

THE STANDARD BEARER

A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine

*How necessary it was for our salvation
that the Son of God come
in deepest humility,
born in poverty and shame,
in order to take upon His mighty shoulders
the entire burden of our sin
and guilt,
and to bear it away
even into the depths
of hell.*



See "Zion Delivered of a
Man Child" — page 123

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In This Issue . . .

No bassinet here, or pretty cradle . . . just a crib for animal's food —
made comfortable, perhaps, by the addition of straw by Joseph, but a manger
nonetheless, in a barn.

"What kind of joke is this," asks Calvin, "for Him to be seen lying in (this)
cradle, who is the king and only Savior sent from God?"

But such it must be. What would characterize Jesus' life, to say nothing of
His death, was evident already at His birth. Though the people of Bethlehem
understood it not, all the "No Vacancy" signs which confronted Joseph and
Mary in their town were a portent of what lay ahead for the "man child" who,
according to the prophecy of Isaiah, would be born to Zion.

Yes, unbelief would sneer, as Rev. Hanks points out in the Meditation in
this issue. For it would not be long before the Jews' rejection of the Christ would
become a conscious, deliberate thing. There would be no room for Him, no not
on this earth, as far as they were concerned.

And such is the attitude of every man, apart from grace. Unbelief today,
too, "deliberately denies the virgin birth and salvation by grace through the
cross of Jesus Christ." Never would we make room in our hearts for Jesus. It
is only by the wonder work of salvation, accomplished in the very way of His
being despised and rejected of men, that Jesus makes room for Himself.

In this Christmas season we do well to reflect as Calvin did on the "start
God's Son enjoyed": "Such was His manner of birth, for He had put on our flesh
to the end that He might empty Himself for our sake. So He was pushed into
a stable and lodged in a manger, denied a place of hospitality among men, that
heaven may lie open to us, not only as a place in which to lodge, but as an eternal
home-land and inheritance, and that angels should receive us to dwell with
Him."

Read, in this issue, "Zion Delivered of a Man Child."

D.D.

Zion Delivered of a Man Child

Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord rendering recompense to his enemies.

Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.

Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children.

Isaiah 66:5-8

Christmas is the first of the series of Christian holidays. Soon after Christmas follows Good Friday and then, in rapid succession, Resurrection Sunday, Ascension Day, and Pentecost Sunday.

One follows the other as cause and effect, the birth of Christ, His death on the cross, His resurrection, His ascension, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost — all of which reaches its climax in the return of Christ with the clouds and the multitude before the throne in the new creation.

The prophet Isaiah saw all this in prophetic vision long before it happened.

He stands, as it were, in the midst of the Jews after they had returned

from captivity. He recognizes leaders like Ezra and Nehemiah. He sees such prophets as Zechariah and Malachi. He cannot fail to recognize many believers who are of a contrite heart and a broken spirit, who tremble in fear and reverence as they await the fulfillment of the promise of the birth of the Savior. Among them are Zacharias and Elisabeth, Simeon and Anna, the Shepherds, as also Joseph and Mary.

On the other hand, he hears the sneers of those who are content in their self-righteousness who have no need for a Savior. He shudders at the cold unbelief of the Sadducees, who were among the rulers of that day.

His vision serves for the comfort, the peace and joy of the believers who eagerly awaited the coming of their Savior. It is also of comfort and joy to all who await the final coming of the Lord.

A noise like the rumblings of thunder comes from the Holy City, Jerusalem.

More specifically, the noise comes from the temple.

For those who have ears to hear, it is the powerful voice of Jehovah, the Almighty God of all glory.

As the people, filled with amazement, hasten into God's house, they discover that a woman is sitting there, thankful and rejoicing. She has just given birth to a man child.

But that is not the end of the vision. Before the wondering gaze of these witnesses another child is born, and another, even a large number, a whole nation, ultimately a multitude that is innumerable, like the sands on the seashore.

In holy awe the prophet cries

out: "Who has ever heard such a thing? Who has ever seen such things?"

Jehovah is the God of the impossible, who performs wonder upon wonder!

A man child is born.

Zion is His mother.

Zion is the church of the old dispensation, the woman of Revelation 12. Actually, you may include in that all the women of the old dispensation who brought forth children in the hope of the coming of the promised Seed, culminating in Mary.

The vision takes us to the cattle stall in Bethlehem, where Mary brings forth her firstborn Son, wraps Him in swaddling clothes, and lays Him in a manger.

She represents Eve, who centuries before had beheld for the first time the wonder of childbirth, but who also saw in that wonder the ultimate fulfillment in the promised Savior. Many God-fearing women of numerous generations stood between Eve and Mary, all looking forward to the day when this Christ-child should be born.

The very fact that this line had continued throughout all those centuries is a wonder in itself. There were barren women in that line. It is amazing how many. Yet God brought forth, as was the case with Abraham and Sarah, life from the dead.

Centuries had gone by, countless prayers had gone up from those who longed for and awaited His coming.

Finally, in the fullness of time, exactly at the right time according to God's clock, Jesus is born of Mary, the most blessed among women.

Rev. Hanko is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

"Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child."

This does not mean that Mary gave birth to Jesus without the usual travail. The birth of Jesus from a human point of view was undoubtedly perfectly normal, like the birth of any child.

The prophet is not speaking of Mary, but of Zion, the church of the old dispensation that brought forth the Savior. It is the voice of the Lord which speaks and creates. The same voice that in the beginning called the things that were not as though they were now speaks again. The same voice that governs and controls all creation performs the greatest wonder of all in Bethlehem.

Before the pain, before the travail, this Wonder-child is born. His birth is entirely unique, since Mary's first-born is also the Firstborn of God.

At the annunciation the angel Gabriel had assured Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

We stand at that manger in fear and reverence. For God lies there in all the weakness of mere flesh, flesh of our flesh, the Holy One born from the unholy, Immanuel, God with us!

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

But that is only the beginning of the wonder that is observed in the vision.

Isaiah sees the Jews standing in rapt wonder as more children are born. Not twins, not triplets, but "as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." A nation, the church of the new dispensation is born.

The birth of Jesus is but the beginning of a whole series of wonders that follow one upon another in rapid succession.

Although four thousand years had elapsed since the mother promise had come to Adam and Eve in paradise, although the believers in the dispensation of shadows grew weary as their cry went up to heaven, "Rise, help and redeem us, Thy mercy we trust," now when the fullness of time is come all things happen within a short period of time. Thirty-three years elapse between Christ's birth and the cross, but, soon after, Jesus arises from the dead, forty days later He ascends to heaven, and ten days later the Spirit is poured out on Pentecost, when the small group of 120 is increased by three thousand converts.

These were the firstfruits of the harvest that is being gathered in day by day. For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Must not the Christ have suffered all these things to attain His glory?

How necessary it was for our salvation that the Son of God come in deepest humility, born in poverty and shame, in order to take upon His mighty shoulders the entire burden of our sin and guilt, and to bear it away even into the depths of hell.

Only as Son of God in our flesh could He conquer Satan, sin, death, and hell, arise from the dead on the third day, and triumphantly enter into heaven to take His place in power next to the throne. He died for us, and now He lives for us. He gathers His church, even unto the day of His coming.

The culmination is reached when we are united with Him before the throne. Yea, when He makes all things new.

Yet unbelief sneers.

Already in the old dispensation the unbelievers in Israel mocked at the coming of the Lord. Sneeringly they said, "Let the Lord be glorified." "It can't happen!"

When Jesus came unto His own, His own people did not receive Him.

Soon after Jesus' birth, Herod devised plans to kill Him, so that His parents were compelled to flee with the Babe to Egypt. All through His earthly ministry He was despised,

rejected, and finally cast out as a criminal worthy only of death.

But the word of the Lord to Isaiah stood firm, "He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed."

His coming is not all joy — that is, not for His enemies.

Malachi had already spoken of that: "And who shall abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? he shall be like a refiner's fire, and like a fuller's soap."

*Unbelief deliberately denies
the virgin birth and
salvation by grace
through the cross
of Jesus Christ.*

The coming of Christ is "a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to his enemies."

Unbelief deliberately denies the virgin birth and salvation by grace through the cross of Jesus Christ.

The unbeliever does just that today. He loses himself in tissue paper trimmings, commercializing, and feasting to drown out and deny the very significance of the Christian holiday, to reject once more the Christ of God.

He proves that God is just in His condemnation.

But the Christ is come to your joy.

We go to Bethlehem to hear once more the glad tidings of the angel: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

We bow in worship before that Babe with the confession, "My Savior, my Lord!"

For we see beyond the manger the cross, the empty tomb, the ascended Lord. We now see Jesus crowned with glory and honor, preparing Himself for His return in the day of our final glorification.

He is the Wonder of God, of the God of our salvation!

O come, let us adore Him, the Wonder of all wonders! □

The Death of Confessional Calvinism in Scottish Presbyterianism (7)

Our Reformed readers may need to be informed that it is the glory of confessional Presbyterianism that it boldly proclaims the particular love of God. The eternal source of this particular love is God's decree of predestination. The revelation of this particular love is the definite, limited atonement of the cross of Jesus Christ. The realization of this particular love — its being shed abroad in the hearts of the elect — is the call of the gospel, effectual and irresistible in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The glory of confessional Presbyterianism is the same as the glory of the creedal Reformed faith. The Presbyterianism of the Westminster Standards and the Reformed faith of the "Three Forms of Unity" are confessional Calvinism. And the glory of confessional Calvinism is the glory of God in the sovereignty of His particular love.

Confessional Presbyterianism teaches that God loves and wills to save the elect; that Christ died for the elect; and that the Spirit calls the elect through the gospel unto saving union with Christ. Confessional Presbyterianism also explicitly teaches that God has eternally ordained others to damnation in hatred; that Christ did not die for these reprobate; and that the Spirit deliberately refuses to call the reprobate unto eternal life.

Our Presbyterian readers already know this.

The eternal particularity of divine love and mercy in the counsel of predestination is taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), 3.3, 5, and 7:

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory

The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

In 8.5, the WCF teaches definite, particular, limited atonement:

The Lord Jesus . . . hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those

whom the Father hath given unto him.

