

# he tandard earer

**A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE**

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## Meditation

## Lying Prophets and Lying Wonders

Rev. M. Schipper

*"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee."*

Deuteronomy 13:1-5.



A word of warning, you say, to an ancient people; but which has no significance for the church of another, a new dispensation?

Nothing could be farther from the truth!

Not only is the people of God one in all ages, but the word of warning is echoic as it is addressed to the church of the new era. True, the words are slightly different, but the meaning and implications are precisely the same.

Listen to the apostle Paul (II Thess. 2:7-12): "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who letteth will let until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Or, hear the warning which the Lord Jesus gave to his disciples while delineating on the signs that would be precursory to his parousia. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; in so much that, if were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before." (Matt. 24:23-25).

And if you will receive it, pay close attention to the last prophetic announcement of Scripture, as foretold by the seer of Patmos (Rev. 13:13-14): "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

Awesome, indeed, shall be the power of the Antichrist, who also shall perform wonders and signs, that many may be carried away in a great apostasy!

Clear it should be that what Moses declared to that ancient people is just as pertinent to the present generation as it was to them.

Lying prophets and lying wonders!

Who and what are they?

That we may know who and what they are, it is necessary first to consider who and what are true prophets. And what is so striking in Scripture is the fact that when the true prophets of God appear, most generally you find the false prophets make their appearance with them. We will have occasion to show you presently how true this is. So that it should not be

difficult at all to observe the differences between them.

The true prophet, according to his true nature and calling, was that man of God who was so full of the Word of God and of divine thoughts, that they bubbled over and poured from his mouth. He was not able to contain within him the Word and revelation of God. Moreover, the true prophet was ordained and sent of God to speak his Word. So burdened was he with the Word of God that he could not rest until he had unburdened himself and delivered God's Word to those to whom God had sent him. Authoritatively he could stand before the people and declare: "Thus saith the Lord." Fact is, the Hebrew word which is translated "prophet," comes from a root word, which literally means: "to bubble over." Not only, therefore, was a prophet such a man of God who could predict what was in the future as God desired that his people should know it; but he was mainly one whose calling it was to declare all the counsel of God. And along with that authority to speak the pure Word of God, the prophet was also generally given the power to perform wonders and signs, to confirm the veracity of the Word he was ordained to speak. Men such as Elijah and Elisha are worthy examples of this.

It must be observed, moreover, that true prophecy as well as the Word of God itself, undergoes historical and organical development. Already in the antediluvian world we learn of the prophet Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesying that the Lord was coming in judgment with thousands of angels; while also then we read of the man Noah, who foretold the waters of the flood. But of all the prophets in the old dispensation, none stands out more than Moses, whose prophecies appear as being the basis upon which all that followed stood. It was he also who spoke of the Prophet which was to come, like unto himself, to Whom all would give ear; namely, the Christ of God. In the light of Him, all who preceded were merely types and shadows, while at the same time all their prophecies reflected on Him. While all the old dispensation looked forward to Him, all the new looks back to Him. For in Christ Jesus is all the revelation, the Word of God.

Now, as we said, alongside of the true prophet, the lying prophet with lying wonders appears.

Lying prophets, dreamers of dreams!

That these prophets dreamed dreams, was not in itself evil. That did not make these prophets false prophets. Although a dream was the lowest form of revelation, God also spoke to the true prophets through this medium. But what made dreams of the lying prophets evil was the fact that they were evil dreams. Their contents were false. "Let us go after other Gods, and let us serve them," could not be a revelation of God, but of the evil one. The purpose of their prophecies was not to lead to the true God, but away from Him.



Lying wonders!

We are not told here what these wonders or signs were, but they evidently refer to great acts with mighty power. They were signs and wonders that work. If they failed to work, there would not be much danger in them. They could not serve as a medium to deceive. But, behold, the signs come to pass. They not only claim to have power, these false prophets, but they also are able to display that power.

As we suggested above, the false prophets often appear with the true prophets; and display their powerful signs alongside the display of the wonders performed by the true prophets. Think, for example, of the time when Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh in Egypt. Moses demanded in the Name of God that Pharaoh let the people of Israel go from their bondage. Pharaoh asked for a miracle or sign that Moses spoke in the Name of Jehovah. Aaron was told to cast his rod to the ground before Pharaoh, and behold, it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh called for his sorcerers and magicians to perform their enchantments. They also cast their rods to the ground, and they also became serpents. As the Lord had forewarned, Pharaoh would harden his heart. And the occasion for this hardening of his heart was the fact of the wonder of the magicians. That the power of Moses and Aaron was greater, was displayed in the fact that the rods of the magicians were eaten up by the rod of Aaron. And so it was with the plagues, at least the first two of them, that the magicians were able to duplicate the wonders performed by Moses and Aaron.

Or, think of what we read in Jeremiah 28, where the false prophet Hananiah denies the true prophecy concerning the bondage of Judah in Babylon. Jeremiah had predicted that seventy years shall pass before Judah would return from captivity. Hananiah, however, boldly but falsely predicts that Judah shall return in two years. Jeremiah rebukes Hananiah, saying, "The Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou has taught rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month."

And, if these examples are not enough, note also those which appear in the new dispensation. Alongside Paul the apostle, appear Hymenaeus and Alexander. Beside an Athanasius appears an Arius. Beside an Augustine appears a Pelagius. Beside a Luther appears an Erasmus. Beside a Calvin appears a Servetus. Beside a Gomarus appears an Arminius. Beside those who declare the Word of the Living God in our day are those who prophesy God is dead. And so it shall be unto the time of the end, when the beast and the false prophet shall appear, as is plain from the passage quoted above in Revelation 13.

And what is God's purpose with them?

Never should we conclude that these lying prophets with lying wonders have power of themselves. Awesome as their power may be, and as powerful as their words may seem, they have no power of themselves. Even Satan himself, though he inspires these lying prophets, and exercises his power in them, has no power of himself. Never must we conceive of the power of darkness dualistically, as a power next to God and opposing Him. Though the devil may foolishly imagine that he is powerful to destroy or to frustrate the power and purpose of God, he cannot so much as move without the power of God. Each moment God must sustain him or he cannot continue to be. The same is true also concerning these lying prophets.

Rather must we understand that back of Satan and back of the lying prophets is God, Who realizes His sovereign purpose through them.

That purpose of God is twofold!

In the first place, to prove His people! Not to find out from them whether they love and obey Him. God does not need to find this out. He knows that. He knows what is in man. He knows the end from the beginning. He is the omniscient One. But He proves His people, to bring out of them what He has put in them by His grace. His purpose is that they shall serve Him, and that, too, by denying the idol which the lying prophet proposes. According to this purpose they shall become confirmed in their faith and love toward their God.

But in the second place, just as sovereign is His purpose in the lying prophets with lying wonders, to lead through their deception those reared in the organical development of His covenant who are wicked and perverse, to their destruction. Indeed, it is not only true that God realizes this purpose through the pure preaching of His Word, which is not only a savor of life unto life, but also a savor of death unto death. It is just as true that the lying prophet is a divine instrument to lead to a great apostasy. We realize that this truth finds little acceptance in our day and age; but this does not change the truth one whit. We should realize that reprobation is just as divinely sovereign as election. Witness Israel's history as recorded in Holy Scripture. Even with many who were delivered from the bondage in Egypt God was not pleased, and their carcasses fell upon the sands of the wilderness. Witness the great apostasies throughout Church History, as well as in our own day. And do not fail to grasp the significance of the great apostasy that must yet take place in the day of Antichrist as predicted in Revelation 13.

What then should be our attitude toward these false prophets?

Do not listen to them! To give heed to them is to depart from the way of life. Though it is impossible for the church to put them to death, as the church of the old dispensation was commanded to do, for church



and state are no longer one, yet, from a spiritual point of view, as far as the true church of Christ is concerned, these lying prophets with lying wonders will be ineffective when they are given no audience. The Apostle John goes so far as to say, "Do not even allow them to come into your house."

Positively, we will cleave unto our God and His way! God's Word and Law will be our sufficient light, and in

that light we will walk by His grace.

By that same grace, we will appropriate through faith our spiritual weapons necessary to fight for, not against the truth.

In that battle there can be no doubt as to the outcome!

Victory through the way of suffering. Final and glorious salvation, through the way of the antithesis.

## Editorials

# Seminary Graduation

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*



From left to right: Candidates Ronald Van Overloop, Marvin Kamps, and Wayne Bekkering.

Undoubtedly, one of the highlights of our 1972 Synod was the examination and graduation of our three new candidates for the ministry, Messrs. Wayne Bekkering, Marvin Kamps, and Ronald Van Overloop. It is always a highlight when in our small denomination, with its small school, the Lord gives us new candidates for the ministry of the gospel. This year, however, was something special because there were three graduates. This is something that has not happened for many years in our churches. In fact, there are many adults among our membership who cannot remember such an event, so long ago it is that this has happened. There is, therefore, abundant reason for gratitude to our faithful covenant God for this evidence of His loving kindness and care for our churches and our seminary. I cannot refrain from adding to this the reminder that these three candidates are also the first products of our combined pre-seminary and seminary program which was begun,

on a trial basis, in 1968. This is also significant.

Preceding the happy event of graduation, there was a rather grueling schedule of oral examinations for the three graduates, a schedule which occupied the first three days of Synod's sessions almost entirely. Immediately after Synod was organized on Wednesday, June 7, each of the graduates was required to preach a 45 minute sermon on a text assigned by the Theological School Committee. In connection with this, the student was also required to submit a written outline for perusal by a committee of Synod. A committee of two was appointed to advise Synod on each sermon. By mid-afternoon of Wednesday this part of the examination was completed, and Synod had approved the sermons and decided, upon the advice of these committees, to proceed with the rest of the examinations. Thereupon Synod recessed in order to give its four advisory committees opportunity to work and to prepare their reports, so that Synod might



proceed with its other work, once the examinations were finished.

