

THE STANDARD BEARER

A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine

Thou, who hast compassion upon us as a father for His children, dost not tempt us in the evil sense of the word. Thou art the holy God who cannot be tempted, nor temptest anyone. Thy motive in all Thy dealings is always pure, righteous, true. Even when Thou confrontest us with temptations, Thou dost warn us by Thy Word and Spirit that yielding to temptation is sin. In the hour of temptation the voice of conscience is never completely silenced. Therefore whether we stand or fall, Thy purpose is always to purify us as gold is refined by the refiner's fire, that our faith fail not, but that we come forth spiritually stronger than before.

See: Meditation, p. 290

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Meditation

Cornelius Hanko

Our Prayer For Deliverance

Ques. 127. What is the sixth petition?

Ans. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"; that is, since we are so weak in ourselves, that we cannot stand a moment; and besides this, since our mortal enemies, the devil, the world, and our own flesh, cease not to assault us, do thou therefore preserve and strengthen us by the power of thy Holy Spirit, that we may not be overcome in this spiritual warfare, but constantly and strenuously may resist our foes, till at last we obtain a complete victory. Heid. Catechism, Lord's Day 51.

As we pause at the portals of the sanctuary, bowing our knees in prayer, many needs arise within our souls.

God's glory stands foremost in

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our minds. Whether expressed in words or implied, our love to Him, from whom all blessings flow, and who creates in us the need to seek His face, impels us to desire His glory above all else.

We also long for the final realization of His kingdom, for therein our God is most highly exalted and we find our highest good.

Therefore His will must be done, round about us, in us and by us, that according to His eternal plan and purpose, we with all His wide and vast creation may praise His glorious Name eternally.

Our daily existence requires that we live out of Father's hand, so that in humble trust we pray for bread, no more, no less than our daily ration as measured out in sovereign wisdom and mercy, according to our present physical needs.

As our sin and guilt, as well as our evil nature, appear before our consciousness, we plead for forgiveness, even as we give evidence of God's grace by forgiving one another.

Last, but certainly not least, we hear the voice of God coming to us through His Word, saying, "My child, be thou holy, even as I am holy. Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect".

Therefore, joining our voices with the prayers of all the saints, even as our Lord teaches us, we ask: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil".

We fear temptations.

It is true, Father, that we have reason to thank Thee also for the temptations that crowd in on our lives, wherever we turn, and in whatever we do. Thy Word informs us that we should count it all joy when suddenly and unexpectedly we are confronted with snares of evil. Although we do not always recognize them as

such, they are nevertheless good and perfect gifts which Thou withholdest not from those who fear Thee. It is quite different when we deliberately seek and invite temptations, for then the outcome must be that guilt and shame oppress our souls. But when temptations come upon us unawares, we may be sure that these come to us in Thy wisdom to serve Thy own good purpose in our lives.

Thou, who hast compassion upon us as a father for His children, dost not tempt us in the evil sense of the word. Thou art the holy God who cannot be tempted, nor temptest any one. Thy motive in all Thy dealings is always pure, righteous, true. Even when Thou confrontest us with temptations, Thou dost warn us by Thy Word and Spirit that yielding to temptation is sin. In the hour of temptation the voice of conscience is never completely silenced. Therefore whether we stand or fall, Thy purpose is always to purify us as gold is refined by the refiner's fire, that our faith fail not, but that we come forth spiritually stronger than before.

On the other hand, our mortal enemies, the devil, the world, and our own flesh, cease not to assault us. The devil has a large host at his command, who cunningly plan their attacks against us. The more firmly we hold to the truth, and the more sincere we are in a godly walk, the more determined they are to destroy us. The world round about us plays a double role, sometimes luring and attracting us with her treasures and pleasures, and at other times threatening us with her scorn, hatred, and wicked assaults upon our lives. Along with these two, our flesh is our worst enemy, as the foe within the gates who invites temptations, dreads persecutions, and is drawn by the lust of the eyes, the

lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. O wretched man that I am.

This triple power of evil creates tension in our lives. Satan, the world, and our flesh are never motivated with good intentions, even when they come with a pretense of seeking our good. Their motives are always satanic, deceptive, cruel, evil. Even when they offer us that which is appealing to the flesh, they are out to destroy us spiritually, drawing us away from God and the way of salvation. Their tactics are always unscrupulous, unsparing, devilishly cunning. They initiate their attack at the moment when we are off our guard. They search out our weaknesses, our character faults, which are so much a part of us. They make their offer so appealing, so pleasant, seemingly so necessary for our well-being. They even come as false teachers, who cunningly twist the Scriptures to deceive us and to lead us away from the narrow way that leads to life.

We fear ourselves, Father, deeply realizing that we have but a small beginning of the new obedience. We will the good, yet the evil is always present with us, because by nature we are incapable of any good and inclined to all evil. Our nature is still prone to hate Thee and the neighbor.

We can never stand in our own strength to resist the evil. We think of David, a man who was so valiant in battle against the foes round about, and yet so weak when attracted by another man's wife. Before the temptation had run its course he had made himself guilty of covetousness, adultery, murder, theft, dishonesty, yea, transgression of all the other commandments. What an untold misery he brought upon himself. I am evil, born in sin; Thou desirest truth within.

My own sinful pride could well be my downfall. We think of Peter, who loved his Lord so intensely, that he would readily have faced an army and die fighting to protect Him. And yet when Peter could not fight, when implicit faith was required of him, when he failed to understand that His Master would surrender Himself to the death of the cross, then that faith faltered, and he denied Him whom His soul held as most precious. The warning comes to us: let him who stands beware lest he fall!

It is exactly with that in mind, that we fear temptation, and sincerely beg: Father, never let me depart from Thee so far that it will be necessary for Thee to cast me into the crucible of temptation, to give me over to my sin, to teach me true obedience and self-surrender unto Thee.

Lead us not into temptation!
But deliver us from evil!

Well aware that we are so weak in ourselves, that we cannot stand, no, not for a moment, and also that our mortal enemies, the devil, the world, and our own flesh, cease not to assault us, we earnestly pray that Thou wilt furnish us with the spiritual courage and strength to fight the battle of faith even unto our dying breath, and to obtain the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ. Give us grace to recognize the enemy, to be aware of all his evil designs against us, his subtle deception and his wicked lies. Give us an ever deeper spiritual insight into Thy Word of truth, to maintain and defend it, willing to die rather than to compromise and to be unfaithful to Thee. We think of the power of faith which made it possible for the three friends of Daniel to defy the command of the king to bow down to his image, choosing rather to be thrown into the fiery furnace than to deny Thy Name. Give us love and zeal for Thy Name and

cause here on earth, that we may stand up for the right, and defend it, even when it brings scorn and hatred upon us, even though we must suffer persecution or death.

These are perilous times for Thy church. Men are lovers of self more than lovers of Thee. Many still have a form of godliness, yet they deny Thee who art the power thereof. Thou hast blinded their eyes and created within them a spirit of delusion. Their numbers are growing, their strength increases, even as anti-christ lifts his foul head around us. Empower us in our spiritual conflict that we may strenuously and constantly resist our foes and stand steadfast in this evil day.

Give us a rich measure of Thy Word and Spirit. Bestow on us the grace to put on the whole armor that Thou hast prepared for us, that our loins are girt with the girdle of truth, our heart is protected by the breastplate of Christ's righteousness, our feet are well shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, clinging to the shield of faith with our left hand, and waving the sword of the Spirit, Thy Word, with our right hand, in order that when the smoke of battle fades away and the cry of warfare is silenced, we may stand victorious over all Thy foes and ours. More than conquerors in the Captain of our salvation, who blesses us out of heaven!

Thus we look for the final deliverance in the day of our Lord's return. We long for the day when we shall awaken in righteousness, to sin no more, but to be holy as Thou art holy, and perfect as Thou, our heavenly Father, art perfect.

Wilt Thou sanctify us, that we may redeem the time, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling, even as Thou workest in us both to will and to do. Teach us to live no longer unto ourselves, but ever more earnestly unto Thee, seeking Thy honor and glory above all else. Give us fitness to live close to Thee, in the consciousness that Thou art ever at our right side to sustain us, provide for us, and to bless us with every spiritual blessing, until the day dawns and all the weary night is spent.

We wait upon Thee, even as watchers who wait for the morning. May we do so in an ever increasing longing, eagerness, and watching.

Teach us, Father, to pray this prayer ever more perfectly. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever! Amen. □

The Standard Bearer makes a thoughtful gift for members of your family, friends, and neighbors. Give a gift of the Standard Bearer.

Calvin Professors Cleared

In our March 1 issue we reported on the basis of articles in the *Grand Rapids Press* that the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary cleared the three Calvin College professors (Profs. Clarence Menninga, Howard Van Till, and Davis Young) whose teachings were being investigated by the Board of Trustees. Since that time we have obtained a copy of the "Prepared Statement" released by the Board of Trustees and of the "Report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee" appointed by the Board. From the latter it is clear that the reports in the *Press* were substantially correct. It is also clear that what I stated near the end of that March 1 editorial, namely, that behind all this is Report 36/44 on the Nature and Extent of the Authority of Scripture, was correct.

