



THE **STANDARD BEARER**

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Magazine**



Peace PRC (Lansing, IL) builds new church

See "The Dedication of God's House" — p. 171

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In This Issue ...

... are several articles dealing with various aspects of the biblical doctrine of creation. Rev. Steven Key begins a treatment of the Reformed doctrine of providence. Providence, he reminds us, necessarily follows upon creation. The question is one that "cries out for an answer," particularly at the beginning of a new year: "What is God's involvement with His creation?"

Homer Hoeksema's article in the rubric, "Day of Shadows," takes us deeply into "Paradise the First." Specifically, the late professor of Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary opens up the meaning of the Tree of Life in the original creation. There is no lengthy defense of the historical reality of the tree (this is simply received by the faith that honors Holy Scripture as the inspired Word of God), but rather an exposition of the rich significance of the tree both for the first Adam and with a view to the second Adam.

Rev. Gise VanBaren brings to our attention current evidence of the folly of evolution from the secular press. He concludes, "What contorted efforts must be made in order to present evolution as a reliable theory of origins!" Read "Minor Corrections in the Theory of Evolution" in the rubric, "All Around Us."

Not many religious periodicals would carry the articles referred to above. I doubt whether any would run the piece by Rev. Arie denHartog, "Hating the Haters of God." That "God's people today must have the same holy hatred for those that hate God as David did (in Psalm 139:19-22)"?

Only in the *Standard Bearer*.

—DJE

The Dedication of God's House*

In II Chronicles 7:1-22 we are informed of the fact that Solomon and the Israelites were also involved in a building project — a building project which was much more extensive than that of Peace Church. They built the temple of God. It required hundreds of thousands of workmen. And the Israelites spent seven years building it. Before that, King David had spent many years gathering material. The material included 100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver. The temple was a very elaborate and beautiful building. Its inner walls were carved with flowers, cherubim, and palm trees. The whole thing was overlaid with pure gold.

Solomon and the Israelites had a dedication service for their new place of worship too. That service was just as elaborate and beautiful as the building itself. The dedication lasted fourteen days. Solomon gathered all the elders of Israel, the heads of the tribes, the chiefs of the fathers, and all of Israel "from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt." In a solemn procession the Levites took the ark of the covenant out of the tabernacle and brought it to the new temple. They offered thousands of sacrifices. They sang songs of praise and adoration

to God. The trumpets sounded. The cymbals and other instruments of music were played.

Solomon spoke to the people and told them about God's faithfulness to David and Israel. He blessed the people and admonished them to serve God. He kneeled down, spread his hands toward heaven, and prayed a beautiful prayer. He asked God to dwell in the house which they had built for Him. He prayed that that house would be the house of God and that God would put His name in that house, so that from that house God would be with Israel and bless her. From that house God would show His faithfulness to Israel and be gracious, merciful, and kind to Israel.

In answer to the prayer of Solomon, God sent fire down from heaven. It consumed the sacrifices which Solomon had offered to God. And the cloud of God's glory filled the house. It was so thick that the priests could not enter into the temple. By that cloud of glory God indicated the fact that He came down unto them to dwell with them in that house. The infinite God, who is so great that heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, much less a physical house, made that house His temple. He set apart that house from all other houses. It was His holy dwelling place.

Thus the temple became the place of worship for Israel. There was no other building where they were to worship God with their sacrifices and offerings. That house was the place of all of their religious ceremonies and celebrations. Whether

they lived far away or nearby, all Israelites had to go to that house to worship God. That is why the dividing of the kingdom and the setting up of the golden calves by Jeroboam was so wicked. By that the northern kingdom left the house of God. They left the house where God dwelt with His people.

As we think of this house which we of Peace Church have built by God's grace, and of our dedication service, we must understand that things are different today. This house is not the house of God. This building which we have built is not the temple of God. God does not dwell in this building in the same way that He dwelt in the temple of the old dispensation. There is nothing sacred about this building as such. The furniture in this building is not holy either.

That is because, with the coming of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the way in which God dwells with His people has changed. Rather than dwelling in a building among His people, God dwells directly in His people. By the Spirit of Christ who was poured out upon the church, God lives in the heart of every true believer. We believers are the temple of God. We are the house in which God dwells. When we came into this church building this evening, we did not come into the house of God. We brought the house of God into this building.

That is a fundamental change. We are not obligated to worship God in any particular building anymore. We may worship Him in the audi-

Rev. Houck is pastor of Peace Protestant Reformed Church in Lansing, Illinois.

*Speech given on 11/17/95 at the dedication service of the new church building of the Peace PRC.

torium of a school, as we did for seven years. We may worship Him in a home. We may even worship Him in a barn if that is what we want. That is because we, who are God's people, are the temple of the Holy Ghost. Wherever we assemble, there is God's house.

That does not mean, however, that we may not dedicate this building to the Lord's use. It does not mean that we may not thank God for this building.

Even as Solomon and Israel thanked and praised God for the temple, we must thank and praise God for this building. For we could not have built this house if God had not been faithful to us. God is the One who gives us all that we have. He gave us the financial means to build this house. He gave the abilities and talents that were needed by those who labored in the construction of this house. No one could have lifted a hammer without His power. He sovereignly ruled over government officials so that we received the proper permits to begin the work and the approval of the work done, in spite of all the requirements which had to be met. Even though it took longer than we expected, and certain aspects of it were difficult, here we are in a beautiful church building. It is all because of the faithfulness of our God.

In fact, this building is a monument of the grace, mercy, and kindness of God to us. For except God had worked in our hearts, regenerating us and giving to us a love of the Truth, we would not even have desired to worship Him in such a house. This building is a testimony of the fact that God is our God who has saved us and who has given to us a love of the church. This building bears record of the fact that God does indeed dwell within us and that the temple of God is meeting in this building.

That can be seen also from the

fact that we dedicate this house almost exactly seven years after we were organized as a congregation. Seven (3 + 4) is the number of God's covenant and of His dwelling together with His people. This house, completed seven years after our organization, manifests the significance of that number. God dwells with us, His holy temple.

The fact that this building is not the temple of God does not alter the fact that we ought to dedicate this building to the use of God's kingdom. Because we are the temple of the Holy Ghost, our bodies, our souls, and all that we have are to be dedicated to the cause of God. We do not belong to ourselves. We belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ. We are to give ourselves over to His service. How fitting and proper, therefore, that we give this building over to the cause of God and His spiritual house. We must do that rather than using this house for our own purposes or for the cause of sin and Satan. This house must be used for God and good rather than for man and evil.

That was the case with the temple of Solomon too. God came to Solomon and warned him that the temple must be used for good and not evil.

In II Chronicles 7:14 God said, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Even though the people of Israel were sinners, if they would humble themselves, repent of their sins, and seek God in His holy temple, God would hear them and forgive them. He would bless them and always be there for them in that house which they built for Him.

But if they would forsake this house and turn away from the God

who dwelt between the cherubim, He would judge them.

God said in verses 19-21, "But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations. And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house?"

That must be our great concern. How are we going to use this house? For God or for man, sin, and Satan? There are many very beautiful church buildings in the world. There are big buildings, elaborate buildings, buildings filled with gold and silver. But most of them are not used for God. They do not serve the spiritual temple of God. They are empty shells. God is not there because the people of those buildings have forsaken God and His Truth. We must not do that. We must be careful that we dedicate this building to God and His cause.

That means first of all and foremost that we must use this building for the preaching of the gospel. The preaching is the chief and most important calling that God has given to His church. It is the chief means of grace. God forbid that this building should be used to proclaim a false gospel or a distorted gospel. We may not allow anyone, no matter who he is, to use this building to preach the lie of the devil instead of the truth of God. The preaching that goes forth from this pulpit must be the gospel of sovereign grace, the gospel of the Reformed faith, the Truth of Holy Scripture. Elders! Congregation! Guard this pulpit and set it apart for the Truth.

In the second place, we must use this building for the proper administration of the sacraments. God has

given us two beautiful sacraments which are signs and seals of the truth of the gospel. Baptism is a picture of the washing away of our sin by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper pictures Christ spiritually feeding our hungry and thirsty souls. These two sacraments must be administered in this building regularly and correctly. We ought to rejoice in presenting our children for baptism because God has established His covenant with believers and their seed. We ought to rejoice in partaking of the bread and wine, for we spiritually partake of Christ Himself. We must continue the practice of "close communion" — only members of this congregation and those who show the consistory that they are truly Reformed may partake of the Lord's Supper here. The elders have to guard the table of the Lord in this building so that as much as possible it is not profaned and God's judgment come upon our congregation.

In the third place, we must use this building for the faithful exercise of Christian discipline. The main reason that so many beautiful church buildings are nothing but empty shells is that the congrega-

tions which once worshiped in those buildings did not exercise Christian discipline. They allowed unrepentant sin to continue in their midst. The result was that they were infested with unbelievers. If this house of God is to be dedicated to God, Christian discipline must be faithfully practiced within these walls. Then, the people who use this building will show themselves to be God's true people by their confession and walk.

Finally, if we are to use this building for God and His cause, every one of us must pray for grace that within these walls we will worship God properly as individuals. When we hear the pure preaching and the reading of God's Word, we listen and take heed. We believe and obey. When we sing praises to Him, we do it from the heart in true thanksgiving for all of His blessings. When we pray, we are conscious of what we are saying and mean what we say. When our children come to this place for catechism, they know their lessons and listen respectfully to their pastor because their parents have faithfully instructed them. Whatever we do in this house, it is

for the glory of the God of our salvation.

If we use this building in that way, God will be in this place when we meet here to worship Him. God will be with us and bless us wherever we are. He will be our God and we will be His people.

But if we do not use this building in that way, if we allow the preaching of the lie, if we are unfaithful in the administration of the sacraments and in the practice of Christian discipline, if we do not worship God from our hearts in true love, we will, like Israel, be cut out of that heavenly land of Canaan. Then this house, no matter how beautiful physically, will be a house of man, a house of sin and Satan. The people of this house will not know the presence of God and His blessings. As people walk by and see the trouble and misery our unfaithfulness brings to us, they will be astonished and will say, "Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house?"

