



The Standard Bearer

***A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine***

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Sabbath Reflections

"LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?"

Psalm 15:1

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the psalmist writes: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem" (Ps. 122:1, 2a).

In the old dispensation, if anyone were to ask, Where does God dwell? he would have been informed that there was only one place in the whole world where God dwelled. He would have been directed to go to Palestine, and more specifically to Jerusalem, the city that stood in Zion's holy hill. At the portals of the holy city he would be directed to the temple, the house of God, where God dwelled among His chosen people Israel.

This house of God was the center of all Israel's life and worship. True Israel confessed: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" To be in the temple was to be very definitely in the presence of the Lord, to behold all His infinite perfections, to worship and adore Him in the beauty of holiness. In the dispensation of shadows, that was the closest anyone could come to God. It was a foretaste of the eternal rest that remains for the people of God.

That necessarily raised the question: Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? Who is worthy? Who is fit to draw near to Jehovah, the only true and living God, and enter into His rest?



It is Sunday morning and we prepare to attend the public worship in our church.

Well may we ask ourselves: Why? Why am I going to church this morning? Is it because I was taught this from my early youth? Or is it my custom? Or is it because others expect it of me? Foremost in my mind may be the question: Who is preaching? Our main interest is the sermon, whether we shall enjoy ourselves, whether our spiritual hunger will be fed and our spiritual thirst satisfied. As important as that may be, however, the main purpose of our attending church is not for our sakes, but for God's sake! We come to worship our God, to stand in awe before Him, to adore and praise His most glorious name. He is of first importance in our lives. His glory is the chief purpose of all mankind. The sweet singer of Israel teaches us to say: "One thing have I de-

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sired of the Lord, that will I seek after: ... to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple."

We enter into God's presence with singing: "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him, all creatures here below. Praise Him above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen." And we bow our heads to receive God's benediction.

We are here to praise and adore our God in humble worship, for here we experience the communion of saints, we pray and sing together, and hear the Word of God together. Here Christ speaks to us through His ambassador. Jesus says: "Where two or three are gathered in my name I am in the midst of them." For the Spirit of Christ applies His Word to our hearts. Here we experience, as we sing, "He feeds with good the hungry soul and satisfies the meek, and they shall live and praise the Lord who for His mercy seek." He feeds us with none other than Himself, the Bread of life, and He causes us to drink of Himself, the Fountain of living waters. For Christ bestows His blessing there. There is no assembly on all the earth at any time that can compare to a worship service. God has appointed this as the means of grace to bestow His blessing upon His people. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God!" But again the question arises: Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? (Ps. 24:3) Shall you? Shall I?

In Psalm 15 David does give the qualifications of him who is worthy and fit. "He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." He successfully controls that small member that no man can tame, namely, his tongue. He does not come into the counsel of the

ungodly; nor does he stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scorers. His companions are those who fear the Lord. He never takes advantage of the poor or the innocent. In a word, he loves God and reveals that love toward his neighbor with a perfect heart according to the second table of the law. Do you meet those qualifications? Do I? Is there anyone in the fallen human race who can qualify? We are conceived and born in sin. We all are prone by nature to hate God and the neighbor. We are corrupt, depraved, incapable of any good and inclined to all evil, as we confess with our Heidelberg Catechism. We never come into God's presence without confessing our guilt and sins, always seeking forgiveness by the mercies of our God.

But there is One who did and does qualify. That is our Lord Jesus Christ. He came to do the Father's will, even as it was written of Him. In complete self-surrender and obedience to the Father He gave Himself as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of those given to Him of the Father. He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. He not only merited for us the right to enter into God's presence, but also through His death and resurrection attained for us eternal life and fellowship with the Most High.

Therefore God has highly exalted Him to the very throne of heaven with a name above all names. All power is entrusted to Him in heaven and on earth. We read in Revelation 5 of a book with seven seals. It contains the full counsel of God that will be carried out in this present dispensation, that the church may be gathered and brought into glory through the judgments of this present time. The apostle John weeps because there is no one in heaven or on earth who is worthy to open the

book and to loose its seven seals. But he is told: "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof."

Christ now reigns in heaven and on earth to carry out the counsel of God even until He returns with the clouds. In heaven He prepares a place for all those given to Him of the Father, that they may be with Him in His eternal rest. On earth He pours out God's wrath upon the wicked, and meanwhile pours out His blessing upon the church, whereby He purifies her and prepares her for glory.

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The true believer of the old dispensation fixed all his hope on the promise of Christ's coming. On Friday afternoon he laid aside his work, put off his work clothes, washed himself, and prepared for the Sabbath. As he did so he realized that in his six days of labor he had not loved Jehovah his God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. In fact, he had failed miserably, had made himself guilty of sin, and had polluted himself with sin. How could he possibly keep Sabbath by entering into the rest of his God?

But he clung to God's promises that would never fail. He looked forward to the coming of that One who would enter into the courts of the Lord, stand in His presence, bear His wrath against the sins of all those given Him of the Father, bring atonement for their sins, and merit for them the right to eternal fellowship with Jehovah. His faith in God's unfailing promises made the keeping of the Sabbath day possible for him.

In the new dispensation we enter into Christ's accomplished work on the cross. Christ comes to dwell in us by His Spirit. He imputes to us His righteousness through faith. He implants His resurrection life in our hearts, whereby we become

new creatures, saints in Christ Jesus, united to Him by a living faith. We are like branches of the vine that draw their life from the vine. Without Him we can do nothing. But in Him we live. Yes, Christ lives in us, in order that through faith we may bring forth fruit unto repentance and salvation.

God's dwelling is no longer in one place, but even as Christ gathers His church by His Spirit out of all the nations of the world, so also the Spirit now dwells in that universal church. Even though the believers are widely scattered, divided by language and by race, and even scattered among many denominations, they are one universal church in Christ Jesus. Wherever that church is gathered Christ bestows His blessing, defending and protecting His people.

Thus the Sabbath day spreads its blessing over us throughout the

week. We live in the blessed hope of the saints as strangers and pilgrims in the earth, looking for our eternal rest with Christ in the life to come.



Our eternal Sabbath.

There remains a rest for the people of God. We expect our Lord Jesus from heaven, who will change our mortal bodies into the likeness of His glorious body, and we will be united with Him forever. Even though there is a multitude that no man can number, Christ will dwell in and with each one of us individually by His Spirit. We will know the Lord as we live in intimate communion of life with Him. We will sit, as it were, at the table of the wedding feast of the Lamb, enjoying His blessed life and the bounties of His hand. In Christ we will see and know our God in

all His glorious perfections, living unto His praise, even as we will live by Him and through Him.

Even as God is infinite, so there will be no end to our growing into Christ, becoming ever richer in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness as children of the King, sharing His fellowship and living ever more fully to the praise of our glorious, blessed God, who lives and reigns forever and ever.

Forever. The figure has been used, that if a bird were to peck away one grain of sand from the seashore every million years, ultimately there would be no more sand on the seashore; but eternity would carry on.

Eternally beholding, reflecting, declaring the praises, the awesome wonders, the glorious virtues of our God! That will be glory! Glorifying in God, to whom be all the praise and glory forever and ever! □

Editorial

The Hillsdale Scandal

Last fall, shocking events at Hillsdale College, a small but renowned college in Michigan, rocked the conservative community in North America. The president's daughter-in-law committed suicide. Her husband informed the public that just before she killed herself she had confessed to adultery with her father-in-law over a period of some nineteen years. She made the confession in the presence of the father-in-law. The board of trustees of the college quickly arranged the president's early retirement and

appointed a high-powered committee to find a successor. The committee included famous and influential conservatives William J. Bennett, author of *The Book of Virtues*, and William F. Buckley Jr., editor of *National Review*.

Hillsdale College came into national prominence over the past thirty years because of its resistance to the encroachments by the federal government. This entailed the college's refusal of federal subsidies and grants. To compensate, the college needed hundreds of millions of dollars from rich donors who share the conservative political, economic, and moral views of the college. The recently retired

president raised these millions.

Both the college and its president were well-known and highly regarded for their aggressive advocacy of moral rectitude in our decadent society. Parents thankfully gave their young people; the wealthy gladly gave their money.

The suicide of the president's daughter-in-law, the report by her husband of her admission of adultery with the president, her father-in-law, and the quick retirement of the president by the board of trustees (with a retirement package of between two and four million dollars) have shaken that bastion of conservatism to its foundations.

The national media reported

the Hillsdale happenings as a scandal.

But the governing board and administration of the college deny the charge. Nothing can be proved. The president denies adultery with his daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law is dead. Nor does the board acknowledge any cover-up. They acted responsibly, they insist, retiring the president only because the unfortunate events have made it impossible for him to continue.

William F. Buckley Jr. backs the board. In an article in the December 20, 1999 issue of his *National Review*, Buckley argued that grounds are lacking for judging the former president of the college guilty without reasonable doubt. In addition, the board of trustees did what was best for Hillsdale.

In its February 5, 2000 issue, *World* magazine, the Christian answer to *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U. S. News & World Report*, published the sober results of its own investigation of the events at Hillsdale. The title of the article is "The Truth is Buried." *World* concludes that no scandal can be confirmed. No one can prove that the president of Hillsdale college fornicated with his daughter-in-law over many years. Nor can any cover-up by the Hillsdale board and administration be substantiated.

People may suspect. The media may play up the suggestive circumstances. But even colleges and their presidents must be presumed innocent until proved guilty.

There was no Hillsdale scandal, but only a Hillsdale tragedy.

Why then an editorial on the Hillsdale scandal in the *Standard Bearer*?

Because there is a Hillsdale scandal. It is a despicable, sexual iniquity committed by the college president, recently retired. The administration and board of the college connived at it, indeed approved and celebrated it. Vast and wide, the scandal implicates virtually the whole of political conser-

vatism in North America, as it does almost all the supposedly conservative churches. In it is an urgent warning to the readers of the *SB*.

The Hillsdale scandal is a fact. All acknowledge the fact, although none, from William J. Bennett to *World* magazine, recognizes the fact as scandalous.