According to the "Prepared Statement" of the Board of Trustees, here is what the board decided:

"(1) We received the report with gratitude and gave copies to Dr. Menninga, Dr. Van Till, and Dr. Young for their study and guidance.

"(2) We declare that the writings of Dr. Menninga, Dr. Van Till, and Dr. Young fall within the limits set by our denomination's guidelines for how to interpret the Bible. But, at the same time, the board reminds the professors of the limitations that these guidelines place upon the interpretation of the Bible.

"(3) We commend these three professors for their deep devotion to Christ and their diligence in subjecting their work to His service.

"(4) The study committee report will help us respond intelligently to the letters of criticism."

The reference to the "denomination's guidelines" is a reference to two sets of synodical decisions. The first set is a decision of Synod of 1972, when the report on the Nature and Extent of the Authority of Scripture was adopted (*Acts*, 1972, p. 69). The second is a decision of Synod of 1982 (*Acts*, p. 107). The latter were decisions which resulted from a flurry of overtures following the so-called Libolt case. The *Ad Hoc* Committee makes reference to these decisions in its report concerning Prof. Menninga, and these were the guidelines applied to the teachings of all three professors. The *Ad Hoc* Committee puts the question as follows:

"Does Dr. Clarence Menninga use any method of biblical interpretation which excludes or calls into question either the event-character or the revelational meaning of biblical history, thus compromising the full authority of Scripture as the Word of God? (See *Acts of Synod 1972*, p. 69) Does he adhere to "... those utterances of the Confessions that affirm the historical factuality of the events recorded in Genesis 1-3? (See *Acts of Synod 1982*, p. 107)"

The committee and the Board clear Dr. Menninga without negative comment even though he teaches that "God used long periods of time to develop the universe to its present condition" and that "The earth may be 4½ billion years old, while modern human beings may have lived on earth for only 40,000 years," and even though he leaves open the possibility that "Maybe the dust is a figure of speech and maybe God formed Adam by enabling a more primitive mother to give birth to an offspring who possessed the image of God."

With respect to Dr. Van Till the *Ad Hoc* Committee expresses concerns on two counts. First of all, they are concerned about what Dr. Van Till says about primeval history in his book, *The Fourth Day*. Secondly, they are concerned about what Dr. Van Till writes about human evolu-

tion. However, while Van Till is criticized for ambiguous and incomplete statements, and while he is cautioned to be clear and complete in his statements, nevertheless he also is found to be within the guidelines. Further, nothing whatsoever is said concerning Van Till's "vehicle-packaging-content" approach to biblical interpretation. The latter is at the root of his entire position with respect to Scripture and explains everything else that he says about Scripture in his book. And it is that approach to biblical interpretation which comes straight from the liberal

theologians of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.

Finally, the report concerning Dr. Young is very brief and commendatory. He, too, is within the guidelines.

The matter will now be reported to the Christian Reformed Synod, of course. And it is safe to say that the Synod will approve the findings of the Board of Trustees with little or no change.

Why?

The answer is to be found in Report 36/44, which since 1972 has been binding doctrine in the CRC. If anyone had any doubts about the evil of that report,

these doubts should now be removed when the concrete application and results of that report have become evident in this case.

And this is the most serious aspect of this investigation and its results. To be sure, that evolutionism and the denial of Genesis 1-11 is approved is a very serious matter. But even more serious is the fact that the door is plainly open for the denial of the infallibility and authority of Holy Scripture on any truth whatsoever. □

HCH

*Taking Heed To
The Doctrine*
Ronald H. Hanko

The Two Natures of Christ: The Humanity of Christ

2. The characteristics of Christ's human nature (continued).

e. A central human nature.

This last aspect of Christ's humanity is little appreciated and seldom mentioned, even by those theologians who have written extensively on the subject of Christ's two natures. This is probably due to the fact that it is the most difficult aspect of Christ's humanity, at least as far as its significance is concerned.

In referring to the centrality of Christ's human nature, we mean that He was not born at random out of the human race, but according to the purpose of God, at

the very center of humanity, that is, out of the Jewish nation, the covenant people of God, and the church of the Old Testament. The centrality of Christ's human nature, therefore, is connected with the fact that the Jews, at least in Old Testament times, stood at the center of history from the viewpoint of God's purpose and work (cf. Deut. 4:7, 7:6).

Among other things, this means that Christ Himself was a Jew as far as His race and appearance were concerned. Those pictures, therefore, which present Him with blond hair and nordic features are not correct and neglect this truth, apart, of

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course, from the fact that all pictures of Christ are a violation of the second commandment. That Christ had a central human nature also means that Christ was Mary's own flesh and blood, as the angel promised Mary He would be in Luke 1:31, and again in verse 35.

The Belgic Confession mentions this aspect of Christ's humanity in its article on the incarnation:

Therefore we confess . . . that Christ is become a partaker of the flesh and blood of the children; that he is a fruit of the loins of David after the flesh; made of the seed of David according to the flesh; a fruit of the womb of the virgin Mary, made of a woman, a branch of David; a shoot of the root of Jesse; sprung from the tribe of Judah; descended from the Jews according to the flesh; of the seed of Abraham (Article XVIII).

And, as the Belgic Confession shows, the proof of this truth is to be found in the Scriptural emphasis on His ancestry. This emphasis is to be found from the beginning to the end of Scripture, in the Old Testament promises and prophecies concerning Him (Gen. 15:5, 6 with Gal. 3:16, II Sam. 7:12-16, Ps. 89:1-4, Is. 11:1), in the story of His birth and ministry (Lk. 1:32, 69, 2:4, 18:38, 39, Matt. 21:8-16), in the preaching and teaching of the Apostles (Acts 2:29-31, 3:22, Rom. 9:5, Gal. 4:4, Heb. 7:14), and even in the promises of His glory and coming in the book of Revelation (5:5, 22:16). It is also in connection with this truth, then, that the genealogies of Christ are included in the New Testament. Matthew's genealogy, which begins with Abraham, is especially important, for the purpose of Matthew's gospel is to show that Christ is the fulfilment of the whole Old Testament, and it is with this truth that He begins.

Matthew's genealogy also points, however, to the significance of the truth that Christ has a central human nature. The genealogy is not given merely to prove the bare fact of Christ's descent from Abraham, obviously, but the very arrangement of the genealogy shows that Christ, as the seed of Abraham and David, is also the fulfilment of the covenants made with them. In other words, the centrality of Christ's human nature is seen here to be basic to all covenant theology.

This is true first of all in regard to the unity of the covenant, i.e., that there is only one covenant of God with His people. That Christ is born the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the seed of David in fulfilment of the promises made to each of these Old Testament people, shows that these promises, which are the covenant promises, are essentially one promise and that the covenant to which they belong is also one covenant in Christ.

The unity of the covenant in the Old and New Testament also is connected with the centrality of Christ's human nature. Our unity with Christ, in other words, is our unity with the whole Old Testament, if He is truly the flesh and blood of Abraham and David through Mary, and if we are truly flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone. There is indeed, then, a real organic connection between God's Old and New Testament peoples in Christ, a connection which is basic to the unity of the covenant in both dispensations. This is, of course, denied by all Baptists in support of their practice of adult baptism. If the sign of the covenant is differently administered in the New and Old Testaments (to children in the O.T. and to adults in the N.T.) then the covenants represented and sealed by baptism and cir-

cumcision must be different covenants, the only explanation of which is to be found in the teaching that there are two different peoples of God (Israel in the O.T. and the Church in the N.T.).

Now, at the time of the Reformation, the Anabaptists actually did deny that Christ was the flesh and blood of Mary. Men like Melchior Hoffman and Menno Simons taught that Christ's human nature was specially created in the womb of the virgin Mary and that He was not really her flesh and blood. Mary's womb was only a kind of receptacle, therefore, for Christ before His birth, and she (to use a modern analogy) was only a kind of surrogate mother to Christ. In fact, some of the Anabaptists tended to deny the reality of Christ's humanity altogether. Their error is pointed out in Article XVIII of the Belgic Confession.

This view of the Anabaptists was, in part, an attempt to preserve the sinlessness of Christ, and to that extent commendable. However, the Anabaptists went astray at this point because of an incipient gnosticism in their system of teaching. They believed and to some extent still believe today in the inherent evil of the material world. This was evident in Reformation times in their refusal to hold public office, to recognize the authority of the magistrates, and in their attempts to maintain a pure church (Donatism), and in their practice of world-flight, still seen today among Anabaptist groups such as the Amish and Mennonites. It is also seen today in much of Fundamentalism (which is largely baptistic) in the separation that is made, at least practically, between religion and everyday life, especially in matters political. It

was, however, also connected with their teaching concerning baptism.