Let us, therefore, be faithful and dedicate this house and ourselves to the cause of God and His true spiritual house. □

Editorial

Does God Desire that the "Offer" be Received by All Sinners?

In an article in the August - September 1995 issue of *The Banner of Truth* magazine, "Calvin and the Free Offer," the writer made the following reference to the Protestant Reformed Seminary:

Professors of the Protestant Reformed Seminary in the USA and their followers in the British Re-

formed Fellowship deny that God makes an indiscriminate offer of Christ to sinners. Adherents of the Westminster standards take the opposite view (p. 28).

The Banner of Truth, published in Edinburgh, Scotland, is a magazine of influence in Calvinistic circles, especially in the British Isles.

Damaging Reference to the PRC

The deliberate implication of this reference to the Protestant Reformed Seminary is that this Seminary and thus the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) are in conflict with the Westminster standards regarding God's free offer of life and salvation by Jesus Christ in the cove-

nant of grace (see the Westminster Confession of Faith, 7.3). In reality, this is the charge that the PRC deny that the gospel is to be preached promiscuously and without distinction to all persons to whom God sends the gospel and that the PRC do not command all who hear the gospel to repent and believe.

This charge, if believed by Calvinists, particularly in the British Isles, would spoil the testimony of the PRC there and hinder their work.

Misunderstanding of the BRF

Inasmuch as the reference to the Protestant Reformed Seminary links the British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) with the Seminary, the charge also reflects adversely on the genuine Presbyterianism of the BRF.

I note in passing that the leaders of the BRF are not "followers" of the PRC or their professors. The leaders of the BRF are men of theological and spiritual conviction and standing in their own right. They agree with the doctrinal confession of the PRC in certain important respects. They may well differ in other respects. One thing they ardently desire: sound, creedal, Reformed churches in the British Isles. These are churches that preach the uncorrupted doctrines of grace without compromise; maintain the one covenant of God with believers and their children; and practice Presbyterian church government. There is not an abundance of such churches in the British Isles.

Those in the British Isles who love the faith of Westminster and Dordt ought not to be found undermining the efforts of the BRF. Rather, they ought to be praying earnestly that God will bless these efforts.

The PRC in America support the work of the BRF mainly by encouraging their seminary professors to speak at BRF-sponsored conferences every two years and by the speaking on behalf of the BRF that is done by the churches' missionary in Northern Ireland.

A Letter to *The Banner of Truth*

In view of the misrepresentation of the position of the PRC in that magazine, I sent a letter to *The Banner of Truth*. *The Banner of Truth* published this letter in the December 1995 issue, as follows:

We respectfully ask that you publish the following in a forthcoming issue of *The Banner of Truth* as our response to the reference to us in the August-September 1995 issue of your magazine.

In the heading of his article, "Calvin and the Free Offer" (*The Banner of Truth*, August-September 1995), John Brentnall makes the following reference to us and our supposed view of the "offer of Christ":

"Professors of the Protestant Reformed Seminary in the USA and their followers in the British Reformed Fellowship deny that God makes an indiscriminate offer of Christ to sinners. Adherents of the Westminster standards take the opposite view" (p. 28).

Mr. Brentnall and the readers of *The Banner of Truth* should know that we believe that God in the preaching of the gospel presents Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from sin to all who hear. We hold that by the preacher God calls (in the sense of "summons," or "commands") all to repent and believe, that is, to come to Christ. We maintain that as Christ is presented to all and as all are summoned to believe, the gospel announces the promise that everyone who does believe (by sovereign grace) will be saved.

In this (original) sense of the term, "offer," we believe that Christ is "offered" in the gospel to all who hear. Indeed, this is our heartfelt confession in one of our creeds, the Canons of Dordt: "It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ, offered therein ... that those who are called ... refuse to come" (III, IV/8).

Contrary to the suggestion of Mr. Brentnall, we do, therefore, agree with the statement of the Westminster Confession of Faith, that the Lord, in the covenant of grace, "freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ" (7.3). The explanation of the state-

ment by A.A. Hodge is basically our understanding:

"He (Christ) bids all men to lay hold of these blessings by the instrumentality of faith, and He promises that if they do so they shall certainly enjoy them," (*A Commentary on the Confession of Faith*, Philadelphia, 1869, p. 175).

There is nothing at all in Hodge's explanation of a sincere desire on Christ's part that all be saved.

Our denial of a "well-meant offer of the gospel," as adopted synodically by the Christian Reformed Church in North America in 1924 and as widely advocated in Calvinistic circles today, is precisely the denial that in the preaching of the gospel God *desires, wishes, purposes, or wills the salvation of all hearers*. It is also precisely the denial that in the preaching of the gospel God *is gracious to all hearers, whether in the sense that He has an attitude of favor to all or in the sense that He actually works saving power in all*.

We judge that the teaching of universal love and a universal will to salvation, in the gospel, contradicts the confessional Calvinistic doctrine of election and reprobation. The teaching of universal grace, in the gospel, contradicts the confessional Calvinistic doctrine of irresistible grace, or effectual calling.

As for Calvin's position on the teaching that God in the gospel wishes to save and is gracious to all men, would Mr. Brentnall read and comment on the chapter, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Call," in David J. Engelsma's *Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: RFP, repr. 1994).

Response by *The Banner of Truth*

To my letter, the Editorial Director, Iain H. Murray, appended his "editorial response":

We agree with Professor Engelsma's concern for accurate biblical thinking about the free offer of the gospel. The critical issue here, of course, is not the mere use of the term "offer," but whether the offer of the gospel is an expression of God's desire that it should be received by sinners. We share with A.A. Hodge (whom Professor

Engelsma cites) the conviction that our beseeching and pleading with men and women to receive the gospel offer is an expression of God's loving concern for the lost (cf. A.A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology*, p. 136). If, as Paul says, God makes his appeals through his servants, then these appeals are not merely expressions of Paul's compassion but of God's. Indeed, if Paul's compassion, prayer, and loving desire for the lost to repent and believe in Christ are not expressions of God's own attitude, they cannot be of God at all. And if that is so, Paul's words in Romans 9:1-3 and 2 Corinthians 5:20 become an embarrassment to us. To deny this on the basis of God's eternal decree of reprobation (he has not chosen to save some, therefore he can have no expressions of compassion and desire for them) does not, in our view, harmonize with *all* of the biblical evidence.

Readers of the magazine will be interested to know that discussion of this important question will be found in two seminal works soon to be published by the Trust: Iain Murray's new book *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism* and John Murray's work on *The Free Offer of the Gospel*.

I appreciate the Rev. Murray's editorial courtesy in publishing my letter in full.

Continuing the Discussion in the SB

In a private letter, the Rev. Murray has informed me that *The Banner of Truth* is not inclined to continue the discussion on its pages. It is evident, however, from the publishing plans of The Banner of Truth Trust mentioned at the end of the editorial response that there is no inclination to discontinue the controversy against the PRC in the British Isles and, indeed, worldwide. Therefore, I must comment in the *Standard Bearer* on Murray's "editorial response."

An "Important Question"

The PRC agree with Iain Murray

that the issue of the "well-meant offer" is an "important question." If the Protestant Reformed denial of the "well-meant offer" is the hyper-Calvinism that Mr. Murray makes it out to be, the PRC are guilty of a false doctrine that conflicts with biblical teaching of the universal love of God in Christ for sinners and that puts an end to promiscuous preaching of the gospel. Thus, the PRC badly cripple evangelism and missions, if they do not make missions impossible.

If, on the other hand, the rejection by the PRC of the "well-meant offer" is right, the Calvinism of *The Banner of Truth*, as of many confessedly Calvinistic churches today, is fatally corrupted and compromised by the damnable lie of Arminianism, that bringing again of the Pelagian error "out of hell," as the Reformed faith officially (and correctly) judges the Arminian heresy in the Canons of Dordt (II, Rejection of Errors/ 3).

Stating the Issue Accurately

Murray states that the crux of the issue is "whether the offer of the gospel is an expression of God's desire that it should be received by sinners."

This is not an accurate statement of the "critical issue." Neither does this forthrightly address the position of the PRC on the preaching of the gospel as this position was precisely expressed in my letter.

I had written that the denial of the "well-meant offer of the gospel" by the PRC is "precisely the denial that in the preaching of the gospel God *desires, wishes, purposes, or wills the salvation of all hearers.*"

Iain Murray, therefore, should have responded that "the critical issue here ... is ... whether the offer of the gospel is an expression of God's desire to *save every sinner to whom the preaching of the gospel comes.*"

I had written that the denial of the "well-meant offer" by the PRC is "also precisely the denial that in the preaching of the gospel God is

gracious to all hearers, whether in the sense that He has an attitude of favor to all or in the sense that He actually works saving power in all."

Murray should, therefore, have responded that "the critical issue here ... is ... whether the offer of the gospel is an expression of the desire of God to save every sinner to whom the gospel comes, *because God loves all men without exception and is gracious to all.*"

It is not helpful to the discussion of "this important question" that Murray responds as he does in the phrase, "... whether the offer of the gospel is an expression of God's desire that it should be received by sinners." For the phrase is ambiguous. Does it mean that a sinner's embracing Christ by faith when the gospel is preached pleases God, whereas a sinner's rejection of Christ presented in the gospel displeases God? This, the PRC wholeheartedly maintain. If this is all that Murray and *The Banner of Truth* mean by the offer of the gospel, they have no quarrel with us.

However, "desire" is far too weak a word for what Murray then intends. God does not merely "desire" faith as the only right and acceptable response to the gospel. He *demand*s it. Every sinner to whom the gospel comes is *obliged* to believe. Refusal will be punished with double stripes of damnation (John 3:18).

Or does the phrase that is supposed to express "the critical issue" mean that God has the desire of purpose that every sinner who comes under the gospel be saved and that God has this purpose because He loves every sinner?

What Murray Means

What follows in Iain Murray's response makes clear that the latter is meant. The offer for Murray is the expression to every sinner without exception of God's sincere desire to save him inasmuch as God loves him. The gospel for Murray is grace for all. Iain Murray and *The Banner of Truth* defend univer-

sal gospel-grace. Whereas the grace of God in Christ in the decree of predestination may be particular, in the gospel it is universal. Whereas the Christ of the cross may be for the elect only, the *Christus* of the gospel is *pro omnibus*.

