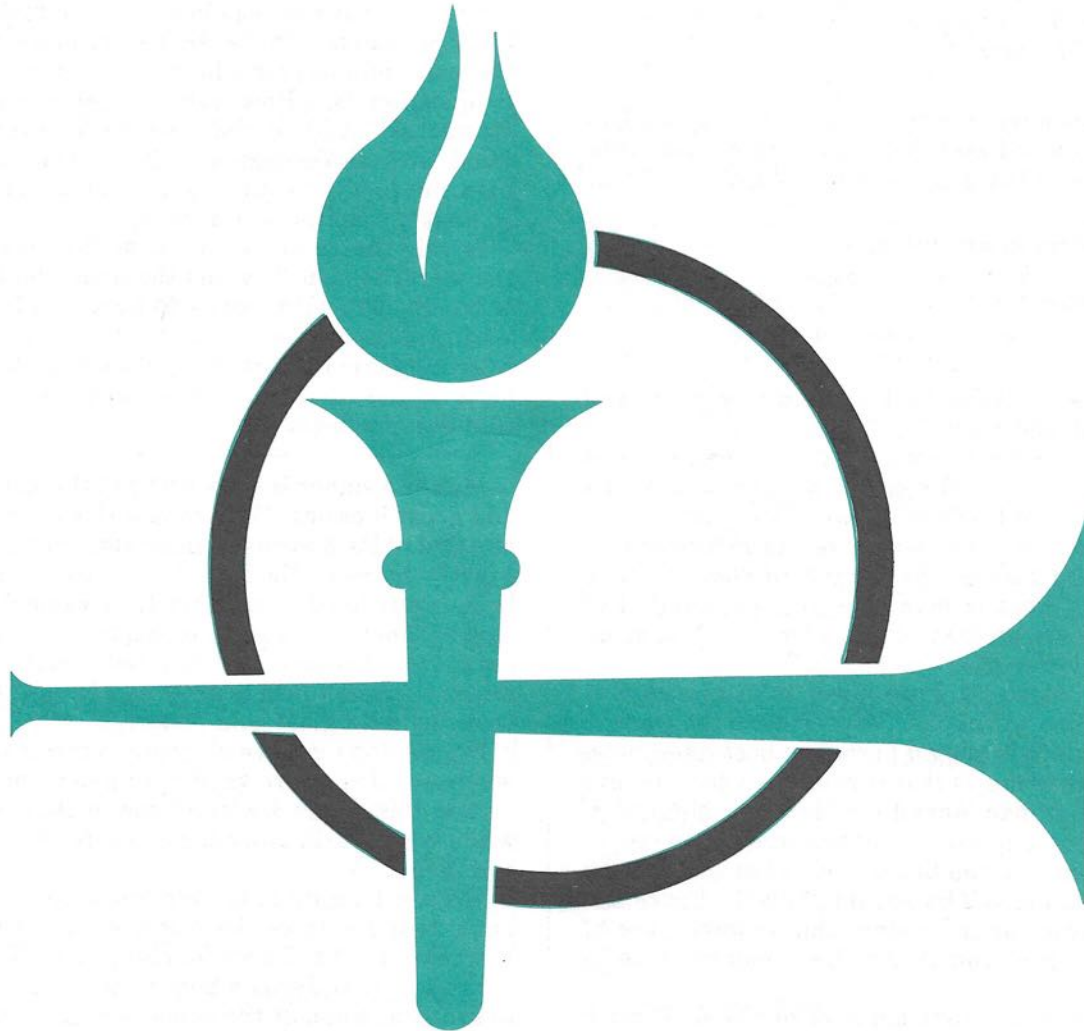


THE OUTLOOK

DEVOTED TO THE EXPOSITION AND DEFENSE OF THE REFORMED FAITH

MAY 1980



**THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BODY
REPROBATION-BOER V.S. THE BIBLE
NEED FOR REFORMED EVANGELISM**

WE SEE JESUS, OUR EXALTED LORD

John Blankespoor

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. Heb. 2:9.

*Lord, our Lord, Thy glorious Name
All Thy wondrous works proclaim;
In the heavens with radiant signs
Evermore Thy glory shines.
How great Thy name!*

That's a song we sing from our Psalter Hymnal, as a versification of Psalm 8. A beautiful number it is. In it we sing of the greatness of our God.

*Moon and stars in shining height
Nightly tell their Maker's might;
When Thy wondrous heavens I scan
Then I know how weak is man*

That's the contrast, God so infinitely great and man so weak and small.

But that greatness comes out still more, much more in the work of His covenant love, and of the destiny of man in God's great work and plan for salvation. That's what the writer to the Hebrews also speaks of and marvels at. Listen to what he says about God: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels."

This expression, "a little lower than the angels" has been difficult to explain, especially in the context of Psalm 8 which is quoted here. The best interpretation, it seems to me, is that it refers not *to rank*, but *to time*. When man sinned God brought him down, lower than the angels. He became subject to death. What a dreadful condition and what misery he brought upon himself by his sin of disobedience! No words can describe the history that followed, one of suffering, sorrow and death. And man returns to dust.

But how great is that name of our God. What a marvel that this great God would be mindful of this little, insignificant man. God destines him to be crowned with glory and honor, and to be even higher than the angels. God will even subject the world to come to this small creature called man.

And this all does take place and will take place through the wonders of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ! It begins its fulfillment in His resurrection and ascension. That's what the writer to the Hebrews speaks of. After all, his purpose in the entire book is to show the greatness and excellencies of Jesus Christ. Christ is the fulfillment of all types and shadows in the old dispensation. What a Savior He is!

But now we do not yet see all things subject to man (vs. 8b). Instead man is subject to death with all it implies. He experiences that every day. There are so many adverse forces and powers in our lives which control us, victimize us, and over against which we are just helpless. Think of the elements of nature such as storms, earthquakes, floods and droughts. There is constant fear and anxiety. War with all its ravages has been the life history of millions of people. And even today, more than ever, there are millions for whom the most important daily question is, "How can we get enough in our stomachs?" Add to that the world even today is filled with sicknesses and diseases with resulting pain and finally death. If you want to see what man is, visit a hospital or a nursing home.

Is this the creature to whom God has subjected the world to come? Is this the man who is destined to be crowned with glory and honor? Is this the man who is to become so great that he will rule over the world and creation? It surely doesn't look like it! But he is so destined in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God but also man.

Man as a sinner is not worthy of this consideration and great blessing. Why should this great and glorious God of Ps. 8 even consider him? But God is great exactly because He is also so great in mercy and love, in our Lord Jesus Christ. He came down to our small planet, the earth, to be prophet, priest and king. And because He suffered death for us, He arose, ascended into heaven and is now THE MAN crowned with glory and honor.

No, we don't yet see all things subject to man, but we do see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor.

And this Jesus we must see, look at constantly while we are still down here in this old world of sin and death.

We see Him by faith. We know He is there. We know that He rules the world with His power and His church with His wonderful grace.

Look at that Jesus when in the hospital. Be sure to see Him when at the cemetery. In all of life's circumstances where a 101 experiences tell us about the problems and difficulties of man in this world, lift up your heads and by faith see that Jesus, sitting at God's right hand in indescribable majesty, glory, power and love.

And the best by far, is still to come. We are going to be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. What He has begun He will finish. God will give to His people, as saved human beings, the role of kings in the new heaven and earth. And that is something which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has ever arisen in the heart of any man.

Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth. What a love and what a salvation! ●

UNSEEN LIFE

*The earth is drab and dead and dull
No signs of life are seen
Where is the leaf, the sprout, the bud
And all that once was green?*

*Ah, deep beneath the frozen ground
In wait of warming sun
Lies Life — though still unseen
New growth has now begun.*

*How do I know? How can I tell
New Life will come this spring?
I find the promise in God's Word
He is creation's King!*

— *Rotha J. Essenburg*
Reprinted from the Photo-Reporter

Notice Regarding the Verhey Case

Our March issue reported the decision of the Dutton Consistory to resubmit its case against Dr. Allen Verhey's objectionable way of interpreting and using the Bible to the coming C.R. synod. This appeal was refused placement on the Agenda because it had not first been submitted to the classis. Therefore the consistory has decided to present the matter to the May classis in order to again ask the synod to properly deal with this matter.

P.D.J.

THE OUTLOOK

(USPS 633-980)



"And the three companies blew the trumpets . . . and held THE TORCHES in their left hands, and THE TRUMPETS in their right hands . . . and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon" (Judges 7:20).

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Send all copy to Managing Editor, Rev. Peter De Jong, Box 34, Dutton, Mich. 49511. Phone (616) 698-6267.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Arthur Besteman, John Blankespoor, John Piersma, Harlan Vanden Einde, Henry Vanden Heuvel, Syburn Voortman, Clarence Werkema.

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Assistant to the Editor: John Vander Ploeg.

Production Manager: Peter Wobbema.

Business Manager: Mrs. Mary Kaiser.

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EDITORIAL AND CIRCULATION OFFICES

THE OUTLOOK

4855 Starr Street, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506, Telephone 949-5421

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9-11 a.m.

After Office Hours please call: 452-9519

Mailing Address: 4855 Starr Street, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

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Caricature of a Conservative

John Vander Ploeg

When we still lived in the vicinity of St. Joseph's Seminary in Grand Rapids, it was not at all rare to encounter the late aging Father Maloney on the street as we were both seeking a breath of fresh air or at the pharmacy where we both had prescriptions filled. He had at one time served at the prestigious St. Andrews downtown to which he referred to as 'The Cathedral'. Father Maloney was such a gracious soul that if there would be a purgatory (which there isn't) I would think he would not have to be detained there very long; and if I would ever want to become Roman Catholic (for which I have not the least intention) I would like to have Father Maloney as my parish priest.

We were both conservatives, but . . .

One thing enjoyable about conversation with Father Maloney was our common love at times for a bit of innocent mischief. When we once met a day or two after Reformation Day and I asked him, "How did you spend Reformation Day?" it must have been with a twinkle in his eye that he told me, "I spent the day praying for you that you may someday become a saint". When I tried to tell him that I was a saint already he had no ear at all for that about which the Bible is plain as can be.

Father Maloney and I were both conservatives but it would have been a caricature to identify us with each other because too often the values he cherished and wanted to conserve were alien to mine. However, it was not difficult to sympathize as he talked about their changing liturgy and when out of the depths of his troubled soul, he lamented, "I hate it! I h-a-t-e it!"

Obviously, conservatism among Roman Catholics is not having a field day, notwithstanding the determined efforts of the popular Pope John Paul II to hold to the line. In his book, *Our Changing Liturgy*, Roman Catholic author, C. J. Mc Naspy, S. J., gives an almost humorous sidelight on this in relating the following:

"Recently a friend of mine was escorting a group of visitors around the new cathedral in Baltimore. He pointed to the image of the Last Supper and named each of the Apostles, Judas among them. A dear lady asked, without the slightest trace of irony, 'Is Judas a saint now, too?' My friend reassured her. Unshaken in the faith, she shrugged: 'Oh, Father, I didn't know, with all the changes going on these days.'"

Before chuckling too heartily about this *faux pas* on the part of a Catholic lady gullible enough to believe the Establishment even when it pronounced black to be white or vice versa, let us as Protestants first put our hands in our own bosom to discover whether this leprosy may also be with us. Overawed by every dictum from the Establishment or possibly too lackadaisical to determine the white or black of a matter for themselves, the probability is that there

are also among us, would-be conservatives either too docile or else too indolent and indifferent to do their own thinking. Little do they realize that they are in reality only a caricature of a conservative.

Yes, Father Maloney and I were both conservatives although we knew very well that it would be a caricature to picture us both as being in the same camp. As we met, conversed, and parted, nothing changed; he was still the conservative Catholic and I the conservative son of the Protestant Reformation.

In good company — Even though our primary interest here is in the bonafide conservative in religion, we recognize that there are reputable conservatives also in political, civil, social, racial and other areas. And it may help us to get the picture of the conservative in proper focus if we take a cue from the outstanding autobiography, *Black and Conservative*, of the well-known Negro journalist, George S. Schuyler, who spells it out as follows in the closing lines of his book:

"We are here (America) blessed with the right of mobility, the right of ownership, the privilege of privacy and development of personality, and the precious machinery of peaceful change. These gifts and gains it is *the purpose of the conservative to defend and extend*, lest we perish in the fell clutch of collectivism. These gifts and gains I have been trying in my small way to preserve" (italics added).

That's it. The distinguished and clearheaded Negro journalist is right on target. A conservative, in his book, is the person who is determined to conserve, to preserve, and to keep those values or commodities that he cherishes as being non-negotiable or dearer than life itself. Even so, the religious conservative is adamant in holding on to precious convictions he has learned from the Bible as being non-negotiable and not for sale at any price, ridicule and caricatures of himself notwithstanding. And, in this, fellow-conservatives, we are in good company.

Is there any doubt about this? It seems so. Rev. Arie G. Van Eek is the Executive Secretary of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada. In *Calvinist-Contact* of January 4, 1980 he is quoted as having said the following:

"The AACS (Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship) continues to be a sign of hope in a church and culture in *which the forces of reaction and conservatism are very strong and present a threat to the churches*" (italics added).