All day Thursday, from 8:30 in the morning to 5:00 in the afternoon was devoted to an oral examination in dogmatics. The three students were examined together, with questions being asked by the professor in dogmatics. At the end of each segment of the examination opportunity was given for any delegate of Synod to ask further questions on any answer given by a student which was not entirely clear or satisfactory to that delegate. On Friday morning, June 9, there were further examinations (again conducted by the professors in these branches) in New Testament History, Church History, Church Polity, and Old Testament History. For the first time this year there were no oral examinations in Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis or in Greek and New Testament Exegesis. These two examinations, according to a decision of the 1971 Synod, were written. The students were assigned passages of Scripture in advance by the Theological School Committee; and committees of Synod were appointed to advise Synod as to the quality of these written examinations. The oral examination of the students was concluded with an examination in *Practica* (practical things) by the Reverend C. Hanko. At the conclusion of this long schedule of oral examinations, Synod in executive session and by ballot approved all three young men unanimously and declared them eligible for a call from one of our congregations on July 7.

Thereupon the candidates and the visitors were called back in to Synod, the president of Synod informed the candidates of Synod's decision, addressed them with fitting words of congratulation and exhortation, the gathering sang the doxology, and prayer of thanksgiving and intercession was offered by the Reverend J. Heys, Synod's second clerk. This is always a highly emotional moment, and this year was certainly no exception. It struck me that the president

of our Synod, Reverend C. Hanko, is our oldest minister in years of service in the ministry. He graduated in 1929. He addressed our newest candidates, and his long years of experience were reflected in the remarks which he addressed to them. When the delegates and visitors, along with the professors, were given the opportunity to congratulate the newly declared candidates for the ministry, there were many smiles of joy and many wishes for the Lord's blessing, but also few dry eyes.

The Graduation Exercises were held in the auditorium of the First Protestant Reformed Church on the evening of June 13. It was a warm and humid summer evening. But a large audience — the largest audience for seminary graduation in my memory — attested to the interest of our people in this event. Reverend H. Veldman, President of the Theological School Committee, was chairman for the evening. The program was interspersed with singing from our Psalter by the audience and musical numbers by the Hope Heralds. Candidate R. VanOverloop spoke in behalf of the graduates on the subject, "Continuing In The Things Learned." His address appears elsewhere in this issue. It was this reporter's turn this year to speak in behalf of the faculty; and he spoke on the subject, "New Theology And Old." His address will appear in the August issue of our *Standard Bearer*. At the conclusion of the program the candidates were given their well-earned diplomas. They then received congratulations from the large audience present.

A snapshot of the candidates accompanies this article, courtesy of the Reverend Dale Kuiper.

It is our prayer that the Lord will soon give these three candidates a place in the ministry of our churches, and that He will give them a long and fruitful ministry.

This was indeed a highlight of this year's Synod, and a highlight for our churches.

Thanks be to God!

## Synod of 1972--A Summary

[Note: Your editor is writing this report as a substitute. Prof. Hanko had persuaded our Stated Clerk, Rev. Dale Kuiper, to report. But Synod did not adjourn until Friday afternoon, June 16. Rev. Kuiper had to return immediately to his congregation in Pella, Iowa, and would not be able to prepare a report in time for our July issue. Hence, he kindly turned over to me his notes. And from these notes, various committee reports, and memory, I am writing this report, so that our readers may be informed as early as possible about various decisions of Synod. HCH]

At the pre-synodical prayer service on Tuesday evening, June 6, the Rev. G. Van Baren, president of the 1971 Synod, ably and forthrightly applied to this year's Synod and its work the words of Isaiah 54:2 and

3, stressing especially our calling to "enlarge the place of thy tent . . . lengthen thy cords . . . strengthen thy stakes," with application to the various items on the agenda of this year's synodical meetings. If I were to



characterize our 1972 Synod, I would say that the delegates listened well to this injunction.

Our Synod this year was positive, forward-looking, careful, thorough, diligent, and unanimous in virtually all major decisions.

That Synod was busy and also very diligent, I think no one present will deny. There was a large amount of work before the delegates. As reported elsewhere, almost all of the first three days of our meetings were occupied with the examination of our three seminary graduates. This meant that advisory committees had to do their work mostly in the evenings or in the early morning hours. It also meant that when Synod reconvened on Monday, June 12, it was still confronted by almost all of its agenda. And the delegates went to work with a will. Our sessions began at 8:30 in the morning, rather than the usual 9 o'clock called for in our Rules. We even began our final day's sessions at 8 o'clock. We also shortened our dinner hour everyday by a half hour. All the delegates remained throughout the sessions. And all participated actively. Interspersed among these busy sessions were such things as evening committee meetings, graduation programs, and *Standard Bearer* staff meeting. Once in a while Synod had to relax its rather exhausting pace simply to catch up with itself and to allow an advisory committee time to meet.

At the same time, Synod was by no means hasty, but careful and thorough. Our president, the Rev. C. Hanko, cut off no discussion, but allowed a thorough airing of views. Synod was not minded to be a rubber stamp for either its standing committees or its advisory committees, as is evident from the fact that no major advice was simply accepted because it was given. More than once the advice of standing committees (such as the Mission Committee and Theological School Committee) was challenged and thoroughly discussed, and sometimes revised or rejected altogether. More than once, too, matters were recommitted to the advisory committees; and then sometimes their advice was rejected or completely overhauled by the delegates. No decisions were taken under pressure of haste to finish the agenda and go home. Synod was certainly mindful of the importance of the matters before it and of the calling to deliberate and decide with earnest carefulness on the matters pertaining to God's cause as represented in our churches.

Yet there was a large degree of unanimity when finally matters were decided. If I am not mistaken, there was only one vote on which a show of hands was required; that was only on a question of the length of a noon recess. More than once I was surprised when, after a discussion which seemed to evidence considerable difference of opinion, the vote was called for, the decision was unanimous or well-nigh so. This was especially true of all the important decisions. Not only does this make for pleasant meetings and a feeling

of unity at the meetings themselves; but it is also, I think, evidence of a large degree of unity in our churches when delegates from East and West and from many localities can come together in such harmony. This is good. And it is certainly reason for gratitude to our God.

Moreover, this Synod was positive and forward-looking. Partly, of course, this was due to the nature of the agenda. There were no items of a negative nature, no protests and appeals before this Synod. All matters pertained to the positive work and calling of our churches. And when the delegates clearly saw our calling to go forward — to enlarge our tent, lengthen our cords, and strengthen our stakes — they so acted. This, too, is reason for thankfulness to our God.

All in all, it was, I believe, a good synod.

So much for general observations.

Now for some specific decisions. In reporting these, I shall follow the order in which these matters were actually treated by Synod. Only the major decisions are summarized here. For the details our readers will have to consult the printed *Acts*, copies of which will again be distributed to all the families in our denomination.

#### *Theological School Matters — Advisory Committee I*

One of the first major items was that of pre-seminary instruction at our Theological School. Last year a pre-seminary program was approved, and a third professor was called; but the pre-sem program was not put in effect when the calls for a third professor were declined. This year Synod decided to initiate the pre-sem program beginning in the fall of this year, with or without a third professor. In addition to our remaining three seminary students, there are six young men waiting and eager to get their pre-seminary training at our school in so far as this is possible. Recognizing this need, and recognizing the fact that this is highly necessary, Synod took the above decision.

At the same time, Synod decided to call a third professor once more, and to stress the urgency of this call in connection with the advancement of our program of theological training. From the nomination presented, Synod voted to extend this call to the Rev. David Engelsma. This year Synod voted for Rev. J. Kortering as first alternate, and Rev. R. C. Harbach as second alternate. It is our earnest prayer that the Lord will provide for our Seminary in this need, and in particular that He will guide Rev. Engelsma in reaching the right decision in this call which, I know, is very difficult for him to consider. Pastor Engelsma will be on vacation for a couple of weeks after Synod; and he was granted permission to take three weeks in the consideration of this call *after* he returns to his flock in Loveland, Colorado. Perhaps we will be able to report his decision in our August issue.



Not a minor matter — either for our school or for my colleague himself — was the item of indefinite tenure for Prof. H. Hanko. How time flies! For seven years already he and I have co-labored. Synod decided to appoint Prof. Hanko to indefinite tenure at our Seminary. About this there was surely no doubt at Synod. And it is reason for gratitude to God for me personally and certainly for our churches that my able and genial colleague announced at a later session his acceptance.

As might be expected, there was a considerable part of Synod's time expended on matters pertaining to our proposed new Seminary Building. I wish to stress that Synod moved very deliberately on these matters. There was lengthy discussion, considerable debate, more than one recommittal for new advice, and not a little revision of the advice in the final decisions of Synod. And yet the final decisions were characterized by unity. Briefly, I can report the following:

1) Heeding three overtures, Synod decided to dispose of the Cambridge Avenue site which had been purchased. I was not present when this decision was taken; but according to Rev. Kuiper's notes, the reasons were two, namely, the problem of property devaluation in that neighborhood, and the fact that the Cambridge site is too small for any possible future building expansion.

2) Nevertheless, Synod was not of a mind to delay the project on this account. Again, after considerable discussion and committee work, though Synod was not in a position to choose from among several available pieces of property in various locations, Synod authorized the School Committee, in conjunction with the Building Committee to be appointed, to purchase a new site, with these limitations: a) The size is to be not less than two acres; b) The cost is not to exceed approximately \$10,000.

3) Synod also approved the basic building plan presented by the Theological School Committee. I cannot draw a picture for you. But I can report that the floor-plan entails approximately 5,000 square feet. There will be 3 classrooms, a separate library room, and an "all-purpose" room (of which one of the chief purposes will be practice preaching!). The *total* cost of the *complete project* will be approximately \$100,000.

4) Synod also authorized the TSC to proceed with this project as soon as possible. In this connection, Synod decided that a sort of "blue ribbon" committee of building contractors and business men should be appointed as a Building Committee. They will devote their sole attention to this matter. In this way the school building project will have competent men in charge, and the Theological School Committee will be able to devote its attention to its proper work, the operation of our school as such.

5) As to finances, the following: a) It was reported that while several larger congregations and many

smaller ones have not yet reported on completed drives, a total of about \$25,000.00 is now on hand in cash and pledges. b) Synod authorized the TSC to proceed with building when 65% of the needed amount is on hand in cash and pledges. c) Synod gave authorization to borrow the remaining amount needed (by mortgage, personal loans, or sale of bonds), with the understanding that the loan(s) will be repaid from future contributions.

