

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

. . . the spiritual reward and profit of studying God's Word far outweighs these things. It is infinitely more profitable for your soul and your spiritual life, for it is more truly refreshing than all the worldly amusements and other temptations and activities upon which we so often and so readily squander our God-given free time.

See "Guided Into All Truth" — page 231

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

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

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.

Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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

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

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

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

## MEDITATION

Cornelius Hanks

## Keeping the Sabbath of the Lord

*Ques. 103. What doth God require in the fourth commandment?*

*Ans. First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained, and that I, especially on the sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God, to hear his Word, to use the sacraments, and contribute to the relief of the poor, as becomes a christian. Secondly, that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by his Holy Spirit in me: thus to begin in this life the eternal sabbath.*

*Heid. Catechism, Lord's Day 38.*



I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up into the house of the Lord!

How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!

My soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cry out to the living God!

One day in Thy courts is better than a thousand in the company of evil men!

I would rather fill a lowly place in the house of my God than share treasures and pleasures with evil men!

For in the congregation of the righteous we worship in intimate communion of life with our covenant God! We prayerfully listen to what God will say to us! Here we experience God's abiding love, His boundless mercies, and His abundant grace, as we pour out our souls in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving before Him! Here we enjoy the communion of saints through the bond of faith that unites us to those who love the Lord!

Here we lay down our pilgrim's staff to rest from our daily toil. Here we escape from the smoke and turmoil of battle, to abide for a little while in the shadow of the Most High, gaining renewed courage to face the enemy for another week. Here we whisper to Jehovah, Thou art our Refuge and our Strength, our High Tower, our God in whom we trust!

Here we keep sabbath in foretaste of the eternal rest!

The sabbath of the Lord our God!

Our weekly sabbath is the oldest institution given to us, dating back to the very dawn of creation.

For Jehovah created the earth and prepared a beautiful home for man, the highest of all the earthly creatures. There in the splendors of paradise God made His dwelling place with man.

Our sovereign God, who lives His own blessed life of intimate love as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, takes man into His heart, into His life and fellowship to worship Him as the glorious, adorable God.

God saw all that He had made as the resplendent expression of His divine perfections, centering in man. And it was all very good, thoroughly fit to serve the purpose for which it was created. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished in six days, even all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended the work of creation, and rested from all that He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it He rested

from all the work which He had made (Gen. 1:31, 2:1-3).

On this last day of the creation week, the first full day of Adam's existence, God shared with him and Eve the joy of His accomplished work by taking them with Him into His rest. What a day that must have been, standing with God at the tree of life, and from that vantage point admiring the grandeur of paradise, hearing the song of creation, and they themselves mingling their voices in humble adoration, "O our God, how great Thou art!"

We were brought into God's sabbath!

God gave to Israel in the old dispensation an even better sabbath!

We fell into sin, transgressing God's covenant, but God is faithful! He promised the Savior! Thus He gave to Israel a sabbath under the law, which for them was the schoolmaster to lead them to Christ!

On Friday afternoon the believing Israelite washed himself, put on his sabbath garments, and as he did so was reminded that the law required, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work." Thou shalt labor with all thy being, in order to keep the sabbath of the Lord. In it thou shalt experience His "well done" only after complete devotion to Him. Shamefacedly he had to confess, "I have failed to keep my God's command, for I have not labored in single love to Him with all my heart and soul and strength! Nor have I loved my neighbor as I should have! How can such a wretched sinner as I am keep the holy sabbath of the Lord?"

Later Jesus demonstrated this very thing by calling attention to an impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, to a man with a withered right hand in the synagogue, and to others on the sabbath day. These represented fallen man under the curse, who can never keep the sabbath of the Lord, since he fails in all that he does. He deserves no sabbath rest, but only death. Yet Christ made it possible for these Jews to keep sabbath by showing them His power to save. Thus believing Israel kept sabbath looking in faith to the promised Savior, in whom was all their salvation! No wonder that they prayed so fervently, "Rise, help and redeem us; Thy mercy we trust!"

They were saved on the basis of the promise, even as God made His home with them in the tabernacle and later in the temple on the promise of better things to come!

Our sabbath rest is far better than anything that the Jew could enjoy!

According to the promise, the Savior did come as the Man of sorrows, the suffering Servant of God, to surrender Himself in perfect obedience to the



Father, to make atonement for our sins, and to merit for us the eternal sabbath in the heavens. As the Captain of our salvation He entered into our death, conquered over all the powers of darkness, and continued His triumphant march through death and the grave into heavenly glory with the Father. God saw all that Christ had done, and behold, it was very good! Therefore God took Him into the heavenly Home and into the rest, in order that He may prepare us an eternal rest with Him in Father's House with its many mansions!

For us the sabbath of the Lord takes on a new meaning. It is the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is an entering in into His rest, merited by Him for us, that we may celebrate the blessedness of His rest in Him and through Him! He has labored to enter into the rest and to bring us with Him into that rest! Thus we already in this life have a foretaste of the eternal Rest with Him in glory!

Our Lord arose on the first day of the week. He poured out His Spirit upon His church on the first day of the week. Quite naturally this first day became the day for public worship. The early church needed no special mandate to meet on the first day. This was not a mere duty, but a privilege, in order that they might experience the rest that remains for the people of God in Christ Jesus! As a part of our Christian liberty, this became the "Lord's Day," as the apostle John reminds us in the Book of Revelation. Every Sunday we look away from ourselves to fix our eye on the cross, listening to the voice of our God as He speaks to us through the preface of the law, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the realm of Satan, out of the bondage of sin and death!" We hear Him say to us, "Love Me! Love Me above all else! And love thy neighbor as thyself." To which we respond, "By Thy grace we do, we will, O God of our salvation!"

Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy!

This day carries with it its blessing for us only in as far as we consecrate ourselves to the service of our God. The important part of the sabbath is the worship service. The important part of the service

is the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. Christ is present where His Word is preached in its purity. For He has made His home within us by His Spirit, whereby He also feeds our hungry and thirsty souls with heavenly food and drink. Besides hearing Christ speak to us through the Word and seeing Him in the sacraments, we join our hearts in song and prayer in the communion of saints. There is no gathering like it in all the world! God's people sing the songs that express the needs and cares, the hopes and joys of all the saints throughout the ages! Together we pray, knowing that our prayers, aroused in us by the Spirit of Christ, rise as a pleasing sacrifice unto the throne of God, mingling themselves with the prayers of the saints who worship before the throne! In concern for our fellow saints we contribute to the needs of the poor, as an essential part of our worship service. This is so important to us, that nothing must interfere with our sabbath as a complete day of rest! The sabbath brings us close to our eternal Home!

Thus the pilgrim takes up his staff again on Monday morning. The soldier of Jesus Christ is ready to meet the enemy with his breastplate a bit more secure, his shield strengthened, his sword of the Spirit sharpened. We learn to cease from our evil works, and to yield ourselves more and more to the Lord, that He may work in us by His Spirit. Thus we learn to live in closer communion with our God from day to day.

Our Catechism speaks of this as the beginning of the eternal sabbath in this life.

In anticipation we see a great multitude standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches of victory in their hands.

They have come out of the great tribulation!

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!

The Lamb feeds them, and leads them unto the living Fountains of waters!

And God wipes away all tears from their eyes!

They have come HOME at last!

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

# As to "The Mind of Common Grace"

It is rather striking, I think, that recently the Reformed Fellowship and its magazine, *The Outlook*, have been paying more attention to the subject of "common grace" than they sometimes have in the past. In the January, 1986 issue of *The Outlook* there are two references to the subject. One is in the REF's evaluation of the Christian Reformed Church's "Contemporary Testimony," which will be up for final adoption at the 1986 CRC Synod. The other is more extensive. It is found in Dr. Henry Vander Goot's address to the annual meeting of the Reformed Fellowship, a transcript of which is found on pp. 8-10. Dr. Vander Goot is a professor of Religion and Theology at Calvin College. This is deserving of a bit of critical analysis.

Dr. Vander Goot spoke on "The Bible in the C.R.C. Today." In his address he is not merely critical, but outlines, first of all, his own position as to how the Bible ought to be read, a position summarized in three terms: "Naively," "Canonically," and "Literally." But then he turns "to the phenomenon of increased sympathy for an historical critical reading of Scripture in the CRC." After demonstrating that there is indeed such an increased sympathy for higher criticism in the CRC, he seeks to analyze the reason for it. And it is in this connection that he refers to what he calls the "Mind of Common Grace."

Permit me to quote rather at length on this score.

The subject is brought up already in his introduction as follows:

Today the CRC has a strong institution and organization at the top. Because that top has been taken possession of by what I shall today call the Mind of Common Grace (Dr. Henry Stob gave it the self-congratulatory designation of "The Positive Mind"), the CRC is being severed from its moorings and increasingly accommodated to the dominant mind of the

mainline Protestant denominations in the US and of the World Council of Churches. This fact is evident in many areas of the church's life, and so it is also evident in the church's use and abuse of the Bible.