Two comments about this.

First, by no means everyone shares Rev. Van Eek's confidence in the AACS as "a sign of hope" in the church. For further information on this, the reader is urged to get *Some Questions and Answers about the AACS* by Rev. Peter De Jong. This booklet may be ordered from Reformed Fellowship, Inc., Box 7383, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501 (1 copy - 40¢ — 3 copies \$1.00 — 10 copies \$2.00 — 100 copies \$15.00).

Second, as genuine conservatives (not the phonies as caricatured) we have good reasons to believe that, as such, we are also in very good company. Consider the following:

The apostle *Paul* was a real conservative with no ifs, ands, or buts about it. To the Galatians Paul wrote: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (1:8, 9). That's conservatism for you!

Jude, the brother of Jesus, was also an avowed conservative. "Beloved", he says, "while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for that faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). And that's militant conservatism!

Moreover, it was **Jesus Himself** who had this message for the church in Thyatira and for us also: "Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come" (Rev. 2:25). The authentic conservative is in the good company of the Lord Himself, than which, to be sure, there is none better.

Finally, the Bible itself demands that we be conservatives in our acceptance of and commitment to it *in toto*. "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book", says our Lord, "If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18, 19). And that's clear enough.

It would seem to be a work of supererogation to adduce still more evidence that, as genuine conservatives, we are in company of which we certainly need not be ashamed.

Recent voices from Canada — *Calvinist Contact* is a weekly journal emanating from St. Catharines, Ontario. Obviously, it is widely read by CRC members north of the border and also by a number of interested members in the States. Recently voices have been appearing in this publication about the good or the bad of being a *conservative* in the church, and it was this material that triggered my writing something on "Caricature of a Conservative".

In the January 4, 1980 issue of *Calvinist Contact* already mentioned, Rev. Arie G. Van Eek, Executive Secretary of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada, is quoted as having said: "The AACCS continues to be a sign of hope in a church and culture in which the voices of reaction and conservatism are very strong and present a *threat to the churches*" (italics added). In the February 15 issue of the CC Rev. Gregg V. Martin, CRC minister at Dunnville, Ontario takes exception to Van Eek's charge. The latter, says Martin, has given him "private assurance . . . that he did not refer to conservatism in the sense of doctrine, but rather in the sense of an attitude of extreme traditionalism and backwardness".

It is difficult, if not impossible, to believe that Van Eek, in his responsible position in the CRC in Canada, does not know that there are in the denomination responsible and articulate conservatives who do not deserve and emphatically repudiate being classified with those who cling to "extreme traditionalism and backwardness". As the controversy between conservatives and liberals in the CRC goes on (e.g. about our view of the Bible) let us lean over backward lest we misrepresent each other. It will only tend to make matters worse instead of better if we fabricate caricatures instead of presenting accurate pictures of each other.

To set the record straight over against Rev. Van Eek's misguided and deplorable utterances about the conservatives, *Calvinist Contact* of February 22, 1980, carried an outstanding letter over the signature of H. Nymeyer on behalf of the Board of Reformed Fellowship of Canada, Inc. This letter is so well-written and so much to-the-point that we take the liberty of quoting from it liberally to further clarify who and what bona-fide conservatives among us really are and to repudiate any and every caricature of them. The letter states:

"We would . . . inform the readers of *Calvinist Contact* that the undersigned, The Reformed Fellowship of Canada, is an association of concerned, orthodox, conservative, Reformed people, who react to the inroads of liberalism, subjectivism and all attacks on the Holy Scriptures and are then presumably the type of people to which Rev. Van Eek, in his statement refers.

"We call ourselves conservative, but we retain the right to define that word ourselves. We want to conserve the heritage God has given us through our fathers. We believe that God has been true to His promise that He would lead His church into all the truth. We would conserve it.

"We want to conserve the confessions of the churches as living confessions for all of life . . .

"We want to conserve the biblical traditions of the fathers. Not simply because they are traditions. We want to conserve them because our God told us to grow this way (Prov. 1 ff) . . .

"We intend to speak out and react unequivocally against liberalism wherever it raises its head. We intend to speak out against the cry of the radically new which finds its justification only in its newness. We believe that all the new must stand the test of intense criticism. We intend to speak out against all attacks on the Bible. Not that the Bible needs defending, but the adherence of God's people to the Bible must be defended at all costs.

"If any of the above represents a hindrance or threat to the churches, we invite Rev. Van Eek (personally or officially as executive secretary of the CCRCC) to point these out for us".

We thank Mr. Nymeyer and the Reformed Fellowship of Canada for this piece of clear thinking.

And we would urge Rev. Van Eek and his like-minded associates to give this their most careful and charitable consideration.

And, from our side of the border, we would also add to it a hearty Amen!

No Faith IN The Church (2)

Peter Y. De Jong

(Translation of Prof. C. Veenhof's *Om Kerk te blijven*)

The confession of the church testifies that we believe the church.

It declares specifically that we do not believe *in* the church.

We believe *in* God the Father and *in* Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son, and *in* the Holy Spirit. Saying the same thing in slightly different words, we believe *in* the triune God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

We do not believe *in* the church, for the church is a creature. To be sure, it is a work of *re-creation*, but therefore and always a creature. In the church we find nothing which is essentially one with and therefore comparable to the triune God.

For this reason believers may never put confidence in and reliance upon the church. This they can and may do only in their heavenly Father and their Lord Jesus Christ. All trust in a creature is idolatry; also trust in the creature which is called church.¹

And because the church is a creature, it does not make us *blessed*. It is made blessed (i.e. "saved") by grace through God on the basis of the merits of Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit.

The pretention that a church, and then in its institutional form, can be a *saving* church is essentially idolatrous. And a church which so defines itself, and which even dares to speak of itself as the *only-saving* church, perpetrates idolatry with itself.

Indeed it is true that "outside" of the church there is no salvation. In His good pleasure God in Christ through the Spirit does His saving work only within the "space" of the church, that is, only in the church and through its ministry.

The church also lives in idolatry when it, to all intents and purposes, forgets that in itself it is *nothing* and only is what it is and does what it does by God's grace.

Of course the church is Christ's church and *in Him* and *through Him* overcomes the world day after day. But that does not remove the reality that the church, precisely as in the case of individual believers, can stumble and sin in such a shocking fashion and does this repeatedly. Thus it behooves the church to be humble and to walk in fear and trembling. All self-complacency, all boasting in self, all "triumphalism" must be avoided as the plague. When the church fails in this respect, it is living in idolatry. Then it indeed fails to live by grace and only so may and can live.

Such idolatry manifests itself, for example, in audacious pride which asserts, "The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah are *we!*"² By such idolatrous arrogance the church

begins to tyrannize instead of to serve. Such pride is also the source of the legalism, phariseeism, and hard-heartedness of judgment about fellow Christians and those outside of the church which throughout the centuries has wreaked great devastations in and around the church. It is no less than the compelling force in every formalistic and legalistic exercise of ecclesiastical discipline together with the excommunication of office-bearers because these have failed to conform precisely to the "ecclesiastical order."

Likewise is it idolatrous when a church in its specific, historically-conditioned, institutional form absolutizes itself and forgets that in the dispensation between Pentecost and the last day every historically-developed and -determined ecclesiastical institution demonstrates the character of "tentativeness."

Calvin broke radically with many kinds of idolatry regarding the church, when he designated the church in its organizational form as one of "the external means or aids by which God calls us into communion with Christ, and retains us in it."³

¹Calvin wrote in the *Institutes*, IV, 1, ii: "The particle IN, interpolated by many, is not supported by any probable reason . . . For we declare that we believe *in* God because our mind depends upon him as true, and our confidence rests in him. But this would not be applicable to the Church, any more than to 'the remission of sins, or the resurrection of the body.'"

²Jeremiah 7:4

³This is the title which appears at the head of the fourth book of the *Institutes*.

Questions for discussion

1. State as clearly as possible the distinction between *believing* . . . and *believing in* . . .
2. How would you define the church? Cf. also *Belgic Confession*, art. 27. What is the meaning of the word "congregation?" From what Latin word does this term derive and how does it thus describe the intimate relation between Christ and His people?
3. In these days when the visible church is often held in low esteem, do you still find people in danger of believing *in* the church? If so, when and where and how?
4. Since no visible, institutional church may "absolutize" itself, does it make any difference to which congregation or denomination we choose to belong? Explain.
5. In what sense is it truly Biblical to confess that "outside of the church there is no salvation?"

III. AN HONEST CONFESSION

Peter De Jong

In an effort to illuminate some of our important church problems recent OUTLOOKS have at the Board's suggestion contained articles attempting to present side-by-side (1) the historic, Biblical Reformed view and (2) the emerging, changing, broadening view held by an increasing number in our

churches. The March issues contained such a presentation of I. The Nature of the Problem: The Biblical Antithesis. The April issue spotlighted II. The Authority: God's Inviolable Word. In this issue let us consider III. An Honest Confession.

(1) The Biblical, Reformed View

Why must we confess and hold creeds? The word "creed" comes from the Latin for "I believe".

The Lord orders that those whom He saves must believe in and confess Him "before men" (Matt. 10:32, 33; Rom. 10:9, 10). That "confession" really means "saying the same things" as God says (1 John 5:9-12). God's Word enjoins us to "be ready always to give answer to every man that asks ... a reason concerning the hope" which we have (1 Pet. 3:15). The creeds are simply the churches' deliberate efforts over the centuries, under the promised and given guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 17; 15: 26, 27; 16:13, 14), to carry out this instruction of the Lord. This saving gospel revelation has structure and order so that Paul must instruct Timothy to "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. 1:13, 14), and this trust he, in turn, must "commit ... to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2:2). It is this trust of "sound" or, literally, "healthful" doctrine which the churches must teach, preserve and defend in their creeds. They are part of the ongoing effort to "hold to the faithful word" in order to teach the "sound doctrine" and "convict" its "opponents" (Tit. 1:9). Their purpose is educational, missionary and apologetic. While clearer and more extensive statements of God's biblically revealed truth and its bearing on new problems or errors may be desirable, "new confessions" or "testimonies" which are designed by ambiguous language to loosen the ties to Scripture and to accommodate those who really deny the faith and practice which it teaches, ought to be rejected as betrayals of the faith. Although the authority of the creeds is subordinate to that of the Bible, we must honestly make their testimony to the unchanging truth of God our own. We have to confess this revealed "whole counsel of God" positively and oppose all who contradict it (Acts 20:27-32), seeking if possible to correct them (2 Tim. 2:25, 26), and if they persist in rejecting God's truth, discipline them (Tit. 1:13f., 3:10; 1 Cor. 5:13; Rom. 16:17).

(2) The Broadening View

Creeds are appropriate expressions of the churches' faith. We realize today (as our predecessors did not) that they are all (like the Bible itself) historically conditioned. They express the feelings of the churches at the time of their origin and cannot be expected to adequately express the churches' attitude in other, changed times. Our historic creeds were formulated in a time when men thought "ontologically," in terms of what they thought "is"; whereas today men think "functionally," in terms of what works. Therefore, to live in and speak to men in today's world, we must discard the "static" ideas of an unchanging truth and begin to think "dynamically". In dealing with creeds (as well as in dealing with the Bible) we must leave room for a variety of changing "interpretations". Our creeds must inspire and unite us as widely as possible, not restrict, divide or exclude anyone. Therefore we should discard antiquated "forms of subscription", for they inhibit progress and prevent us from our taking an influential place in the present world. We must welcome new insights and learn from dialog with others of differing traditions. While we ought to retain our old confessions because of their historical value in helping us to preserve a sense of continuity with and understanding of the tradition of the fathers, we really need a new confession which will no longer attempt to bind us to old opinions which are no longer meaningful to people of our time. Positively, it should appeal to the needs, interests and problems of contemporary man, especially his social, political and economic interests and problems. Such a confession may be expected to help direct our own responsible activities and improve our evangelistic appeal to our communities.

Is Capital Punishment Obligatory in the Case of Murder?

A CRC synodically-appointed committee consisting of Doctors Henry Stob, Hessel Bouma III, Stephen Monsma, Clarence Vos, and Louis Vos have presented a report on Capital punishment (*Acts of Synod 1979*, pages 468-508) which report has been referred to the churches for study, reflection and response to the study committee by October 15, 1980 . . ." The committee is to report further to Synod of 1981. The report before the churches recommends that the CRC Synod declare:

"a. That the Scriptures *lay no mandate* on modern states to exercise capital punishment.

"b. that the Scriptures *do permit* modern states to inflict capital punishment.

"c. that according to the spirit of Scripture capital punishment is prudently exercised only under extreme conditions and not as a general rule." (italics added).

Response — Over against this denial of the historic position of Reformed Christendom a number of quotations may be adduced from various sources. Cited in this issue are excerpts from an article by Dr. Jacob J. Vellenga (has served on the National Board of Administration of the United Presbyterian Church and later as Associate Executive for the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.) in *Christianity Today* (October 12, 1959). Dr. Vellenga states:

"From time immemorial the conviction of good society has been that life is sacred, and he who violates the sacredness of life through murder must pay the supreme penalty. This ancient belief is well expressed in Scripture: 'Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. For your lifeblood I

will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image' (Gen. 9:4-6, RSV). Life is sacred. He who violates the law must pay the supreme penalty, just because life is sacred. Life is sacred since God made man in His image. There is a distinction here between murder and penalty . . .

