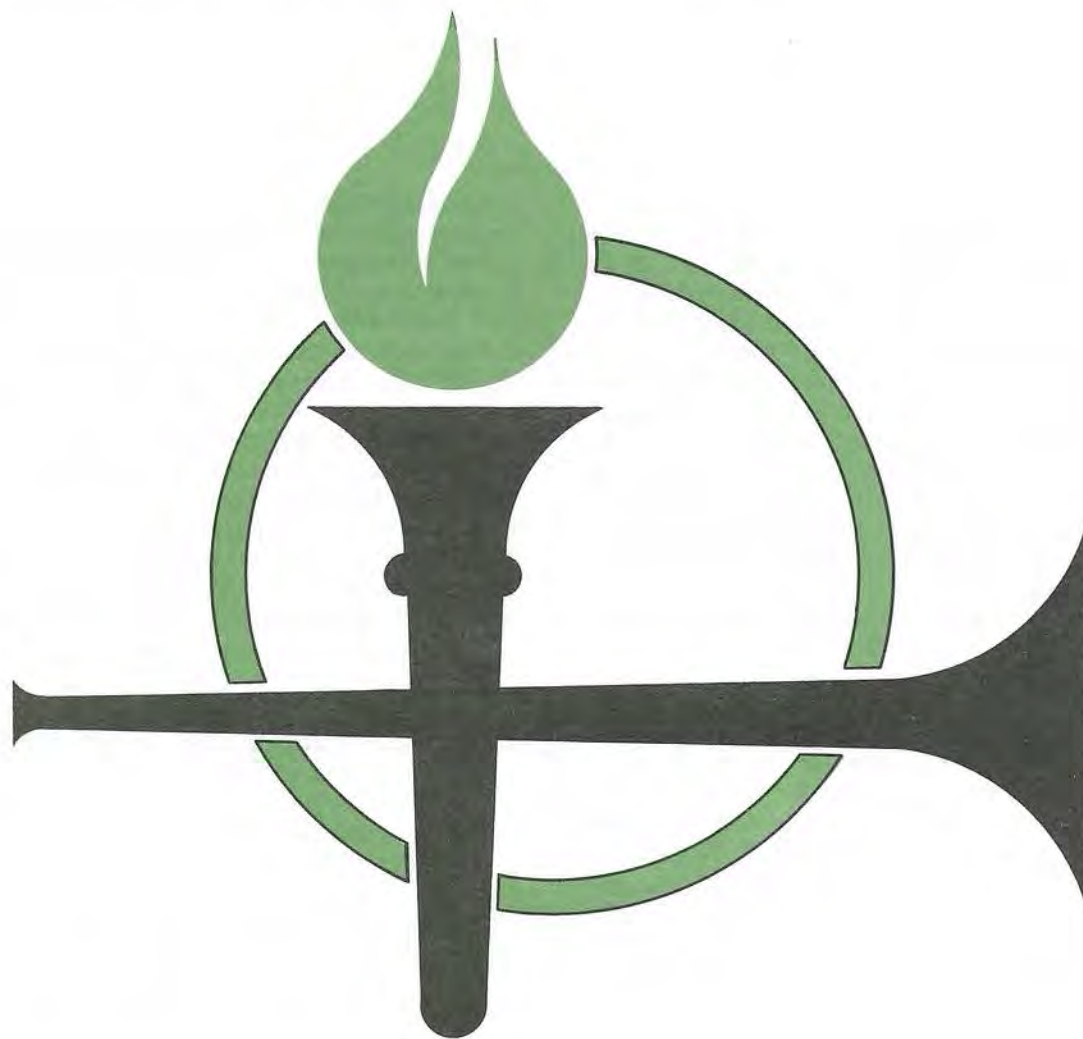


THE OUTLOOK

DEVOTED TO THE EXPOSITION AND DEFENSE OF THE REFORMED FAITH

MAY 1982



**PEACE AND DISARMAMENT
COUNSELING, THE BIBLE AND GOLFING
GAY RIGHT OR OLD VICE?**

Reformed Women Speak

WILL YOU BELIEVE CHRIST'S WORDS?

Sandra Heynen

The Christian who examines the geological and archaeological evidence produced by the scientists of today will often encounter intellectual problems that challenge his faith. The way these humanistically programmed scholars interpret their findings makes the historical existence of Adam and Eve appear impossible. But Reformed Christians should perceive more clearly than most, that all man's study and investigation proceeds from some foundational perspective. As Francis Schaeffer puts it, "No man can live without a world view and this bias always affects what he perceives in the physical evidence."* Even so, some who profess to be Reformed and appear to be devout, when faced with this impressive array of "facts," begin to entertain dangerous thoughts. They reason that since something has to be other than it appears — wouldn't it be easier to live with a mythical Genesis than to reject the learned conclusions of our scientific age? How can all these brilliant twentieth century minds be wrong? Why not give up a sure historical knowledge of our origin and thereby avoid the ostracism and ridicule of the scientific community? Those who yield to this train of thought also claim that it is possible to radically change one's interpretation of the first chapters of Genesis without altering any other teachings of Scripture, especially the thrust of the redemptive message.

But it is a delusion to think that Genesis 1-3 (at face value a factual account) can be considered a parable or symbolic myth without destroying the integrity of God's Word. Let us consider just two of the problems this approach causes.

Of all the New Testament writers, Luke is considered outstanding for his attention to historical detail and accuracy. He introduces his Gospel account by emphasizing that he investigated carefully and thoroughly and mentions the eyewitnesses he had consulted. He was highly educated, a physician with a systematic mind. How then does one deal

with his genealogy in Luke 3, where Jesus' human ancestry is traced back to *Adam*, through all of Adam's descendents who were mentioned in Genesis including Shem, Noah, Methuselah, Enoch, Enos, and Seth? Where do the mythical sons of mythical Adam end and the real people begin? And if *any* of Christ's ancestors were mythical, how can we be certain that *He* was historical, truly human? Or if Luke just made an error here, what does that do to his credibility? It becomes evident that the Bible and what it teaches has a complicated unity and is interrelated in unexpected ways.

Perhaps most important of all, we must consider the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ while He was on earth. As the Belgic Confession states:

We believe that Jesus Christ according to His divine nature is the only begotten Son of God . . . co-essential and co-eternal with the Father (Art. X) . . . (He) really assum(ed) the true human nature with all its infirmities, SIN ACCEPTED (emphasis mine) . . . (Art. XVIII) (and) the divine nature *always* remained united with the human (Art. XIX) . . .

The above statements are essential truths of the Christian faith. And if so, is it not necessary to maintain that Christ, the Truth embodied (Jn. 14:6), could never have taught or thought anything untrue or deceiving? Scripture confirms His great insight and perfect understanding in many ways: 1) Christ often read the thoughts of the Pharisees (Lk. 6:8; Matt. 22:15-22). 2) He was acutely aware of the Purpose for which He was sent to the world (Lk. 4:18-21, 43). 3) During His years of ministry, Christ was continually correcting the faulty understanding of the religious leaders and common people in regard to the teachings of the Old Testament (Jn. 10:22-39). In the light of all this can it be alleged that the Lord Jesus could have been so "time-conditioned" that He would accept myth as fact in regard to Genesis 1-3? In Matthew 19:4-6 Christ quoted from Genesis 1:27 and 2:24, as one would refer to an actual occurrence, to prove that God ordained and instituted the sexual

**He Is There and He Is Not Silent*, p. 4.

union (marriage) at creation and did not intend it to be violated by divorce. If we can say that our Lord and Saviour was mistaken, deluded, or inaccurate in even one instance, doesn't that deny His Diety and destroy His perfection?

The only answer for such dilemmas is the sure safeguard that God Himself has mercifully provided to protect us against doubting His Word. It is amazing how, time and again, there is recorded in the Gospels (often in the very words of Christ) the testimony to the factual nature of the very parts of Scripture Satan most likes to attack in order to chip away at our faith. Just a few examples include: 1) the book of Jonah (surely "just a story" — but how can storybook people testify on Judgment Day? [Lk. 11:29-32]); 2) Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch (Lk. 5:14; 16:29-31; Jn. 5:45-47; 7:19-23); 3) the claims of Bible critics that Isaiah 40-66 was written by someone other than Isaiah — but the Apostle John quotes from the disputed section and calls it the words of Isaiah (Jn. 13:37-41; Lk. 3 & 4; Matt. 8:17; 22:17-21).

In conclusion, each Christian today must take a serious look at where one ends up a short time after putting man's scientific knowledge above the truth of God. Let the words of Christ our King and Final Authority ring in our ears: "FOR HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES, YE WOULD HAVE BELIEVED ME; FOR HE WROTE OF ME. BUT IF YE BELIEVE NOT HIS WRITINGS, HOW SHALL YE BELIEVE MY WORDS (Jn. 5:46, 47)?

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Word Way

*The entrance of God's perfect Word gives light,
Which guides the thoughts of searching simple souls,
Protects their hearts from sin, restores their sight,
And shines upon their path to godly goals.*

*It brings great peace to those who love His law.
For them no circumstances can offend;
But thankful trust replaces doubts that gnaw,
And harbors hope that cheers them to the end.*

*God's Word Divine has made and fashioned all,
But wayward creatures need forgiving grace
To heal their hearts, to save them from the fall,
And quicken them till rest beyond the race.*

*Lord, let me not despair in devious ways,
But keep my soul that I may live Your praise.*

— Richard Vander Zee

THE OUTLOOK

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"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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Peace and Disarmament

Gregg V. Martin

New Protest Marches

In our Reformed circles here in North America, we shall, no doubt soon, be hearing pleas that we join in the peace and disarmament movements which are already so vocal in Europe. All throughout Western Europe the fall of 1981 was marked by large scale protest marches against the NATO Alliance and against the United States in particular. The protesters claimed to be demonstrating for peace, which they would define as the disarmament of the Western powers. The demonstrators were especially insistent that the nuclear defense shield in Western Europe should be dismantled. In the foreground of these marches, especially in West Germany and the Netherlands, were the leadership of the liberal protestant churches. In the Netherlands these protesters received aid and encouragement from certain segments of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, a denomination with which the C.R.C. has ecclesiastical fellowship. Liberal European churches, which had long ago quit preaching the Gospel and consequently were losing members and influence, suddenly found new popularity by making pacifistic political pronouncements.

