 10:16 as a creature with a gentle, harmless nature, and thus as the very opposite of the hawk.

As suggested above, the dove brought Noah a message of peace. God's holy wrath had brought terrible devastation to the earth. He visited the sinful human race and made war against it, wiping off from the face of the earth all His enemies! In His holy wrath He brought worldwide calamity and disaster. Who can stand before Him? But He used a harmless dove to let the church know that His thoughts to His people are thoughts of peace, and that He had a new earth ready for His church to live on and to use in His service. That dove, indeed, brought a message of God's peace upon His church that had seen His terrible wrath against His enemies.

And now God is sending another Jonah to Nineveh with a message of peace for His people dwelling there. O, yes, Jonah preaches destruction. But God did that through Noah as well. And, as we hope to point out later in this series, that must be done. That is the way to approach the sinner. Do not argue with God about that. You are sure to lose and find out your folly. But that must wait for a later installment in this series. The point to be made

here is that God sends Jonah to Nineveh because He has eternal thoughts of peace for His people in Nineveh. And He sends a dove to let them know this.

What we must keep in mind while we consider the book of Jonah is the fact that it brings us the gospel as it is in Christ. We must see that when we read in verse one of the book that the word of the Lord came to Jonah. It was the word of the gospel, the good news of salvation, the news of "peace on earth to men of good will." The message was that of eternal thoughts of peace which God has for His people in Christ. Jonah was not sent to see whether there were any children of God among these Gentiles. He was sent because there were people there toward whom God eternally had thoughts of peace. To these He wants Jonah to extend the olive leaf of the gospel so that they may know the salvation which God has prepared for them.

Although in some of his actions Jonah was a hawk, averse to bringing the gospel to these Gentiles, and when forced to do so found delight in pronouncing impending destruction upon the wicked, God used him to convey His thoughts of peace to the elect in that Gentile city. God used him as a dove. Never mind Jonah's unpeaceful attitude. Never mind the fact that he did not come into Nineveh acting like a dove. The truth we must see is God's peaceful thoughts and intentions that sent Jonah to be His tool for the salvation of His people in Nineveh. Jonah has the name of dove, not because of what he in his sinful nature did, but because of Him Whose word came to Jonah to be preached in Nineveh. Jonah was the messenger. It was God's message. Let us not lose sight of that fact. What God does through man counts, not what man wants or sets out to do.

And God's thoughts of peace toward those whom He chose in Christ are eternal thoughts of peace, thoughts He always had in His holy heart and mind, and which will be there eternally. A truth we must remember is that not only is Jehovah God, but God is Jehovah. His name Jehovah means I AM. And there are so many false doctrines today that deny this truth. That He is the I AM ought to fill us with holy awe and prevent us from any tendency to present Him at any time as a changeable god, dependent upon man's will as to what to do next. He says, "I Am" and never says "I Was" or "I Will be." Always He is the same, unchangeably the same. In this name He tells and warns us that He *is*, and that without our help; that He has in Himself all that which He needs; and that He does not need our consent, our acceptance of a well-meant offer of salvation, of a free offer, or for us to open our hearts to receive His Son. His glory and the attainment of His desire does not depend upon what we do or are going to do. He is the I AM, and is not the I hope-to-be, if you will let me and help me.

No, His thoughts of peace toward His people are eternal, because He chose every one of them personally before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4); and this choice is with Him eternally and unchangeably. That is why He sent Jonah to Nineveh. There were people there that must be saved. These will be saved. For He is Jehovah, and thus is the unchangeable and self-sufficient One.

THAT assures us of our salvation as well. And let it be pointed out that the book of Jonah begins with that truth for our comfort. In the Hebrew we read, "How the word of JEHOVAH came unto Jonah, the son of Amitai." As we consider this book and its truth, let us bear that in mind. Jehovah is at work. Jehovah speaks to us from the pages of this brief book of the Old Testament.

ALL AROUND US

Robert D. Decker

Pope Tells Moslems: "We believe in the same God."

Christian News, a Lutheran magazine edited by Herman Otten, in its September 2, 1985 issue carries a report on Pope John Paul II's recent visit to

Morocco. The report was written by Vivienne Heston, a reporter for Religious News Service. Here are some excerpts:

Pope John Paul II concluded his pastoral visit to Africa with an historic encounter with Islamic students in Casablanca, Morocco.

The pope flew hundreds of miles off the normal course from Kenya to Morocco to show his respect to Moslem pilgrims on their way towards Mecca. The altered flight path was symbolic of the Vatican's efforts to establish a new dialogue with the world of Islam.

John Paul's message to the young participants in the pan-Arab games was one that he had carried throughout his 12-day African sojourn: "We cannot invoke God as father of all men if we refuse to act like brothers among men who were created in the image of God."

Some 60,000 Islamic students gathered at the Casablanca sports arena to hear the papal address. It was the first time in history that a Roman Catholic pope has been received as a moral leader among Moslems.

The invitation for the speech was made by King Hassan II of Morocco, a great admirer of John Paul . . . John Paul decided to accept the king's invitation despite the security or doctrinal risk involved. Many theologians said the time was not ripe for conciliatory gestures towards Islam, especially in the light of the latest events in Lebanon. Similarly, King Hassan received pressure from his Arab friends to postpone the meeting in favor of a private talk. John Paul was invited to speak to the students as an educator and moral leader. He emphasized moral values and their importance for the future of humankind.

"Each person is unique in the eyes of God and irreplaceable in this work of development," John Paul said. "Everyone must be recognized for what he/she is and then respected as such. No one should use his fellow man, no one should exploit his equal, no one should scorn his brother."

The similarities that join as well as the differences that divide Christians and Moslems were stressed during the pope's speech. He said he had come as a believer and that he recognized their common belief in one God.

"Abraham is the same model of faith in God for us, [a model] of submitting to his will and of confidence in

his bounty," John Paul said. "We believe in the same God, the only God, the living God, the God who creates worlds and brings its creatures to perfection."

No, the Roman Catholic Church has not changed. Rome is not moving closer to evangelical Protestantism. The pope sounds no different than a host of liberals who preach a social gospel, a fatherhood of God and a brotherhood of all men. Let us not be deceived. The god of the pope may be the god of Moslems. But it is not the God of Holy Scripture. Only an idol.