All in all, the decisions of Synod in the area of our Theological School were forward-looking. And there is indeed reason for rejoicing that the Lord our God continues to provide for our training of future ministers of the gospel in our churches, men who will be faithful to the Word of God and our Reformed Confessions and who will be capable of preaching the Word and expounding the Scriptures ably to God's people.

#### *Mission Matters — Advisory Committee II*

As might be expected, and as is surely necessary and proper, a large part of Synod's time was spent on various matters brought by our Mission Committee. One cannot but be impressed by the fact that this committee has a tremendous amount of work to do in the course of a year. With its limited man-power — the committee is confined to Classis East — it is almost overwhelmed by the amount and variety of work for which it must care. Perhaps it is time that careful plans be made for a broadening of this committee or for an assignment of part of its work to a committee from the West.

One of the chief items under consideration was a proposal forwarded by the Mission Committee in connection with the call extended to the Rev. Bernard Woudenberg by our Hope Church, Grand Rapids, to be our Home Missionary. Briefly, this proposal included many fine aspects in harmony with the policy adopted in 1965; but it entailed confining the work of the missionary-elect to the Grand Rapids area and to work which was mainly preparatory to the location of mission fields, so that should a field be discovered in the U.S. or Canada, another man would have to be called to labor in that field. This was somewhat different — as all concerned recognized — than that which Synod had in mind in its decisions of 1971. The outcome, after lengthy and basic discussion, was that Synod, while expressing approval of some aspects of this proposal, nevertheless decided that our home missionary must be prepared to labor in any field in the U.S. or Canada. As of this writing, Rev. Woudenberg must still give his decision in regard to the call. Synod expressed the hope that he might see his way clear to accept this call in the light of the above decision; and during the course of Synod's meetings many prayers were offered that the Lord would guide Rev. Woudenberg in this matter and that He would provide for the urgent need of our churches in



fulfilling our mission calling.

Also the work of Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers in the Jamaica Field received considerable attention at Synod. Rev. Lubbers was home on furlough, and was therefore able to report to Synod in person. This was good: for it meant we could receive a first-hand report and could receive full information and raise questions for him to answer. It also gave Rev. Lubbers the opportunity to present his questions and problems and furnish his insights in a way that is not possible in a mere written report. I will not attempt to summarize the lengthy report which Rev. Lubbers gave. He has promised me a couple of articles for the *Standard Bearer* on this subject in the near future. You may look forward to them. I do want to emphasize that one is impressed by the many difficulties confronted by our missionary and his wife in Jamaica in their rather lonely situation, as well as by the hard work and faithful labor expended, sometimes in the face of little *apparent* progress. But there is evidence of gradual progress in Jamaica, and there is reason to believe that some of the long and patient work there will come to fruition in the not too distant future; there are hopeful signs of this. Meanwhile, let us remember that Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers are in need of our constant prayers. Their path in Jamaica is by no means an easy one!

In regard to the Jamaica field, I may report the following decisions:

1) Synod had before it a proposal to call another (younger) man for the Jamaica work to co-labor with Rev. Lubbers. The motivation of this proposal was various. Partly, it was based on the principle that it is proper for *two* missionaries to be sent out together. Partly, the basis lay in the fact that there is simply too much for one man to accomplish alone. Partly, the proposal looked forward to the time when it might not be possible for Rev. Lubbers (who is not exactly a *young* man) to continue in Jamaica, and would thus provide for continuity in the work. This, however, was referred to the Mission Committee for further study and recommendations to next year's synod. It was a matter which appeared in Rev. Lubbers' report, and it was a major proposal not previously submitted to the consistories and classes by way of the Agenda; nor had the Mission Committee expressed itself on the matter. It was, therefore, not ripe for a decision at this time.

2) Synod did, however, make provision for assistance for Rev. Lubbers. It authorized the Mission Committee to send a minister to Jamaica for two three-month periods during the coming year. This, therefore, will certainly provide a measure of help and relief for the time being.

3) The matter of incorporation of the Jamaica churches, a rather involved matter, but nevertheless necessary for formal recognition of the churches and safeguarding of their property and of our investment in

their properties, was before Synod. No progress had been made on this matter by the Mission Committee in the past year. After considerable discussion, the matter was once more returned to the Mission Committee for action. And it is to be hoped that there will be definite progress on this before long. Especially the matter of the church buildings of the churches there has been hampered by lack of progress in this area.

Synod also decided to express to Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers "our deep appreciation for their tireless and strenuous efforts here in Jamaica, assuring them that they have our prayers and love when they return to this most difficult field wherein God has given them fruit upon their faithful labors."

Finally, Synod, in connection with the report of the Foreign Mission Committee about distribution of literature in Indonesia, authorized that committee to investigate further work there along these same lines. Although our churches are very limited in this regard, we may note that at last our FMC has some definite work to perform.

#### *Foreign Correspondence – Advisory Committee III*

This year's Agenda contained a lengthy and detailed report from the Committee for Correspondence with Foreign Churches. This was the main item on which Committee III advised Synod. On some of these matters I hope to inform our readers in greater detail in future issues. Briefly, I may report the following:

1) Synod declined the invitation to send observers to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod of 1972. The grounds for this decision were much along the lines suggested in my earlier editorials on this subject and were those proposed by the Committee for Correspondence.

2) Synod authorized the Committee to continue its contact with the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia by letter and/or tape recordings. It also authorized the committee to make preliminary plans for a face-to-face contact in Australia in the summer of 1973, subject, however, to final approval by the 1973 Synod. This is not by any means a matter of final arrangements. The latter would depend on many things. But the simple fact is that IF such a contact is to be arranged, preliminary arrangements must be made long before the 1973 Synod or it simply cannot be accomplished. The final decision, however, will be strictly up to Synod of 1973, the Lord willing.

3) Synod decided to seek official contact with the Hapdong Presbyterian Church of Korea, in connection with a promising unofficial contact made by the Committee for Correspondence. An invitation was extended to the General Assembly of the Hapdong Church to send two or three official representatives to our churches next year in order to confer about this contact. I cannot report on this matter in detail at this time; it would require too much space. But our readers may look forward to a later report.



4) Synod approved an extensively revised constitution for this committee, a committee which hereafter will be known as the Committee for Contact with Other Churches.

#### *Finances — Advisory Committee IV*

Always at Synod there is one advisory committee whose work is to advise Synod on all financial matters, such as budgets, subsidies, assessments, etc. In connection with this committee's work, I may report the following:

1) Our synodical treasury is in excellent condition, due chiefly to the fact that our churches and our people have admirably met the needs of our various denominational funds, and partly to the fact that it was not necessary to spend all monies which had been budgeted.

2) Provision was made in connection with our Student Aid Fund to give financial assistance to our pre-seminary students.

3) In spite of various increases in budgets, the synodical assessments for the coming fiscal year of 1973 will actually be 50c lower per family than in the previous year. That is something even better than Phase 2 in this era of inflation!

4) The calling church for Synod of 1973 is Hudsonville, Mich.

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In conclusion, I have one critical remark to make in connection with this year's Synod. There was no decision of Synod concerning this; but several times this was remarked about in the course of Synod's work. And it is a remark which all concerned should take to heart — and act accordingly. There was far too much material that was brought to Synod by way of "supplemental reports." Some of it concerned important proposals. Not only does this make Synod's work more difficult, but it is also not a healthy situation because it means that these matters have not been able to be considered previously by consistories and classes. And this is contrary to sound church policy, as well as directly contrary to the rules of Synod regarding the Agenda and proposals of major importance. This ought to be corrected promptly.

But I do not want to end on a negative note. At the conclusion of our 1972 Synod on Friday afternoon, June 16, the delegates had abundant reason to close with the doxology, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," and with prayer of thanksgiving and intercession to our covenant God.

## *Graduation Address*

# Continuing In The Things Learned

*Candidate Ronald Van Overloop*

He was in prison for the second, and what would turn out to be the last, time. He would leave the prison only to be executed. He had just appeared before the judge, and he felt that his life on earth was near the end. He was an old minister of the gospel and was in prison as a result of his beliefs. He seems to know that he will soon die, and therefore writes a letter to a young minister whom he had trained for the ministry and whom he loved very much. In this letter he asks this young servant of Christ to come and visit him in prison. That old minister was the apostle Paul. In his last letter to Timothy he tells him to be faithful to the Word of God and to give himself over exclusively to it. Paul tells Timothy that this Word of God is the heart of his ministry. In the midst of the continual threat of false doctrine and of persecution the servant of God finds his strength solely in the Word of God. Paul describes those evil days in II Timothy 3:1-13. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." (vss. 12, 13)

As a result of these evil and perilous times, Paul tells Timothy in verse 14, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of." Continue in, stand firm, abide in those things. Never depart from them. By nature you will want to leave them, so you will have to fight to stay and abide in them.

What are those things? They are the truths of the Scriptures which are given by inspiration. They are the truths of the Scriptures by which God has revealed Himself. In the Scriptures we learn about God, the sovereign Lord Who created and upholds all things for the glory of His own name. We learn that God has chosen for Himself a people in Christ, His Son. From the Scriptures we learn that man rejected and despises God. But we also learn that Christ died for us, bearing the curse which was rightly ours and giving us the righteousness of God. Therefore we are to walk holily in the midst of the world. And we learn that Christ is coming again to establish His kingdom in the new heavens and new earth. In those truths we are to continue. We are to think on them, follow them, and



grow more and more in them till Christ comes again.

But how do we learn these things? We learn these things as children from our parents. They teach us them as we grow up in the organism of the church. However, I believe that it could be said that we all are taught them by our seminary, either directly or indirectly. Ministers and seminarians, of course, learn these truths directly from the seminary. But our parents, who teach them to us, are taught them by their ministers in the preaching. Thus, the men whom the seminary taught, teach us of these truths of Scripture. Therefore you can see the importance of the seminary.

In many congregational prayers our seminary is referred to as the heart-beat of our churches. The heart-beat, we all know, is vital to our physical existence. Without our heart-beat we would die. The same holds true for our seminary. If it would not exist, our churches would soon disappear. Why? Why is the seminary so important?