Campaign in Our Churches

The campaign to ally our churches with this so-called peace movement has indeed already begun. The Council of the Christian Reformed Churches in Canada had on its agenda in 1981 proposals to support officially such pacifistic, ecumenical organizations as Project Ploughshares. A report to that same Council proposed that "The endeavours of the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America and of the Roman Catholic Church in oppressed countries are recommended for support by our government." (Council Agenda 1981, Appendix H, 7.08). It should be noted that this Inter-Church Committee

on Human Rights is a liberal, ecumenical organization. It is organizations like this together with the Church of Rome that we are being urged to recommend and support. A publication of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee entitled "For Our Neighbors' Good," distributed here in Canada, openly attacked the government of the United States on the issues of the Law of the Sea and foreign aid. In the official weekly publication of the Christian Reformed Church, the peace and disarmament movement in Europe is frequently and sympathetically presented to the readers. It is evident that the church bureaucracy has a fervent desire to involve our churches in supporting (unilateral) disarmament and peace at any price, the ecumenical movement's latest fad.

Time to Wake Up

We who desire to remain true to the Reformed faith and to keep our churches solidly based on God's Word must come to realize what is happening. What will our stand be when proposals to agitate for disarmament are placed openly before the assemblies of our churches? We certainly are for peace. All sane men oppose the unthinkable tragedy of nuclear war. Does this mean, however, that we as Reformed Christians must ally ourselves with the peace protesters of today and the left-wing machinations of various ecumenical organizations? My answer in a word is: No. As Reformed Christians we will not be seduced into conforming to the world's idea of peace. We will not ask our NATO governments to remove the power that protects our life and freedom from the unspeakable tyranny of soviet communism.

Government's God-Given Responsibility

Our answer to the pacifists comes from our Belgic Confession: "We believe that our gracious God, because of the depravity of mankind, has appointed kings, princes, and magistrates; willing that the world should be governed by certain laws and poli-

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cies; to the end that the dissoluteness of men might be restrained, and all things carried on among them with good order and decency. For this purpose He has invested the magistracy with 'the sword for the punishment of evil-doers and for the protection of them that do well.'

This is our Confession, and it rests on the sure foundation of the Bible. Pacifism is at its root misguided and has never been considered a valid option for Reformed Christians. We recognize the right and responsibility of a state to be armed for the protection of the people, which is the chief duty of government.

Pacifist Hypocrisy

Additionally, it may be said that the present day pacifists and disarmament protesters are clearly revealed by recent events to be utter hypocrites. The desire of the NATO Alliance to update its means of protection and defense brought out millions of protesters in Europe; but when the forces of the Communist, Warsaw-Pact government in Poland flexed their military might there was quite a different reaction. *Time* magazine reported in their Feb. 1, 1982 issue:

"Accustomed to portraying the U.S. as the chief threat to world peace, the leaders of the antinuclear crusade have been confounded by General Wojciech Jaruzelski's move against the Polish workers that had evidently been ordered by Moscow. In all of Europe only a few thousand have demonstrated against Poland's imposition of martial law, although more than two million people had turned out for anti-nuclear weapons rallies in major European cities last fall."

The pacifists and their ilk who support them here in North America are acting on only surface issues and are reacting to the world situation in a way that can have only damaging consequences for the freedom that we presently enjoy in the Western world.

What Does the Bible Say?

In times like these we Reformed Christians are all the more called to come to a proper, Scriptural understanding of the place and duty of civil government. The Bible most certainly is not silent on this issue. With full confidence we can turn to the Word of God for wisdom and knowledge by which we can give an answer to those who would subvert the Church of Christ and the defense of the Western world.

The New Testament teaches us that legitimate government is God's instrument — "He does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute His wrath on the wrongdoer" (Rom. 13:4). In the Psalms David speaks of his kingly task — "Morning by morning I will destroy all the wicked in the land, cutting off all evildoers from the city of the Lord" (Ps. 101:8). Thus it is the duty of the civil authorities to use whatever force is needed to protect the innocent and punish evil-doers. We must recognize that there is basically no difference between the individual criminal, who would murder or

otherwise terrorize a community, whom even the pacifists would no doubt want restrained, and a host of evil-doers, e.g., an invading army or any force of tyranny that would seek to terrorize a community or nation. These too must be restrained. In his *Institutes* Calvin's conclusion on this matter was: "Therefore, both natural equity and the nature of the office dictate that princes must be armed not only to restrain the misdeeds of private individuals by judicial punishment, but also to defend by war the dominions entrusted to their safekeeping." (IV, xx, 11).

Bible-Believing Christians Must Speak Up

It would be well for each one of us as concerned Christians who are vitally interested in the truth and in the well-being of Christ's Church to consider seriously our response to the peace and disarmament movements. This movement is already very powerful in Europe, and of all the European countries the Netherlands is one in which these pacifists have the most influence. As we well know, influences and movements popular in the Netherlands will sooner or later show up here among the Reformed Community in North America. The tip of the iceberg is presently visible; we can see it in the tone of articles published in certain magazines and in statements by committees of the Council of C.R. Churches in Canada. The floodgates of propaganda for this pacifistic campaign may open wide any day.

If we are faithful students of God's Word and our Reformed Confessions, we shall have an answer to give when the time comes. With positive conviction based squarely on the Bible, we must declare that proposals for unilateral disarmament and peace at any price are contrary to God's Will as He has revealed it. The time will soon come, I am convinced, when we will have to stand and be counted in the defense of our freedoms and of our governments' duty to protect that freedom with the force of deterrence equal or greater to that of those who seek to destroy us and our way of life. In this day and age that clearly means a nuclear deterrent force.

Search the Scriptures, then, and learn what God says about the responsibility of government, as God's instrument, to protect us. Let us not allow the shrill cries of the pacifists and their sympathizers to overwhelm our churches, nor let us allow them to go unanswered. We must answer on the basis of the Bible, that strong and sufficient defense is an obligation of a government to its people, and we must support all just and reasonable efforts by our governments here in North America to fulfill that obligation to us and to our allies.

The Mid-America Reformed Seminary News submitted by the school's executive committee for our May issue was erroneously attributed to Dr. Timothy Monsma, who, as a footnote states, has been appointed to the faculty. The author of the article was not Dr. Monsma, but the committee.

Nouthetic Counseling, THE BIBLE AND GOLFING

John G. Kruis

Rev. John G. Kruis is the pastor of the Christian Reformed Church at Sussex, New Jersey, and a member of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors. Nouthetic Counseling is the method of Biblical counseling developed and promoted especially by Dr. Jay E. Adams. The word "nouthetic" was coined from the Greek word which is translated "admonish" in such places as Col. 3:16 and Romans 15:14 and is used to indicate the kind of Biblical Christian counseling which Christians should be giving to others.

Tom's Problems

Tom, (the name is fictitious, the case is factual) a victim of a broken home, had started smoking marijuana when he was about fourteen years old. At age nineteen he and his two close friends were into it quite deeply. Tom was already experiencing the sad consequences of his sin. No longer could he keep his car on the road. His money was going for the purchase of pot. He was behind in his car payments and his car was in disrepair. Tom was in danger of losing his job at the factory. His father was threatening to expel him from the apartment which they occupied together.

In January (1981) the young man admitted that he was making a mess of his life. He said to me, "I'm blowing my mind." He expressed the desire to quit smoking pot and to get things turned around in his life. I assured him that by God's grace and power, he could overcome that sin, be set free and enjoy

a new and different way of life. (Cf. I Cor. 10:13; Rom. 12:1, 2; I Cor. 6:9-11.) Thankfully, he started to see some hope.

Counseling

We began to work on his problems together, meeting for counseling almost weekly. I did that which many counselors among us would wholeheartedly disapprove of, especially in working with teenagers. I worked primarily with the Scriptures, as our guide and instrument to help bring about change in Tom's life. As we identified his various problems (which were complex) we also sought God's way out. Since drug abuse is a life-dominating sin it was necessary to work at a total restructuring of his life. Changes were necessary, for example in his home life, devotional life, his social life (especially friendships) and recreational life. Changes had to be made in his work habits and financial management. Basic, of course, was his total spiritual outlook. He had to break old sinful attitudes and behavior patterns, and develop new and godly ways, put off the old man of sin with its deeds and put on the new man (Eph. 4:22-24).

The first several weeks were extremely difficult. The road was very rough and Tom had his ups and downs. However, he made very significant progress. As he saw that life was becoming more pleasant he was encouraged to continue working at change.

Social Problems

As one would expect, the area of his social life presented special problems. His two bosom friends (with whom he had a close friendship since early

childhood) were neither ready to kick the habit of pot smoking, nor to accept counseling. Tom had quit attending all church functions, so he had no friends there. There were no meaningful contacts with close relatives. Consequently about the only thing he could do with his free time was to stay up in that apartment and listen to his records and tapes (hardly a beneficial pastime) and watch television. So before long he complained, "It drives me up a wall to just stay up here. I can't stand it."

One had to sympathize with him as he struggled with this problem. It was imperative to come up with a solution. Quite naturally, I counseled him to return to the church. But I also said, "To help fill the vacuum you ought to get involved in some wholesome recreational activities." Finally I suggested, "Take up golfing." At first that didn't sound interesting to him. Not at all!

Try Golfing

By the time the golfing season arrived his problem remained. So I insisted, "I'm going to take you golfing." Well, at first he found excuses when I tried to make arrangements to go. However, finally he did agree to go with me. I must admit that as we took the half-hour drive to the golf course, I had my apprehensions. Would a 19-year-old fellow really enjoy golfing with a minister — one in his fifties? Was I being unrealistic? To be quite frank, I was praying!

The course was an easy one to play, the weather ideal. Naturally, since Tom had never golfed before, he got off to a slow start. However, by the fourth hole he was already doing surprisingly well and was obviously beginning to enjoy it, especially when he made a 180 yard drive. On the 14th hole — a 270 yard drive, just to the right of the green! By then he was riding on cloud nine. And I could not have been more delighted. What he didn't know was that I was also busy thanking the Lord as I was walking down the fairways! Tom actually golfed a 56 on the second nine. For the sake of nongolfers — that's extremely unusual for a beginner.