The particular, exclusive, effectual saving work of the Spirit through the gospel is taught in the WCF, 10.1:

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ

This truth of the particular love of God is denied by influential Scottish Presbyterian theologian Donald Macleod in his recent book, *Behold Your God (BYG)*. Macleod teaches a love of God in Christ and a will of God to salvation that are universal. He proclaims a death of Christ for every sinner without exception. He defends a gracious work of the Spirit in the gospel that is directed by the Spirit to all who hear.

*The serpent in the Eden
of Presbyterian truth
was the doctrine
of common grace.*

The doctrine of the universal,

ineffectual love of God for sinners, Macleod contends, is genuine Scottish Presbyterianism.

I fear that this doctrine does indeed pass for Presbyterianism in Scotland today. If so, write "Ichabod" over contemporary Scottish Presbyterianism! For the glory has departed. Macleod's doctrines of a universal love of God, a universal atonement, and a universal grace in the preaching sound the death knell for confessional Calvinism in Scottish Presbyterianism.

The serpent in the Eden of Presbyterian truth was the doctrine of common grace. In previous editorials, we saw that the doctrine of common grace led Professor Macleod to reject the doctrine of total depravity for the doctrine of partial depravity. This same intruder has corrupted the doctrines of predestination, limited atonement, and irresistible grace in the theology of Presbyterian Macleod.

Having set forth, defended, and advocated common grace in chapters 13-15 of *BYG*, in chapter 16 Macleod applies this favor of God toward all humans to the love of God for sinners in Jesus Christ. God's love is His outstanding perfection, writes Macleod, and the love of God is supremely revealed at Calvary. The Presbyterian theologian quotes and expounds John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son . . ." (pp. 146-149). "Herein," he correctly states, "is love" (p. 149).

And then comes the vital, inescapable question:

The biblical teaching on the love of God confronts the Calvinist with a question of real urgency: What is the extent of God's love? Whom does it embrace? And is it at all possible, against the background of predestination, to speak of God loving all men? (pp. 149, 150)

Macleod does not hesitate: "There must be no hesitation. The world is ugly and unlovely and some of its constituents will be finally and irrevocably lost. Yet we cannot stop

short of saying that God loves it." "His love extends to those who are not yet reconciled to Him and even to those who are *never* reconciled (emphasis his — DJE)."

As Macleod makes clear in his question about the extent of God's love, a question directly linked with the love of God of John 3:16, the love of God for all men is not merely a love that gives all men earthly gifts. It is a love that wills the salvation of all men:

Most important, God's love for the world means that He will have all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:4 God will have all men to be saved in the sense that He has provided a salvation suited to the needs of all Furthermore, the salvation is offered to all (God) has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but longs that they should turn and live (Ezekiel 33:11) (pp. 150, 151).

This affirmation of universal love is the denial of election. For election is selective love.

Denial of limited atonement follows. Macleod quotes Preston with approval: "Go and tell every man without exception that there is good news for him, Christ is dead for him." Christ is the Savior of every human "in the deed of gift and grant to mankind lost." We may tell all sinners without exception that "Christ loves them so much that He offers to be their Saviour and pleads with them to accept Him" (pp. 152, 153).

This universal love of God revealed in the cross of Christ is expressed in the preaching of the gospel. The preaching of the gospel is an offer of salvation to all sinners expressing the love of God in Christ for them all and the desire of God to save them all.

To evoke that response (of receiving Christ Jesus as Lord — DJE) we may tell them that Christ loves them so much that He offers to be their Saviour and pleads with them to accept Him. But they must *come*. If the offering love is spurned — if the crucified Christ is rejected — they

are lost (p. 153).

The biblical view . . . is that the sending of preachers is an expression of God's desire that all men should be saved . . . (p. 131).

It is clear, then, that the love of God for all men as expressed in the free offer of Christ and His salvation is something which Reformed theology has been at pains to conserve and even to emphasize (p. 153).

This now, apparently, is contemporary Scottish Presbyterianism: a universal love of God in Christ that fails to secure the salvation of many; a death of Christ for all that fails to redeem many; and a grace toward all in the preaching that fails to call many into union with Christ.

This doctrine of an ineffective universalism is directly related to the glaring absence in the whole of Macleod's book about God of the truth of reprobation. Macleod has no place for an eternal, sovereign decree ordaining some persons to damnation. If there is such a decree in the God whom Macleod wants us to behold, Macleod is ashamed of it and hides it from our view. But the inevitable result is universal electing love, universal atonement, and universal grace in the preaching. This is the death of the gospel of particular, sovereign grace confessed by Dordt and Westminster.

Professor Macleod saves us the trouble of charging that this contemporary Scottish "Presbyterianism" is nothing else than the heresy of Arminianism. He admits this himself:

Arminianism believes that God so loves all men that He has made their salvation possible, if only they believe. It also believes that God so loves all men that He offers them this salvation freely. The Calvinist believes all that and the Arminian believes nothing more (p. 154).

This may be *contemporary* Scottish Presbyterianism. But it is not *confessional* Presbyterianism. If this theology represents Presbyterianism in Scotland at the end of the 20th

century (and I have not seen one word of protest coming out of Scotland), confessional Calvinism is dead in Scot-

land.

"Behold Your God"?

We confessional Presbyterians

and creedally Reformed believers cannot recognize our God in this theology. □

—DJE

A Cloud Of Witnesses

Prof. Herman Hanko

William Tyndale: Father of the English Bible

Introduction

We all have many Bibles in our homes: our own Bibles and our children's Bibles, as well as family Bibles used for family devotions. Most of us have the King James Version of the Bible, sometimes called the Authorized Version, prepared under the aegis of James I in 1611. It is a sad fact that our Bibles often lie unused, taken for granted, a somewhat peripheral part of our life. Yet behind our Bibles stands a story of great heroism, towering faith in God, and drops of martyr's blood. The story is that of William Tyndale, father of the English Bible.

Tyndale's Early Life

William Tyndale was born sometime in the early 1490s on the Welsh border into the home of a well-to-do farmer. He went to Magdalen Hall, Oxford where he received his M.A. degree in 1515 and was ordained into the Roman Catholic clergy. In that same year he transferred to Cambridge University, probably because he had heard that the Greek New Testament of Erasmus was available there, and he was interested in reading Scripture in its original language.

One must understand the situa-

tion in England at this time. Henry VIII, husband of many wives, was on the throne. Dedicated Roman Catholic, but bitter enemy of the pope's rule in England, Henry persecuted Protestants on the one hand, but separated the church of England from papal control on the other hand. The church itself was rife with evil, wickedness in high places, and fornication of every sort. One of the chroniclers of the age characterized the priests as running from the houses of prostitutes to the altar to perform mass; incapable of understanding the Latin in which they mumbled their liturgies; superstitious and worshipers of such relics as a gown of the virgin Mary, a piece of the burning bush of Moses, straw from the manger at Bethlehem, and a complete skeleton of one of the babies murdered by Herod the Great; drunkards and gluttons whose wicked lives were supported by the blood, sweat, and tears of the common working folk.

The Universities, however, were seething with the new learning of the Renaissance, the discoveries of Columbus and Cabot, and the teachings of Luther, the Reformer of Germany.

It was in Cambridge that Tyndale was converted from his Romanism to Lutheranism. And it was in these ancient halls that Tyndale first became acquainted with Scripture in its original Greek, and not in the fusty Latin of the Vulgate.

Preparation For His Work

It was in 1521 that Tyndale joined the household of Sir John Walsh at Little Sudbury Manor, a few miles north of Bath. Here he functioned as chaplain, tutor, and Secretary, but also preached occasionally at Bristol where he expounded the Lutheran doctrines of justification by faith alone and the free gift of forgiveness of sins through repentance. He was also a frequent guest at the table of Sir John Walsh, where notable clerics from all over England often assembled. Their sophistries and hypocrisies were exposed by Tyndale's bold appeals to Scriptural teachings so that, along with his sermons, Tyndale's views aroused the hatred and fury of friars, abbots, and prelates.

It was at one of these meals that Tyndale spoke to a visiting cleric those words for which he remains beloved by all succeeding generations of those who cherish Scripture: "If God spare my life, ere many years pass, I will cause that a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."¹

¹These words were an echo of the famous wish of Erasmus, who in the preface of his *Greek New Testament* wrote: "I would to God that the ploughman would sing a text of the Scripture at his plough and that the weaver would hum them to the tune of his shuttle."

Prof. Hanko is professor of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

Warned by his superiors to desist in his teachings, and resolved to begin the great work of making the Bible available to the people of his beloved country, he set out for London to secure permission from the authorities in the church to translate the Scriptures. This permission he sought from Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of London, a scholarly man and close friend of Erasmus. But Tunstall, loyal to Rome and afraid of the new Lutheranism, refused permission to Tyndale and became, in later years, one of Tyndale's most vicious opponents.

During his stay in London, Tyndale lived with Lord Monmouth, to whose house God graciously and providentially brought the Reformer. Lord Monmouth was an influential Lutheran; but, more importantly, he was a friend of the merchants who operated the docks in London over which poured a steady stream of Lutheran literature. Tyndale was convinced that his endeavors would never be successful in England: "Not only was there no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament," Tyndale wrote, "but also that there was no place to do it in all England." The London merchants agreed to support the endeavor, and Tyndale left the country for Germany never to return. The year was 1524.

The Work Of Translating

It might be well to pause for a moment and consider what Tyndale was doing.

The Romish Church in England had forbidden the Bible to be translated into the common tongue. The church was adamant about this and did everything in its power to enforce this rule. There is no question about it but that the reason was simply that the Bible in the hands of the common people would reveal how totally corrupt the Romish church had become. The church did not want people to know this. One cleric with whom Tyndale spoke about translating the Scriptures raged: "We had better be without God's laws than the pope's."²

Tyndale saw the absolute need

for reform in England. But he saw too that no reform could possibly come about without the Bible being the standard of truth and life. And, undoubtedly persuaded by Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, he understood that the Bible had to be in the hands of every believer, in a language which he understood.

All of this is obvious. What is so totally amazing is that Tyndale's convictions were so strong that he determined to devote his life to accomplish that goal. And he determined to devote his life to that goal in spite of the fact that it would mean exile, poverty, suffering, and finally a martyr's death. It was clear to Tyndale from the outset that he would eventually be killed for what he determined to do. He went ahead with the work anyway.