Herman Otten editorializes in the same issue of *Christian News* and we heartily agree with his comments: "Pope John Paul II concluded his 'pastoral visit' of Africa by telling Moslems: 'We believe in the same God . . . ' When the pope visited the Netherlands earlier this year he told the Jews about the same thing. According to the Pope, Jews, Moslems and followers of other non-Christian religions all worship the same God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

"Vatican II in its declaration on non-Christian religions and the Pope's latest Credo left the door wide open for an anti-scriptural universalism which maintains that man can get to heaven without a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Rome now teaches that even pious atheists will get to heaven. Most major Protestant denominations, along with Rome, now allow their clergymen to maintain that Christ is not the only way to heaven . . . THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND MOST MAJOR PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS TODAY DO NOT INSIST THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY TO HEAVEN AND THAT NON-CHRISTIANS ARE LOST IN ANY ETERNAL HELL. (emphasis Otten's) . . . Contrary to the Pope and liberal Protestant theologians, Moslems and Jews do not worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These patriarchs worshipped the only true God, the Holy Trinity. They trusted in Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah, for their eternal salvation."

News Briefs

The following items are all gleaned from the September 3, 1985 issue of the *R.E.S. NEWS EXCHANGE*, a publication of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, edited by Paul G. Schrotenboer, the

General Secretary of that Synod.

"The Reformed General Convention of the German Democratic Republic and the Board of the Reformed Alliance (Reformierte Bund) in the Federal

Republic of Germany, as well as (West) Berlin, have given their support to the call for the formation of an Ecumenical Peace Council. The call, addressed to the churches of the world, was issued at Dusseldorf Kirchentag.

"In their declaration the representatives of the two churches of both Germanies state as their common conviction that 'Peace is a matter of confession and that it means confessing or denying the Gospel,' that 'in the face of hunger and social misery in the world, the scandal and risk of an escalating arms race has to be given more importance than its alleged advantages;' and that 'the threat of mutual destruction is contrary to the spirit of Christ and is an expression of our sin.'

"In their declaration they urge that four necessary steps be taken: to stop the manufacture of atomic armaments, to prohibit the use of outer space for armed military purposes, to dismantle the atomic missiles already stationed, and to reduce armament expenditures."

As much as we may deplore and even fear the prospect of nuclear war, what has this "peace" to do with "the peace of God which passes all understanding" which peace keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus? (cf. Philippians 4:6, 7)

"(Burbach, West Germany) Speaking here at a conference of the Association of Evangelical Missions, Tom Chandler, assistant secretary of the missions committee of the World Evangelical Fellowship, told the mission leaders that white Christians are now in the minority in the world. Chandler pointed out that in 1910 about six percent of all Christians lived outside Europe and North America. Today that proportion has increased to 54 percent. The majority of non-Christians also live in nations of the Third World."

This has to be another indication of the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ who said: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come . . . Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." (Matthew 24:14, 42)

"(Cluj Napoca, Rumania, RPS) Although the Reformed bishop had requested the enrollment of 36 students, the state allowed only ten students to enroll at the Reformed Theological Seminary at Cluj. To make matters worse, the churches are not allowed to provide theological instruction to the youth outside the theological faculties, leaving the churches without means to make up for the insufficient number of theological students. The repressive state policy of curtailing theological

enrollment has been practiced for years and is seen as a deliberate effort to slowly stifle the Reformed church, which is the largest Protestant church in Rumania (estimated total Protestants: 1,280,000)."

Though we may not always think about it, there is persecution of God's church in various parts of the world. Persecuted Christians need our prayers. This too Jesus said is a sign of His coming and of the end of the world: "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." (Matthew 24:9)

"(Indianapolis, Indiana) According to an editorial in *The Presbyterian Layman* (July/August 1985), the 'liberal agenda of Presbyterian Church continues.' The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the large, liberal, mainline Presbyterian Church, R.D.D.) recently held its 197th General Assembly. The editorial states that those who had hoped for a movement of the church away from its liberal agenda were disappointed. The best example of this continuing trend, according to the editorial, was the debate on the abortion issue. With only slight modification the assembly reaffirmed the pro-choice stand. Though some positive things did occur in Indianapolis, the assembly spent most of its time on political/social/economic issues, such as the United States involvement in Central America and divestment in South Africa. The editor laments that things are made more difficult for Presbyterian evangelicals by the way things are done. Very rarely in any of the meetings of the General Assembly is there opportunity for examination of viewpoints other than those of the official agencies. The printed materials presented are biased toward one point of view. The great number of issues make it impossible, particularly for elder commissioners, to come prepared. The editorial states: 'the number of issues considered by the General Assembly each year must be reduced. Issues to be considered should be those that affect the spiritual and moral well-being of society and not every political, social and economic problem facing the world.'"

The editor is right. Ecclesiastical assemblies may treat only ecclesiastical matters and that too in an ecclesiastical manner. (cf. Church Order of Dordt, Article 30) This too is a sign of the end. Many are the false Christs and false prophets in our time who say "here is Christ or there" and who deceive many. (cf. Matthew 24)

*Read & Study
The Standard Bearer!*

“Good Morning, Alice”

Gise J. Van Baren

This first stay in the hospital was not very pleasant for Alice. One thing she could never endure was needles — and she saw needles in abundance both here and during the remaining time of her life. One of the tests for diagnosing ALS involved placing of needles under the skin to determine the reaction of the muscles to electrical charges. It was a most unpleasant kind of test — and Alice insisted that she'd never go through that again. After about a week, Alice came home to her apartment without having heard any definite diagnosis.

After a later hospital stay, Alice's “friend” wrote:
Good morning, Alice:

I'm glad you're back home from the hospital!

It's going to be a busy day, so I'm writing early — it's still dark out. Morning is my favorite time though. It's so quiet (before the family gets up, that is).