Only, the scandal is not what is universally suggested and supposed. It is not that the president of a conservative college, avowed defender of moral rectitude in Western society and professing Christian, slept with his own son's wife on and off for 19 years. Nor is it that the governors of the college looked through their fingers at this unseemly behavior, or even that they tried to cover up the wickedness when it came to light.

The scandal is that a few months before the suicide of his daughter-in-law and the report by her husband of her confession of incest, the president of Hillsdale College divorced his wife of 44 years and married another woman. He did this in a very public manner, the only manner in which one can divorce his wife and remarry. The college community, including its high-powered conservative backers, celebrated the remarriage with a very public banquet on the college campus. It is not at all impossible that William J. Bennett, author of *The Book of Virtues*, and William F. Buckley Jr., champion of the right, were among the celebrants.

Conservative Hillsdale College saw no scandal.

William J. Bennett did not decline to serve on the search committee for a new president on the ground that the board of trustees had attempted to cover up the former president's divorce and remarriage.

Bennett saw no scandal in the president's divorce and remarriage.

William F. Buckley Jr., who with his customary verve and logic argues that no scandal can be proved, obviously does not regard

the divorce and remarriage as scandalous.

World magazine noted the divorce and remarriage in passing, as one might report that prior to the events that caught the nation's eye the college president had had an appendectomy. But the conclusion of its careful investigation is that there is no evidence of scandal at Hillsdale. *World* is blind to the scandal of a conservative, professedly Christian, college president's divorcing his wife of 44 years, the mother of his four children, and remarrying (within a few months).

What accounts for this scandalous failure to see the Hillsdale scandal?

One of two things, and possibly both.

All of these conservative persons and organizations have become so used to divorce and remarriage that they do not even notice the evil anymore. That a grandfather may have committed adultery with his daughter-in-law still gets their attention. That a grandfather divorces grandmother for another woman is not even noticed. Tolerance of wickedness soon results in blindness to it. American society has reached this point as regards abortion. It is well on the way to reaching this point as regards homosexuality. It is long past this point as regards divorce and remarriage. The Bible describes this spiritual condition as the searing of the conscience with a hot iron (1 Tim. 4:2).

The other explanation is that all of the parties are themselves so compromised by unbiblical divorce and remarriage that they are unable to speak out against it. Their mouths are shut. The politically conservative galaxy in which Hillsdale College is a bright and shining star is as rife with divorce and remarriage as are the liberal circles that Hillsdale despises. The reputedly conservative churches to which the editors and writers of *World* belong are full of unbiblically

divorced and remarried members. By this time the leaven of marital infidelity has leavened the whole lump of most evangelical, Presbyterian, and Reformed churches.

It is not surprising, then, that no one notices the scandal—the *real* scandal—at Hillsdale, even though it stares them in the face.

The Hillsdale scandal is a classic contemporary illustration and confirmation of the truth of my editorial a few issues ago, “The Scandal and Silence.” The ethical scandal both in our society and in the churches is unbiblical divorce and the remarriage that follows. And all are silent about the scandal. Especially the noisy reformers of society and church are silent about it.

The divorce and remarriage of the president of Hillsdale College is a scandal. It is gross public transgression of the seventh commandment of God’s law: “Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her” (Mark 10:11).

It disgraces him: “If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (I Tim. 5:8).

It disgraces Hillsdale College and the cause of conservatism that

Hillsdale represents, not because it happened, but because the college did not swiftly and decisively expel its president when it happened. Indeed, the college did not even recognize it as a scandal. It *celebrated* the remarriage.

The Hillsdale scandal—the *real* and *unquestioned* Hillsdale scandal—is not neatly confined to a small college in Michigan. It has spread to implicate in the iniquity and disgrace with the shame all who have judged the events at Hillsdale without noticing the scandal. Particularly is this true of those who have solemnly concluded that no scandal is proven or provable at Hillsdale. The Hillsdale scandal is the scandal of William J. Bennett, William F. Buckley Jr., and *World* magazine.

No one should doubt whether the divorce and remarriage is the real scandal of Hillsdale. The cause of the sexual promiscuity and perversity that now deprave and destroy our nation and that defile the churches is the failure to honor marriage. If the former president of Hillsdale College did, in fact, commit adultery with his daughter-in-law, the greater evil, and the cause, was his unfaithfulness to his wife.

The irony of the Hillsdale scan-

dal is that the college and its supporters are enthusiastic about “worldview.” They war against the lawlessness of liberalism in society and call for conservatives, especially Christian conservatives, to promote a Christian “worldview” in North America. This is also the agenda of *World* magazine, which could not see any scandal at Hillsdale.

Any “Christian worldview” that has so little regard for marriage and the family that it is unable to notice the scandal of Hillsdale is unworthy of the name Christian. The efforts of such a “Christian worldview” to resist what Robert Bork has called the “slouching towards Gomorrah” of the United States and to advance the kingdom of Jesus Christ—the *calling and privilege of every true child of God and especially every genuine Reformed Christian*—are futile.

The triune God, Creator of the heaven and the earth, has made the family the fundamental institution of earthly life both in the nation and in the church.

The foundation of the family is marriage.

The destroyer is divorce and remarriage.

The scandal. □

— DJE

Letters

The “Witness” of Matthew 18

Please have Rev. Daniel Kleyn complete his article [“The Neglected Admonition,” *Standard Bearer*, Dec. 15, 1999]. Don’t “neglect” to explain exactly what is meant as “witness.” It cannot necessarily mean witness to the sin against the brother. I was involved in a situation like this and accompanied the offended brother as a “witness.” To make a long story short, I left the PCA because of

what transpired. I am very interested in what the author has to say about the “witness” and his responsibilities.

Emmett O’Donnell
Fulshear, Texas

Response:

The *Standard Bearer* article referred to spoke of the calling one has to speak to a brother or sister who, in his judgment, has sinned against him. This is, according to Matthew 18, the *first step* of discipline.

The question, however, concerns an aspect of the *second step*

of discipline. This step involves speaking again to the accused. But this time one is called to take along “one or two witnesses, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established” (Matt. 18:16).

The questioner asks about the witness (witnesses) who is (are) involved in this second step of discipline. Who is he? And what must he do and say?

The witness, as the questioner correctly points out, is not necessarily one who witnessed the sin. If this had to be true, there would be many cases in which it would

be impossible to find a witness, and thus impossible to deal with sin beyond the first point of discipline. For quite often one who has been sinned against is the only one who is aware of and who has witnessed that sin.

The witness, then, is a witness, not of the sin, but of the fact that the accuser has spoken to the accused about the sin. This means that before anything else is done the witness must first be sure that the accuser has already spoken to the accused privately. If this has indeed taken place, they then together visit the erring brother.

The witness is first of all an observer. As an observer, the following matters are of concern to him. Has the accusation been presented properly and fairly? Has this been done in the spirit of the love of Christ? Is the accuser sincerely and lovingly seeking the repentance of the sinner? And also, is it definitely the case that the one being accused remains unrepentant with regard to the sin?

Of all these things he must be a witness. And thus, if the matter goes beyond the second step of discipline, he is now a witness to the

fact that the first and second steps have been correctly carried out. He must be present so that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

However, the witness does more than simply observe. As Matthew 18 indicates, he also has the responsibility to say something. This is clearly implied in the first part of verse 17: "And if he shall neglect to hear them." The one accused of sin must hear, not just "him" (the accuser), but "them" (the accuser and the witness). Obviously the witness also speaks.

But what may and what must the witness say?

The witness does not automatically say the same thing as the accuser. It is very well possible that the accuser is the one who is wrong. For that reason the witness must not come to the meeting already convinced that the accused has indeed committed the sin. He must come with an open mind. Before he says anything regarding the sin, he must hear out both sides. He must determine whether the accusation is true. He must determine who is right and who is wrong. He must make a judgment.

And on the basis of that judgment, he speaks.

If the witness is convinced that the one who is being accused of sin is indeed guilty, he must say so. He must lovingly admonish the sinner. He must point out to him, as the offended brother has, his sin. Lovingly, remember! He is to be motivated by the desire to lead the sinner to repentance. He ought to do all he can to turn the sinner from the error of his ways. If the sinner repents, the matter is finished and forgotten. But if this does not happen, then, and only then, is the matter brought to the church (the consistory).

It may happen, however, that the witness determines that the one who is being accused of sin has not really committed the sin. In this instance, too, he is called to speak. But now he must show the accuser that he is wrong in accusing the other brother of sin. The accuser must be called upon to confess that sin and to seek forgiveness from the brother he has accused. In this way too, through the work of God's grace in His people, reconciliation takes place. □

— Rev. D. Kleyn

Search the Scriptures

Rev. Martin VanderWal

The King's Obedience Proved

Matthew 4:1-11

Strange! The Messiah, as soon as He presented Himself to John the Baptist and received His glorious gifts at baptism, is immediately driven into the wilderness. Conventional wisdom would have Jesus immediately begin heal-

ing the sick, deaf, dumb, lame, raising the dead, and casting out demons. He ought to have begun showing the glory and majesty of His kingdom, gathering multitudes about Himself. There is a great movement to be begun, a movement lasting up to our present day!

Conventional wisdom is, however, not the wisdom of God. According to divine, exalted wisdom—so unlike worldly wisdom—

Christ must immediately enter into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. God would have it so. This King must be shown to be an obedient King, learning obedience even by the things that He must suffer. For His crown comes to Him only through the way of battle. And the lesson, though it begins here, is not really finished until the last drop of His blood at Calvary is shed.

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The real glory of Christ, coming out of these temptations, is that both He and we are assured that He is mighty to save. There is something that must have been true of Christ, according to His human nature. Just as He grew in wisdom and knowledge from boyhood to manhood, so He must also be able to rejoice that His integrity stands in spite of the fierce attack of the devil. He counted it all joy!

There is something also for us to know through these temptations. We have presented to us in these Scriptures a Savior who is mighty to save, a Head whose righteousness is perfect beyond all flaw.