His time in Europe was not pleasant. He probably stayed briefly in Wittenberg, where he almost certainly met Luther. But the main work of publishing was done in Cologne. The New Testament was ready for printing in 1525—only a year after Tyndale fled England. While the printing was in progress, an assistant spoke too freely over his wine about the work, and the news came to Johannes Dobneck, alias Cochlaeus, a bitter enemy of the Reformation. A raid was arranged, but Tyndale was forewarned and succeeded in fleeing with the printed pages and manuscripts.

He settled in Wörms, and in 1526 the first complete edition of the English New Testament was published. It was smuggled into England through

the London merchants in bales of cloth, boxes of food, and other goods of trade. Many of the copies were confiscated and burned by the Roman authorities, and many were bought up by the church and burned in St. Paul's by Cuthbert Tunstall. In God's irony, the money gained by the sale of these volumes was sent to Tyndale to be used for an edited and improved edition.

Tunstall hated the Bible and about exhausted himself in curses as he described it:

[It is] intermingled with certain articles of heretical depravity and pernicious erroneous opinions, pestilent, scandalous, and seductive of simple minds ... of which translation many books, containing the pestilent and pernicious poison in the vulgar tongue, have been dispersed in great numbers throughout our diocese; which truly, unless it be speedily foreseen, will without doubt infect and contaminate the flock committed to us, with the pestilent poison and the deadly disease of heretical depravity.

This was the opinion which the church had of God's Word!³

New and improved editions of the New Testament were constantly being prepared by Tyndale, many containing marginal notes, some of which were directed against the papacy. But Tyndale also began work on the Old Testament. For this he had to learn Hebrew, which he did in the course of his wanderings in Europe. In 1530 the Pentateuch was completed and printed in Antwerp, Belgium, although Tyndale had to do the work twice because, in traveling by boat, Tyndale suffered shipwreck, and the first manuscripts were lost.

Because the volumes continued to be smuggled into England and because the authorities in England could not stop the steady flow and wide distribution, their fury increased and their determination to kill Tyndale became an obsession. It was decided to send men to Europe to catch Tyndale and arrest him. These efforts were, for the most part, unsuccessful.

²Quoted from *The Lives of the British Reformers*, published by Presbyterian Board of Publications in Philadelphia. The book is a collection of tracts put out by the London Tract Society. Our readers will be interested to know that one of the nicest biographies of William Tyndale, usable by young people and adults, is *God's Outlaw*, by Brian H. Edwards; Evangelical Press, 1988.

³Quoted from *God's Outlaw*, p. 92.

It is hard to know why. The spies were many and clever and Tyndale made no great efforts to keep his whereabouts secret. It is true that Tyndale had many friends, also in Antwerp; but it seems that we finally must come to the conclusion that God watched over His servant in a special way because God was bringing reformation through His holy Word to England.

Tyndale's Martyrdom

But when God's work for Tyndale was completed, God took Tyndale out of this life; and God gave his faithful servant the privilege of leaving this life through a martyr's death. A worthless no-good by the name of Henry Philips thought to ingratiate himself with the authorities of the church and perhaps win fame and fortune by trapping Tyndale. He was successful. He posed as a friend, established a close relationship of trust with Tyndale, wormed his way into the home of Poyntz (with whom Tyndale was staying in Antwerp—although Poyntz never really trusted Philips), and, when Poyntz was out of town, persuaded Tyndale to go with him for a walk. Leading Tyndale down a dark alley, he pushed the Reformer into the grasp of some scoundrels no less evil than Philips, who, hidden by a carefully prepared plan, seized him and turned him over to the authorities.

Tyndale was imprisoned in the castle of Vilvorde near Brussels. Here he lived for one year and 135 days without heat or light from candles or lamps, without sufficient clothing to keep him warm or food to sustain his weak frame, without friends and books. His only visitors were tormenters who bombarded him incessantly with demands that he recant. While Poyntz and friends in England did everything in their power to secure his release, the Romish authorities, thirsty for his blood, were not

about to let their quarry go now that they had him in their grasp.

He was tried, defrocked, and sentenced to death. In the early dawn death was administered. He was bound to a stake, an iron chain was fastened around his neck, a hemp noose was placed at his throat and brush was heaped about him. The executioner, with all his might,



William Tyndale

snapped down on the noose and within seconds Tyndale was strangled. His limp body was then burned as the pile of brush was lit. His last words were: "Lord, open the king of England's eyes." With that he fell asleep.

Our Heritage

The lasting monument to his martyrdom is our King James Version of the Bible.

John Wycliffe had, two centuries earlier, translated the Bible into English. But it had never been printed, and Wycliffe's translation was from the Latin Vulgate. Tyndale's was from the Hebrew and Greek. One incomplete copy of Tyndale's Cologne edition survives and two copies of the

6000 that were printed in Wörmers are extant. The 1534 edition, printed in Antwerp, is the last and the best. It formed the basis for the famous Coverdale Bible. Though Thomas More, an English Roman Catholic and humanist, called Tyndale's Bible "The Testament of Antichrist," it survived first in Coverdale's Bible. In 1537 (one year after Tyndale's death) it was ordered by the king of England to be placed in every parish church in the realm and made available to every man, woman, and child within the kingdom.

Ninety per cent of Tyndale's Bible passed into the KJV and 75% into the RSV. It is basically Tyndale's Bible which we use today. A brief quotation from his Bible will show the similarity, although the quotation is in the English of Tyndale's day. The passage is Romans 12:1, 2:

I beseeche you therefore brethren by the mercifulness of God, that ye make youre bodies a quicke sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God which is youre reasonable servynge off God. And fassion note youre selves lyke unto this worlde. But be ye chaunged (in your shape) by the renuyng of youre wittes that ye may fele what thyng that good, that acceptable and perfaicte will of God is.

Not only ought the story of Tyndale give us renewed appreciation for our Bibles; it ought also to fill our hearts with thanksgiving to God that He has given the church such men of courage and conviction that we can have God's Word today to read, to study, to enjoy, to believe. When we read the beloved words of our King James Version, we ought never to forget that these words were written with the ink of martyr's blood. □

Doctrine

The Hebrew word for doctrine means "to take, receive, seize"; then it means that which is received mentally, instruction. The Greek has a whole family of words relating to our topic: one means that which is taught; another refers to the one doing the teaching, the doctor or master; the verb form simply means to instruct or indoctrinate. The word doctrine appears fifty-two times in Scripture, good evidence of its importance. Strikingly, when we read of *doctrines* in the plural the reference is always to strange doctrines, the doctrines of men, or the doctrines of devils. False doctrines are legion and contradictory, but true doctrine is one, for it has its unity in Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of God drops from heaven as rain (Deut. 32:2), it is pure and good (Job 11:4). The people were amazed at the teaching of Jesus, saying, "What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he . . ." (Mark 1:27). But Jesus did not teach new doctrine; it was not His but the Father's, and it agreed with the teaching of Moses (John 7:16-19). The children of God obey from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto them (Rom. 6:17). Since all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, it has the primary profit of giving us doctrine (II Tim. 3:16). Adding to the peril of the times in which we live is the fact that men "will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (II Tim. 4:3). The purpose of God in giving ministers to the church is "that henceforth we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . ." (Eph. 4:14). Of such central importance is the truth that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is come in the flesh that the denial of this is antichrist, and "if there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (II John 10).

Christ is the Master, the Teacher, the Prophet sent from God. When He was but twelve years old He was found in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions; already then the people were astonished at His understanding and answers (Luke 2:46). Six other times we read that men were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught with authority and not as the scribes. Christ declares the Father whom no man hath seen (John 1:18); He makes known unto us all that He has heard of His Father (John 15:15); He was ordained to be our chief Prophet and Teacher to reveal to us fully the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption (L.D. 12).

Because ministers are called by Christ in the service of His Word, they are given to the church as pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11); teaching or indoctrinating is an important aspect of their work. Thus, ministers are to give themselves to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine (I Tim. 4:13); they are to take heed to themselves and the doctrine, by meditating upon these things and giving themselves wholly to them (I Tim. 4:15-16). Those who labor in the Word and doctrine are to be counted by the church as worthy of double honor (I Tim. 5:17). Great care must be taken that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed (I Tim. 6:1). Sound doctrine is able to convince the gainsayers (Titus 1:9). All the minister's speech must be in harmony with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1, 7). And the elders must be apt to teach (doctrine) (I Tim. 3:2).

We are saved by doctrine, for by taking heed to and continuing in sound doctrine ministers save themselves and those that hear them (I Tim. 4:16). Some will ask, "But are we not saved by faith in Christ?" Indeed. But who is Christ as to His Person and natures? What does His anointing consist of, and what is His place in the covenant of grace? What was the nature of His death and resurrection? For whom did He suffer, die, and rise again? And what is this faith, and what does it hold for truth? Faith in the heart, embracing Jesus Christ the Lord as He is set forth, described, delineated in the doctrines of that Word of God, *that* is able to make us wise unto salvation. To deny the importance of sound doctrine for our salvation is to fly in the face of the Scriptures and show ourselves either ignorant or unappreciative of church history. Controversies raged between adherents of the doctrines of men and the doctrine of God; confessions were written which condemned heresies and set forth the orthodox faith. Today we are called upon to contend earnestly for that faith because the great matter of salvation depends on pure doctrine, and the greater matter of God's glory is wrapped up in it. We must be of the

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mind that characterized the writer(s) of the Athanasian Creed when he wrote after the Arian controversy, "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic (universal) Faith, which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly."

The doctrine of God our Savior, held to with iota-like precision, embraced with believing hearts, must be adorned with good works (Titus 2:10). Here Paul shows the foolishness of trying to separate doctrine and practice, or even preferring one above the other. Scripture is profitable for doctrine . . . that we may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. Doctrine is the root and branch; good works are the fruit. And there is a harmony and inner consistency between the two. True doctrine is itself beautiful, for it reveals God in Christ! When that doctrine brings forth good works by the Spirit, what adornment that is! How God is praised by it! □

Church and State

Mr. James Lanting

Supreme Court: Graduation Ceremonies No Longer Have a Prayer

We recognize that ... throughout the course of the educational process, there will be instances when religious values, religious practices, and religious persons will have some interaction with the public schools and their students. But these matters, often questions of accommodation of religion, are not before us. The sole question presented is whether a [nonsectarian prayer] may be conducted at a graduation ceremony in circumstances where, as we have found, young graduates who object are induced to conform. No ... school can persuade or compel a student to participate in a religious exercise. That is being done here, and it is forbidden by the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

Lee v. Weisman, 1992
(majority opinion)

In a landmark decision early this

summer, the U.S. Supreme Court banned prayers at public school graduation ceremonies. A bitterly divided court (5-4) held that a graduation invocation and benediction offered by a clergyman selected by the school compelled students to participate in a forbidden "state-sanctioned religious exercise." But four justices filed a vigorous dissent arguing that such "nonsectarian" prayers are "an accepted part of our political and cultural heritage" which involves no coercion or compulsion of students who are present but choose not to join in the prayer.