It was Tom who suggested that we ought to go again soon. This we did. Again he did amazingly well, a 48 on the second nine. As we left the course we arranged to go again, but I warned him that he could hardly expect to keep doing that well.

The third week of August Tom called me. Excitedly he said, "Guess what? I bought a set of clubs." I replied, "Great, man. That's just great." That was exactly what I had hoped would happen. The rest of the summer and through the fall Tom went golfing about twice a week. Happily he found another golfing partner. His social and recreational needs were being met. The temptation to join his friends in smoking pot was greatly diminished.

In October we golfed together again, this time on a much more difficult course. We ran nip and tuck almost all the way, finishing in a heavy downpour. But we were having fun. Tom was the victor — by one stroke. More significantly, Tom had gained a much more important victory. I asked, "Any problems with smoking pot now?" With obvious delight he replied, "I haven't touched it for several weeks."

Biblical Counseling Is Practical

Why write about this? To help destroy some of the myths about nouthetic counseling, which come to my attention from time to time. This brief account of only a small part of my involvement with Tom demonstrates the falsity of some of the myths.

It demonstrates that nouthetic counseling is not biblicistic. We don't just throw a bunch of Bible texts at a counselee and say, "Now just live by the Bible and all of your problems will be solved." We do unashamedly hold that the Bible has the answers to even the most difficult and complex problems, and we use the Scriptures as the infallible rule for faith and practice (II Tim. 3:16, 17). But we also show the counselees how it gives direction for even the nitty gritty things of life. In Tom's case, for example: What does God's Word have to say about friendships? What bearing does that have on your life right now? What changes must you make? How can this be done? What does putting off the old man have to do with your recreational activity? What changes must you make in this?

Nouthetic counseling is not simplistic. Quite recently I read a comment again which implied that nouthetic counselors work almost exclusively at motivating people to get right with God and to start living by the Bible. Supposedly they expect that if this is accomplished the problems will go away. To be sure, we place a strong emphasis on the necessity to get right with God, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. This is primary. However, as in Tom's case, we also work through the many complex problems, along with their contributing factors. We give counsel and work intensively with counselees to help bring about the needed changes in their attitudes and behavior. In this way, through the power of the Holy Spirit, problems are solved.

Helping People

Nouthetic counselors do not lose rapport with either young people or adults by using the authoritative Word of God and the directive method. Would Tom have gone golfing with me (also by his request) if I had lost rapport with him? My experience has consistently been that directive counseling, with the open Bible does not destroy rapport. Rather, through the work of the Holy Spirit, it helps to establish and maintain it.

Nouthetic counseling is not a hard-nosed, unsympathetic, unloving approach. Did my insisting that Tom should establish other friendships, that he had to put off the old sinful habits and put on new and godly ways, exclude sympathetic understanding and a loving concern? What do you suppose moved me to take Tom out golfing (which took preference for a time or two over golfing with my usual golfing partner, my close pastor friend)?

Nouthetic counseling, the Bible and golfing go well together.

P.S. Neither Tom nor his dad had to shell out from 20 to 75 dollars a counseling session. It didn't cost them a cent.

The Doctrine of Last Things

The Intermediate State (1)

Jerome M. Julien

When death intrudes our family circles, it drops a veil of mystery. Many questions surface in our minds. Suddenly we want to know what happens after death. After all, we have been forced to say farewell to a loved one. That moment has been so difficult and so painful. Is death the end? Is there any comfort?

Of course, for the believer who experiences the death of a fellow-believer, these questions are partially and yet visibly answered in spite of the closed coffin which is then lowered into the ground. The Christian burial always and correctly calls attention to the fact that the body is in the grave to await the Day of Resurrection when all bodies shall come forth (John 5:28, 29). For the child of God that day will be abounding with blessing.

But that Day is still in the future. What about our loved one right now? What about that soul between death and the resurrection? The existence of the soul during this time we usually call *the intermediate state* — that which is in between, that which is temporary, that which is incomplete. This term covers both the existence of the believer and the unbeliever during this time. For each, however, this existence is very different.

Precisely where does the soul exist during the period we call *the intermediate state*?

The writers of the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (q. 86) summarized the Biblical teaching concerning the believer after death as being "communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death. . . ." The *Heidelberg Catechism* (q. 57) teaches us to confess that "my soul, after this life, shall immediately be taken up to Christ, its Head."

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* further describes this intermediate state for believers as being

that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they will be united to their souls.

That same eighty-sixth question adds a summary of what the Bible teaches about the souls of the wicked after death. They

are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, till the resurrection and judgment of the great day.

In addition to this, the *Westminster Confession of Faith* adds: "Besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none (XXXII:1)."

Of course, this teaching of the Reformed Churches is supported by Scripture. While it is true that there are other teachings more clearly and fully taught in Scripture, this one is certainly there.

There are three words used in Scripture for the intermediate state, all of which shed light on the nature of this existence of the soul after death. Now, while a consideration of these words may seem very technical and therefore rather unimportant, we cannot ignore them. William Hendriksen tells us that the consideration of these words is very practical since

certain sects are constantly telling the people that due to a wrong translation of these words . . . the doctrine of *hell* as a place of everlasting punishment has taken such a hold in the church (*The Bible on the Life Hereafter*, 83).

Now, the cults are dead wrong, but do we really know what we believe?

The first word that we find used is the Old Testament word *Sheol*. This word translated into English by "pit," "grave" or "hell," appears some sixty-five times. A. A. Hodge writes that it comes from a Hebrew verb meaning "to ask,"

expressing the sense of our English proverb, that the "grave crieth give, give." It is used in the Old Testament to signify, in a vague and general sense, the state of the departed, both good and the bad, intermediate between death and the resurrection of the righteous (Hosea xiii. 14). . . (*Outlines of Theology*, 551).

For both the righteous and the wicked, it is the state of death, or the realm of the dead. It is a place (Gen. 37:35; 1 Sam. 2:6), with bars (Job 17:16) and gates (Isa. 38:10). It is characterized by darkness (Job 17:13). As the state of death, into which all men go, it brings pain to the unbelievers (Deut. 32:22; Ps. 49:14). On the other hand, for the believer this state of death is full of expectation (Num. 23:10; Ps. 16:9-11; 17:15; 49:15; 73:24-26).

Sheol can also mean *grave* (Ps. 141:7). Anthony Hoekema reminds us that this is not necessarily a common use of the word since the Hebrews had another word for grave: *qebhar*. He adds: "Many passages in which *Sheol* could be translated by *grave* also yield good sense if one renders *Sheol* as realm of the dead (*The Bible and the Future*, 96)."

Further, *Sheol* is apparently the *place of punishment for the wicked*. There are times, therefore, when it can be translated *Hell*. Both Louis Berkhof and William Hendriksen agree that *Sheol* can be so translated, but Anthony Hoekema is much more cautious. Some of the passages usually understood as referring to *Hell* he shows can be understood another way. However, Psalm 49:14 he indicates, can possibly be correctly understood as referring to *Hell*. To this we add Deuteronomy 32:22 where we learn that *Sheol* is the place of God's burning wrath.

The New Testament speaks of *Hades* eleven different times. Once it is translated *grave* (1 Cor. 15:55) and the other times it is translated *Hell*. Again, however, there are different ways of understanding this word, just as with the Old Testament word *Sheol*. Its common meaning is *the realm of the dead* (Acts 2:27, 31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13). In two places *Hades* is seen sharply contrasted to Heaven (Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15). Besides, when you read Matthew 11:23 and 24 it becomes very clear that *Hades* is a place of judgment. The same becomes clear in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). There, *Hades* is contrasted to Abraham's Bosom, a place of happy existence.

There is one more word used in the New Testament to describe the intermediate state. In 2 Peter 2:4, we read of *Hell* or *Tartarus*. This is the only time this word is used. Verse 9 tells us that this is the place of punishment for the wicked during the time between death and the general resurrection of the last day. Thus it is that Jude 7 can indicate that Sodom and Gomorrah along with nearby cities are now "suffering the punishment of eternal fire."

What do we learn from these three words? 1) During the intermediate state both the righteous and the wicked continue to exist. 2) For the wicked it is a time of torment as they are held in the clutches of death. It is Hell! 3) For the righteous in Christ it is a time of joyful expectation, awaiting the day of the resurrection.

About this time of joyful expectation the Bible has more to say. We are told that for the believer to be absent from the body is "to be at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). This can be our comfort because while Jesus was on the cross He said to the penitent thief, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Because of what Jesus would do on that cross, believers would know death as the doorway to being "at home with the Lord." Is it any wonder, then, that Paul, writing about life and death, could say, "But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake" (Phil. 1:23). See also Acts 7:59.

Hendriksen writes:

Never can it be emphasized strongly enough that the redeemed in heaven between the moment of death and that of the bodily resurrection have not yet attained to ultimate glory. They are living in what is generally called "the intermediate" state, not yet the final state. Though, to be sure, they are serenely happy, their happiness is not yet complete (*The Bible on the Life Hereafter*, 58).

The intermediate state and the final state are not two distinct experiences, however. There is a continuity between them. Therefore, what Scripture says about the final state can also be applied legitimately to the intermediate state, if we keep in mind its incompleteness. Thus, the beautiful picture of the church translated to glory which we have in Revelation 7:9-17 gives us only a glimpse — but a glimpse at that — of glory. It is a picture of deliverance from trials, cares, hardship. It is life — eternal life, and the unblemished joy of salvation.

How, then, do the intermediate and final states differ? 1) Those enjoying the intermediate state with the Lord are *limited* to heaven. They do not yet inhabit the full inheritance. They know heaven and its joys, but not the new earth. 2) They are *limited* because they do not inhabit the body. The body is part of being man. They now await this body in its glorified form in the Resurrection. 3) Their joy is *limited* (though they do not realize it) because the full body of believers is not yet together. For there to be unlimited joy and blessing the whole church, the whole Body of Christ, must be together (Heb. 11:40).

Nevertheless, of the saints with the Lord, it can right now be said that they know rest (Rev. 14:13).

How beautiful! How comforting! Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. "Death for the Christian . . . is a homecoming. It is the end of his pilgrimage . . ." (Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 108). Think of it! Nothing — not even death — can "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39)! ●

Gay Right or Old Vice?