How Murray harmonizes this teaching with the Reformed creeds on the sovereignty of God, the oneness of His counsel, the particularity of the cross, and the irresistibility of grace is a problem for him and an enigma to me. Nor does he attempt to show this harmony in his response. Perhaps he will do this in his forthcoming *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism*. We will see.

A Question Intended to Promote the Discussion

For the furtherance of a serious discussion of the issue, in the hope that all who love the sovereignty of

grace may come to be of one mind, I pose a different question for Iain Murray and *The Banner of Truth*. My question focuses on the implied argument in Murray's line, "The critical issue ... is ... whether the offer of the gospel is an expression of God's desire that it should be received by sinners." The argument may be put thus:

1) God's confrontation of a sinner with an imperative (command, or exhortation), obedience to which pleases God, implies God's purposeful desire, in love for that sinner, that the sinner actually obey the imperative and be saved in so doing.

2) God does confront every sinner who hears the gospel with an imperative, "Believe in Christ presented in the gospel!," obedience to which imperative pleases Him.

3) Therefore, God desires the salvation of every sinner who hears the gospel.

My question: When God confronted Pharaoh in Exodus 5:1 with the imperative, "Let my people go!," did God desire, in love for Pharaoh, that Pharaoh actually let the people go, so that in the way of his obedience Pharaoh be saved?

The question can be put more succinctly. From an imperative, or command, by God to sinners, may we infer a sincere desire of the divine will that the sinner fulfil the imperative inasmuch as God loves the sinner and wishes his salvation?

May a doctrine of the extent of God's grace in Jesus Christ be based on the fact that God has the gospel preached to all?

Would Iain Murray answer this question: Was the Word of God to Pharaoh in Exodus 5-11 an expression of God's desire that His Word should be received by the sinner Pharaoh? □

— DJE

Letters

■ A Doctoral Study of Hoeksema's Theology

I was pleased to read your excellent editorial on Herman Hoeksema as "The Reformer of 1924," in the October 15 issue of the *Standard Bearer*. I was especially intrigued by your suggestion that the time had come for someone from your denomination to write a doctoral dissertation on Hoeksema's theology. I want to encourage you to follow through on that suggestion. I am sure that you know that many of us who do not agree with all of the details of Hoeksema's theology have, nonetheless, learned much from his

writings — and also from the writings of other people who, like yourself, have carried on in his tradition. A solid and sympathetic critical exposition of these writings is long overdue. I think that you are exactly right in proposing that someone from your church do the job, and that they do it as a doctoral dissertation. I wish you well as you seek to inspire the fulfillment of this excellent proposal.

Let me add that I would be very happy to see such a project take place here at Fuller Theological Seminary. We have an excellent pro-

gram in doctoral studies and I would be happy to serve as a mentor for this particular project should the student in question be interested in such an arrangement. My guess is that you have other plans in mind, but I do want you to know of my willingness to encourage this endeavor in any way that you should see fit as you move ahead with your work on this matter. Let me know if I can be of any help. □

(Dr.) Richard J. Mouw

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All Around Us

Rev. Gise VanBaren

■ "Minor" Corrections in the Theory of Evolution

Time magazine in its December 4, 1995 issue presents a cover feature article on the subject of "Evolution's Big Bang." The article is of interest not so much because of its

elaborate defense of evolution, but rather because of its presentation of alterations in the traditional theory. Although evolution is considered a matter of "science" in distinction from creationism (presented as a matter of "religion" rather than "sci-

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ence”), the article makes abundantly clear how “flexible” the theory of evolution really is. In fact, the thought came to mind as I read the article that certain aspects of the “new” theory of evolution seem to show possibly creationism rather than evolution!

I quote only a limited portion of that feature article — and obviously this requires taking things “out of context.” Nevertheless, you will receive some indication of the radical changes in thought about the theory of evolution — which is almost everywhere presented as scientific fact.

Indeed, while most people cling to the notion that evolution works its magic over millions of years, scientists are realizing that biological change often occurs in sudden fits and starts. And none of those fitful starts was more dramatic, more productive or more mysterious than the one that occurred shortly after Erwin’s wormlike creature slithered through the primordial seas. All around the world, in layers of rock just slightly younger than that Erwin discovered, scientists have found the mineralized remains of organisms that represent the emergence of nearly every major branch in the zoological tree. Among them: bristle worms and roundworms, lamp shells and mollusks, sea cucumbers and jellyfish, not to mention an endless parade of arthropods, those spindly legged, hard-shelled ancient cousins of crabs and lobsters, spiders and flies. There are even occasional glimpses — in rock laid down not long after Erwin’s Cambrian sandstone — of small, ribbon swimmers with a rodlike spine that are unprepossessing progenitors of the chordate line, which leads to fish, to amphibians and eventually to humans.

...Then, 543 million years ago, in the early Cambrian, within the span of no more than 10 million years, creatures with teeth and tentacles and claws and jaws materialized with the suddenness of apparitions. In a burst of creativity like nothing before or since, nature appears to have sketched out the blueprints for virtually the whole of the animal

kingdom. This explosion of biological diversity is described by scientists as biology’s Big Bang.

Over the decades, evolutionary theorists beginning with Charles Darwin have tried to argue that the appearance of multicelled animals during the Cambrian merely seemed sudden, and in fact had been preceded by a lengthy period of evolution for which the geological record was missing. But this explanation, while it patched over a hole in an otherwise masterly theory, now seems increasingly unsatisfactory. Since 1987, the discoveries of major fossil beds in Greenland, in China, in Siberia, and now in Namibia have shown that the period of biological innovation occurred at virtually the same instant in geological time all around the world.

...Even more speculative are scientists’ attempts to address the flip side of the Cambrian mystery: why this evolutionary burst, so stunning in speed and scope, has never been equaled. With just one possible exception — the *Bryozoa*, whose first traces turn up shortly after the Cambrian — there is no record of new phyla emerging later on, not even in the wake of the mass extinction that occurred 250 million years ago, at the end of the Permian period.

Why no new phyla? Some scientists suggest that the evolutionary barrel still contained plenty of organisms that could quickly diversify and fill all available ecological niches. Others, however, believe that in the surviving organisms, the genetic software that controls early development had become too inflexible to create new life-forms after the Permian extinction. The intricate networks of developmental genes were not so rigid as to forbid elaborate tinkering with details; otherwise, marvels like winged flight and the human brain could never have arisen. But very early on, some developmental biologists believe, the linkages between multiple genes make it difficult to change important features without lethal effect. “There must be limits to change,” says Indiana University developmental biologist Rudolf Raff. “After all, we’ve had these same old body plans for half a bil-

lion years.”

The more scientists struggle to explain the Cambrian explosion, the more singular it seems. And just as the peculiar behavior of light forced physicists to conclude that Newton’s laws were incomplete, so the Cambrian explosion has caused experts to wonder if the twin Darwinian imperatives of genetic variation and natural selection provide an adequate framework for understanding evolution. “What Darwin described in the *Origin of Species*,” observes Queen’s University paleontologist Narbonne, “was the steady background kind of evolution. But there also seems to be a non-Darwinian kind of evolution that functions over extremely short time periods — and that’s where all the action is.

...Biological evolution, says Kauffman, is just one example of a self-organizing system that teeter-totTERS on the knife edge between order and chaos, “a grand compromise between structure and surprise.” Too much order makes change impossible; too much chaos and there can be no continuity. But since balancing acts are necessarily precarious, even the most adroit tightrope walkers sometimes make one move too many. Mass extinctions, chaos theory suggests, do not require comets or volcanoes to trigger them. They arise naturally from the intrinsic instability of the evolving system, and superior fitness provides no safety net....

It is simply beyond understanding how reasonable people can make such alterations in their theory of evolution — yet still insist that this is a matter of “science.” It seems inconceivable that what formerly took, presumably, hundreds of millions of years to “evolve” by chance, did now (so they would claim) take “only” some ten million years. By their own admission that would appear to be far too short a time for “chance” happenings which would account for present day life forms. Their further admission that no further life forms have been evolving from lower forms in the past “millions” of years is also telling.

Scripture gives a clear explana-

tion of the "sudden" life forms in Genesis 1 (though that did not take ten million years). One wonders: why should "evolution" be "scientific," but Scripture be "unscientific"? We are also told in Scripture that "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3). Though the unbeliever sees the things of God in creation (Rom. 1), he holds this under in unrighteousness. That will ever be the case.

Of interest, too, is the fact that the evolutionist can freely shave off a few million years here or there — yet claim to have a viable "theory" of origins. This particular article simply takes off some 45 million years from a single era:

Scientists used to think that the evolution of phyla took place over a period of 75 million years, and even that seemed impossibly short. Then two years ago, a group of researchers led by Grotzinger, Samuel Bowring from M.I.T. and Harvard's Knoll took this long-standing problem and escalated it into a crisis. First they recalibrated the geological clock, chopping the Cambrian period to about half its former length. Then they announced that

the interval of major evolutionary innovation did not span the entire 30 million years, but rather was concentrated in the first third. "Fast," Harvard's Gould observes, "is now a lot faster than we thought, and that's extraordinarily interesting."

Simple, is it not? One assumes that also this present estimate also is not exactly accurate — perhaps, give or take a few weeks. What contorted efforts must be made in order to present evolution as a reliable theory of origins!

■ Baptism of Children of Non-attenders

In the *R.E.C. News Exchange*, December 1995, there is an account of common practice of baptism of children of non-attenders in Great Britain. The parents simply present the child for baptism and the minister is expected to perform the ceremony.

George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in an October speech publicly criticized clergy who (are) unwilling to baptize children whose parents are not regular attenders at church. Carey, the leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion,

said church members should not "build too many barriers around church life." He said he was grateful for his own baptism at a time when his parents were not attending and had only flickering faith. He said Christians should represent their faith with "generosity."

Some evangelicals within the Church of England are debating whether these non-attenders are also non-believers. Mark Birchall, chair of the Evangelical Group in the Church of England's synod, said it was a farce to baptize children of non-believers. "Baptism involves making promises, and to baptize where there is no belief is inviting the parents to commit perjury," he told a reporter. He added that most evangelicals would still accept those who are believers but non-attenders.