Civic Prayers

The suit was brought by a Providence, Rhode Island, public school student and her father four days before her middle school graduation. Deborah and Daniel Weisman objected to the school district's custom of permitting principals to invite members of local clergy to give invocations and benedictions at middle and high school graduations.

It was also the practice of the Providence school officials to provide invited clergy with a booklet entitled "Guidelines for Civic Occasions," prepared by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. The pamphlet suggested that prayers at nonsectarian civic ceremonies be composed with "inclusiveness and sensitivity."

Notwithstanding the Weismans' objection, a certain Rabbi Gutterman was invited and offered the following invocation at her graduation:

INVOCATION

God of the Free, Hope of the Brave:

For the legacy of America where diversity is celebrated and the rights of minorities are protected, we thank you. May these young men and women grow up to enrich it.

For the liberty of America, we thank you. May these new graduates grow up to guard it.

For the political process of America in which all citizens may participate, for its court system where

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all may seek justice we thank you. May those we honor this morning always turn to it in trust.

For the destiny of America we thank you. May the graduates of Nathan Bishop Middle School so live that they might help to share it.

May our aspirations for our country and for these young people, who are our hope for the future, be richly fulfilled. Amen.

The Weismans later amended their suit to ask the courts also to bar such prayers at her future high school graduation. The lower courts ruled in favor of the Weismans and the school district then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Establishment Clause

The majority of the Supreme Court held that such graduation prayers violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The Establishment Clause prohibits governmental activity "respecting an establishment of religion."

But in what sense was the local clergyman's prayer "governmental" activity? The *Weisman* Court held that the rabbi's prayers were "state-sponsored religious activity" because of the school district's direct involvement in the ceremony and its content. In fact, the Court found that because of the published prayer guidelines given the clergyman, "the principal directed and controlled the content of the prayer." Quoting an earlier decision, the majority held that "it is no part of the business of government to compose official prayers for any group of Americans to recite as part of a religious program carried on by the government...."

A Civic Religion

But how does a nonsectarian prayer at a graduation ceremony "establish" religion? The Court held it does so for two reasons. First, the Court refused to recognize the existence of so-called "nonsectarian prayers within the embrace of what is known as the Judeo-Christian tradition." The Court argued that such prayers, purposely devoid of "sectar-

ian" references to Jesus Christ, for example, are perhaps understandable but nonetheless misguided effort to construct a "civic religion." The Court ruled: "The suggestion that government may establish an official or civic religion as a means of avoiding the establishment of a religion with more specific creeds strikes us as a contradiction that cannot be accepted."

Secondly, the Court held that even nonsectarian prayers at such civic ceremonies constitute forbidden "establishment" of religion because the student present may have "a reasonable perception that she is being forced by the state to pray in a manner her conscience will not allow." Citing references to adolescent psychology, the Court opined that students are often susceptible to peer pressure towards conformity. Accordingly, since such prayers at graduation ceremonies constitute religious exercises in which students are "coerced" by peer pressure to participate, such prayer activity is the kind of "establishment" forbidden by the First Amendment.

Dissent

Justice Scalia, joined by Chief Justice Rehnquist, Justice White, and Justice Thomas filed a scathing dissent, complaining that the majority opinion "lays waste" the "long-standing American tradition of nonsectarian prayer to God at public celebrations generally." Scalia argued that the "history and tradition of our Nation are replete with public ceremonies featuring prayers of thanksgiving and petition."

The dissent also ridiculed the majority's notion that high school graduates are somehow psychologically coerced into participating in these prayers merely because they may be required to stand in respectful silence while the prayer is being offered. Rejecting the majority's "psycho-journey" into an analysis of adolescent peer pressure, the dissent insisted that coercion has always meant "acts backed by threat of penalty," not mere peer pressure.

Scalia concluded his dissent by stating that for the majority of Ameri-

cans religion is not to be practiced in secret. Many people, he declared, find it necessary to "acknowledge and beseech the blessing of God" in public worship also. Such a long-standing American tradition is, he concluded, merely an acceptable accommodation of religion by the government.

Ceremonial Deism

It is difficult for the Reformed Christian not to have mixed feelings regarding the outcome of the *Weisman* case. On the other hand, the majority's finding that some high school students unwillingly participate in these graduation prayers only because of psychological coercion is farfetched.

Moreover, the *Weisman* decision gives additional concern to those who fear the Supreme Court is veering from a healthy accommodation of religion to a latent hostility toward all religions. As Richard John Neuhaus has argued recently, our courts are wrongly insisting upon a "public square naked of religious symbol and substance."

On the other hand, one wonders what state government is doing issuing guidelines for so-called nonsectarian prayers at its school graduation ceremonies. Such generic and meaningless (blasphemous?) prayers do conjure up the notion of a sanitized civic religion, a ceremonial deism that should be repugnant to all evangelical Christians.

But perhaps the fundamental problem here is not that prayers at graduation ceremonies are inappropriate. The problem is that state government should not be conducting graduations. The Court held that "it is not part of the business of government to compose official prayers." True enough. But it is equally true that it is not part of the business of government to (educate and) graduate children. If the state would properly relinquish this enterprise to parents and teachers exclusively, the practice of offering appropriate and specific prayers at such significant events would then remain unchallenged. □

Proper Christian Self-Esteem

(2)

It is absolutely essential to your spiritual and emotional health that you have a proper view of self. But, more specifically, that view of self must be in harmony with God's view of you. What good will it do me, if every Tom, Dick, and Harry, and all the Dr. Feel-goods are telling me that I am good and ought to feel good about myself, if the end of all my good feelings is everlasting banishment from the fellowship of God? For that very reason, my youthful brother and sister, you must not be gullible in accepting the prevalent teachings about self-esteem.

The Self-Esteem of the Dr. Feel-goods

The modern notions of self-esteem promoted throughout the modern church by such men as Robert Schuller and James Dobson stand in stark contrast to those of the church in the past. Far from being biblical, the teachings of these men and others concerning self-esteem are entirely man-centered and contrary to sound biblical theology. Yet, by means of their television and radio broadcasts and hence large listening audiences, they carry away large numbers of church people with their thinking.

It often strikes me that there are more people who accept as true what is said by men of prominence, than who receive God's Word as truth. By all means let us prove ourselves different. Let us turn to Scripture and

prove ourselves more than "theological airheads," accepting things as truth just because some so-called expert has blown some hot air into our ears.

For no other reason than a lack of biblical sensitivity, Robert Schuller has been somewhat effective in accomplishing his desire for a reformation in the thinking of the church. In his book, aptly titled *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, Schuller asserts that there is a basic flaw in modern Christianity. He finds that flaw in the church's presentation of the gospel "in a way that assaults a person's self-esteem." He blows the trumpet blast calling for a new reformation. Unlike the Reformation of the 16th century, when the focus was on Scripture as the only infallible rule for faith and practice, Schuller calls for the focus of the new reformation to be on "the sacred right of every person to self-esteem." Moreover, he blames all bad behavior on the church's 2,000-year stand—actually it is much longer than that—calling God's people to repentance and emphasizing how sinful they are. Such calls for confession of sin and repentance have destroyed emotional health and self-esteem, causing people to behave in a way unacceptable by society. So says Schuller. And this idea that people will behave better and perform better if only they have a high self-esteem is an idea that has permeated a large segment of society, including the realms of education, medicine, psychology, child-rearing, and the church. No doubt you have heard it yourselves.

So there is a wind of doctrine that has blown from Schuller's Crystal Cathedral, as well as from other

regions of thought through the church of our day, and has wrought a major change. It has brought about a change in belief and in approach to preaching, to education, to the rearing of children, to pastoral counseling, and to the whole concept of Christian discipline. But has it brought a *proper* change? Is this wind of doctrine true or false? It must be one or the other.

The Origin of the Modern Self-Esteem Movement

Robert Schuller speaks of self-esteem as the New Reformation doctrine. If Rev. Hoeksema could preach on "Proper Christian Self-Esteem" back in the 1930s, what is this *new* doctrine? Where did this "New Reformation" doctrine originate? Has it come from the Bible? Is it a development of biblical truth? For us who hold the Bible as the inspired and authoritative Word of God, that is an important question.

It soon becomes evident that the whole modern concept of self-esteem, even in our own thinking, has been influenced, not by the Bible, but by modern thought. And there is a clear distinction between the two.

Robert Schuller unashamedly confirms such to be the case. He takes the biblical concept of sin and completely redefines it. Although salvation from sin is necessary, he defines sin as "any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem." Hell is simply the loss of pride. Schuller writes, "A person is in hell when he has lost his self-esteem." And that no one misunderstand what he means by self-esteem, Schuller defines it as "the human hunger for the divine dignity

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that God intended to be our emotional birthright as children created in His image . . . Self-esteem then, or 'pride in being a human being,' is the single greatest need facing the human race today."

Now, no matter whether a person believes the biblical teaching concerning sin and hell, there is no denying that Schuller's definitions are not the same as the Bible's. In fact, there is no comparison between them. Schuller — very dishonestly, in my opinion — takes terms that have been defined a certain way for thousands of years, and completely redefines them.

The Influence of an Unbiblical Idea

Now, I have called your attention to the self-esteem movement as promoted by Robert Schuller. I have done so because he has been the most prominent figure in this movement within the church world. His influence has been great. But his approach

is decidedly *unbiblical*. The philosophy of Schuller and his colleagues is a stark contrast to the gospel of salvation presented in the Bible.

I call your attention to this because I would not have you led astray. I want you to understand clearly what Scripture has to say about *proper* Christian self-esteem. But this modern *unbiblical* theory of self-esteem has permeated the church to levels which are frightening. Even songs sung in many churches and schools carry the baggage of this man-made philosophy. There is a popular contemporary religious song written to nice music and entitled, "They'll Know We Are Christians," which carries the line, "... and we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride." You probably know that song and others that express the same type of thinking, if you only examine the lyrics.

But such thinking has also had devastating effects upon preaching.