Peter De Jong

Pressures Toward Toleration

From many quarters we are being pressed to abandon the traditional Christian conviction that homosexual practice is morally wrong, and to tolerate it.

Recently TV's Donahue in interviewing a popular evangelist regaled his sophisticated audience with some clips of the preacher's Biblical denunciations of homosexual practice. Donahue's closing remark was that when preachers see how public attitudes are changing regarding this subject they will fall into line.

A news item reported how Palo Alto ministers had largely supported a gay rights ordinance which, to their surprise, was rejected by the voters.

The official defense of homosexual conduct as acceptable, by the Dutch mother churches of many of us has become notorious. An editorial in the March 16 *Wachter* informs us that the Dutch government is considering passing a law which would outlaw job discrimination against people who live together without being married or people who engage in homosexual practice. When some Christian school administrations criticized the proposed law as an infringement on their freedom, the administration of the Reformed Churches' (the GKN's) Kampen theological school and that of the Theological Faculty of the Free University at Amsterdam defended the law and expressed their outrage with the, in their opinion, un-Christian attitude of those Christian school boards.

There are also comparable signs of a growing tolerance regarding these matters in our own circles. The December 11, 1981 *Calvinist Contact* reported on an interview with Rev. John Vriend, pastor of the Grand Rapids Christian Reformed Church of the Servant, regarding steps taken in his church toward creating a "climate of acceptance" toward homosexuals. The minister said, "One of the more significant things we have done is to invite the chairman of

a local organization called 'Dignity', a Roman Catholic organization for homosexual people, to speak to our congregation about 'Why Christian gays are angry with the church.'" Vriend expressed his satisfaction with the sensation this incident created and the progressive attitude it was promoting.

In the October, 1981 issue of *Dialogue*, published by Calvin College's Communications Board, two editors reported on a discussion with a professed homosexual student, a philosophy professor and a college chaplain. In the discussion the interviewed student expressed the opinion that though homosexual conduct might be the result of sin he did not think it was sinful. Although some disagreed, the tenor of the discussion was toward a less critical attitude toward homosexuals. References were made to Lewis B. Smedes' book *Sex for Christians*, which, although it acknowledged the Bible's condemnation of homosexual practice, softened and qualified that with the suggestion that certain "constitutional" homosexuals seek to achieve an "optimum morality" with one other person as "preferable to a life of sexual chaos" (Smedes, p. 73).

It is no secret that the faculty of the AAC'S Toronto Institute for Christian Studies was internally divided and demoralized by a long and painful controversy about this same matter.

The Christian Reformed Synod of 1973 adopted a study committee report which, while it condemned homosexual practice, did so only after critically questioning the Biblical condemnations on which such a church decision, if it is valid, has to be based. The report began with accepting uncritically the opinions of some current psychologists on the nature of homosexuality (distinguishing sharply between a homosexual condition and homosexual practice), and proceeded from that starting point to consider the passages in the Old Testament that condemn the practice. It stated "Whether the judgment which the Old Testament makes on homosexuality would be the same if such a distinction had

been known we cannot say at this point. But therefore we cannot simply apply the Old Testament prohibition without considering whether our knowledge of homosexuality may not modify to some degree our moral judgment about the homosexual practices of such persons." Proceeding to the New Testament it said, "But again we need to ask whether the judgment of Paul applies to those who are homosexuals as we have defined them, i.e., those who are constitutionally homosexual. . . ." Its final conclusion condemning homosexual practice is also qualified by the stated principle that "biblical injunctions and prohibitions are to be honored in every instance where they are not overborne by either external necessity or by a higher value." (Is it surprising that ministers trained in this kind of "critical" handling of the Bible are uncertain about their convictions on this as well as many other moral questions?)

Whether we consider the trends in our society, the precedent of our mother churches or the trends and decisions in our own, we can see the mounting pressures to move from the traditional and Biblical condemnations of homosexual practice to a more tolerant acceptance of it. Isn't this movement the necessary adjustment to "progress" which many assume it to be?

The "New" Acceptance Is Not New.

First of all the assumption that an "accepting" attitude toward homosexual practice is new or in any way real "progress" has to be criticized in the light of a long history which contradicts it. Our synod's report says of the practice "It was known in ancient times and in every subsequent era" and "Homosexuality had a long history in the hellenistic world. It was already practiced and approved by Plato. . . ." The "new" understanding and therefore the tolerance of it are not (as the synod committee assumed) a new discovery of some present day psychologists. Even the evidence cited by the committee shows them to be simply a return to pagan attitudes which were commonplace among the sophisticated Greeks of Plato's dialogues* — and the degraded Canaanites which Israel encountered in Palestine.

We Must Begin With the Bible.

The Old Testament laws which deal with this subject cannot be fairly criticized because (as the synod committee alleges) they were formulated in ignorance of our contemporary insights. On the contrary, God gave His people these laws with their stern warnings to deliver them from and safeguard them against exactly these false and foolish pagan notions which are now being promoted as new discoveries.

The trouble with the "new" views (and with our synod committee's report in as far as it accepts them) is that they begin by accepting the claim of some contemporary experts and then criticize the Bible from that point of view. As evangelical Chris-

tians we must learn to turn matters around — to start with the Bible and then criticize the opinions of the experts from that point of view. As Bill Bright said at the recent San Diego Congress on the Bible, "The key issue is very simple. Either the Bible stands in judgment over every man's mind, or every man's mind stands in judgment over the Bible."

Old Testament Revelation

In effort to summarize what the Old Testament says about our subject, we first recall in Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:18-24, God's good creation and His revealed purpose in creating man male and female to form a unity in heterosexual marriage. After the Fall we see various perversions of this, as of all other created relationships. In the laws which God gave to Israel, as His people, He restated and outlined His order in these relationships and warned against the various pagan perversions of them. Leviticus 18:22 lists homosexual relations among the "abominations" which God detests, going on to explain (vv. 24ff.) "Do not defile yourselves by any of these things: for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. For the land has become defiled, therefore I have visited its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants. But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not do any of these abominations . . . so that the land may not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you. For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people." Later in chapter 20 these warnings are reiterated with the death penalty prescribed for a number of these offenses including homosexuality (v. 13). In the light of God's revealed detestation of these practices we ought also to consider and understand his commands to Israel to exterminate the degraded Canaanites' society and take over their country. That development, not yet appropriate in the days of Abraham, "for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete" (Gen. 15:16), was now ordered by God.

The Lesson of Sodom

In this same light we ought to consider the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and its important role in Biblical history. Abraham must be informed of it and the reason for it even before the event occurred "since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." "For I have chosen him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice in order that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him" (Gen. 18:17ff.). In other words, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah must be an unforgettable lesson to warn God's people through the future generations of what He in His justice is going to do to nations, and ultimately the whole world that persists in rejecting Him and His laws. A survey of the many references to that event in the Old and New Testaments shows that that is

*At one point in the *Symposium Alcibiades* expressed his amazement at Socrates' remarkable refusal to indulge in this common pastime.

exactly what the event became throughout Biblical history.

Through the later Old Testament history we observe that one of its most characteristic features is the recurring decline from faithfulness to God and His Word and corresponding lapse into compromise with the surrounding paganism and its vices, to be followed from time to time by periods of reformation under godly judges or kings.

Among the vices which returned in such times of decline our familiar Bible versions mention especially "sodomy" — the homosexual vice associated with Sodom. When "Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord" in the days of Rehoboam "there were also sodomites in the land; and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel" (1 Kings 14:22, 24). When a later king, Asa "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord," "he took away the sodomites out of the land" (15:11, 12). Similarly, we read of a later godly reformer-king, Jehoshaphat, "the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land" (22:46). In 2 Kings 23:7 we read a similar report regarding the godly Josiah, "And he brake down the house of the sodomites."

New Testament Warnings

The New Testament restates the same emphatic warnings about God's invariable hatred of homosexual and other perversions of His creation and His laws. Especially the Corinthian Christians who were under special pressures to conform to the easy-going, notoriously immoral life-style of their environment (very similar to what ours is becoming) were warned, "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 homosexuals . . . will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; cf. also Eph. 4:17-5:8). 1 Tim. 1:10 includes homosexuals, translated in the RSV as "sodomites," among those who are breaking the law of God and living "contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

The Romans I Explanation

Most revealing in helping us to get a proper Christian understanding of homosexuality is Paul's treatment of it in Romans 1. There he introduced his gospel as "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (v. 16). He went on to show (in a way copied by our catechism) why it is of utmost importance to everyone. All need it. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (v. 18). All have enough revelation of God the Creator in His creation to make their rejection of Him completely inexcusable. Despite that revelation they deliberately substitute for the "glory of the incorruptible God" a humanistic and naturalistic "image." How is God's "wrath" shown against such inexcusable religious apostasy? Three times we are told that "God gave them over" (vv. 24,

26, 28) to doing what they wanted to do in progressively worse and more degenerate forms of vice. First (v. 24) "God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them." Presently, in a further state of this revelation of His "wrath," "For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error" (vv. 26, 27). In this passage homosexual practice is exposed as both calling for the retributive judgment of God, and as part of the execution of that judgment in the accelerating degeneracy of those who reject Him.

These clear biblical teachings leave no possible room for the easy toleration and even welcome of homosexual activity that is now being advocated.

How can one account for the sudden upsurge of homosexual activity in our society and the publicity and support being given it in news media, movies and even the courts? That is no mystery to anyone who considers this Biblical explanation. As our society progressively and deliberately throws off the shreds of Christian influence that remains in our laws, customs and culture, rejecting all of God's standards especially in the areas of education and public life, God's wrath is increasingly shown in His abandoning us to the old pagan vices which have destroyed past civilizations. The upsurge of homosexual vice in our time is just one of the more ominous symptoms of a civilization which, like that of Israel's old Canaanite neighbors, is rapidly becoming ripe for extermination.