The Fierce Temptations

With the first temptation of Christ, Scripture sets before us the infinite superiority of the second and last Adam over the first. The first Adam was surrounded with the fruit of all the trees of the garden. The second and last was famished, having fasted for forty days and nights. The first Adam was created under God, to serve Him. The second was God Himself; but, not considering equality with God a thing to be grasped, emptied Himself into the form of a servant. To the first Adam came the Tempter: "Ye shall be as gods." A most evident lie. To the second and last came the same Tempter: "If thou be the Son of God." The truth. The first Adam fell before the lie. The second and last stands.

We see how this works. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." There is reason for Christ to do this thing. As the Son of God He has the power to turn these stones into bread. All he needs to do is say the word. He is famished, his belly crying out in need of food. Yet, there is one thing that stands in the way: the will of God. It was the Spirit who drove Him into the wilderness, the Spirit of God. It was the will of God, the word of God, that He suffer hunger. It was exactly before that word that Christ

must bow as a willing, humble servant. It must be His meat to do the will of His Father in heaven. His answer is perfectly appropriate, taught out of the law. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He has the power, but not the authority, His will being subject to the will of God.

The devil seems to have learned from this temptation. Christ has used the Scriptures to support Himself in this first temptation. Fight fire with fire. In his twisted and perverted ways, the father of lies will now use the Scriptures to tempt Christ again. But, even more than the use of the Scriptures, the use of the very same idea. Christ withstood the first temptation by declaring his utter dependence upon God, rejecting dependence on physical bread to sustain His life. Now the devil sets before Christ the very same idea. Christ withstood the first temptation by declaring his utter dependence upon God, rejecting dependence on physical bread to sustain His life. Now the devil sets before Christ the very same idea. Do not proceed according to nature. Do not live in harmony with the truth that, should you throw yourself down from this high place, you will break your neck on the ground. There is a word of God to be depended upon. It is written: "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." If this Scripture applies anywhere, it must certainly apply to the Messiah. Therefore, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." If man is to live by the word of God, then certainly the Messiah must live by Psalm 91:11, 12.

In Jesus' answer, we see marvelous wisdom and discernment. Again, He answers by Scripture. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Fact is, it was the will of God that His Son deny Himself physical bread to the satisfying of His flesh. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. But it was not the will of God that His Son throw Himself down. He was brought by

the devil to the pinnacle of the temple. He was commanded by the devil to cast Himself down. Not by God. To do this would be unrighteousness, it would be stepping out of the will of God.

The wisdom of Christ becomes evident from His particular application of the Scriptures to His circumstances. The Scripture brought by the devil in support of his command was no support at all. The key we find in the phrase the devil conveniently omitted from his quotation: "to keep thee in all thy ways." These "ways" refer to the regular walk of the children of God. God's angels protect His children in all their walk. It is not their calling to step out of that walk. Such was the temptation of the devil. For Christ to do this would be a temptation of God Himself. Therefore the entirely appropriate response, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." We must remember that it is not only the knowledge of Scripture but also the wisdom to apply them rightly that guards against the wiles of the devil.

In this answer of Christ we also find a strong rebuke of the devil. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Whom is the devil tempting right here? Hear the words out of the devil's own mouth: "If thou be the Son of God...." The devil knows who this is, as surely as his comrades, Matthew 8:29. To continue in this way surely must seal the devil's condemnation and punishment in the lake of fire. But continue he does. How foolish and vain!

The third temptation carries with it an awful weight, even a weight of glory. The devil holds before Christ "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." All these the devil promises to Christ. Christ need only do one thing. "If thou wilt fall down and worship me." The devil set before Christ an easy way. Here there is no cross to hang upon. Here there is no suffering and dying. One

simple act. All Christ need do is prostrate himself before the devil. Then he would be King of kings, and Lord of lords. All the glory of these earthly kingdoms would be His.

Set aside for a moment the question of whether or not this temptation is grounded in reality. Whether or not Satan had the authority to give Christ these things as He had promised. Whether or not Christ would be able to obtain them, though it would be extreme unrighteousness to bow before Satan. Consider the attractiveness of the offer. More people by far. For while God would give to Christ only the elect, the devil offers Him the world, all men head for head. A glory that is great without the shame and contempt of the cross. Wealth, fame, military and political might. Consider how things stand in the present day. The church is a little and despised flock of sheep, at the mercy of the world at large. Is there not more glory offered by the devil than by God the Father?

Here we see the devil at his boldest. The temptation is great, but the disobedience asked is wholly blatant. To obtain this thing, Christ would have to switch parties, as it were. He would have to declare Himself a rebel against God, and make Himself an ally of Satan. This was the very thing Satan held out as the condition. No more to fall down before God and worship Him. Rather, to give to Satan the glory that belonged to God. Obviously, Satan's last-ditch effort.

Christ will not have the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, as offered by Satan. Take notice, though, of the way He refuses the temptation. He does not hold before Satan the truth that by Him and for Him were all these things created. He does not make mention of the far greater glory that will be His as crowned by God the Father. He does not speak of His coming session at God's right

hand. None of that. He will be simply a servant. "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Note the sheer power Christ expresses in the first part of His answer. "Get thee hence, Satan." Not a thought of falling down or worshipping. Never may Satan be left with the impression that he is greater than Christ. Christ will order Satan: "Get thee hence!" He is the Son of God. Therefore, Satan must obey. Therefore, "the devil leaveth him."

The battle is over. What a beautiful thing we read in verse 11. "Behold, angels came and ministered unto him." These are faithful and elect angels, who stood when and where Satan fell. God grants to them the privilege now to come and minister to Christ. How this must have affirmed to Jesus His integrity in the face of such temptation. This is also for us the seal of God's approval on this victory of Christ.

The Glory Revealed

Though Christ refused the glory offered him by the devil, His glory is clearly revealed. He came out of these temptations unscathed. His righteousness shines with greater luster and brilliance, having been purified by fire. It is a righteousness most worthy of our trust, a righteousness which is

mighty to bring us to God. The glory is also that of pure holiness. Through these temptations we see that our Savior is wholly consecrated to God. So unswerving is His dedication to God's glory, that the devil cannot turn it away in the least respect. How we stand in need of this righteousness and holiness.

We also see the glory of Christ as our faithful High Priest. Tempted in all points like as we are, He is a sympathetic High Priest. He knows the feeling of our infirmities. He has wholly identified Himself with us. In our greatest temptations we must know that our Lord is with us, to lead us through them.

Tempted but without sin, He is both faithful Priest and perfect sacrifice. His human nature, free from every taint of sin, is the perfect sacrifice to take away our sin. Offered to God in humble service, this Priest obtains for us a perfect righteousness. By that righteousness stands our salvation.

That salvation God is pleased to realize in the crucible of temptations. Like our Lord, we must face the machinations of the devil. Knowing that we have a faithful High Priest gives us the assurance that we shall be preserved through them all. We see from this passage that God has also given to us a proven means of resisting this temptation: His Word.

Questions for Further Study and Meditation

1. How can we maintain the infallibility of Christ as the Son of God, and understand the reality and force of these temptations? What particular aspects of Jesus' human nature are in the foreground of this passage?

2. Some commentators hold that the latter two temptations are of

an illusory character. Can that be true or not? How might that character be in conflict with the weight and significance of these temptations? Did Satan have the authority to give to Christ as he said? How does the substance of his request betray the fact that he was not about to do as he promised?

3. What comfort must be yours in

seeing Christ tempted in this way, and in seeing His victory over these temptations? Which Scriptures give definite significance to these temptations of Christ for your salvation?

4. What are some of the similarities between Christ's temptations and yours? Think along these lines: "If you are a Christian...." "I will give you earthly and material...."

What is the way of rejecting these temptations, as Christ has shown us? Does your knowledge of Scripture show you are prepared for these attacks? □

Marking the Bulwarks of Zion

Prof. Herman Hanko

Berengar and Transubstantiation (1)

Introduction

Although I have used the name Berengar in the title of this article, there are two reasons why this choice of names might be misleading.

The first reason is that Berengar was not by any means the only one to enter the debate over the doctrine of transubstantiation. In fact, in this article we will be talking about two others: Paschasius Radbertus and Ratramnus. Both are important names in the debate.

The second reason why the use of his name in the title is misleading is that Berengar was, as a matter of fact, not the heretic in this controversy. And this series of articles is about heretics. Berengar was the one who held a correct view of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He fought long and hard against transubstantiation.

I have chosen Berengar because his life is the most interesting one, and the story of his life best illustrates the controversy over this doctrine.

The second point that needs to be noticed in this introduction is

that the three men whose names I have mentioned (along with a man by the name of Lanfranc) represent two different controversies separated by about 200 years. The first controversy was during the lifetime of Gottschalk, who died a martyr for his confession of the truth of sovereign grace. The time was in the middle of the ninth century. The opponents were Paschasius Radbertus and Ratramnus.

The second controversy took place in the middle of the eleventh century. In this controversy the two antagonists were Berengar and Lanfranc.

We shall be discussing all of these men along with their views.

The Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper

We must have a clear understanding of the issues around which debate swirled if we are to understand the lives and views of these men.

The most basic question was this: How is Christ present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper?

To that question two answers were given. While there were some variations in these two answers, most basically the difference was this: Is Christ present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper in a

physical way, or is He present in a spiritual way?

Some said that Christ was present in the elements literally and corporeally, so that His body and blood were communicated through the mouth. Others said that Christ was present spiritually and that He was communicated through faith.

It was the same controversy that divided Rome from the Reformers in Switzerland; and it was really the same controversy which finally divided Calvinists from Lutherans.

The First Controversy and the Views of Radbertus

The view which ultimately prevailed in the Roman Catholic Church, the view that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, was taught in some simple forms almost from the beginning of the history of the church of the new dispensation. But it never had any kind of prominence, at least not in the first five or six centuries. The great church father Augustine repudiated the whole notion and taught emphatically that Christ's presence was a spiritual presence only.

The controversy which developed in the ninth century was carried on between two monks. In

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fact, the controversy in the eleventh century was also between two monks. And, when one stops to think about it, all the work in theology in the entire Middle Ages was the work of monks, whether they defended the truth or were heretics.