"No one can deny that the execution of a murderer is a horrible spectacle. But we must not forget that murder is more horrible. The supreme penalty should be exacted only after the guilt is established beyond the shadow of a doubt and only for wanton, willful, premeditated murder. But the law of capital punishment must stand, no matter how often a jury recommends mercy. The law of capital punishment must stand as a silent but powerful witness to the sacredness of God-given life. Words are not enough to show that life is sacred. Active justice must be administered when the sacredness of life is violated.

"It is recognized that this article will only impress those who are convinced that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the supreme authority of faith and practice. If one accepts the authority of Scripture, then the issue of capital punishment must be decided on what Scripture actually teaches and not on the popular, naturalistic ideas of sociology and penology that prevail today. One generation's thinking is not enough to comprehend the implications of the age-old problem of murder. We need the best thinking of the ages on how best to deal with crime and punishment. We need the Word of God to guide us."

J.V.P.

Reprobation and Boer's Gravamen

Dr. Harry Boer submitted to the 1977 CRC Synod a gravamen in which at the outset he states: "I submit herewith for synodical *examination* and *adjudication* a gravamen against the Reformed doctrine of reprobation as taught notably in the Canons of Dort, Chapter I, Article 6 and Chapter I, Article 15 . . ." In the closing sentence of his gravamen, Dr. Boer adds: "I submit herewith for synodical *examination* and *adjudication* this gravamen . . . against what I judge to be a grievously and unbiblical, therefore un-Reformed, indeed un-Christian doctrine." This matter will be on the *Agenda* of the forthcoming 1980 CRC Synod.

Response — Over against Dr. Boer's denial of the historic doctrine of *Reprobation* a number of quotations may be adduced from what others say. Cited in this issue is the following excerpt from the historic, well-known *Westminster Confession of Faith*: "The rest of mankind (in distinction from the elect), God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel

of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for this sin, to the praise of his glorious justice. "Matt. 11:25, 26; Rom. 9:17, 18, 21, 22; 2 Tim. 2:19, 20; Jude 4:1; Pet. 2:8" (Section III on "God's Eternal Decree").

In his commentary on *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Dr. A. A. Hodge states:

"This section teaches the following propositions:

"1. That as God has sovereignly destinated certain persons, called the elect, through grace to salvation, so he has sovereignly decreed to withhold his grace from the rest; and that this withholding rests upon the unsearchable counsel of his own will, and is for the glory of his sovereign power.

2. That God has consequently determined to treat all those left in their sins with exact justice according to their own deserts, to the praise of his justice, which demands the punishment of all unexpiated sin." (p. 74)

J.V.P.

THE NEED FOR REFORMED EVANGELISM

THE TREND TOWARD EVANGELISM

The topic of evangelism has been receiving a great deal of attention in recent years. New materials dealing with the subject appear annually, and a host of seminars and conferences explaining the how's and why's of evangelism have been conducted. There is no reason to suppose that this trend will soon disappear.

There is good reason for us to appreciate this trend. Evangelism is an essential part of the task our Lord has given to us as His people. We cannot shirk this responsibility without being unfaithful to the God who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. (I Peter 2:9b) Accordingly, we can only applaud this trend to the extent that it helps us fulfill our obligations in the area of missions.

"RELUCTANT EVANGELISTS"

In the ongoing discussion about evangelism, a good deal of attention has been given to those church members who are less than enthusiastic about this task of the church. The presence of such people within the church is so obvious that no astute observer would deny their existence. As a general rule, the motives imputed to our "reluctant evangelists" are unflattering, to say the least. They are accused of being blind to the truth of Scripture, having no concern for the souls of others, having no vision for the extension of the church of Christ, and so forth. Without question, some of those who "drag their feet" on evangelism deserve to be reprimanded, but there is more to be said about the matter.

Not all of our "reluctant evangelists" are opposed to evangelism as such. Often they object to the tactics and byproducts of evangelism as it has been carried out in recent years. It is no secret that evangelism has become the "in-thing" in the last decade. Since mission work has become so "fashionable," it is almost considered heretical to raise a question about anything that is done in the name of evangelism. Those who harbor any doubts as to the propriety or effectiveness of a given approach had better be prepared to be labeled "anti-evangelism" if they voice their opinions.

INNOVATION IN THE NAME OF EVANGELISM

Unfortunately, some people posing as champions of local mission efforts, thereby attempt to introduce a multitude of innovations, both in doctrine and in practice, into the church. Often these changes have little to do with genuine evangelism, but they are pushed through nonetheless for the sake of our witness to the world. Here are some examples:

In order for our worship services to appeal to "outsiders," it is said that they must be more informal than they have been in the past. This means too that the sermon must not be so "heavy" and "doctrinal." Instead the minister must learn to be more "entertaining" in order to hold the interest of prospective converts.

Much of the agitation for open communion, a per-

missive stand on the lodge, and a more lenient view of divorce has arisen under the pious cloak of evangelism. The appeal in these, and many other matters, is not to the Word of God, but to simple pragmatism: "if we adopt this position we can bring more people into the church."

It is plain for all to see that there has been a marked change in our church educational materials in the past ten years. We no longer have a "two track" system, catechism and Sunday School. Instead, we have a "unified curriculum" for what is now referred to as "church school." This change, too, has, in part, been justified because of a need to appeal to evangelism prospects. But in the process of combining Sunday School with catechism, catechism has largely gone by the board.

A byproduct of our emphasis on evangelism has been increased contact with people from a variety of church backgrounds. This has led to a new attitude among us that generally minimizes differences between denominations and church traditions. How many times haven't you heard someone excitedly announcing his discovery that "there are Christians in other denominations, too?"

Other changes and consequences could be mentioned, but those listed are sufficient to illustrate the point. Many innovations have been and are being introduced into the church in the name of evangelism, when in reality they often have little to do with genuine evangelism.

ENCOURAGING REFORMED EVANGELISM

The point of all this is NOT to discourage local churches, and individuals within those churches, from doing mission work; the opposite is in fact true. Evangelism is too important for us to allow any part of the church to remain on the sidelines because their input has been ignored. Tragically, the liberal element within the church has been in the forefront of our evangelistic discussions. That has not only "soured" many conservatives on evangelism as practiced; it has also meant that often our efforts as a denomination have been based on assumptions that are from a Reformed viewpoint, dubious. It is easy and convenient to parrot the views and copy the methods of a variety of Arminian para-church organizations.

Let me urge you, if you are one who has been "turned off" on evangelism by the tactics and assumptions of others, please don't give up! Get involved! Challenge un-Reformed assumptions and methods when and where you see them. Don't allow practices and teachings that are un-Biblical to be introduced under the guise of evangelism. Evangelism is too important a task for any of us to ignore for any reason.

For further reading: R. B. Kuiper. *God-Centered Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961. 216 pages.

Morton H. Smith. *Reformed Evangelism*. Clinton, MS: Multi-Communication Ministries, Inc., 1975. 32 pages.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

Jerome M. Julien

THE STATES OF CHRIST

To the Christian Jesus Christ is all-important. Everything we know about Him is precious and essential. We consider His two natures (human and divine) and bow in awe while our hearts rejoice. We meditate on His name and titles (Jesus, Christ and Lord) and we are comforted. We analyze His triple office (Prophet, Priest and King) and rejoice in God's gracious gift of a complete Savior. How meaningful that title Christian then becomes!

But there is another distinction, one that is at the very heart of our confession: the states of Christ — His humiliation and exaltation. Five of the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed — the Church's confession through the centuries — focus on this aspect of the doctrine of Christ. We confess that Jesus Christ "... was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary ...". These very familiar words and the words that follow them outline the states of our Mediator.

Definitions

What do we mean when we speak of the *states* of Christ? Often we think of "state" and "condition" as being synonyms — and sometimes they are. We may speak of "a state of shock". But there is also a sense in which these are not synonyms. "State", in this case, refers to one's position in life and particularly to how that person stands in relation to the law. Is he guilty or is he innocent? "Condition" has to do with the resulting way of life. Louis Berkhof illustrated it in this way: "One who is found guilty in a court of justice is in a state of guilt or condemnation, and this is usually followed by a condition of incarceration with all its resulting deprivation and shame" (*Systematic Theology*, 331).

What, then, do we mean when we speak of the states of Christ? Very simply, we are speaking about His relation to the law as He does the work of salvation for God's elect.

M. J. Bosma wrote:

There are only two relations toward the law possible; a relation of innocence or of guilt; everybody is either innocent or guilty. If innocent the law protects and advances, if guilty the law condemns and brings suffering on the head of the transgressors. The innocent are at liberty, are free and defended by the powers of justice. The guilty lose their liberty and suffer the penalty of the law at the hands of the powers of justice (*Exposition of Reformed Doctrine*, 161).

In Adam all have transgressed God's law (Romans 5:18, 19). All are guilty. Jesus Christ came to take the place of God's elect so that they would know salvation. Thus, Jesus had to take our place before the

law, too. As our Substitute He had to be judged guilty and He had to be liberated from the curse of the law.

Taking the place of God's elect as they stood before the law Christ had to experience two different stages: the state of humiliation and the state of exaltation. Briefly put, in the state of humiliation Christ merited salvation for us, and in the state of exaltation He now applies it to us.

The State of Humiliation

In the state of humiliation we find Jesus Christ subject to the demands of the law as a rule for life and, also, under its condemnation. He had to perfectly obey God's demands. Only by perfect obedience would He be able to redeem those whom God gave to Him, those who were under the law (Galatians 4:4, 5). In the state of humiliation, then, Christ was acting as servant "for us men and for our salvation" (Nicene Creed).

As Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to write to the Philippians about the unselfishness which should characterize Christians he wrote a significant statement about Christ's humiliation.

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross (2:5-8).

The word "emptied" in this significant passage has been at the heart of theological discussion through the centuries. Generally, there have been two ways of understanding this. 1) When the Son of God became man, His deity was abandoned. He gave up His divine nature. One writer has called this "incarnation by divine suicide". 2) When the Son of God became man, He gave up voluntarily His position of being on an equality with God. He did not cease to be God but He "gave up his environment in glory. He took upon himself limitations of place (space) and knowledge and of power, though still on earth retaining more of these than any mere man" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, IV:444).

The first explanation given makes Christ basically human and able to err. Obviously, this does not square with the facts about Jesus Christ given in the New Testament. The second explanation takes into account that Jesus had to be mighty God all the way through His state of humiliation in order to complete the work of salvation.

William Hendriksen in his *Exposition of Philip-
pians* (pp. 107, 108) lists the following as particular
meanings of this second explanation:

- (1) *He gave up his favorable relation to divine law.* While he was still in heaven no burden of guilt rested upon him. But at his incarnation he took this burden upon himself . . . (II Cor. 5:21) . . .
- (2) *He gave up his riches . . .* (II Cor. 8:9). He gave up everything, even *himself*, his very *life* (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 10:11) . . .
- (3) *He gave up his heavenly glory . . .* (John 17:4) . . . From the infinite sweep of eternal delight in the very presence of his Father he willingly descended into this realm of misery, in order to pitch his tent for a while among sinful men . . .
- (4) *He gave up his independent exercise of authority.* In fact, he became a servant, *the servant . . .* (Heb. 5:8). He said, "I do not seek my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (John 5:30 . . .).

Then, Hendriksen adds,

Inpatiently we voice an objection, namely, "But if Christ Jesus actually *gave up* his favorable relation to the divine law, riches, glory, and independent exercise of authority, *how could he still be God?*" The answer must be that he, who was and is and ever remains the Son of God, laid aside all these things *not* with reference to his *divine* nature but with reference to his *human* nature, which he voluntarily took upon himself and in which he suffered all these indignities (p. 108).

Philippians 2:5-8 teaches this when it says that the Son of God took "the form of a servant" (v. 7b) while He retained the form of God.

Indeed, in Christ's humiliation "He humbled himself" — he really and voluntarily abased Himself for us! This humiliation went so deep that He went all the way to death of the cross, the death of a malefactor. What grace!

The State of Exaltation

Entering, then, the position of guilt before the law and experiencing the resulting punishment, He

satisfied the law and was then in a position of innocence toward the law. Having to suffer no longer, Christ entered into liberty and joy. Now, lifted up to honor and glory He is in the state of exaltation.

This state Paul also describes in Philippians 2. He continues in 2:9 —

Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Greek word for "highly exalted" is used only here in the New Testament. It means that Christ was elevated "*in a transcendently glorious manner*" (Hendriksen, *loc. cit.*). He received a position of greatest honor and majesty. Why? Because He had been utterly obedient and thus victorious over sin, death and the grave. He had completed the necessary work of redemption. Hendriksen writes:

The exaltation is the reversal of the humiliation. He who stood condemned in relation to the divine law (because of the sin of the world which rested on him) has exchanged this penal for the righteous relation to the law. He who was poor has become rich. He who learned obedience has entered upon the actual administration of the power and authority committed to him (*loc. cit.*).