You can't help but think when you read Gen. 39:1-3 that Joseph kind of had it made. In everything he did, he prospered. But reading the rest of the chapter shows how he had to fight his battle of faith, too. And yet through all the trials the rest of the chapter mentions, the Lord was with Joseph and the Lord made him to prosper. The chapter says that four times. I think this is such a great example God gives us.

For me, even when the trials of raising children in the fear of the Lord seem so impossible; for you, even on your bed of affliction, WE ARE PROSPERING — because the Lord is with us.

Cause for comfort — and more: cause for JOY.

Love, Your friend

Please read Isaiah 12

As the weeks passed, we could notice her limp become worse. Alice lived in an upstairs apartment with outside stairs. She had always been very comfortable in this small apartment, and especially en-

joyed the owners, dear friends, downstairs. But we watched with growing concern as Alice ever more slowly dragged herself up and down those steep stairs. And how discouraging it must have been for Alice! She had always been so independent, doing everything for herself. Now she needed help just to carry a small bag of groceries up those steps. And she surely did not want to admit that soon she might not be able to climb those stairs herself.

Dear Alice:

Good morning! You know, it has been a week now since I began writing you, and I am enjoying it more all the time. There may come a time when I will not “feel” like writing, but so far I look forward to my time with you in the morning.

I shouldn't have chosen such a small card for such a tremendous chapter. It is so true that to really benefit from Scripture, you should read a passage three times.

You can't do that with this chapter without feeling the intense joy that Isaiah had, and by the third time you read it, that intense joy fills your own heart and soul. I really am going to memorize verse 2. If I can remember it and bring it to mind in times of distress, it will fill my need.

And I guess verse 3 explains what you and I are doing together, Alice; with joy we are drawing water out of the wells of salvation.

I am enjoying sharing those waters with you Alice — thanks!

Love, Your friend

Please read Joshua 3:13

Then came the official diagnosis: ALS. Alice didn't immediately know what was involved in ALS. In fact, she never did want to know all the details — though she shortly after learned about the general progress of the disease.

For the family, however, it was different. A disease we had seldom heard of, and had known

nothing about, became quickly very familiar. At the local library, details were found in medical works. It was "Lou Gehrig's disease" — named for a ball player in his prime who died within two years after diagnosis of this illness. One could read: "Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis causes a progressive paralysis. The first symptom is often muscular weakness, followed by wasting or atrophy of the arms and legs . . . Unfortunately, there is no known treatment for ALS, just as there is none for multiple sclerosis . . . The disease may prove fatal in a few months and some patients have survived for ten years, but few patients live more than five years after the disorder first makes itself known." Another article, one read by Alice herself, stated an average life-span for a patient diagnosed as having ALS was two years. Two years! "The end is frequently brought on by paralysis of the respiratory system, or by pneumonia, to which the patient, in his weakened condition, is highly susceptible." Further study indicated that usually one's mind remained clear to the end; and bladder and bowel functions were normally not affected by this disease. Otherwise, one quickly became helpless — even losing the ability to speak. Said one article: "Unquestionably the most devastating of the neuromuscular disorders affecting adults . . ." Two years! Devastating! Utterly helpless! The various statements sunk in slowly but emphatically.

Good Morning, Alice:

Well, it's not sunny this morning, and things did not go very easy at the breakfast table with my "tribe" this morning, but really now that I'm finding a passage to share with you tomorrow, I do feel better.

Are you wondering why Joshua 3:13 means something special to me? It wouldn't be, but someone explained it so beautifully to me! You see, the overflowing waters were rushing down the Jordan and God promised that as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark would rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the Jordan would stop and stand on a heap. The crossing was such a big thing — on the other side lay the PROMISED LAND; but by faith the priests had to take that first step. The waters didn't stop until the priests had stepped in.

God provides the way when we need it and not before.

We can believe that when we go through our own deep waters, God will show the way as we go. What a beautiful way to face trials!

With love, Your friend

Please read Psalm 25:4 and 5

One of the pleasures Alice always enjoyed was her week of camping at Gun Lake in Michigan with

relatives. This year was to be no exception. She spent the fourth of July there and later a week in August with the family. Eagerly Alice made use for the first time of her recently purchased used camper. But how quickly she tired and needed much rest! Still, she found the relaxation, the campfires, and visits most enjoyable. Her limping, however, was becoming more pronounced. A special step was made so that she could enter the camper more easily. We remarked to each other that this was not only the first but likely also the last time she would be able to use her camper.

Good morning, Alice:

I think winter is finally coming. The heavy clouds seem to be just pushing through the sky, ready to drop snow. We're "supposed" to get some today, too. I like to watch the sky in the winter — it never looks the same.

Ps. 25:4-5 almost seems to ask something opposite of Josh. 3:13 — that we want to know ahead, our path and way. It really doesn't though; the "showing" and teaching and leading are a constant thing — and not a look ahead. The last phrase shows that so well.

On Thee do I wait all the day. What a confession! What a difficult thing to do.

If we could just live — constantly aware of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and leading us. If we could just consciously do and think and desire with Him leading us, and not seek our own desires — how much more full of joy our lives would be — even (and maybe especially) in disciplining my children and in obeying with love my husband.

On Thee do I wait all the day! If I could just keep that before my mind all day . . .

With love, Your friend

Please read Col. 3:11-15

Climbing the apartment steps became increasingly difficult. Alice would try to pull herself up while struggling to lift her left leg to the next step. Now even with the kind assistance of cousins and friends who helped carry up laundry and groceries, it was increasingly evident that an upstairs apartment was no longer feasible. Even Alice was ready to admit it. Still, she was intent on living by herself. Though it was almost impossible for her to button anything, she insisted she could still take care of herself. Alice obtained a new apartment on August 1, ground level without any steps. She kept this apartment for about four months — but was not even able to stay there the entire time.

Good Morning, Alice:

I surely shouldn't have chosen so many verses — there's just so much these verses make me think about! Col. 3:15 tells me about the peace of God in my heart,

and I looked to the preceding verses to see just how I must be to "let" that peace rule.

I learned quite a lesson. So often it is easy to judge or look down on another person because she or he is different as far as spiritual sensitivity goes. The passage has taught me again that we are all one body — that I

must love — and then be thankful!

Now if I can just remember that the next time I think critically . . .