Now insofar as this error is not explicitly taught anymore in Baptist circles, it would seem that it is not an integral part of their theology, but only a temporary aberration (cf. L. Verduin, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, p. 253). But Berkhouwer (*The Person of Christ*, pp. 198ff) and others insist, as does the Belgic Confession by implication in Article XVIII, that it is indeed implicit in all Baptist theology.

The connection is this: in denying infant baptism, the Baptist is forced to deny any real connection between Christ as the Head of the New Testament Church and God's Old Testament people and covenant. This led in Anabaptism to a denial of the centrality of Christ's human nature, i.e., to a denial of the fact that He was born Mary's flesh and blood. Thus, according to Anabaptist teaching there was, indeed, no real connection between Christ and God's Old Testament people through Mary. And even today in dispensation circles, Christ is not spoken of as the Head of Israel, which implies some kind of organic relationship and connection, but only as Israel's King (a purely formal relationship). There is indeed, therefore, an implicit denial of the centrality of Christ's human nature in Baptist theology.

The centrality of Christ's human nature has been explicitly denied in Reformed circles also, notably by Dr. Abraham Kuyper. He taught that Christ did not assume an individual human nature, but human nature is general, i.e., human nature as it is common to all men. He says, for example:

To be sure, Scripture teaches everywhere that Christ was a man, that He bore the human nature, but that He was an individual, that among the variations of the seed of Adam there was also the variation Jesus is absurd (Dictaten Dogmatiek, Locus de Christo, 33, quoted from H. Hoeksema, Reformed Dogmatics, pp. 354, 355).

Since, as Kuyper himself admits, a general human nature is an abstraction, it ought to be immediately evident that this is really a denial of the reality of Christ's human nature, first of all. But even apart from that, it falls into the same error into which Baptist theology falls, that is, the error of cutting the organic connection between Christ and His people, especially the Church of the Old Testament.

Thus, though the error itself seems to have died with Kuyper in Reformed circles, and though it is no longer explicitly taught in Baptist circles, these errors do serve to show how closely the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, especially a correct understanding of His humanity, is tied to the Biblical doctrine of the covenant. To this matter we shall return.

Let us note at this point, however, this additional truth, that insofar as Christ has a central human nature and is born in the family of Abraham and David, He is also the living proof of the great promise of the covenant, that God will continue that covenant in the line of generations. In fulfilment of that promise, God continued His covenant of grace from Adam, through Abraham and David to Christ Himself, and so Christ is the surety of that great promise of the covenant as it was given to these Old Testament people of God. And what is more, He is still the surety of that promise as it is given to us in the New Testament, as in Acts 2:39. He would not be this if He was not the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, the seed of Abraham, and the fruit of the loins of David. That He is means that we can still sing the words of Psalm 89 with hope:

For Him my mercy shall
endure,
My covenant made with Him
is sure,
His throne and race I will
maintain
Forever, while the heavens
remain
(Psalter No. 243, 6). □

The Standard Bearer makes a thoughtful gift for members of your family, friends, and neighbors. Give a gift of the Standard Bearer.

The Strength of Youth

Barrett L. Gritters

Hard Questions For Young People:

"How Shall I Prepare For Marriage?"

Dear Christian parents and young people,

This section of the Standard Bearer has always been written for the Young People. The Title "The Strength of Youth" emphasizes the unique strength that young people have in their teens and later.

Although there is a unique strength that young people have, in their lives there are many difficult questions to face and answer. My purpose in this rubric this year is to address some of those questions and try to give guidelines for answering them, so that their strengths may be used to the fullest.

If you have questions you would like to see addressed here, please write to me at 8360 Clyde Park SW, Byron Center, MI 49315.

God lead you and bless you as you face your many "hard questions."

Before you turn the page, because you know you are not nearly close enough to marriage even to think about preparing for it, stick around a bit. This is written for you. It is not written for those close to marriage. In fact, if you are engaged, and marriage is around the corner, it is almost too late to think about preparing for marriage in the sense that I am speaking of it.

This article is written for all of you who would like to be married some time in the future, believe (or hope) that it is God's will for you to marry some time, and desire to enter that marriage relationship in a God-fearing manner. For you, it is a difficult question, "How shall I prepare for marriage?"

So you have never heard about preparing for marriage before you were serious about marrying. You suppose that you will wait until you are ready to get serious about marriage before you will make any preparations. I hope I can convince you to think differently. The title of this article does not ask the question, "Shall I Prepare For Marriage?" You simply cannot ask that question. It would be like asking, "Shall I prepare to be an adult?" Whether you like it or not, your entire life is preparation for adulthood. The same is true for marriage. For all those whom the Lord has determined will marry, their whole life is a school for married life. What have you been learning?

Barrett L. Gritters is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Byron Center, Michigan.

SOME THINGS YOU HAVE NO CONTROL OVER

The greatest preparation you will have for married life is what you receive in your own home.

You will learn how to behave in marriage by the way your parents behave. Either consciously or unconsciously, your marriage behavior will be patterned after the behavior of your parents. It is possible that you learn from the poor behavior of your parents, vowing to yourself never to behave toward your mate in that way. If that happens, I hope that you can still learn from the catechism's explanation of the fifth commandment, that we "also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand;" and, especially, that you remember that there is no sin that you are not capable of committing yourself, especially those that your parents are good at. This learning would be a *conscious* lesson.

But most likely your learning about marriage from your parents will be unconscious and passive; you will simply adopt it as your own from their example. Then it is my prayer that your parents (who are probably "listening in" here) will be a *good* example for you.

How? I pray that you have parents who *love* each other, and aren't afraid to *show* that love to each other when you're around. I pray that you have parents who *speak* to each other often, who are true *friends*. I hope your father and mother confess their faults to *you*, and pray for your forgiveness when they sin. I hope your father *respects* your mother. I hope he *loves* your mother, and gives good, strong, loving leadership to her and to the children. I hope your mother behaves as a Sarah, *cheerfully submitting* to

your father. I hope your parents are *home* together often, spending time with you, talking and having fun. My prayer is that your family spends time around the Scripture after meals, discussing it, singing it in the psalms, learning from it.

Indeed, if you don't learn those things from your parents, where will you learn them? And how will your life be different from theirs?

I also pray that your parents *don't* teach you that possessions are everything. I hope they don't teach you by their example that it's unnecessary to have a budget. ("We have plenty of money; and we're assuming you will always have abundance, too.") I pray that your parents don't teach you that entertainment is the goal of the weekend, that the whole of spiritual life is showing up at church twice on Sunday, that "remembering the Sabbath" is instructing the kids, "Learn your catechism," and then jumping in bed for the afternoon. I hope your parents don't do those things: because your attitude towards money and entertainment, your view of church life and your observance of the sabbath day have a lot to do with the way your *marriage* is going to go.

I make that prayer, because if you have parents like that, you are going to have a tough time when you become married. This is not to say that a good marriage for you is impossible if you have had this kind of home atmosphere and instruction. A boy who grows up without the advantage of a good high-school and college education surely is at a disadvantage, but he can overcome that by getting a good education later on. A young woman who has not had a good family life can overcome that deficit by learning what marriage is all about and praying for grace

to learn. But nothing can replace the good example of godly parents for preparing you for your own marriage. And nothing can harm more than parents who teach ungodliness.

SOME THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO

There are a good many things that you have some control over. I would like to present five exercises to help you prepare for marriage. I also realize that all these are gifts from God and that, apart from His Holy Spirit and grace, are impossible. (Pray and work!)

Learn to love others.

Husband and wife will be happy if they love each other. When there is true love in practice, their marriage will be sound. A man treats his wife well when he loves her. The wife will submit to her husband when she loves him. And both will submit in obedience to God in other areas, because true love for each other comes out of their prior love for God.

But true love is *giving* to another person. Far from being only giddy feelings that magically appear or disappear, love is a spiritual bond that comes to expression in *actions*. God's love for us gave His Son to die. A man's love for his wife brings him to give time and energy to her. A wife's love for her husband makes her give herself as a true "helper," suited for him. Loving giving does not come easily, and will not last for a young man or young woman who never practiced that kind of giving love before marriage. One great problem for marriages today is the attitude that everything I do must be for me. The young person who lives with that mindset is bound to have problems in marriage. Love is selfless giving.

If loving others in that way is difficult, what about loving others who are not always very *lovable*? This, too, will be required of you when you are married. Your future spouse will not always be as attractive and lovable as when you were dating. Pray for grace to love unlovables. All young people can practice this before marriage. It is not easy, but comes by grace.

Learn to submit to others.

Marriage means submission, especially for the wife. If there is anything that is contrary to our natures, it is to submit. Just think of Eve and the fall, Rebekah and the plot to steal the blessing (Gen. 27), Rachel and her idols (Gen. 30, 31) . . .