There is, I think, reason for this. The schools in which the majority of people were trained were monastic schools. That is, they were established, supported, administered, and staffed by monks from particular monasteries. If one wished to go to school, he went to a monastery. This did not necessarily mean that one had to join a monastery as a monk to attend, but the very education in a monastic school was, in itself, a powerful incentive to join.

Further, the education in those days was almost exclusively for a life in the service of the church. Whatever one may have studied, it was to prepare him for a career in the church. Quite naturally, therefore, those who had had sufficient education to be busy in theology were also directed into careers in the church, the most available one being a career as a monk.

The view which later prevailed in the Roman Church was defended by Paschasius Radbertus. He lived from about 800 (the year Charlemagne was crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire) to 865.

Radbertus was a very learned and devout monk, but was also superstitious, as most monks were. He was a native of Soissons in France and soon rose in the Benedictine Order to become abbot of the monastery in Corbie.

Prior to becoming abbot he was a teacher in a monastic school and, because of his ability, he was sent on various ecclesiastical missions, especially involving the Benedictine Order.

In 831 Radbertus began to teach his views on transubstantiation — although that term itself was not used till almost the thir-

teenth century. He developed his ideas in a book that he dedicated to Charles the Bald, son of Charlemagne, who ruled over France upon the death of his father.

Radbertus taught that the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper were so completely changed into the body and blood of Christ that nothing remained of bread and wine at all. No bread was present, no wine remained, even though the figure of bread and wine presented itself to the senses of sight, touch, and taste.

While Radbertus attempted to find proof for his views in the teachings of the fathers and in Jesus' words in John 6, he also appealed superstitiously to other lines of proof.

He appealed also to marvelous stories of the visible appearances of the body and blood of Christ for the removal of doubts or the satisfaction of the pious desire of saints. The bread on the altar, he reports, was often seen in the shape of a lamb or a little child, and when the priest stretched out his hand to break the bread, an angel descended from heaven with a knife, slaughtered the lamb or the child, and let his blood run into a cup (Schaff).

The First Controversy and the Views of Ratramnus

Ratramnus was a contemporary of Radbertus. He was a monk in the same monastery in Corbie. He was only a simple monk and Radbertus was his superior. That did not deter him from taking issue with his abbot.

Ratramnus was a friend of Gottschalk and was also a defender of Augustine. He wrote a book entitled "Concerning the Predestination of God," in which he taught double predestination. He wrote this book, strangely enough, at the request of Charles the Bald.

Why Ratramnus was not condemned and punished as severely

as Gottschalk is something of a mystery. I suspect that one major reason was that Gottschalk was much more outspoken in his defense of the truth than Ratramnus. Gottschalk vigorously promoted Augustine's views at every opportunity. Ratramnus was more discrete. I do not mean to suggest that such discretion was a virtue. It was not. When the truth of God is at stake, one ought to defend that truth with vigor and enthusiasm — even if one must suffer for it, as Gottschalk did.

Ratramnus was a man of astonishing literary ability. His gifts of writing were widely recognized. Probably for this reason Charles the Bald, after receiving Radbertus' book on transubstantiation, which had been dedicated to him, asked Ratramnus to write a response.

This was done, and Ratramnus set forth his views that the presence of Christ in the bread and wine was only a spiritual presence. Ratramnus had it all straight. He taught that Christ was appropriated by the participant at the Lord's table, not by the mouth, but by faith. Hence, only those who had faith were also able to appropriate Christ, while the unbelievers were unable to receive Christ.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, therefore, was a commemorative celebration to assure believers of their redemption in the cross of Christ.

Such a view was in keeping with the views of Augustine, specifically also in keeping with Augustine's view on sovereign predestination. Believers are elect, and the power of their faith lies in election. Unbelievers are reprobate, and they can receive no blessing from the sacrament.

The End of the Controversy

The views of Ratramnus did not prevail in the church of Rome. They did not prevail any more than did the views of Gottschalk. Both were ultimately condemned.

It would seem, therefore, that

all the work of Ratramnus was in vain, that his remarkable understanding of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and his defense of it — even though he had to disagree with his superior in the monastery of Corbie — was of no account and amounted to nothing.

But God works in unexpected

ways, and our time is not by any means God's time. Over 500 years later, during the heated discussions in England over the Reformation, the works of Ratramnus on the Lord's Supper were discovered. They were republished and widely read, and they had a powerful influence on the development of the views of this sacrament in the En-

glish Reformation. The English Reformers saw the clear and unequivocal arguments Ratramnus had raised against Rome's position, and they were persuaded by much of Ratramnus' interpretation of the presence of Christ.

God's truth is always victorious. □

Day of Shadows

Homer C. Hoeksema

The Prediluvian Period (6)

Chapter IV

The Development of Cain's Line

In the light of the significant data studied in the previous chapter, the few details furnished us by the Scriptures concerning the history of the two spiritual seeds during the prediluvian period may be clearly understood.

As we have remarked before, the Scriptures are *selective* in their account of the history of this period, and extremely brief. Yet they furnish us with sufficient details that we may clearly understand the history. We are told something of the *beginning* of the two lines, that of Cain and that of Seth. In Cain's case, we are informed concerning his ungodly offering, his killing of godly Abel, his curse, and his building of a city (naturally, under the pressure of the curse).

The information concerning Seth is briefer still. The Bible informs us that Seth was given instead of Abel: a significant fact,

because it informs us immediately both as to the spiritual character of Seth and as to his place in the history of God's covenant. He is of the seed of the woman. For the rest, almost nothing is told us. The only other significant fact concerning the line of Seth in its early history is recorded in Genesis 4:26: the fact that men began to call upon the name of Jehovah. This can only mean that at this early point there was the public maintenance of the name of Jehovah, in worship, prayer, and open confession. As such, this fact is significant: it distinguishes the line of Seth at once from that of Cain.

As it were in snapshot form, the Scriptures tell us something, secondly, of the *height of the development* of these two lines. Cain's line is briefly described as reaching its height in Lamech, the seventh generation from Adam. In his family there is a mighty development in riches, in the arts, in invention and industry, but also in wickedness. Again, the Scriptures are briefer still concerning Seth's line. There is only the very brief notice concerning Enoch in Genesis

5:21-24. But this notice is sufficient to give us the picture. Seth's line reached great heights about the same time as the line of Cain, but in an altogether different sense: Enoch, also the seventh from Adam, walked with God in the midst of an ungodly world, and prophesied of the coming of the Lord for judgment.

Finally, the Bible gives us a brief account of the *end* of this course of development. It furnishes the picture of Cain's line, full of wickedness, ripe for destruction, being judged and destroyed in the Flood. It describes the triumph of the seed of the woman in Seth's line as it proceeds to Noah, the righteous, who finds favor in the eyes of the Lord, who also walks with God, and who becomes heir of the world.

Yet this brief, almost snapshot-style account is very significant. In the first place, as far as this period is concerned, it gives us a fundamentally *complete* account. What else of significance is there to relate of any period of history? We have the account of the rise of the

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two conflicting lines, their development and conflict, and their end — an end in which the triumph of God's grace and of the cause of His covenant is clearly set forth.

Secondly, however, we should not overlook the fact that the Scriptures present this history as typical. From this point of view, the significance of this period lies in the fact that in it there is an enactment, as it were, of all of history. These various stages of development are repeated. The beginning stage is marked by the fact that the world departs from God, while the church calls upon the name of the Lord. The development-stage is marked by a great manifestation of power on the part of the world, while the church walks with God. The end-stage is that of the consummation. The end of the world is destruction, while God's covenant people shall have the victory and shall inherit all things in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The description of the development of the line of Cain which the Scriptures give us in Genesis 4:19-24 may be aptly summed up in the language of Psalm 37:35: "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree." It can hardly be doubted that in this passage there is a description of exactly that situation: great power and development and boastful wickedness. Not many details does the Bible give us, but just enough to draw such a picture.

An analysis of the few details which the Scriptures give us brings to light, in the first place, the fact that there was a marvelous development of power and genius at the time of Lamech and his family.

Notice what we are told, first of all, of the sons of Lamech: Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain.

Jabal was the proud son of the beautiful Adah and Lamech. The

significance of his name is not to be ascertained with certainty. But his reputation and significance in the history of those times is recorded in the Scriptures: he is described as the father of those who dwell in tents and possess cattle. The point is not that he was the father of people like the wandering Bedouins, nomads, who roam from place to place. Surely, in his generation men did not become pilgrims and strangers in the earth, as were the people of God, who looked for the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. But Jabal is the father of the rich, of those who make it their ideal to gain the whole world, of those who call the things of the earth their own. To be rich at that time was to have cattle. Jabal and his kind would move from place to place, pasturing their herds, and thus dwelling in tents. Jabal was the father — both natural and spiritual — of those who make it their ideal to pile up for themselves the riches of the world: the father of those who are rich according to the world, but are not rich toward God.

Jubal, also a son of Lamech and Adah, is renowned as the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. In him, therefore, another aspect of his father Lamech's genius and his mother Adah's sensuality becomes manifest. He was an artist!

Music as such is a good gift of God. The harmony of notes is a creation of God. The ability to discover and express and make use of that harmony is as such also a good gift of God. This harmony and the power to reproduce it on instruments of music, through string or pipe, was discovered and developed by Jubal. Jubal's genius is artistic, and he invents musical instruments to enhance the joy of life and to create song in the midst of the groaning creation. But music, in itself a good gift of God, is ei-

ther good or evil, according as the regenerated heart plays and sings by faith to God's glory, or as the unregenerated heart expresses that which is of sin, of lust, of the world, and of rebellion against God. The spellbound world of Jubal's day would sit and listen when he would express what lived in his own and in the world's soul in soft and melodious strains bespeaking the lustful pleasures of sin and immorality, or in strident and thunderous notes of mighty power and proud rebellion. Jubal's art (and related to music are the art-forms of color and line and speech) is for the celebration and elevation of the life of *this* world.

Tubal-Cain was the son of Zillah and brother of Naamah. He turns his genius to industry. He is the father of every artificer in brass and iron. His genius is inventive and technological. He is the artificer of utensils and instruments which are useful for man in peace and in war. Inventive genius, developing the means of life and subjecting the powers of nature, was remarkable in Tubal-Cain and his generations.