Legally, Church of England clergy cannot refuse a baptism. They might delay it, but all citizens have a legal right to be baptized in the church of the land.

It is obvious that such a view of the sacrament of baptism does not at all take into account the wonder of the covenant of God established in the line of our generations. It becomes rather a form without substance. □

A Cloud of Witnesses

Prof. Herman Hanko

William III of Orange: Warrior of the Faith*

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

*A recent and excellent biography of William III is the trilogy written by Marjorie Bouwen published by Inheritance Publishers.

Introduction

There was a time in the history of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ when the fortunes of the church in the Netherlands were inextricably tied to fortunes of the church in Great Britain. This was the time of William III of the House of Orange.

The times were extremely perilous for countries which had become Calvinistic. Through the efforts of the Roman Catholic counter-reformation, the Protestant Reformation had not only been stopped in its tracks, but the Roman Catholics had once again taken the offensive in Europe. Spain had always been firmly on the side of the Romish Church;

France, by slaughtering the Huguenots and forcing the faithful to escape torture and death by seeking refuge in other countries, had become an ally of the papacy in the battle against Protestantism; the Roman Catholic party was still strong in the British Isles, and God's people were well acquainted with suffering and death for Christ's sake. Rome's servants were ready to launch powerful armies to subdue Protestant kingdoms and force Europe once again to bow before the papal throne. Even in the Netherlands, that bulwark of the Reformed faith, there were those who, weary of war, sought compromise with the enemy.

The one man whom God used to thwart these papal purposes was William III of the house of Orange, Stadholder in Holland. Against them all stood William III. His story is an intriguing one, though no less intriguing than the man himself. His impenetrable reserve made him something of a mystery even to his closest associates.

Birth and early years

William was the third by that name in the notable line of Dutch rulers which began with William the Silent. He was born at the Hague, the Netherlands on November 14, 1650 from William II, prince of Orange, and Mary, daughter of Charles I of England. He was thus in the direct line of Dutch royalty and had close ties to the royal line of the Stuarts in England. Charles I was the king of England who was beheaded by Parliament with the approval of Oliver Cromwell during England's civil war. Charles II, another Stuart, was on England's throne when William was born, and was William's uncle.

William was born eight days after his father died and was left an orphan in his early youth. Although he was by a recently-passed law prevented from assuming the rule of the United Provinces of Holland, his education through University was geared towards acquainting him with the responsibilities of rule.

When 16 years old he was made a ward of the States-General, the ruling body in the Netherlands. Under Johan de Witte, grand pensionary of Holland, he received a knowledge of the intricate affairs of government and the niceties of diplomacy and rule.

William's early wars

In 1671 the perfidious Charles II of England and the equally untrustworthy Louis XIV of France joined in a plot to invade the Netherlands. Their purpose was to destroy the strongest bastion of Calvinism in all Europe. This was particularly treacherous of Charles for he had professed repeatedly to be a friend of the Hollanders. And it was not strange that Louis XIV was a part of the plot, for the king of France was constantly searching in all the corners of Europe for places in which to meddle and for countries to bring under his rule. Yet, of more importance, both Charles and Louis hated with a passion the deep and staunch Calvinism which was the religion of the Lowlands.

When the plot to invade the Netherlands was discovered, alarm spread through the country and William was appointed Captain-general of the nation's forces. However, the appointment was not to include Stadholder, even though his father and grandfather had held both positions. The Dutch, always fearful of giving too much power to her rulers, and being staunch lovers of liberty, had passed a law preventing the same man from holding both positions.

The French immediately invaded the southern provinces and captured three of them in as many weeks. In defense of their country the Dutch opened the dikes and flooded the polders to stop further French advance. William was ordered to hold the "water-line."

The times were exceedingly difficult. Although the Dutch navy was able to hold England at bay and prevent an immediate invasion from across the channel, William had all

he could do to slow the French advance.

The people, alarmed at the threat of being overrun by foreign powers, clamored for the States-General to make William Stadholder in spite of the recently passed law. And the States-General reluctantly proceeded to do so. Thus, William held the same posts which his father and grandfather had held and was now responsible for the defense of the country and its administration.

Charles and Louis, thinking they had the Netherlands at their mercy, made offers of peace which many in the Netherlands, weary of war, wanted to accept.¹ In fact, so tumultuous were some of those who belonged to the French Party that disorders arose in the streets. The result was the assassination of Johan De Witt by a mob. Because the peace offers included ruinous conditions for the Lowlands, William refused them, although he had, almost by sheer will-power, to impose his determination upon the people. The Netherlands stood alone against two of Europe's greatest powers. By dint of great courage did William manage to hold out. And such courage was born out of a firm conviction that the Netherlands had to remain Calvinistic and not return to the bondage of Romanism.

In 1673, with help from the emperor, Leopold I, William was able to rebuild the army and defeat the French in a couple of key battles which restored to him a few strategic cities. But war continued sporadically, and William was by no means successful in every battle which he fought.

In 1677, through a strange twist of history and through intricate diplomatic maneuvers, William married Mary, daughter of James, duke of

¹ It must be remembered that the Netherlands had, only a few years earlier, emerged from the Eighty Years' War with Spain.

York (later to be James II, king of England), and niece of Charles I. Because Mary was in the line of succession, this marriage not only established a pact between the Netherlands and England, but made William a potential heir to England's throne.

Much has been written about the relation between William and Mary, and what has been written is by no means complimentary. It is not always easy to sort fact from fiction and determine correctly the nature of their relationship. But the following seems true.

William determined to make Mary his wife because he thought it would result in an alliance between the Netherlands and England, which would make the lot of his people easier in their wars with France. When he married Mary, he took her away from a frivolous, opulent, giddy court and from the only life she knew and enjoyed. The thought of leaving the palace in London and living in dark and damp Holland and the relatively ascetic life of William's court filled her with dismay. She did not want William nor life in Holland and in her husband's court. Her first years were misery in the extreme.

Equally, William hated life in London. He did not fit well in the English court because his plainness stood in sharp contrast with the opulence of the palace; his plain speaking was considered vulgar in comparison with the smooth flattery and hypocritical blandishments of London society; his Calvinism was an abomination to those who, though members of the Anglican Church, possessed no religion at all; and his obvious sincerity could not be tolerated amidst the frivolity of life in the king's palace.

For these and other reasons the marriage was in its early years a marriage of convenience in which the two rarely saw each other. But gradually Mary came to admire the steely determination of her husband and even came to adopt the faith which was the driving force of all

he did. Her loyalty to him was above question, and when William came to see it and appreciate it, she became the object of his admiration and attention. They were, after a rocky start, a devoted couple.

William's rule in England

Shortly after William's marriage, his father-in-law came to the throne in England, but he was true Roman Catholic and was determined to restore Roman Catholicism to the British Isles. This meant that his own son-in-law and daughter had to be pushed out of the way and the staunch Calvinism of the Netherlands made ineffective.

James' rule of the British Isles was so cruel, so heavy-handed, so obviously an effort to restore the papacy to England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland that his own people rose against him. By delegations from the nobility, William was invited to invade England and become the king.

The only way in which William could become king of England was through invasion. This was also carried out. We shall allow another to tell the story.

On the 19th of October, William went on board, and the Dutch fleet, consisting of fifty-two men-of-war, twenty-five frigates, as many fire-ships, with four hundred victualers, and other vessels for the transportation of 3,660 horse, and 10,692 foot, put to sea from the flats near the Brielle, with a wind at southwest by south. Admiral Herbert led the van, and Vice-Admiral Evertzen brought up the rear. The prince placed himself in the centre, carrying an English flag, emblazoned with his arms, surrounded with the legend, "For the Protestant Religion and Liberties of England." Underneath was the motto of the House of Nassau, *Je Maintiendrai* (I will maintain).²

Since the days when a storm destroyed the Spanish armada, the British have always maintained that God fought for Britain and for the Protestant cause in that land. So

again the wind helped William. Although the wind first veered to the north and drove the Dutch fleet back to its ports, it became "a Protestant wind" once again. It not only brought the ships of William to the southern coast of England, but held the British navy at bay to the north and enabled the Dutch to land their troops unmolested in Tor Bay near Devon.

After landing successfully and without opposition, indeed, after being jubilantly welcomed by the British, William marched on London and forced James to flee to France. The throne was declared vacant by abdication, and William was pronounced king of all Britain. The date was February of 1689. In April the throne of Scotland was offered him and opposition to William was quelled.

But James, determined to maintain the throne of the Stuarts, landed in Ireland with the promise of French help. Soon he launched attacks against key cities in Ulster with the purpose of making Ireland a launching pad to recover England and Scotland.

As the danger grew and after Londonderry and Enniskillen were successfully defended, William took his troops across the Irish Sea and landed at Carrickfergus, where to this day is a stone marking the place where he first set foot on Irish soil. James was soundly defeated at the great battle of the Boyne on July 1, 1690 and Ireland was subdued. This day is still celebrated by Ulster's Protestants with parades and speeches recalling God's deliverance of Ireland from Roman Catholicism.

William was now king of all Britain — and Mary, his wife, had returned to her homeland.

William could not stay long in Britain however, for Louis was still meddling in continental affairs and was determined to restore Europe to papal rule. Showing his diplomatic skill, William forged an alli-

² Wylie, *History of Protestantism*.

ance with Brandenburg, Hanover, Saxony, Bavaria, and Savoy (all Protestant provinces), with England as the linchpin of the federation, to defeat the nefarious purposes of Louis. Because Spain, thoroughly Roman Catholic, hated France with a passion, William was sometimes able to solicit the help of Spain; but this help was of dubious value.

Through many efforts toward peace and through many broken treaties, William, by sheer determination of his own will, was able to protect Protestant countries from the schemes of popery.

He died a weary and broken man on March 19, 1720.

William's place in history

God uses strange and sometimes sinful ways to accomplish His purpose. It cannot be denied that much of William's efforts were based on the principle that the cause of God is advanced by the sword. Even given the fact that in William's days the relation between church and state was so close that one could hardly avoid resorting to the sword in defense of the faith, the fact remains that the cause of the gospel is not advanced by human might and power. Nevertheless, God can and sometimes does draw a straight line with a crooked stick.