It simply will not happen that a young girl who hopes to marry never submits when she's young, but will for the first time when she marries. This must come with a lifetime of practice. I would warn young men that girls who show no submission to teachers at school and rebel against their parents at home, are giving pretty good indications that they're not going to submit to your love in marriage either. Also, how does she treat you when you date? Is there any flexibility when your opinions differ? Don't forget the timely warnings of Solomon in Proverbs 21:9, 19; 27:15, etc.

Pray for the grace of submission to parents and teachers.

Be attractive.

The way to land a fish is to use the right bait. The way a young person is usually led to his or her God-ordained spouse is by being lured by the other's attractiveness.

There is physical attractiveness. Solomon "sings" of this beautifully. Even though you might not look for a neck "like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers," (Song of

Solomon 4:4), Solomon was praising the physical beauty of his beloved. Physical attractiveness is not something to be slighted. God has made us as human beings to see and appreciate physical beauty in others.

But the lure for a good mate is not mainly physical, but spiritual. I Peter 3 calls women to let their cosmetics be inward — meekness, a quiet spirit, a godly walk; and not outward — hairstyles, jewelry, clothing . . . The same must be true for the young men. Let them try to cultivate the spiritual graces.

Any good fisherman will tell you that if you want to catch carp, you use carp bait; bullhead, use bullhead bait; trout, you use trout bait. How many young people will fail to see what is on their line until after it is too late to throw it back?

Spiritual beauty not only prepares for marriage by luring a godly partner, but, just as important, prepares you to handle all the issues you will face from the time you have your first row until the day you part in death. Knowledge of the Bible, the desire to pray, willingness to work through problems biblically and prayerfully, all form the only solid foundation for good married life.

Remain a virgin.

Although there could be a lot said here, I don't need to say very much about this, except that both the young women and the young men know that this applies to them, and that violation of this important biblical rule means untold misery both before and after marriage.

My hope is that parents, pastors, and counsellors and teachers at school, will spell out the details of this vital point, showing the Bible's warnings about promiscuity and encouragement for virginity.

Learn what friendship is.

This really is the heart of it all. If you learn what friendship is, you *will* love others, submit to others, be attractive to others, and remain chaste. If you know true friendship, you will stay home with your spouse, have a prayer life together, observe the Sabbath properly, and love to spend time around the Word of God together. Marriage is friendship.

At bottom, our relationship with *God* is friendship. This is the essence of the covenant. The Bible also describes the relationship between God and the church as a marriage. (Spend some time looking at both the Old and New Testament passages that refer to this.) If our marriages, then, need to reflect the relationship between God and His church, they need to reflect that *friendship* first of all.

How do you learn about friendship? First, by cultivating your friendship with your God. Speak with Him; tell Him your secrets; listen to His secrets to you in His Word. Learn to enjoy time with Him. Learn the pleasures of His company. Learn to "open up" to Him.

Second, cultivate friendships with others. Make good friends with others of the same sex, but also with others of the opposite sex, without thinking that it needs to be "serious." Learn to open up to them, tell them your secrets, your needs, your troubles, your happiness. Learn to listen to them, care for them, love them . . .

Marriages made of two who have learned about friendship before ever "leaving father and mother" will be (by God's blessing) marriages that are not only strong, but a great *joy* for both husband and wife!

* * * * *
Marriage is not to be taken lightly, nor its prospect ignored. You *are* preparing for marriage *right now*. How are you doing? □

All Around Us
Gise J. Van Baren

"Remember the Sabbath Day"

Troubling times are in store for the faithful child of God. We all know that. One of the problems that many already face is: will I lose my job if I refuse to work on Sunday? Or the question might well be: will I be able to get a good job if I refuse to work on Sunday? One observes that in the religious community there is seen little objection anymore to the breaking of the fourth commandment. Many, apparently with clear conscience, can eat out in restaurants on Sunday; many can travel to or from vacations on Sunday; many find "good" excuses for working on Sunday.

It is high time that the church, for principal reasons, insist on proper Sunday observance. And one would expect from Reformed circles that such strong emphasis upon the Sabbath as a day of spiritual rest would be particularly heard. It must, then, be cause of great grief and sad disappointment in the Christian Reformed Church when the editor of its *Banner* appears to deplore the growing secularization of Sunday — but on practical grounds, not on the basis of religious principles. The editor attempts to

destroy the whole foundation upon which our observance of Sunday rests. The sad part is that many, especially among the young, will consider the arguments quite appealing — for after all, does not this editor, who has studied theology, know what Scripture teaches?

The editor writes of changing practices with respect to Sunday observance:

One of the reasons for the sudden demise of our church's system of Sunday observance (all our do's and don't's) was the weak theology that supported it. The previous generation of Reformed and Presbyterian Christians suffered through a legalistic form of Sunday observance that was only quantitatively different from the infamous Sabbath rules of the New England Puritans. At any church gathering or family reunion one may still collect horror stories about "what we could and what we could not do" in those days.

The editor continues by showing that there are some good social reasons for maintaining Sunday as a day of rest:

But we are Christians in the nation, and we ought to promote a national form of Sunday observance. We ought to do it for the honor of God, the health of the nation, and the protection of Christians.

Shoppers want to have the stores open on Sunday; the store clerks aren't asking for it. We should try to make all people realize that having seven business days is bad for all and benefits none.

Whatever the religious significance of the Old Testament Sabbath was, it had a basic social and humanitarian purpose, according to Jesus' own interpretation:

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). God instituted it for his creatures' interest and well-being. People who do get weary of the ratrace now and then might still favorably acknowledge this wisdom of the Creator in forbidding work on one out of seven days.

In a full-page ad in the Toronto Star, Gerrit De Boer, owner of a large furniture business, told the government of Ontario that wide-open Sunday shopping is bad for the family life of store employees and will not increase sales or produce jobs. Thousands agree with him.

But then the editor proceeds to demolish the principles upon which rests our Sabbath observance. In this, he does dreadful disservice to the cause of God and His church. He writes:

Although there are some attractive (and speculative) theories that demonstrate how the Christian Sunday has replaced the Jewish Sabbath, there's no New Testament evidence to that effect. One has to be either a strict Sabbatarian and Seventh-Day Christian or stand in the freedom of the New Covenant, which has no holy days, holy foods, or holy places (and no holy land) but only a holy people who are elect in Christ, dedicated to God, and zealous to do his will.

. . . I remember how in the 1950s practically all the discipline cases in our Canadian churches had to do with "Sunday labour." But those who milked cows or worked in hospitals were all right.

I myself once worked in a gas and oil field, overseeing production from the wellhead to containers. Sometimes I worked on Sundays. As a result I faced principled opposition from a number of delegates at the Albertan classis to which I applied for financial support to study for the ministry. Yet these same delegates

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used their gas furnaces on Sundays without any qualms.

Sunday is not the Sabbath. And we are not under law but under grace!

I love those people who stand firm, knowing that one cannot work on Sunday once or twice and then close the shop again. Rightly, they draw the line. They say no because they have said yes to God.

Unfortunately, people who stand firm are not always inclined to let others be free. I know how desirable solidarity is with respect to supporting the Christian school and with respect to observing Sunday. Common commitment should weigh heavily on us. We don't make our decisions in isolation from one another. But our good decisions do not give us the right to lay down the law for others.

... The church gives no detailed rules for Sunday observance. But church members are people who want to love God above all and who have lost their hearts to Jesus.

In a time when the secular Sunday is being ever more widely accepted, Christians will find creative ways to fulfill the Sabbath command.

... And when we approach the children of this secular age, we shouldn't come with a packet of commandments about Sunday observance. But we do present the gospel that delivers people from greed and worry and places them, body and soul, for this life and the next, in the hands of the heavenly Father.

There may be many who rejoice in such a defense of Sunday

— which encourages the use of the day as one of non-labor, but denies any principle reasons for doing so. One can relax with the family at the beach, engage in all kinds of recreational activities, enjoy togetherness — or he can work on that day if he wishes. Each must be at liberty to do as he desires in this New Testament age of “freedom”. Of course, this means that the worship services in church are also a matter of personal choice. If one desires to worship another day, he need not go to church. Or he may determine to worship in his own home and ignore public worship altogether. Why not?

And if one can so treat the fourth commandment, what about the other nine? Are none of these binding anymore? But if they are, why not the fourth?

It is indeed a sad day in the history of the Reformed churches when all that which had been faithfully maintained in the past is rapidly being overthrown. Theistic evolution is openly accepted, approved by official

church bodies. Sunday becomes just another day — which might conceivably still be used as a day of non-work (not necessarily for “rest” — which is a spiritual concept).

There appear to be so many who seem to strain at “gnats”, yet are ready to swallow these “camels”. How long can all this undermining of the old landmarks continue?

But we too must be on guard. How easy it is to find the arguments concerning such breaking of the Sabbath to be appealing. Were not our forefathers just too strict? In how many ways might we not already be breaking the fourth commandment? For us, observance of the fourth commandment must not just be a condemnation of those who might go out to eat in restaurants on Sunday. Rather, there must be that labor of love, that true spiritual rest, in which (especially on Sunday) we contemplate the wonders of the work of our God.