"The Power of God for Salvation"

When we accept this grim Biblical evaluation of homosexual practice haven't we lost all compassion and hope for the practicing homosexual? We certainly have not. The apostle Paul was showing why such individuals, as well as everyone else, desperately need the gospel which is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (v. 16). In the Corinthian letter which warned that "homosexuals . . . shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) he immediately added, "And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (v. 11). The Lord can and does deliver from every kind of sin and vice. We will not help the world, or the church or the homosexual person if we let ourselves be persuaded that sin is no longer sin and vice is no longer vice. We will only be really helpful if we see and show how God exposes and denounces sin for what it is and calls us all to Himself as the Savior of sinners.*

*Particularly helpful in dealing with this subject is the section in Jay E. Adams' *The Christian Counselor's Manual* entitled "How to Counsel Persons Involved in the Sin of Homosexuality" (pp. 403-412; cf. also in his *Competent to Counsel* pp. 35, 36 and *The Big Umbrella*, pp. 219-221).

News and Views

Elco H. Oostendorp

The Center of Seminary Education. Christianity Today for February 5, 1982 has an article by Clark H. Pinnock of McMaster Divinity School in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, in which he comments on the state of theological education in the "mainline" theological seminaries today. His comments are based on an article in *Theological Education* (Spring 1981) by Edward Farley of the Divinity School of Vanderbilt University. Farley "acknowledges that 'mainline' theological education is trapped in a cul-de-sac because the basis on which it used to rest has been shattered." The negative impact of critical historical study has undermined the traditional Bible-centered pattern because its basis in the authority of the Bible has been shattered. The result is that students are not given a unified course of education that prepares them to preach the Word and give direction in the work of the churches. The multitude of subjects do not hang together and the result is "chaos." Pinnock is thankful that there are still many strong evangelical seminaries based on the traditional view of Scripture, but stresses that the situation described by Farley serves as a warning and a challenge to such schools to stand fast on the authority of the Bible. He warns, "Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall."

"REFORMED PERSPECTIVE, A Magazine For The Christian Family," is the name of a new monthly magazine published in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. According to a cover letter with the first copy I received in the mail, copies have been sent to all ministers listed in the Christian Reformed Yearbook. This ambitious project is supported by the Foundation for the publication of a Reformed Social-Political Magazine, an organization whose members are associated with the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. The price is \$22.50 per year in Canada and the United States (U.S. funds); single copies \$2.00. Quoting from the Editorial, "We attempt to cover much the same territory as is re-

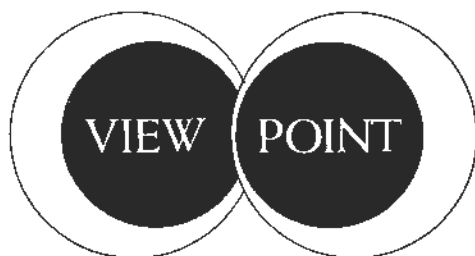
ported on by the so-called neutral media. But we will at all times do so in the full awareness that our King is exalted up on high, and that, seated in majesty at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, He guides and He directs all the world events to suit His divine purpose." Although at present the magazine is written mostly by Canadians, the hope is to include other authors from the U.S. and Australia. This first issue is largely composed of a review of The Year of the Lord 1981 by the editorial committee and a Report on Religion by (Rev.) Ben J. Berends. There are other well written articles on a variety of subjects. All in all, a laudable attempt to fill a real need.

CREATIONISM IN ARKANSAS. This is the caption on the front cover of the January 1982 *Reformed Journal*, featuring an article by Dr. George M. Marsden of Calvin College. Dr. Marsden "testified as an expert witness at the 'creationism' trial in December." In this article he explains why he opposed the Arkansas law that required equal presentation of "creation-science" along with "evolution-science" in science classes of the public schools. Although he is also opposed to secular humanism associated with much teaching of evolution, he cannot go along with the position of the law which virtually limits creationism to the teachings "of the Institute for Creation Research and related agencies which teach that creation occurred in six twenty-four-hour days, that the earth is about 10,000 years old, and that the geological evidence is explained by the Genesis flood." Further he says, "The law purports to be 'insuring neutrality'. Neutrality, however, could be insured only if there were merely two real choices concerning the relationship between creation and science. If there are more than two — as there surely are — then the law gives preferential treatment to one conspicuously sectarian brand of Christian teaching." The main thrust of the article of Marsden, who wrote a book on *Fundamentalism*

and *American Culture* (1980), is that "fundamentalists often have narrowed their definitions even within the dichotomized choices they offer us." Many will no doubt regret that his dislike of fundamentalism made him a participant in this trial on the side of many who are avowed enemies of the orthodox Christian faith.

BAD NEWS FROM CANADA. *Christianity Today* for February 19, 1982, reports the findings of a survey of Canadians concerning religious attitudes, which reveals great decline of the Christian faith especially among members of the United Church, the country's largest denomination. "Less than half of its members profess an unequivocal belief in God." In 1956 61 percent of Canadians attended church; in 1978 only 35 percent; for the United

Church 28% and the Anglican Church 24%. Sunday School enrollment in the United Church shrank from 570,000 in 1966 to 242,000 in 1977. Dr. Reginald Bibby of the University of Lethbridge who conducted the survey stated, "With the possible exception of conservative church members, Canadians — church members and nonmembers alike — have a remarkable level of ignorance of even the basic content features of Judaic-Christianity." He points out that this will have serious consequences for their children who have not had the background their parents had and tend to grow away from the church completely. The churches have compromised with the prevailing secular, humanistic spirit of modern society. Their plight is a sobering reminder of how quickly a falling away can take place. ●



Whose Ministry?

Peter De Jong

On Tuesday, February 16 an annual CAREER DAY was scheduled at Calvin College. This project was jointly sponsored by the Counseling Center and Placement Office of the College, who arranged to bring on campus some 55 representatives of business, industry, community agencies and the professions. Among the wide variety of career areas to be represented the list includes GOSPEL MINISTRY represented by Rev. Gordon Negen and then farther down the list, simply THE MINISTRY whose scheduled representative is Rev. Marchiene Rienstra. Mrs. Rienstra had spear-headed the feminist drive to break through the Biblical, confessional and church order barriers into the ordained ministry of

our churches. Failing in that effort, she became pastor of a United Presbyterian Church. That is the denomination which has gained notoriety by admitting a minister who refused to acknowledge the deity of Christ, while at the same time outlaws ministers and churches who have conscientious scruples against admitting women to ordination and has been seizing the property of such churches. The Calvin Board of Trustees, learning of Mrs. Rienstra's scheduled appearance on Career Day, expressed its disapproval. But she still appeared. Whom is Calvin College trying to recruit for the ministry — and for whose ministry? ●

Who is Telling the Truth?

Peter De Jong

The Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary, seeking to allay the widespread apprehensions of the churches about the orthodoxy of the faculty of their seminary and in its words "to remove some of the innuendos and false accusations that have been made" has sent a "Public Statement to all the consistories of the Christian Reformed Church." That statement includes the following:

With respect to Professor John Stek, there is an ongoing discussion with him in connection with his research into the early history of man. The Board of Trustees has instructed him in his teaching office to correlate the findings of his research and the event character of Genesis 1-11, with the view to doing full justice to the church's confessional view of these chapters as elucidated in point E of the *Acts of Synod 1972*, page 69: Synod... "warns against the use of any method of biblical interpretation... which calls into question... the event character... of biblical history, thus compromising the full authority of Scripture as the Word of God."

The members of the Calvin Seminary faculty without exception believe that Adam and Eve were created by God and are our first parents. They further accept the reality of an historical fall as recorded in the Scriptures. The Board of Trustees is assured that our faculty is in full agreement with the confessions of our church and we have the utmost confidence in our faculty.

At the last *Outlook* board meeting someone called attention to the discrepancy between the Calvin Board's Public Statement and the testimony of a recent student of Professor Stek. Rev. Neal Hegeman, in an article entitled "Did Adam Exist as a Historical Person?" in the June 1981 *Outlook* wrote:

The Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary had to face this question in 1980 when the writer of this article protested the view of an Old Testament professor who did not believe Adam was a historical person. The Board listened to the protest, interviewed the people involved and appointed a committee of Biblical scholars and pastors to study the issue. Their recommendation was to advise or instruct the professor to conform to the historical event character of Genesis 1-11 and to uphold the teachings of the Church.

No one has challenged the truth of Rev. Hegeman's testimony; in fact, the Board's own actions confirm its validity. How does one harmonize these two?

The members of the Calvin Seminary faculty without exception believe that Adam and Eve were created by God and are our first parents.

... an Old Testament professor... did not believe Adam was a historical person.
Who is telling the truth? ●

Godspell

Peter De Jong

On March 11-13 and 19-20 the Calvin College Thespians presented the musical drama *Godspell* in Calvin's Gezon Auditorium. In this play actors represent Jesus and His disciples as clowns. The performance may indeed, as the student paper *Chimes* in its enthusiastic review observed, recall old morality plays, carry a religious message, be "based on the Gospel of Matthew," and get a sensational response from the student audience. Its actors may, as the program states "play roles, some of them obvious caricatures, some more honestly filled with the emotional reality of the moment, but all of them created with the idea of projecting the message of the Gospel in a fresh and exuberant manner." But does all this repeat the ten commandments, notably the second and third? The Israelites, no doubt, enjoyed their "celebration in contemporary style" around the golden calves and Aaron could piously explain, "a feast to the LORD," but the LORD did not approve of this self-chosen way of representing and worshipping Him.

When *Godspell* appeared in Netherlands theaters in 1972 the consistory of a church at Hengelo sent the following letter (printed in *Nederlands Dagblad*, sent us by a reader and freely translated) to the burgomaster:

Mr. Burgomaster,

You will understand that now when a theatrical is announced in which the Son of God and Savior of the world is subjected to scorn and mockery we appeal to you who are able to prevent and forbid the holding of such God-dishonoring performances within your territory.

We turn to you the more readily because this concerns nothing less than the Name and honor of Him who is the Lord of Glory, having all power in heaven and on earth, worthy to receive all honor and worship and praise into all eternity. We are able to speak also in the name

of all in Hengelo who love our Lord Jesus Christ in truth as their Redeemer, and acknowledge and confess all honor and respect toward Him as their Lord and King.

We would be deeply ashamed if we did not let our indignant protest be heard when people in our neighborhood make fun of the Name of our Lord and God in such a scandalous fashion.