William's accomplishments were

many — in spite of the fact that his critics are numerous and severe.

One forceful criticism lodged against William is against his character. He is portrayed by biographers as stiff, withdrawn, stern, taciturn, and reserved to the point of coldness. There is some truth to this charge, and all his life William was an alien among the ruling class in England which scorned him and ridiculed him behind his back. But it is often forgotten that William had no patience with the intrigue, double-dealing, duplicity, and double-crossing which so characterized diplomacy in those days — and in these. He was honest, forthright, and single-minded in purpose, and he said what was on his mind, whatever may have been the consequences.

Further, William was a man of iron will and deep principle who would stand by his principles though all were against him. He fought on against the powers of the papacy when his own people counseled compromise and dishonorable peace, and when his cause seemed on the brink of defeat. He believed passionately that he was God's instrument to protect Calvinism from Rome and he unwaveringly stood for what he was sure was God's cause. Scorned by the nobility, he

was loved by the common people, both in the Netherlands and the British Isles.

And his courage bore its fruits. Even those who hate Calvinism speak glowingly of his vast accomplishments. The freedom, union, and prosperity of Holland were due to him. He preserved the crown in England by judicious rule and gave England the stability and continuity it enjoys to the present. He was a patron of the arts, kind to the tenants on his royal estates, a brave general who commanded intense loyalty from his troops, and a friend and helper of thousands of refugees fleeing Roman persecution. He spent himself in affairs of State and ruined his health in the defense of the cause of the Reformed faith. His irritability and sometimes ungracious conduct was due to ill-health and overwork. He could also be kind, courteous, and forbearing.

His deepest drive was to create a Europe in which was religious toleration, along with which would come a cessation of religious wars, a curbing of papal power, and a European citizenry which could live in quietness and peace.

These ends he accomplished. And the cause of Calvinism, though now again at low ebb, was successfully defended by his fortitude. □

Taking Heed to the Doctrine

Rev. Steven Key

Providence

Having established from Scripture the truth of creation, the question necessarily follows: What is God's involvement with His creation? The question cries out for an answer. From the viewpoint of our own faith and life, this question cries out for an answer. Looking into a new year with all its uncertainties requires of us the conviction that our heavenly Father is in control.

We live in a valley of tears: so many anxieties, so many cares, so much trouble. In the face of all our sorrows comes the call from Psalm 62:8: "Trust in him at all times."

The only way you will trust in Him is by seeing that the same God and Father who created is the One who also upholds and governs all things. He does so as your faithful God and Father, so that *everything*

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in your life and mine, *without exception*, comes not by chance but by His fatherly hand.

We stand before the truth known as God's providence. A more beautiful definition of this truth is not to be found than the definition given in our Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 10.

"What dost thou mean by the providence of God?" Answer: "The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by His fatherly hand."

What a profoundly blessed truth!

How critically important it is that you understand this truth and receive it with application to your own life!

The only way to face the suffering and trials that mark our life on this earth, the only way to live with peace-filled souls, the only way to know the comfort of the gospel, is by seeing God as the absolutely sovereign Lord who upholds and governs all things according to His own wise purpose, and who does so for your sake. He shall save His people in Christ. Not one of them shall be lost. In fact, all things work together for their good.

Upholding All Things

That God upholds His creation is a truth taught throughout Scripture. God holding all things in His hand — a figurative expression, but one that reveals a wonderful truth.

It is the Lord, according to Acts 17:25 and following, who gives unto all life, and breath, and all things. It is in Him that we all live and move and have our being. The whole of Isaiah 40-46 sets forth this same truth in detail. He who has created the things in the heavens "bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his

might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." That is how the Lord upholds and governs the sun, moon, and stars. To His church He promises, "I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

The truth of God's power in upholding all things is emphatically expressed in Psalm 33.

Verse 6 expresses the truth of creation: "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." But in the very next verse the inspired psalmist turns to God's continued work and says, "He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses." The reference there is apparently to the wonder work of God's grace as He led His people, Israel, out of the bondage of Egypt through the Red Sea. He upholds and governs His creation by the same Word of power with which He created the universe.

"Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Again, a reference to that work of God in the past. Then the psalmist once again speaks of God's continuous work, when he writes, "The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." Our God upholds all things in His vast creation. So teaches Psalm 33.

Does it not stand to reason?

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." That is the testimony of Hebrews 11:3. God created the world, by the Word of His power, calling all things into being out of no material thing. Where would God put that world of His creation?

We have a place to go with the things that we make. A woman stitches a wall hanging, and places it on the wall. A man builds a cabinet and installs it in the chosen place.

But when God created the world — we speak figuratively — He had to hold it in His hand *forever*. And that is true not only of the planet called earth. He upholds *all* things by the Word of His power. That is true of every creature.

It is the Almighty God, Jehovah, who feeds the sparrows. It is Jehovah who gorgeously clothes the lilies with even greater beauty than that of Solomon. And those testimonies of Jesus are applied to you more directly when He says in Matthew 10:30 and Luke 21:18 that not a hair shall fall from your head except by the will of your heavenly Father. He upholds all things, guiding them to the end that He has appointed.

He upholds our bodies. He upholds our souls. He upholds our minds. He upholds all that we are in the world, in relation to others and in relation to the whole world. We continue to exist according to His will, by His upholding power. What a magnificent God we serve!

God, our faithful Father, is directly involved in our lives and in the function of every element of creation. That is the precious truth of Scripture that we lay hold of by faith.

Governing All Things

Our God also governs all things. His directing of all things is inseparably connected with His upholding of all things, as is evident even in the Scripture passages referred to in the paragraphs above.

God governs everything.

That this creation is a moving creation is very evident in this scientific age. We know today much better than in former years that this creation is from every point of view a *living* creation. That man and the animals are active, moving creatures is obvious. But in recent years we have learned that all creatures move.

*But
when God
created
the world —
we speak
figuratively
— He had
to hold it
in His hand
forever.*

The cells and atoms that make up each creature are living and moving cells. The soil itself bustles with living organisms, breaking down other organisms, building still others, all serving in the production of the plants and crops. God made nothing that is dead.

When we say that God governs the whole world and all things, we mean exactly that every movement and life, conscious or unconscious, of every creature, is determined by the Almighty God, our Father.

Scientists speak of natural law. But the psalmist in Psalm 104 shows us in what that natural law consists. He enumerates the outworking of what we call "natural law," and shows that it is all the work of God Himself. In conclusion the singer lifts his praise to God: "O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom thou hast made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."

Natural law is simply our observation of how God makes and upholds and governs things in an orderly way. God has a law for the moon around the earth, and a law for the earth around the sun. If the earth would revolve around the sun in a different way for each revolution, everything would be upset. The psalmist says, "He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down." (Do not say that the psalmist was ignorant of astronomy. He speaks of the sun not in scientific terms, but as we observe that sun going down over the horizon at the close of day.) That takes place by the Word of God.

That is not to say that God is bound by what we call the natural laws of His creation. Sometimes He works apart from those natural laws. Then He reveals Himself in a wonder. But God is pleased to work by such natural laws for our sakes. He upholds and governs all things for our advantage.

God governs all things with a certain purpose in His perfect mind,

and toward a certain end which He in wisdom has determined from eternity.

This is another tremendously comforting aspect of God's providence.

Directing All Things with Purpose

It becomes evident, when we speak of governing, that there is a purpose in the mind of Him who governs. We must not separate the end from the means. Ephesians 1:11 tells us that God "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Our Belgic Confession maintains the same truth in Article 13:

Natural law is simply our observation of how God makes and upholds and governs things in an orderly way.

"We believe that the same God, after He had created all things, did not forsake them, nor give them up to fortune or chance, but that He rules and governs them according to His holy will" (emphasis mine).

The Westminster Confession of Faith also sets forth this truth very beautifully in Chapter III, Article 1, when it says: "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass."

The purpose which He has in view with all the works of His hands is also expressed in Ephesians 1. He works "all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory...."

The outworking of God's providence is but His ordained way to that end which He has determined from eternity.

But that applies more particularly to your life and mine, who trust in God. All things serve His wise purpose for us. That thorn in the flesh, that God has not removed, is there to serve our salvation and our everlasting fellowship with our heavenly Father. That shameful but forgiven past will serve God's wise purpose for us, and will serve us on the pathway to glory. Affliction also serves God's purpose for us. (We simply touch on the relationship between God's providence and evil. We intend to come back to that subject in our next article.)

The afflictions which God sends our way, the deaths that touch us and our families, the sorrow — all serve God's perfect purpose, not only for our own life, but for our life as we stand in relation to our brothers and sisters in Christ. The same is true of all the joyful experiences in life.

So we claim this doctrine as our own. We are believers in the sovereign God, who is our Father for Jesus' sake.

Faith looks to the Scriptures and contemplates what God does, reconsiders what God has done, and from these things concludes what God shall do in the future. Faith sees the God who is unchangeably faithful, bringing about our promised salvation. □

HIS STRENGTH

"His strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9).

I am so weak —
Thou art so strong;
I need Thy presence
All the day long.

Strengthen me, Lord,
Please take my hand;
Each troubled thought
Thou dost understand.

Give me Thy joy —
Fill with Thy peace;
Remind me again
Thy love will not cease.

I am so weak —
Thou art so strong;
Please hold my hand
And help me along.

Annetta Jansen
Dorr, Michigan

Hating the Haters of God (1)

We live in an age when the theory that God loves all men is an almost universal idea in the church world. From this follows the teaching that we too are to love all men. Even the most wicked men in the church and in the world are to be tolerated. None is ever to be condemned, opposed, and expelled from the church. Everyone, after all, has the right to his own opinion about the doctrine of God, and he has the freedom to choose his own philosophy of life. The church is to be so loving that it accepts all and tolerates all in her midst. Even in the world we are not to condemn anyone harshly, no matter what his life-style. Even the sodomite, for example, is to be sympathized with and not condemned. He is to be treated merely as a man who has chosen an alternate life-style, or as a man who has a genetically determined attraction to the same sex. We must do all we can to make such a man feel accepted for what he is among us.