It is widely acknowledged that in many churches today sin is not addressed in the preaching. Preachers do not want their hearers to feel uncomfortable, desiring instead that they "feel good about themselves." Those sitting in the pews have their pride stroked, at times are made to feel better than those sitting in other churches; but are not brought to their knees before the holy God and are not led to the cross either. And as a consequence something less than the full orb'd gospel is preached, and those who hear are deprived of a real saving gospel which glorified God and brings about proper Christian self-esteem.

You must recognize in your youth the importance of having our sins exposed to our own consciences. There is a need for sharp preaching, preaching that does not pander to our pride. Only such preaching will lead us to a proper Christian self-esteem. □

The Day of Shadows

Rev. John Heys

A Comforting Shadow of God's Grace

For the well-being of his life, Jacob needed to leave the land of Canaan and flee to the land from which his grandfather Abraham came. This flight was not because of the unbelieving Gentiles, who considered the land of Canaan to be their property. He had to flee from his own twin brother, Esau, on whose heel he, Jacob, had at birth been clinging physically

(Gen. 25:26). Our God had through Isaac pronounced the covenant promise upon Jacob. And, as God's counsel was being fulfilled, that which Isaac promised Jacob caused Esau to say in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob" (Gen. 27:41).

In His grace and mercy our God caused Jacob in a dream to know that all is well. In that dream He declared to Jacob, "Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all the places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee,

until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. 28:15). When we turn to Genesis 29 we find our God giving Jacob a God-fearing wife. Esau, his brother, had taken two Hittite women to be his wives. In Genesis 26:35 we read that this was "a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah." These two children of God were greatly saddened to learn that their son Esau had married unbelieving women. But our covenant God keeps His promise. Having assured Abraham that He would establish His covenant with him and his seed, He in His counsel

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designed all the things that caused Jacob to go where his grandfather Abraham had been born; and He arranged all things for Jacob to receive a believing wife from Laban, who was a brother of Rebekah, Jacob's mother.

Another amazingly striking thing is that which reveals God's grace as well as His providence. The very first woman that Jacob met in that "land of the people of the east" was one whom our God used to bring believing seed unto Jacob. Three men were waiting at a well, because in that day the custom was to wait until all the shepherds had come with their flock, with a view to giving them water. These men told Jacob that the woman, who was now coming with a herd of sheep, was Rachel, Jacob's cousin and the daughter of Laban, his uncle.

Now, whether or not we take the position, which some do, that Rachel was not a believing child of God, Jacob was deceived and caused to marry Leah, Rachel's older sister. Laban, the father of these two daughters, deceived Jacob, and had him marry Leah rather than Rachel, whom he loved, and for whom he had worked for seven years. Even if Rachel was not a believer in the one and only God, the fact is that our God did by His grace bring forth from her a believing child. It does please our God to gather at times His elect out of families where both father and mother are unbelievers. We are children of God, not by what our parents gave us, but by His Spirit and in His grace. Our God usually does gather His elect out of believing parents, who can teach their children the truth; but the Spirit is sent with a spiritual life which He implants in those eternally chosen in Christ. And here we have Jacob—who was a reborn, believing child of God, and through whom our God did bring forth the twelve men who became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. It is necessary for the elect child to be brought where he is taught the truth about his sins and of his salvation by God's grace. And every elect child of God will be brought where he does come in contact with

the truth, which we today find in God's Word, the Holy Scriptures.

Jacob was a believer, who would instruct his children in the truth which we find in Scripture. And we have no evidence that Rachel opposed his teaching to his children. His twelve sons were believers. Ten of them were sons of Leah, her maid, and Rachel's maid. Joseph, of whom we read very much in Genesis 39-50, was a son of Rachel. So was Benjamin her son, given her the day that she died (Gen. 35:16-19). She called him Son of My Sorrow, in the Hebrew name Benoni. But Jacob called him Benjamin, which means Son of the Right hand.

The comforting truth here in this section of the day of shadows is the sovereign grace of our God, and of His tender mercy. For Jacob must flee from the land of Canaan, which was promised Abraham and his seed. He had to flee because of his sin of lying to his father, claiming to be Esau, and seeking that which his father revealed he would give to Esau, the firstborn of the twins. Esau claimed in his soul his right to that which Isaac agreed to present. And Jacob did commit a sin by putting on some of Esau's raiment, and skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth part of his neck. All this was a sinful act of Jacob, as well as of his mother, who ordered him to do this. Because of that lie and deceit he did not deserve to have the covenant blessing. He behaved as an unbeliever, revealing himself by nature to be no different from Esau, the unbeliever.

Still more, Laban, Jacob's uncle, caused Jacob to take Leah as his wife, thinking that she was Rachel. Isaac blessed Jacob thinking that he was Esau. Jacob takes Leah as his wife, thinking that she is Rachel. Jacob sinned before his father; and Laban sinned giving Jacob Leah, making him believe that she was Rachel. Sin, sin, and more sin was being performed in the church of that day! And we should bear in mind, and tightly hold on to the truth, that one sin is enough for us to be sent to everlasting punishment in hell! Adam and Eve committed

one sin, and that moment they died spiritually. Every sin, no matter in what form it comes, is an act of hatred against God. Every sin reveals that we do not want what God wants. Sinning against the one true God calls for His holy wrath and everlasting punishment. As God said to Adam, "The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Jacob did find fault with Laban for his deceitful act. But Jacob did not say to Laban: "This I deserve, for I deceived my blind father into thinking that I was Esau, in order to get the inheritance he intended to give to my brother Esau." How often is it not true that we can see and hate the deceitfulness of others, but consider to be good a sinful work which we have performed? Jacob sees Laban's deceitfulness, but not his own.

And how can we deny that Jacob, by his lie, had no right to that covenant promise and its blessedness? How can we deny that Laban was deceitful? He promised Jacob this wife after seven years of work—and not on condition that Leah would by that time be taken by some other man. Because Leah was "tender eyed," and Rachel was "beautiful and well favoured," Laban may very well have had fear of never getting Leah married to bring forth grandsons to him. We lie when we speak an untruth as being the truth. But we can also commit the sin of lying, by not saying the truth which is necessary for one's well-being. In Genesis 29:27 we find what was in Laban's heart. He said to Jacob, "Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years." He wanted more work from Jacob. He could stress the need of Jacob doing what was right, namely, marry his firstborn daughter; but he was not looking for that which is right in God's eyes. He was looking at benefit for his own flesh, namely, get Jacob to work for him another seven years. And, if that actually was the law in the land that Leah must first be married, he should have told Jacob that he could not work for Rachel, but must do so to obtain Leah as his wife.

Go back to verse 19 of this chapter. Seven years before this marriage to Leah, Laban said to Jacob, "It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me." Jacob had promised to work for seven years in order to get Rachel as his wife. That was Jacob's revelation of how strongly he wanted Rachel, and his willingness to work for seven years to get her as his wife. But Laban undoubtedly has before him the desire to have Leah married to Jacob, and was not concerned with the "law" that he might not let someone marry Rachel before Leah was married.

But what we should see, and what is presented here in Holy Writ, is the grace and mercy of our God. Were it not for what He realized by His Son in our flesh, and what we receive in His mercy and grace, because of what His Son did for us, we would not and could not be Christ's bride. In Romans 9:16 we read, "So

then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." And here in Genesis 29 we read of God fulfilling His promise to Abraham, as is presented in Genesis 15:5. There we read the awesome and comforting truth: "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them . . . So shall thy seed be." And here in this incident presented in Genesis 29, using Jacob, Leah, and Rachel, and their servants, our God brought forth sons for Jacob, who became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.

In His mercy, and by His grace, our God gave Jacob believing sons. And here, indeed, we have a beautiful shadow of what He is doing today, and is in the New Testament dispensation presented by Paul in Ephesians 2:8, 9, where we read that comforting truth: "By grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Never claim to have salvation because of what you did. Never think for a moment that you deserve salvation because you did what the world does not and cannot do. Instead, sing the truth of Psalm 139:14, which is presented in our Psalter number 383:1, namely, "All that I am I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom, Lord, hath fashioned me; I give my Maker thankful praise, Whose wondrous works my soul amaze."

Things may hurt our flesh; and we may lose our earthly goods and life, because Satan is using the world against us. But salvation is by God's grace. And God's grace deals with us in love and mercy, not to any degree in His hatred.

Let this truth be presented, but also maintained:

By God's grace all is well;
Not one elect will go to hell.
In His grace God gave what we cannot earn;
And causes us for such salvation to yearn. □

Taking Heed to the Doctrine

Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

"The Declaration of Principles" and Its Work

But that which ye have ... hold fast till I come.

Revelation 2:25

The "Declaration of Principles" was adopted by the Synod of 1950 with what appeared to be a unanimous vote (later one person claimed to have dissented). This adoption was not final. First it was sent for evaluation to the churches; but its reception there was hardly the same.

Rev. Woudenberg is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

My friends and I, having witnessed the vote of Synod, spent several weeks traveling from Hull to the West coast. On the way we reflected often on what had happened; and we saw little reason why this declaration should cause any great degree of problem. After all, it contained nothing other than what had been taught in our churches all along. But once we arrived in California at Bellflower and Redlands, it became evident how wrong we had been. We met a whirlwind of objections; and the same was soon true throughout our churches.

The objections fell basically along three lines:

1. The first was church political. It claimed that the request for this form or declaration had not been legal inasmuch as it had not come by way of consistory and classis, as Article 30 of the Church Order requires. It had originated with synod itself, which was wrong.

2. The second had to do with its status, claiming that this declaration constituted in effect a fourth form, or a uniquely Protestant Reformed creed. This could only serve to separate us from a true Reformed heritage, and particularly from the Liberated churches with whom we were working, and whose immigrants were being organized into Protestant Reformed churches in Canada.

3. And finally, the third objection had to do with its doctrinal content. Few thought to criticize its doctrines generally, for our churches had been built on them; but there was a growing sympathy for the ideas of conditions in theology, which the declaration so emphatically condemned.

The result was a furor of writing that filled most of the following year.