And we believe that we may appeal to our authorities who rule us by the grace of God to prevent such a desecration of the Name of the Lord. ●

Dismiss the Liturgical Committee

J. Tuininga

I believe many consistories and members of the church rue the day that synod ever appointed a *standing* Liturgical Committee, and gave it an almost unlimited mandate. I really believe that much of their effort is a waste of time and money. I believe it's time the members of this committee get their walking papers. Not only are we being bombarded with an almost endless list of forms which results in mass confusion as far as the pew is concerned, but one also wonders where all this is going to end up. When I look at the Report of the Liturgical Committee in the 1981 *Agenda* for synod, then I start wondering if we're high Anglican rather than Reformed. And one wonders how much time there is left for a sermon after going through this endless liturgical ritual. I dare to venture a pretty reliable guess that the Liturgical Committee is out of touch with the majority of churches and church members when it comes to liturgy. The majority of church members simply don't go for all this malarkey. They prefer the simplicity that has always characterized Reformed worship.

One also wonders how this so-called responsive reading is supposed to fit in with the "dialogic" nature (between God and His people) of the Reformed worship, as the Rev. L. Verduin pointed out recently in *The Banner*. Note this:

Minister: You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.

People: I say to you, do not swear at all . . .

Minister: You shall not kill.

People: I say to you, Love your enemies . . .

Minister: You shall not covet.

People: Take heed and beware of all covetousness . . .

What the people say is part of God's command to His people. It is in no way a *response* to what God is saying. I don't see the liturgical sense of this. I also wonder about the exchange of greeting between minister and people: The Lord be with you (minister) and the Lord be with you too (people). Boaz and his workers greeted each other in that manner (Ruth 2:4), but I don't quite see how that fits into a worship service. Is worship a meeting between the minister and the people, or between God and His people? And it doesn't make sense to say to God, "The Lord be with you," does it? Just what is the logic behind this?

I know from experience that if you want trouble in the local congregation, then appoint all kinds of committees (music, worship, greeting, etc.) They all start feeling important and in order to justify their existence they have to "create" work by coming up with all kinds of new-fangled ideas. So it is on the denominational level too: the more committees, the more problems. We are becoming far too organized a church. It's time to disband several committees and thus to decentralize the church. For the good of all. ●

Who's Wasting Time?

J. Tuininga

I want to touch on a few aspects that ought not to be overlooked in the current debate about women in ecclesiastical office.

1. The argument has been somewhat in vogue among the proponents of women in office that their opponents are wasting a lot of time and energy on a rather (what they consider to be) minor matter. But what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Who began this whole debate? Is it *not* a waste of time and energy for those who are in favor of the issue? Indeed, is the issue so important that the matter must be forced upon a church in which, according to synod's own judgment, "the overwhelming majority" is not of a mind to open the offices to women? Is it a matter of such crucial importance to the life of the church? Is it going to revitalize the church? If it really is an unimportant matter, why not drop it in view of the church's opposition?

2. Prof. M. H. Woudstra once wrote in connection with the "love of God" debate that when a tidal wave threatens to engulf you, you are not going to worry about fixing a loose shingle. Rather all hands

must put forth a total effort to hold back the tide. Just now when a wave of lawlessness is sweeping across our society, wherein there is a systematic effort to overthrow the ordinances of God with respect to marriage and home as well as many other areas of life (and the Women's Liberation movement is one facet of this effort), the church should do all in its power to resist this movement and not waste time and effort on "fixing shingles" — which will only accommodate the enemy. And, as the Rev. J. Eppinga once pointed out in *The Banner*, in this age of Women's Liberation and the quest for egalitarianism, the church must be doubly sure that it's not following the spirit of the age in its decisions. For it is beyond dispute that this issue did not arise from a renewed study or understanding of the Word, but from the influence of emancipation in society around us. That means, to my way of thinking, that this is a most inopportune time to try to settle this issue, the more so since putting women in the diaconate is not really going to change a thing as far as the impact of the church on the world goes. Any woman (or man for that matter) who wants to be of greater service

to the Lord can find opportunities galore to do so in the church. And many women are doing exactly that.

3. We ought not to overlook the plight of the home in today's society. Many marriages and homes are in trouble today, also in the church. A lot of factors contribute to this, but one major one is surely the prevalence of mothers working outside the home, even when there are growing children. When such is the case, why would the church, of all agencies, want to abet even slightly such an evil? Ought not the church to do all in its power to resist further erosion of the home? Would this not be the greatest contribution the church could make at such a crucial stage in history? Here the words of Paul come to mind: "Train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God" (Titus 2:4, 5 NIV). If there ever was a time for the church to emphasize this up-to-date teaching of God's Word, it is today. Indeed, the church needs to hear it herself. If she doesn't, who will? ●

NOORDELOOS CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH 1857-1982

The beginning of the Noordeloos Christian Reformed Church is closely associated with its first minister, the Rev. Koene Vanden Bosch. In 1856 the early settlers, living in an area approximately four miles northwest of Zeeland, Michigan, learned that the Rev. K. Vanden Bosch, then serving the Christelyke Afgescheidenen Church of Noordeloos in South Holland, the Netherlands, planned to migrate, along with a goodly number of his congregation, to the United States and to settle in the Zeeland area. These energetic settlers petitioned Classis Holland of the Reformed Church in America at its April 2nd meeting in Zeeland, to organize a congregation to be known as the Noordeloos Reformed Church. The name Noordeloos also became the name of the settlement. Classis Holland acceded to the request and appointed the Rev. C. Vander Meulen to effect the organization. Upon his arrival the Rev. K. Vanden Bosch was installed as the first minister of the church. At the August 20 classis meeting of that year he was welcomed into the fellowship of the classis as a "precious reinforcement, obtained of the Lord, for the work of the Church."

However, in the course of less than a year, the Rev. K. Vanden Bosch found there were practices within the Reformed Church with which he could

not agree. His protests concerning some of these practices were not sustained by the Classis. This led to his decision to secede from the Reformed Church by means of a letter dated March 14, 1857. Classis Holland at its April 8 meeting accepted his letter of secession as a notification of his separation from the Reformed Church. The Noordeloos Christian Reformed Church dates its origin as the date of Rev. K. Vanden Bosch's letter of secession. While the letter makes no mention of the congregation, we know from reliable sources that most of the congregation also seceded from the Reformed Church and began to hold services in the Vanden Bosch home. Some time later a church building was constructed of logs. In September of 1874 the congregation decided to build a new church on the present church property and in 1875 it erected its first church-owned property. ●

March 14 marked the 125th anniversary of the beginning of the Christian Reformed denomination as well as of the Noordeloos congregation. Congregational celebrations are planned during the months of April and May. ●

Note: This information was submitted to The Outlook by the committee planning the celebration.

The Ascended Lord Blessing His Church

John Blankespoor

And he led them out as far as Bethany and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

Luke 24:50-52

Some experiences we never forget. God did not want the disciples to forget what they saw and experienced when Jesus left them. And He wants it, through their account, to be just as real for us who are still living on this earth.

With outstretched arms Jesus blessed the disciples, and *while* He was doing so He left them and ascended into heaven. God wanted Luke to tell that to the church of all the ages — including ours.

Forty days had passed since Jesus arose from the grave and conquered death. During this period He showed Himself at least ten times to the disciples and other believers. Nowhere do we read that unbelievers ever saw the risen Lord. Unbelief never comes to the resurrection. But now Jesus' work on earth was finished. It was time to go to heaven and to continue His work from the heavenly "headquarters." The work of Calvary was history. The atonement had been made for His people. It would be of infinite value to all of His people for eternity. He had also risen from the grave and broken the bars of death. That too was part of His great work on earth. But He would do still more. (We must be careful that we do not become unbalanced, as some Christians appear to be, emphasizing almost exclusively His work on Calvary.) He would continue working in the great program of His Father, the salvation of sinners, working in the history of the world through the entire New Testament age which would culminate in His return and renewal of heaven and earth.

When the time came for Him to leave in body this earthly sphere of labor He took the disciples with Him to the well-known Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. Does it perhaps have some symbolic significance that He ascended, not from a valley, but from a mountain which was pointing heavenward? Having spoken a few words to the disciples, He suddenly began to go up into the air. Who had ever seen anything like this before? There was no launching pad for a take-off or mechanical rocket-booster with

thousands of pounds of thrust power. It was a miracle. The disciples must have watched in utter amazement. Slowly he ascended, higher and higher. What particularly interests us now is that *while* He was going up His hands were outstretched, and He was blessing those who were left behind. Why did He do it? What does it mean for us?

Recall the work of the priests in the Old Testament. Among their many tasks, no doubt the main one was the bringing of sacrifices to God for the people. Following the sacrifices and offering of incense in connection with them, the high priests regularly blessed the people. Remember that when people waited for Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, to bless them, he was not able to speak because of his unbelief.

It was important that the pronouncing of the blessing followed the sacrifices. Sinners can be blessed only when their sins have been forgiven by way of the sacrifices.

What did the high priest say in the blessing with his outstretched arms? In Numbers 6 the Lord had told Aaron what the high priest must say:

The LORD (Jehovah) bless you and keep you,
The LORD make His face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you;
The LORD lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.

Jehovah, the faithful covenant God, was making these great promises. He assured the people of His blessing and protection. This did not mean that no adversity would trouble their lives. It meant that at all times He would protect them. The "face" of God is the "personality" of God, expressing His love. As the smiling face of a mother can show her love to her child the Lord says to us in this benediction, "I love you, you are mine, and I am going to give you peace." These words are apparently a repetition of thought to emphasize the faithful promises of God to His people. They cover every experience in their lives, at all times and in all circumstances. Believing and enjoying those promises, we have the peace which Paul later describes as surpassing all understanding. This was the benediction, spoken by high priests thousands of times through many centuries.

Jesus is the great High Priest — "Our Only High Priest," says the Heidelberg Catechism. He had paid for sin, once and for all, for all His people. And He had conquered death. As a result, blessings will be poured out upon the church, the body of believing sinners.

Did Jesus literally speak these words of Numbers 6 when He was going up into heaven and leaving His disciples? We don't know. We may be sure that this was the meaning of the blessing given with His outstretched arms.

Those arms remained stretched out while He was ascending, clearly suggesting that He will go on giving the benediction of Numbers 6. In heaven He is Lord of Lords. But even in His kingship He continues to be our only High Priest, always blessing us.