Incidentally, for those who may be mystified by the reference to Dr. Henry Stob, this reference is to a long series of articles by Dr. Stob in *The Reformed Journal* in the late 50's and early 60's. These articles were later included as essays in his book, *Theological Reflections* (Eerdmans, 1981). Perhaps the designation of Stob's "The Positive Mind" as "The Mind of Common Grace" is an apt one. Dr. Stob also wrote an essay on "The Militant Mind"; this is akin to what Dr. Vander Goot later calls "The Mind of the Antithesis."

It is in the last section of his address, however, that Dr. Vander Goot refers extensively to this "Mind of Common Grace." That section is entitled "Higher Criticism and the Mind of Common Grace in the CRC Today."

First of all, Dr. Vander Goot ascribes higher criticism in the CRC to this "Mind of Common Grace," as follows:

Why this uncritical use of so-called historical critical methods and assumptions? I fear that, in the area of biblical studies in the CRC tradition, this is the outgrowth of what I earlier called the Mind of Common Grace. The Mind of Common Grace sensitizes people only to the so-called moments of truth in contemporary academic and cultural developments. The first question that occurs to representatives of this mind is what "good things" modern historical criticism has brought to light. As immigrants, we continue to crave acceptance by and participation in the mainline culture that surrounds us. We need to look for possibilities of cooperation and adaptation. So the Mind of Common Grace causes the practitioners of higher criticism to become desensitized to the exact spiritual and religious meaning of historical criticism



in the situation of its origin in western intellectual history. The Mind of Common Grace causes us to lose sight of the dynamic, historical element in the events that happen around us. We thus acquire an *abstract* view of the world and of what is happening in it, in ironic contrast to the very *historical* methods we have now come to advocate.

After referring to Dr. Harry Boer's defense of historical criticism in his book, *Above the Battle? The Bible and Its Critics*, Dr. Vander Goot goes on to analyze the damaging activity of this "Mind of Common Grace" as follows:

The Mind of Common Grace, of accommodation to the existing culture in the academy, out of the desperate immigrant desire to be accepted, obscures the concrete, dynamic element in the actual phenomenon of higher criticism in the modern period. The Mind of Common Grace blurs the element of conflict with and antithesis in modern scholarship. In this way it is left with so-called "good points" or "moments of truth" that it now lets stand for the whole and the real meaning of the phenomenon in question. How convenient for persons who are eager to flee their narrow Dutch past to embrace the academically prestigious in mainstream ecclesiastical culture!

Finally, Dr. Vander Goot faces the question of the future and also the question of how to deal with this "Mind of Common Grace" as follows:

Will we see more of this kind of legitimation and explicit use of criticism in the future? There is, I believe, no way to prevent it, since the Mind of Common Grace has become the dominant mind of the CRC's leadership. Though the Mind of the Antithesis won a battle over higher criticism in the CRC in 1922, it lost the war in 1924, at least in the higher educational institutions of the CRC. Such massive trends are hard to

reverse, especially now that the CRC has become a strong organization at the top. Every effort to counter the erosion will be foiled by the deadliest means available to the establishment, namely institutional procedures, which are both more locked-up than they used to be and much more complex than before. To challenge the dominant Mind of Common Grace, we will need to think in terms of alternative institutions, and that, I believe, will be the trend of the future in a church whose organizational structure is becoming increasingly separated from the alien to the people it is supposed to serve and represent.

Now, without necessarily expressing agreement with Dr. Vander Goot's analysis or with his position, I call attention to the fact that to a certain degree this is a breath of fresh air. For one thing, this is one of the few times that any CRC criticism has been voiced, if not of common grace itself, then at least of the "Mind of Common Grace" — whatever that may mean. For another, this is one of the few times, if not the only time, that any Christian Reformed voice has been heard acknowledging a connection between common grace and higher criticism, and especially between 1922 (the Jansen Case) and 1924 (the Three Points of Common Grace). Meanwhile, the reader should bear in mind that the reference is not to the common grace of the "general, well-meant offer," but to common grace in the Kuyperian sense as it is set forth in the Three Points proper.

However, there are several aspects of Dr. Vander Goot's address which are deserving of a more detailed analysis; and this shall have to wait until our next issue. Meanwhile, I invite the reader to study carefully the rather lengthy quotations of Dr. Vander Goot's position which I have reproduced here.

HCH

## WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Herman C. Hanko

# Moral Aspects of Medical Technology (3)

In our last article we discussed some general principles of importance for our treatment of the moral aspects of different forms of medical technology. With this article, we want to begin our discussion proper of this subject. It is probably best to

follow a sort of chronological order in dealing with various aspects of this issue: i.e., first of all to treat the moral aspects of medical technology which have affected the conception of a child and its development before birth; and then to treat those



aspects of recent medical technology which affect the life of people after birth.

In beginning then with the question of recent developments in scientific circles and in the advancement of medical procedures which affect conception and the development of a child prior to birth, we want to turn first of all to what are commonly called contraception and birth control.

Although in much modern parlance no distinction is made between contraception and birth control, it is probably better to recognize that technically these two terms refer to two different things. The term contraception refers to various devices and techniques which are used for preventing conception, while birth control refers technically to means to prevent birth of a conceived child. Birth control, in one way or another, therefore, refers to abortion. The distinction becomes crucial because some forms of what is commonly called contraception are in fact forms of birth control. I refer to what are commonly called intrauterine devices. These devices are implanted in the uterus to prevent birth. They do not prevent conception, but, after a child has been conceived, they result in aborting the fetus. They are not, therefore, contraception devices, but birth-control devices.

In our discussion of contraception and birth control, we intend to discuss birth control first of all. That is, we will devote this article to the general subject of abortion.

Some of our readers may perhaps object to an article on this subject on the grounds that abortion is so obviously wrong that there is no need to discuss it in the pages of *The Standard Bearer*. It is to be hoped that this is indeed true and that none of those who are regular readers of our periodical would even for a moment give consideration to what is a terrible crime. Nevertheless, abortion poses, especially in our day, its own kind of threat. Abortion has become common. Many cities have their own abortion clinics in which thousands of abortions are performed. It has become, through rulings of the Supreme Court, legally acceptable. Abortions are done more often than most types of surgery. The result of this could very well be that people in general and God's people in particular become inured to the evil of it and begin to accept it as a common thing.

This is the way sin operates. And the devil knows it. Even the ungodly have a conscience. The first time some heinous crime is committed by them, their consciences plague them. But if they persist in

this sin, gradually their consciences become hardened and they no longer think of the sin in terms of its terrible character. The same thing is true of any man, including the child of God. If a sin is committed often enough, gradually it loses its power to plague the conscience, and gradually it is accepted as right and proper, or if not this, at least its seriousness is lost. This is true, e.g., of the sin of fornication. The first time a person commits the sin of fornication, the person may have a terrible time living with the sin, and that person's conscience may be a whip which lacerates all his or her life. But the second time it is a bit easier; the third time easier yet; and finally the sin no longer pains and troubles, but becomes a way of life.

This is not because the sin loses its horrible character before God, but because, when we live in sin, the conscience becomes hardened. Indeed, we know from Scripture that God sovereignly hardens the conscience and heart of man as His just punishment for sin. This is exactly why confession of sin is so extremely important. Confession of sin means, as we all know, sorrow before God for the sin which we have committed and a turning away from sin. When one sins, these are the only two alternatives: become hardened in sin or confess one's sin — there is no third possibility.

Add to this the fact that the highest judicial body of our country has now legalized abortion so that it is acceptable legally in all parts of the country, and one can readily see that a climate is created in which some of the horror of abortion disappears and we begin to accept it and no longer be adversely affected by it. When this happens, and the devil would very much like it to happen, we become easy targets for the temptation to abort a child which is conceived but not particularly wanted.

And so it is important that the child of God continuously be reminded of the horror of this great sin so that his spiritual sensitivity may remain and so that he may continue to protest this great evil as loudly as he can. It is not without purpose that we turn to a discussion of this subject.

Our country has a fairly strong "pro-life" movement which, although it has not succeeded in getting the law changed, has nevertheless kept itself before the consciousness of the public. This pro-life movement continuously pours our statistics of one sort or another to show what a great evil has befallen our land when abortion was legalized. These statistics are of various sorts, but no matter how you look at them and no matter what statistics you read, the impression they leave is devastating. Just a few of these statistics are worth repeating here. John Jefferson Davis in his book, *Evangelical Ethics* writes:



Legal abortions increased from 898,000 in 1974 to 1,574,000 in 1982, according to researchers at the Alan Guttmacher Institute. Of those obtaining abortions in 1981, 66 percent were under age 25, and 77 percent were unmarried. This last figure shows that abortions in the United States are most frequently sought as a "solution" to the problem of pregnancy outside of marriage.

Abortion represents a \$700-million-a-year industry in this country. The United States leads the world in teenage abortions, with over 500,000 every year. Some 150,000 abortions are performed in the second trimester of pregnancy, "the most grisly of all," notes Dr. Matthew J. Buffin, "the ones that some hardened abortionists refuse to do because the killing is so real and unmistakable."

These figures mean that each day an average of 4,257 unborn human beings are aborted in the United States. In Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, abortions now outnumber live births.