Til tomorrow, Your friend

Please read Ps. 103:19-22

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Jason L. Kortering

Genesis — The Beginnings (2)

We continue with the outline of the book of Genesis.

5. The generations of the sons of Noah (10:1-11:9). Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (10:1). The generations of Japheth are listed (10:2-5). This is followed by the generations of Ham, including Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord (10:6-20), and the generations of Shem (10:21-32). The whole earth was one language and dwelt in the plain of Shinar (11:1, 2). They began to build a tower of brick which would keep them from scattering throughout the earth (11:3, 4). God came down and confused their language, which resulted in an interruption of the building and a scattering of the people abroad (11:5-8). The name of the tower was Babel, for the Lord confounded their language and scattered them (11:9).

6. The generations of Shem (11:10-26). Mention is made of Shem's son Arphaxad, born two years after the flood. He had a son, Salah, etc. The significant point is that the age of man was shortened after the flood: Shem lived 600 years, Arphaxad 438 years, and Nahor (father of Terah, father of Abraham) only 148 years (11:10-26).

7. The generations of Terah (11:27-25:11). Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran (father of Lot). The subsequent history focuses on Abram. Haran died in Ur of the Chaldees (11:27, 28). Abraham took

Sarai for wife and Nahor took Milcah. Sarai was barren (11:29, 30). Terah took Abram, Sarai, and Lot and went from Ur to Canaan, dwelling in Haran. He died there at the age of 205 years (11:31, 32). God called Abram to leave Haran and promised to make of him a great nation and bless him (12:1-3). Abram departed and Lot went with him. He was 75 years old when he left. He passed through Shechem and there, on the edge of Canaan, God promised to give him the land. He settled near Bethel (12:4-9). When a famine was in the land, he went to Egypt. As they approached, he cautioned his wife Sarai to tell the men that she was his sister. She was taken into the house of Pharaoh. The Lord plagued the house of Pharaoh and he learned of her real identity. He admonished Abram and sent him away (12:10-20). Abraham and his household, including Lot, return from Egypt. They have trouble over land use. Abraham offers Lot a choice. Lot chooses Sodom while Abraham takes the plains of Canaan. God once again promises all the land to him and to make his seed great. He settles in Mamre (13:1-18). The battle of the four kings against the five kings follows. Abraham is involved because Lot is taken captive (14:1-12). Word came to Abraham that Lot was captured. He took his trained servants and slaughtered Chedorlaomer and the kings with him and brought back Lot and the others who were captured. The king of Sodom went to greet him and offered him all the booty, but Abraham refused, lest they claim to have made Abraham rich. Melchizedek, King of Salem, also

greeted him and gave him tithes, revealing himself to be a worshiper of Jehovah (14:13-24). Jehovah assures Abraham He is His great reward. Abraham complains that he is childless, that he has only Eliezer his servant. God assures him he will have a son, and as many offspring as the stars (15:1-6). Jehovah seals His covenant with Abraham: the firebrand passes through the divided pieces of animals. He assures Abraham that he will become a great nation, especially after his generations will have been taken captive and released after the fourth generation. He promises him that he will possess the land from the Nile to the Euphrates Rivers (15:7-21). Sarah tries to resolve the problem of having no son by offering Abraham her handmaid, Hagar. He consents and a child is conceived (16:1-6). Sarah is jealous and drives Hagar away. The angel tells Hagar to return, and that Ishmael is to be the name of her son and he will be a wild man. Abraham is 86 years old when Ishmael is born (16:7-16). At 99 years of age the Lord appeared to Abraham and renewed the covenant with him and his seed (17:1-8). He gives him instruction concerning circumcision as a sign of the covenant (17:9-14). Jehovah promises that Sarah will have a son and that his name will be Isaac. He will be the covenant son, not Ishmael (17:15-22). All the males of Abraham's house are then circumcised (17:23-27). Three angels appearing as men, come to Abraham and he prepares a meal for them. While eating, they announce that Sarah will have a son. She laughs and is reprimanded (18:1-15). Before leaving, they reveal to Abraham that God is going to destroy Sodom. Abraham pleads for Sodom on behalf of Lot. Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked if 50 righteous are there, or 45, or 40, or 30, 20, even 10? (18:16-33). There are not 10 righteous in Sodom, so God sent two angels to Sodom to rescue Lot. Before they reach Lot's house, they are approached; and after the angels enter his house the men of the city try to break down the door. Lot offers them his two daughters, but they refuse. The angels strike them blind (19:1-11). During the night Lot urges his relatives to leave with them in the morning, since God will destroy the place, but none heed. The angel takes Lot, his wife, and their two daughters by the hand and pulls them out. Fire and brimstone destroys Sodom and the cities about (19:12-28). God remembers Abraham by rescuing Lot (19:29). Lot's wife lingers and becomes a pillar of salt. His daughters commit fornication with their drunk father. Each bear a son, Moab and Ammon by name (19:30-38). Once again Abraham journeyed southward into Gerar. He told Sarah to identify herself as his sister, not wife. This time Abimelech took Sarah into his house and God afflicted them with disease. God warns Abimelech

that he has another man's wife and that he must return her. He calls Abraham and explains God's dealing with him. He returns Sarah and much gifts. Abraham prays for his healing and God answers (20:1-18). Sarah now conceives and Isaac is born. She laughs with delight and he is circumcised on the 8th day (21:1-8). At the feast of weaning, Ishmael mocks Isaac. This angers Sarah and she demands that Abraham cast out the bondwoman and her son. He does this, and they almost die by the heat of the desert. God provides water and they are restored (21:9-21). Abraham and Abimelech covenant at Beersheba to live in peace (21:22-34). God now tries Abraham's faith by commanding him to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering. In obedience, Abraham arose early and took his son and two servants and went to Mt. Moriah. As they approached alone, Isaac asked his father, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God will provide." At the right place, Abraham built an altar and placed Isaac upon the wood on the altar. When Abraham stretched forth his hand to slay his son, God stopped him and acknowledged the power of his faith. A ram was offered as substitute (22:1-14). The angel of Jehovah renewed the covenant that God would make with Abraham a great nation as the sand of the seashore (22:15-19). Some of the generations of Nahor, Abraham's brother are listed (22:20-24). Sarah died at 127 years of age. Abraham mourned for her and purchased the cave of Machpelah for 400 pieces of silver from the children of Heth and buried her in it (23:1-20). Abraham recognized his duty to seek a wife for his son Isaac. He sent his trusted servant to Haran to the house of his brother, Nahor, for a wife for Isaac. The Lord led him to Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor. He knew she was the one, for she filled the pre-determined sign when she said, "Drink, and I will give to thy camels also." The servant blessed God for His care. Having the consent of her parents, he returned with Rebekah and her maids. Isaac was in the field awaiting their return. They were married and Isaac was comforted after the death of his mother (24:1-67). Reference is made to Keturah, wife of Abraham and the children born to her (25:1-6). Abraham died and Isaac and Ishmael came and buried him in the cave of Machpelah (25:7-11).