* * * * *

It was in the July 1, 1950 issue of the *Standard Bearer* that "The Declaration of Principles" first appeared; and by mid-September the objections began to come in. They first were found in a letter-to-the-editor which led into one of the more balanced of all the exchanges that were to come. It consisted of a series of questions submitted by the Rev. J. Blankespoor. His first question read as follows:

1. I am informed that the Mission Committee requested Synod to draw up a form regarding our principles for those (especially in Canada) who request organization. On the basis of this Synod drew up this declaration. Now my question is this: Is it church politically correct to make such a declaration on the basis of a request of a committee? Doesn't this violate the rule of Reformed Church Polity that matters must come to Synod via Consistory, Classis, etc?

To this in the next issue, October 1, Rev. Hoeksema gave an answer which perhaps presents most succinctly the original design and purpose of the *Declaration*. It read as follows:

Synod, in my opinion, did not violate any rule of Reformed church polity by acceding to the request of the Mission Committee for a form or declaration which might be used in the organization of churches. It is not true that it is a rule of Reformed church polity that all matters must come to synod via consistory and classis. The article of the Church Order that pertains to this matter is Article 30, which reads as follows: "In these assemblies ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted and that in an ecclesiastical manner. In major assemblies only such matters

shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the churches of the major assembly in common." Besides perhaps Article 51 of the Church Order pertains to the same matter: "The missionary work of the church is regulated by the general assembly in a mission order." The Mission Committee, therefore, certainly had the perfect right to appeal to synod for a form that may serve as a basis for the organization of Churches. And the synod did nothing that was church politically out of order, when it drew up a declaration of principles.

Let me, however, explain this matter a little more in detail, especially to show what motivated the Mission Committee to come with such a request to synod.

The Mission Committee is a synodical committee that serves synod and all our churches in the interest of our mission work. Its purpose is through our missionaries and in cooperation with the calling church to propagate and disseminate the pure Reformed truth (which to us is the same as Protestant Reformed truth) outside of the pale of our churches and to bring to manifestation the purest manifestation of the body of Christ in the world (which to us is the Protestant Reformed Church). They have not the calling, therefore, to organize any group of people, regardless of their doctrinal convictions, but only such as are sufficiently acquainted with our Protestant Reformed truth and are willing to subscribe to its main tenets.

Rev. Hoeksema's point was well taken. The origin of this declaration was not irregular. The fact was that the Mission Committee had run into a very real problem in its work; and it had every right to appeal to Synod for assistance. And this synod had moved to provide. Moreover, recognizing the importance of what it was doing, it was careful to send its proposal for evaluation to the churches at large prior to its final adoption and implementation, observing thereby both the letter and the spirit of Article 30.

In turn, this declaration hardly constituted a fourth form. Rather it was in fact a derivation from and an

application of the Three Forms of Unity to a particular problem which had arisen concerning the churches in common. There was a real need for clarification as to what constituted our distinction as a unique denomination in America, and what we taught concerning certain crucial points of doctrine. It was, after all, a simple matter of honesty for the sake of those with whom we were working to inform them what they could expect within one of our churches. Upon final adoption, of course, this document would become binding in those situations to which the synod applied it; but that is true of every decision of synod by reason of Article 31.

The furor, however, was not to be silenced; and the same objections continued to come over and over again. In fact, this declaration did little to change our relationship to the Liberated churches; for, concerning that, the die was already cast. What it did serve was to bring to the surface the underlying division that had been smoldering for some time in our own midst. And, in turn, for the first time there began to emerge suggestions of a split.

* * * * *

Within the first two decades of our denominational existence there had been a distinct development of doctrine and ecclesiastical identity which took place. Our growth in numbers was hardly dramatic or rapid, not nearly what some may have expected; but there was development. We did not remain in a mere negative stance of rejecting Common Grace, for which we had been cast out of the Christian Reformed Church. Extraordinary theologian that he was, Rev. Hoeksema had gone on to develop our focus on particular grace into a complete and unified theological approach, carefully steering clear of some of the pitfalls of the past, and with distinct applications to the relations of life which had never been so clearly distinguished to that time. Moreover, on a practical level, he had taken a sizable group of young men, most with little academic training, and molded them into preachers who,

for the most part, had gained a high degree of proficiency in their pastoral work as well as in their preaching. The sermons they produced constituted exegetical, doctrinal discourses based on sound Reformed principles, and with apt applications to life. This work again was not spectacular. It avoided that. And it accordingly did not draw large crowds. But it served well in feeding the people of God. And, meanwhile, we had succeeded in building an ecclesiastical organization, with assemblies that functioned well. We had developed our own distinctives, which we fondly referred to as "Protestant Reformed truth."

But this did not mean that all was well. With some, as might be expected, disillusionment had set in. There were those who had engaged themselves in ecclesiastical skirmishes, and lost, leaving hurt feelings that did not go away. Others began to see themselves as theologians in their own right, but with little room for recognition in so small a group as ours. And there was always the disappointment that our churches did not grow and prosper as had been thought. Under the hardships of the Great Depression, and through the restrictions of the war years, these things had to be endured; but with the flush of post-war victory new and optimistic plans and anticipations began to emerge.

It was into this that the prospects of a coalition with the Liberated churches in The Netherlands had brought great hope. Here was the possibility at last not only of recognition within the theological circles of Europe, but also of growth into a sizable denomination through the influx of immigrants which had already begun.

The problem was, however, that, although we had much in common with the Liberated people because of the similar way in which we had all been evicted from our mother churches, the doctrinal stances we held were quite different. The Liberated theologians saw our theology as little different from that of the Synodicals who had cast them out. In

turn, to us it was perfectly evident that the Liberated, while claiming to deny Common Grace, were insistent on a view of the covenant which proposed a grace common to every baptized child, elect and reprobate alike. And, finally, there was one overwhelming disappointment, one which may have been for Rev. Hoeksema greatest of all: in spite of the promises, the Liberated theologians in The Netherlands evidenced no real interest in the doctrinal teachings which we had worked to develop, and to which Rev. Hoeksema had given his life. Although Dr. Schilder had assured us such interest was there, no meaningful discussion of our teachings was ever found in *The Reformation*, their church paper. In fact it appeared that, without study or consideration, and in spite of Hoeksema's careful distinctions, the Liberated were quite ready to dismiss our work as nothing more than reworked Kuiperianism, when this was exactly what Rev. Hoeksema had worked so carefully to avoid.

Thus, while their synod in 1948 made a decision to seek correspondence with us, their committee made no effort to contact us until, over a year later, they met with two of our ministers who happened to be visiting their land, and elicited from them some kind of an assurance that the doctrinal teachings of Rev. Hoeksema were not those of our churches at large, and that at least some of our ministers were quite ready to leave them behind. The result was the disastrous letter of Prof. Holwerda in which he advised the immigrants with whom we were working to join our churches, but in doing so, to reject the teachings of Rev. Hoeksema, and bring their Liberated theology into our midst. Clearly, it seemed, although these Dutch theologians may have desired an American connection, they had no real interest in the distinctives to which we had come.

And this left us with a crucial question: how important were these historic, doctrinal positions to us? Were they something to be maintained at all cost, or could they well be sacri-

ficed for the sake of working with the Dutch, and the influx into our churches that might result?

It was the answer to this question which, according to the providence of God, the Declaration of Principles was to serve to bring about. □

Because He Loved Me

Jesus in a lowly manger
On a night so long ago
Took on Him my human nature
Just because He loved me so!

In a world of sin and sorrow,
In a vale of tears below,
He, the sinless, willed to suffer
Just because He loved me so!

On the cross, despised, rejected,
All those pains we cannot know!
There He bore God's great displeasure
Just because He loved me so!

From the grave He rose triumphant
Over death, a mighty foe,
My arisen Lord and Master —
Just because He loved me so!

Now to heaven He has ascended
To prepare for me a home,
Sent the Spirit for my comfort
Just because He loved me so!

Now in gratitude I'll serve Him
And His love to others show,
Pray all nations soon may know Him
Just because He loved me so!

Then, when every eye shall see Him,
And I hear His trumpet blow,
Up above I'll praise Him ever
Just because He loved me so!

Standard Bearer
December 15, 1932

News From The Contact Committee

The Contact Committee has been busy with some matters of importance to our churches since the last Synod met in June of this year.

Of most importance and of most interest to our people is the work of Rev. & Mrs. Kortering in Singapore. While Rev. Kortering has made a valiant effort to keep our people informed of his activities via news letters which have been distributed throughout the denomination, we will try to add a few things in this article.

When the Korterings arrived in Singapore after a brief stopover in Hawaii, they were received by a large group of saints from both Covenant and First Evangelical Reformed Churches, even though the time was past midnight. The saints in Singapore usually meet visitors from the States in this way. They themselves cannot know how much this means to those of us who have traveled there. To be met by the smiling and eager faces of fellow people of God when one arrives in a strange airport, in a strange land, among a strange people, is like water to a thirsty soul.

The Korterings have by this time found good lodging. The flat which has been rented for them was in need of extensive cleaning and renovation; but this has now been accomplished, and the Korterings are comfortably settled in their home away from home. The renovation consisted of painting the entire apartment, finishing floors, sanding bedroom floors, installing kitchen cabinets, and cleaning tile.

Prof. Hanko is professor of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

Because Rev. Kortering is aware of the fact that much of his work will involve mission labors, he has taken every opportunity to acquaint himself with this kind of work. He attended a meeting of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship and met missionary families from many parts of the Orient.

The main responsibility of the Korterings is the work in Covenant. Rev. Kortering is, in effect, their pastor, although his labors are by no means limited to that congregation.

One of the highlights of his labors so far has been a trip to India undertaken with Pastor Mahtani. The trip was planned in the light of an invitation from a group of Sindhi Christians in the northern part of India asking Pastor Mahtani to speak for them. The reports of Rev. Kortering's trip are only beginning to trickle in since they have only recently returned after being gone an entire month. You will be kept informed through other articles and newsletters.

The Lord willing, a student from the ERCS will be coming to our country to study in our Seminary next school year.

We need to be reminded of how important it is that we bring the work of the ERCS and of Rev. & Mrs. Kortering to the throne of grace.

To turn to a different subject: Prof. Decker has recently returned from a visit to NAPARC (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council). The meeting was held at Bonclarken, North Carolina. To this organization belong six denominations, among which are the Christian Reformed Church, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the Presbyte-

rian Church of America. There are seventeen denominations which are invited observers.

This visit by an observer from our churches was authorized by our Synod in June.

Prof. Decker had the opportunity to observe the meeting of the Interim Committee which prepares resolutions for the Council, and the meeting of the Plenary body which makes decisions.