What is the significance of Christ's exaltation?

1. He was lifted up in the highest honor and greatest glory.
2. He no longer bore our sin and guilt. Now He is the Possessor of all righteousness.
3. This was the reward of His perfect obedience in His humiliation.

Through this exaltation, then, 1) God declared that Christ had met the law's demands and was entitled to His reward, 2) Christ showed what will happen to believers because of His death, and 3) believers will know the promised perfect glorification.

Next, we will see how each step in the humiliation and exaltation is precious to the believer.

But even now we can say: Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift! ●

THE 3 R's

Laurie Vanden Heuvel

There was a time when grandpas and grandmas would point to the little red or white schoolhouses which dotted the countryside of this great land and say, "That's where I learned my three R's." By "three R's" they meant reading, (w)riting and (a)rithmetic. These three processes were considered to be the essential equipment to get through life. They were what one might call the "meat and potatoes" of education. Important as those "three R's" *were* and *are* in the educational smorgasbord of today's curriculum, there are three R's which are even more basic

Reformed Women Speak

and express more precisely what God expected to accomplish through us as "image-bearers" when He gave us the cultural mandate to "subdue the earth and have dominion over it." Those three R's are: reflect, revere and respond.

Reflect

To "reflect" is to *think*. It refers to both the *process* of thinking and the *content* of thought. The process of thinking is unique to man, not shared by animals and therefore it is a demonstration of the

"image of God" in man. The process of thinking must be developed in man from infancy to old age by such methods as questions and answers, making of comparisons, understanding of relationships, tabulation of similarities and differences and the like. All of these methods of developing thought *presuppose* the existence and assimilation of *facts* upon which the mind must act and react. The secular educator calls these facts *brute* facts. By this he means that there is a body of information belonging to mathematics, another body of information belonging to science, another to music, another to history, another to geography. This information is called the "brute facts" in each area of study. The secular educator maintains that these facts just "happened" and continue to happen without relationship to or generation from a *source* called God. The secular educator then proceeds to inculcate these brute facts into the thinking process of his students by various methods. But when he reaches the point in the educational process where he must attach *values* and *significance* and *purpose* to these facts, he is at a loss, operating in a vacuum. He has taught his pupils to think but he has neglected to give them the *foundation* for thought, the *values* attached to the thought and the *purpose* for thought. The student's entire educational venture ends in *despair*, a despair which is sending thousands to mental institutions and other thousands to suicide.

In direct contrast to this, Psalm 36:9 says, "In Thy light we see light." Colossians 2:3 says, "Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Christian education *begins* by asserting that there are no brute facts which stand in isolation from God, but that on the contrary, all the facts of creation, whether they are mathematical, geographic, scientific, or historical not only find their *origin* in God, but also their *development*, *continuation* and *final consummation* in God — so that there is no fact, be it ever so small, which is divorced from His divine generation and control.

Revere

As a child grows under the tender influence of a Christian educator, he not only assimilates thousands of departmentalized facts, but he begins to attach *spiritual* and *moral* values to these facts. He begins to *revere* the Creator and created, and the importance of this *reverence* cannot be overemphasized. This reverence was completely missing in Adolph Hitler and the group of responsible educated men who surrounded him and carried out the ghastly atrocities of the Nazi regime against the Jews. These men enjoyed the music of Beethoven, Bach and Mozart. They admired the artistry of Rembrandt. But they were tragically *twisted* in their *value judgments*. Somehow in their spiritual educational backgrounds, the *facts* of art, music, science and all the rest had been imparted but they had been taught in a vacuum, totally devoid of the *unification* of intellect, feeling and action around a *Christian perspective* which yields an entire range of Christian value judgments and virtues.

But we must be honest and admit immediately that we face increasing crises in this land of ours. In the United States of America, responsible educated lawmakers have authorized the slaughter of thousands of unborn babies every day to cover the sins and please the whims of heartless parents. Responsible educated politicians in high offices have stunned the nation by their deceit and coverup. Millions of young educated Americans have exchanged the marriage bond for free love so that today virginity is a joke instead of a prize.

It does not take a theologian to discern that the leadership of this country rejects God, exalts man and pursues every avenue of communication and education, be it television, movies, stage, newspapers, magazines and most crucial — the public school classroom — to build a world of values and comforts to the glory of man. Unless we as Christians realize first of all, that those who *dominate* our entertainment industry, journalism, news media, liberal churches (of which there are legion) and public schools (where our entertainers, writers, news analysts, advertisers, scientists, liberal preachers, and teachers are trained) champion a view of God, of man, of created reality and goals for living which are totally antithetical to the revelation of God, we will never wave the banner for Christian education. There are far too many Christians even in the Reformed community who, in Thomistic fashion, think that we can *share* much of secular thinking and then sprinkle a little of God's Word on top like we sprinkle sugar over cereal. They fail to understand that there is *no common mind* between the Christian and the pagan.

Christian schools have been founded on the conviction that covenant children must begin with the *mind of Christ*. They do not first exercise the mind of the world (the secular mind) and then *add* Christ on top of it. They begin by acknowledging that God is the Creator and Redeemer of the world, all the world — natural sciences, psychology, moral choices, creativity, self-expression, government, history, mathematics, literature and all the rest. They *begin* by bowing before the demand that God be "all and in all." These are their basic presuppositions and upon these their teachers build, training each child, "furnishing him unto every good work."

Year by year Christian teachers open new vistas of knowledge of God and of His revelation in science, math, music, history, biology and all the rest. Year by year Christian teachers train them to *evaluate* everything they see and hear by the standards set down in God's revelation, "teaching, rebuking, reproving, instructing" so that the child's education is one of *value judgments* with the Scriptures operating as the *norm*.

Response

To all of the Christian training with which the Lord surrounds His children, He calls for a response — a life of discipleship.

In history for example, the Christian young person has seen the historical process not as a long

series of dates and events but rather as a scaffold surrounding a building called the kingdom of God — a scaffold which, when it is removed in the day of days, will reveal the perfect plan of God accomplished in human history. He has realized that through all of the events of history — the wars, the pioneer expeditions, the development of communication and transportation, the inventions, the reverses and advances of society, God is gathering a “bride” for Himself who will live with Him and for Him through all eternity. That Christian young person then looks at himself with whatever endowments God has given him and he seeks to utilize those abilities in a strategic way, contributing to the building of the kingdom of God.

The Christian young person, having mastered basic language skills, now seeks to use them to articulate his Christian convictions about life and God by writing and by speaking in his family, to his friends and associates, on a personal level and perhaps even a professional level.

Through science the Christian young person has come to understand and appreciate the creation around him. He does not abuse it but seeks to use it

by developing its potential and using his discoveries to alleviate human suffering.

In math, the Christian young person has developed a profound respect for the design, order and unity of creation. He uses his skills in many ways to advance the kingdom.

In music too the Christian young person has responded to the beauty in the harmony of sounds and discovered that this gift of God can be used as a vehicle of praise and worship and he uses it for that purpose.

We could go on developing the vast horizons which open up to the child of God through the process of Christian education. But these examples are sufficient to demonstrate the fact that Christian education is not only valuable but *indispensable* for the development of our children as image-bearers of God. Only Christian education can properly fulfill God's plan for our families. ●

Mrs. Vanden Heuvel, editor of this department, lives at 207 Kansas Ave., NW, Orange City, Iowa 51041.

Reprobation: Boer vs. the Bible

W. Robert Godfrey

Dr. W. Robert Godfrey is Associate Professor of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary and Associate minister of the Trinity Christian Reformed Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was converted while in High School and joined the Christian Reformed Church at Alameda, California, took his undergraduate work at Stanford University, in California, obtained the M. Div. Degree at Gordon-Conwell Seminary in Boston, Mass., and obtained the doctor's degree at Stanford University, where he wrote his thesis on the Canons of Dort. He is a delegate to the coming C.R. Synod where the Dr. Boer's Gravamen against the doctrine of Reprobation as confessed in the Canons is a major item on the agenda. It would be hard to find a writer better qualified to deal with this subject.

For over 350 years the Canons of the Synod of Dort have formed an integral part of the doctrinal standards of the Dutch Reformed Church and her descendants. The Canons were born of controversy and formulated to protect the Gospel message that salvation is by grace alone from the revival of a semi-Pelagian theology espoused by the Arminians. Despite the time and circumstances of their composition neither the Canons themselves nor their theology are simply Dutch. The Canons were unani-

mously adopted by an international synod of European Reformed churches, were enthusiastically received by Reformed churches in Great Britain, France, Switzerland and Germany as well as the Netherlands, and have been widely hailed since as a faithful and effective declaration of the biblical doctrines of grace.

The teachings of systematic and biblical theologians from Calvin and the Westminster Divines down to Hodge, Kuyper, Bavinck and Berkhof, have been in accord with the doctrines taught in the Canons, particularly the doctrines of election and reprobation. From the time of Calvin these doctrines have been subjected to rigorous examination and to fierce attacks, but have been consistently reaffirmed and defended by the Reformed churches. The testimony of the history and theology of the church, therefore, places a heavy burden of proof upon the Reformed thinker who opposes the Canons' teaching on election and reprobation.

Boer's Gravamen

Dr. Harry Boer, a Christian Reformed minister, has taken that heavy burden upon himself in his gravamen or official complaint against the doctrine of reprobation found in the Canons of Dort. He presented this complaint to the 1977 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church seeking a change of what he considers to be a fundamental error in the doctrinal standards of the church. This article will attempt to analyze and evaluate Boer's gravamen.

The object or goal of Boer's gravamen is simple.

He seeks to have the doctrine of reprobation as taught in the Canons of Dort I, 6, and I, 15 "excinded" or made "non-binding" on office-bearers in the Christian Reformed Church (*Acts of Synod 1977*, p. 665, hereafter referred to just by page number). His reason for pursuing his goal also seems simple. He maintains that there is no Scriptural evidence for the doctrine and that therefore it should not be an official doctrine in a church which is founded upon the Word of God alone.

In his challenging the Canons on the point of reprobation, Boer acknowledges that he stands in opposition to traditional Reformed orthodoxy. He recognizes that the doctrine of reprobation has been a clear element of Reformed teaching since the days of John Calvin (p. 677). Yet he makes the inaccurate claim that the doctrine historically has had "uncritical acceptance" (p. 679). Nothing could be farther from the truth. Despite centuries of studied acceptance by learned Reformed theologians and exegetes, Boer maintains in strong language that reprobation is not the result of the study of Scripture, but is the result of "theological rationalism" (p. 676) that has made Reformed exegesis on this matter "an unprincipled, ruthless exercise" (p. 678). He believes that "so sinister and doomful a teaching" (p. 677) is "grievously unbiblical" (p. 679). For Boer reprobation rests upon rationalistic deduction, not upon the Bible, and is harmful to the church that embraces it. Thus Boer claims to stand on the side of the Bible over and against "theological rationalism."

If the aim of Boer's gravamen is simple, so his procedure to establish the point of the gravamen seems straightforward. He analyzes nine particular Scriptural texts cited in the First Head of Doctrine of the Canons of Dort to see if they teach reprobation and maintains that his analysis shows that these texts do not teach the doctrine. He then concludes that since there is no biblical evidence for the doctrine, his gravamen must be sustained by the church and the doctrine of reprobation removed from our church standards.

Yet on careful examination the matter is not simple. More than Boer would like to admit is at stake. Nor is Boer's line of argument in the gravamen at all convincing. At nearly every point his argument is seriously flawed both historically and biblically. This article will focus on those flaws in relation to 1) Boer's definition of reprobation, 2) his understanding of the character of the Canons, 3) his exegesis of particular texts, 4) his failure to address and analyze texts other than the nine proof texts and 5) his failure to wrestle with the theological implications of his position. Finally the article will discuss the church's continuing need for the doctrine of reprobation and election. In all, the article will try to show that the church must reject Boer's gravamen.

Definition of Reprobation

The divine decree of reprobation is clearly defined in Canons I, 15 as an eternal decree of God in which, first, some are passed by and left in their sins (sins for which they, not God, are responsible) and,

second, those passed by are condemned and punished because of their sins. This definition makes clear that the reprobates are passed by because of the just good pleasure of God, and are damned because of their sins.

Boer seems to understand the position of the Canons correctly in his initial discussion of reprobation (p. 667). In his conclusion, however, he seriously misrepresents the teaching of the Canons. He caricatures Dort's doctrine of reprobation, claiming that it is "a sovereign wrath that damns men to an existence of everlasting death without regard to any demerit on their part" (p. 679). Boer is claiming that the Canons teach that God damns men without regard for their sin. This representation is a most unfair and inaccurate definition of reprobation. No Reformed theologian has ever taught such a doctrine. The Conclusion of the Canons, which Boer himself cites, clearly rejects and repudiates the notion that anyone is damned without regard to his sin.