And could not we also find ways to promote the observance of this day of rest for our greater profit? □

Guided Into All Truth

Thomas C. Miersma

Rationalism and Its Fruit (3)

Modern philosophy begins as we have seen with man, man's reason, and man's experience. As such, in its very starting point, it has no place for divine revelation or the need of the Scriptures. The claim of the Word of God there-

fore to be divine revelation is one which philosophy opposes and against which it strives. Throughout the eighteenth century and the era which preceded it, the drive of worldly philosophy was to set man's wisdom

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and experience upon the throne as the sole standard of authority. That which did not measure up to that standard as acceptable to human reason was ridiculed as false. The object of the attack of human reason was first of all the contents of Scripture, particularly the wonders or miracles set forth in the Word of God. Behind this attack, however, lay an attack upon Scripture itself as a work of God and as God's Word.

This attack was given further impetus through the philosophical writings of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant himself was little concerned with Scripture or revelation. His importance lies in bringing together the threads of rationalism, evaluating them critically, and laying the foundation for the development of philosophy from the 1800's to the present. Kant was a rather unusual individual. He was born, lived and died in Königsberg in Prussia, Germany, though he was of Scottish descent. A homebody, he never went more than forty miles from Königsberg during his whole life. A life-long bachelor, his personal life was one of clock-like regularity, rising at five in the morning to read, study, and write; dining at one-thirty; taking his afternoon hourly walk at four; and retiring to bed at ten o'clock. His pattern of life was so regular and consistently punctual that the town's inhabitants are said to have been able to set their watches by his appearance at the door of his house in the afternoon for his daily walk.

At the center of Kant's thought, and his critical approach to the rationalistic philosophy which preceded him, is the principle that human reason is finite and limited by time and space to the realm of experience as far as

certainty and truth are concerned. The mind is driven to seek an underlying unity in all things which we behold and experience in the phenomena of the world about us. This attempt of our reason, or pure reason, to find in the realm of thought and ideas the absolute and ultimate unity or unifying principle of all things (god) can never be more than a projection of the mind. While this activity of the mind as it synthesizes our experience may be useful to categorize and to reduce our experience to its underlying unity, its result is nevertheless no guarantee that that unity actually exists. Fundamentally Kant's approach leads to the denial that man can ever achieve any real knowledge of God through human reason. But by limiting truth to that which man beholds and experiences, Kant at the same time denies the possibility of any real objective revelation, of a revealed and knowable Word of God, and of revealed truth. Kant does not stop, however, with this theoretical form of agnosticism. That which cannot be discovered by the mind, he finds in the sense of moral right and wrong and justice, which we experience ought to be, though it does not appear in the real world round about us. We experience a sense of duty and obligation. This moral imperative or sense of law then becomes the basis in Kant's thinking for the practical belief in the idea of a moral being (god) as a matter of practical reason.

Kant in effect denies any real knowledge about God or any real objective revelation of God or Word of God, but makes room for morality as a practical matter, for the role of the conscience. While it may seem as if this has little to do with the doctrine of Scripture, Kant's influence and thought had a profound effect upon the Christian church in

Europe and North America by those who brought his ideas into the church. Kant's philosophy constitutes a denial of the Bible as in any sense God's Word of truth. Revealed truth is an impossibility. Religion is reduced to a matter of mere morality and ethics. Take Kant's ideas into the minister's study as the basis from which to proceed with Scripture in making sermons, and the Bible becomes simply a source book for teaching morals, a source book of object lessons illustrating good and acceptable behavior and moral conduct. Religion has as its object the good moral life, and happiness through socially acceptable behavior. This is exactly the effect that Kant's ideas had as they were brought into the Christian church by those who followed him or were influenced by him. Religion ceases to be the worship of God in Jesus Christ and becomes only a tool for promoting the philosophy of the so-called golden rule and good neighborliness.

Moreover, since it is man's own inner sense of right and wrong, of duty and obligation, which is the basis of morality, man is now principally made also the standard of his own morality. There is no place either in Kant's approach for a revealed objective standard of right and wrong, no place for the revelation of the righteous judgments of God. The Kantian god is himself subject to the same moral law or obligation which man senses in himself, and god may really be dispensed with altogether. The door is open for a functioning atheistic humanism in which man is his own standard of morality and judgment. Man's sense of what is right and wrong, of what ought to be done and not to be done may also be imposed upon Scripture, for it is man's own conscience which becomes the true standard of morality.

Again we also find in the philosophy of Kant the use of Christian theological language, which is separated from its actual meaning, and reduced to a tool to teach non-Christian ideas. Christianity as a religion exists, in this approach, upon a higher plain than other religions of the world only because of its higher moral development and purer achievement of the moral idea. The incarnation of the Son of God in our flesh and blood is taken up as a mere symbol of man's moral nature. Christ becomes only a moral example who shows us what man ought to be as an ideal and what he can become. Our Savior becomes simply a good teacher of a refined morality, a better teacher than those found in other religions.

Kant opened the way for the philosophers that followed him in succeeding generations to redefine what is right and what is wrong in man's own image and according to man's judgment. Morality is reduced to a matter of practical expedience and is made relative. Where the conscience is seared as with a hot iron, as it is

in man as sin develops in this world, morality ceases altogether.

By his approach, however, Kant also brought the development of the philosophy of human reason as the standard of truth to a new point. Pure reason according to Kant is limited to the phenomena of this world, which we see and experience. This is, in Kant, the only realm of certainty and objective truth. Religion is a matter of practical reason and morality which is not founded in objective truth, but in man's sense of morality, of right and wrong. This approach introduces a fundamental divorce, not only between truth and the reality of good and evil, between any real standard of right and wrong and morality, but it also separates religion and theology from any contact with real truth or reality. Kant not only uses Christian terminology as a tool to teach philosophical ideas, but he opens the way to the treatment of religion and theology as a mere symbolic expression for religious feelings, which have nothing to do with truth. The way is opened to identifying faith with emotion and defining faith as simply religious feelings. Kant's philosophy destroys faith

as a certain knowledge grounded upon the facts of our redemption in the death and resurrection of Christ. The Bible stands and functions on two levels, which have nothing whatsoever to do with one another. On the level of objective reality and truth it is simply a human document like any other, to be treated as literature. As a book of religious faith and feeling, a source book of morality, it functions quite independently of whether any of its contents are in fact historically true. It may be a collection of complete fairy tales as far as its objective reality is concerned. The philosophical system of Kant opens the way to separate completely faith and its foundation in the historicity of any events recorded in Scripture. The facts of history belong to the phenomena of this world which are subject to science and human reason. Faith and its contents belong to the realm of religious ideas and feelings which are the projection of human thought and the exercise of practical reason and the sense of moral order. Kant lays the basis for building a wall between faith and reason. □

*Bible Study
Guide*
Jason L. Kortering

Deuteronomy — Exhorted Unto Obedience (3)

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In the book of Deuteronomy, we do not have additional laws given by Moses. Rather we have

a review of the instructions which God gave the people at Mt. Sinai, for the people who

were about to enter the land of Canaan. The book is divided into four parts: the first discourse of Moses (1:1-4:43), the second discourse of Moses (4:44-26:19), the third discourse of Moses (27:1-30:20), and the last words of Moses, including the record of his death (31:1-34:12).

With our outlining, we are in the midst of the second discourse of Moses, beginning at chapter 19:14.

We have a series of general instructions regarding residence in Palestine. Mention is made of the landmarks which were set in old times marking each one's inheritance. They were not to be removed (19:14). Accusations against anyone of evil had to be sustained by two or three witnesses, and false witnesses had to be removed (19:15-21). When Israel was ready to engage in battle with an enemy, they were to be encouraged by the officers by the reminder that Jehovah was the One Who went before them in battle. If anyone had built a new house and had not yet dedicated it, or planted a vineyard and not eaten of it, or become betrothed to a woman and had not yet taken her, or was fainthearted for battle, he was instructed to return home, (20:1-9). In attacking cities in battle, those which were in the land of Canaan had to be completely destroyed and all its inhabitants, lest they corrupt the people by their evil influence. Concerning cities which were farther away, they could offer peace to them, and if accepted make them tributaries; but if not accepted, they should kill all the men and keep the women, children, and possessions for themselves. In the process of battle they should not destroy trees good for food (20:10-20). If the body of one slain would be found in the field,