To sum it up, these three renowned sons of Lamech represent all who make it their aim and ambition and achievement to make the world rich, to make it beautiful and pleasant, and to make it useful and convenient.

Now it is a very striking fact that these masters of vast possessions, these masters of art, these giants of industry are in the line of Cain-Lamech. They are descendants of the mighty Cain, the murderer of the righteous. They are sons of the proud and boastful and self-asserting Lamech. They are the seed of the serpent. When it comes to these things, you read nothing of Seth and his descendants. In the genealogy of Seth-Noah you find no record of mighty achievements according to the stan-

dard of the world. They called upon the name of Jehovah, and they walked with God, and they preached righteousness, but you do not find among them the possessors of this world's goods, the artists, the industrialists. The latter are the men of the world. It is the sons of Lamech and his two wives, Adah and Zillah, who are reputed as possessing this remarkable power and genius. In the line of the wicked generations of Cain an unusual degree of natural power of mind and body displayed itself and rapidly developed. The picture here drawn by the Scriptures is that of the world approaching the zenith of its glory.

But that glory is the glory of the world! At the very point when the world before the Flood reaches the zenith of its glory it also becomes great in wickedness. For the Scriptures clearly witness to the fact that these mighty men of renown and women of renown were people *of* the world and *for* the world. The love of God was not in them. They were of the seed of the serpent. It is this very strong and swift development of natural life which constitutes a significant element in accounting for the rapid decay and development in sin of the first world.

That there was indeed such a decay and development in the manifestation of sin at this time is abundantly evident.

In the first place, the record of the Word of God here speaks loudly of the lust of the flesh and of vanity. There is the fact that Lamech took two wives. He and his wives are the first who are mentioned in the Scriptures as trampling God's fundamental ordinance of marriage.

There is the fact, also, that the Scriptures give evidence of the voluptuousness and sensuality of the women in Lamech's family. For

one thing, these women are on the foreground, as appears from the very mention of their names. The name of a woman is not mentioned at all in the generations of the sons of God. In fact, a god-fearing woman is not mentioned by name until the time of Sarah, Abraham's wife, and she is recorded in the Scriptures as an example of a godly woman of a meek and quiet spirit. But these women are on the foreground! Besides, it is to be noted that to his *wives* Lamech sings his "Ode of the Sword," indicating that they must have been of a kindred spirit with him, given to the lust of the flesh. Moreover, the names of the women in Lamech's family bespeak the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes. Adah means "the adorned"; Zillah means "the shady"; and Naamah, the daughter of Zillah, is "the pleasant" or "lovely." These women made themselves a name by being the very embodiment of the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, boldly displaying whatever may please and attract the sinful lusts of the flesh.

In the second place, the record of Lamech's family is a record of human pride and boastfulness, of rebellion and vengefulness and cruelty. In whatever way Lamech's song may be interpreted — and there is room for difference as to the details of its meaning — the thrust of it is very plain. It bespeaks murder. As sung in the ears of his wives, it bespeaks the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. In its insolent reference to the avenging of Cain, it bespeaks haughty contempt and arrogance over against God and man.

In the third place, the Scriptures give us a direct evaluation of the age of Lamech. Enoch, like Lamech, was also the seventh from Adam, and therefore a contemporary of Lamech and his family. In his prophecy, as referred to in Jude, 14 and 15, we find the following

evaluation of the generation in which he lived: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Notice the emphasis on two related items here: 1) the ungodliness of that generation; and, 2) the coming of the Lord for judgment.

Finally, we should take note of the fact that history confirms this evaluation. From this point forward there is the amalgamation mentioned in Genesis 6. There is increase in wickedness until the earth is filled with violence. Soon the measure of iniquity is filled, the world becomes ripe for judgment, and the Flood comes and destroys them all.

Now the question is: what is the significance of this development — both the development in natural life and the development and progress in the manifestation of sin — with respect to the history of this period? There are several related questions involved here. How is it that this strong development of natural life occurs in the generations of Cain-Lamech, not in the generations of Seth-Noah? Why was there this strong development in the sphere of things natural in the generations of Cain? Or rather, what is the divine reason and purpose in bringing that development about in the generations of Cain? Was there divine grace in it? Or divine wrath? Why, from the viewpoint of the divine reason and purpose, was there not such a development in the generations of Seth? What, too, was the spiritual, ethical significance and effect of this development in the generations of Cain? Then, too, there is the question what effect all this had on the subsequent history of this period, on the development

of the conflict between the two spiritual seeds, and thus on the achievement of the consummation of this prediluvian history in the Flood.

All these questions are fundamental. The proper understanding of the history of this period, and, in fact, of all history, is involved in them. One's "philosophy of history" is at stake here. We may add at once: at this point it is of fundamental importance whether one's view of this history is colored by the theory of common grace, or not. Needless to say, our answers to these questions must be biblical, not philosophical.

In this connection, in the first place, we must remember that the strong and unusually swift development of natural life is an element which accounts for the rapid degeneration and the development in sin of the first world. The two facts of the great natural development manifest in Lamech's family and the wickedness which was manifest do not merely stand side by side or merely coincide in time. There is a connection. That connection is one of means and result. The inventive genius and its products, of which we have spoken, stood in the service and employment of sin. They were actually employed also by the flesh unto corruption. The spiritual motive of their development and employment was that of enmity against God, and the spiritual product of the development and employment of those great natural talents was greater sin and corruption. As that first world reached the zenith of its development from a natural point of view it also reached the zenith of its development in point of wickedness.

The principle is that of the organic development of sin as it proceeds hand in hand with the organic development of the race. The point is not that the natural devel-

opment and its products were in themselves sinful and corrupt. Not the genial power as such, not the art and the science and the industry and the ability to gather possessions, not the harp and the organ and music and song as such are wicked and ungodly. Such is never the case. Neither sin and the curse nor grace and blessing are in things as such. But as the natural gifts and genius and power and talents manifest in Lamech's family developed in various directions, they stood in the service of sin and darkness. They provided all the more means for the development of a carnal and sinful life. They were the means which sinners employed in creating for themselves an entire world of the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. For, we must remember, the sinner commits iniquity always with and in proportion to the means which God in His providence gives him. The more that sinner grows in power and the more he grows in gifts, the more he develops that power and employs those gifts in the sphere of natural, earthly existence, and the more he grows in the ability and the means wherewith to commit sin.

In the second place, it should be noted that this development cannot be explained on the basis of a "common grace." This is important. Precisely at this juncture one's basic view of history as it is involved in the question of God's attitude toward the righteous and toward the wicked, toward elect and reprobate — and this, of course, is the basic question in the common grace theory — precisely at this juncture, one's basic view of history comes into play.

First of all, if it is held that in a certain favor, or grace, over the reprobate ungodly God gives them the things of this present life, it is

inconceivable how those very things could be the means for their destruction. If they are the latter, then there can be no grace involved; and if they are the former, then there can be no destruction involved. In other words, the old, unanswered question presses itself

to the fore: what *grace* is there for the reprobate in the things of this present time?

Nor will it do to present matters as though God bestows blessings upon the reprobate, but the reprobate turn these blessings into a curse. For this is destructive of the very idea of divine grace. No more than a father in love bestows upon his child the very instrument which will be to his destruction, no more does God bestow things in His grace when those very things are, and cannot be anything else than, means to grow in corruption and to become ripe for destruction. The very suggestion of this idea is preposterous with application to the living God and His grace.

Nor, secondly, do the Scriptures teach anything like this. The contrary is true. God's Word does teach that we are by nature children of wrath, and that *the wrath of God abideth* on such as believe not the Son (John 3:36). It does teach that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). It does teach that God hates all the workers of iniquity (Ps. 5:5). It does teach that "the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth" (Ps. 11:5).

With respect to the things which the wicked receive in this present time and the status of the wicked in this present time, the Scriptures also express themselves in no uncertain terms. Here is the picture drawn in Psalm 37:35, 36: "I have seen the wicked in great

*Neither sin
and the curse
nor grace
and blessing
are in things
as such.*

to the fore: what *grace* is there for the reprobate in the things of this present time? Nor will it do to present matters as though God bestows blessings upon the reprobate, but the reprobate turn these blessings into a curse. For this is destructive of the very idea of divine grace. No more than a father in love bestows upon his child the very instrument which will be to his destruction, no more does God bestow things in His grace when those very things are, and cannot be anything else than, means to grow in corruption and to become ripe for destruction. The very suggestion of this idea is preposterous with application to the living God and His grace.

Nor, secondly, do the Scriptures teach anything like this. The contrary is true. God's Word does teach that we are by nature children of wrath, and that *the wrath of God abideth* on such as believe not the Son (John 3:36). It does teach that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). It does teach that God hates all the workers of iniquity (Ps. 5:5). It does teach that "the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth" (Ps. 11:5).

With respect to the things which the wicked receive in this present time and the status of the wicked in this present time, the Scriptures also express themselves in no uncertain terms. Here is the picture drawn in Psalm 37:35, 36: "I have seen the wicked in great

power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." Similar language occurs in Psalm 92:5-8: "O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this. When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever: But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore." Psalm 73 speaks very clear language concerning God's dealings with the wicked, telling us what Asaph learned in the sanctuary of God when he was troubled by the very prosperity of the wicked: "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors" (vv. 18, 19).

Hence, the wicked — also the wicked of that age — receive many things under the providence of God, but they receive them in such a way that they corrupt these gifts unto their own destruction. They receive their soul and their body, their mind and their will, their gifts and great talents, their physical strength and their mental capacity and genius, their wives and their children, their wealth and possessions and all the resources of this earth. All these are bestowed upon them by God in His providence. In fact, even as is the case in this particular instance, so the Scriptures generally picture the ungodly as having a greater proportion of all these things than the godly. This is also the general picture of history: the wicked prosper, and God's people are the poor and despised.