Christ gave the command to preach the gospel to all nations. The preaching is done only by the minister, not by the elders and deacons. Only the minister holds the prophetic office. That is why a congregation without a minister is in an abnormal situation which is not alleviated by classical appointments. A congregation without a *minister* does not have the three-fold manifestation of the three-fold office of Christ. Because of that command of Christ to preach the gospel, ministers are needed. As long as ministers are needed, there will be a need for those who are preparing themselves for the ministry. As long as Christ has His church in the midst of the world, as long as the elect must be gathered by His Spirit and Word, ministers of the gospel are needed.

There is especially an abiding need in the Protestant Reformed Churches. We believe and profess that we, the Protestant Reformed Churches, maintain and proclaim the gospel in all its purity. That profession implies that we are obligated to be sure that there are men to proclaim that truth.

But there is and always will be a shortage of ministers. It can be inserted here that if there is a surplus, it is the duty and obligation of the churches to make use of that surplus, so that that surplus no longer exists. Even though we know that this shortage exists, it is rather difficult for us in the Eastern Classis of our churches to realize and feel that shortage. If we are vacant, we have pulpit supply and catechism teaching. Only those of our churches who have had an extended vacancy know what this shortage really is. That this shortage really exists can easily be shown. At present we have six vacancies in our churches: four pastorates, one professorship, and one home missionary. And even though we have three graduates from our seminary this year, that shortage will not be filled for another two years, if the Lord wills that the students now in the

seminary will graduate in their respective years. Also there are other factors figuring in this shortage. We have several ministers who are near or past 60 years of age. From these facts we can easily see that a shortage actually exists. But we must remember that this need must not cause worry. God has provided for us in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

If the churches are to have ministers, these ministers must come from the congregations themselves. That is so because the responsibility to preach lies on the individual, autonomous churches. Therefore the churches must do all they can to provide ministers for themselves. That is the principle of Article 19 of the Church Order, too. "The churches shall exert themselves as far as necessary, that there may be students supported by them to be trained for the ministry of the Word." It must be remembered that the purpose of this article is not to help needy students, but rather to help the churches. Too often matters of this nature are evaluated exclusively on a money basis. This is a mistake. Money is involved, but there is something much more important which underlies this article of the Church Order. That principle is that the individual churches must do all they can to provide ministers. But this does not mean that the church calls a minister to his position.

We must always remember that only God calls a man to become a minister. This call of God is indispensable. But because God calls men to the ministry, we must pray, committing to Him our needs. Pray, asking Him to fill the vacant churches with men. Only God calls, but God uses means.

The churches individually must exert themselves to fulfill the mandate of this article of the Church Order. The church is duty bound to recruit from its own members, God-fearing and capable youths and prepare them for the ministry. This exertion of the churches takes place through various means. It takes place in the general training and instruction of the covenant youth in Catechism, in young people's society, at family visitation, and in the preaching. The question of entering the ministry is then placed before qualified young men. The whole idea is that young men must face this question honestly. Therefore it is the calling of the churches to exert themselves toward locating such men whom God is pleased to call. Advice and encouragement is then given. This also implies, of course, that those not qualified, those who lack essential qualifications are advised against entering into the ministry.

But this exertion is not only by the churches as a whole, but also it is the calling of parents and individual families. We know that the initiative *must* come from the individual himself. In this way the ministry is different from elders and deacons. Elders and deacons are nominated, but young men alone make the initial decision to enter the ministry. No one



may make this decision for him. One must never be nagged or coerced into the ministry. There is nothing worse than an unhappy minister. But that does not mean that everyone stands passively by. His parents give him counsel, guide him, and pray for him.

This exertion must also take place in families where there is no one preparing for the ministry. Families must begin by showing respect for the ministry as a position of God-given authority. They must give it due honor, so that the children see that and imitate it. Also, they must show concern for the seminary. Pray for it. Talk about it. Talk with and encourage the seminarians. I can say from experience that that means a lot. Pray for and encourage the professors. They need encouragement too. We will never know how much hard work, now much blood, sweat, and tears they put into their labors in the seminary. Also show your concern for the seminary by attending convocation exercises. Do not ever think that your presence goes unnoticed. Come to graduation. In general, make it so that you and your children *believe* that the seminary is

the heartbeat of our churches.

Then we can understand how it is *this* institution which instructs all of us in the truths of the Scriptures. It teaches us, either directly or indirectly.

Therefore, continue in that which you have learned, candidates. You and I must continue in that as we take up our calling. Continue in that which you have learned, delegates to Synod, as you deliberate matters concerning the welfare of our churches. Continue in that which you have learned, beloved of God, as you walk in the midst of this world.

Why? Why continue in those things? Because these truths of the Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. You will not be foolish as the world, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. You and I will have the wisdom which will enable us to know how we are to walk in the midst of this world of sin.

Therefore, continue in that which you have learned. Continue!

## Feature

# Pentecostalism In The Light Of The Bible (2)

*Rev. Robert D. Decker*

The question you recall is: "Does the Bible teach that the experience of Pentecost is to be repeated and sought after by believers today?" Turning first to Acts 2 we may conclude that this chapter records an event which is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to the disciples (the eleven Apostles) given just prior to His ascension. In Acts 1:4, 5 Jesus commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father which they had heard of Him. That promise concerned the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth through Whom Jesus would come to them. Jesus promised this return in the Spirit in the night of His betrayal (cf. John 14, 15, 16). This promise Jesus further defines as the "baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

Noteworthy in this connection is the fact that Jesus commanded them to wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit, but Jesus did not lay down a list of conditions which they had to fulfill in order to be baptized with the Holy Spirit; He simply told them to wait. It is true enough they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, chose one to take the place of the betrayer; but the passage nowhere indicates that they were consciously, fervently fulfilling the conditions spoken of by Pentecostals as necessary to be filled with

the Spirit. (cf. Acts 1:14ff) They were simply instructed to wait for the Spirit. That is what they did and they did it prayerfully.

Then it happened! Suddenly, when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. The signs were the sound of a mighty, rushing wind; cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them; and they began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. When the news spread a great crowd gathered and the people were utterly amazed to hear them speak in "our tongues the wonderful works of God" (vss. 5-10). The reaction of the multitude was twofold; some doubted and wondered what it meant, while others mocked and said they were drunk (vs. 12).

In answer to this the Apostle Peter stands and preaches that beautiful sermon which contained essentially two points. What happened Peter explains is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. The Day of the Lord has come; the New Dispensational day which marks the fulfillment of the Old Testament types and shadows. It's the Day in which God would call His people out of every nation. And, it's the Day of judgment that shall be signified by signs and wonders; blood, fire, and vapour of smoke in both heaven and



earth; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon into blood (compare in this connection Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 where these same signs and wonders are mentioned as marking the Day of the Lord's return). The great and notable day of the Lord which shall culminate in the very end of the ages when Jesus' return has come.

Secondly, Jesus of Nazareth, delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, crucified and slain by you; this Jesus God has raised up, exalted, and given the promise of the Holy Spirit. Having received the Spirit, Christ shed forth this which you now see and hear. And all this means that God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ.

That Word preached powerfully pricked them in their hearts so that they cried: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter answers; "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (vs. 38) The ground of that call to repentance is found in verse 39, where we read: "For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." We learn further that three thousand gladly received the Word and were baptized. These continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers (vss. 41, 42).

Pentecostals teach that the "gift of the Holy Spirit" refers to the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" which follows repentance and conversion and is to be attained by fulfilling the proper conditions. This Spirit baptism is evidenced by speaking in tongues, it is said. Acts 2 nowhere says that the three thousand who believed or those whom God added daily to the church spoke in tongues. Peter's sermon indicates, too, that when one repents he receives the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but there is no indication that the gift of the Spirit follows conversion at some later time, in the way of fulfilling conditions.

Finally, Acts 2 certainly points to the *uniqueness*, the once for all time character of the event of Pentecost. Prophecy has been fulfilled, the Day of the Lord has come, God begins calling His saints out of all nations through Jesus Christ crucified, risen, exalted, Who poured out the Spirit. In the Spirit Christ has come into the Church, filling the hearts of the saints, in order to call such as should be saved.

What is the significance of the tongue-speaking here? Along with the cloven tongues like as of fire and the sound of the mighty, rushing wind, they were a *sign*. They signified to the one hundred and twenty that Jesus had come to be with them through the Comforter, the Spirit of truth as He had promised. They were a sign, too, assuring the church that by the Spirit of the exalted Christ they were empowered to preach the gospel to every nation as they had been commissioned. And, they were a sign to the multitude

and all who hear the apostles of the power and presence of Christ in the early church. Hence all were amazed, some doubted and wondered, others mocked, and about three thousand of them were pricked in their hearts by the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

The second passage used by Pentecostals is Acts 8:5-25. Here we find Philip, the deacon and evangelist, preaching the Word in Samaria accompanied by miracles and *signs*, casting out of unclean spirits, healings etc. Many believed and were baptized by Philip into the name of Jesus Christ. These believers, however, did not receive the Holy Spirit until the Apostles John and Peter came from Jerusalem to lay hands on them and pray for them. The fact that these believers first believed and were baptized and then later received the Spirit apparently lends support to the Pentecostal position.

But does it? Even assuming that the Samaritans spoke in tongues the passage does not teach what Pentecostals claim. The Samaritans were a mixed race, partly Jewish and partly Gentile. Because they had attempted to frustrate the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Ezra 4:4, 5) the Jews hated them and "had no dealings with them" (John 4:9). It is in this light that we must understand the receiving of the Spirit by the Samaritans. The Church is now expanding beyond the limits of the Jewish people, and the Jewish Christians must know that the Samaritan believers are not to be despised, but regarded as equal with them. Hence they, too, received the Holy Spirit. In the words of Dr. Hoekema, the event in Samaria is a "kind of extension of Pentecost." Please note, too, that nowhere in this passage do we read of the Samaritans having tarrying meetings, fervently praying and seeking for the Spirit, nor do the Apostles command them to do that.

Next there is the account of Cornelius recorded in Acts 10. Peter, lodging in Joppa in the house of one Simon a tanner, receives a vision of unclean animals with the command "rise Peter, kill and eat." While Peter wonders about the meaning, the Holy Spirit tells him there are three men who want to see him. These tell Peter that Cornelius has been warned of God to "hear words of thee." Peter goes to Caesarea where Cornelius explains his vision, Peter preaches the gospel to him, and the fruit of the preaching is that the Holy Spirit fell on them and they spoke with tongues and magnified God. Then they were baptized.