In a recent article in *The Banner* abortions in other countries was discussed, particularly in Japan. The article says,

Since abortion was legally permitted by the Eugenics Law of 1948 for any reason from suspected defects to economic hardship, at least 60 million abortions have been performed. That's over 4,400 per day for thirty-seven years. That's over half the present population of Japan and over five times the present population of Tokyo. Research shows that 47 percent of Japanese women have had abortions and that two abortions will be performed per every adult woman. Well over half of these abortions have been performed under the "economic clause" of the Eugenics Law, which permits abortion if there is a fear that pregnancy or delivery may endanger the safety of the mother because of economic reasons.

In the September 11, 1985 issue of the *Presbyterian Journal* statistics of another kind appeared. These statistics were given to show how widely abortion has been accepted in our country. Only 11% considered abortion illegal in all circumstances. 87% considered abortion legal in the first three months of pregnancy when the pregnant woman's life was threatened, and 85% considered abortion legal in the first three months of pregnancy when a continuing pregnancy might threaten severely the physical health of a woman. 83% considered abortion legal when pregnancy was the result of rape or incest; 73% considered it legal when a woman's mental health was endangered; 69% considered it legal when there was a chance that a baby would be born deformed; 56% considered it legal when a family could not afford a child; and 52% considered abortion legal when it was a woman's decision for any reason.

In a recent letter to the editors of *U.S. News and World Report*, one correspondent expressed what is perhaps a very commonly held view. "It's easy," this correspondent wrote, "for lawmakers to push 'pronatalist' measures, but it is not easy raising a child. I can't blame anyone who chooses a financially secure life over one burdened with the costs involved to raise a child." What is striking about this letter is its frank admission that underlying the correspondent's approval of abortion is simple covetousness. We are not, I think, exaggerating when we say that this is often a primary consideration. People love money more than children.

And so abortion has become a national epidemic and the consequences are horrible beyond imagination.

## ALL AROUND US

Robert D. Decker

### More on "Alive '85" Faith vs. Unbelief

#### More on "Alive '85"

In this column recently (December 15, 1985 issue) we published a report and critique of an evangelistic campaign in the Grand Rapids area called "Alive '85." Because being against some-

thing like "Alive '85" is somewhat akin to being against "motherhood and apple pie," I expected some criticism of that article. This expectation proved correct. A brother from Holland, MI wrote as follows: "Item 2, Page 127, *Alive '85*. I always cringe a little when I hear criticism of the procedures



of evangelizers (*sic*) who while far more active than I may not be doing it in what to me is a theologically correct manner. Reminds me of when Jesus' disciples met the independent missionary.

"I with you believe the Reformed view is most God glorifying. I, too, find much of Arminian theology atrocious; and, yes, I will say almost blasphemous. But yet I have had these people living in our home. They have used our home for Bible study meetings and social affairs. I see their activity in witnessing. They want to serve Christ with their whole heart. I do believe Christ is using some of these people to bring His elect into His kingdom. Prof. Decker finishes his article with some excellent instruction. However, this instruction is not being heeded by many in my denomination, and possibly in yours."

The brother does not give a Biblical reference to what he calls "the independent missionary" whom Jesus' disciples met. Does he refer to the incident recorded in Mark 9:38-40? If he wishes me to comment on this he may write again and give me the reference.

For the rest I have this to say in reply:

1) The standard for "a theologically correct manner" must be Holy Scripture as interpreted by the Reformed Confessions. Neither I nor any other man may determine what is a "theologically correct manner." Arminian theology does not meet the test of Scripture and the Reformed Confessions. Neither do Arminian methods of evangelism: altar calls, etc. The Bible, in Romans 10:13-15, tells us precisely how God's people receive the faith enabling them to call upon God's name and be saved. They must hear Christ through the means of the preaching of the Word.

2) I do not judge the sincerity or the motives of Dr. John Guest. Only God can know the hearts of men. I am saying that both his theology and his methodology are incorrect according to the standard of Holy Scripture. The question is not whether Christ uses "some of these people to bring His elect into His kingdom." The question is: how, according to Scripture, does Christ bring the elect to repentance and faith?

3) The Rev. Peter De Jong, editor of *The Outlook*, gives the following report of what Dr. Lester De Koster had to say about "Alive '85" in a recent lecture (January 1986 issue): "The speaker (De Koster, R.D.D.) saw another example of flunking such tests in the fact that many of our local churches saw nothing wrong in supporting the recent "Alive '85" campaign. Was that campaign not an insult to the

Christian Reformed pulpit? We confess that faith is a gift of the Spirit, conveyed by the Word preached (Rom. 10:17), which should proceed in the churches under consistory supervision. In that way the elect are brought to saving faith, which is shown to be real by the works that follow. But such a ('revival') campaign poses the questions, Are you sure that this is the only way? Is it doing the job? Should we not add an itinerant evangelist with a different accent? - and perhaps some soft music and repeated invitations, to produce faith? Isn't this about as far from a Reformed understanding of the church as one could get?"

"The speaker recalled a Sunday School card distributed long ago in the Zeeland church, portraying Uzzah who held out his hand to steady the ark. He only wanted to give the Lord a little help, but was struck dead for his improper help. De Koster never forgot the lesson, and the Biblical reminder of his mother that 'to obey is better than sacrifice' (I Sam. 15:22). We may not play lightly with the Lord's designated methods of saving souls. Don't say, 'A little help is OK.'" With these sentiments we heartily agree.

4) We appreciate the tone of the brother's letter. We hope the above answers his questions and concerns. If this is not the case the brother is welcome to write again.

## Faith vs. Unbelief

Syndicated newspaper columnist Sidney J. Harris had this to say about the Bible:

Over the years, I have learned much, and, I hope, understand much, from my reading of the Bible. Perhaps the most important thing I have learned is how to read the Bible - that is, with discrimination, with historical perspective, and with some appreciation of literary techniques.

My respect for Scripture is too great to permit me to approach this varied collection as if I were reading a literal transcription direct from the hand of God. To believe that is to contemptuously ignore everything we have learned in the last century about its contents and composition.

The Bible is a work of art as much as it is anything else. It is a cloak of many colors and fabrics, not a seamless web. There is immense wisdom in it, and some historical truth, mixed with superstition, inaccuracy, contradiction, fiction, allegory.

Reinhold Niebuhr, the distinguished Protestant theologian of our time, warned that the Bible is the most dangerous book in the world to read - if you bring to it only a naive faith and an ignorance of the ways in which it grew and changed over a thousand years, under different hands, who may have been 'inspired' by God but were only mortal, fallible men, confined and shaped by their own culture, their own time and environment.



Modern scholarship in Biblical studies - most of it by believing Christians - has made enormous strides in analyzing and separating those parts of Scripture that reflect the authentic text from the many additions, revisions, alterations and mistranslations that have crept into it. These scholars, creditably enough, have not allowed their piety to interfere with their intellectual honesty.

I am far from suggesting that there is only one 'correct' way to understand the Bible, or that such specialized studies as "hermeneutics" and "form-criticism" are necessary tools for the general reader. But for fundamentalists to insist that only their reading is the correct one is not only the height of arrogance but the depth of ignorance as well.

Fundamentalism - whether it be Christian, Jewish, or Moslem - is a willful regression to a primitive form of thinking. If man is created in the image of God, as many believe, then it is his intelligence, his capacity for reasoning, that most sets him apart from other creatures. Not to use this God-given faculty to try to comprehend the different levels of meaning in the Bible is a rejection of His greatest gift to us.

Human knowledge without the Bible is deficient. The Bible without knowledge is a terrible weapon that easily leads to self-righteousness, bigotry and persecution. What the fundamentalists most of all forget is that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

Apart from a good deal of bad theology reflected in the statements of Mr. Harris, the issue concerning one's view of the Bible and how it is to be read and understood is not one of knowledge and understanding versus "arrogance and ignorance." The issue is faith versus unbelief. Peter tells us that the apostles did not follow cunningly devised fables when they spoke of the power and coming of Jesus. They were eyewitnesses of the majesty of Christ. They come to the church, therefore, with a more sure word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed (II Peter 1:16-19). The reason for this is: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:20, 21). In II Timothy 3:16 and 17 we read: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." One either believes this by God's grace or he rejects this truth in unbelief. The consequences are serious indeed. (Cf. Revelation 22:18, 19.)

## Good Morning, Alice (7)

Gise J. Van Baren

After the return from Florida, there was to be no more walking for Alice. Earlier, two persons would hold her, each by an arm, as she slowly walked from one end of the room to the other. Once or twice a day was enough. This would loosen her muscles a bit, preventing cramps and pain. But now even this short walk had become too difficult. One more activity had to be given up. There would be no more walking for Alice. No more walking! She had reached this point after many months of

gradual deterioration; and Alice was well aware that this time was coming. But it was disappointing nevertheless to have that moment arrive.

*Good Morning Alice:*

*It's early and quiet again and yet it's taking me a long time to write this morning. These verses are so full that so much is going through my mind, and I don't know what to write.*

*I'll start by sharing with you the two thoughts that came to my mind first.*

*When a relative of ours died very suddenly about four years ago, my husband said, "You know, every day*



we pray, 'Thy Kingdom come', thinking of when Christ returns — and not realizing His kingdom could come for me at any moment!"

The other statement I thought about is one a woman said to her son when he sent his children to a public school: "This life is so short and eternity forever. We must do all we can to prepare."