8. The generations of Ishmael (25:12-18). Hagar bore him by Abraham. The names of his sons are given, twelve princes according to their nations, living from Havilah (Shur) near Egypt toward Assyria (25:12-18).

9. The generations of Isaac (25:19-35:29). Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah. She too was barren at first. Isaac prayed for her and she

conceived twins. As they struggled within her, she inquired of Jehovah who explained that two nations were within her, and that the older would serve the younger. At delivery, the first, Esau, was born red and hairy, the second, Jacob, was fair-skinned. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born (25:19-26). It soon became evident that they were quite different boys: Esau was an outdoors-type, Jacob a home-body. Once when Esau returned from the field he smelled the pottage prepared by Jacob. He begged a meal, being at the point of death. Jacob seized the opportunity to claim the birthright: "Sell me thy birthright!" Esau did (25:27-34). Due to the famine, Isaac traveled to Abimelech at Gerar of the Philistines. God warned him not to go to Egypt (26:1-5). Here once again, the men took interest in Rebekah, his wife, whom he called his sister. Abimelech saw otherwise and inquired of Isaac why this deceit. He warned his people not to touch Rebekah (26:6-16). To avoid conflict with the servants of Abimelech, Isaac dug wells toward Beersheba. Here the Lord appeared to him and renewed the covenant of Abraham (26:17-25). Abimelech came to Isaac and they made a covenant with each other not to harm the other in the future (26:26-33). Esau at 40 years of age married wicked women and was a grief to his parents

(26:34, 35). When Isaac was old and about blind, he decided to give the birthright blessing to Esau. He called him and asked him to get venison and bring it to him and he would bless him. Rebekah heard it and instructed Jacob to kill a goat, put on the clothing of Esau, and bring the meat to his father. At first he feared, but he went ahead. Isaac was suspicious by his early presence. He smelled his clothing, questioned his voice, and asked him directly if he was his firstborn Esau. Jacob said, "I am." Isaac then pronounced the blessing, giving to Jacob all the material aspect of the birthright (27:1-29). Esau returned and Isaac realized that he had been deceived. Esau was in a rage against Jacob. He begged a blessing. Isaac told him he had blessed Jacob, and he shall be blessed. All he gave to Esau was that his place would be away from the fatness of the earth, he would be a servant to his brother and live by the sword (27:30-40). Esau hated Jacob for this. Rebekah saw this and counseled her son to flee away to Haran to get away from the wrath of his brother and seek a wife from the household of his mother (27:41-46). Before Jacob left, Isaac pronounced the spiritual birthright blessing upon him (28:1-5). Esau in turn married the daughters of Canaan, those of the children of Ishmael (28:6-9).

GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

Thomas C. Miersma

The Reformers' Principles of Scriptural Interpretation: Introduction

In the past several articles we have been considering the reformers' doctrine of Scripture as they developed and defended the Word of God over against the errors of Rome and led the church back to the solid foundation of God's Word. We have seen that from the very beginning the reformers took their stand upon the Word of God as the in-

fallible and inerrant word of truth and have seen also that this was in fact never an issue between them and Rome. The issue between the reformers and Rome always centered in Scripture's authority and clarity. The reformers maintained that Scripture was complete in itself without the need for a second source of revelation in a supposed apostolic tradition. Being the complete Word of God it was both all-sufficient for faith and life and the sole standard of authority, having its authority in itself

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and not derived from the church. As to its clarity, we have seen that the reformers maintained that the Scriptures were clear and understandable in themselves, objectively so, as God's Word to man and that the darkness of man's understanding must be laid at the door of man himself as a sinner. Moreover, in the study and understanding of that Word of God the reformers opposed the attempt of Rome to withdraw the Word of God from the believer and limit its understanding and interpretation to the hierarchy of the church. The reformers maintained that even as it was God's Word and revelation, God's truth, so also God Himself taught His people by His Word through His Spirit, given to every believer, that all might know, understand, and discern for themselves the truth of God's Word. This is the subjective principle of the truth that we are taught of God.

It is with this in mind that we now turn our attention to the reformers' principles of Scriptural interpretation, to the reformers' hermeneutics. One might be inclined to call this the reformers' method of Bible study. While there would be some truth to this idea, the idea of a "method of Bible study" has certain dangers to it. Scripture is one Word of God, one revelation of God in Jesus Christ, but God has given His Word to us in a rich and diverse way. While there are principles which apply to the study of the Word of God as a whole, yet it is ultimately the Word of God itself which must determine how they are to be applied and how that Word must be understood. Also here we must beware of imposing upon Scripture some man-made system of interpretation. This had happened in the middle ages with the various and false allegorical methods. This happens in our day also, even among so-called fundamentalist circles which insist upon a literal method of interpreting Scripture. While it is certain that we are indeed to take Scripture literally according to the plain meaning of the Word of God, yet also this so-called literal method has inherent in it the elements of a man-made system imposed upon Scripture. For what is meant by it too often is this, that all Scripture is to be treated as if it were the historical books of the Bible such as Kings or Samuel. Thus books which are the revelation of God's Word by signs and symbols, visions and dreams, such as much of Ezekiel, Revelation, or Isaiah, are treated as if they were merely history written beforehand or in the same manner as the book of Chronicles.