Note well, the Spirit fell on them and they spoke with tongues not subsequent to (as Pentecostals teach) but prior to their baptism. Why did the Spirit cause them to speak in tongues? Because Peter had to know "of a truth God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." (vss. 34, 35). And those of the circumcision, the Jewish Christians, were astonished, because on the Gentiles, also, was poured the gift



of the Holy Spirit (vs. 45). This too, then, was an extension of Pentecost, and the tongues once more serve as a sign to the Jewish Christians that the Gentiles are also saved in Jesus Christ and receive the Holy Spirit. This is precisely the explanation Peter himself gives to the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 11:1-18). He tells them all about his encounter with Cornelius, his preaching, and the Holy Ghost falling on them as evidenced in their tongue speaking. And when the Jews hear that they respond: "Then hath God granted also to the Gentiles repentance and life." Peter cites this event once more at the "Jerusalem conference" dealing with the Gentile question (cf. Acts 15).

The final instance of tongue-speaking in Acts is found in chapter 19:1-7 where Paul meets a band of twelve disciples. The Apostle asks them; "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They answer that they had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit. Paul questions; "into what then were ye baptized?" to which they reply, "the baptism of John." Paul then tells them that John baptized unto repentance, calling the people to faith in Christ Jesus, Who was coming. When they hear this they are baptized into the name of Christ, and when Paul lays hands on them the Holy Ghost comes upon them and they "spake with tongues and prophesied."

The point of this passage is plain. These twelve disciples were still living in the age of the shadows, at the door of the New Dispensation, but still in the shadows. They were unaware of the fact that the day of the Lord had come, and had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit. This event, too, is an extension of the unique wonder of Pentecost, and the tongues and prophecy serve as a sure sign to these believers that the Spirit of the crucified, risen Christ had indeed been poured out.

It ought to be perfectly obvious that these passages from the Book of Acts do not teach what Pentecostals claim they do. Positively the unique character of the wonder of Pentecost as the inauguration of the day of the Lord is strongly emphasized. God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ, the Spirit has been poured out, and in the power of the Spirit the Church is gathered and built out of every nation.

Pentecostals claim their strongest support from I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. We suggest that the reader follow our exposition of these chapters in his Bible. In Chapter 12 the Word teaches that though the Corinthians "come behind in no gift" (1:7); they were ignorant concerning the gifts of the Spirit. In the context of the entire epistle we understand that the Corinthians were misusing the gifts of the Spirit for each one's own selfish ends. The tragic result of this was schism in the church. It's to this that the inspired Apostle Paul addresses the sharp instruction of these three chapters. The Corinthians must know that no man speaking in the Spirit calls Jesus accursed (which is

exactly what one does in effect when he causes schism in the church); likewise, no one is able to say Jesus is Lord except in the Spirit (vss. 1-3).

In the verses 4-11 the Apostle lists the diversity of gifts in the church which all come from the same Holy Spirit. Notice, not all receive all the gifts. To one is given this gift, to another is given another gift. Not even in the Apostolic Church where the gift of tongues existed were all believers to seek to have the gift of tongues. All this the Apostle illustrates with the figure of the human body with its many individual members each serving in its own place the unity of the body. Paul continues by speaking of the offices which God has set in the church (vss. 28-31), the last of which is "diversities of tongues." No more than all are Apostles do all have or should all seek to have the gift of tongues. The Pentecostal position that believers should seek and lay claim to the power of God through the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" as they define that concept, simply cannot stand in this light. The conclusion of chapter 12 is: "Covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." That more excellent way is the way of the love of God set forth in chapter 13. The love of God never fails; everything else, knowledge, prophecy, tongues, will vanish; but the love of God abides. Without that virtue of the love of God we are only making noise and the gifts of the Spirit profit us nothing.

Thus the Apostle begins chapter 14 with the admonition: Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." To prophesy is to speak the Word of God by preaching and by mutual exhortation on the part of the members of the church — cf. II Peter 1:16-21 where the Bible is called "the more sure Word of Prophecy." He that speaks in tongues speaks mysteries that no one understands; he speaks to God (who has no need of edification!) and to himself; while he who prophesies builds up the church and *that* is the more excellent way of the love of God (vss. 2-4). So Paul wishes in verse 5 that all should prophesy rather than speak in tongues, because prophecy is greater unless the tongues be interpreted for the edifying of the church. Even in the realm of music (vss. 7, 8) except the laws of harmony, etc., are observed one does not know what is being piped or harped.

Applying the figure (vss. 9-19) Paul says to the Corinthians; unless you speak with your tongue words easy to be understood how shall your speech be known? You are speaking into the air! Hence the Word is: seek to excell to the edifying of the church. Pray for an interpretation of your tongues, else you will not be edifying. For this reason I thank God I speak with tongues more than you all — yet I rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my words I might teach others, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue!



Brethren, Paul continues in vss. 20ff., be children in malice and grown men in understanding. Here we get to the heart of the passage. Paul is saying you must be innocent of malice, that vicious evil which tears the church apart; and you must be mature in understanding. This is what the Scriptures teach. In the law, the Old Testament Scriptures, Isaiah 28:11, 12 to be exact, it is written: with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that they will not hear me saith the Lord." (vs. 21) In Isaiah 28 we learn that the priests were drunk with wine; they were children in understanding, who were not weaned from the milk nor drawn from the breasts. These had rejected the Word, which was to them as line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little — that they might go and fall backward and be broken and snared and taken. Therefore God will not teach these children in understanding knowledge; His judgments are upon them who mock His Word. The doctrine of rest for the weary is not for these grown men in malice, these drunkards of Ephraim. God will speak to them with stammering lips and another tongue. They will be taken captive, and the Word of understanding, rest for the weary, they will not hear. To whom will God speak the refreshing Word of salvation? To the residue of the people, the remnant according to election, for whom He lays in Zion the tried and precious cornerstone, the sure foundation, Jesus Christ.

Wherefore, writes the Apostle, in other words, because this is the Word of God, tongues are for a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not. (vs. 22ff.) You Corinthians had better be warned that tongues — your babbling in uncertain sounds without interpretation, so that it cannot be understood or serve to edify the church — is a sign of God's judgment and hardening of those who reject the Word! If an unbeliever comes into your meeting and you are all speaking in tongues, he will say you are mad, crazy; but if he hears you prophesy, and sees you building up the church, he is convinced, falls on his knees and worships, by the Spirit's application of the prophetic Word.

Hence the conclusion. Let everything be done decently and in good order. If you insist on speaking in tongues, let it be by turn, only two or three at most, and let there be interpretation. God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted them to speak. Was the problem in Corinth the women? How many Pentecostal groups today observe this rule? So, while I, the Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, do not forbid the proper use of tongues, neither do I command it. Rather prophesy that the church may be edified! This is the more excellent way. Obviously even in the New Testament Church where tongues had a place they were not emphasized, as by Pentecostals

today.

Now, some conclusions. First from the Acts, passages (chapters 1,2,8,10,11,19). In none of the four occurrences, assuming the Samaritans spoke in tongues, were believers fulfilling any conditions, praying for the baptism with the Spirit to be evidenced by speaking in tongues. In each of the four instances *all* the believers present received the sign of tongues *along with* other signs. It was not just some who received the baptism in the Spirit as Pentecostals teach. And in all instances (this is true of Corinth, too) the baptism or filling with the Spirit as evidenced by tongues and other signs happened *through the instrumentality of the Apostles*. Peter and John had to go to Samaria, Philip could not do it. Peter had to preach to Cornelius, Paul to the twelve disciples at Ephesus and also at Corinth. There is no record in the New Testament of the bestowing of these signs and gifts on someone by prayer or laying on of hands by any one other than an Apostle. This means that when the Apostles passed from the scene the miraculous signs and gifts which served to authenticate their office and message passed away with them. "They were part of the credentials of the Apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the church. Their function thus confined them to distinctively the Apostolic Church, and they necessarily passed away with it." (B.B. Warfield, *Miracles Yesterday and Today*, p. 21).

In this light I Corinthians 13:8 has profound significance. The text reads: "Charity never faileth, but whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." The verbs used in reference to prophecy and knowledge are the same in the Greek. That verb is in the passive voice and is to be translated, "to cause to cease." God will put an end to them in that day of the Lord when we know as we are known and see face to face in glory. But "tongues shall cease." This verb is in the middle voice and means "simply stop." A.T. Robertson in his *Word Pictures of the New Testament* translates, "shall make themselves cease" or "automatically cease of themselves." The point is this: tongues and the other miraculous gifts, healings, etc., suddenly are no more in the church. They are of short duration. Why? Because they are designed by God to serve as a *sign*, a sign not only to authenticate the gospel, but a sign to serve also as a means of making the content of prophecy and knowledge known. But when they have served their confirming purpose as a sign, they cease without the least affecting the church's possession of the mysteries of the faith.

This is precisely the Bible's teaching elsewhere. In Hebrews 2:3-4 the Scriptures teach that the Word of the Lord was: "confirmed unto us by them that heard Him — the Apostles, God bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and



gifts of the Holy Ghost." And in Mark 16:19, 20 we learn that after the Lord's ascension the apostles "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the Word with signs following." Those signs were taking up serpents, drinking deadly poison, tongues, and healings. Confirmation of the Word was necessary in this age of transition out of the Old into the New dispensation when the Canon of the Scriptures was yet in the process of being completed. When the entire Scripture had been given, the last apostle goes to glory, and tongues automatically cease of themselves. The Word has been given and confirmed. Let us take heed, lest we neglect so great salvation! It is not correct to say that the New Testament nowhere explicitly teaches that tongues belonged only to the Apostolic age. I Corinthians 13:8 in the light of the context of the entire New Testament teaches precisely that!

What positively is the Word of God in all of this? *Prophecy*! We have the Word of God, the infallibly inspired Bible. It pleases God by means (and only by this means) of the preaching of that Word to save His Church (cf. I Cor. 1, Romans 10) and put to nothing the wisdom of this world. Preach, then! Be instant in and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering, preach to the ends of the earth. Whatever the Church does, let it preach the Word! And let it do so in faith. The Church, the all to whom the promise is given, these and their children even as many as the Lord our God shall call *have been* baptized with the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. That happened at Pentecost. And the Spirit testifies of everything Jesus said to us. The fruit of that Spirit (Gal. 5) is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law! We live in the Spirit: let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us keep on being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5) so that we walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. The means by which we are enabled to do that is the Word

preached.