With such thinking so prevalent, David's words in Psalm 139 jar the sensitivities of people. Let me quote the entire passage: "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies" (Ps. 139:19-22).

Rev. denHartog is pastor of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, California.

Those are the words of the "man after God's own heart." David fought many wars during his career as king against the enemies of God and His people. He led the armies of the Lord of hosts to battle in which many thousands were killed. That characterized much of David's career as king. He continued to do that until God gave him rest over all his enemies. Was David simply a bloodthirsty man in fighting these wars? Was he perhaps a man filled only with nationalistic fervor for Israel, with imperialistic ambitions to conquer the world? Perhaps David simply gave way to a momentary sinful and unholy passion when he uttered the words of Psalm 139.

As shocking as this might seem to some in our day, David speaks in Psalm 139 of a "perfect hatred." The hatred of which David speaks in the above passage was a holy hatred. It was a hatred perfectly consistent with love for God. In fact it *was* love for God. Had David said the opposite, "Do I not love even those that hate Thee, O God," then David would have been revealing that he did not truly love God. Then David would have hung up his spear and bow and ceased from ever leading the armies of the Lord to battle against God's enemies and the enemies of Israel again.

When David fought the Lord's battles with hatred against God's enemies in his heart he was being a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus will come finally to destroy all the enemies of God in the wrath of God. This is a fearful thing. In the end He will cast all the enemies of God into the ever-

lasting fire of hell. He will do that because He hates those that hate God with a perfect hatred.

Maybe there are those who would agree that the hatred of David was a holy hatred. However, they would immediately say that this has absolutely no application for the church today. This was exclusively the character of a bygone age. The more liberal of these would even say that God has changed since that bygone age. In the Old Testament God was a God of vengeance and wrath. Therefore He caused fire to come down from heaven to consume His enemies. He destroyed Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea. He sent His angel of death to slaughter the 185,000 soldiers of the proud, blaspheming Sennacherib. But in the New Testament age God reveals Himself as a God of love, who loves everyone and desires to save everyone. Therefore the sentiments of David are wholly inappropriate for Christians today.

We maintain that God's people today must have the same holy hatred for those that hate God as David did. We maintain that the true church today must do battle against God's enemies with the same holy hatred in the hearts of her members. She must follow her Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, in this great battle of the ages with the same fervent desire for the glory of God.

Holy hatred for the haters of God must by all means be clearly distinguished from unholy hatred in all its forms. The hatred that resides in the heart of wicked men is evil. It is terribly wicked. God will judge men for their hatred against God and their fellow man. The Bible clearly

teaches that we must love even our enemies. Our Lord taught us this in the Sermon on the Mount. In this Christians must be distinguished from the unbelieving world. The world loves only those who love them. The Christian is called to love even his personal enemies. Jesus says: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:43-45). The inspired apostle Paul gives Christians a similar admonition: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:19-21). We may not hate our personal enemies even when they do evil against us and persecute us.

The same David who by inspiration of God wrote the words of Psalm 139 showed by classic example that he kept the words of Jesus and of the Lord's apostle. When Shimei cursed David at the time of the great tragedy of Absalom's rebellion against David, Abishai said to David: "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head." But David answered: "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" (see II Samuel 16). David was not perfect, of course. But David never in holy fervor did evil against his own personal enemies. He did in holy fervor execute the judgment of God on God's enemies.

God has enemies also today. He has many enemies. The wicked are the enemies of God. God hates the reprobate ungodly wicked with a perfect and holy hatred. He is angry with the wicked every day. He reveals His wrath from heaven continually against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (see Rom. 1). The New Testament God is not different from the God of the Old Testament. Of course not. He is the unchangeable God of wrath against the wicked. God's wrath is an indispensable part of His holiness. A God who is not a God of wrath against sin and the sinner is not holy. God does not love the wicked. He has not changed His attitude against the wicked since the days of the Old Testament. He is still a consuming fire against the wicked. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the angry God. (See Heb. 10 and 12. This passage of the New Testament is a fearful warning against apostasy.)

It is wrongly maintained that God loves everyone and hates no one. It is claimed that all the passages of the Bible that speak of the anger and wrath of God against the wicked must be interpreted as meaning only that God hates the sins of the wicked. He does not hate their person. We disagree. It is true that God hates the sins of His elect and loves their person. He hated our sins with such an infinite and perfect hatred that He poured out His wrath on His beloved Son on the cross to make atonement for those sins. But it is not true that God hates only the sins of the wicked. This is a common idea piously promoted by many teachers in the church world today. It is not a biblical truth. The Bible is very plain that God hates the person of the ungodly wicked man. He hates the ungodly with such a perfect, holy hatred that He will judge them eternally in hell.

Neither is it true that God loves the wicked in time and later will turn to hate them. God sees all men eter-

nally. He does that as God. He hates the reprobate ungodly wicked with an unchangeable, perfect, holy hatred already now. God reveals His wrath from heaven continually against all their wicked deeds. The many judgments that God visits upon the earth even today are the revelation of His holy wrath against the ungodly world in which we live.

If we truly love God we must hate the enemies of God. It is not love for God to love God's enemies. To hate God's enemies is, however, a very fearful calling. This is true especially for two reasons. In the first place we realize that we are all by nature children of wrath. We are by nature the enemies of God. We all deserve the pouring out of the wrath of God upon ourselves, even the best of us. We deserve nothing but wrath from God. So great is our sin against His Holy majesty that we deserve the everlasting wrath of God in hell because of our sin. It is only by the sovereign grace of God in the cross of Christ Jesus that we have been delivered from the holy wrath of God. The more we realize this truth concerning ourselves the more we ought to fear and tremble before God. We are not by nature better than the ungodly world, and yet we must condemn the world by the Word of God.

The second reason why our calling to hate God's enemies is so fearful is that we are by nature prone to all kinds of unholy hatred. Even as children of God we have only a small beginning of the new obedience. Deep down in our sinful nature resides all sorts of sinful passions that we have to fight against daily. Even as Christians we find that much of our hatred against our fellow man is deeply sinful and displeasing to the Lord. For a man as sinful as you and I are it is an extremely difficult thing to have only a holy and perfect hatred against the enemies of God. We need much prayer to be able to hate with a hatred that is holy.

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How does the Christian today manifest the attitude of David the man after God's own heart? Who

are the enemies of God? Can we know them at all, or is this something that only God knows? Is it

only for God to know who are really the enemies of God? □
...to be continued

• *Day of Shadows*

• *Homer Hoeksema*

Chapter 5

Paradise the First (cont.)

The Tree of Life

Paradise the First was the earthly tabernacle of God with man. It was a real garden, the particular dwelling place of man, God's covenant friend, in the state of righteousness. In the midst of the garden God dwelt with man. Moreover, man was at home in the garden. Twice we read that God "put" man in Paradise (Gen. 2:8, 15). This refers to an act of God whereby He so established Adam in the garden that he understood his position and calling and was able to perform it. He was not a stranger in his environment, but the proper relation was established between him and his surroundings.

In the midst of the garden was the tree of life. Thus we are informed very briefly in Genesis 2:9: "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Of this tree of life man might freely eat. For the Lord God commanded him, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." The only exception to this was the other special tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of which man was specifically forbidden to eat (Gen. 2:16, 17). This

is also plain from the fact that after man's fall into sin he was barred from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24).

The question is: What was the significance of this special tree, the tree of life?

Various interpretations of the tree of life have been given.

According to some, the tree of life would actually have the power to give man eternal and glorious life. That is, it would not merely have the power to perpetuate Adam's earthly existence in Paradise the First; but it would be able to give Adam eternal life in the qualitative sense of that term, heavenly life, eternal life as the Christian obtains it through our Lord Jesus Christ. However, there are some grave objections to this explanation. For one thing, this theory overlooks the fact that Adam was of the earth, earthy, and that as such he was perfectly content and happy as God's covenant friend in the state of rectitude in the midst of the earthly creation, and that he would have had absolutely no desire for anything other than that only and perfect happiness which he knew.

Secondly, this theory presupposes that there might have been another way to the glory of eternal life than through our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, in the divine economy of things the sending and death and exaltation of God's Son in the flesh were actually unnecessary, except as a secondary way to eternal life. Eternal life could have been attained by Adam. If this were true,

it was really a shame that Adam ever fell: the deep way of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ could have been avoided — I mean, not by man, but by the Lord our God. But let us look at this explanation of the tree of life from the point of view of that tree itself. This theory attributes spiritual power, the power to accomplish a spiritual change, to what was evidently a physical tree with physical fruit and physical energy of some kind. Besides, it is evident from Scripture that even after Adam and Eve had sinned, the tree, if they had eaten of it, would have produced its effect. This is plain from Genesis 3:22-24: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

Others have explained the tree of life as a mere sacrament. This, according to them, is the whole significance of the tree of life. With respect to this view, we must remember that while there was a certain sacramental character to this special tree, it can hardly be maintained flatly that the tree of life was a sacrament. For, in the first place,

The late Homer Hoeksema was professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

a sacrament, in order to be a sacrament, must always be instituted as such. Sacraments are directly appointed by our Lord as holy, visible signs and seals. Thus it is with the sacraments of baptism and of the Lord's Supper: they have been directly ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ to be observed by His church. But thus it was not with the tree of life. The tree of life was merely a gift.

In the second place, it is important to remember that sacraments do not have power in themselves, apart from the grace of God. The water of baptism is not itself grace, but a means of grace. The bread and wine of the Lord's supper do not in themselves impart grace to those who eat and drink them. But it is evident that this was true of the tree of life, and that, too, even after Adam and Eve had sinned. There was a certain power and efficacy in that tree itself.

Still others explain that the tree of life was such that it would give perpetual strength to the physical nature of man. This is certainly correct, in the light of Scripture. Yet this does not explain the tree of life fully.