How do those thoughts go with this verse? Christ is able to keep us from stumbling in this life and present us faultless — perfect unto God with joy. What does that do to your heart, Alice, to be presented faultless before God and to dwell in His glorious Presence — forever?

It spoke to me in this way — any time may be His chosen time for me. Am I ready?

And I won't be reading magazines or watching television and I won't hold grudges or be impatient or jealous in His glorious Presence — so — am I getting ready?

Am I keeping my mind on Him? Am I forsaking my pet sins? It's so easy to give in and say I can't help it, that's just the way I am. Well — then I'd better examine myself. Do I desire a faultless life in His Presence forever? Then shouldn't I desire the beginning of it now?

May we in this day and those ahead for us, not battle against Him Who is able to keep us from stumbling.

And may it be our desire to see our Lord's glory and majesty and dominion and power both now and forever.

So let it be, Alice, for you and for me.

In His love, Your friend

Please read Heb. 12:2 and Nehemiah 8:10b

We sadly noticed too the increasing difficulty Alice had in speaking. Often she had to repeat herself to be understood. The words were slurred and muffled. We would pretend that our hearing was at fault — but it was painfully obvious to all that her tongue and throat muscles were now being affected by the disease. This, too, became a matter of growing concern. How does one communicate without speech? The thought must have troubled Alice too, though she never made mention of it.

Good Morning Alice:

It's early Saturday morning with another busy day ahead. Hopefully Monday things will get back to "normal". It's a good thing there are refreshing Lord's Days once a week; it's all too easy to make myself too busy.

When I was writing you about Jude, these two other verses came to my mind.

In a devotional book I have, there is a meditation on these two verses. Neh. 8:10b and Heb. 12:2. The book

describes the joy of Hebrews as that of saving us sinners. Jesus, for the joy of saving His children, you and me, endured the cross . . .

And according to Neh., that joy is our strength. After years of neglect and exile, the people had the law read to them and they knew they were guilty and couldn't keep the law. Nehemiah comforted them with these words: "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

Jesus bore our sins for the joy of redeeming us even though with great sorrow. And that is our strength to be accounted righteousness.

Do you see why I thought of those verses when I read Jude 24? With exceeding joy, Jesus presents us faultless before the throne of God, only because He counted it joy to save those whom the Father gave unto Him.

Let us both be strong in that joy and receive daily strength from the knowledge of it.

With love, Your friend

Please read Psalm 42:5 and Psalm 43:5

It always amazes one, yet it is so comforting, to behold the "communion of saints" in action. There were by far too many examples of it to mention them all: not only the cards, but also the visits and gifts. But one instance stands out in our minds. A young married lady, Kathy, who had been trained as a physical therapist, began visiting for a few hours once a week. She would help with Alice's exercises and spend some time just visiting. Ah, how Alice looked forward to those visits! The visits continued with but a brief interruption when Kathy had her second child.

Good Morning Alice:

Well, the kids are back in school, but I almost wanted to keep them home this morning. With all the funny weather brewing, I just feel better with everyone off the roads.

I don't think there is anything as comforting in God's Word as the Psalms. Any child of God can learn so much from them. David and the other Psalmists must have either written their thoughts down or spoken them, sharing them with others. I think that in itself teaches us something. We should somehow let out of our hearts and minds, our anxieties, our questionings, our doubtings, and even our rebelliousness.

I don't know if these two Psalms were expressed by the Psalmist at the same time or not, but Ps. 42:11 and Ps. 43:5 are the same. What the Psalmist is doing is making known his innermost feelings, either to himself alone or others also. He is naming his problem; his trouble. I think he is saying to himself: "Look, this is how I feel; this is my complaint; this is why I am depressed; or this is my sorrow." But he doesn't stop there. After admitting that, he talks back to himself and forces himself to remember God and turn to Him.



We can do the same thing by admitting our feelings to ourselves — and then talk back to ourselves, using the Word of God.

Our feelings will differ from one day to another, but God is sure. He is ever the same; our sure Foundation.

These verses differ in one way. Ps. 42:5 says, "I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance; His countenance — the ever constant Being of God revealed to us in Scripture is our only hope and our help Who is ever near.

Ps. 43:5 says, "For I shall yet praise Him Who is the health of my countenance." I shall praise Him Who makes my spiritual being and expression healthy again — and more — He Who makes my outward expression healthy so that others may see my hope.

I've probably tried to say too much. I hope you've understood. Just let's both try today to admit our inner feelings to ourselves, and then give it all over to God and tell ourselves that He is our hope and our health and perhaps others will see in our countenance the joy this brings.

With joy, Your friend

Please read II Cor. 12:9-10

Change, especially when it became necessary because of the degree of deterioration, was always resisted by Alice. She refused to admit any change for the worse. The time came when obviously she could not be in her "bedroom" anymore. In order to help her properly, the bed had to be in the larger "living room" of the garage. But Alice refused to hear of it. What should one do? Without telling Alice of the plan, some of the family came one evening and simply moved her bed and her "treasures" out of the bedroom into the living room area. Though obviously it was very disappointing to her, she dared not object — especially with her minister-brother present. But she soon came to enjoy this change. She could more easily remain in bed while visiting with those who came to see her. And it was far more convenient for the family who were there to help her.

Good Morning Alice:

The kids are a little disappointed that we didn't get all the snow we were supposed to. We did get just

enough to make everything clean and white again.

You should see all the rabbit tracks in our backyard. The kids leave corn out there and, with the new snowfall, we can see rows of tracks all leading to the corn in the middle. It's like the yard is a square pie and the rabbits cut it into pieces.

None of us today is like Paul. God gave him that special wonder of being caught up and taught directly by God. And then because God knows human nature, He gave Paul a thorn in the flesh so that Paul would not be "exalted beyond measure." Paul asked three times to have it taken away, but God told him that His grace was sufficient for Paul. How did Paul react to that? How do you and I react to a burden? "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake."

Can you feel that way, Alice? Can you gladly glory in your infirmities in order that the power of Christ may rest upon you?

I'm sure that you experience the love of God in a far deeper way than before God gave you this disease, and that is the glory of God resting upon you.

But remember also that God has used your disease to strengthen so many other children of His also. God has given them the necessity of caring for you. This is probably extremely hard for you to accept, and I'm sure it's a heavy task for them too.

But striving together to use this experience for the purpose God gave it to you — to draw you all closer to Him — you will experience sufficient grace; you will accept your disease; as difficult as this may seem, as the blessing that it is.

Why?

Because when I am weak, then am I strong. When I am weak of flesh, then I am strong in spirit. Strong in Christ. And happy. Happy enough to smile through our tears and rejoice with each other in love and thanksgiving to Him.

May you experience this today.

In His love, Your friend

Please read Psalm 92:1-2

Take the time to ready and study  
the Standard Bearer.  
Give a gift of the Standard Bearer today!



## BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Jason L. Kortering

# Exodus — God's Dealing with His Nation (1)

The Torah designates this second book of the Pentateuch as *Shamoth*, "names," taken from the opening word of the book itself. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, changed the name to *Exodos*, which in turn was taken over by the Latin Vulgate as *Exodus*, meaning "going out."

### AUTHORSHIP

Details of the author of the first five books of the Bible have been presented in former articles and need not be repeated here. A few additional observations as they apply to the book of Exodus follow.

First, in the book of Exodus we are introduced to Moses as a person. We get to know what kind of a man this Moses was as we read the book itself. His name must have been given to him by his parents and later taken over by the daughter of Pharaoh (2:10). Literally it means "drawn out," a reference to the incident when Moses was hid among the flags. Under the providence of God, his life was spared, for his parents saw that he was "a proper child" (Heb. 11:23). His early training within the covenant home furnished him with the spiritual framework for his subsequent ministry (2:9). Though his education in the schools of Egypt and in the court of Pharaoh qualified him as a leader, Moses had yet to learn humility and dependence upon God. The killing of the Egyptian served to drive him to the quiet of Midian for his training to be a shepherd of Israel (2:11-15). God called him at the burning bush and assured him He would be his strength (3:12). The events that followed reveal to us Moses as a very human being, who literally wrung out his soul for the good of Israel. He led

them out of the bondage of Egypt, through the wilderness for some forty years, up to the very edge of Canaan. What a task! No mere human being was able to endure so severe a trial and accomplish the task; he had to be divinely empowered. As such, Moses was a type of the Lord Jesus, *the Mediator of the covenant*. Only Jesus can give to us the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Secondly, during his activity as leader, Moses made a direct recording of the happenings, and this formed the basis of the content of this book. Exodus 17:14 mentions this in connection with the defeat of Amalek: "And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." The same thing occurred in connection with the giving of the law: "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord" (Exodus 24:4). Whether the contents of the book of Exodus were written in sequence, exactly as we presently have them, or if he wrote them in segments and then compiled them, the end result is the same, the Holy Spirit over-ruled the activity to produce the inspired book.