And that is precisely the trouble today. There is in our day a terrible despising of the pulpit. It is because the Church generally fails to expound the Word and comes with excellency of speech and worldly wisdom rather than preaching Christ crucified, that a movement like Pentecostalism can make such an impact. The sheep of God are hungry and thirsty and are not being fed with the Bread and Water of life! These weak and sickly sheep are swept along by the bizarre, spectacular "successes" and enthusiasm of Pentecostalism. The time has come when "they will not endure sound doctrine; but . . . turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (II Tim. 4:3, 4) The charge of God is: "Preach the Word!"

What do you say then to your Pentecostal neighbor? Having shown him from the Scriptures the truth, he will invariably say to you: "But how can you dismiss this; I've had the experience, it's real." The answer you must give is: The Bible teaches that tongues have ceased, I cannot and you may not base your faith on your experience. That is pure subjectivism. To claim a direct line through the Spirit is to deny the sufficiency of the Word of God and necessarily the power of that Word preached, through which means alone God is pleased to save. This is serious business indeed! The Bible says: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life . . . He which testifies these things saith: Surely I come quickly. Amen. Come Lord Jesus. (Rev. 22: 18-20).

Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, could say under the inspiration of the Spirit: "I speak with tongues more than you all." No one can say that today! Paul also said under the inspiration of the Spirit, "tongues shall cease." They have.

I say to this Word of God and I hope you say it with me, "Amen!"

## Friendship with God

# Creation

Rev. B. Woudenberg

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," Genesis 1:1.

We have here one of the deepest and most profound truths to be found anywhere. By it every being is affected.

To be sure, there is something within us that would rather it were not so. In his natural way of thinking

man much prefers to look upon the universe as a sort of neutral, self-existent, no-man's-land; one to which he can claim squatter's rights and call his own. In fact, so addicted is man to this outlook on life that only a crushing and transforming convulsion of his own inner being will ever free him from it. Man wants desperately to be sovereign, like God, in his own little world and



universe.

But the Bible will have none of this. Its opening verse here stands in direct contradiction, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The implications are immense.

Psalm 100:3 tells us what this means in the first place, "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." In turn, Psalm 50:10-12 carries it further, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." This is God's world. He has designed it, and He has brought it into being. He alone really understands its proper function and is able to lead it in a way that is good. If anyone truly wishes to deal with this world in a real way, he must simply go to God and say, "Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end," Psalm 119:33. It is this that Genesis 1:1 demands finally of every man.

"In the beginning" is the first phrase in the Bible, and it does much more than merely designate the first moment of time. It does that, and this must be maintained against various attempts that are made to suggest some kind of a pre-Adamic world and history. The beginning, the first moment of time is right here in Genesis 1:1; but the phrase involves more in its depth.

We read of "the beginning" more often in Scripture. Most familiar, of course, is John 1:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Although in quite different context, we find a closely related thought when Christ speaks to John in Revelation 1:8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." In turn, we find several significant passages in the Old Testament such as where Wisdom speaks in Proverbs 8:22, 23 and says, "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." And then there is Isaiah 46:9, 10, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

The thought through all this is that the creation did not in the strictest sense come "out of nothing." At the beginning there was something there, or someone, as the source from which alone the creation could come forth. There was Wisdom, there was the Word, there was the Counsel of God, there was the Alpha and

the Omega, the Almighty one. As it says, "In the beginning *God*."

Further, we should realize that God here is not just one person of the Trinity; He is the Triune God.

We tend, perhaps, to be misled by the confession of the Apostolic Creed, "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." The impression is so easily left that accordingly there is only one person of the Trinity, the Father, who is active in creation. And that certainly is not so. The Scriptures make very plain that creation is the work of the Triune God.

Actually, there is good reason why the Creed speaks of the Father as Creator. It is because His personal characteristics as Father come most distinctly to the fore in the work of creation. He does not perform the work alone, apart from the Spirit and the Son, but because of what He is within the Godhead He stands on the foreground in creation. So the Scriptures speak most often of Him as the Creator, too, as in Isaiah 45:18, "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens: God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain." Or one can listen to the Gospel of the angels in Revelation 14:7, "Fear God, and give glory to him . . . worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

But certainly the Father is not alone in creation. So John 1:1-3 reads, "In the beginning was the Word . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." In Colossians 1:16 we read of Christ that, "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, . . . all things were created by him, and for him." Hebrews 1:2 in turn speaks of "His Son . . . by whom also he made the worlds." Certainly the Son was active in creation, too.

Nor is the Spirit without His part in creation. Already in Genesis 1:2 we read, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." One of the great Psalms reflecting on creation is Psalm 104 and, after making mention of all the great expanse of created beings, it says in verse 30, "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth."

Nowhere do we have a nicer summation of the Triune activity in creation than in Psalm 33:6. All we have to remember is that the "word" here is Christ according to John 1:1, 14 while the "breath" is throughout Scripture a figure of the Spirit. So we read, "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all three together the Creator of this world.

But what is the act of creation? What did God do when He created the world?

Actually Genesis 1 is quite vivid in its description, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was



light. . . . And God said, Let there be a firmament. . . . And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass . . . etc." Genesis 1:3, 6, 11. Accordingly Psalm 33:9 describes the creative act in this way, "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." In turn when we go on to Hebrews 11:3 we find the faith of the child of God described in this way, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

There is reason why Hebrews 11 gives creation as the prime example of the content of true faith; it is so tremendously difficult to believe that God could actually bring this world with all of its intricacy of detail into existence by the mere utterance of His voice. Neither is there any way in which man can really go back to verify it to be so. All one can do is believe.

Not indeed as though man has not had dreams of this same power for himself. In fact one wonders if the very history of this world could not be analyzed rather completely in terms of man's search for words of this kind of power, words that will realize the human dream. Certainly many different efforts of this kind have been tried. At times it has been the search for words of magical incantation, at times for words of spellbinding influence, or philosophical perception, or scientific application, or anything that man might come up with that may give to him power to realize his dreams. But in the end, it never really happens. I Corinthians 1:19, "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

And yet, as much as man dreams of it for himself, to recognize such power as belonging to another, even if He be God, is more than man can do. To admit that God has, and can, and does succeed where man only fails is like bowing one's head and dying; and that man of himself will never do. It takes grace to believe that God does possess that creative power which can say, Isaiah 55:11, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

What we must understand, moreover, is that God and His creative act stand behind the existence of everything. "In the beginning God created *the heaven and the earth*," and that is all inclusive. Nehemiah 9:6

puts it this way, "Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the sea, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all." In fact, the Scriptures never tire of expanding upon the extensiveness of God's creative power. Psalm 74:16, 17 says, "The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter." And Psalm 89:11, 12 goes on, "The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south, thou has created them."

The result is that the creation is very literally filled with the glory of God. Psalm 19:1, 2 is very true, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." Paul puts it this way in Romans 1:20, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." And then when we come to Revelation 4:11 we find that this remains the content of the song of the elders in glory, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

But one thing must be remembered; it takes faith to see this glory. No, we don't see it all the time, maybe very seldom. It is that strange fact of spiritual perception. Whenever we walk about with pride in our hearts and personal ambition guiding our lives our eyes become blind to the glory of God. All we see is a cold world lying under a curse which sends chills of fear deep into our souls. But when, by God's grace, we turn in repentance to lay hold upon the redeeming power of the love of Christ, the whole world before our eyes is at the same moment transformed, II Corinthians 5:17, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." With the swell of joy there whelms forth the song of praise, Psalm 24:1, 2, 10, "The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods . . . The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah."

The call of the gospel is to believe in the Christ of the Scriptures, Who leaves us nothing but the utterly humiliating confession that we are sinners, damnable and corrupt in ourselves, sinners who must be and only can be saved by pure and sovereign grace.



*From Holy Writ***Exposition of Ephesians 5: 15-21 (cont.)***Rev. G. Lubbers*

The Ephesian believers are a new creation; they were created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before prepared that we might walk in them, (Eph. 2:10). That they were to walk in good works they did not understand as they should have; neither did they understand that they were elected by God in Christ from before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame in God's sight (Eph. 1:4). There was sad evidence of many sinful relationships and conditions in this church in Asia Minor; there was lack of love, of upholding each other in love; there was a definite need of warning these Christians that they must maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, (4:1-3); also there was a lack of speaking the truth in love, and of the putting off of the lie due to a deep consciousness of being one another's members, (4:25); moreover, there was need of positive walking in love toward one another in forgiving each other for Christ's sake.

Yes, they were new creatures in Christ!

However, they were far from having perfected sanctification in the fear of God. The "more and more hate sin and cleave to God" is in desperate need of being preached. There was need of Christian admonition. Gospel exhortations were the call of the hour, lest God be tempted in the church and Paul would not be free from the blood of these saints. Was not this Ephesian church the people who are said by Christ to have "lost their first love"? (Rev. 2:4)

Yes, there was a certain light-hearted flirting with sin; there was worldlimindedness in this church. They did not strive to live antithetically in the world, to be in the world yet not of the world. They should have been deeply conscious that they once were darkness, but now are light in the Lord, (Eph. 5:8). Oh, they should truly have walked as children of light. Their association with the world was so easy; they were friends of the world often — a world which says in her heart that there is no God — to the point that they did not rebuke the world for their life of sin and darkness. No, their speech was not seasoned with salt to give grace to those who heard them; they did not rebuke them. Now they must be roused from their spiritual stupor of sin; they must rise from the dead, and Christ shall give them light. Such is their only hope and their solemn calling in Christ.

It is a question of how they have learned Christ, to put off the old man and to put on the new man, which is renewed in them by God's sovereign grace and

power. The matter is one of true conversion, continued sanctification, an unabated battle against the satanic hosts of hell as these energize and inspire natural and unregenerated men.