But grace and providence are not the same. The operation of God's providence is motivated either by His favor or His wrath, ac-

cording to His purpose of election and reprobation. To be sure, unless the ungodly receive all these things, they could never sin, and they could never increase their guilt and fill up the measure of iniquity and become ripe for destruction. But these very gifts constitute, as it were, the capital wherewith they sin and develop in ungodliness. We must understand, therefore, that these things are a means both for God, who sovereignly executes His purpose, and for the wicked, who act as responsible moral agents. The wicked employ them knowingly and willfully in the service of sin and corruption. Thus, they are responsible and harden their hearts unto their own destruction. God uses these same means according to His sovereign counsel and in His wrath over the ungodly, thus fitting them as vessels of wrath unto destruction. Accordingly, the greater the gifts and talents, the more means the wicked have wherewith to sin and to develop in sin, and the more swiftly they run to destruction. The riches of Jabal, the arts of Jubal, and the inventive genius and industry of Tubal-Cain, as well as the great strength of Lamech and the physical beauty and charm and glamour of an Adah, a Zillah, and a Naamah — all these are means to make sinners great as sinners, and thus means for their destruction.

In the third place, we face the question as to the reason why the generations of Seth-Noah, in contrast, are so conspicuous for their lack of those same mighty achievements for which the generations of Cain are famous. There is a sharp contrast here; and this contrast surely has a reason.

In answer to this question, we point to three related elements:

1. The first and deepest reason lies in God's election. It is the Father's good pleasure to reveal the things of His kingdom to those who are, as far as things natural are concerned, babes, even as it is His good pleasure to hide them from the wise and prudent.

It pleased God to glorify His own grace by choosing and calling the weak and the foolish and the things that are nought in this world.

It pleased God to glorify His own grace by choosing and calling the weak and the foolish and the things that are nought in this world. It pleased Him to reveal the wonder of His grace in such a way that no flesh should ever glory in His presence, that, according as it is written, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Herein lies the deepest reason why as a general rule God keeps His people small and of no account as far as the things of this present time are concerned, and as far as status according to the flesh is concerned.

The Lord Jesus saw this realized in His own public ministry, and He gave thanks to the Father for it in Matthew 11:25, 26: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." The apostle Paul writes of this in I Corinthians 1:25-31: "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to

nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

2. There is a very sound spiritual reason for this situation. That reason is that God's people seek the things which are above. Those things constitute the center of attraction for the saints, while for the people of this world the things that are below are the focal point of attraction. Once more, let it be emphasized that sin is not in things as such, or in the possession of things. Riches are not wrong; art is not wrong; and invention and industrial development are not wrong. But the temporal and material things are not properly an end in themselves. This the people of God have learned to understand. They confess that they are strangers and pilgrims in the earth, that the present things can never constitute their goal, that they have here no continuing city, but that they seek one to come, and that therefore they strive not to strike their roots deeply into this present world. They consider the things of this present time to be but means, and they find them useful only as such, considering them legitimate only insofar as they can be used as such. Quite normally, therefore, their attention is less drawn to the things of this present world, and as a result they do not develop greatly, as a general rule, in regard to those things. Different it is for the generations of Cain-Lamech. Their portion is here below. Quite normally, therefore, they concentrate all their at-

tention upon and expend all their energies in the development of and the seeking of those this-worldly things.

3. In close connection with the preceding, we must remember that God's people *must* seek the things which are above. They *must not* seek the things which are below. This is not only a "must" from the point of view of God's purpose with them, but it is also their sacred calling and obligation. Generally, they are less attached and less attracted to the things that are below when the Lord keeps them small and of little power and influence in the world, and with slight possessions and often many sorrows and tribulations. Again, it is not because sin is in things. But in view of the fact that God's people have but a small beginning of the new obedience, and in view of the fact that the things of this present time so easily become a source of temptation, normally abundance of possessions and affluence and worldly influence and power are not conducive to spiritual health and vigor of sanctification. In His wisdom and

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care for His people, therefore, God keeps them small in the world, and takes care that their portion here below is of such a measure that incentive to seek the things which are above does not suffer.

4. Then we should see the broader implications of this situation for the history of this period. As was suggested already in the preceding chapter, the stage was set by means of this sharp spiritual and natural contrast for the antithetical development and progress of history in this period along the

lines of sin and grace. This is true, first of all, with respect to the amalgamation of which Genesis 6 speaks. It requires a certain set of circumstances for such amalgamation to take place. One of those requirements is, of course, the sharp spiritual contrast between the generations of the godly and those of the ungodly. Another requirement without which such amalgamation cannot take place is the presence of a carnal element in the generations of the people of God. But a certain historical situation is required also. The world must have the means and the power wherewith to allure and to tempt, to make itself attractive to the carnal seed among the generations of the sons of God.

There must be Jabal's riches, Jubal's music, the conveniences provided by Tubal-Cain's genius, and the charms of a Naamah, in order to attract and to deceive the children of God's people.

Secondly, we must not forget that there were undoubtedly fierce persecutions at this time. About this we shall speak again in a later connection. But we may bear in mind now that even as the world must have the power and means to make it carnally attractive for one to cast his lot with that world, so it must also have the means and the power to make it carnally unattractive to be spiritually separate from and to oppose and condemn that world. Such a situation developed when the generations of Cain began to flourish in the world "like a green bay tree."

Thus the stage was set for the conflict to develop and move forward to the point that the people of God were decimated until there were few, that is, eight souls to be saved in the ark, while an entire world of ungodly perished in the very waters by which God's people were saved. □

All to God's Glory

Our lives as children of God are to be directed and governed by one fundamental principle. One rule determines all that we think, all that we say, and all that we do. That rule is, "Do all to the glory of God!" That is our calling in this life. And that will be our calling into all eternity.

That this is the principle that determines all our conduct is clearly shown in the Scriptures. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever, Amen" (I Pet. 4:11). "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Ps. 34:1). "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

To glorify God is to acknowledge Him as God alone. It is to acknowledge and serve God as the all glorious One. He deserves all glory. We must give it to Him. And we do that by praising, honoring, worshiping, serving, and thanking Him every day of our lives. We glorify Him by living our

lives, not for ourselves, but for Him.

The reason why God must be glorified by us is simple — He created us to do so. He has given us our life and health and strength and every earthly possession we have. He has also given us an immeasurable abundance of spiritual riches. But God has not made us or given us all these things for ourselves. Our lives and all that we have must be used for Him. All creation glorifies God its Maker (Ps. 19:1). So ought we.



God must first of all be glorified for what He is. Even apart from all that He does, God should be praised by us. He is a glorious God, infinite in His perfections. He is great in Himself. He is great on account of all His glorious virtues: His holiness, wisdom, justice, grace, love, power, infinity, truth. "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised" (Ps. 145:3). Do we take the time to glorify God for this? Do we, as we read the Scriptures, meditate on the perfections of God that are revealed to us in His Word? Do we praise Him for what He is?

God must also be glorified for what He does. God reveals Himself to us in His works of creation and providence. As we see God's revelation of Himself to us in these works, we must glorify Him for that. That means glorifying God for the beauties and wonders of the creation itself. That means glorifying God for all that occurs in the creation, including the tornadoes

and earthquakes and floods. That means glorifying God for all that occurs in the history of the world, including wars, the rise and fall of world leaders, disease, and death. That means glorifying God for all that takes place in the church. And it means glorifying God for all that occurs in our own daily lives. God does it all. We must see God's hand in all these events and glorify Him for His work.

We must glorify Him for all that He has done to make us what we are. The psalmist says, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). God has created us with many talents, gifts, and abilities. Each of us is a remarkable creation of God. Just think of how our minds and bodies function. Just think of the way in which, each day, air and food and water give us life and health and strength. God must be glorified for that. We may not, by boasting of our abilities and strength, take that glory for ourselves.

Especially must God be glorified by us for what He does for us and in us through Christ. That is, He must be praised for His work of salvation. We are sinners saved by grace. We are undeserving of the least of His mercies. We deserve eternal damnation. But God is great in His love and mercy and grace toward us. He has saved. He has redeemed and justified. He daily sanctifies. Our hearts must therefore be filled with the desire to glorify Him. We certainly have every reason to do so. He must be glorified. We may not steal some of this glory for ourselves.

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The latter is what the Arminian does. He refuses to confess, "God is everything, and I am nothing." Somehow, therefore, he contributes to his own salvation. He produces faith. He accepts Christ as his Savior. He keeps himself faithful to the end. By claiming to do these things he seeks to have some glory for himself.

But by nature we are no different. Apart from grace we are Arminian. We want to praise ourselves. And we want other men to praise us. We love the praise and the approval of men. We feel we ought to receive widespread recognition for anything and everything we do. We are constantly hoping to hear words of commendation from others: "What a great job you do as a parent! What excellent grades you achieved in school this year! What impressive skills you have in sports! Your craftsmanship is remarkable! Your abilities are outstanding! Your comments at Bible study were right to the point! Your sermon last Sunday was wonderful!" If someone will just tell us how well we have done something, we are happy.

That is sin. It is the sin of being a man-pleaser. Whenever we live with that desire, we are guilty of robbing God of the glory that is due only to Him.

Glorifying God is an exclusive activity. It is antithetical. It is either/or. Either we glorify God, or we glorify ourselves. We cannot do both. "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake" (Ps. 115:1). Do we sincerely make that confession?

No other person may receive God's glory. All glory to God — not just some of it or most of it, and a little bit for man too. And all glory to God always — not just some of the time or most of the time, but all the time. God alone deserves all the glory.

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Perhaps the hardest aspect of desiring God's glory and living to the glory of His name is the subjective element.

This involves, first of all, glorifying God in all our life. That brings us back to I Corinthians 10:31. We must be motivated by a desire for God's glory in all that we do — in all our thoughts, in all our words, and in all our actions. We must strive to glorify Him in every area and in every aspect of our lives.

What Paul says in I Corinthians 10 is striking. The apostle, you will notice, mentions the rather routine activities of eating and drinking, pointing out that even these things must be done to God's glory. At first this may seem strange. We might be inclined to think that a better example could have been used — an example of a spiritual activity, such as worship, reading the Scriptures, or prayer. For surely it would be more important that God be glorified in these things than in the common activities of eating food and drinking water.