Thirdly, the question is raised whether there may have been some editorializing at a later date, either by Moses himself or another. This is brought up in connection with Exodus 6:26 where Moses and Aaron are identified specifically as those to whom the Lord said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies." If Moses was writing this, why would he so identify himself? Did one of the copyists add this? A similar reference is made in Exodus 16:33-36. There mention is made that Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to the land inhabited, even unto the borders of Canaan. Moses did not come all



that way. How then could he have said this? Moses certainly could have written that as he anticipated the Lord completing His promises. Even if there were slight additions by someone making a change in the original, this would not detract from the authenticity of the book or reliability of its contents.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MESSAGE

The book of Exodus falls quite naturally into two main parts. The first part covers chapters 1-19 and the second, chapters 20-40. In the first twenty chapters, Moses gives us the history that forms the transition between the period of the patriarchs (which ended with Jacob and his family going into Egypt, the conclusion of the book of Genesis) and the formation of the nation of Israel. In Exodus, we learn about the great number of children born and the increase in numbers. Israel now presents itself as a threat to Egypt; hence the setting is given for the conflict between Egypt and Israel. Finally, the nation leaves the house of bondage and is prepared for the wilderness sojourn. In the last twenty chapters of Exodus, we learn of the laws of God and the detail of the tabernacle structure and worship. This is closely related to the first twenty chapters in that these laws form the basis upon which God will establish a covenantal relationship with this nation. We learn of the nature of the theocracy, that God will be the Ruler of this people and that He requires that His people consecrate their lives to Him. He will tabernacle in the midst of His people as a Holy God! The worship of the tabernacle displays this before the people. Typically, Christ is in their midst as the Mediator of that covenant. The law was added to the promise to show the necessity of that Mediator.

We might add at this point, that the unfolding of this law of God was not complete at Sinai. As Israel goes forth, God will give them more detail. This revelation of the law is progressive. The detail given at Sinai is contained in the books of Exodus and Leviticus. More is added as they sojourn in the wilderness, the book of Numbers. Finally, on the Plain of Moab, the Lord adds still more, the book of Deuteronomy. Taken together, we can see how the five books of the Pentateuch fit together.

### A BRIEF OUTLINE

1. The introduction (1:1-6). The sons of Jacob are listed by name as those who went from Canaan to Egypt. Their number totaled seventy souls (1:1-6).

2. The bondage of Israel in Egypt (1:7-22). By now the number of Israelites had grown, for the land was filled with them (1:7). The new Pharaoh knew not Joseph. He was afraid of the number of Israelites lest they join with the enemy and fight against Egypt (1:8-10). Task-masters are set over the

people and they are afflicted as they build the treasure cities of Pithom and Raamases (1:11). Yet, the more they are afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew (1:12). The Egyptians added greater burdens and drove them still harder (1:13, 14). Pharaoh instructed the Hebrew midwives to kill the sons which were born to the Hebrews. They however refused and made excuses that the babies were born before they could even come to assist the new mothers (1:15-21). Now the order came that all the baby boys born to the Hebrews had to be thrown into the Nile River (1:22).

3. Moses' childhood (2:1-10). His father and mother were of the tribe of Levi (2:1). After Moses was born, he was hidden three months (2:2). Then Miriam, his sister, laid Moses in a small ark in the midst of the flags of the river, awaiting the arrival of the daughter of Pharaoh to bathe (2:2, 3). Having discovered the ark, Pharaoh's daughter opened it and Moses wept. She was moved with compassion as she recognized the child as a Hebrew (2:4-6). Moses' sister offered the services of a Hebrew nurse, and she called her mother who nursed him (2:7-9). Moses grew up and at the set time was brought to the daughter of Pharaoh who took him into the palace and gave him the name Moses, "Because I drew him out of the water" (2:10).

4. Moses' wilderness sojourn and return (2:11-4:28). Moses killed an Egyptian who fought with an Israelite. On the next day, two Israelites were fighting and Moses intervened; but one of them challenged him if he was going to kill him as he did the Egyptian the day before. Moses realized that it was public knowledge and that Pharaoh would learn of it, so he fled to Midian (2:11-15). At the well of Midian, he was approached by the seven daughters of the priest of Midian with their flocks. The shepherds roughed them up, but Moses helped them water their flocks. Upon returning home to their father Reuel, they explained their early return by the help of the Egyptian. He in turn told them to invite Moses to their home. So Moses came to live with them. He married one of the daughters, Zipporah by name, by whom he had a son, Gershom (2:16-22). A brief reference is made to the bondage of Israel in Egypt (2:23-25). Moses tended the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro, for many years. Upon one such occasion he was in the vicinity of Mt. Horeb when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the burning bush, engulfed with fire but not consumed. The Lord called to him out of the bush and told him to take off his shoes, for the place was holy ground. He identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses hid his face (3:1-6). God said He heard the affliction of His people in Egypt and that He had come to deliver them and to bring them to Canaan, the land



of milk and honey. To Moses He said, "I will send thee" (3:7-10). Moses replied that he was not able to do this — "Who am I that I should command Pharaoh to release them?" God assured him it would take place, and that on the very mountain on which he stood he would worship Jehovah with the congregation. Moses asked how he would identify God to the people. God replied that he should tell them, "I am hath sent thee." God would do mighty things upon the kingdom of Egypt, so that Israel would spoil them (3:11-22). Moses raised another problem: What if they will not believe him? To this God answered with the signs of the rod changed into a serpent, a leprous hand cleansed, and the water turned into blood (4:1-9). A final plea came from Moses: "I am not eloquent." Jehovah reproved him and asked Moses, "Who made the mouth? I will be

thy mouth!" When Moses still fretted, God told him that Aaron, his brother, would be his spokesman and act as a mouthpiece. God specifically placed his rod in Moses' hand (4:10-17). Moses informed Jethro of the call of God to go to Egypt. Moses took his wife and sons and Jehovah reminded him that he must do all the things He instructed him and that Pharaoh would not cooperate because He would harden his heart. Moses must tell him that Israel is God's firstborn, to be freed, and if Egypt will not do this they will lose their firstborn (4:18-23). God met Moses to kill him for refusing to circumcise his son. It became evident his wife was the one who refused to do it (4:24-26). Aaron met Moses in the wilderness and preparations are made to confront Pharaoh (4:27, 28).

## GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

Thomas C. Miersma

# Scripture Interprets Scripture: Grammatically

We are considering in this column the Reformed principle of Scriptural interpretation, that the Word of God is its own interpreter. This principle, which the reformers have taught us, we are pursuing from the viewpoint of its application to our own Bible study, and confining ourselves for practical reasons to its application to the study of the English Bible. These are the same techniques and approaches which the reformers themselves used in their own exposition of God's Word and which you will find reflected in their commentaries.

In preceding articles we made some preliminary observations and also discussed certain tools which are useful in our study. In the preceding article we began to trace the elements of studying the words of a text or passage of Scripture to understand their

meaning. We pointed out certain things which could be done in Bible study with the use of an English dictionary, and it is at this point that we wish to resume our discussion.

An English dictionary will give us to some extent the meaning of the word or its various shades of meaning and will help to clarify the text we are studying. We want, however, to know its particular use and meaning in Scripture and the passage we are studying. For this we must go to the Scriptures themselves, and our concordance. The first thing to do therefore is locate the word and the reference to the passage we are studying. Concordances are like a combination of a dictionary and listings of verse references, somewhat like a phone book. The concordances we have mentioned are *Young's* and *Strong's*, so we will occasionally refer to them.

Having found the word and its reference we want to know several things. Our concern is first of

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all with the original Greek or Hebrew word that stands behind our English word. This is the word which the Holy Spirit gave by verbal inspiration; we want to learn what we can about it as it stands in our text. The first question we may ask is this, how else did our King James translators translate this word? This will take us beyond the English dictionary to a more precise understanding of the meaning of our text. To find these other meanings of the word you must either find its number (*Strong's*) or its spelling in English letters (*Young's*) and locate it in the back of the concordance, using also whatever notes our concordance provides. The questions we want to answer are these: What does this tell us about the basic and original meaning and idea of the word? If the word draws a certain concrete picture, what is it? The normal word for sin, for example, in the New Testament means to "misaim" at a target, or to miss the mark one is aiming at. This information will be much like the different meanings our dictionary gives us, though there will be some which are quite different, as we are working with the word of another language which lies behind our English word. Again the basic question we want to answer is, what light does this shed upon our text or passage and its meaning?

The next thing we want to know is, what other words in the original language of Scripture have this same translation. (*Young's* divides the words up this way; with *Strong's* you will have to follow the numbers.) How are they similar to the word used in our text? How are they different? What do these similarities and differences tell us about the idea expressed in our text in Scripture? What is the Spirit's meaning and purpose in using this particular word, and what particular emphasis does this give the text and passage? For example, there are a number of words which are translated in our English Bible by the word iniquity. One refers to the perverseness of sin, another to the guilt of sin, or to the bent and misshapen character of sin in the light of God's law. The other thing our concordance (depending on the edition) may tell us is what other words come from this same root word in the original. The noun for faith and the verb for believing in the New Testament come from the same root word, for example.

It may be well to emphasize at this point that if you have a good, thorough concordance, and know how to use it, you can learn many of these things without knowing either of the original languages of Scripture. It is simply a matter of work and study.

The next consideration is the use of the particular word in the Scriptures and of its related words. This is the heart of our study and is done by looking up the various references given in the concordance.

The purpose of this is to answer certain further questions. First, what light do these passages shed upon the meaning of the word and of our text? Which ones deal with the same subject? (Not every reference will be helpful.) How does Scripture expound the meaning of this term and the text to us?