We would explain the significance of the tree of life as follows:

1. That tree and its fruit had the power of giving perpetual, earthly life to man in as far as he had been taken from the ground. This is very plain from Genesis 3:22-24, the passage already quoted above. That tree had this power to supply man with perpetual, earthly life even after he had sinned, so that it was necessary to bar the way to the tree of life. In this connection, it seems evident also that this eating of the tree of life was not simply a once-for-all matter, but that it would be necessary to eat of this tree continually and repeatedly. You must remember that man had not been created so that he could not die and return to the dust. To be sure, there was no death in the state of rectitude. Death is not a natural process, but it is the visitation of the wrath and

curse of God. But this does not mean that the first man, Adam, was immortal. Man was created fallible and mortal. He was taken from the dust of the ground, and as such he was mortal. It was possible for him to become subject to death. He was, indeed, not subject to death; but he was, so to speak, "die-able." For that mortal man, it was his connection with the tree which, in the positive sense of the word, invigorated his earthly life with that strength which made him victorious over all possibility of decay and death. Such was the significance, first of all, of the tree of life.

2. As such, the tree of life was a symbol to Adam of the gift of life: perpetual, earthly life. We must remember the nature of the tree in general. The tree transforms the earth into living and life-yielding fruit for the living soul. Man is of the earth, earthy. As such, he is dependent upon the ground from whence he was taken for his life. But he cannot live directly from that ground. The tree forms the connection between man and the ground, transforming, as it does, the substance of the ground into food for man. In the fruit trees, therefore, God opened His hand to give life to man and beast. Among all those trees there was one tree that was set aside: it was the tree of life, which was distinct in this, that he who ate of it would never lose his earthly life. That tree of life, therefore, was the symbolic representation of God opening His hand to give life unending, that is, perpetual earthly life, to Adam.

3. It is in this connection that we may discern something of a sacramental character in the tree of life, even though it cannot be called a sacrament in the full sense. It was an emblem, a sign, of God's covenant. It was a kind of visible and tangible sign of God's favor and of that higher aspect of Adam's life which consisted in the knowledge of and fellowship of God. This is suggested by several scriptural facts. In the first place, it is suggested by

the very name "tree of life." In the second place, it is suggested by the antithesis of the tree of life in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which also had special significance, as we shall see. In the third place, it is suggested by the fact that Adam might eat of this tree only in the way of obedience, so that when he sinned, the way to the tree of life was closed. Finally, it is suggested by the fact that Scripture speaks in connection with the heavenly tree of life of "the right to eat of the tree of life" (Rev. 22:14).

We must remember that the tree of life was more than a mere physical means for the extension of man's physical existence. It was the tree of life. Even though Adam's life was earthy, nevertheless life also for Adam implied the favor and fellowship of God, his Creator-Lord. Now, if in this connection we remember that the tree of life was in the midst of the garden, in the very heart of Paradise, we might say that according to the analogy of the temple, the tree of life was in the holy of holies. There, in the midst of the garden, where the tree of life was, dwelt God. There He met man in the wind of the day. To approach the tree of life, therefore, before the Fall was to approach God. As long as Adam could draw near to God, in order to enjoy His fellowship and communion, he could have life. That tree preached this to Adam: "To live apart from God is death; 'tis good His face to seek."

Such, briefly, was the significance of the tree of life in Paradise the First.

But that tree of life is no more. We must remember that it never was destined to remain, but only to serve for a moment at the dawn of history, and that, too, in connection with the whole of God's purpose in Christ which was to be achieved through the course of history.

First Adam, and we all in him, became separated from that tree of life. Adam was sent forth from the garden, and cherubim were stationed at the east (the entrance) of

the garden, and a flaming sword turning every way, so that the way to the tree of life was closed, barred, absolutely.

The question is: why? And the answer is that if Adam had remained in connection with the tree of life, he would have perpetuated his earthly existence, but his earthly existence *in sin, without God*. Then there would be no redemption possible for him. Adam must lose that life. He must lose that earthly life, and he must lose that earthly life especially as it became subject to sin and as it was without God. As it was with Adam, so it is with all God's people. They must lose this present, earthly existence, this life without God in the world. They must not cling to this life, an existence apart from the favor and fellowship of God. Indeed, "to live apart from God is death; 'tis good His face to seek."

But in that case would it not exactly be a good thing for Adam to approach the tree of life? If he again approached the tree of life after he sinned, would he not be approaching into God's communion? And was not that what he needed? The answer is, in the first place, that Adam through his sin, and we in him, had lost the right to eat of the tree of life as the symbol of God's communion. In the second place, God was gone! After the Fall, the tabernacle of God was no longer with men in Paradise. That Paradise would never again be God's tabernacle. As a house of God with man, it was empty. Nor was it God's purpose to return to that earthly tabernacle and to restore it. He purposed to build His tabernacle, His covenant dwelling with man, in Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus, the Son of God incarnate, He would establish His tabernacle in the fullness of time, in order to realize it fully in the new heavens and the new earth in the day to which we now look forward, when finally His Word shall be fulfilled: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall

be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. 21:3).

For a time that first Paradise and its tree of life remained on the scene of history. But it remained only as a silent, yet highly vocal testimony. It remained as gospel-preaching. God did not remove it immediately. We must remember that at that early stage in history God's people were without the full and clear light of the gospel. God spoke to His people in sundry ways. One of those ways was through Paradise and its tree of life, the way to which was closed. That tree of life preached: "You must die. And yet there is hope. For in connection with the promise, I, the earthly tree of life, to which you can never return and to which you must not desire to return, point forward to a better tree of life which is to come."

For we must not forget: God had better things in store for us. It was His purpose to unite all things in heaven and on earth in Christ, in the glorious and heavenly new creation. With a view to that purpose all things were adapted from the beginning with a view to the end. Thus the earthly creation is an image of the heavenly. In the things

earthly are so many parables, so to speak, of heavenly things.

Thus Paradise the First was an earthly picture of the heavenly Paradise, the new and eternal kingdom of God in Christ. Adam was a picture of the second Adam, Christ, the Head of the new, united creation. The midst of the garden is an image of God's communion with man. The river is an image of the flow of

life from God in Christ eternally to His people. The tree of life is a picture of the heavenly tree of life. The vision of that heavenly tree of life is recorded for us in Revelation 22. There you find the picture of the river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. The tree of life is pictured as bordering that river on either side, bearing twelve manner of fruits, and yielding her fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. What the reality of this vision shall be concretely, we cannot say. We must wait until that time arrives. But certainly, it is evident that the heavenly tree of life represents the means of eternal life from God in Christ. In Christ God's Word is: "Behold, I make all things new!" □

In the things earthly are so many parables, so to speak, of heavenly things.

WHITER THAN SNOW

The pristine snow is blanketing the ground;
The dirty gray/brown/black is covered by pure white —
This soft, clean beauty came without a sound
And overlaid the ugliness — made darkness bright.
Oh, what a picture of my evil heart within:
Christ's sacrifice upon the cross has overlaid
The filth, the pride, the ugliness of sin,
And cleansed my heart; a creature new has made.
God's work within me far exceeds the earthly snow
That covers and then melts and leaves the grime.
His gift to me expunges sin, and lo,
He sees in me no sin or guilt at any time.
For God, as far as east from west, expelled
My guilt and stain; Christ's righteousness beheld!

Thelma Westra

John 6:41-59

Jesus' Sermon on the Bread of Life (2)

In our first look at this sermon preached in the synagogue of Capernaum, we saw that Jesus clearly identified Himself as the true spiritual bread sent down from heaven. All the nourishment of eternal life is to be found only in Him who is the bread of life. Only by faith in Him is there salvation. This salvation is certain and can never be lost, for the Father has given His Son to be the meat and drink of eternal life for all His elect.

Beginning in verse 41, we read that the Jews murmured at Him. They stumbled over the word, "I am the bread of life come down from heaven." They understood that Jesus was saying that He was not born as other human beings, but was sent down from God. That they denied. The Lord responded by telling them that faith (coming to Him) is possible only by the Father's irresistible grace. He then goes on to repeat His word in the strongest possible way. He is the meat and drink of life eternal, and one must eat and drink Him, or he has no life at all.

We may sum the Lord's words in the following way. Jesus rebukes their carnal thinking of earthly bread. Jesus exposes them for what they are — totally depraved sinners who cannot receive Him of themselves.

Jesus preaches the only way of salvation. They must believe in Him, they must receive Him by receiving His words, which are spirit and life. They must become one with Jesus. Salvation is not earthly and perishing, but it is the forgiveness of sin and life everlasting, through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Believing is the gift of God. The Father must give and the Father must draw. And the Father does give and does draw. He gives to those whom He loves from eternity in Jesus Christ.

The sum of it all is that Christ preached the *heart* of the gospel: divine, gracious, unconditional election and reprobation. He preached just one message: salvation is of God and not of man.

Outline:

1. The murmuring of the Jews (vv. 41, 42).
2. The rebuke by Christ (vv. 43-46).
3. Christ, the true meat of eternal life (vv. 47-51).
4. The criticism of the Jews (v. 52).
5. The Lord's reply and insistence that only by eating and drinking His flesh and blood is there life in us (vv. 53-59).

Questions:

1. Why did the Jews murmur at His statement: "I am the bread which came down from heaven"? Show that the Jews correctly understood that by that statement the Lord was saying that He was different from all other human beings.

2. Why does the Lord, in verse 44, respond to their murmuring by teaching the truth of irresistible grace?

3. From verse 44 show:

- a. Total depravity
- b. Irresistible grace (What is the teaching of irresistible grace?)

4. Does man's inability to come to Christ absolve him of his accountability for his sin?

5. Where is the quotation in verse 45 written in the prophets? What does Jesus intend to prove by this quotation?

6. Explain how verse 46 teaches the deity and majesty of Christ.

7. Explain the difference between Christ as the bread of life and the manna in the wilderness. What does Jesus mean when He says that the bread He gives is His flesh?

8. What does Christ mean when He insists that we must eat His flesh and blood? How do we eat His flesh and blood?

9. What are some of the various explanations which have been given for verses 53-59? How do these words apply to the Lord's Supper? How is Christ present in the Lord's Supper? What is Transubstantiation? Consubstantiation? Memorial Feast?

10. Show that the flesh and blood of the Son of man means Christ's own body which He offered up on the cross for sinners.

11. How does Jesus make plain that the Lord's Supper is not physical but spiritual eating and drinking through faith in the heart? □

Book Reviews

When the Foundation Crumbles: Why did I Leave the Christian Reformed Church?, by Edward Heerema. Privately published, 1994. 30pp. \$3.00 (paper). [Reviewed by the editor.]