Boer's error in defining reprobation is one fatal element in his gravamen. This error is basic when Boer begins to examine the Bible's teaching on reprobation. He argues that the Scripture does not teach reprobation, but which definition of reprobation does he mean? Is the definition he uses that of the Canons or that of his caricature? There is indeed no evidence in Scripture for Boer's improper definition of reprobation that God damns some without regard to sin. The question that Boer needs to address, however, is whether there is any evidence that God willed from eternity to pass by some sinners, not to bestow his grace on them, and to damn them because of their sins.

The Character of the Canons

When Boer turns to the question of Scriptural evidence for the doctrine of reprobation, he demonstrates a basic misunderstanding of the Canons and of confessional statements in general. He declares that he needs only to examine the Scriptural evidence presented in the Canons of Dort themselves: "I do not consider it my responsibility similarly to analyze the exegesis of texts adduced by Reformed theologians from other parts of Scripture . . . I am bound by the confessions of the Christian Reformed Church and by them alone" (p. 676). Boer assumes in addressing only the nine proof texts offered that the Canons intended to present exhaustive or definitive biblical evidence of the doctrine. This assumption misunderstands the nature of the Canons. Confessional documents are not designed to prove doctrines by presenting full Scriptural evidence. They provide rather a summary of biblical teaching, only occasionally using representative texts which summarize biblical truth. Confessional documents present the product of the study of the Bible. One sees this clearly, for example, in the Canons of Dort, Heads of Doctrine II-V, where no Scripture is quoted in the positive articles (although one text is referred to in III-IV, 9). In the First Head of Doctrine there are no Scriptural quotations in one-half of the articles and no Scriptural references in one-third of them. In the article defining reprobation (I, 15) this

distinction between proving a doctrine and stating it can be seen. This article states that there is "express testimony of sacred Scripture" for the doctrine of reprobation, but does not try to prove this by referring to any specific texts. If, following Boer's methodology, adequate Scriptural evidence for all doctrines presented by the Canons had to be found within the Canons themselves, much more than the doctrine of reprobation would have to be removed. Would Boer want to argue, for example, that because Canons I, 4 ("The wrath of God abides upon those who believe not this gospel. But such as receive it and embrace Jesus the Savior by a true and living faith are by Him delivered from the wrath of God and from destruction, and have the gift of eternal life conferred upon them.") does not cite Scripture, that he is not obligated to believe it?

Exegesis of Particular Texts

Boer discusses nine texts drawn from the First Head of Doctrine, which he claims are given there to prove the doctrine of reprobation (p. 666). Yet it would hardly be surprising if none of these texts clearly proved reprobation, since none of them are cited in article 15, the one article that fully defines reprobation. In fact, most of the texts which Boer examines were cited in the Canons to serve some function in their respective articles other than to demonstrate the biblical foundation of reprobation. Let us look at how these nine texts are used in the Canons. Article 6 cites two texts (Acts 15:18 and Eph. 1:11), not to prove reprobation, but to show that the giving or not giving of faith proceeds from God's decree. Eph. 1:11 is certainly supportive of this teaching of the Canons. Article 18 cites three texts. Rom. 9:20 and Matt. 20:15 are not used there to prove reprobation, but are cited appropriately as a warning against murmuring at the just severity of reprobation. Rom. 11:33-36 is included in article 18 to show the proper doxological response to the mysteries of God.

Paragraph 8 of the Rejection of Errors cites Rom. 9:18, Matt. 13:11 and Matt. 11:25, 26, again not to prove reprobation, but to show that God does not give to everyone the grace necessary for faith and conversion. Again the texts are appropriate. None of these eight texts were adduced in the Canons specifically to prove the full doctrine of reprobation. Boer's dealing with these texts, which were not brought forward in the Canons to teach reprobation, only demonstrate his misunderstanding of the Canons.

Romans 9:11-13

The one other text which Boer examines is Rom. 9:11-13, a text which demands fuller study here. Boer himself reserves his longest discussion for this text cited in article 10. He recognizes that this text is the most important Scripture used historically by Reformed theologians to prove the doctrine of reprobation. Any claim that reprobation is not biblical must provide a satisfactory exegesis of Romans 9. Boer attempts this task.

Boer begins his exegesis by noting that Paul in

Rom. 9:12, 13 is citing two Old Testament texts: Gen. 25:23, "The elder shall serve the younger," and Mal. 1:2, 3: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." Boer concentrates his attention on the citation of Malachi. He notes that Malachi in the Old Testament is concerned with the conflict between the nations of Israel and Edom. Boer contends that Malachi refers to Israel by its forebear Jacob and to Edom by its forebear Esau. Thus Malachi speaks of Israel and Edom in a corporate, national sense when he refers to Jacob and Esau. Boer argues that Malachi is not speaking of individuals when he says, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." Boer insists that God did not "hate" the individual Esau in an eternal decree. God had indeed eternally decreed that Esau the elder should serve Jacob the younger, but God's hatred of Esau was not part of that decree. God's hatred resulted in response to the rebellion and sin in history of Esau the individual and of the sinful nation Edom.

Boer then relates Malachi's message to the situation addressed in Romans 9-11 which he interprets as the message of salvation for the Gentiles and of rejection for the Jews. Here again, Boer argues, Paul like Malachi has corporate entities and not individuals in view. The Jews have been rejected for rejecting the Messiah, but a remnant has been retained by election. Indeed the hardening of Israel is not the result of an eternal decree, but of its sin and unbelief of which Israel must and can repent.

Boer's exegesis here is intriguing, but does not take accurate or satisfactory account either of the broad context of Romans 9-11 or of the specific thrust of Rom. 9:11-13. Boer fails to see properly the broad question that Paul answers in Romans 9-11: Does the experience of Israel negate the promises Paul has just made in Romans 8? Paul has reached the climax of his assuring words to Christians: "If God is for us, who is against us? . . . Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:31, 33, 35). But after assuring Christians that nothing can separate them from the love of God, Paul faces the problem of Israel. Was not Israel given similar promises? Was not Israel God's elect people? Yet Israel languishes in unbelief. Has not God's promise failed? And, most importantly, if the promise has failed to Israel, might it not also fail for Christians?

Paul faces this problem squarely. Despite the unbelief of Israel, he says "it is not as though the word of God had failed" (Rom. 9:6). Paul shows that God's word has not failed because those who are truly Israel will be saved. The key is that "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel" (v. 6). Paul teaches that within the nation of Israel there are children of flesh and children of promise (v. 8). Not all of the nation therefore are children of God. Physical descent is not enough. One must be a child of promise.

Paul then proves the discriminating purpose of God by several specific examples. First in verses 7-9 he mentions the distinction between two individuals, Isaac and Ishmael — the one a child of promise, the other a child of the flesh. Then Paul refers to the case of Jacob and Esau (vs. 10-13). Paul makes his

point strongly here. Jacob and Esau are twins, the sons of the same mother and father. Yet Jacob was a child of promise and Esau a child of flesh. The discrimination between these two was a matter of election. It occurred before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad (v. 11). In reference to these two unborn persons, both equally corrupted in Adam's sin, but not yet differentiated by personal sins, Paul cites Malachi: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Contrary to Boer's thesis the context shows inescapably that when Paul quotes Malachi he has the historic individuals Jacob and Esau in mind. First this is clear because he speaks of Jacob and Esau as the unborn children of Isaac and Rebecca (v. 10). Secondly it is clear because Paul is illustrating his teaching that not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. Hence a national interpretation of Jacob and Esau would make no sense, for no one would have been tempted to think here that Edom was part of the promise to God's elect people Israel. In citing Mal. 1:2, 3 Paul is referring the text to the individuals Jacob and Esau.

While the primary context of Malachi is the nations Israel and Edom, yet Paul has not misused the text of Malachi in referring it to individuals. As John Murray in his *Commentary on Romans* has aptly stated: "Although the respective peoples proceeding from Jacob and Esau are in the forefront of Mal. 1:1-5, yet we may not discount the relevance to Jacob and Esau themselves. Why was there this differentiation between Israel and Edom? It was because there was a differentiation between Jacob and Esau. It would be as indefensible to dissociate the fortunes of the respective peoples from the differentiation in the individuals as it would be to dissociate the differentiation of the individuals from the destinies of the nations proceeding from them." (Vol. II, pp. 20-21). Boer's exegesis of Rom. 9:11-13 has ignored its clear, specific teaching on individual election and reprobation.

Paul does not stop at this point after showing that God's electing purpose with Israel has not failed. He squarely faces the question that could be put to him: Paul, have you maintained election by making God unjust? (v. 14). Paul's answer is that God is absolutely just when he discriminates between sinners, showing mercy to one and hardening another (v. 18). He gives the example of Moses and Pharaoh (vs. 15-17). Boer suggests that Pharaoh was hardened for his sin (p. 670). This is true as far as it goes. But was not Moses also a sinner? Was Moses chosen because he was better than Pharaoh? Obviously not. God's eternal discriminating purpose alone can explain mercy for sinful Moses and hardening for sinful Pharaoh.

Yet Paul still has an opportunity to correct any misunderstanding about his teaching on election and reprobation when he entertains the question: "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" (v. 19). Does Paul answer by saying that God elects but does not reprobate? Does Paul answer by saying that God only reprobates those who resist his grace? No! He asserts in the clearest terms God's sovereign discrimination in election and reprobation: "Has the

potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use?" (v. 21).

The doctrine of election and reprobation are beyond our full comprehension. Many more questions remain which could be put to Paul, some of which he answers in Romans 10-11. But his articulation of a doctrine of reprobation in Romans 9 is crystal clear, and it is that Pauline teaching in Romans 9 that is accurately summarized and articulated in the Canons of Dort.

Other Texts

One text of Scripture in the Canons, then, Rom. 9:11-13, does teach reprobation. But the matter ought not to be left there. It must be reiterated that by dealing only with the texts in the Canons, Boer has not acted responsibly. He is obligated as the author of a gravamen to prove from the whole of Scripture that the confession of the church is wrong. Therefore he must deal with all the Scriptures or at least the major Scriptures that touch on the matter of reprobation. Boer has fallen short of this obligation.

Certain obvious Scriptures demand attention. Boer ignores I Peter 2:8, "... for they (those who reject Jesus) stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do." Here Peter speaks of some being destined to continue in sin. Is this not reprobation? Nor does Boer speak of Jude 4: "For admission has been secretly gained by some who long ago were designated for this condemnation." Is not such a designation a decree of reprobation? Nor does Boer think of Judas Iscariot as our Lord speaks of him in John 6:70, 71; 13:18, 19; 17:12. Judas is chosen to be a disciple, but is prophesied long before as the betrayer, the son of perdition. All of these texts teach elements of the doctrine of reprobation, but Boer does not refer to them in his gravamen.

Theological Implications

As one who offers a gravamen to the church Boer sidesteps his responsibility in more than his failure to take account of particular texts of Scripture. In rejecting a significant element in the Reformed system of doctrine, Boer is obligated to show that eliminating this element does not damage or compromise the rest of the system. Specifically Boer is responsible to show how he can continue to believe in election — as he says he does — once he has rejected reprobation. Reformed theologians have argued that once one rejects reprobation a truly biblical conception of election cannot be maintained. Boer does not explain what will happen to the doctrine of election if reprobation is excised from the Canons.

Historically two groups have tried to maintain the doctrine of election without retaining reprobation. The Lutherans attempted this in their Formula of Concord. They sought to eliminate reprobation by making grace resistible. But much more than reprobation is lost by such a procedure. Man is again made the central, determining factor in his own salvation. The other group, the Arminians, also sought to retain election. Even at the Synod of Dort they argued that they were not rejecting the Reformed

doctrine of election, but only the doctrine of reprobation. Their procedure was even more disastrous than the Lutheran, however, as they grounded election on foreseen faith. This solution founds election, not on God's sovereign good pleasure, but on qualities found inherent in some men but not in others. Again election ultimately becomes determined by man rather than by God and one is left with a man-centered religion.

The Need of Reprobation

This article has attempted to show the serious flaws in Boer's gravamen. It would be tragic, however, if, after three years of study, the gravamen was rejected by the Synod simply because of its flaws. The Synod should not simply reject the gravamen, but should enthusiastically and zealously reassert the church's commitment to the doctrine of reprobation presented in the Canons. We need this doctrine to encourage individual Christians, to build up the church, and to magnify the glory of God.

The individual Christian is encouraged by a doctrine of reprobation which is an integral part of election. As the Lutherans and Arminians have experienced, one cannot have the full, comforting doctrine of election without reprobation. Reprobation undergirds the truly gracious character of election. It is a truly gracious and sovereign election, which does not rest on any human accomplishment or worth, that assures the Christian that his salvation is entirely God's work in Christ and that "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). In addition, reprobation also assures the Christian that when an apparent believer (for example Judas) deserts Christ and his cause, we should not despair. Such apostasy is not an example of God's failure to keep his own, but part of God's eternal plan (see John 13:19).

The Church needs reprobation both for its confessional integrity and for its evangelistic work. The confessional integrity of the church is under attack from many sides. Some attack the confessions for using Aristotelian, scholastic thought forms rather than Christian ones. Some attack the confessions for their assumption that there is one clear message in the Bible that can be summarized in a system of doc-

trine. Some claim that the confessions do not really meet the needs of modern churches. These attacks would change the church from a disciplined, confessional body to a body that has accommodated itself to the wisdom of American pragmatism and individualism. These attacks on the confessions are of a piece with attacks on the Reformed view of the perspicuity, sufficiency and reliability of the Bible. The church must uphold its confessions not just because they are a glorious heritage, not just because they have provided strength and stability to the church for centuries, but preeminently because they clearly and faithfully express the truth of God's Word.