We also want to seek the answer to a specific question. That is this, what is the meaning and idea of the word and its concept in both the English and the original and what are the various elements (like those given in the English dictionary) of this concept and its meaning. If it is a doctrinal term, it is the elements of the doctrine we want to determine. If it is a practical matter, such as Christian marriage, what do the Scriptures as a whole say about it? To give a few examples, the word for faith in Scripture can refer to the activity of faith, trust, and confidence. It can also refer, as in Jude 3 where we are called to contend for the faith, to the content of our faith, that which is believed. The terms used in Scripture for grace and favor can have a number of meanings. They can direct us in the most basic sense of the word to the truth that God is beautiful in Himself in His perfection and therefore gracious. They may direct us to the fact that that beauty and perfection as it is revealed to us as sinners is unmerited favor. Grace can also be set before us particularly as the power of God in salvation, or as that which makes the objects of His grace and favor beautiful before Him. These distinctions are drawn from Scripture itself and are found by looking up the passages in Scripture where the words and terms are used, not only the specific one in a passage but also the parallel terms, as well as the way the English word is used.

The purpose of such study is to let the Scriptures speak and to let them lead us to understand them. This type of study will deepen and enrich your understanding of the passage you are working with, and it is both edifying and spiritually rewarding. The objective is to understand the word and its meaning first of all; but also, secondly, to develop from Scripture the concepts in the text and passage in the light of Scripture as a whole; and then, to determine what specific aspect of that concept and idea is on the foreground in the text you are studying. If you want some examples of how this is done or to check and revise your study, take a look at how Rev. H. Hoeksema develops the various Scripture concepts of the attributes of God or his discussion of the various words for sin in his *Reformed Dogmatics*. One of the particular values of *Reformed Dogmatics* is that Rev. Hoeksema sets the fruit of his work before you, with the various passages of Scripture quoted in full. If you read the commentaries of the great reformer John Calvin with attention, you will also observe that it is this kind of



study which lies behind his comments and exposition.

A few other remarks about this kind of word study are in order. Sometimes it is not a single word, but a Scriptural phrase or expression which we must study. For example, the expression "workers of iniquity" must be taken as a whole. Remember also, with parallel passages and references, that they also are to be read in context if looking them up is to be of real value. Keep in mind that this has to be done with the spiritual willingness to let the text of Scripture explain itself.

This kind of study is not easy; it is something you learn to do by doing it. But it also becomes easier the more you pursue it, and as you grow in the knowledge of God's Word and build upon previous study. There is no reason why the average child of God cannot learn to do this kind of study, according to the measure of the gifts and talents God has given him. Remember the fundamental principle is

that we are taught of God. It is first of all a matter of prayer and the work of the Spirit.

Such study of God's Word may be difficult to take up after a long day of work or physical activity. It is time-consuming. It is part of the reason why your minister needs to spend his time in his study if he is to have two good sermons each week. Looking up reference after reference can become rather tedious. The temptation to abandon this kind of study can be very strong at times. And it is also contrary to our sinful flesh which does not want to hear the Word of God. But the spiritual reward and profit of studying God's Word far outweighs these things. It is infinitely and eternally more profitable for your soul and your spiritual life, for it is more truly refreshing than all the worldly amusements and other temptations and activities upon which we so often and so readily squander our God-given free time.

## STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Ronald L. Cammenga

# Criticism — Giving It

None of us is above criticism. All of us need honest, constructive criticism. We ought to be willing to receive criticism. From time to time it will be necessary for us to give criticism to others.

Criticism is healthy. Criticism can be of great benefit to us. We can all profit from criticism. Criticism can be the surgeon's knife to cut away some serious, life-threatening infection in us, and be the means to restore us to spiritual and psychological health. We need to learn how to give and how to take this kind of criticism.

Criticism can also be destructive. Criticism wrongly given can seriously injure the one to whom the criticism is directed, can turn brother

against brother, can destroy fellowship. Improper, unloving, harsh criticism can create civil war in the church, sap the church of its strength, and ruin its worship of God and its witness to those outside.

Scripture has much to say about this matter of criticism. Solomon writes in Proverbs 27:5, 6, "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." In Proverbs 9:8 we read, "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee." We are told in Ecclesiastes 7:5, "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools." Passages like Romans 15:14, Colossians 3:16, and Hebrews 3:13 call the people of God to admonish one another.

Criticism is judgment. A critic acts the part of a judge. He reviews evidence, makes evaluations,



and draws conclusions. He attempts to discern problems and offer solutions. There are basically two types of criticism: positive and negative.

Positive criticism identifies strengths and acknowledges achievements. It offers congratulations and encouragement.

We all need positive criticism. Positive criticism in the form of commendation, praise, expressions of appreciation and thanks serve the purpose of building us up. Positive criticism spurs us on to perseverance and continuation. A good parent, teacher, employer, officebearer knows the value of positive criticism.

Too often when we think of criticism we think in terms of negative criticism. Many of us are woefully weak in the area of positive criticism. There ought to be much more positive criticism among us than there is. Many of us are quick to offer negative criticism, but never have a good word to say to our wife or husband, our children, the Christian school teacher, the minister, or the elders. Hardly ever is a word of appreciation or encouragement found in our mouth. This is wrong. If all we ever do is give negative criticism, find fault, and identify the weaknesses of others, there is something radically wrong with us. In Proverbs 12:25 we read, "Heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad."

Although positive criticism is needed, we must beware of extremes. Too little encouragement leads to despair. But we must also beware of too much or undeserved commendation. This is flattery, and the Bible everywhere condemns flattery. "It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory" (Prov. 25:27). And in Proverbs 29:5 we read, "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet."

There is also a place for negative criticism in the life of the child of God. Negative criticism points out weaknesses and mistakes and calls for correction.

Negative criticism can be useful, and there are times in our lives when we all need the negative criticism of a loving friend. There will be times when it will be necessary for us ourselves to give negative criticism. Although we might naturally draw back from this and although we would rather not offer the criticism because we are afraid of how it might be received, our love for the one who needs the criticism and our concern for the correction of some wrong or the strengthening of some weakness in his life must motivate us to carry through with it.

Certain basic, Biblical principles ought to regulate the negative criticism that we give.

First of all, our negative criticisms ought to concern significant matters in the life of the one we feel it necessary to criticize. A significant matter would be a matter of sin, a serious weakness, or dereliction of duty. What we must all avoid is the very real danger that our criticism degenerates into a personal diatribe. Our criticism then concerns insignificant, trivial matters. Every little difference of character, viewpoint, way of doing things becomes an occasion for our criticism. Our criticisms concern matters that are either indifferent or of little importance.

We have much to learn in this respect, I fear. We have much to learn about being longsuffering towards one another, bearing with one another's weaknesses. We have much to learn about tolerating different emphases, distinct viewpoints, and differences of personality. We have much to learn about living peaceably with one another, and not making an issue about every little thing that arises. We ought to have a concern here for the unity of the church and preserving the unity of the church. One of the quickest ways to tear down the church's unity is our living with each other in such a way that we are always ready to criticize and condemn each other. What would happen if we lived this way in our marriages or in our homes? What would happen if all we ever did was criticize each other for every little thing? In no time our marriages would be ruined and the fellowship of our homes destroyed.

In the second place, negative criticism must be given in love, and the one who is giving the negative criticism is responsible to make plain to the one to whom he is offering the criticism that his criticism is motivated by love. What is condemned is harsh, unfeeling criticism that cuts, wounds, and kills. Proverbs 27:6 says that "Faithful are the wounds of a friend . . ." In offering negative criticism, Ephesians 4:15 also applies, that we must speak the truth IN LOVE.

How many Christians have not suffered from negative criticism that was not given in love, but which amounted to a vicious attack? How many parents, ministers, Christian school teachers, employees have spent sleepless nights after such attacks? How much pain of soul have not such attacks caused?

Our criticism will be loving criticism, in the third place, if it is criticism that aims at the upbuilding of one another. This is the question we ought to ask ourselves before we ever offer negative criticism: "Why am I giving this criticism? Am I aiming at his (or her) spiritual and physical well-being? Am I motivated by his (or her) upbuilding?" If the answer to these questions, in all honesty, is "No,"



don't give the criticism, even if the criticism itself is valid.

One measure of our concern for the upbuilding of the one whom we criticize is whether or not we pray for them. It's easy to criticize them, but do we pray for them? It's easy to criticize our wife or husband, but do we pray for them? It's easy to criticize the Christian school teachers, but do we pray for them? It's easy to criticize the elders, but do we pray for them? It's easy to criticize the minister, but do we pray for him?

In the fourth place, in offering negative criticism we should be objective and specific. Our criticism should be based on concrete evidence, and not just on subjective opinion and feeling. This will also assure that our criticism is specific. Criticism that is vague and general does little good. Be able to substantiate your criticism, to point out the evidence that supports the validity of the criticism that you are making.

In the fifth place, accompany your criticism with suggestions for correction and improvement. To

confront someone with negative criticism, but to point out no alternative is wrong. There are many negative critics who can go on at great lengths describing weaknesses and mistakes, but who have not a word to say as far as a suitable alternative is concerned.