Thus, while there are certain all-comprehensive principles upon which a sound method of Scriptural interpretation is based, yet their application will change and be supplemented, depending upon whether we are studying an epistle or the psalms or the gospels, and whether we are studying an Old

Testament type, a miracle, or a parable. We prefer to speak therefore of principles of interpretation, rather than a method of interpretation.

The fundamental principle of the reformers' interpretation of Scripture is that Scripture interprets Scripture, that God explains His Own Word. This principle will guard us against all false methods of interpretation or man-made systems. For then we will indeed be taught of God. We will also embrace the true literal meaning of the Scriptures, not the artificial literalism of so-called fundamentalism with its strange distortions of prophecy, but that which is literally the mind of the Spirit.

This will also lead us to a right understanding of the spiritual meaning and significance of the Word of God without falling into a false spiritualizing of Scripture, which is more properly called allegory. This false twisting of Scripture, of explaining away the plain meaning of Scripture, was the heritage of Rome in the days of the reformers. Rome sought to use the Scriptures for its own end, to bend the Scriptures this way and that so that what did not fit the Roman system was made to fit. Texts were wrenched out of their context and made to teach what they did not teach. Interpretations were imposed on Scripture from above, worldly philosophy was joined to Scripture, married to it, and made the standard. What did not fit the system of Rome was explained away or obscured by absurd questions or distortions. Scripture was set at war with itself, its unity broken, and the Word of God lost.

It is this same abuse and corruption of the Word of God which lies behind the current assaults upon God's Word in the Reformed community and behind such issues as women in ecclesiastical office. The Scriptures are now made to serve the philosophy of so-called women's liberation. In the bending of Scripture, in the distortion of the Word of God, in the blatant denial of its plain teaching and meaning, there is nothing new. It is but a re-introduction of Rome's error into the Reformed community, though in a new guise.

Over against this stands the legacy of the reformers who would have God explain His Own Word, who approached that Word with a child-like trust that God might teach them and that they might believe. This is the position of faith which stands under the Word of God and which presumes to know nothing but what God will teach us of Himself. This He will do by His Word and Spirit. We will know and understand His Word, for He Himself will teach us, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. As Scripture is the sole authority for faith and life, sufficient and clear, understood by the working of God's Spirit within us, so also Scripture must explain Scripture. God must expound His

Own Word. That which is clear and easy to understand will explain that which is more difficult and hard to be understood.

In taking this stand upon the fundamental principle of interpretation that Scripture interprets Scripture, the reformers were being entirely consistent with the doctrine of Scripture which they had learned from Scripture itself. There must be the starting point of all study of God's Word. Each text must be seen in its context in the place and chapter and book in which it stands. To understand the meaning of a word, its usage in Scripture must be traced and its particular significance sought in the Word of God itself. A doctrine or a concept must be determined by the whole of what the Scriptures have to say about it, and one passage must explain another. All must be seen in its various relationships and unity as the one Word of God. The uniqueness of each given passage must be sought in the Scriptures and its place be determined. As God gave His Word as His revelation of Himself to us in Jesus Christ, so also there is no portion or passage of Scripture which is without intent, purpose, and design, nor any meaningless repetition, but each passage contributes something without which the whole of the Scriptures would be incomplete. Such an approach to Scripture, out of faith, requires that Scripture alone be its own expositor, that God might teach us. This is the foundation of the reformers' exegesis and interpretation, that even as their doctrine of the Word of God was guided by the principle, "Scripture alone," so also their interpretation of Scripture was guided by its application, "Scripture interprets Scripture." Undergirding both is the fundamental article of faith, that the Bible is God's Word and revelation to us, by which "He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to his glory and our salvation." (Belgic Confession of

Faith, Article II)

Such a hermeneutic can rest only upon faith, a faith moreover which is rooted in the sovereignty of God, also over the Scriptures. Thus we see them not merely as a collection of various ancient writings or human documents, but as the one unified Word of God, given to us according to God's counsel and purpose, brought into being by God's sovereign providence and working through divine inspiration. Only then do we hold in our hands, not the accidental product of men, but that one Word of God which He intended to give unto us, designed from all eternity and brought into being through men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Ultimately the principle of Scripture alone and the interpretative principle, Scripture interprets Scripture, must rest upon belief in the sovereignty of God. Only thus can we understand that the history of the Old Testament church is not the mere record of an ancient people whose accuracy may be in doubt, but that it is the revelation of God to us, so that the very things which happened to them happened unto them, as we read in I Corinthians 10:11, "... for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Then indeed we must say Scripture interprets Scripture, for it has but one author and one design, and is one Word of God to us through the Spirit which may be known by faith through the same sovereign grace given to us through the Spirit. Lying behind all that the reformers have to teach us concerning the Word of God and its interpretation lies this fundamental confession of the sovereignty of God. When it is lost, then Scripture is also lost. It is for this very reason that Arminianism and Modernism can never retain the Scriptures as the Word of God, but must needs overthrow both God's sovereignty and His Word. For where one is lost the other will be lost also.

IN HIS FEAR

Arie den Hartog

The Christian Family: Children

The Lord has wonderfully designed the home as the ideal place where children should be born and raised. There is no other institution among men

which can replace the home to fulfill this task. The Lord does not give children to every Christian home. There are some homes where in the prov-

idence of God there are no children. Marriages without children can fulfill the purpose of God. For most Christian couples childlessness is a difficult burden to bear. These however must be assured that the Lord has another purpose for them. Those who do not have the burden and responsibility of raising children can often devote themselves to areas of service in the church and kingdom of the Lord which those who are mothers and fathers are unable to do. Through the history of the church there have been many shining examples of this. Usually, however, the Lord does bless the homes of Christians with children. The Christian man and woman who marry in the Lord ought to make the bringing forth and raising of children one of the chief purposes of their marriage.