There is a reason, however, why these things are mentioned. The text emphasizes by this that nothing may be excluded. We are very quick to forget about glorifying God in the seemingly mundane activities of life — eating, drinking, washing dishes, dressing, taking a shower, reading, exercising, and so on. But the Scriptures teach us that we may not do so. The admonition is all encompassing. God must be glorified in absolutely everything we do.

That means that a wife and mother must glorify God while she is changing diapers, while she is washing dishes, and while she is speaking to someone on the phone. A husband and father must glorify God while he pounds nails into lumber, while he busies himself with his daily work, and while he relaxes at home. A child must glorify God while solving math problems, while playing with friends,

and while attempting to master the latest computer game.

How is this done? It involves a number of things. It involves doing all that we do in a way that is pleasing to God, that is, in obedience to His commands and will for us. It involves being conscious of the fact that God is always watching us. It involves doing what we do to the best of our God-given abilities. It involves doing our work, not just because we need to earn money, or because we have no other option but to do these things, but cheerfully and in thankfulness to God. It involves being aware of the fact that this particular task has been given us by God. Everything must be done in order to please Him.

We must live to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Then God will be glorified — not only *by* us, but also *because* of us.

Christ said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). God is glorified by others on account of the things that you and I do. God is glorified by our good works.

The glory for the good works that we do is certainly not for us. If we know ourselves spiritually we know that we are totally incapable of doing good works in our own strength. The fact that we do them is because of God's work in us. God must be glorified, for our good works are His works in us. Do not let men praise you for your good works. If they want to praise you, point out to them that God should be praised.

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The other way in which God must be glorified subjectively is through everything that He does to us. This is even more difficult, for we must desire that God so govern all that He does to us so that

He alone (and not we) receive the glory. It is easy enough to desire, objectively, that God be glorified in all that He does in the world out there. But to seek, subjectively, that He be glorified in all that He does to us personally is quite a different matter.

What makes this so difficult is the fact that a proper desire for God to be glorified in all that He does to us means that we have to put aside all concern for ourselves. Our only concern is God. We desire that God do as He wills, regardless of what happens to us.

For the sake of His own glory, God may do with you and me whatever He pleases. Therefore we must say: "If God is glorified through placing me in the midst of war and unrest, then I want Him to do that. If God is glorified through sending me sorrow or persecution or depression or death, then I desire that too. If God is glorified through making me lonely, or sick, or poor, then I do not desire that He do something different. If God is glorified through afflicting my children, or through causing some of my children to go astray, or through leav-

ing me childless, my heart's desire is that God do exactly these things so that He receive the glory. Regardless of what happens to me, to my family, to my life, to my possessions, to my name, or to my honor, my heart's desire is that God do whatever He pleases so that He is glorified through all His dealings with me."

To glorify God in this way is to do what Job did after he lost all his possessions and children. He worshiped God! And then he said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). It is also to say, as he did later, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15a).

Then God is glorified. Glorified first of all because His plan is a perfect plan for the sake of our salvation. And glorified by our humble submission to what He does in our lives.

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For this we need grace. For

this we need the gift of faith. Faith is a certain knowledge and a hearty confidence. Through faith we know God as our Father for Christ's sake, who promises to do all things for our good. So even though the calling to glorify God is a solemn duty, there is also great incentive to do it. For we know that God does all things well. In this confidence of faith we can truly say, "May God be glorified regardless of what happens to me." God will have all the glory and honor. Even when we fail to glorify Him, He will be glorified. He will cause that He alone receive the honor that is His due.

But God will also work this in us, His people. By the power of His grace He will cause us to glorify Him.

What a privilege it is that we may live to God's glory in all that we do in this life. And what a blessed joy it will be when we can do this in perfection in the eternal kingdom He is preparing for us. There, as never before, we will do all to God's glory.

Let us not wait until then. Let us begin now. All glory to Him and Him alone! □

All Around Us

Rev. Gise VanBaren

■ "The Man of the Millennium"

At the end of every year, *Time* magazine nominates its "Man of the Year." With bated breath, the press awaits its great announcement. This year, of course, was different. This year it was not only a question of "Man of the Year," but also "Man of the Decade," as well as of the century and of the millennium.

The reason for its choices might be of interest to the Christian as well. However, the world examines and announces according to standards that are neither biblical nor concerned overly much with the spiritual. Whom would the church nominate? Dr. W. Robert Godfrey, professor of church history and president of Westminster Seminary in California, presents his nomination in the *Outlook*, January 2000, with some sound reasoning:

Certainly the Christian churches have experienced great continuities and discontinuities in the past one thousand years. In light of

this long and complex history, does it make sense to try to name one man as the man of the millennium? Who might it be? No doubt a number of candidates could be suggested. Roman Catholics might name Thomas Aquinas, a theologian of towering intellect whose system continues to inspire important thinkers even in the twentieth century. Many may point to Martin Luther who in his theological insights and spiritual power was the great pioneer of the Reformation. Others have pointed to Johann Gutenberg for his impact on technology and communication or to Isaac Newton for his reorientation of science

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from Aristotle to modern paths of progress.

For man of the millennium, I would propose John Calvin. Since I am a Reformed minister writing for a Reformed periodical, such a suggestion may seem parochial, but I think it is easily and properly defended. Many scholars beyond Reformed circles recognize the importance and influence of John Calvin.

Calvin's theological and pastoral importance must surely be listed first. Calvin was the most systematic, Biblical, and balanced theologian in the history of the church. His *Institutes of the Christian Religion* is the best text in theology ever written. Calvin was also in many ways the model commentator on Scripture and an extraordinary preacher. His insights into worship reformed the life of churches in many lands. Calvin was a great teacher to Reformed churches in Switzerland, Germany, France, Hungary, the Netherlands and Great Britain. His influence carried beyond Europe. At the time of the American Revolution, 90% of American Christians followed, to one extent or another, the Genevan Reformer. In our century his influence can still be seen in the great missionary work in Korea and Nigeria.

Calvin's impact on our millennium extends far beyond the strictly theological and churchly. Calvin was the first theologian to argue that the Bible's prohibition against usury did not mean that Christians could not charge interest on loans. That conclusion was a key moment in the development of western capitalism; and so Calvin's significance for economics is very great. Similarly in the realm of politics, Calvin's contention that lesser magistrates could lead resistance to tyranny laid the foundation for the Dutch revolt against Spain, the Wars of Religion in France, as well as the English and American revolutions. Those struggles against tyranny were essential to the rise of democracies in the west.

Calvin also affected the spread of education in the modern world by stressing the importance of every Christian being able to read

the Bible. This emphasis was certainly not unique to Calvin, but was promoted with zeal by the Reformed churches. Calvin's understanding of the physical world as an expression of the will of God (rather than the being of God) created an environment in which modern science could grow, often from universities with a Reformed background.

The last millennium has been a complex time of remarkable and sometimes surprising developments. Since we do not know the time of Christ's second-coming, we cannot know whether the second millennium is the last millennium before Christ's return. But we should be encouraged that the Christianity of the second millennium – especially as taught by John Calvin – will continue to be a stimulating and reliable guide to Biblical religion and Christian living as we begin that new millennium.

That is Godfrey's judgment. Most of his reasoning sounds excellent to me—except his conclusion that there just might be another millennium before Christ's return. Would you agree with his choice of the "Man of the Millennium"? Perhaps you have a better nomination for "Man of the Millennium." If so, who would it be—and why?

■ Pentecostals and Roman Catholics

From the editors of *Religion Today*, February 7, 2000, comes the report of Pentecostals who seek closer union with the Roman Catholics.

Black Pentecostals say they can learn from the Roman Catholic Church. Leaders of 27 denominations, members of the Joint College of African-American Pentecostal Bishops, will travel to Rome this week to visit the Vatican and perhaps meet with the pope, the *Chicago Tribune* said. The bishops said it is time to recover some of the ancient traditions practiced by the Catholic Church.... "I think

we can learn from each other," Larry Trotter of the Sweet Holy Spirit Full Gospel Baptist Church in Chicago said. "We come with a fervor and fire they may be missing, but they come with order and structure we may be missing." The bishops will attend a three-day seminar at the Pontifical North American College, a seminary for U.S. Catholics, and will attend a general audience and a healing Mass with the pope, the *Tribune* said. They also might have a short personal visit with the pontiff. ...Pentecostalism is one of the fastest-growing segments of Christianity. Pentecostals believe that God, through the Holy Spirit, empowers Christians with spiritual gifts, including prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues.... "The shock to me was that these Pentecostals – these charismatic, tongue-speaking people – all wanted to go to the Vatican," J. Delano Ellis of Cleveland said. He is a friend of Cleveland Catholic Bishop Anthony Pilla, who helped arrange the trip. "We are part of the body of Christ, and we want to grow closer to other parts of the body of Christ. It's time to build some bridges and tear down some walls," Ellis said.

And so, the drive to union with Rome continues. It has been the present pope's stated aim to bring all religions together. It appears that his efforts are meeting with a degree of success. Is all of this not preparation for the one anti-christian church at the end of the age?

■ Religious Tensions Grow

On many fronts the division between religions, and increasingly between Muslim and Christian, grows. *Christianity Today*, January 10, 2000, reports concerning growing tensions in Nigeria:

Following the implementation of *shari'a* (Islamic law) in Zamfara state on October 27, four other states in northern Nigeria – Bauchi, Katsina, Borno, and Yobe – are preparing to adopt *shari'a* as their legal system. Thousands of

Christians in Kaduna, led by the Christian Association of Nigeria, protested in the streets.

Observers say the states' decision is pushing Nigeria to the brink of a religious war. The crisis began over two decades ago, when Nigeria's Muslim political leaders moved to align the country with other Islamic nations, although half the population is Christian.

Muslims predominate in the North, with some estimates running as high as 90 percent of the region's population. But with a secular constitution, the states' move toward *shari'a* – which regulates Muslim life and prescribes punishments such as stoning and beheading – has divided the country even further.