Perhaps the most important decision that was made was concerning the decisions of the Christian Reformed Church on women in ecclesiastical office. The Council had protested to the CRC the decisions of 1990; but in this year's meetings, it expressed satisfaction with the decisions which the Synod of the CRC took last summer.

The Council also received a request from the Reformed Church in the United States (what some of our readers know as the German Reformed Church) to become a member. This request was postponed for a year.

One valuable benefit of attending these meetings is the possibility of contact and conversation with other conservative Presbyterian and Reformed men.

The week of November 16 Prof. Decker and Elder John Flikkema II will be attending the meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches which will be held in Lynwood, Illinois. An opportunity to tell our readers of this meeting will come later.

The Contact Committee received a letter from the Session of the Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand where Rev. Rodney Miersma labors. A few excerpts from this letter

will give you a bit of an idea concerning the work there.

Our church is small and we live in a land which has apostatized to the point when one wonders whether there is yet any faith Aware of [our] calling we have been active in trying to bring God's Word to all parts of New Zealand. In addition to the preaching here in Wellington twice each Sunday our pastor will have lectured seven times in the months from March until November Our pamphlets are advertised regularly in a Christian paper . . . , which has resulted in large numbers of these pamphlets being mailed to literally all parts of the country In addition to the seven families of our church there are thirteen others who are subscribers to the *Standard Bearer*. Our Bookshop continues to sell books to more than the church members Some [ministers] have preached through the entire Canons using *The Voice of Our Fathers* as

source material Our tape library also enjoys continued use with hundreds of titles available.

With respect to our membership we have had our disappointments. Two of our youth have left for foreign lands On the brighter side we have had a gentleman worship with us since February of 1990 . . . and comes faithfully twice a Sunday Society life continues from about mid-February to mid-December each year. Four families meet each week in the Wellington area, and the Bible study by the Inskeeps further north is held every two weeks with several visitors attending regularly. A Bible History, Heidelberg Catechism, and Pre-Confession class are held each week for the catechumens.

Turning to contact with other churches we can report significant activity. Earlier in June our pastor and his wife traveled to Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia where our pastor attended as observer the Presbytery meeting of the

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. In addition to attending the meetings our pastor had the privilege of preaching twice on the Lord's Day, which preaching was received very well. As fruit of that contact and as indication of closer ties the Tasmanian Presbytery has asked us to send our pastor to Tasmania to preach for the congregation in Burnie for two months and for the congregation in Launceston for one month. We have assented to their request and count it a privilege to be able to help our fellow saints there in this most important way. (The Miersmas will be in Tasmania, the Lord willing, from December 10 through the month of February. H.H.)

So that gives our readers some idea of the work in New Zealand.

We bid you all farewell while we seek your prayers upon our work.

In Christ's service,
The Contact Committee,
Prof. Herman Hanko, Secretary

□

Book Reviews

We and Our Children: The Reformed Doctrine of Infant Baptism (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1981) by Herman Hanko. 118 pp., \$5.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Henry Pieter Kik, Western Theological Seminary*.]

My selection of the book *We and Our Children*, by Herman Hanko, was in no small part due to my interest in the Protestant Reformed Churches with their strong position on the biblical doctrine of "The Covenant of Grace" and Herman Hoeksema's "battle" with Abraham Kuyper on covenant theology. This eventually (1924) led to Hoeksema's deposition

by the Christian Reformed Synod because of his rejection of common grace.

Although Hoeksema highly esteemed Abraham Kuyper, he rejected his viewpoint on God's covenant with Noah, which was not the covenant established with the church, but a covenant of common grace established with every human being, with the wicked world as such. It is at this juncture that the Christian Reformed Synod formulated the "Three Points":

1. That the grace of God is not particular, not for the elect alone, but sustains a certain covenant of friendship with natural man.

2. That immediately after the fall in paradise a certain operation of grace, though not regenerating a man, prevents him from becoming as corrupt as he would have become without this operation of grace.

3. That with this operation of "common grace" in natural man he can do very much that is good. He leads a relatively good life in this earthly sphere and relationships.¹

I include this history in my critique because it enriches the biblical meaning of the Covenant of Grace as set forth in the book *We and Our Children*, by Herman Hanko, who had Herman Hoeksema as his mentor. (Reverend Herman Hanko is professor of church history and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary.) In covenant theology as revealed in Scripture and expounded by Calvin, the grace of God is not inclusive but particular.

The strength of this treatise is found in the fact that it deals with those Baptists who claim they are truly Reformed in their theology. In western Michigan we have "The Reformed Baptist Church of Grand Rapids." In this context Professor Hanko writes that this has forced "all defenders of Paedobaptism to take a second look at their position and examine it in the light of Scripture." The author not only does this, but

¹ *Therefore Have I Spoken*, Hoeksema, G., 1969.

*This critique of Prof. Hanko's book was given recently by the Rev. Henry Kik, minister of Congregational Care Laketon Bethel Reformed Church of Muskegon, Michigan. Because of the nature of the critique and because of the importance of the issue, we publish this critique for the benefit of the readers of the *Standard Bearer*. — Ed.

does it well. He makes his conclusions by evaluating the "Reformed Baptist" position as set forth in the book written by David Kingdon entitled *Children of Abraham*.²

This small book, Hanks claims, is the most articulate and best reasoned of all defenses of the Reformed Baptist position. Hanks holds that:

... the defense of Paedobaptism is not always what it ought to be. Many who have written extensively in this field have presented arguments which are less than convincing to a committed Baptist because they have failed to understand the Scriptural idea of the covenant of grace Failing to see that the covenant is always organic, they have left large loopholes in their arguments and have given Baptists abundant opportunity to criticize their position on various counts.³

In his thesis Hanks makes the following statements:

1. A Reformed Baptist is really an impossibility.
2. The Baptist who defends free will, man's initiative in the work of salvation, resistible grace, the altar call, the free and well-meaning offer of the gospel, is the Baptist who is *consistent*.
3. The Baptist, on the other hand, who maintains the doctrine of grace, and repudiates dispensationalism is *inconsistent* in his theology—he may claim that he is a Calvinist . . . he may repudiate dispensationalism—but he is guilty of a happy inconsistency for all that.

These keen observations by Rev. Hanks are basic to a real understanding of the Scriptural doctrine of the covenant of grace which he sets forth with Scriptural conviction and as the believers' response to the truth of the covenant of grace.

The student who seeks to explore the doctrine of infant baptism would profit greatly from reading Hanks's book, *We and Our Children*. One will appreciate the extensive quotations from Kingdon's book, *Children of Abraham*. This affords the reader an unusual opportunity of sitting in on a great debate on the subject of Paedobaptism.

The Reformed Baptist, as represented by Kingdon, certainly repudiates the dispensational position and rebukes his fellow Baptists for holding to it. Kingdon does this in his effort to affirm the unity of the old and new dispensations for the purpose of affirming the unity of the covenant. His view of circumcision is that it is of national and spiritual significance. He really departs from the Reformed position when he contends that the seed of Abraham belong only to those who are true believers. For this reason Reformed Baptists believe that repentance and faith are necessary for one to belong to the covenant. Hanks rightly observes:

Kingdon fails to deal with this typical character of the old dispensation. He fails to see that the land of Canaan was but a type and picture of heaven. He fails to see that Israel itself was a picture of the church of every age Thus the essence of the covenant and of the promise of the covenant remained the same.⁴

On the basis of Scripture (Gal. 3:23-29; 4:1-7) Hanks comes to a meaningful conclusion on this matter:

It is clear from the passage that Paul compares the church of the old dispensation with that of the new under the figure of a child who grows to manhood. The church of the old dispensation is like a small child who needs instruction. He is indeed the heir of all the possessions of his father. But he cannot have this inheritance yet for he is but a child and will not know what to do with it. And so he is under a schoolmaster Throughout the whole old dispensation the church was under the instruction of the schoolmaster of the law But God continued to give this church His instruction . . . (until) the church became, in the fullest sense of the word, sons and heirs of God through Christ.⁵

The instructive thrust of the "debate" between Professor Hanks and Kingdon is most rewarding to follow. In part:

Kingdon: The interpretation that the

Apostle Paul gives to the concept of "the seed of Abraham" establishes the principle that the ordinance of baptism should now be applied only to those who show credible evidence of being in union with Christ, for only those in union with him are Abraham's seed (Galatians 3:29) The New Testament leaves us in no doubt that such is nothing other than a credible profession of faith in Christ.

Hanks: The serious mistake which Kingdon makes is the error of making separation between the two dispensations even though he maintains that there is unity in some respects. The whole Baptist position hangs on this point and any refutation of the Baptist position must show that the unity of the two dispensations is far greater than Kingdon will acknowledge This . . . means that the covenant is one and the promises of the covenant are one; but that they are differently administered This is not difficult to prove.⁶

The Covenant with Believers and their Seed

One issue that seems to be constantly active is the issue of whether God saves His church in the line of continued generations.

Kingdon: Since I maintain that children as such no longer have covenantal significance it follows . . . (say some), that I deny that God works along the lines of generations, and that therefore I am guilty, in the end, of maintaining a purely individualistic doctrine of conversion I fail to see that because I reject the baptism of infants that I am obliged to deny that God works in families. Hanks: That God saves His people in the line of continued generations is clearly taught in Scripture. The first line of proof lies in the fact that repeatedly in Scripture specific com-

² University Tutorial Press Ltd., Foxton, England.

³ *We and Our Children*, Hanks, pp. 10ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 22ff.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 23ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 26ff.

mands of God come to children as well as to adults. And the important and interesting part of these commands of Jehovah God is that these commands are given on the grounds that children as well as adults are included in God's covenant.⁷

The scriptures cited by Professor Hanks are abundant. They weave a golden thread of covenant grace into a meaningful pattern of both the sign and the seal of the covenant. For me it struck a response of thanksgiving and praise, for it is not what we who pre-believing parents have done, but rather what our sovereign God has done. This is expressed by Hanks when he writes:

So it is with God's covenant. That stream of God's covenant began already at its source in paradise with Adam. As it runs throughout history, many new streams of new generations come into that covenant from the outside where they lose their original identity and become the people of God.⁸

The strength of Hanks's book is that it answers the position of the "Reformed Baptists" — and if you can answer them, you will have little trouble answering the regular Baptists!