the elders of the city closest to it would redeem the city by taking a heifer to a deserted valley and cutting off its head and washing their hands over it, acknowledging before God that they did not know the murderer, and asking God to put away the guilt (21:1-9). Reference is made to the taking of a wife from among the women captured in battle. If an Israelite discovers a beautiful woman among them, he may take her to wife. Only she had to shave off all her hair and cut her nails and bewail her captivity for one month. After this the man may take her to wife, and if he delight in her, keep her. If not, he may let her go, only he may not sell her for money. Similarly, if a man has two wives, one loved the other hated, if the first-born son is of the wife whom he hates, he must give him all the privileges of the firstborn, even though he hates his mother (21:10-17). A stubborn and disobedient son who lived as a glutton and drunkard was to be taken to the elders of the city, and they were to stone him to death (21:18-21). The body of a person put to death by hanging was not to remain on the tree at night, for that would defile the land (21:22, 23). Any lost property belonging to the neighbor had to be returned. Also a fallen animal had to be lifted up (22:1-4). Men and women were forbidden to wear the clothes of the opposite sex (22:5). Care had to be taken to preserve life in the midst of nature (bird's nests), and at home, by providing safety on the roof of a house (22:6-9). Separation was emphasized: an ox or ass could not plow together, wool and linen could not be worn together, equal fringes had to be on garments (22:10-12). We then have a few instructions concerning marriage. A woman is given in marriage to a man, and if he later claims that

she was not a virgin, the evidence of her virginity has to be brought to the elders. If he is found to be a false accuser, then he is to pay 100 shekels of silver to the father of the woman for the evil brought upon his family, and she has to remain his wife. If there is no evidence of her virginity, she is to be stoned to death (22:13-21). If a man lay with either a married woman or betrothed virgin and she does not cry out, both are to be stoned to death. If this fornication takes place in the field, where no one could hear her cries, only the man is to be stoned. If a man forces a virgin not betrothed, he must pay her father 50 shekels of silver and take her to wife. In no case was a man to take his father's wife (22:22-30). The congregation of Israel is to be consecrated to God. Hence all unclean are to abstain from coming among the people, e.g. eunuchs, bastards, the Ammonite, and Moabite to the tenth generation (23:1-8). The people are to purify themselves and remove all abominations when they go forth to battle (23:9-14). A runaway slave could be kept in one's house, but harlots and homosexuals were banished (23:15-18). Usury (making money by charging interest) was forbidden among the people, but could be practiced with strangers (23:19, 20). Vows were to be freely taken, but once taken they had to be kept (23:21-23). Grapes and corn could be eaten freely from the neighbor's field, only none could take extra home with them (23:24, 25). A bill of divorcement is described: a man marries a woman in whom he finds some uncleanness and he puts her away. Once put away he may not marry her again (24:1-4). A newly married man was exempt from war and business for one year, in order that he might cheer up his wife. A millstone

was not to be taken as pledge for debt (it was his livelihood). If a man pledged his garments, it could only be for that day, and kidnapping required the death penalty. They are reminded to keep the laws regarding leprosy (24:5-13). Hired servants who were poor and depended on daily wages had to be paid (24:14, 15). Children were not to be punished for sins of fathers, nor fathers for children's (24:16). The stranger's judgment was not to be perverted, nor a widow's raiment taken in pledge (24:17, 18). Gleanings were to be left in the field and on the trees for the poor (24:19-22). Corporal punishment for an offender was limited to forty stripes (25:1-3). The ox is not to be muzzled when he treads corn (25:4). If a man dies, his widow is to be married to his surviving brother and the first-born son shall take on the name of his brother. If the brother desires not to marry, he shall give account to the elders of the city and the brother's wife shall come and loose one of his shoes and spit in his face and say, "So shall it be done to that man that will not build up his brother's house." His name is to be "one who has the loosed shoe" (25:5-10). If two men are fighting and the wife of one comes to intervene and grabs him by his genitals, her hand is to be cut off (25:11, 12). Dishonest weights are forbidden (25:13-16). The people are reminded of Amalek's sin when he attacked the feeble of the congregation. They are to blot out his name when they arrive in Canaan. Also, they are to offer to God the firstfruits which they would gather from the entire land and rehearse before God His providential care shown in the journey (25:17-26:11). They are reminded of the importance of tithing for the sake of the

Levite, stranger, fatherless and widows. They are to be glad in this and keep the laws which God commanded, for therein are they a special people before Him (26:12-19).

4. Moses' third discourse (27:1-30:20). Instruction is now given that when Israel crosses the river into Canaan, a special ceremony is to be conducted. The law is to be written upon plastered stones set up in Mt. Ebal, in connection with an altar built of field stones, and offerings made to Jehovah. This is a reminder to keep God's law. Mt. Gerizim is the mountain of blessing and Ebal the mountain of cursing. A list of curses follows (27:1-26). By hearkening diligently unto the Lord, Moses assured them God would bless them. A list of such blessings follows (28:1-14). Once again a list of curses follows, an indication that the people would be unfaithful and should be warned of this very carefully. Many of the curses are prophetic of what will happen to them, e.g. in the eventual captivity in Babylon (28:15-68). Moses then proceeds to instruct the children of Israel in the covenant which Jehovah established with them. He does this in addition to the words which God gave at Mt. Sinai. This is now in the land of Moab. He rehearses the loving care of God shown during the forty years in the wilderness. They had bread to eat, water to drink, their shoes did not wear out, and God even protected them from the enemies (29:1-9). He calls the people to witness that they stand before Jehovah with their families and tribes to assume loyalty to God. They are not to turn to the gods of the heathen lest Jehovah will punish them, and the land be consumed before them — a reference to the eventual captivity (29:10-29). On the other hand, Moses assures them that in the

way of repentance, God will receive them and give them a new, circumcised heart, and bless them richly by returning them to their land and maintaining His covenant with them (30:1-10). A final summary is given, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I commend thee to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments" (30:11-20).

5. This is the final section of the book, Moses' last words and the record of his death (31:1-34:12). Moses reminds the people that they are now by the edge of Canaan. He will not be able to go with them into the land, but Joshua will go before them. God will destroy all the nations that occupy the land. They are not to fear since Jehovah will go with them (31:1-6). He gives the same encouragement to Joshua (31:7, 8). Moses presents to the priests written copies of the laws which he rehearsed before them and instructs them to read these to the people every seventh year (31:9-13). Both Moses and Joshua were instructed by God to appear before Him in the tabernacle, and the Lord appeared before them in the pillar of cloud. Jehovah now instructs Joshua of Moses' death and the coming apostasy of the children of Israel. He gives to them a song which must be committed to memory by the congregation, so that when evil days come they may recall God's promises in the singing of this song (31:14-23). The law which was presented to the priests must be kept in the ark of the covenant (31:24-30). □

In His Fear
Arie den Hartog

Distinctive Traits Of True Godliness

The Word of God often exhorts us to live in godliness. Sometimes this term is used to describe a specific virtue along with a number of other Christian virtues, such as in II Peter 1:5-7: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." Other times this term is used alone to describe the sum of all Christian virtues. In the next few articles in this department we want to consider some of the distinctive traits of true godliness. We shall use this term, therefore, in the more general sense. Godliness, as the term itself suggests, is God-centeredness in our life.

Godliness is the knowledge and love and fear of God. It is true piety born out of a deep consciousness of who God is, and out of a serious and earnest desire to live unto Him. The truly godly man has a profound knowledge of the sovereignty and holiness and righteousness and truth of God. He is conscious that God is ever present with him and that he lives his whole life before the presence of God.

Godliness must characterize our whole life. It must be the spiritual principle out of which we live. True godliness is the fruit of the Spirit of God in the heart and soul of the child of God. There is both an inner godliness of the heart and an outward manifestation of that godliness in our life. There is, according to the Word of God, a false form of godliness. This "form of godliness" denies the power thereof. Therefore it is a sham. It may bear some outward resemblance to true godliness, but it is mere form and hypocrisy. It is not the fruit of the almighty work of regeneration and sanctification in the heart of the child of God. True godliness is the manifestation of God's mighty and wonderful working in us, which causes us to be more and more conformed to His own

image and to manifest His own glorious virtues in our life.

True godliness is never ostentatious. The truly godly man does not call attention to his own godliness. He does not boast about it. As soon as a man does that, he ceases to be truly godly, and becomes a hypocrite. The truly godly man is deeply humble because of the consciousness of his own great sin and weakness. He has nothing to boast about in himself. All his glorying is in the Lord alone. He is not self-conscious about his godliness. His godliness is evident to all men.

We must all strive to live in godliness. In a recent article we discussed the great need of exercising ourselves unto godliness. We need not repeat that here. Godliness does not come automatically. It does not come easy, for it is against our sinful and ungodly nature. Every moment we are not careful and fail to walk by faith in the strength and grace of God, our sinful nature will again arise in us and we will cease to be godly. Maintaining true godliness involves a constant spiritual struggle. We often fail. We always fall far short of the standard of the Word of God. But we must continue to fight the good fight of faith.

