

lations, in our distribution of health care and other communal assets. We cannot see our way clear to these goals on our own. And yet, as our text promises, we take up the whole armor of God—in worship, in study, in political activism, in interpersonal and social relations—“so that [we] may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”

There is a promise and a hope implied here, both of which are denied to those who see life as nothing but “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” Armed with our Christian hope and promise, let us pray that the light of God’s Spirit will shine before us as we go out into the darkness of a fallen world..

BOOK REVIEW

The Private World of Mrs. Packard, by Barbara Sapinsley. (New York: Paragon House, 1991. 220 pp. Illustrated.

Reviewed by Dr. James Beck, Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary.

Every time discouragement sets in because of the slow progress of egalitarian ideas, we ought to be able to reach over our shoulders and pull from the shelf a book such as Sapinsley’s. The story of Mrs. Packard (1816-1897), set in the American midwest, should remind all of us how much has been accomplished by our forebears.

Elizabeth Packard’s struggles are well-known in the history of American psychiatry. She was committed by her Presbyterian pastor husband to the Illinois State Asylum for the Insane in Jacksonville. There she lived for three and one half years (1860-1863) before being released, because Illinois officials could no longer maintain that she was insane. She travelled back to the Packard manse by herself. While walking home from the train station, she chatted with a young lad who later turned out to be her own son. He had grown so in her years away that she did not recognize him.

What did the Rev. Theophilus Packard have against his wife? “She disputed him on Calvinist theory, refusing to believe that her babes were born damned or that women had no right to hold and express their own opinions” (p. 5). Elizabeth made the mistake of participating in adult Sunday School class discussions. Fellow church members did not seem to mind her thoughtful challenges to established doctrines, but her husband was not at all pleased. Theophilus was an oldline Calvinist who could hold to some progressive ideas, such as the need for the abolition of slavery, but who could not tolerate any freedom of expression for his wife.

Matters did not improve around the Packard

manse after Elizabeth was released from the asylum. Soon she found herself locked into her room with the one window to the outside nailed shut. She managed to smuggle out a note to a passerby who alerted the local judge as to her imprisonment. A trial followed at which Theophilus was informed he did not have the right to imprison his wife in her own home. The Packards remained separated for the remainder of their lives. Elizabeth refused to consider a divorce.

She began to write of her dreadful experiences. She supported herself with her earnings and was to become a widely known advocate for the insane. She lobbied in many legislatures for improved treatment and protection for those consigned to warehouses for the mentally ill.

The stakes were high for Elizabeth Packard, who raised her voice to question theological positions. The stakes are still high when women ask for the opportunity to participate in biblical and theological discussion. But, thanks to Mrs. Packard, women are much less frequently shipped off to asylums for doing so.

NEW STAFF MEMBER: WELCOME, ELAINE TJOELKER!

“I think CBE is in St. Paul!” was Elaine Tjoelker’s reaction one year ago when she first found out she would be moving to the Twin Cities for her husband to finish school. She had hoped to get involved in the local CBE chapter and possibly volunteer some time in the national office.

Happily, this past December, Elaine joined the national office staff as the part-time Public Relations and Special Projects Manager. Her background in fundraising, public relations, and events planning closely matched CBE’s need to organize outreach efforts, fundraising, the speaker’s bureau, and upcoming conferences.

Elaine grew up in Pittsburgh, is a graduate of Calvin College, and comes to us by way of Knoxville, Tennessee and Madison, Wisconsin.

CLARIFICATION

The sale price of \$5.00 each for EQUAL TO SERVE, by Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, is of the remaining hardcover copies. When this supply runs out, our book service will carry the paperback edition (the only edition now available in bookstores).