How amazed those watching disciples must have been to see Jesus ascend in this way. How their eyes must have remained glued on Him and His outstretched arms — until a cloud obscured their view. They knew that even then, above that cloud, those arms were extended and the Lord was pouring out showers of blessings.

To whom do these promised blessings come? They came to the disciples. But the disciples were the representatives of the church — as well as her "pillars." Therefore, in a broad sense, the recipients of the blessings are all believers. Believers everywhere and in all times, of all races and colors. The blessings are for His people in persecution and distress, for widows and widowers, for lonely and destitute, for burdened, troubled and depressed. We face the question, "Are you looking up at the Lord as He ascended to heaven with outstretched arms, giving His blessings?" Do you hear Him saying to you, "The Lord blesses you, and keeps you; the Lord causes His face to shine upon you and is gracious unto you; the Lord lifts up His countenance upon you and gives you peace?" He is able to convey those blessings because as the Ascended Lord He has all power in heaven and on earth.

The disciples must have sensed something, perhaps much, of the meaning of this event. Previously when He had at times left them they were somewhat lost, lonely and depressed. Now they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. They did not feel left behind as if the Lord had forgotten them or left them to themselves.

I think of the Ethiopian eunuch who went on his way rejoicing. I hear Paul, while in prison, saying to us, "Rejoice in the Lord always." I hear the Lord Himself saying, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Again Paul wrote, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Christ ascending into heaven was our forerunner, going ahead to prepare a place for us. At the same time He does not want us to feel left behind or forgotten. As our ascended Lord He says, in effect, "Remember what the disciples saw when I ascended, and remember what I said and say."

The Lord blesses you and keeps you
The Lord causes His face to shine upon you
and is gracious unto you,
The Lord is lifting up His countenance upon
you and giving you peace. ●

Chariots of Fire

David B. Cummings

Rev. David B. Cummings is the pastor of the Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Hanover Park, Illinois.

While The Outlook does not ordinarily place movie reviews, the Editorial Committee decided to print this excellent analysis of one of the most extraordinary films, which has received high praise from Christian magazines as well as secular critics. This material first appeared in Grace Church's February Monthly Newsletter, The Lampstand, and was sent to us by its pastor.

The mood of the film carries with it all the beauty, intensity, pain, laughter, and joy of reality. It can do this because it is rooted in reality — the two main characters are historical figures who both ran for Great Britain in the 1924 Pans Olympics. The beauty shimmers across the screen as we look across the heathered hill of Scotland in the morning mist. The beauty continues as we see the smooth strides of the Olympic track team beating out their paces along the shores where breakers meet beach. And the beauty merges with intensity as we enter into two lives that are reaching, and straining every nerve and muscle for victory. One, because he demanded it of himself. The other, because he knew that when he did his very best, he would feel God's pleasure.

The story accurately portrays the atmosphere of Great Britain in the 1920's — her steamships, her national pride, and her Cambridge, with its traditions, stuffed-shirt professors, and dimly lit chapels. The story is also accurate in portraying its main character, Eric Liddell, as a committed Christian. Eric Henry Liddell was born at Tientsin, in North China, on January 16, 1902, the second son of missionary parents. His parents returned to China, and left Eric in the homeland hills of Scotland. There Eric distinguished himself as a rugby player for the

team that represented Scotland in international games, and as a world class sprinter. His specialties were the 100 meter and 100 yard dashes and the 225 yard dash. (And yes, the movie is accurate to the "T" in its depiction of Eric's race at the Scottish championships when he is knocked on the ground and is 20 yards behind!) When he was not involved in track meets, Eric was training for the Olympics. When he was not training for the Olympics, he was involved in evangelistic preaching. As a "muscular Christian" and front-page athlete, there was a category of hard-hats, miners, and students with whom he had a ready audience that many others did not have.

The other runner is Harold M. Abrahams, the captain of the British team. His father was a Lithuanian Jew, who had worked to give his son every opportunity to achieve wealth, happiness, and success. But, Harold feels put down. He feels keenly the prejudices expressed against him — whether by a stare, a glance, or a word. Set against an Anglo Saxon culture with its long heritage of tradition, Harold is bent on penetrating through and violating tradition in order that he might gain success. Thus, he acquires his own personal coach, the colorful Italian-Arab Sam Mussaybini, who shaves every unrefined edge off his running style and seconds off his times. The contrast in motives between Harold and Eric is vivid, persuasive, and intense, yet accomplished with sympathy and sensitivity. The review in *Christianity Today* states this point well.

Empathy is generated for both characters through their races. The audience can experience through slow-motion photography, precise camera angles, and superb use of the synthesizer the pain and joy they might otherwise miss. They understand what a race really means to these runners. We feel their intense desires, both on the track and in their personal lives. When Abrahams sits alone in the stands and the audience flashes back with him to his moments of defeat, in so doing, this becomes more than a mere sports film. Running effects

those runners' entire lives... (*Christianity Today*, Jan. 22, 1982).

The climax in the film is certainly the confrontation of Eric by Great Britain's Olympic committee, including the Crown Prince of Wales, and Eric's subsequent race. The Olympics' preliminary heats in the 100 meters were scheduled for Sunday, the Christian's Sabbath. When Eric had found this out, he had stated with simplicity the convictions of his conscience grounded in the Word of God, "I'm not running." The 100 meters was his best event, and the event in which he had the best chance of bringing home Olympic gold and glory for his nation. All the pressure of his nation and its royal authority seek to persuade him to run the Sunday race. But Eric serves a higher authority. Here is Christian conviction, integrity, and humility portrayed and lived at its best.

Eric does, however, begin to train for another race, the 400 meters, which will not be run on Sunday. That race was, on film and in the record books, unforgettable. As Harold Abrahams himself stated years later, "In that race, drawn in the outside position, Liddell ran from start to finish with an inspired and passionate intensity, which gave him a decisive victory in the world's record time of 47.6 seconds" (*Sunday Times*, May 20, 1945).

Are there any points at which the film can be faulted? There are several. After the brave win from 20 yards behind, Eric was actually unconscious for one-half hour. The movie pictures him up and about, although exhausted, after a few minutes. This is one of a number of short-falls from historical accuracy. Our other criticism centers on the shallowness of the Christian message depicted as coming from Eric's lips. If it is a non-Christian producer which has influenced this shallowness, we can understand their offense at the cross. If any Christians involved watered it down so as not to offend, then they should be ashamed for such timidity. In the movie Eric's message does not transcend that of the power-of-positive-thinking message of Norman

Vincent Peale or Robert Schuller. In the movie the message consists of "The Kingdom of God is Within You." "Christ Loves You." "The Power is Within You." In reality, it is doubtful that this was Eric's message. Eric Liddell was a Christian who knew and proclaimed unashamedly the cross of Christ and His power to save sinners. Here we have a real hero for our children. Here is the real story of a Christian whose life typifies that of many ordinary Christians who will never have a movie made about them, who have stood for their convictions, who have set apart the Lord's Day entirely for Him. Here is a story the ordinary person feels, because, though not flawless the story is conveyed in a personal unforgettable way, that primarily because Liddell himself is unforgettable.

"Eric Liddell," said Harold Abrahams, "was a man whose intense spiritual convictions contributed largely to his athletic triumphs. While his ability must have been great, but for his profound intensity of spirit, he surely could not have achieved so much" (*Sunday Times*, May 20, 1945). As Liddell's biographer and fellow evangelistic campaigner, David Thomson has gone on to comment, "Abrahams is right. The whole secret of Liddell's life — and of the personal influence and character which meant so much more than all his speaking and all his athletic triumphs — was the relationship in which he stood to Jesus Christ. He was a living exemplification of that saying of his Master — "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." From first to last he was a Christian — clear, convinced, consecrated. The background of his early home, the strength and beauty of his parent's Christian life, the decision [to serve Christ and His gospel] to which he came in early manhood, the resolution that marked him all the way through, to learn from everyone who had anything to teach him as to how the life of Christian discipleship might be made more vital and more effective — all these played their part. He was Christ's man — first and last — and whatever he put his hand to he did with all his might." ☉

ADAM AND EVE – then and now

John Vander Ploeg

“Who was the first man? Adam.”

It was just as simple and settled as that in our childhood, long ago. You see, that's what we learned at home, at church, and at the Christian school. And there was no question about it, because that's what the Bible taught.

But today – well, that's a different story.

Kuitert on Adam and Eve

Listen, for example, to Dr. H. M. Kuitert, professor of ethics at the Free University of Amsterdam. Kuitert's book, *Do You Understand What You Read?*, calls the historicity of Adam and Eve into question. The book was first published in the Netherlands with more than twenty thousand copies being sold in a little more than a year. Kuitert writes:

“That the Bible is time-bound occasions many questions about how it should be understood. It is to these questions that the rest of this little book is devoted. The Bible contains any number of images that witness to a time long past and to situations and customs that have become foreign to us. The entire lifestyle and culture of the Bible bear the stamp, from beginning to end, of a time when people experienced their world in a way different from our way of experiencing it. . . .

“For example, the biblical writer quite naturally tells of the firmament that God made (Gen. 1:6). But in our way of seeing things, there is no such thing as a firmament. The blue expanse that stretches out over our world is not a blue umbrella or cosmic dome; it is a light effect, like the light effect of water, making it look green or blue. Now this, of course, is not an example that is going to create a great deal of misunderstanding. We can read about the firmament and go on reading without having missed the intention of the writer at all.

“The same Bible writer tells us about the first man, Adam, who lived with his wife Eve in the Garden of Eden as the first married couple. But no matter how far we go back in history, we do not find any hint of a single, original mar-

ried couple in a Garden of Eden. On the contrary, the oldest humanity that we have been able to find evidences of appears to be of a very primitive sort, hardly like the neatly portrayed people of Genesis. Now there are believing readers of the Bible who have no difficulty at all with the account of Adam and Eve, any more than they have problems with reference to the firmament. They insist that the living world in which the writer of Genesis expresses himself as he proclaims God as the creator was a world in which a first married couple was as much a natural part as was a firmament. Both elements fit the picture people had of the world at that time. . . .