This kind of wrong negative criticism abounds in the world today. This is the character of our society that gives itself over to gossip, ridicule, poking fun of the weaknesses and mistakes of others. Our country is filled with critics who point out what's wrong with our nation and our nation's leaders, but who never suggest a viable alternative.

It has been said that it is easier to give criticism than to take it. This is hardly true. To give proper criticism, out of the right motive, in the right way, and with the proper goal in view is one of the hardest things for the Christian to do. Yet, criticism given following the Biblical principles we have cited, will be blessed by God. It is criticism that will be received. It is criticism that will serve the good of the one to whom it is given. It is criticism that will prove to be constructive criticism.

## Report From Singapore

*Arie den Hartog*

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who gathers His church through the preaching of the Holy Gospel from every tribe and tongue and nation. It has been quite some time since we have written a report on our work in Singapore for *The Standard Bearer*. Some of our readers will have read the regular form letters sent to a number of our churches. They will have to excuse us if some of the news in this report has been told them before. We thought it would be good once again to report to all of our people. We are conscious of the fact that we are sent out and supported by you all. The work we do here is also your work. We are always de-

pendent upon your prayers, support, and encouragement. In that connection we would like again to express our appreciation to all who sent us greeting cards and letters in the past Christmas and New Year season. We are much encouraged in our work by all of these.

The Lord continues to bless us as His church in many ways. We have had our struggles and difficulties and discouragements in the last year. These are common to every church as long as she is here on this earth. The Lord has preserved and blessed us through them all. Especially in the last couple of months we have seen again many wonderful ways in which the Lord is blessing us. The attendance at the worship services has recently increased significantly. This has been the result large-

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*Arie den Hartog, a missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches, is currently laboring in Singapore.*



ly of a group of new young people who have joined us. Most of those are from a Presbyterian High School in Singapore. This is one of the so-called mission schools in Singapore. Historically these schools were started by missions of various denominations. Today however there is, sadly, very little distinctively Christian about these schools. They are academically superior to the government schools and therefore attract many students. But most of the students are from non-Christian homes and even many of the teachers are non-Christian. Two of our church members are teaching at this school. Through their efforts some of the students have been led to the Lord and encouraged in their Christian faith. Pastor Lau and I have on occasion given messages for a Bible Study group at this school led by the two sisters of our church. The Lord has greatly blessed all of this so that a number of these students are now regularly attending the Youth Fellowship Meetings at our church and also the worship services on the Lord's Day. There are several other new people attending the worship services regularly. Our meeting place at the kampong is therefore once again filled to capacity for our worship services.

In December we had a four-day camp for students and children. There were altogether about sixty in attendance at this camp. Most of the young people mentioned above from the Presbyterian High School also attended. I had the privilege of being the camp speaker. I was asked to give four messages on the theme "The Christian's Firm Foundation." It was a busy time but a real joy for us.

According to the tradition of ERCS we had a special "Gospel Meeting" on Christmas Eve. Once again I had the privilege of being the speaker at this meeting. The message was translated into the Chinese by one of our elders. The Lord blessed us with a large attendance. There were more visitors at this meeting than we have ever had for any "Gospel Meeting." A number of the parents of our members were also present.

The Sunday School which meets before the worship service on the Lord's Day is also really prospering. We have a goodly number of children attending who are relatives of members of our church. It is especially a joy to see the youngest class of the Sunday School. This class is made up largely of children from the congregation. The eldest of these children are now between four and five years old.

There is another group of young people who will soon be ready for confession of faith and membership in our church. We have spent many months instructing them from the Heidelberg Catechism in

the doctrines of the Reformed Faith. This catechism class meets every Lord's Day in the afternoon at our home at Blair Road.

In the past year we again had a number of weddings and a number of new babies born. The character of the church has really changed over the years. A few years ago most of the members were single and students in various levels of their education. Now most of our members are seeking to establish themselves in their careers. We have many married couples. More and more children are being born. All of this does present some problems as our members struggle to adjust to new responsibilities and situations in their life. There is a great need for family orientated ministry in our midst. We are planning to start a fellowship group especially for young married couples. There is great need for instruction and encouragement in the area of raising a Christian family. The physical circumstances of life in Singapore make this all rather difficult. Transportation is a problem. Many live at opposite ends of the Island from each other. Though Singapore is small it can take quite a long time to travel by bus from one end to the other. At our session meeting last Friday we spent quite a long time talking about the future of the church. Among other things we discussed the need of starting catechism instruction for the children of the church in about a year's time. We also decided to investigate the feasibility of trying to start a kindergarten.

The Lord willing there are some exciting things in the future. One of the most significant of these will be the return of brother Jaikishin and his family from the U.S.A. We are looking forward to the day when, in the providence of the Lord, Jaiki will become the second pastor of the ERCS. In that connection there is a revival of talk about the idea of starting a second congregation. The church has been exhorted to pray about this matter. Personally we have long believed this to be a good idea. There would be many advantages to having more than one congregation even if both of these were somewhat smaller than our present congregation. We especially hope and pray that such a move would expand the witness of our church in Singapore and the proclamation of the Reformed Faith. The greatest obstacle that we always face however is the problem of finding a proper meeting place.

Our family is now living in the house that the church owns on Blair Road. Plans are to try to sell this property and purchase another. We are definitely going to be chased out of the kampong soon. The landlord has already received notice that this kampong will be demolished and he has to tell his tenants to re-locate. The building committee has



looked at a number of different places in the past year. But none of these proved to be suitable to purchase. In most cases we could not obtain approval from the authorities to use the places for a church. Presently another property is being considered. It is a very large bungalow house with a large hall. The committee is investigating the various legal matters. As we have told you before, this problem of meeting places is facing many small churches in Singapore. Because the government is predominately pagan we cannot look for any relief from all the strict regulations governing building control in Singapore. So this remains a very great need for the ERCS. We ask for your prayers.

We continue to face quite a number of pastoral problems in the church. It would not of course be appropriate for me to detail any of these. Some of our members continue to wrestle with personal spiritual problems. Often these problems involve relationships with non-Christian boy friends and girl friends. These things keep the pastors and elders of the church very busy. We have also lost a few of our members through these problems. It is sad when this happens. But the church through history has experienced these trials. Satan works the hardest in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ by various devices to deceive and discourage the members and lead them astray.

We enjoy living in the house at Blair Road. It has a number of advantages over the apartment we

lived in for five years. It is larger and has more room for the children to stretch their legs. The design of this place is pretty uniquely Chinese and quite different from Western homes. It has a large air well that is open to the sky. One of the halls on the ground floor is used for various church meetings. On the first of January we had a special prayer meeting for the new year. There were more than eighty people present for this meeting. That really filled the place up. There are many other church meetings here. We have a regular Bible study group that meets here every Thursday evening. This Bible study has been pretty well attended. In the past we have had some nurses from the hospital across the street joining us. We have regular pre-marriage counseling classes here for couples intending to get married. I have been giving a class in Greek grammar to two students most of last year. The elders and session meetings are also held here. The area we live in is very traditionally Chinese so we as Westerners really stand out. The road on a number of occasions has been used for Buddhist religious festivals. It was quite a thing to experience this right in front of our house. It reminded us of the paganism we live in here and the urgency of preaching the gospel of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We hope that this report has brought our work closer to you again. We covet your continued prayer and support.

## Book Reviews

**REASON WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF RELIGION**, by Nicholas Wolterstorff; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984; 161 pp., \$4.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This is the second edition of a book originally published in 1976. At the time of the original publication I reviewed this book, which review can be found in the *Standard Bearer*, Vol. LIII, pp. 497-499. In that rather lengthy review I criticized the book severely for denying the decisive role

which Scripture plays in all true knowledge and accused Wolterstorff of developing an epistemology which was basically a denial of the infallible Scriptures and which leads inevitably to scepticism. After re-reading the book, I can only maintain that original assessment.

This new edition, however, has some material appended to it in which the author enlarges on the basic theme of the original volume in a couple of areas where questions were raised. The additions,



therefore, in no way modify his original position.

His purpose in the addendum is to discuss what God's goal for mankind is in order that he may show what our calling is to attain that goal. This is briefly stated on pp. 113, 114:

... I shall try to say what, in my judgment, the goal is ...

The goal of human existence is that man should dwell at peace in all his relationships: with God, with himself, with his fellows, with nature, a peace which is not merely the absence of hostility, though certainly it is that, but a peace which at its highest is *enjoyment*. To dwell in shalom is to enjoy living before God, to enjoy living in nature, to enjoy living with one's fellows, to enjoy life with oneself. A condition of shalom is justice, and a component in justice is liberation from oppression. Never can there be shalom without justice. Yet shalom is more than justice. Justice can be grim. In shalom there is delight.

If this quote leaves you with the impression that the author is advocating some sort of "social gospel," your impression is correct. Wolterstorff looks for the kingdom here upon earth, a kingdom universal in scope, a kingdom embracing all men, a kingdom in which true peace is present in this sinful world.

When all the verbiage, jargon, and technical language is stripped away, it becomes evident that the whole gist of Wolterstorff's problem is whether this universal kingdom of peace shall be achieved through theoretical thought or through action. Or, to put it a bit differently, is this kingdom a place in which there is room for knowledge for its own sake? or must we simply engage in action? The rather anti-climactic answer is that both are necessary.