The church also needs reprobation for its evangelistic task. This claim may strike some as strange, but Paul himself demonstrates this in the way he moves from Romans 9 to Romans 10. The doctrines of election and reprobation taught in Romans 9 do not elicit passivity or terror. Rather Paul shows in Romans 10 that these doctrines as they express God's sovereignty urge us to call people to faith in Christ. Election does not breed uncertainty, but assurance. Because faith is God's gift to his elect, those who come to faith know they are elect. The great promise that "every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13) rests upon the foundation that "I will have mercy upon whom I have mercy" (Rom. 9:15). It is the joyful task of the church then to preach salvation through faith in Christ knowing that it is the electing God who by His Spirit irresistibly draws to faith those for whom Christ died.

Finally reprobation magnifies the glory of God. Reprobation properly evokes from us a profound sense of awe before God. His glory, power and purposes are beyond our full comprehension. But we must not succumb, as Dr. Boer does, to the temptation to cut God's purposes down to the standard of our minds. God's thoughts are not our thoughts (Is. 55:8). We must confess, with gratitude for a salvation that we did not deserve, the mystery of God's indiscriminating ways as they are revealed in Scripture. Those who reject reprobation are really the rationalists who reduce theology to what seems sensible to them. The church must reject Boer's gravamen and assert again the faithful, biblical teaching of the Canons of Dort to the greater glory of God.

MINISTERING TO THE YOUNG ADULTS

Henry Vanden Heuvel

One of the areas in our Christian Reformed Churches that is most often a concern to the elders is the area of what is called "the young adults". This group of young people are roughly described as between high school graduation and marriage. In conversations with elders from almost any Christian Reformed Church, sooner or later the discussion will turn to this group in the church. How do you deal with the young adults?

Helping A Neglected Group

The particular problem that troubles most consistories is that this group of young people is often left out in the cold by the program of the church. There are catechism and Sunday School for the grade school and high school age. There is the Young People's Society for high school young people. And of course when young people get married there are societies both for men and women, as well as the cou-

ple's clubs. But what is there for this in-between age? Many Churches are finding success in organizing Young Adult groups which supply the need for organizations for this age group.

Personal Problems

However the problem is not only that there are no organizations for this group. That is, after all, a formal, structural concern that is easily remedied by the introduction of Young Adult Societies. The problem that most consistories are concerned about is more acute in that many of these young adults drop out of the church structure entirely. They fail to make profession of faith. They do not attend church as faithfully as they should. Some of them become involved with drinking, drugs, and immorality. Sometimes encouraging all of this is the tendency among many young adults to leave home, and live in apartments or elsewhere even though they still work in the same areas as their parental homes. Now I do not at all suggest that those who no longer live at home are doing a terrible thing. Circumstances may be very different from the situation some years ago when it was unheard of for unmarried young people to live away from home. We obviously must take that into consideration. Nor may we paint all young people with the same brush, and charge them with drinking, drug abuse, or immorality simply because they happen to live in apartments rather than at home. The point of this article, and the concern of both parents and consistories is with those young people who are living disorderly lives, whether they live at home or not. Is there anything that can touch these particular young people?

Personal Visiting

It is certainly true that the greatest need that these people have is for the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The opening of their hearts to see their sinful life style, and the leading of the Holy Spirit through His Word to a renewal of spiritual interest — these are the things we all pray for. But is there something that we can do to promote these things?

I would like to make a suggestion that has been used successfully in some churches. A kind of "family visiting" has been held with these young people individually. This is not the regular family visiting to which we are accustomed. This is a kind of specialized visit in which we try to "get under the skin" of these young people. It is often felt by some of these young adults, I think, that older people are very naive about the activities of the young people. And maybe there is justification for that feeling. When regular family visiting is carried on, if a young adult is present (although the kind of young people we are talking about here are most generally not at home for family visiting), deep, personal questions are not usually asked of him. And the result is that he often thinks that the elders and minister really don't know anything about what is really happening in the world of the young adult. However, in visits between an elder, the minister, and the young adult by himself, these searching questions can be

asked. And the life style of the young person can be explored, often with an openness and candor that is not possible in a larger group. In such visits, we have talked about the drinking of some of these people, and they have told me that they do drink, and some have said that they regularly get drunk. We have talked about their relationship with their girl friends and boyfriends, and some have told me that they have engaged in pre-marital sexual relationships. This kind of candor could never be achieved in the presence of their parents. For many of these people, it is the first time that anyone other than their friends has talked to them about their lives.

The Purpose

The point of such visits is certainly not just to get these young people to open up. It is to point them to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to attempt to show them from the Word of God that their life styles are not in accordance with what God commands to us. It is to warn them of the evils of drinking, of drug usage, and of sexual immorality. But at the same time it is to show the marvelous grace of a forgiving God who receives the prodigal son back again. We have had occasions where some of these young people have come through such visits to confess their sins, and to express the desire to meet with the consistory to make confession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Unfortunately this is not always the result of such visits. But at least an opening has been made, and the young person has found that the Church is concerned for his spiritual and eternal welfare.

There are no easy solutions to the problems that some young adults have. And the way some churches have tried to deal with these problems is not guaranteed to be successful. But it is a way of doing something in an area that all too often is neglected by the church. We can be indeed thankful to God that many if not most of the young adults are truly Christian young people who love the Lord and take an active interest in the church. But for the others, this is at least a way to express the concern of consistories and parents and to try to help them. ●

ONLY BELIEVE! (Matt. 19:26)

*"With God all things are possible"
Kings move at His command;
The sun was made to stand still
By His Almighty hand.
The river was divided,
A widow's son was raised;
The prison chains were broken
And God's great name was praised.
A young lad killed a giant!
A blind man sight received —
"With God all things are possible"
If only we believe.*

Annetta Jansen
Dorr, MI

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BODY

Neal Hegeman

Neal Hegeman is a senior at Calvin Theological Seminary. He has coached and taught physical education at Reformed Bible College and himself been extensively involved in college athletics. He minored in P.E. at Wilfrid Laurier University at Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. He hopes to enter missionary service under the Christian Reformed Board of World Missions in Latin America. His observations have important implications for our news of physical fitness programs, athletics, education and counseling.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body" I Cor. 6:19-20.

What attitude should the Christian have toward his body? I Cor. 6:19-20 helps us to see that because our bodies belong to God they are to be used for his glory. God has a claim on our bodies because he is our Creator, Provider, Saviour, Sanctifier and Judge. We must respond to God according to who He is and for what purpose He makes, sustains, saves, sanctifies and judges us.

Temples of the Holy Spirit

Paul asks: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?" In order to know why our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit we should review what God has done.

First, God made our bodies. God created man both body and soul (Gen. 2:7, Ps. 139:15). The body is the physical, material mantle for the spiritual, invisible soul. Man is a soul-body, in which both the physical and spiritual are related. God made the body and the soul and he made it good.

Secondly, God sustains our bodies (Gen. 2:15, 16). God provides food, wholesome activity and an environment for man's existence. Ultimately, God gives life and can take life (Job 1:21). Man depends on God's providence and is responsible for cooperating in maintaining the body.

Thirdly, God redeemed our bodies. After the fall of man into sin, the results of sin affected the body of man. There would be toil, pain, and finally death. Man was made from dust and to dust he would return. This curse of sin upon the body, however, was personally dealt with by God. God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to earth, and Christ took upon himself human form, including the human body. Christ humbled himself unto death on the cross. His human body was crucified on the tree of death, as the atonement for sin. Christ arose from the grave with a new body, a spiritual body (I Cor. 15:35f) like that which is also promised to all those who believe

Christ died and rose for them. They too will be resurrected with a new, spiritual body.

Fourthly, God sanctifies our bodies. "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11). The redeemed bodies of Christians are sanctified by Christ's Spirit. God's indwelling Spirit is contradictory to sin, selfishness and the spirit of this world. The Christian body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. The temples of God in the Old Testament were not so important because of their outward appearances, as because of the fact that God would dwell there. They were holy and sanctified places.

Finally, God will judge the use of our body.

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9-10).

As the Lord judged the temple in Jerusalem, so our temples will be judged. We are held accountable for what we do in our bodies.

Our Confession and its Implications

Knowing who God is and that we are temples of the Holy Spirit leads Paul to the confession that "we are not our own, we were bought with a price." Our bodies belong to the Lord, for he has bought us with his own body and blood on Calvary. This confession is echoed in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 1.

Q. "What is your only comfort in life and death?"

A. "That I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ."

Consider the implications of the confession of Paul and the Reformers concerning the body. Paul was speaking to the early Church in Corinth whose members were involved in immoral practices. Paul exhorted them that the body was to be kept morally pure in the light of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Reformed confession was written during a time when many considered the body inherently evil or non-redeemable. In contrast with that idea the Catechism confesses that the Christian, both body and soul, belongs to Christ.

A Misplaced Emphasis

In our contemporary situation besides the same issues of immorality and pessimism concerning the body, also a popular tendency to overemphasize the body. Whereas Paul exhorted the Corinthians to "glorify God in your body", our situation often suggests a different emphasis, "glorify your body using God."

Body glorification, in the Christian community, can be seen when the emphasis of our activity centers around the body rather than God. The body receives the glory and not God. Thousands of dollars are spent on personal grooming while we are hard pressed for money to give to people who are trying to meet the basic necessities of life. Parents pressure their children, or schools channel children to excel in competitive sports without really knowing the final goal of the process which has taken uncountable hours of the participants' most productive and character building years. We can also be so concerned about losing excess weight, while a hungry watching world, tries to gain and maintain normal weight. Our grooming businesses, athletic programs or weight control parlors, despite their sometimes Christian names betray our mis-directed emphasis. To capture our mis-directed zeal we need only to observe the Sunday behavioural patterns of many Christians. Depending on the time of the year and the part of the country, many Christians will squeeze in a baseball, basketball, football, hockey or golf game on Sunday afternoons. Right between the two worship services they sandwich an activity which brings out more religious fervor than both worship services and all their devotions combined. All this commotion centers around persons with exceptional athletic ability (athletes and cheerleaders) who compete to win the big game. It's man at his best, playing the game with all the thrills of life compressed into two hours of TV prime time. We glorify 'the bodies' rather than God on that special day.

Glorifying God

How then should we glorify God? We can glorify God by being *thankful* that He has made us, sus-

tained us, uses us, redeemed us, and is preparing a final dwelling place for us. We truly can be grateful.

We glorify God when we *study* the body, as to its creational harmony, usefulness, function and disfunction. We glorify God when we study the body, acknowledging the Creator.

We glorify God when we maintain the body which God has made. If God made it, we should take care of it. Even if our situation involves a physical handicap, God still wants us to be stewards, though it might involve engaging the assistance of others. Personal habits such as smoking, or excessive drinking, which destroy the body, do not glorify God.

We glorify God when we *discipline* our bodies. Our discipline must be both physical and spiritual as we seek to control our bodies as well as to resist temptations.

"For while bodily exercise is of some value, godliness is of value in every way" (I Tim. 4:8).

We glorify God when we *serve* others. Matthew 25:35ff speaks about the final judgment when Christ will judge us according to our earthly service. Interestingly enough, bodily concerns such as hunger, thirst, nakedness and sickness are mentioned. Have we responded to the physical needs of our weaker brother? We are very creative in making games to satisfy our physical needs; how creative are we in meeting the physical needs of others?

The Christian is concerned about the body because it is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. We are called to be thankful, study, maintain, train and use our bodies to serve the needs of others. God has made us with a purpose; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will help us to realize that purpose. ●



The following have been submitted and we place them, without endorsement, for the interest of our readers.

Dear Editor:

On February 18, 1980, the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church of Burlington, Washington, was organized as a Church of Jesus Christ. On that date former members of the Christian Reformed Church of Mount Vernon, Washington, chose from

their members, by free ballot, two elders and one deacon. These men, Pete Wolters and Allan Oudman as elders, and Dick Vander Kooy as deacon, were installed as officebearers on February 24, 1980 by Rev. Harry Van Dyken. At present this church has seven families, consisting of fifteen confessing members and thirty-one members by baptism.

The basis of organization is on God's infallible Word as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity, namely: The Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort. We have adopted the Church Order of Dort prior to the revisions of the 1960's.

This action was taken to reaffirm our commitment to the Authoritative, Infallible Word of God.

This commitment to that Word of God in the Christian Reformed Denomination was drastically weakened when Synod adopted Report "44," regarding the Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority. Much has been written about Report "44," but after careful studying it seems that the *reader* decides what applies, where it applies, when it applies, and what the Word of God *really* means to us in these "modern, changing" times. Therefore, we should not be surprised that a Dr. Verhey and a Dr. Harry Boer are now questioning and or ac-

tually denying parts of the Word of God! That is just a logical conclusion on their part when this Report was adopted.