Our life of godliness must adorn the doctrine of God that

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we confess. God has given to us that true doctrine that is in Christ Jesus, the blessed gospel of salvation. As Reformed Christians we have this doctrine in all of its glory and truth. We are highly privileged of God. Who are we that we should be so favored of God? We have the calling to confess and maintain and defend the doctrine which God has given to us. We must preach this doctrine as a church, and confess it in our personal lives as Christians. Our godliness must adorn this doctrine. Many Christians who have confessed the true doctrine of salvation have by their ungodly lives brought shame to the gospel of Christ. This has been the occasion of blasphemy against the truth of God by the world. Sometimes we have witnessed in the sphere of the church those who have vehemently confessed the true doctrine of God, but even while doing that have displayed such ungodly attitudes and manners that they have done grievous hurt to the cause of Christ. It has happened even that faithful ministers of the gospel have been slandered and maligned by these "professors of the truth." While on the one hand seeking to stand for the truth, these have manifested a most ungodly manner in which they have treated brethren of the Lord. So grievous has this been that weaker saints of God have been driven from the church. For all of these reasons it is so urgent that we adorn the doctrine of God we confess with a life of true godliness. When we live in true godliness, the glory of God's own work becomes manifest in us. If we are truly godly we will greatly desire this and rejoice in this.

The chief trait of true godliness is an evident love for God. The great commandment of the law of God is that we love God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength. There is no higher and more glorious virtue possible for man than love for God. There is no more holy affection imaginable. The godly man desires to love God perfectly. He knows that by nature he is prone to hate God. The natural man is at enmity against God. The only reason why there is in our heart any love for God at all is because God loves us first and shed His own love abroad in our hearts. Therefore we can begin to love God. Always the source of our love to God is His love towards us.

Love for God is a personal and holy affection and delight in God. It is more than a mere assent to certain doctrines about God. It is a personal delight in Him. The godly man has holy pleasure in God and all of His virtues. With fear and trembling He loves God for all that He is in His perfect righteousness and holiness and absolute sovereignty. The godly man who loves God does not seek to clothe God with attributes of vain human philosophy, as the modernist does. Anyone who seeks to do that hates the true God and denies the true God, desiring an idol of his own vain imagination. Love for God involves a spiritual longing after God and desire for His communion and fellowship. The man who loves God can say with the Psalmist; "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Psalm 73:25 and again; "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Psalm 84:2

Love for God is evident in the life of the godly man. It is true that first of all that love must be in his heart. But it must also come to manifestation. Love for God is not merely a nice warm feeling inside or a mere passing emotion. The godly man is one who is manifest as a man that truly loves God. It will show itself first of all in a strong desire to know more and more about the true doctrine of God. He is not satisfied with a mere shallow and superficial knowledge of God. His love for God constrains him to desire more and more to know the blessed revelation of God. This becomes evident in that he frequents the house of God to hear the preaching of the Word. He loves to search the Scriptures in his own home with his family. He desires to know more and more of the revelation of God's mighty deeds and wonderful works among His people. Above all, he delights to search the wonderful revelation of God in His works of salvation and in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The love for God which fills the godly man causes him to desire the fellowship and communion of God. Church for him is more than a building where sermons are preached. It is the place where the God-fearing man enjoys communion and fellowship with God, who dwells among His people. The truly godly man spends time every day in prayer to God, and personal communion with Him in his own inner closet.

The godly man who loves God delights in the commandments of God. He knows the words of His Lord; "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever. John 14:15, 16. A man who says that he loves God and is not serious about the law of God in his life is

a liar. He does not know the truth about love for God. The godly man finds the joy and blessing of the Lord in the way of keeping His commandments. The man who loves God hates every way of the wicked ungodly. He weeps because God's commandments are transgressed by the ungodly world. He is deeply conscious of his own sin and weakness. He knows that he does not himself keep the commandments of the Lord perfectly. This is not

something about which he becomes complacent. It is the cause of continual sorrow to the godly man. He longs to be delivered from all of his remaining sins and weakness. He earnestly strives against them in the fear and love of God.

The godly man who loves God has an evident desire to see the name of God as the highest purpose of his own personal life. He actively supports and promotes

the cause of the church and kingdom of God, and delights to see them prosper.

Much more, of course, could be said about how the love of God becomes evident in the life of the godly man. Love for God is the principal virtue out of which proceed all of the other distinctive traits of true godliness. In succeeding articles we shall continue to consider some of these traits. □

Book Reviews

Lori, Gertrude Hoeksema; Reformed Free Publishing Association, Grand Rapids, Mich. 153 pp. (paper) \$6.95. [Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema]

Truth is stranger than fiction, it is sometimes said. This true story of the conversion of a deaf-mute and mentally impaired girl is certainly a confirmation of that maxim. If some of the details of this story were found in a novel, they would probably be characterized as unbelievable and non-realistic. But this deeply moving account of the instruction and conversion of a dear child of God is truth, not fiction.

You probably think that as the husband of the author I am a biased reviewer. I freely concede this. And from that point of view I gladly allow the book to recommend itself. Besides, the rather overwhelming public response to this latest RFPA publication also serves as a recommendation.

However, from my position as the author's husband and as firsthand observer of many of the events recounted in *Lori*, I am also able to confirm the facts of the story. It is safe to say that, if anything, the author has underplayed the drama of the events, possibly because sometimes words were inadequate to describe them.

In conclusion, two things. First of all, this little book should encourage us — parents, churches, schools — to do all in our power to furnish Biblical and spiritual instruction to the handicapped among our covenant seed.

Secondly, we should not underestimate the ability of the Spirit of Christ to drive home and to apply that instruction. If this book serves to underscore these two items, then, in addition to being a moving and highly interesting true story, it will serve a positive purpose. □

[Note: You may order the book directly from the publishers: Reformed Free Publishing Association, P.O. Box 2006, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501. Incidentally, this has been the RFPA's fastest selling book so far; in a few months' time almost a thousand copies have been sold. If you sign up as a RFPA Book Club member, you can purchase this and all RFPA books at a 30% discount. HCH]

Sources Of Secession, Gerrit J. tenZythoff; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co.; 189 pp., paper, \$12.95. [Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema]

This is No. 17 in the Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America.

For anyone interested in Dutch Reformed church history, and especially in the history which gave rise to the Secession of 1834, which forms such an important background to the history of the Holland colony and its RCA church, the history of the CRC by way of its secession in 1857, and thus also the history of the Protestant Reformed Churches, this is a book to read. You will have to put on your thinking

cap, because the history is involved and the author's account is filled with detail, evincing rather thorough research. But all of this is worth your while.

The book does what its title suggests: it goes back to the roots of the Secession of 1834, with which the names of men like De Cock, Van Raalte, and Scholte are connected. There are some 40 pages of footnotes, some of them even more interesting than the text itself.

Here and there the book is marred by some evident inac-

curacies, both doctrinal and factual. For example, the author does not accurately describe either supra- or infralapsarianism; nor is it true that De Cock and the Seceders held the confessions to be infallible. But these do not detract from the value of the book.

Add this volume to the church history section of your library. □

Report of Classis West

March 8, 1988

For the first time in its history, the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California was host to a meeting of Classis West. The Spring, 1988 meeting of Classis was held in the beautiful, new church building of the Redlands Church on March 2. The delegates enjoyed the warm hospitality of the Redlands Congregation. For many, it was the first opportunity to see the impressive buildings — church, Christian school, and parsonage — and grounds of the Protestant Reformed saints in Redlands.

Twelve ministers and thirteen elders represented the thirteen churches of Classis West at this one-day meeting of the Classis. Rev. C. Terpstra led in opening devotions, speaking to the delegates from John 10:11-13. By rotation, Rev. R. Cammenga

presided over the Classis. Elders A. Bleyenbergh (Hull) and R. Brands (Edgerton) were present at Classis for the first time and signed the Formula of Subscription.

Among the reports were those of the Reading Sermon Committee and the Church Visitors. The report of the Reading Sermon Committee reminded Consistories to return reading sermons that have been used and reminded Pastors to submit a new reading sermon this year. The Church Visitors informed Classis that they have visited all the churches during the past year and "found a good spirit of unity and peace in our churches . . ."

Six Churches — Edgerton, Edmonton, Houston, Isabel, Lacombe, and Pella — requested subsidy for 1989 in the amount of \$120,537. Classis approved these

requests and forwarded them to Synod, 1988.

Classical appointments were given to Isabel according to the following schedule: March 20, 27 — Miersma; April 10, 17 — Kuiper; May 1, 8 — Haak; May 22, 29 — Engelsma; June 12, 19 — Moore; July 3, 10 — De Vries; July 24, 31 — Cammenga; August 14, 21 — den Hartog; September 11, 18 — Lanting.

The Consistory of Redlands sent an overture to Classis that intended to "clarify the authority of doing mission work and the role of the calling church, missionary and the mission committee in doing mission work." Proceeding on the basis of their belief "that the work of missions is that of the local church," Redlands called for substantial revision of the Constitution of the Mission Committee. This revision,

according to Redlands' overture, "would give to the local calling church its rightful authority." Classis was asked to adopt the overture as its own and to forward it to the June, 1988 meeting of Synod. Classis rejected the overture on the ground that it "violates Article 51 of the Church Order which states that the General Synod regulates the mission work of the churches in a mission order."

