

# The STANDARD BEARER



A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Thanks to God's grace, we are quite alive and well today. We are about to dedicate a new seminary building. We are active in home missions. We are active in Christian education. We are active in all our congregations with sound and edifying preaching; and our people do not have to sit in the pews wondering what new heresy or liturgical oddity they will have to stomach on Sunday. We have no theistic evolutionists and other deniers of the historicity of Genesis among our teachers and preachers. . . . Thanks be to God's grace alone, we are Reformed. By that same grace we intend to remain Reformed. And by that same grace, we will continue to develop in the Reformed line. [See page 221.]

February 15, 1974

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## MEDITATION

# The Way to the Father

*Rev. M. Schipper*

*"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

John 14:6.

Jesus saith unto him . . . !

That is, unto Thomas, one of the twelve, who had just expressed his ignorance, and then asked a question. "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

To him Jesus replied, "I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

He is speaking of the way to the Father!

While His own soul was greatly troubled, because His hour was at hand, the Lord took time out to give solace to troubled hearts. He had told His disciples that He was about to leave them, and they needed consolation.

Let not your hearts be troubled . . . !

In my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

How strange that He should say this, when apparently they had no conception of His departure at all; nor did they understand His destination, or the way to that destination!

Perhaps we are to understand this as Jesus' method of soliciting from Thomas his expression of ignorance and his question; in order that He might give His disciples the light they so sorely needed.

He was going to the Father!

And to the Father He is the only way!

No man cometh unto the Father, but by me!

The Father!

Always in Scripture, and especially in the gospel of John, we are confronted with the question: to whom does the term "Father" refer? Does it have reference to the first Person of the Holy Trinity, or does it refer

to the Triune God? That the term is used in both senses can very easily be demonstrated. However, we are more particularly interested now in its significance in our text.

The context makes it plain that the Lord uses the term as referring to the Triune God. As such, God is His Father as He appears in human nature, as Mediator and Saviour of His people; and God is our Father therefore for Jesus' sake.

In the preceding context Jesus speaks of the disciple's faith in God, and immediately thereupon He says: "In my Father's house are many mansions." It is plain that He is still speaking of God when He speaks of Him as Father. And there is no indication that He has changed this significance when in the text He speaks of the way to the Father.

The Triune God therefore is spoken of in the endearing term of "Father." He is, first of all, the Father of Jesus according to His human nature. The Man Jesus came forth into the world, not by the will of man, but by the will of God. But that He speaks of God in terms of His Fatherhood is especially for the benefit of His disciples, and the entire church of Christ. In and through the Man Christ Jesus, God is become our Father for Jesus' sake. And by His saving grace we are become sons and daughters of God Most High; and we are taught to address Him as "our Father which art in heaven."

Important it is to see at this point that the Triune God is the covenant God, Who apart from any consideration of the creature, lives eternally His own perfect divine life in three Persons. There is in the being of God an interchange and fellowship of Persons who seek and find in each other a bond of love. The Father through the Son in the Spirit live together the perfect covenant life of God. Though this

divine covenant relation is self-sufficient and needs not anything, least of all the creature, to make it perfect; God has determined nevertheless to take to Himself a people who shall share in His own covenant life. He has chosen that people eternally and sovereignly in Christ, and everything else God has willed must serve to the realization of that people and the perfection of this eternal purpose, namely, to establish with them and realize in them His own covenant life. Hence, the covenant is not the way to the Father, as some would have it, but it is the central purpose of the Father, and all must serve that purpose.

God has willed eternally to tabernacle with His people in Christ!

Not, you understand, has God chosen to dwell with all men. Nor has He determined to dwell with all those who choose to dwell with Him. It should forever be established that not man determines who shall dwell with God, but He alone sovereignly determines this. Though Father's house has many mansions, and therefore many sons and daughters shall dwell with Him, His people are limited to no more or no less than those whom He has chosen in Christ to be redeemed by Him.

And, as in an earthly home father with mother share in being the center about whom the whole life and activity of the home evolves, so it is, only in the most perfect sense, in Father's house. Take father and mother out of the home, and that very moment the idea of the home ceases. Take God out of the house of many mansions, and its central purpose is destroyed. He has willed to be the center of attraction, and to receive the glory and praise of all His dear children. "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise."

This is Father's will!

It cannot be frustrated!

The way of which the text speaks leads to Him!

And that way is Jesus!

He is the Son of God, Who is become the Son of Man! He, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, yea, very God of God, according to His divine nature, became the Son of Man. He, Who was and is eternally in the bosom of the Father, united Himself with human nature in the womb of a virgin of the house and lineage of David. A complete human nature He assumed, like unto us, though without sin. In the Person of the Son the two natures, divine and human, unite, and in such a way that they are unmingled, unchanged, undivided, and inseparable.

Thus, in Jesus, we see God's way to Himself!

Because there was no one among God's people that could prepare the way and bring them on the way to the Father, God Himself came, in the Person of His Son, to become the way.