It can be stated in this way: Today's doubt is tomorrow's fact. Sow doubt today about what the Bible really says about a particular matter and tomorrow the churches may well be ready to accept the "new revelation" or "the historically or culturally conditioned changed revelation" as fact! We are reminded here of Paul's pressing instruction to the Ephesians: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Ephesians 4:14.

The organization of this congregation was done in obedience to our Covenant God and in love as it is our Christian duty to admonish each other. May the love of God shine in the hearts of us all to the furtherance of His Kingdom and for the well-being of His Church here on earth.

We sincerely hope and pray that the Christian Reformed Denomination may once more return to the Faith of our Fathers and claim that rich Reformed heritage which is so rapidly slipping away in today's churches.

We are presently seeking a permanent place of worship.

May we in all humbleness of heart bow before God that we may be found faithful in doing what He has commanded.

Allan Oudman
2479 Hoehn Road
Sedro Woolley, Wash.
98284

Fight or Switch?

A public meeting for all concerned Christians of Reformed faith with a special invitation to the young people, was held on March 28, 1980, in Allendale Christian School. The purpose of the meeting being: "to recall and an invitation to reaffirm the biblical christianity of our confessions." Speakers for this meeting were Rev. Harry Van Dyken and Rev. John J. Byker, former ministers of the Christian Reformed Church who recently have resigned their ministerial status as well as their memberships in their local congregations.

The material distributed at this meeting announced plans concerning worship services for the following Sundays as well as the well known ACRL statement of 1974 concerning deviations from the historic Christian faith with some addenda to update this material.

In his opening statement the chairman for the evening observed that the meeting was not called out of malice, but largely because he and a number of other people were frustrated concerning the situations in both the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church. In his opinion one of two things could take place, either a miracle within the denominations or else to find a refuge somewhere else.

He concluded that there can be no more time spent in debate within the RCA or CRC since it has become absolutely useless to overturn the various Synods. Neither did he consider this to be necessary, since after all "this is a matter of faith, and faith is not debatable." So, rather than talking about the issues, the time has come to deal with them.

In coming to grips with these things, he wanted to stress the fact that this new group is not schismatic in taking this action. Rather, the blame was placed with the denominations who allowed such things as participation in the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, women in ecclesiastical office, communion participation by baptized members, homosexuality, theistic evolution, liberation theology, economic socialism, Report 44, lack of discipline, improper administration of the sacraments, unsound preaching and the new hermeneutic. In general, the toleration of evil within the churches.

Why Separate:

Following these opening statements, Rev. Van Dyken spoke on, "Why this meeting is necessary." Basically, not because he wanted to set the battle lines again, but rather, because he felt troubled. Troubled because the rich heritage of the CRC is being lost, and he felt that the Lord required of him to preserve this heritage. He observed that there are those who are determined to change that heritage, and the result is that some feel pushed out of the church. Due to a new form of Arminianism,

Neo-Orthodoxy and liberation theology that is being forced upon the churches, it has become an institution that pleases men rather than God. The whole outlook is pragmatic and in the process the communion of the saints is lost, as well as the truth of God's Word.

His decision to separate himself from the denomination was based on what he called "the need to conserve." It was a personal decision because he feels he has to answer for himself, not for the denomination. He didn't consider this as schismatic, since he defines schism as the breaking of the church, not the organization. Schism takes place when the truth is broken, and this has been done. Unity within the church is not an institutional unity but the unity of the truth.

What Responsibility?

Rev. Byker spoke on: "What is our Responsibility?" He reminded us that the Reformed faith calls for a responsible life. Covenantal theology includes blessings but also responsibilities. The corporate responsibility has been lost in the CRC. In the speakers opinion, the only things that keep the denomination together is the quota system and the fact that each minister within the CRC must have spent at least one year at Calvin Seminary.

He stated that many people are ignorant of the issues involved because they have left the responsibility up to Synod, Classis and individual ministers. Most ministers, he pointed out, are not willing to speak on the issues, they don't even want to preach about sin, and want nothing to do with corporate responsibility.

Furthermore, materialism is rampant in the church, and the members in general don't know the issues. Consequently, there is a blind following of the blind. Institutional idolatry accepts everything that comes down from Synod or the denominational pentagon without question.

Concerned ministers were advised that conservative caucuses should not be utilized because these are politically motivated. Individual congregations that are conservative and are served by a conservative minister should nevertheless take action. Inaction in effect is silent approval of the liberalism within the denomination.

So much for the factual reporting. I realize that everything has not been said at the meeting. Nevertheless, the reader will have some feeling about what took place.

Evaluation

My personal evaluation of this meeting is that now in turn I am troubled. Troubled because of what might happen to the CRC if all "concerned" or "conservative" ministers and members within the CRC immediately leave it.

I am personally convinced that there are a great number of ministers who hold the truth of the Word of God near and dear to their hearts, who proclaim that Word in all its truth as the two-edged sword. There are many churches throughout the denomination that are shining lights amid the dark clouds that surround us. There are great numbers of people who hold to the historic Christian faith.

I am personally convinced that the work of the CRC for the cause of the kingdom of God is not lost as yet, but it will be if those who are concerned keep running away. Is our church so far gone that reformation is impossible? I think not! Is our historic faith as confirmed in our Reformed confessions worth fighting for, or is it not? I think it is! Is it our corporate responsibility to hold fast to the truth? Yes, it is! If we become frustrated, should we run away? I think not! What we must do is to stand up for the truth. We must let that truth be known. And if it should come to the point that reformation is impossible, I personally would rather be deposed from the ministry, than leave right now.

What Must We Do?

In a recent article in the January issue of the OUTLOOK, Rev. John Piersma raised some valid points. Such as adopting a set of rules to guide our deliberative bodies. That we insist on the proper definition of terms that are used by "liberals" and "conservatives" alike but with a wide variety of meaning. That we see to it that the informed people are delegated to Classis and Synod and that these people make known what their theological position is.

That is a good beginning. Now we better do our homework. And with that I mean that the members within the churches become more aware of what is taking place within the denomination. I know what the frustration of protest is all about, too, but that doesn't mean we just ought to give up trying.

The individual members had better bring their concerns before their consistories. Speak to the elders and deacons. Show them you are concerned and why. If they heed you, great. If they don't listen, speak to others in the congregation and start the cycle all over again.

But that will never take place when people would rather go drink a cup of coffee than study the Bible. It will not take place when people say: "Well, things are not so bad in our church," and therefore they do nothing. It will not happen if people are not willing to give of their time and efforts, to dig into God's Word or go over the lengthy reports of committees. It will not take place if people take for truth everything that comes out of study committees without realizing that much of the thinking is influenced by the liberalism of the day. And it will not happen if we grant the learned doctors of theology free reign, with the understanding that their learning or critical method overrides the simple faith of the average church member.

No reformation will take place in the church if we have office bearers who are so involved with other things that they cannot properly shepherd the church of Jesus Christ. But reformation will take place if our office bearers are men of action, who know what the Bible says and who are willing to put their faith in action. And it is the duty of every member of the church to see to it that those kind of men are elected and delegated.

Today more than any other time, we must have members who will challenge the Pastor to be the true spiritual leader. One who interprets Scripture with Scripture.

One who is true to all God has revealed in His Word. Men who realize that what God said centuries ago to His people is still what He says to His people today.

We need members who demand the sound preaching of the Word. If that is not forthcoming that they then are willing to exercise discipline among the members, but also the office bearers within the church.

We need members who are committed to follow the Lord regardless of what men may say or do. People who can look through the Satan-inspired question: "Hath God really said?" People who are willing to declare "Thus saith the Lord."

Today there is an abundance of religious illiteracy and the cause is religious indifference. The only cure for that is religious instruction. Instruction that is based squarely upon God's Holy Word. Instruction that is true to the historic Reformed confessions. Only then will there be Christian, religious commitment.

No, I am not questioning the motives of some people who want to begin a new "United Reformed Church," but I am questioning the methods. I will agree that the time may come that a separation must take place, although I pray to God that He will spare us from that. And presently I do not feel that all available means have been used to call the CRC back to the truth of the Word of God, to repent of her sin, to set forth once again that clear line of distinction between the world and the kingdom of God, the antithesis!

I'm afraid that all too often we have considered (leaving) because we have not really been ready to suffer and to sacrifice for the sake of Christ's Church. Yes, we have prayed for a change in direction within our denomination, but we have not always been willing to be the instruments within God's hand through whom He will still work His miracle of grace.

And so for the present, I would rather fight than switch. I would rather be on my knees before Almighty God and agonize in prayer for the CRC, than to run and let her die.

Rev. Fred Gunnink
Coopersville, Mich.

Dear Mr. Editor:

In the February 1980 issue of the Outlook, a letter to the editor appeared from P. Vander Lei of the newly formed church, the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church. While I can sympathize with this group because of trends in the Christian Reformed Church, I also am concerned with this type of letter in The Outlook. While it is true that all contributions represent the personal views of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Reformed Fellowship, Inc., it is also true that readers tend to feel that what appears in The Outlook reflect the feeling of the publishers.

I am concerned because this letter to the editor has the appearance of schism, and I think it would be a big mistake if others begin to break in small groups from the CRC.

P. Vander Lei states that "actions have been taken in the Christian Reformed denomination which, in their conviction, will eventuate in a loss of the leading of the

Word of God." I believe this is true, but is it a reason to leave the CRC? P. Vander Lei also states "The choice arises out of a conviction that the Christian Reformed denomination presently is no longer true to its history and name." What does he mean by that, and is that reason to leave?

In R. B. Kuiper's book, "The Glorious Body of Christ," he states "Organizational Succession without doctrinal succession is worthless. A church that possesses the former but has lost the latter is no longer a church of Jesus Christ. Our Reformed fathers were right when they said that "succession of doctrine" rather than "succession of persons and places" is a mark of the true church." (pg. 71)

Has the Christian Reformed denomination gotten to the point that we should have a secession because of doctrine? The official stand of the Christian Reformed Church is that we believe the Bible to be the infallible word of God and we officially hold to the three forms of unity, and as such, we are a true church.

It is very true that many among us are promoting things contrary to the word of God, but no synod has officially adopted such. Synod came close to that on having women deacons, but this has not become official in the church order and due to conservative actions, the matter is under study. Also report #44 on the authority of the Bible has a "hole in the dike" which gives some the loop hole to promote ideals foreign to our stand on the authority of the Bible. This needs to be changed, but as such, I don't believe we can have a secession on that matter at this time. Neither can we have a secession because of personal beliefs of such people as Dr. Harry Boer and others. Their beliefs contrary to the Bible and the confessions as they may be, have not as yet been officially adopted.

At this point in time secession would be schism. What we need now is for conservatives to unite and follow the example of Peter De Jong in the Verhey case. We may not win a popularity contest, but we better be obedient to our Lord. Our Lord wants us to stand up for the truth and fight against untruth. God forbid that the CRC becomes a false church, but in the event that the Christian Reformed denomination officially adopts positions contrary to the Word and the Confessions and makes it so that we can no longer live in harmony, than let us prayerfully seek God's leading and leave as a large group of conservatives. To begin leaving in little splinters as the above mentioned group is an easy way out, but not necessarily the right way.

Obedience to the Lord demands that we get to work in the CRC. We have not done all we could to turn our denomination around, and until we do, we better not have a secession because it would be schism. Schism is sin!!!!

Richard Van Essendelft
West Sayville C.R.C.
New York

Did Synod Speak Clearly?

Although I am not a member of C.R.C., yet I find it very instructive to follow in part some of the tensions the Church is feeling in these present days. Trends are usually

the same. What happens in one Denomination has a tendency to pass onto another. We in Brazil are not isolated from the outside world and its influences. For this reason, I am interested and concerned with the struggles of the C.R.C.

May I be permitted to make an observation? In the October Issue, Jelle Tuininga, in his Letter to the Editor, comments: "But Synod's action was disappointing, for it did not speak clearly on the matter." I would like to suggest that the Synod did speak clearly, for it expressed the disposition of the majority of the representatives. True, the thought of the majority is disappointing, but let's face reality, the Church is in doctrinal trouble, but it is the situation the majority are desiring. I regret that I cannot give a satisfying answer to the problem. To a large extent, it is the Minister that builds the Church in its doctrinal position, and in a similar manner, it is the Seminary that molds the doctrinal and ecclesiastical disposition of the Minister. Perhaps the work of the Seminaries should be more closely watched.

Thank you for your interest and the work of the Outlook, may you be encouraged to continue.

Ivan G. G. Ross
Minas Gerais, Brazil

A LOOK AT BOOKS

AN URBAN STRATEGY FOR AFRICA by Dr. Timothy Monsma, Published by William Carey Library, Pasadena, Calif. 175 pages, price \$6.95. Reviewed by Harold De Groot, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Even though the research for the book was done in preparation for a doctoral dissertation, the author has succeeded in writing a very factual, readable, interesting book on a subject which must be faced as the church seeks to minister to urban dwellers in Africa.

There is a mass exodus from the rural areas to the cities. Many are educated; many are Christians; many are lost in the city. How is the church to evangelize? How are they to grapple with the complex problems of urbanization? How is the church to harvest this complicated, ethnic conglomerate? The "problem of the sheep that stray is the 'Achilles heel' of the church in Africa that cries out for attention." Yet the church and missions have neglected this urgent challenge. The author deplors the fact that administration is receiving the priority over evangelism.