How important it is that we understand properly the place of children in the Christian home. The world is growing increasingly corrupt in its philosophy and attitude in regards to children in the home. There is a clamor to limit the size of families because of the threat of over population. There are in the world many governments which have official policies to limit family size. There is strong social pressure for family planning. Some even consider it almost immoral to have large families. The world looks with dismay and condemnation at large families and wonders if perhaps the father and mother were not enlightened enough to know about birth control or whether they were simply so careless that they did not plan their families. There are couples who decide even before they are married not to have any children at all. Many today consider children too burdensome, a great hindrance and limitation of the freedom of a couple to pursue their selfish pleasure and ambition. We as Christians must be very careful not to allow this evil and worldly philosophy to affect us. It must not creep into our church. We must be bold and courageous and willing to follow the teaching of the Word of God and not of the world.

The bringing forth of children is first of all a command of the Lord our God. It is not merely a matter of a couple's choice, so that they may freely choose not to have children. It is part of God's creation mandate to man given to man before the fall. After that God had created man He commanded man, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:29). The whole of this mandate remains in force today and unto the end of the world. Because of sin man is not able to fulfill this mandate in a godly

manner. Nevertheless the command stands. There is a new commandment to bring forth children to God's people after the fall. By His grace they must bring forth the children of the covenant. The words of the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 29:5 and 6 surely have relevance for the New Testament Christian family as it has the hope of inheriting the eternal Canaan that is above. "Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons, and daughters; that ye may be increased there and not diminished." Concerning the young Christian woman the apostle writes to Timothy, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (I Timothy 5:14).

According to the Word of God children are a blessing from the Lord. When God first gave the mandate to be fruitful and multiply, He did this in the context of pronouncing a blessing upon Adam and Eve. Psalm 127 and 128 sing of the blessedness of children. "Lo children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Psalm 127:3). Describing the great blessedness of the God-fearing man the Psalmist states, "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table" (Psalm 128:3). From this passage we can learn first of all that it is God who gives us children. For the Christian, children are a wonderful gift of His grace that must be joyfully and thankfully received. It is of the Lord to open and close the womb. How often this is taught us in scripture. Think of Sarah, Rebekah, Hannah, Elizabeth, and others. He gives children. The newborn child is wonderfully formed by Him in its mother's womb.

Children have great significance in the gracious covenant purpose of God. One of the central aspects of the covenant promise to the Patriarchs of old was that their children would be as the sand of the sea and the stars of the heavens, innumerable. Scripture from beginning to end teaches us that God is pleased to continue His covenant promise from generation to generation with the children of believers. The whole of scripture is a mighty testimony of God's faithfulness to raise up new generations of His covenant from His faithful saints. On the day of Pentecost, the day of the birth of the New Testament church, it was declared by the apostle Peter in one of the most beautiful sermons of the Bible: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). From this passage it is clear that God has not changed His covenant purpose in the New Testa-

ment, as some suggest, but He continues to be the God of His people and their children. This is a tremendous truth and the great reason for God-fearing parents to bring forth children. The covenant of God is realized by grace. We bring forth our children only in sin and corruption. We have no strength and no ability to bring forth a godly seed. The Lord by His grace and according to His purpose of election takes of our children, works in their hearts through His Spirit, and transforms and renews them to be His own holy people. We bring forth our children in the hope and assurance of God's covenant promises.

Bringing forth children is a matter of true Christian love between the Christian husband and wife. God has united together the beautiful expression of sexual love in marriage and the bringing forth of children. The conception of children comes naturally from this love between husband and wife. W.G. de Vries in his excellent book on marriage entitled *MARRIAGE IN HONOR* says it very nicely.

God ties the blessing of children to the mutual love between husband and wife. A married couple that decides not to have children has murdered its marriage from the beginning. Such a marriage comes to a sterile standstill; it perishes from egoism.*

It is natural for the married couple to desire earnestly to have children. It is a rich and blessed fruit of their love for one another to receive a child that is made by God out of the union of their two natures. It is even more true that the godly couple who knows the blessed truth of God's covenant will desire earnestly to be used of the Lord to bring forth covenant children. How the saints of old longed to have children. Think again of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Rebekah, of Hannah, of Zacharias and Elizabeth, and so many more. We ought to follow their example and earnestly pray for children in our marriage.

To bring forth and raise children requires a tremendous amount of sacrificial love on the part of the Christian couple. It is not easy. For the woman after the fall childbirth involves much pain and suffering. Raising children involves lots of sacrifice. Children from infancy on demand very much from their parents. It is true that children in the home will greatly limit our freedom to do things together alone as husband and wife. Mother will not be able to have a career outside the home. Raising children costs a lot of money, money that we might otherwise spend on material things we desire. The physical sacrifice in terms of the amount of time and energy required will often leave parents exhausted, especially if there are a number of

children in the home. There will be sorrows, trials, and hardships. Many in the world today refuse to give what is required and refuse to make the sacrifice. Therefore some decide not to have children so that they can continue to pursue their selfish purposes in life. The Christian, by the grace of God and with courage and faith in God, decides to make the necessary sacrifice. The Christian married couple is convinced that the Lord has called them unto this.

Bringing forth and raising children involves a tremendous responsibility. When God gives us children He entrusts them to our care and keeping. They come into this world totally helpless and completely dependent upon their parents. They need physical nourishment from their parents. They need a shelter and protection. They need a warm and loving home. Above all they need spiritual guidance and nurture for many years of their life. Their future, physically, psychologically, and spiritually, is dependent upon parents. The responsibility of bringing forth and raising children is so staggering and awesome that with fear and trembling we need to pray for grace and trust in the Lord for wisdom and strength. The burden of this responsibility must be born by both father and mother.

In the purpose of the Lord children need to be raised and nurtured in the fear and admonition of the Lord. The truth of the covenant does not mean that all our children will automatically be God's children. One of the sad consequences of the fall is that we bring forth our children in sin and corruption. There will be many times as our children grow up that they will fall into sin. They will often imitate the very sins and weaknesses of their parents. To raise children we need to have the courage and determination to admonish and rebuke sin in them. There will be times when we have grief and sorrow because of the sins of our children. That sorrow will be deep because of the strong and close flesh-and-blood ties between us and our children. It is impossible however that these hardships and trials will annul the blessings of God upon His faithful saints. The covenant promises of God will never fail. The Christian couple acts in faith when they decide to bring forth children. Their confidence is in the Lord and their joy is in fulfilling His calling and purpose for their marriage. By His grace they desire to be used of Him to bring forth the generations of His people. They desire to see their children's children, and peace upon Israel.