**The Proper Spiritual Narrow-Mindedness, Ephesians 5:18**

When I was a young man, I did not have enough money to buy a dish of ice cream. Hence, I was not tempted to buy the wines and hard liquors in the stores. Fact is, that the little grocery store where I went to buy the groceries did not stock these commodities. There was no demand for them; and where no demand is, the business man soon no longer stocks an item. However, we now live in an affluent society; we have all that it takes to live it up a bit and, in the realm of the sociable, to ape the world, pattern our life after the world! We are told not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds, that we may approve what is the good, the perfect, and acceptable will of God, (Rom. 12:1-3).

Worldlimindedness was the sin of the Ephesians!

And Worldlimindedness leads to world-conformity!

Writes Paul here in Ephesians 5:18, "*And be not drunken with wine wherein is excess.*" Paul takes the bull by the horns; he meets the sin head-on by not mincing any words. This becoming drunken with wine must come to a complete halt; it must be utterly banished from their lives by the crucifixion of the flesh, the mortifying of their members upon earth, knowing that our life is hid with Christ in God. This exalted knowledge alone can pluck our feet out of the devil's clutches. It is clear from the Greek that Paul does not merely warn against possible drunkenness in the church; he is warning them against *actual drunkenness* with wine. It was an actual sin in which these Ephesians were walking. They were not walking in the good works which God had prepared for them. They lived by the Spirit, but did not walk in the straight and narrow course of God's precepts. They were turning to the broad way which leadeth to destruction. Now Paul says: stop becoming drunken with wine, wherein is excess.

Here is holy narrow-mindedness!

The evil of wine and becoming drunk with it is exposed. Yes, wine has a good usage. It is a good gift of God. Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected when it is received with thanksgiving. But the Ephesians could not give thanks at the end of an evening of excessive living, due to drinking too



much wine. God was not in their thoughts in their excesses. They are more like the prodigal who consumed his substance with riotous living. He came to the end of the road of such living. Jesus made wine at the feast of Cana. The Psalmist sings the praises of God's works and includes wine which makes glad the heart of man. Wine is also used at the table of the Lord. Nevertheless, it is also stated that wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Wine is ever associated, in the worldly use, with excessive living. For excessive living is a life of debauchery, extreme indulgence in sensuality, a profligate behavior which is unbecoming to those who were elected to be holy and without blame before God. In a word, it is a trifling with the grace of election.

Psychologically there is a strong resemblance between being drunk and satiated with wine, and the singing which is the effect of the Spirit. In both cases men are carried away by other powers. In the one case, a man possesses his soul in patience; and in the other, he is a victim of sin, stimulating the fleshly lusts. But both have a song — the drunkard and the man who is Spirit-filled. Both are in an exalted and stimulated state of mind. The one is on the door-step of hell when he has his delusions of seeing serpents; and the other sings on the door-step of heaven, within the portals of the eternal city in hope. Psychologically these two states of mind may have some resemblance; however, spiritually they are as distant from each other as the poles.

The term which Paul uses for "excess" in the KJV is "*asootia*." Such an one cannot be saved; there is not hope for him even in the Greek-Roman humanistic ethics. He cannot ever fit in constructively in society; he is a "losel," a "hopelost," worthless person. He cannot spare, cannot save, he is a *prodigus*, a scatterling. His life is one grandiose squandering of means. (Trench, *Synonyms*) And, we may continue to quote Trench, "such a one spending on his own lusts and appetites — laying it out for the gratification of his own sensual desires, a dissolute, debauched, profligate manner of living: *liederlich*." And the learned Trench continues, "A waster of his goods will be very often a waster of everything, besides; will lay waste himself, his time, his faculties, his powers — will be himself laid waste; he at once loses himself and is lost."

Now Paul knows that the Ephesians are fully aware of the implications of the term which we have in our Bible translated "excess." Such excess cannot be a Christian life; it is not the part of those who are wise, buy out the time; it is the part of those who walk the

broad way which leads to destruction. And many there by who go in thereat!

All such flirting with the world, with sin, and with the powers of hell must stop!

This is healthy narrowmindedness which may well be cultivated in our day; parents, teachers, and ministers are to be good examples to the flock, and, particularly, to the young people in the church. Be not deceived by flattering speech which deceives. No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. Today men would rather speak of an "alcoholic" than of a drunkard. It is constantly repeated from radios, the world over, that alcoholism is not sin but sickness. The Holy Ghost chose not to use this term. He speaks of men "becoming drunken with wine, wherein is excess." The Christian who is guilty of this sin needs not merely some medical attention and some psychiatric lies concerning the "sickness" of an alcoholic; what he needs is to be placed under the exhortation of the Gospel. He must confess his sin, repent, be converted and be healed in his conscience from the guilt of this sin, of his worldimindedness and world-conformity! He must return like the prodigal in the Scriptures and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against thee!"

In so doing he will flee all sin; he will be putting off the old man, crucifying the flesh. And, if he is sorry for this one sin, he will see that it was not just a bad deed, but that he was in a bad way. No doubt there is a great need for us in our day to warn our children, our young people, by word and example. Such is our reasonable service; it is the most logical thing under the sun. It is the logic of the Spirit of God in Christ. It is not hard to understand; it does not need to be told often to the wise and the simple. But they who flirt with sin and trifle with the grace of election come to ruin.

Perhaps the apostle is suggesting here that this is a constant battle which never ends. The price of spiritual liberty is eternal vigilance. He uses the present tense: *keep on stopping* becoming drunk with wine. This requires much spiritual sobriety. The days are evil also today. Let us then become wise, sober, knowing our times. We must believe that these sins of the world are such that the wrath of God cometh upon them; it is the wrath of God which manifests itself in this excessive living: riotous living, drunkenness, debauchery. Sin bears sin! It eats like a cancer, invading all of life.

Flee this worldimindedness; abhor this world-conformity!

Stop becoming drunk with wine!

"The excellent, infallible and sole preparation for grace is the eternal election and predestination of God."

Martin Luther



## *The Day of Shadows*

# Paradise Lost

*Rev. John A. Heys*

Here in America we like to boast of men going from rags to riches.

We like to point to presidents of our country, financial successes, or men of other earthly achievements whose beginnings were humble, and who climbed from log cabins and poverty to become rich and famous.

Scripture presents to us another picture. Having shown us a man in indescribable bliss and riches, Holy Writ shows us one who fell from riches to rags, from spiritual life to spiritual death, and therefore from boundless joy to deep sorrow, and from fellowship with God to banishment from His face.

In the Word of God little is said about the ideal conditions in which Adam and Eve lived before they were cast out of the garden. By implication we do learn much from that into which they were plunged. In Genesis 3:17-19 we read, "And unto Adam God said, Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Before this, God had already said to Eve, "I will greatly multiply thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Take these two together, and you can somewhat visualize what Adam and Eve had before this. The climate was ideal, and they did not need coats of skin during the day nor the evening. There was no sweat or sorrow, no struggle to get food for their stomachs, no injuries to be experienced by thorns and thistles, in a few words no discomfort, but instead pure comfort and joy and peace and gladness. They could truthfully say, *THIS* is life!"

And the loss of all this was greater for Adam and Eve than we could ever know, for we never had any such ideal conditions anywhere on the face of this earth since that day, nor were we robbed of all of it in one day. (No, Job did not even suffer so great a contrast, though he lost much in one day.) Man sought to rob God of His glory; and he ended up robbing himself of all the good and joy and life that he had

from God. His glory was all taken away; and he became poorer than the beasts of the field.

Yes, he did! For man lost something the animals never had, and that was God's covenant fellowship. He had because of that "mother promise" of Genesis 3:15 the beginning of a restoration of that covenant fellowship. God had clothed him with the skins of animals and had given him promise of better things to come. But that close, intimate, personal fellowship with God that he enjoyed in the garden is gone! And there stand cherubim (Please never read it as in the King James version, for cherubim already is plural, and cherubims is no more correct than geeses or mices) with a flaming sword to keep man away from that sacred place where he had such joy and fellowship with God. This loss, by contrast, makes the other insignificant, even though by nature we see it the other way. We sing correctly from the Psalms, "To live apart from God is death, 'Tis good His face to seek; My refuge is the living God, His praise I long to speak." And Jesus tells us that this is life eternal, that we know God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent. John 17:3.

We may, therefore, also be sure that Adam and Eve lived outside the garden as close to that gate or way to the tree of life as they could. Cain soon moved away with no desire at all to be reminded even of God's existence. But Adam and Eve as believers with a rich and precious promise dwelt just outside the garden with the hope of a full restoration of covenant fellowship with God. They loved God again, for God had put enmity in their hearts against Satan and his whole kingdom. And by faith they took hold of that promise of victory in the Seed of the woman.

Yet as far as the material side is concerned, their loss was a permanent loss. Never would they go back to such ideal earthly conditions. Nor would their children, or children's children to a thousand generations. In fact their children to a thousand generations were told that daily by God. It is well to take note of the fact that the original earthly creation as pictured to us in Genesis 1-3 contains three distinct areas or precincts. There is the land of Eden. There is the garden eastward in that broader expanse of the land of Eden. And there is the "midst of the garden" where were those two special trees, and where Adam had that close and delightful fellowship with God. And when God gave Moses the plan for the tabernacle, He designed it again to have three precincts corresponding to these three areas of the original creation. He dwelt



Himself in the midst of the garden (tabernacle) between the cherubim on the mercy seat, in the most holy places, or Holy of Holies.

Now the point we wish to make is that which is given us in Exodus 26:1 and 31 where we read, "Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubim of cunning work shalt thou make them. And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubim shall it be made." And thus generations after Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise, their children's children still saw cherubim guarding the way to the presence of God on that veil. All Israel was reminded in the tabernacle that the way was barred. And though the high priest might go behind the veil once a year without being burned by the fury of God's wrath, he had to do so with the symbol of the blood of Christ, which he would symbolically sprinkle on the mercy seat, on the great day of atonement.

This was continued in the temple; and until the day that Christ took away those cherubim, because He had suffered the flame of God's wrath upon the sins of His people, Israel had that reminder. And when Jesus cried out in victory, "It is finished!" God tore that veil with the cherubim in twain and showed man that the way to a full return to His presence was now legally realized.