As the sub-title of this 30-page booklet indicates, the crumbling foundation is that of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). Retired CRC minister Edward Heerema, who has recently left the CRC, charges that the CR decision opening the offices in the church to women shows that "the Bible has become irrelevant" in the CRC. He points to the "crumbling" of the authority of Scripture in other, recent decisions of the CRC as well.

Especially interesting is Heerema's answer to the question, "How did this state of affairs come about?" Heerema finds the beginning of the decline of the CRC regarding the authority of Scripture in the controversy in the 1960s over the love of God and the death of Christ. A CR seminary professor taught universal redeeming love and universal atonement. The CRC not only could not condemn the teaching but virtually approved it. Heerema speaks of synod's "feeble decision that really settled nothing."

What Heerema does not notice is that the CR seminary professor and his defenders expressly ground-

ed the teaching of universal love and atonement in the 1924 decisions of the CRC on common grace. If Edward Heerema and the others who share his concerns will follow up on his question, "How did this state of affairs come about?" — surely an important question — they will find that the Dekker controversy over universal redemptive love and universal atonement necessarily takes them back to the common grace controversy of 1924.

The booklet can be ordered from the author at

619 S.E. 32nd St.

Cape Coral, Florida 33094. ■

Directory of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. Manassas, VA: Christian Observer, 1995. 235pp. \$25 (paper). [Reviewed by the editor.]

One may question whether a book of this kind will "put a stick in Satan's eye," as the advertising has it, while appreciating — and recommending — its usefulness in less grandiose ways.

Christian Observer has compiled a directory of Presbyterian and Reformed churches in North America. Congregations are listed with their address by state or province in alphabetical order of state or province. Each congregation is identified by denominational affiliation.

The directory begins with a list of Presbyterian and Reformed denominations in North America with the address of the stated clerk. I note that the mailing address of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America is wrong.

There is also an "international contact list." This gives names and addresses of Presbyterian and Reformed persons, churches, and organizations worldwide from Albania to Zimbabwe. The listing for Australia includes Mr. and Mrs. N. Kleyn, but not the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. The Singapore listing includes Rev. J. Kortering, but not the Evangelical Reformed Churches of Singapore. These are not criticisms. This is a first effort and edition of an ambitious project. The publisher asks for help in correcting the directory.

A section of "yellow pages" offers services and materials, including bibles, films and videos, periodicals, and seminaries.

The concept is a good one. The directory will come in handy in many ways. Every Reformed or Presbyterian church library, pastor's study, and denominational committee could use a copy.

For copies write or call *Christian Observer*,

9400 Fairview Ave.

Manassas, VA 22110

(703)-335-2844. □

News From Our Churches

Congregational Activities

At their annual congregational meeting, held back in December, the congregation of the Hudsonville, MI PRC voted to approve a proposal from their Council to go ahead with plans to install air conditioning in their church building before next summer.

Mr. Wigger is a member of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

Beginning with Sunday the 26th of November, and continuing at least through the winter, the congregation of the First PRC in Edmonton, AB, Canada is invited to have coffee and fellowship after their 3:00 P.M. service in the basement of their church.

The Council of the Bethel PRC in Itasca, IL approved plans to hold singspirations on the second Sunday of each month about ten minutes before the evening service would begin. These plans were made for a

six-month trial period.

Bethel's Council also directed their building committee to continue its work on conceptual drawings for a church building. These plans and all related matters should be submitted to their congregation sometime in the future.

The Council of the Peace PRC in Lansing, IL was authorized at their annual congregational meeting to investigate building a parsonage on their new church property.

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

The Council of the Hull, IA PRC informed their congregation recently of their decision to purchase carpet for the balcony of their auditorium. This decision was made to make the balcony more useable, and to improve the quality of the sound in the auditorium.

The time around the holidays sees many of our congregations busy with programs that celebrate the true spiritual meaning of the holidays. In west Michigan, members of our area churches were able to spend some time at the close of Lord's Days in December doing just that. First, on December 10, they were able to enjoy the annual Thanksgiving/Christmas concert of the Hudsonville, MI PRC's Choral Society. One week later the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI presented their annual Christmas concert.

Going back to November, the choirs of the Doon and Hull, IA PRCs presented a combined concert on November 19 at the Doon church.

The congregation of the First PRC in Edmonton, AB, Canada was invited to enjoy the Christmas Children's Program and church Choir Program presented on Wednesday evening, December 20, in their auditorium.

The Consistory of the Grace PRC in Standale, MI made a special request to Classis. The Consistory decided that, since they are now the

only vacant church in Classis East, it would seem the best for all concerned that they cancel the remaining schedule of classical appointments for the months of December and January. In place of classical appointments Grace had requested the Seminary to supply the 1:00 P.M. service on a regular schedule for the benefit of the professors and students as well as giving relief to the local ministers during the busy holiday season.

A welcome program for the new pastor and his family, Rev. A. Brummel, his wife, Crysta, and their two sons, recently installed at the First PRC in Edgerton, MN, was held on December 1.

On that same night the congregation of the Hope PRC in Walker, MI got together for a formal welcome for their newly installed pastor, Rev. Dykstra, his wife, Carol, and their family.

The following Lord's Day, December 3, Rev. Dykstra preached his first sermon at Hope based on II Corinthians 4:5-7 and entitled "All Glory to God — the Character and Work of a Reformed Minister."

Evangelism Activities

The Extension Committee of the Lynden, WA PRC, believing that the spiritual health of the congregation and the life of their members are inseparably connected in the work of

evangelism, was grateful for the positive response from their congregation in providing help toward newspaper advertising in the *Lynden Tribune*. Lynden has received nearly half a year's worth of advertising space for the *Tribune* so far. The Extension Committee has also decided to advertise in a local Canadian newspaper on a monthly basis as well.

School Activities

This past December the students of our Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville, MI were encouraged to bring their own money, instead of gifts, for the Book Fund for Needy Servants, as written about in our December 15th issue of this magazine by Rev. Kortering, our minister-on-loan in Singapore.

Minister Activities

Our Doon, IA PRC's new trio from which they were to call a pastor consisted of the Revs. Bruinsma, Spriensma, and Terpstra.

Food For Thought

"The Holy Scriptures require a humble reader who shows reverence and fear toward the Word of God and constantly says, 'Teach me, teach me, teach me!'"

— Martin Luther,
Table Talk, #5017 □

Peace PRC Dedication Service

Mr. Donald Terpstra

On Friday, November 17th, Peace Protestant Reformed Church held a dedication service for our brand new church building. This new building, the Lord willing, will eventually be our fellowship hall. The building can seat 325 people. On dedication night there were about 300 people present. The service began with encouraging opening re-

marks and prayer by Rev. Charles Terpstra, pastor of our mother church, South Holland Protestant Reformed Church. Later in the service we were also presented with a monetary gift from South Holland PRC to be used to start a church library.

The speech was given by our own minister of six years, Rev.

Steven Houck. Rev. Houck read II Chronicles 7:1-22, which tells of the dedication of the old dispensational temple of Solomon. He explained that that temple was actually the dwelling place of Almighty God. In the new dispensation our church buildings are not God's dwelling place, but the place where God's people (the new dispensational tem-

ples of God) meet together for worship. Rev. Houck also explained how important it should be for us to dedicate ourselves to using this church building for God and His cause, and thus to manifest the marks of the true church, namely, the true preaching of His Word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the faithful exercise of Christian discipline. During his speech Rev. Houck reminded us that Peace PRC was organized almost exactly seven years ago that night, on November 11th, 1988. In the Bible the number seven represents God's covenant and the relationship of God dwelling with His people (3+4=7).

During our dedication celebration there was also much praising of God by way of music. We had

congregational singing, and Peace's 26-member choir sang four appropriate and beautiful numbers. The congregation joined the choir in singing "The Church's One Foundation." All this was accompanied by our recently purchased piano and an organ which was donated to us. The organ had previously belonged to one of our charter members, Grace Medema, who passed away just a few months before completion of this building.

The program ended with the chairman of the building committee thanking all those who helped with the building project. Many hours of work were donated, not only by our own people but also by others. He also thanked everyone for working on the project with a spirit of coop-

eration, which really helped things run smoothly. After the closing prayer by Rev. Houck, everyone was invited to stay for coffee and donuts. All were also invited to tour the new facility, which consists of an auditorium, a kitchen, a council room, a nursery/catechism room, two washrooms, and a couple of storage areas.

We thank God for seven years of existence as a Protestant Reformed Church, for a pastor to preach the Word diligently from week to week, and now for a brand-new church building.

Our new address is:

18425 Stony Island Ave.

Lansing, IL 60438.

Come visit us and see our new church building. □

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Doon PRC Men's Society would like to express its heartfelt sympathy to its fellow member and secretary, David Wiersma, in the death of his father,

BERNARD WIERSMA.

May they be comforted in His Word and be sustained by God's grace. "The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace" (Psalm 29:11).

Chester E. Hunter, Jr., President
Henry Miersma, Vice-President

NOTICE!!

Covenant Christian High School is accepting applications for the Band and Choir positions for the 1996-1997 school year. Those interested should call the school at (616) 453-5048 or write to:

Agatha Lubbers
Covenant Christian High School
1401 Ferndale S.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49544.

NOTICE!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Pella, IA on Wednesday, March 6, 1996, at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. All material for the Agenda is to be in the hands of the Stated Clerk 30 days before Classis convenes. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the Clerk of Pella's Consistory, using the forms provided for that purpose.

Rev. Steven Key,
Stated Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 5, 1996, our parents and grandparents,

MR. and MRS. CHESTER E.

HUNTER, Sr.,

celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. We thank them for many years of covenant instruction in God's Word in the home. We pray that our heavenly Father will bless them in the remaining days of their pilgrimage together on this earth. "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad" (Psalm 126:3).

* Ignacio Quenga
Dwight

* Vivian Haney
Stefan, Amanda, Alexia

* Chester, Jr. (Skip) and
Barbara Hunter

Beth
* Lynne and Kris Hunter
Brittany, Colon, Ethan, Brenna

Grand Rapids, Michigan/Katy, Texas