Many Muslim religious leaders are unbending. "It is on the basis of freedom of worship that people in these states, who are predominantly Muslims, want to be governed by the laws of their religion," says Sheikh Abubakar Jibrin, the imam (Islamic cleric) of Fasfam Mosque in the northeastern city of Sokoto.

...church leaders are not surprised by recent attempts to Islamize the country. "I think that what the states want to do is to formalize what they have been doing secretly before," says Anglican bishop Benjamin Kwashi. "Having worked in some parts of these states and with some experience around those places, one would

know how difficult it is to be there as a Christian and as a Nigerian."

So the situation worsens in Nigeria, as it does also in other countries which are predominantly Muslim. Increasingly there is a rise of the nations of Gog and Magog against all that which is Christian—or at least nominally so. It is a further sign of the times.

■ "Presbyterian Synod Supports 'Holy Unions' "

The same issue of *Christianity Today* reports growing support for homosexuals, also in the ministry, within the Presbyterian Church USA. The article states:

A regional body of the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) has ruled in support of same-sex unions, as well as the candidacy of noncelibate homosexuals for ordination.

At two separate hearings in New Jersey, the Permanent Judicial Commission of PCUSA's Northeast Synod upheld homosexual participation in religious ceremonies and offices. The commission ruled 8-2 in favor of the South Presbyterian Church of Dobbs Ferry, New York, continuing to offer "holy union" ceremonies to homosexuals. Proponents of holy unions argued that a union

is not the same as a marriage between a man and a woman, and therefore not forbidden by the Presbyterian Book of Order.

Committee members ... said in their dissenting opinion that "the blessing of such an activity by a Minister of Word and Sacrament would be unconstitutional and against the policies of the [PCUSA]" because "homosexual practice is a sin."

The commission also ruled 8-1 in favor of allowing Graham Van Keuren, a non-celibate homosexual seeking to become a minister, to be received as a candidate, the church office that precedes ordination. Clifton Kirkpatrick, who oversees the judicial commission, said it was important to view these rulings as "decisions of a regional body, not PCUSA as a whole."

The decisions are likely to be appealed to the denomination's General Assembly.

So the march goes on. Step by step, little by little, section by section, changes take place. So it was with the battle for theistic evolution; so it was with the battle for women in office; so it is now in the battle for full acceptance of the homosexual in the churches. Good is evil; evil has become "good."

And it does not really matter to so many what the Bible actually teaches on this. □

Book Reviews

Johannes C. Sikkel: A Pioneer in Social Reform, by R. H. Bremmer. Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada/Pella, Iowa: Inheritance Publications, 1998. 47pp. US\$5.90/CAN\$6.95 (paper). [Reviewed by the editor.]

The appeal of this small book to the Reformed reader is manifold. It introduces a prominent minister in the reformation in the Netherlands known as the "Doleantie" who is otherwise only

a name on several Dutch books gathering dust on the bookshelf. It indicates the extent to which the *Doleantie* and its preachers were involved in the national life of the Netherlands, particularly politics and labor. And it demonstrates the sharp disagreements among the ministers of the *Doleantie* over such matters as labor unions and women working outside the home.

Johannes C. Sikkel was a minister in the state church who joined Abraham Kuyper's *Doleantie* in 1886. The book describes Sikkel's

active role in developing a Calvinistic view of labor and of labor's relation to capital. Basic to Sikkel's thinking was the conviction that labor is redeemed by Christ. Accordingly, he was critical of Kuyper's position that labor must be viewed in light of common grace. Sikkel's stance drew opposition from both Kuyper and Bavinck. Sikkel condemned the trade union movement, as nothing more than Marxist, organized class struggle. This infuriated some of his colleagues. Sikkel urged the "fellowship" of

employer and employee—"fellowship in enterprise."

Bremmer sums up, that for Sikkell "love for one's neighbour demands that social warfare be

settled and peace be restored by means of consultation between capital and labour" (pp. 44, 45).

Adding to the interest in the

book is its revelation that the place of women both in the workplace and in the church was a divisive issue in the *Doleantie* from the very beginning. ■

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Minister Activities

Rev. C. Hanko, one of our churches' emeriti pastors, was able to return to his home in Hudsonville, MI in early February after a short stay in Brookcrest Nursing Home in Grandville, MI. His blood counts are back to normal and he feels much better.

Rev. M. VanderWal, pastor of the Covenant PRC in Wyckoff, NJ, slipped on some ice and injured his back. As a result, he was not able to preach for his congregation on February 6. Hopefully he suffered no lasting injury and by now has once again taken up his labors.

Sister-Church Activities

At a prayer-breakfast in mid-November, the leaders of the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore discussed their concern for meeting the spiritual needs of the Chinese-speaking population in Singapore. Adding to the urgency of this matter is the fact that these people are the older members of the community in Singapore. Some 20 years ago, when our sister churches had their beginning as mostly young people, their concerns revolved mostly around church, marriages, and families, but now as the members become older, their attention naturally is directed towards their aged parents who still hold to their Chinese religion and superstitions. Unless the ERCS has a Chinese ministry for them, they will have to be referred

to other churches if and when God is pleased to work salvation in them.

One of the difficulties facing the ERCS in this task is that none of their "preachers" is trained in the Scriptures in the area of sermon making. Looking at this problem they quite naturally asked the question whether Prof. Hanko could be of some help in this area, just as he had helped in Myanmar. So out of that prayer-breakfast discussion evolved the idea that he teach a brief course on sermon making for those who are involved in the Chinese ministry. This was planned for a number of Saturday afternoons in January and February, and was open to anyone who wanted to learn more about teaching the Bible in any setting — Sunday School, pastoral visits, or formal messages.

Mission Activities

Rev. R. Moore, our missionary to Ghana, reports that the subject of the sovereignty of God in salvation is increasingly appreciated by those with whom he is working, in a culture which emphasizes that man merits the whole of salvation. They are learning the doctrine from the Scriptures, as they study each passage in its entirety. And the result, the missionary says, is that the lives of the saints there are also lifted up.

Rev. J. Mahtani, our missionary to Pittsburgh, PA, was in Grand Rapids, MI the weekend of February 11-13 in order to have a quarterly visit with the subcommittees of the council of Southwest PRC and the Domestic Mission Committee. He was also able to preach once for Southwest. After

the evening service he gave a public report on the progress of the mission work in Pittsburgh and the eastern US.

Evangelism Activities

The Reformed Witness Committee of the Hope PRC in Walker, MI sponsored two lectures on the theme, "The Distinctively Reformed Doctrine of the Covenant." On February 17 Rev. G. VanBaren spoke on that theme as it applies to "The Rearing of the Children of Believers," and on March 16 Prof. R. Decker is scheduled to speak on that theme as it applies to "Missions." Both lectures were held at Hope Church.

Congregational Activities

On January 21 and 22 about 140 members of the Georgetown PRC met for what has become their annual Winter Retreat. This year, as in the past, the retreat was held at Camp Geneva, on the shore of icy cold Lake Michigan. Rev. N. Brummel, pastor of the Cornerstone PRC in Schererville, IN, was the guest speaker for the conference. He spoke on the subject, "Exercising Unto Godliness," with a focus on witnessing.

The Choral Society of the South Holland, IL PRC presented a concert of sacred music on Sunday evening, February 10.

The council of the Loveland, CO PRC has decided that on the third Sunday of each month (September through May), beginning February 20, there will be a song service immediately following their evening worship service. Plans call for the congregation to be seated following the benediction and those with children in nursery bringing

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

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them into the sanctuary. The service would last 10-15 minutes and consist of the singing of Psalter numbers.

This year the council of the Grace PRC in Standale, MI appointed a committee to edit and prepare material each month for an informational newsletter. This newsletter was entitled, appropriately, "Grace Notes."

Young People's Activities

The weekend of February 11-12 the Young People's Societies of the First PRC in Holland, MI and the Kalamazoo, MI PRC met together for a retreat at Camp Manitou-Lin on Barlow Lake, approximately half way between the two churches. On Saturday they went skiing at Bittersweet near Allegan. Rev. W. Bruinsma and

Rev. C. Terpstra both spoke on the subject of parental authority in young people's lives.

Food For Thought

"The soul is the life of the body.

Faith is the life of the soul.
Christ is the life of faith."

— John Flavel □

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the Hudsonville PRC expresses its Christian sympathy to our fellow member Mr. Henry Huizenga in the sudden passing of his brother,

MR. CLARENCE HUIZENGA,

on Sunday afternoon, January 23, 2000.

May he and his family find their comfort in the words of Revelation 21:3, 4: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 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. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Erv. Kortering, Secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of Immanuel Protestant Reformed Church (Lacombe) extend their sympathy to our fellow member John Oudman in the death of his wife,

MRS. ANNETTE OUDMAN.

It is our prayer that he may find comfort in the words of the psalmist in Psalm 23:6b: "and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Rev. Rodney Miersma, Pres.
Wilbur Linker, Clerk

TEACHER NEEDED

Covenant Christian High School is seeking applications for the position of choir director for the 2000-01 school year. Qualifications to be considered are teaching degree, ability, and interest in the program. Interested parties should contact Mr. Rick Noorman at (616) 453-5048 or Mr. Ed Ophoff at (616) 247-8382.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

March 21, 2000 is the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents,

HAROLD and EDNA SCHIPPER.

Thanks be to our faithful Lord who has blessed their life together. We pray that Jehovah will continue to uphold and guide them and that He will always be the center of their marriage.

"For the Lord is good: his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

- * Jane and Rich VanTil
- * John and Lori Schipper
- * Pete and Pat Schipper
- * Tom and Luanne Schipper
- * Dan and Laura Schipper
- * Fred and Janet Ensink
- * Kyle and Dave Hoonhorst
- * Marie and Bob Heyboer
- * Chuck and Barb Ensink
- * Bob and Karen Ensink

Grandchildren and
great-grandchildren

Holland, Michigan

NOTICE!!

All standing and special committees of the synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, as well as individuals who wish to address Synod 2000, are hereby notified that all material for this year's synod should be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than April 1. Please send material to:

Don Doezeema
4949 Ivanrest Ave.
Grandville, MI 49418

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