“But many devout Bible readers feel that the question of Adam is a different kind of question than the question of the firmament. In their judgment, anyone who thinks the question of Adam is the same kind as the question of the firmament misreads the Bible. Thus, this single example places us in the center of the problem of how to interpret the Bible. Which reader has understood what he has read – the Christian who says that Adam and Eve have the same reality as the firmament, or the Christian who says that while the firmament is not a literal firmament, Adam and Eve are literally the first married couple of the human race?” (*Do You Understand What You Read?* pp. 36, 37).

Kuitert's question is significant and revealing.

The historicity of Adam and Eve are obviously under attack from those who profess to be Reformed.

Part of a Pattern

This calling into question of the historicity of the opening chapters of Genesis, of the account of Adam and Eve, of the serpent, and of the fall, is obviously part of a pattern – something that bodes no good for the future of the historic Christian faith. The departure of Kuitert and his followers from our convictions of long standing about these matters is by no means an isolated phenomenon.

To call attention once again to what is happening today with respect to the hermeneutical question, or

the interpretation of Scripture, may be thought by some to be superfluous. There is nothing that Satan, the archenemy of the truth, would rather have men think. Already in Paradise, in the form of a serpent, Satan made a wedge and scored a victory by subtly introducing an apostate hermeneutics when he asked, *Yea, hath God said. . . ?*

The interpretation one makes of Scripture, not only in its opening chapters but throughout, is crucial. It is precisely at this point that conservatives or evangelicals and liberals or the moderns come to the crossroads and a parting of the ways. As one writer recently observed, the issue is ultimately as simple as this: one will find himself either on the side of Jesus Christ and say, *Thy Word is truth*; or on the side of Pontius Pilate and say, *What is truth?*

One of the first principles of sound hermeneutics is that we are always to compare Scripture with Scripture if we are to read and interpret the Bible aright. In other words, there is no better commentary on the Bible than the Bible itself. However, the pattern that is emerging with increasing clarity in our time is a reading and interpretation of Scripture by comparing it with man's reason, his findings in the laboratory, and even the apodictic pronouncements of a pseudo-science, instead of the other way around.

That the repudiation of Adam and Eve as historical persons is part of a growing pattern is documented by a recent book, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches*, by Jeffrey K. Hadden, professor of Sociology and Urban Studies at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana. From a 1965 survey or poll of the clergy of six major Protestant denominations, Dr. Hadden reports certain significant findings about the matter we have in mind. Ministers polled included "a 'random' sample of parish clergy and the entire population of campus clergy" of the following denominations: Methodist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, American Baptist, American Lutheran, and Missouri Synod Lutheran.

Concerning the statement, "Adam and Eve were historical persons," following are the percentages of those who were in agreement: Missouri Synod Lutheran — 90; American Lutheran — 49; American Baptist — 45; Methodist — 18; Presbyterian, U.S.A. — 16; Episcopalian — 3.

Another related statement in Dr. Hadden's poll was the following: "Scriptures are the inspired and inerrant Word of God not only in matters of faith but also in historical, geographical, and other secular matters." Percentages of the clergy agreeing with this statement were as follows: Missouri Synod Lutheran — 76; American Baptist — 33; American Lutheran — 23; Methodist — 13; Presbyterian, U.S.A. — 12; Episcopalian — 5. Also other interesting results of Dr. Hadden's poll are provided in his book (*The Gathering Storm in the Churches*, Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y., \$1.95).

It would be especially interesting to know how the percentage of the clergy of our own denomination would compare if we had been included in Dr. Hadden's survey. Because we do not live in a vacuum, we ought to pray fervently and also be on our

guard lest this new hermeneutics (really not new at all!) takes its toll among us also.

Jesus, Luke, and Paul

There should be no doubt that if Adam and Eve were not historical persons who once lived in a literal Paradise, then the plain language of Scripture is no longer trustworthy, and that also a long line of others before us have been badly deceived by this language of the Bible with its meaning so obviously on the surface.

Most serious of all is the fact that then our Lord himself was in error when He accepted the Genesis account of Adam and Eve at its face value. What did Jesus mean — if not that Adam and Eve were literal persons in Paradise — when He said: "But from the beginning of the creation, male and female made he them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife. . . . What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 1:6-9). Can we in good faith come to any other conclusion than this, that Jesus accepted the Genesis account of Adam and Eve as literal history?

That the reality of Adam as a historical person is being called into question or denied is so serious also because it tampers with the truth of the genealogy of Christ as it is recorded in Scripture. If Adam was not a real person, then we can no longer put stock in what Luke tells us about the Savior's lineage as follows:

"And Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat . . . the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God" (Luke 3:28-38).

Finally, if Adam and Eve never lived as real persons, what happens to Paul's teaching about all men being lost in Adam and of all believers being saved in Christ?

The first Adam, as the head of the covenant of works, and Christ, as the head of the covenant of grace, appear side by side in Scripture. How can we deny the existence of the one and at the same time cling for our salvation to the existence of the other? Paul writes about this as follows:

"For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many" (Rom. 5:15); "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22).

Adam and Jesus appear side by side in Scripture as it unfolds the marvelous story of sin and grace. These two stand or fall together. God's revelation is an unbreakable whole. The rejection of any one part of it eventually leads to the loss of all of it. That price is too high to pay! ●

This is an editorial from The Banner of June 26, 1970 by our former editor who was previously The Banner's editor. It is reprinted by permission.



Letters to Barbara, a Novel by Glenn Meeter. 263 pages, 1981. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. \$12.95. Reviewed by John Vander Ploeg.

Once again to spend a few hours in the town of Lansing (Illinois), to visit once more in the home of Glenn Meeter's grandparents, and also once again to be at the church where I served as the author's pastor in his boyhood days, now more than thirty years ago — all of which the reading of this his novel made possible — was for me decidedly not an unpleasant task.

Glenn Meeter is now a professor of English at Northern Illinois University in De Kalb, Illinois. Although *Letters to Barbara* is his first novel, he has previously written short stories published in *Atlantic Monthly*, *Redbook*, and other magazines.

In our days in Lansing the Meeters had an extensive onion-set business there as well as a canning factory in Wisconsin. They generously supplied our family with sauerkraut and graciously kept on doing so even though, as they one day informed us, our ungrateful young son had told Glenn at school, "Don't let your Dad send us any more of that stuff." For anyone familiar with the scene and the author's background, memories multiply in the reading of his absorbing story from start to finish.

While he may not receive the acclaim accorded to a Peter De Vries or a Fred Manfred (Feike Feikema), (for whom Calvin College, to put it mildly, should certainly not roll out the red carpet when they appear there) Glenn Meeter does reveal a literary ability that may well warrant the appearance of other books to come.

However, with all due appreciation for the good in *Letters to Barbara*, this reviewer cannot escape the conviction that Glenn Meeter hardly does full justice to the sturdy stock with its Reformed heritage that produced him. After all, notwith-

standing their follies and foibles, these were the folk who also produced such worthies as Dr. H. Henry Meeter and Dr. Cornelius Van Til (the latter from neighboring Highland, Indiana). *Letters to Barbara* could be received with better grace if it accentuated the positive instead of or as well as the opposite.

Unfortunately, Meeter's story is not altogether free from a tinge of profanity, a concession to realism now being justified by the avant-garde as being inescapable in literary art, but fortunately still taboo for a choice minority of good writers.

Adrian Vanden Vaarten, chief character in *Letters to Barbara*, gives a graphic account of his growing infatuation with the attractive black girl, Barbara Robinson, with whom he worked for a summer as a fellow supervisor at Hoover Park in the neighboring city, Calumet (Calumet City, Illinois). For some reason, the plus factors in the story are obviously weighted on the side of Adrian's black summer co-worker, Barbara, and her father, a Pentecostal minister, with the negative factors on the side of Orangetown (Lansing, Ill.). It may be observed also that the racial tension and the incidence of real or possible miscegenation covered only a narrow segment of the life of Glenn Meeter's early years in the area of which he writes.

With his literary standing now fairly well assured by this appearance of his first novel, Glenn Meeter might do well to write a sequel, also with his Orangetown roots in mind, covering a broader spectrum of life there in which he probably could find far more to appreciate than what comes to the surface in *Letters to Barbara*. A suggested title for what could be an outstanding novel (for whatever the suggestion may be worth): *Orangetown, U.S.A.*

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WRITINGS OF THE PROFESSORS OF CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, compiled and edited by Peter DeKlerk, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1980, paper. Reviewed by the editor.

This almost two-inch thick paperback which required almost eight years to compile lists all of the writings of all of the professors who were appointed to teach at Calvin Theological Seminary in its over 100-year history through 1979. This incredibly large labor will continue to be very useful to anyone who is trying to find the writings of any of these men. The list of each author's writings is preceded by a photograph and brief biography and the writings are listed year by year. Although many of the writings are brief articles or book reviews, a number of books also appear in the lists. Especially impressive is

the remarkable amount of literary production of some who taught over the past century. Readers may be interested in the length of some of the longer lists in pages: L. Berkhof, 52; G.E. Boer (the first professor), 43; C. Bouma, 34; G.D. DeJong, 98; P.Y. DeJong, 59; G.K. Hemkes, 28; W. Hendriksen, 36; D.H. Kromminga, 53; J.H. Kromminga, 25; B.K. Kuiper, 27; M. Monsma, 35; L. Praamsma, 57; H. Schultze, 43; M.H. Woudstra, 31.



The Miraculous Shroud?

I enjoyed Mr. D. K. Tennant's article, "The Miraculous Shroud?," in the March *Outlook*. One other point which he did not fully develop regarding the believer's approach to the shroud is as follows below. Perhaps either you or Mr. Tennant would like to make an additional comment.

The salvation of the believer is based upon the propitiation of Christ as the sacrifice without spot or blemish. Only He has been able to keep the law, and our justification is based on His righteousness. Thus, if it could be shown that He had in any way broken the law, our hopes are dashed. There could be no salvation.

The second commandment is clear. Could it be that Christ could make an image or likeness of Himself? God forbid! The shroud has become an idol. Could Christ lead us into idolatry? The truth is that this shroud is an unholy thing and can only be seen by Christians as a challenge to the deity of Christ.

I do discern that the prohibition expressed in the second commandment, even though spelled out quite clearly in the Westminster and Heidelberg Catechisms, is not fully understood by many in the congregations as evidenced by the plethora of pictures of Christ among them.

Most cordial regards,
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