There is really nothing positive to say about the book. The only advantage to reading it is to learn of current thinking in one branch of the church to which Wolterstorff belongs.

**OUR LORD PRAYS FOR HIS OWN**, Thoughts on John 17, by Marcus Rainsford; Kregel Publications, 1985; 476 pp., \$14.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

Rainsford was an Irish pastor, educated in Trinity College (Dublin), who did his work in the last part of the 19th century. This book, meditations on our Lord's high priestly prayer, is called "the greatest classic ever written on Christ's high priestly prayer for His people." It is particularly devotional writing, but must be read carefully, for the author not only does not emphasize the distinctives of sovereign and particular grace, with which this prayer of the Lord is filled, but is, in many instances, openly Arminian. This is not surprising

when one considers that the author worked closely for a number of years with Dwight L. Moody in the evangelistic campaigns in London in 1875 and 1883-1884.

**STRUCTURES FOR MISSION**, Marvin D. Hoff, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 243 pp. (paper) \$11.95. (Reviewed by Prof. R.D. Decker)

This book, written by the recently appointed President of Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, is part of the Historical Series Of The Reformed Church in America. As such it is obviously of interest primarily to members of that denomination. The book traces the history of mission work done by the Reformed Church in America (R.C.A.). What structures and methods did the R.C.A. create and use to carry out its calling in both foreign and domestic missions? From this point of view the book is of interest for anyone involved in missions.

History buffs will also like the book. The R.C.A. is one of the oldest Protestant denominations in the U.S.A. In 1628 the first church was established. It was part of the Classis of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, until 1792, a period of 164 years. This fact, among others, the reader will learn from the fascinating first chapter, "The Reformed Church in America From 1628 through 1945."

**CHRISTIANITY AND PHILOSOPHY**, by Keith E. Yandell; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984; 289 pp., \$10.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

The question of a genuinely Biblical Christian philosophy is always an intriguing one; and it was, therefore, with considerable interest, that I turned to this book. This was the more true because this book is the second in a series of books under the general theme: "Studies in a Christian World View" edited by Carl F.H. Henry.

While it has many interesting features about it, it does not succeed in presenting a Christian philosophy however, mainly because it proceeds from a rationalistic viewpoint, while it is our contention that any Christian philosophy must proceed on the basis of faith in the Scriptures.

The book is addressed to "those who already have some acquaintance with philosophy — to college juniors and seniors with some background in philosophy on up (if that is the right direction), and to those who are interested enough in the topics discussed to be willing to work to follow an attempt to deal with them."



## CONFERENCE ON PRESBYTERIANISM

**Monday, March 3, 1986, 8:00 P.M.**

Topic: "The History Of Scotch-Irish Presbyterianism."

Speaker: Rev. George G. Hutton, pastor of The Bible Presbyterian Church, Larne, North Ireland.

**Tuesday, March 4, 1986, 9:00 A.M.**

Topic: "A Comparison Of The Westminster Standards And The Three Forms Of Unity."

Discussion introduced by: Prof. H. Hanks, Prof. in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

**Tuesday, March 4, 1986, 1:30 P.M.**

Topic: "Presbyterian Principles Of Worship."

Discussion introduced by: Rev. George G. Hutton.

All meetings will be held in the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church, 16511 South Park Ave., South Holland, IL.

This conference is arranged by the Committee On Conferences of Classis West, in conjunction with the Evangelism Committee of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church.

**THE PUBLIC IS CORDIALLY INVITED!!!**

## News From Our Churches

January 30, 1986

From First Church's Jamaica Mission Committee we received the following report:

"Rev. Joostens and his family were the victims of an armed burglary at their home in Jamaica on January 15. By the grace of God no one was physically hurt, but the family was psychologically shaken up. A delegation was sent to assist them and the Bruinsmas during this difficult time. We have felt God's faithfulness through this trial, as the commitment to the field is very deep in both families. Though we would not choose to walk this way, we are persuaded that also these things are meant for good and the furtherance of His work on the island of Jamaica. The Joostens and Bruinsma families continue to covet our prayers and letters as they labor on our behalf." (Letters to both families can be addressed to: Ferris Heights, Cave P.O., Westmoreland, Jamaica.)

Our missionary, Rev. Bruinsma, writes that the policy for missions in Jamaica which speaks of the missionary focusing his labors in a certain area for a time is a good one. He feels that the spiritual fruits of such labors are showing themselves in the two congregations with which he works. Everyone has warmed up to the Bruinsmas and the people are not afraid to speak with them about their problems.

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

Rev. Bruinsma reports that they are still waiting on the government of Jamaica for incorporation. They have obtained a title to the Cave Mt. property and expect future titles to their Belmont and Beeston Spring properties. They continue to seek titles for Lacovia and Dias properties. He also reports that electricity has been installed in all the churches. The Belmont Church will be getting doors and windows soon. Cave Mt. and Beeston Spring Churches will also be starting their building projects soon.

There are many changes taking place in our church buildings. A very important building project (the most important one to our Loveland readers) is the new Loveland Church, Colorado, which is a 54 x 100 foot structure attached to the old church, capable of seating 350 people. The sheetrock and brick are being put up. The \$115,000 air conditioned church will be completed in March.

Other changes include the following. South Holland Church, Illinois, is buying new carpet for the church auditorium. Southeast Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, is purchasing additional and improved recording equipment at a cost of \$2,650 to improve the recording of their sermons and the clarity of their Sunday broadcast. First Church, Holland, Michigan, will seal and stripe their parking lot in the Spring. First Church, Grand Rapids, has approved the completion of the lower level of



their church.

The consistory of Hudsonville Church decided in November to have some of their Psalters rebound at \$4.50 per book, which is a good price since the Psalter is presently out-of-print.

Rev. Harbach's commentary on Genesis is completed and will go to the printers soon. Contributions can be made out to the Grandville Church Publishing Committee and sent to Mr. Dennis Dykstra, 3228 Chestnut, Grandville, MI 49418.

Our schools have now passed the half-way point for this school year, and the support they have received from the household of faith has been encouraging. They still need that support and more if they are going to meet their needs for the remainder of the school year.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 15, 1986, our parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. ALLEN HENDRIKS celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. We are grateful to our Heavenly Father for them and their covenant instruction. May God guide and keep them in the years He may give.

their children:

Mr. and Mrs. Larry Nelson  
Mr. and Mrs. Bob Figert  
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Meaney  
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Jacobsma

Mr. and Mrs. Randy Hendriks  
Mr. and Mrs. Brad Hendriks  
and 10 grandchildren

### NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in South Holland, Ill., on Wednesday, March 5, 1986, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. Delegates in need of lodging should notify the Clerk of the South Holland Council.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk  
Classis West

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Esther Griess, and her family in the death of her husband, MR. ALVIN GRIESS.

May she and her bereaved family be comforted in the certainty that in life or death we are not our own, but belong unto our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

Rev. Ron Cammenga, Leader

### NOTICE!!!

All students enrolled in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, who will be in need of financial assistance for the 1986-1987 school year, are asked to contact the Student Aid Committee's secretary: Mr. Larry Meulenberg, 342 Begole S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504, Phone (616) 453-8466. This contact should be made before the next meeting of the committee on March 13, 1986.

Larry Meulenberg

### NOTICE — SYNODICAL COMMITTEES!!!

All standing and special committees of Synod are hereby notified that all the material for the 1986 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches should be in the hands of the Stated Clerk no later than April 15, 1986. Please send material to the undersigned.

Rev. M. Joostens  
2016 Tekonsha S.E.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

### NOTICE!!!

The Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of a Kindergarten and 1st Grade teacher for the 1986-1987 school year. Teachers interested in applying for this position please write to the Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School, 218 - 2nd Street, Hull, IA 51239, or phone Ron Koole, (712) 439-1060 or Glenn Kooiker, (712) 324-2973.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On the 3rd of February, 1986, our parents, MR. AND MRS. CHARLES E. VAN MEETEREN, commemorated their 30th 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:

Charles A. and Beth Van Meeteren  
Randy and Nancy Hendriks  
Don and Shelly De Vries

Gary and Mary Gaastra  
Beth Van Meeteren  
and 7 grandchildren

### ATTENTION!!!

Reformed Free Publishing Association has a limited number of cloth-bound copies of *Behold, He Cometh!* in stock. You may order a copy, pre-paid, for \$12.95 plus \$1.50 postage. Book club members receive a 30% discount. Write to:

Reformed Free Publishing Association  
P.O. Box 2006  
Grand Rapids, MI 49501

or call Eunice Kuiper at (616) 534-1927.

Note: After the current, very limited supply of hard-cover copies is exhausted, this book will be available only in a paperback edition.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 5 our dear friends, MR. & MRS. CHESTER E. HUNTER, SR., celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. We take this opportunity to express our love and appreciation for their special care for us, for all of our shared experiences, and for their beautiful example to us of a godly marriage and home. We marvel at the strange way the Lord directed all our paths to meet.

Our prayer is that they may have many more years together and that we may continue to enjoy their fellowship for many years to come.

"The friendship of the Lord is ever with his own;

And unto those that fear His name His faithfulness is shown."

Their "adopted" children,  
Mr. & Mrs. Ignacio Quenga  
Dwight Felix