In conclusion I quote Hanks:

And so we baptize infants. It is the command of God through all ages. Those who fail to do this must recognize that they live in disobedience to the Lord. They have no true conception of the covenant. They cannot avoid dispensationalism. They remain individualistic in their thinking. And they do injustice to the children God has given to them.

To the people of God in every age it is a great comfort that God indeed saves them and their children. It is God's unfailing mercy and grace. To Him be the glory forever.⁹ ■

Through Christ's Word: A Festschrift For Dr. Philip E. Hughes, edited by W. Robert Godfrey and Jesse L. Boyd III; Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1985; 252 pp., \$10.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. Herman Hanko.]

Dr. Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, visiting Professor of New Testament and Reformation Studies at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, has earned an international reputation as a widely learned scholar in the fields of exegesis, theology, and church history. This book, containing essays by his friends and colleagues, is written in his honor.

The book is divided into four parts: New Testament Studies, Old Testament Studies, Historical and Theological Studies, and a bibliography of Dr. Hughes' writings.

The first two sections are of interest to and can only be, for the most part, understood by scholars who work in colleges, universities, and seminaries. They also are often written from the viewpoint of literary-historical criticism of Scripture.

The third section is the one for me, and the one which will be of value to any who wish to delve into historical and theological studies.

J. I. Packer has an essay on different kinds of Arminianism and the differences between these Arminianisms and Calvinism. The essay is so good that it is worth the price of the book. Packer deals with the Arminian controversy in The Netherlands in the latter 16th and early 17th century and, with theological insight, analyzes the issues. But he moves over to England and discusses the different kinds of Arminianism that appeared in that land, carefully analyzing their erroneous theologies. He demonstrates clearly how even such well-known Puritans as Jeremy Taylor, Thomas Goodwin, and Richard Baxter moved into the Arminian camp with their views of justification on grounds other than Christ's perfect atoning sacrifice.

Dr. Packer delivered a paper on the same subject at the Leicester Con-

ference in 1968 which was later published (along with the other papers) under the title, "The Manifest Grace of God." This chapter is a modification and expansion of that original paper.

W. Stanford Reid talks about the influences of Calvin's early legal training on his reformatory work. Roger Nicole has an interesting article on Friedrich Spanheim, Calvinist theologian in Geneva and Leyden. W. Wilson Benton, Jr., has an excellent article on federal theology in the 16th and early 17th century, with a penetrating analysis of the covenant of works and the idea of the covenant as an agreement between God and man. John N. Akers has an article on Southern Presbyterians and Slave Missions, and W. Robert Godfrey has a valuable article on the idea of the relation between church and state in Dutch Calvinism.

Buy the book and read this excellent section. ■

Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation, edited by Mark A. Noll. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. 232 pages, \$12.95, paper. [Reviewed by the Editor.]

This is a useful collection of ten confessions, or confessional-type statements, from the era of the Reformation. Included are "The Ninety-five Theses of Martin Luther (1517)"; "The Sixty-Seven Articles of Ulrich Zwingli (1523)"; "The Schleithem Confession (1527)"; "Martin Luther's Small Catechism (1529)"; "The Heidelberg Catechism (1563)"; "Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-1563)"; "Profession of the Tridentine Faith (1564)"; and "The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1571)."

"The Schleithem Confession" is the confession of the Anabaptists, spiritual ancestors of today's Baptists. The first article of their faith concerns baptism. The second sentence of this first article runs, "This excludes all infant baptism, the highest and chief abomination of the pope." This lays bare Anabaptism. The

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 43ff.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

Augsburg Confession is the creed of the Lutheran churches. The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent and the Profession of the Tridentine Faith are Roman Catholic confessions. Only excerpts from the lengthy Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent are given. These excerpts are taken from the doctrinal portions of the Roman creed. The other confessions appear in their entirety.

"Brief introductions set the documents in historical and theological perspective."

Especially those who do not have access to some or even many of these confessions in other volumes will welcome this collection. It will be useful for reference. Those who have never read Luther's ninety-five theses and small catechism, Zwingli's sixty-seven articles, and the Genevan Confession will want to do so for sheer edification. Here is the beginning of the section in Luther's small catechism in which the Reformer instructs fathers how to teach the Lord's Prayer to their families:

"Our Father who art in heaven."

What does this mean?

Answer: Here God would encourage us to believe that he is truly our Father and we are truly his children in order that we may approach him boldly and confidently in prayer, even as beloved children approach their dear father (p. 69).

Reading through the confessions as they appear in this collection reminded me that the Reformed believer does well to be suspicious of modern translations of the creeds, even as he does well to be suspicious of modern translations of Holy Scripture. Other principles of translation prevail nowadays than the principle of scrupulous faithfulness to the original text. An instance is Allen O. Miller and M. Eugene Osterhaven's translation of Question 103 of the Heidelberg Catechism:

What does God require in the fourth commandment? First, that the ministry of the gospel and Christian education be maintained, and that I dili-

gently attend church, especially on the Lord's day... (p. 159).

My concern here is not with the translation, "Christian education," although this is a dubious rendering of the German, *die Schulen*, "the schools." The reference of the Catechism is not to some form of Christian education of its members by the church, but to the seminaries and, by implication, to the Christian day schools. What is objectionable is the translation of the German, *Feiertag*, as "Lord's day." *Feiertag* means "sabbath," or "day of rest." To substitute "Lord's day" for "sabbath" in Question 103 of the Catechism is to obscure a truth that is of crucial importance for Reformed Christians, and one that is well-nigh lost today, the truth, namely, that their behavior on the first day of the week is sabbath-observance. To put it differently, the Catechism's deliberate use of *Feiertag* in Question 103 makes clear that the Lord's day is the New Testament sabbath and that the fourth commandment of the law is still in force, requiring observance of a day. □

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

School Activities

The Hope PR Christian School in Walker, MI presented their annual all-school program entitled *Sola Deo Gloria* on Friday, November 13, in the First Jenison CR Church.

The students divided their program into four parts: Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture Alone, and God Alone. Woven throughout the entire program were, of course, songs introduced by different narrations. A narration from the *Standard Bearer* written by Prof. H. Hanko perhaps best expresses the theme. "The heart of the tradition which we have received from the Calvin Reformation is the

principle of the glory of God. *Soli Deo Gloria* was the starting point of all Calvin's theology; and it is this basic truth, so completely scriptural, that has characterized the Reformed faith up to the present."

On November 3 the Randolph (WI) PR School Society held a special meeting, at which the society was asked to approve three proposals submitted by their school board. 1) That we express commitment to beginning classes for the 1993/94 school year, should the Lord continue to open doors for us. 2) That we conduct a fund drive within our own congregation and by letter to the membership of the PR churches. 3) That a PR school begin only when tangible property is owned—either land or permanent classroom facilities.

In connection with these three proposals, the consistory of the Randolph, WI PRC also adopted a

motion: "In light of our calling in Article 21 of the Church Order, the consistory expresses its unanimous support to the three proposals from the school board."

Besides that, the congregation was also requested to assemble on November 12 in their sanctuary to hear their pastor, Rev. S. Key, address them concerning "Why PR Education?" A question and answer period followed.

Evidently these three proposals were adopted at that November 3 meeting, since we, like all our PR families here in North America, received letters in mid-November laying out the plans for beginning a Christian school in Randolph. Perhaps reading this will jog your memory about their financial need. What a great opportunity. We have been asked to take this step in faith with Randolph. Let us not miss it!

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

THE STANDARD BEARER

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Young People's Activities

According to the 1991 Yearbook of our churches, the Young People's Society of the Pella, IA PRC consists of 14 members. Well, these young people recently sponsored a fundraiser for next year's convention by first selling and then making over 600 sub sandwiches. Not a bad day's work. Now if we could only get them to clean their rooms . . .

The Federation of P.R.Y.P. Societies sponsored a Fall Retreat for young adults 18 and older at Camp Michawana near Hastings, MI on November 6 and 7. Rev. B. Gritters spoke to the 50 or so young adults on Friday evening concerning one's responsibility to handle the Word of God properly. He based his remarks on II Timothy 2:15, especially the last phrase: "rightly dividing the word of truth."

Besides the profitable discussion of this theme, other activities included a huge bonfire Friday night, followed by activities Saturday morning too numerous to list.

Mission Activities

Rev. G. VanBaren, presently serving the Covenant Reformed Fellowship in Larne, Northern Ireland, writes to his congregation in Hudsonville, MI that "the services on Sunday have been going well. There is an average attendance of about 40. There are five committed families and four individuals. In addition there are two families and several individuals who attend rather regularly on Sunday evening."

Rev. VanBaren also includes a few comments about a coal stove in their "manse." "It was smoking quite a bit on Sunday morning, but we seem to have made adjustments necessary to keep that to a minimum." They have cooked some meals on it

just for the experience. He also writes, "We have become fairly well accustomed to driving on the 'wrong' side of the road, using the steering wheel which is on the right side of the car."

You are encouraged to write the VanBarens while they are in Northern Ireland. Their address is:

3 Sunnyside, Doagh Road
Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim
BT36 8BL
Northern Ireland.

Food For Thought:

"Wouldst thou know when thou hast been humbled enough on account of sin? When thou art willing to let go thy sins."

—Thomas Watson



ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of the First Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere Christian sympathy to fellow officebearers, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kregel and Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Velthouse and families in the loss of their mother and grandmother,

MRS. LENA WYNSMA.

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

Rev. Meindert Joostens, President
Ronald VanPutten, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary-Martha Society of the Redlands Congregation would like to express their Christian sympathy to their fellow member Marty Mantel and her family in the death of her grandmother,

MRS. KATHERINE SAUL.

May she and her family find comfort in God's Word "...they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you" (Isaiah 51:11b, 12a).

Pastor denHartog, President
Tammy VanUffelen, Secretary

NOTICE!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, January 13, 1993, at the Faith Protestant Reformed Church, at 9 A.M.

Jon J. Huisken
Stated Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On December 4, 1992, our parents,

**GORDON AND JUNE
VANOVERLOOP,**

celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary.

We thank our covenant God for the way in which He has used them to teach and train us in His fear. Their presence, council, and example are what we value most. Their labor in the Lord has not been in vain.

It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless us through them in the days ahead.

- * Ron and Sue
 - * Jim, and Linda, who has gone to be with her Father in glory
 - * Tom and Vicki
 - * Greg and Vicki
 - * Randy and Ellen
 - * David and Julie
- and their 25 grandchildren.

Hudsonville, Michigan