For the world, of course, there is never a return to the ideal conditions of paradise, though man invents his air conditioners, furnaces, labor-saving devices, humidifiers, dehumidifiers and air purifiers. God took that whole garden away through the flood. On this earth there is no paradise anymore. There was one for a time after the fall of man from which he was barred, but today there is none at all.

What is more, it will not work. It simply will not work! This whole unbiblical movement of the women's liberation movement will not work. Neither will all of man's labor-saving devices, inventions, and discoveries of the powers in God's creation keep man from getting himself into worse messes than at the moment he decries. The younger generation is correct in pointing to the mess we have made of things. They are incorrect as far as their explanation of it and solution for it is concerned. But that man makes a mess of God's earth (and messes up His moon with our junk — for a crashed lunar landing vehicle is nothing but junk) is inevitable from the moment man refused to be God's royal priesthood, His steward and servant. We care not how we pollute the air and waters, just so we can get a few more so-called labor-saving devices, and fleshly pleasures, and seek to escape the curse without the cross. Since man declared war on God he also declared war on his fellow men; and he still says today, "Everyman for himself!" (And he practices it as much

as he can.) If it is to my material advantage, I'll pollute your air and streams. But I will fight you, if you pollute my air and water." Indeed, paradise is lost, because man is lost in sin. Not being united in God with the desire to glorify Him with all His creation, man is disunited from his neighbour to seek that glory of God for himself; each man for himself, each family for that family, each nation for that nation. And to unite presently in the Antichrist will seem for a brief period of time to give hope of something better on this earth. But it will not work, for God has placed the curse upon this earth. And all men in the world together not only cannot lift it, but by their very efforts can only call for a more terrible measure of that curse in hell!

God is not mocked. But God is not pushed aside either. Men may say that He is dead. But that does not kill Him and remove Him from the scene, or remove one smallest part of the curse which He has imposed upon man. The woman, likewise, may object — and today strenuously does object — to the curse God imposed upon her. Because God has multiplied her conception, she often resorts — to the pill and to abortions. Because of that curse upon her there are cries of a population explosion that threatens to bring starvation to all of us. But you are not going to lift God's curse by the pill and by the murder of abortion. You are only adding new sins for which that more terrible form of the curse in hell will be meted out by a holy and sovereign God!

There is no room in God's law for abusing and mistreating the woman. But there certainly is not in Scripture any room for a women's liberation movement that liberates itself from the fifth commandment and rebels against that word of God in Genesis 3:16, "... and he (thy husband) shall rule over thee." To try to escape this punishment and curse (for this is something distinct from the authority that God gave Adam over Eve in the state of righteousness by the very fact that He gave her to Adam, and not Adam to her, made her of his rib and not him of her rib) by rebellion only aggravates the sin and increases the guilt. And this is not the way out for the woman. It is the continuation of the way on which she began when she wanted to be God's equal, and therefore ate of the forbidden fruit. Now she wants to be man's equal. But it will not work, because the almighty God has placed her under man, and under the curse that he shall rule over her in his sinful, fleshly defiance of God.

For us there is hope in Christ. Paradise is lost, and we will never get it back. Nor do we want it back. We must not face that first paradise with the hope of returning to it. By faith we must look forward to the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21 and 22. There we will have the tree of life again, and there we will dwell with God in a tabernacle that has no veil and has no cherubim to guard the way to the tree of life.

And all this is true and is possible because we lost



our sin when the last Adam paid for it with His life. There is therefore now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. Dwell not on the loss of paradise and its beauty, but quickly flee to the cross of Christ to rejoice in *the loss of sin!* For that also means the loss of the curse and the obtaining of a blessedness far greater than Adam's and Eve's in that first paradise.

Having lost our sin in Christ there is hope for us,

though paradise is lost. And that hope is for that new Jerusalem with the river of life, the tree of life and God's tabernacle with men, the one that has no veil and no cherubim to bar the way. The one where there is no curse, but blessing, no sweat of our faces and sorrow, no thistles and thorns, but instead the joy of tasting and seeing that God is good.

## Book Review

### Samuel Willard: Preacher of Orthodoxy In An Era of Change

*SAMUEL WILLARD: PREACHER OF ORTHODOXY IN AN ERA OF CHANGE*, by Seymour Van Dyken; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972; 224 pp., \$5.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

Samuel Willard was a Puritan preacher in New England who lived during the years 1640-1707. He lived during a time, therefore, when Puritanism was being challenged in New England and when not only new doctrines were being brought into the area, but also when the whole concept of church and state as

maintained by the Puritans was being challenged.

This book, in discussing the life and views of Willard, discusses also this change in the religious and political climate of New England. The book is interesting and worthwhile for an understanding of this period and for an analysis of Puritan thought. It is especially worthwhile in showing how deeply Calvinistic the New England Puritans were in their theology and how they combatted both the errors of Arminianism and Antinomianism. The book has an extensive bibliography and a worthwhile index.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

Christian fellowship and spiritual growth will be products of the 1972 Protestant Reformed Young People's convention, the Lord willing. The central place for all activities and lodging is the YMCA camp in Estes Park, Colorado. A correction concerning last month's announcement is that the theme is "Come, Lord Jesus" and the book *BEHOLD HE COMETH* is excellent material for preparation. Evenings in the mountains are chilly so bring suitable clothing. Sleeping bags are needed for Monday night lodging in Loveland. Pray to our Father for a spiritual rewarding convention in which He receives all honor.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 20, 1972, MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM SWART celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Covenant Father for preserving them for each other and for us these past years. It is our prayer that in their remaining days they may experience the continued blessings of our Covenant God.

Their children and grandchildren

Judy

Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Kalsbeek

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Van Overloop

Kevin and Ronda

#### NOTICE OF CANDIDACY

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, having examined Seminarians Wayne Bekkering, Marvin Kamps, and Ronald Van Overloop, declares them to be Candidates for the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Protestant Reformed Churches. They are eligible to be called on or after July 7, 1972.

Rev. D. H. Kuiper  
Stated Clerk of Synod

The addresses of the Candidates are as follows:

Wayne Bekkering  
3608 Minnie Ave., S.W.  
Wyoming, Mich. 49509  
Phone: (616) 534-6369

Marvin Kamps  
3336 Barrett, S.W.  
Grandville, Mich. 49418  
Phone: (616) 534-8221

Ronald Van Overloop  
1210 Eastern Ave., S.E.  
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507  
Phone: (616) 245-1389

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis East will meet in regular session on July 5, 1972 at Holland, Michigan. Matters to be treated must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least ten days prior to the convening of the session.

Jon Huisken, Stated Clerk



## News From Our Churches

At a congregational meeting held in our Redlands Protestant Reformed Church on May 15, Rev. D. Kuiper was chosen to receive the call to serve as minister there. Rev. Engelsma is again considering the call to serve as third professor in the seminary.

The month of June has brought graduation for many of our young people. It might be appropriate, therefore, to include a "note to our graduates" which appeared in a bulletin of Hull Protestant Reformed Church in May of 1971. It comes, very likely, from the pen of Rev. Kortering.

"Graduation is a highlight in your life. Whether you receive your 8th (or 9th) grade diploma or high school diploma, it means years of hard work and represents a real achievement.

"Graduation is a moment of reflection. What have you learned? The diploma doesn't tell you the answer. Your academic standing in your class doesn't reveal it. Rather your life will indicate whether your education has achieved its purpose that, 'the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works' II Tim. 3:17.

"Graduation is a time of aspiration. You have mixed feelings about the future, either you leave a school for another, or you have completed your formal education. The future is uncertain for all of us. Yet the faith you have is not in yourself, not in your neighbors, but in your God. This gives you the stamina to implement your instruction in all areas of your life that God may be glorified through you. Continue to learn that, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles' Isa. 40:31."

In addition to our grade school and high school commencement exercises, there was the June 13th graduation ceremonies of three of our seminary students — Candidates Bekkering, Kamps, and Van Overloop. Rev. H. Veldman, in his introductory remarks at that program, called attention to the fact that we were witnessing a "mass graduating exercise." It's been a long time, he reminded us, since we've had a graduating class of more than one. But, he added, significantly, even more important than the quantity is the fact that we have quality. Both of those factors, it would seem, made of those ceremonies "an event that should gladden our hearts and motivate us to give thanks to our faithful God who so richly blesses us."

Notices concerning the Young People's Convention have appeared, it seems, in all of our churches' bulletins. There's no doubt that this is an important

event for our young people, especially for those of the Loveland Society which will host the convention. In fact, the convention looks to be of considerable importance to the entire Loveland congregation. According to a newsletter prepared by the Young People's Society for that congregation, an estimated 250-300 young people will converge on the community on July 24. "We need lodging," the newsletter continued, "for about 250 young people in the homes of the congregation on Monday evening." According to the calculation of the committee, that "will average out to about 8 or 10 young people in each home." After the suggestion that "bunks in garages" will suffice, there was that nice little abbreviation, "etc." What that includes is anybody's guess, I suppose, but if my memory of the 1961 Loveland convention serves me correctly, barns and back yards are definitely not to be excluded.

To reminisce a little further, Loveland's present pastor tented in one of those back yards, at that convention eleven years ago; and, further, on Sunday of the convention week, he occupied Loveland's pulpit — though, at that time, as Seminarian Engelsma.

As you know, Rev. Engelsma spoke at the program commemorating the 25th anniversary of Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School. When he was in Grand Rapids, for that occasion, we learn, he was also asked to deliver a lecture on "Modernism and Neo-Orthodoxy" for the modern church history class at Covenant Christian High School. A similar visit was that of Prof. Hanko to a 9th grade class at Adams School, where he spoke about extra-sensory perception and about tongue-speaking.

Last, but hardly least, is a message from our ever-enthusiastic business manager, Mr. Vander Wal.

"In the June issue of our *STANDARD BEARER* you included in your column a report concerning the geographical coverage our paper has been receiving of late. Your news item ended with the hope that we might receive a subscriber residing in the State of Alaska. Well, thanks to your column, we 'got one!'

"A subscriber to our magazine submitted and paid for a '10 for 2' Introductory Offer for a 6 months' subscription for The Anchorage Public Library, Anchorage, Alaska. How about that!? Now it's Maine to California, Alaska to Florida. Any reader wish to submit the name of a prospective reader residing in the State of Hawaii?

"Thank you, Mr. Editor, and ALOHA!"

D.D.