In closed session, Classis treated the request of a Consistory for advice concerning discipline.

Results of the necessary voting were the following:

- Classical Committee: Rev. R. Dykstra.
- Delegates ad examina:
primus - Rev. A. den Hartog;
secundus - Rev. C. Terpstra.
- Church Visitors: Rev. G. Lanting, Rev. R. Moore.
- Stated Clerk (to fill the unexpired term of Rev. D. Engelsma, who resigned due to press of other duties): Rev. R. Hanko.
- Delegates to Synod, 1988:
primi ministers - den Hartog, Engelsma, Koole, Kuiper,
secundi ministers - Cam-
menga, De Vries, Haak,
Moore; primi elders - J. Flik-
kema (South Holland), E.

Stouwie, Sr. (South Holland), J. Van Den Top (Doon), E. Van Ginkel (Doon); secundi elders - R. Brunsting (Hull), A. Hendriks (Edgerton), J. Tolsma (Lynden), G.F. Van Baren (South Holland).

After April 1, 1988, all correspondence for Classis West should be sent to the new Stated Clerk, Rev. R. Hanko, 218 Barker-Clodine Rd., Houston, TX 77094.

Classis will meet next in Loveland, Colorado on September 7, 1988, the Lord willing.

Rev. David J. Engelsma,
Stated Clerk
Classis West

News From Our Churches

Ben Wigger

(Editor's Note: For some inexplicable reason the Postal Service took several days to deliver the March 15 news column the few miles from Hudsonville to Grandville, with the result that there was no news column in the March 15 issue. With the News Editor's permission, I here present a condensation of his March 15 and April 1 columns. HCH)

Ministers, Trios, Calls

Trio: First P.R.C., Holland, Michigan: Revs. J. Kortering, R. Van Overloop, B. Woudenberg.

Call declined: Hope P.R.C., Isabel, S.D., by Rev. D.J. Engelsma.

Rev. Steven Houck, missionary in Modesto, California, has undergone further testing for nausea which could be due either to an ulcer or to gall bladder problems. He thanks the congregation in Redlands, CA, as well as all of us, for our prayers of support.

Building Projects and Improvements

—Hope P.R.C., Redlands, CA, recently decided to build a new garage at the parsonage. To help finance this improvement a box was placed at the rear of the

auditorium for a few weeks to receive cash and pledge donations.

—Southeast P.R.C., Grand Rapids, MI, is in the midst of an extensive building improvement program. Their monthly paper, *News From De Pews*, tells of an unplanned addition to the program; a burst water pipe flooded their basement recently, with the result that the basement carpet will have to be replaced — with help from their insurance company.

—Lynden P.R.C., Lynden, WA, recently rescinded their decision not to build on their current property, and has instructed their New-Church-Building Committee to investigate thoroughly the possibilities of building on their present property.

Ben Wigger is an elder in the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

—In Lacombe, Alberta, Canada, the congregation was to be given an opportunity to inspect the building of the Nazarene Church which is for sale.

—Hudsonville (Mich.) Protestant Reformed Church has a new sanctuary organ — a digital computer organ, product of the Advanced Custom division of the Allen Organ Company. It features 46 equivalent ranks, numerous front and rear speakers, and chimes. The February 17 Dedication Program featured selections by the Choral Society and an organ recital by Mrs. Fran Lubbers, member and organist of Southeast P.R.C. A couple weeks later Mr. Carlo Curley, world-renowned organist, presented a concert of classical organ music which also served to demonstrate the potential of the new instrument.

—If you have driven past Southwest P.R.C., Grandville, Mich., recently, you will have noticed that their new sanctuary is rapidly taking shape.

Young People's Convention Fund Raisers

Several bulletins carried announcements of various activities designed to raise funds for next summer's convention.

—At Trinity P.R.C., Houston, Texas, the young people sponsored a chili and hot-dog supper.

—At Hull, Iowa P.R.C. the young people sponsored their annual soup supper.

—At South Holland, Illinois P.R.C. the YPS sponsored a gym night.

—The Federation Board also sponsored a gym night/volleyball tournament.

—Hank and Lois Brands recently gave a slide program on

Europe at Hope School, Walker, Michigan; and the proceeds were for the Young People's Convention.

Outreach

—Rev. T. Miersma (Edmonton P.R.C.) and Rev. D. Kuiper (Lacombe P.R.C.) recently visited Monarch, Alberta in response to a request for help from some saints there. Edmonton and Lacombe plan to keep in touch with these devout people; but they do not see this area as a field of labor for the present.

—South Holland, Illinois, P.R.C., because of interest in the Fort Wayne, Indiana area, has begun conducting a regular Bible study there. If anyone knows of persons in the Ft. Wayne area who might be interested in a Reformed Bible study, invite them to attend and put them in touch with South Holland Church. □

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Study Society of the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church mourns the loss of a faithful member, MR. THOMAS NELSON, who went to his eternal home on March 12, 1988.

The Society expresses its Christian sympathy to our sister-member, Mrs. Thomas Nelson, and their children and grandchildren.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." (Revelation 14:13)

Pastor Steven Key, Pres.
Mrs. J. Kamminga, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 11, 1988, at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, Michigan. Material to be treated at this meeting must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least three weeks prior to the convening of this meeting.

Jon J. Huiskens
Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church would like to express their Christian sympathy to Mrs. Bernard Driesen, in the death of her father, MR. JOHN HOEKSTRA.

"The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever." (Psalm 37:18)

Rev. R. Moore, Pres.
Bonnie Hoksbergen, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

Covenant Christian School of Lynden, Washington, is seeking a third and fourth grade teacher for the 1988-1989 school year. Interested applicants may call Ben VanderVeen (Sec'y. of the school board) (206-354-3188), or John Hilton (principal) (206-354-5436) (206-988-6032 home). Applications should be sent to: Covenant Christian School, 9088 Northwood Road, Lynden, WA 98264.

NOTICE!!!

Adams St. Christian School is in need of a full time teacher in the primary grades for the 1988-89 school year. Please contact Ed Ophoff at (1-616) 247-8382 or send a resume to Adams St. Christian School, 1150 Adams St. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49507.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 15, 1988, the Lord willing, our parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. BARNEY HAAK, will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We thank our God with them for the gift of forty years of marriage.

We also thank our God for them and the Covenantal instruction they have given us.

We pray that God will continue to bless them in the years to come.

Richard Haak

Ken and Marilyn De Jong

Edward, Sharon, Stephan, Michael,

Elisa, Kristin, Diana, Emily,

Melissa, Melinda

Carl and Mary Haak

Bethany, Keri

60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 13, 1988, our beloved parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. ALBERT GRIESS celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

We are grateful to our covenant God for His special love He has given to them by preserving them for one another and for us these many years. We pray for God's continued blessing and care upon them in the remaining years ahead.

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

Bernice Schmidt

Larry and Tillie Nelson

Rolland and Nola Griess

13 grandchildren

13 great grandchildren

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church extends its sincere sympathy to our associate member, Mrs. John Boer, in the death of her sister, MRS. JOHN SIETSTRA and in the death of her brother, MR. JOHN HOEKSTRA. May God comfort her in this double sorrow.

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

Rev. R. Moore, Pres.

Bonnie Hoksbergen, Sec'y.

ATTENTION STUDENTS!!!

The Protestant Reformed Scholarship Committee is taking applications for scholarships to be awarded to future Protestant Reformed ministers and teachers for the 1988-89 school year. Each applicant must also submit an essay of at least three hundred words, presenting a defense of the Bible's infallibility in the context of theistic evolution. For an application, contact Dirk Westra, 7960 Ronson, Jenison, MI 49428. The application, accompanied by the essay, must be returned by June 1, 1988.

CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY

All young men desiring to begin studies for the 1988-89 academic year in the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches should make application at the April 21, 1988 meeting of the Theological School Committee.

Pre-Seminary Students:

A transcript of grades from high school and college (if any), a letter of testimony from the student's pastor or consistory, and a certificate of health from a reputable physician must accompany the application.

Seminary Students:

A testimonial from the student's consistory that he is a member in full communion, sound in faith and upright in walk, a certificate of health from a reputable physician, and high school and college transcripts must accompany the application. All applicants to the seminary department must have completed the equivalent of a four-year college education (125 semester hours) and must meet the course requirements for entrance to the seminary department. These entrance requirements are listed in the seminary catalog available from the school.

All seminary department applicants must appear before the Theological School Committee for interview before admission is granted. In the event that a student can not appear at the April 21st meeting, notification of this fact along with a suggested interview date must be given to the secretary of the Theological School Committee before this meeting.

All correspondence should be directed to the Theological School Committee, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., S.W., Grandville, Michigan 49418.

Jon Huiskens, Secretary