**MARRIAGE IN HONOR* by W.G. de Vries, Paideia Press, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. Page 180.

Book Review

ISAIAH 40-55: SERVANT THEOLOGY, by George A.F. Knight; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, MI, ISBN 0-8028-1039-X, 204 pp., paper \$9.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema)

This is one of a series, the International Theological Commentary, currently being published by Eerdmans. The author, a New Zealander, is also co-editor of the entire series. The claim of the series is that it "moves beyond a descriptive-historical approach to offer a relevant exegesis of the Old Testament text as Holy Scripture. The series aims, first, to develop the theological significance of the Old Testament, and second, to emphasize the relevance of each book for the life of the Church."

Naturally, I examined this book to discover whether it lives up to this claim.

I must confess my suspicions were aroused when I saw the title, which made me fear that the approach was that of higher criticism.

My suspicions were confirmed. The book assumes the viewpoint of higher criticism with respect to the authorship of Isaiah. Isaiah 40-55, according to the book, was not written by Isaiah at all, but by someone who is called Deutero-Isaiah. And the date of this alleged Deutero-Isaiah is post-captivity, so that the book denies the prophetic-predictive character of this section of the prophecy. It is not prophecy at all, for example, when in this section Cyrus is mentioned by name and described in detail.

My suspicions turned to complete dismay and anger, however, when I discovered that the classic 53rd chapter is explained in this commentary without so much as mentioning the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

My judgment? This commentary is worthless to any Bible-believing child of God, except as an example of the horrible ends to which higher criticism carries one.

Report of Classis East

September 11, 1985

Hope Protestant Reformed Church

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, September 11, 1985 at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids. Devotions were conducted by Rev. B. Gritters, chairman of the May classis. Rev. C. Haak was the chairman of this session. Each church was represented by two delegates. Special welcome was given to Revs. Bruinsma and Houck who were in the city for a conference with the Mission Committee.

The business of this session was routine for the most part. Southwest requested and was granted classical appointments. The following schedule was adopted: September 22 — Miersma, September 29 — Haak, October 6 — Bekkering, October 13 — Flikkema, October 20 — Gritters, November 3 —

Woudenberg, November 10 — Van Baren, November 17 — Kortering, November 24 — Miersma, December 1 — Haak, December 8 — Bekkering, December 15 — Flikkema, December 22 — Gritters, December 29 — Woudenberg, January 5 — Van Baren, January 12 — Kortering.

Covenant requested relief from synodical assessments because of the loss of families. Classis granted this request and will forward the matter to synod for its final approval.

Expenses amounted to \$329.00. Classis adjourned at approximately 10:45 a.m. The next meeting of classis will be on January 8, 1986 at Hudsonville.

Jon Huiskens, Stated Clerk

News From Our Churches

September 30, 1985

The Northwest Chicago mission field is sponsoring a conference on marriage, November 22 and 23 in the meeting rooms of the Holiday Inn. There will be two speeches Friday night and Saturday morning, with a panel and final speech Saturday afternoon. Rev. Engelsma, Rev. Kortering, and Prof. Decker will be speaking. They will focus their attention on the implications of the marriage institution, realities of marriage difficulties and failures, the Biblical solutions to these problems, and the joys of marriage.

Rev. C. Hanko is preaching the evening sermon at First Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan for the next several weeks while Rev. Joostens is in Jamaica. If all goes well, Rev. Joostens and his family will return for the Christmas and New Years holidays. This will give Rev. Joostens the opportunity to officiate at the installation of office bearers and at the dedication of the new church. Rev. and Mrs. Veldman are in Lynden, Washington for the next couple of months.

The latest news in church buildings is that the existing parsonage of Doon Church in Iowa will be sold by their consistory. Grandville Church in

Michigan will soon begin building a parsonage. Daryle Kuiper, a member of the Grandville congregation, will be the general contractor and looks forward to a lot of volunteer effort. What do you do with 10,000 bricks? First Church, Grand Rapids, has decided to save the bricks for a future parsonage. Hope Church in Walker, Michigan is spending \$3,600 to provide better drainage in the lower parking lot, realign the gravel drive, extend the ramp, and install an additional set of steps.

Three new board members were chosen to the Reformed Free Publishing Association: John Cleveland, Peter Faber, and Jim Van Overloop.

The thirty-first Protestant Reformed Schools Teachers' Convention will be held in Hull and Doon, Iowa, October 17 & 18. Rev. Kamps' keynote address will be, "How Do We Raise the Level of Our Spirituality?"

For those of us in the Grand Rapids area, remember to attend Rev. Kortering's speech on "Psalm Singing, a Reformed Heritage," at Seventh Reformed Church, 950 Leonard, N.W., Oct. 29, at 8 p.m.

DH

David Harbach is a teacher at Adams St. Prot. Ref. Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

NOTICE!!!

Plan now to attend the Lecture sponsored by The Protestant Reformed Lecture Committee.

THE SUBJECT: "PSALM SINGING — A REFORMED HERITAGE"
THE SPEAKER: REV. JASON L. KORTERING
THE DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1985
THE TIME: 8 P.M.
THE PLACE: SEVENTH REFORMED CHURCH
950 LEONARD ST., N.W.
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Protestant Reformed Lecture Committee

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On the 13th of September, 1985, past, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. BARTEL ZANDSTRA, SR., commemorated their 35th wedding anniversary together. We, their children, and grandchildren are thankful to God for them and for the covenant instruction we have been privileged to receive at their hands. Our prayer for them is that they may continue to dwell together under the blessed Hand of God Who gave them to each other and to us.

Their children and grandchildren:

John R. and Claire Zandstra	Joanne Zandstra
Peter J. and Julie Zandstra	Bartel Jr. and Jan Zandstra
David and Karla Zandstra	Betty Zandstra
Charles and Karla Zandstra	Mark Zandstra
Wilbur and Mary Bruinsma	Roseanne Zandstra
Daniel Zandstra	and 15 grandchildren