Not only does the author ably and interestingly state the many-faceted problems of the churches ministering to urban areas, he also offers some excellent solutions. Probably the most urgent plea is to train pastors adequately to meet the needs of the elite of the cities. A more meaningful worship service and good preaching are a must. Missionaries and Christian professionals are desperately needed for leadership training.

This book is a gem. Refreshing. New. The author has a grasp of the complexity of African urban areas with their many ethnic and language differences. His suggestions to churches and missions in meeting this complex challenge are realistic and attainable. This work should be in the library of everyone interested in missions and burdened for the church which must minister to city dwellers in Africa.

HAPPINESS IS NOT AN ACCIDENT by Richard W. DeHaan. 1971, Zondervan Publishing House. 176 pp., paperback, 95 cents. Reviewed by Rev. Donald J. Negen.

The twenty-two chapters of this book are divided into four parts: Happiness is not an accident; Happiness in a changing world; Happiness in spite of adversity; Happiness with yourself and others. Although the first part reflects the title of the book, the concept does prevail through the succeeding chapters.

While the author's understanding and interpretation of secular views are at times debatable, he does appropriately focus on the key to happiness. He correctly emphasizes that happiness originates with God. It cannot arise out of our circumstances which are frequently adverse, nor out of our world with its enticements to find pleasure in sin.

The reader will be reminded again, in simplified fashion, of some of the Biblical truths which govern our beliefs and our life style.

HOLINESS, ITS NATURE, HINDRANCES, DIFFICULTIES AND ROOTS, by J. C. Ryle. Published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506, 1979, 471 pages, \$8.95. Reviewed by Rev. Simon Viss.

This volume contains twenty chapters, each of which is a subject in itself, but all related to the title. Each chapter is an exposition of a text. Every chapter contains a wealth of material on some aspect of Christian living. One can be edified and spiritually enriched by reading a chapter a day. Today, we tend to shy away from books of this size. Everything has to be compacted and summarized. We're influenced by T.V. commentators who have to compress all the happenings from all over the world within thirty minutes.

The publisher is to be commended in reprinting this book which first came off the press a hundred years ago. Though it is a book of considerable length it is easy reading. The style is lucid and graphic. There is not a page that cannot be grasped by the average reader. And yet it is a book replete with profound truths, extremely relevant for our day.

Basically, the world hasn't changed. The human heart is as sinful as ever. How must a Christian live in a sinful world? First, he

must understand what sin is. Ryle's first chapter is on the subject of sin. He holds before the reader the text, "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). Without the knowledge of sin, justification, conversion, and sanctification have no meaning. A holy life is a life lived in conformity to God's law. But we cannot live such a life in or by ourselves. It is only through Jesus Christ that we can attain unto the standard God demands.

Appropriately, the last chapter is entitled, "Christ is All" (Colossians 3:11). Here is what he says, "I purposely close this volume with a paper on this remarkable text. Christ is the mainspring both of doctrinal and practical Christianity. A right knowledge of Christ is essential to a right knowledge of sanctification as well as justification. He that follows after holiness will make no progress unless he gives to Christ His rightful place. I began the volume with a plain statement about sin. Let me end it with an equally plain statement about Christ." Then follows a beautiful exposition of what it means that Christ is our all.

A number of chapters are character studies — Moses, Lot, Lot's wife, the thief on the cross, etc. These chapters are a delight to read. The entire book has a wealth of doctrinal and devotional material. This book must be read to be appreciated.

NURTURING CHILDREN IN THE LORD by Jack Fennema. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Reviewed by Cornelius Vogel, Christian School Teacher, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

"Back to the Basics" is a theme which is currently being expressed among educators, both public and private. Jack Fennema brings the Christian educator back to the basics in the area of discipline. He begins with Scripture to determine the "pattern for nurture that God wants for His children." He builds his case upon a biblical view of discipline and a biblical view of the child. The child as an image-bearer of God, by nature is a unity, is rational, interactive, morally aware, and is creative. Each of these characteristics must be included in the teacher-pupil relationship.

Biblical discipline is synonymous with nurture and emphasizes both instruction and correction. Mr. Fennema points out for the reader how this biblical basis differs from the basis used by the behaviorists and the humanists. The biblical approach to learning and knowing is broader. It includes the total activity of the person—thinking, feeling, and responding.

Instruction, or "preventive" discipline, which is primarily the responsibility of the parents, must be based upon God's Word. Biblical instruction, whether "caught" informally, or "taught" in a more formal school situation, will develop respect and security. Chastening, or "corrective" discipline, which is needed to "redirect" the child, must also be based upon God's Word and use the biblical description of authority.

This discussion of discipline is useful to the Christian educator. It returns him to Scripture as the basis upon which to build his approach to discipline. This gives the

teacher a foundation upon which to develop his own methods of implementation. The author expresses the hope that the non-Christian educator, who is often seeking an academically reasoned foundation to discipline, will also find this book useful. Reading this book can be a profitable experience for the Christian parent as well as for the teacher.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GRACE, by Arthur C. Custance. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506; 1979; 398 pages. Hardcover. \$12.95. Reviewed by Rev. Fred Van Houten.

This is an amazing book. One who reads it would think that the author is a Professor of Systematic Theology in some great Calvinistic Seminary. However, he is a member of the Canadian Physiological Society and a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute. The scholarly book was spawned during a cold winter's intense personal study of the Bible while the author was in complete isolation and only twenty three years of age.

It is most refreshing that such a sizeable production on the real issue of Calvinism could be published in 1979. The author excels in bringing to the religious world a book that is thoroughly historical and Scriptural almost to the extent of being encyclopedic. He begins by tracing the historical development of the doctrine of election in a very thorough manner, particularly with Augustine, but also demonstrates how it is taught explicitly in both the Old and the New Testaments. Appropriately, he devotes much space to the Reformers. It is like reading an excellent treatise on Church History.

Custance explains in detail and from various angles the five points of Calvinism. With compelling logic he points out inconsistencies in the Arminian position. However, with variable references to Common Grace, he could still be classified as an infalapsarian. His favorite text, discovered at that time, is "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). Such texts as this one, and other Scriptures such as John 6:37, 44, he quotes again and again. With respect to the way of salvation there is absolutely no synergism.

A few chapters are on preaching, and this reviewer is happy they were included. The author pleads for frank and honest proclamation of the Word in the language of the Bible. He has no toleration for such approaches as "God loves you" and "Christ died for you" but believes it is proper to say that Christ died for sinners, and "Open your heart to the Lord" and "Accept Christ as your Savior."

This brief paragraph reads the five points of Calvinism voices the author convictions very well:

The only defense against Synergism is an unqualified Calvinism ascribing all the glory to God by insisting upon the total spiritual impotence of man, an Election based solely on the good pleasure of God, an Atonement intended only for the elect though sufficient for all men, a grace that can neither be resisted nor earned, and a security for the believer that is as permanent as God Himself (p. 364).

With the completely logical explanation and cogent defense of Calvinism as the virtue of this book, this reviewer felt something missing. It lacks a warm, fervent and urgent plea to preach the Gospel of God's grace to a hell-bent world. Reminders of such Scriptures as Isaiah 45:22 and 55:6, 7 could well have been included. After all, Paul wrote a lot about the sovereign grace of God, but he also was a great missionary. However, this is a great book for our time. Thanks also to Bakers for an excellent job of publishing. Read it and rejoice! Custance sounds the trumpet for Calvinism! And it's not Taps!

THE PROPHET JONAH: HIS CHARACTER AND MISSION TO NINEVEH, by Hugh Martin. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979 reprint, 460 pp., \$6.95. Reviewed by Rev. Case Admiraal.

This series of expository messages on the book of Jonah, first printed in 1866, adds to the growing number of books available to us on the minor prophets. The fact that his volume consists of expository messages explains both its strength and its weakness. It is not technical and can be beneficially read by all. At the same time, it lacks conciseness. Often the reader has to plow through long sections of tangentially related material in order to get to the heart of a chapter.

Although the author slips into moralizing a number of the episodes in Jonah's excursion (cf. ch. 5, e.g.), he does a fine job in developing the major themes of this prophecy. Especially helpful is the author's analysis of the times in which the book of Jonah was written and its major purpose.

A MODERN STUDY IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS (Charles Bridges' Classic Revised for Today's Reader) 752 pages, paper cover; also a study guide for use with the book, both by George F. Santa. \$17.95. Mott Media, Post Office Box 236, Milford, Mich. 48042.

Of this book, first published in 1846, the renowned preacher Charles H. Spurgeon has said that it is "the best work on the Proverbs." Cyril J. Barber in his *The Minister's Library* (a Baker publication, 1974) gives this evaluation:

"... this work has become a classic of Protestantism. Rich in thought and valued for its exposition. Provides valuable material for the preacher."

Without tampering with Bridges' meaning or intent, George F. Santa has served today's Bible student well by revising and updating the language of this outstanding volume to make it readily understood. The Topical Index as well as the many Scriptural cross-references add to the value of

the book. Proverbs is a treasure-trove of wisdom for Christian living into which this commentary gives abundant and precious insights.

J.V.P.

TULIP, by Duane Edward Spencer. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506; 1979, 75 pages; \$1.45, Paperback. Reviewed by Rev. Fred Van Houten.

The subtitle of this book is "The Five Points of Calvinism in the Light of Scripture." This is a reaction against what the author calls "the humanist theology of Erasmus and Rome." Having been an Arminian preacher for nine years, such a reaction on his part is understandable.

Inclusion of the "Five Points" of Arminianism is a positive feature of the treatise, as is the clear description of the Arminian position, abundant use of Scripture, and a chart contrasting the Arminian with the Calvinist view. However, one who writes a book on this subject should do more to explain the Bible texts, particularly those listed under the Arminian view. The treatise defends Calvinism strongly and condemns Arminianism equally strongly, however this reviewer is left with the sad impression that the case is overstated, and that all anyone can do in the way of salvation is to see whether or not he is elected by God. Some statements could be questioned because they are not explained adequately. On page 66 he writes, "Whosoever will may come" is not to be found in the Bible." How about Revelation 22:17?

SEVEN WONDERS OF GRACE by C. H. Spurgeon, Baker Book House (Summit Books), Grand Rapids, Mich. 224 pp. \$2.95. Reviewed by the Rev. Harrison Harnden.

This book consists of seven sermons which are illustrative of the grace of God in the lives of seven biblical characters. All of the sermons are in the exemplary, rather than the redemptive-historical, homiletical perspective. In effect, they represent the best of efforts out of what is basically a poor preaching method. All of the sermons are textual and typical of the Spurgeon methodology. There are some explorations into the fields of speculation beyond what the text and context of the passage actually state, but these are not sufficiently offensive to greatly reduce the value of the messages. The applications are amazingly contemporary considering the material is nearly 100 years old. It still remains a truth that you cannot read Spurgeon without profit.

A BLADE OF GRASS, by Gladys and Gordon DePree. Zondervan Publishing

House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1967, 189 pp. \$2.95. Reviewed by Rev. Allen Bultman.

Here is a meaningful paperback of daily devotionals. Each devotional begins with a Scripture verse and is followed by a uniquely designed structure of free verse comment. The authors desire that their efforts be a small, quiet, alive blade of grass is modest. They very effectively direct the thoughtful reader to the living Word of God with its call to faith and obedience. This blade of grass is good food for the soul. Try it, you'll like it!

VALLEYS AND VISTAS — AFTER LOSING LIFE'S PARTNER by David Bogard. 94 pages. Baker Book House \$4.95. Reviewed by John Vander Ploeg.

With his accustomed theological precision and clarity Professor Louis Berkhof has defined the believer's mystical union with Christ as "that intimate, vital and spiritual union between Christ and His people, in virtue of which He is the source of their life and strength, of their blessedness and salvation."

In *Valleys and Vistas*, the late Rev. David Bogard (minister in the Reformed Church in America until his death in 1976) relates his personal experience of this mystical union that continued and also became enriched after the loss of his life's partner with whom he had spent forty-seven happy years in marriage. Bogard had the gift of recording the trauma and also the triumph he experienced as a believer in his bereavement, and he does so in a delicate, dignified manner and also with an exquisite choice of words.

In *Valleys and Vistas* the reader may enjoy and profit from close fellowship with a devout man of God whose piety was so obviously healthy, whose heart throbs were so poignant but also so precious, and whose conquest over doubt is so well stated at the close of his book in this testimony for Christ:

"So I have come to an intellectual peace for which I searched so passionately in my youth, by a route I did not then know existed. I suspect that there are many whose intellect far surpasses mine who can tear to shreds what I have written here. I cannot help that. There comes a time when electioneering is over and one must vote. I have cast my ballot for this matchless Teacher who is the truth."

Valleys and Vistas After Losing Life's Partner — a truly beautiful book both in content and in format — an outstanding gift for anyone who has experienced a similar loss — a book to read and also to re-read in the time of bereavement to aid one to come to know the peace that passes all understanding.