The only way to the Father!

You see, by nature God's people are not the children of God. By nature they are children of wrath, as are all the children of men. They are all conceived and born in sin, are dead in trespasses and sins. They are children of darkness, and therefore have no right to dwell in Father's house. Corrupt are they, inclined to all evil, and incapable of doing any good. Totally depraved are they, and worthy of everlasting damnation.

Shall the elect therefore become the children of God, and made fit to dwell in Father's house, they must be changed!

And shall they be changed, God must come Himself, in the Person of His Son, and unite Himself to them. He must in their nature assume their guilt, and bearing that guilt, pass under His own righteous judgment, and bear His own righteous wrath until the guilt is paid for and removed, and His people are made perfectly righteous before Him. He must grant them forgiveness of sins, and the right to eternal life. He must adopt them legally, and inscribe the adoption papers with His own blood.

In all this, Jesus is the way!

But there is much more!

Not only must He justify His people. He must also sanctify them. He must change them spiritually from children of darkness into children of light. Whereas they were vile, He must make them clean. Whereas they were liars and subject to the lie, He must give them the truth once more, and cause them to love and to speak the truth. Whereas they are spiritually dead, He must make them spiritually alive.

In all this, Jesus is the way!

For when He suffered and died for them and in their stead, God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand, where He gave unto Him the Spirit without measure. By this Spirit, now as the Spirit of Christ, God's people are sanctified, and made to become spiritually the children of God.

But even so, not all is said! He must call them efficaciously by His Spirit and Word out of the world, and form them into the people of God, and lead them by His grace, His Word and Spirit, and bring them at last into Father's house with its many mansions, which He is now preparing for them.

In all this, Jesus is the way!

He is the way, because He is the truth and the life!

Such is the significance of His word to Thomas, to the disciples, and through them to the entire church of Christ!

Thomas saith unto Him, Lord we know not whither Thou goest!

Now, Thomas and all the disciples must know that He is going to His God, and their God for His sake!

Moreover, Thomas asks the question: And how can we know the way?

Now, Thomas and all the disciples, yea, and all His people can know that He only is the way to the Father!

Shall God's people go to the Father, which they shall surely do, they must go to Him through Jesus!

Objectively this is realized through the redeeming work of Christ accomplished for them as their Mediator and Saviour. Subjectively this is realized in

them by the Spirit and Word of Christ as it is applied unto them by His saving grace.

Jesus had said unto His disciples: Ye believe in God, believe also in Me. Going to the Father through faith in Christ, we shall come to Him, our God and Father. And when we shall see Him in the face of His Son, we shall be like Him, for we will be transformed so that we conform to His image. In us His adopted children He shall see the likeness of Himself and be glorified!

No longer shall we be of the lie, but of the truth!

No longer shall we be dead in sins, but alive unto righteousness!

With Him shall we tabernacle!

World without end!

Amen!

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## EDITORIALS

# The Protestant Reformed Church of Prospect Park, New Jersey

Except in some news items, there has been no account given in our columns of what, I believe, is not only newsworthy, but also an historic event. I refer to the organization of the Protestant Reformed Church of Prospect Park, New Jersey. Why do I call this an historic event?

Well, there is more than one reason. Quite in general, it means that a new Protestant Reformed congregation has been established, and that, too, through our denominational home mission labors. And this in itself is significant, especially for our little denomination. But more specifically, this is the first time a Protestant Reformed Church has been organized east of the state of Michigan. Besides, it means that our denomination now stretches from coast to coast, from New Jersey to California. And still more significantly, it means that there is a Protestant Reformed outpost in an area which for years has been a stronghold of the Reformed community.

Some time ago I suggested that we should hear from this little flock concerning their beginnings and

their organization; and their clerk, Mr. Thomas Nelson, graciously responded with the following account:

"For several years some of us were reading the *Standard Bearer*. We also ordered books such as *The Triple Knowledge*. We were very favorably impressed; and we recognized it as the Lord's doing when some time in March the Rev. Engelsma contacted us from Philadelphia and made arrangements to visit us in Fair Lawn, N.J., urging us to get as many together as possible. An evening date was set, and several families were present when Rev. Engelsma arrived. He presented to us very clearly and forcefully the stand of the Protestant Reformed Churches. He had also contacted another family in a nearby town, a family about whom we did not know, and got us together. At Rev. Engelsma's suggestion we contacted the Protestant Reformed Mission Board.

"The Board sent us the Rev. R. Decker to minister to us for a month. And so it was that on a Sunday morning in May the Rev. Decker opened unto us the Scriptures in the living room of Mr. and Mrs. Charles De Groot.

"Other pastors followed. And it was on September 11, 1973 that an organizational meeting was held. The Rev. H. Veldman led in prayer and preached a sermon on Ephesians 4:14, 15, stressing that we must grow up in Christ. Four families participated in the organization. The Rev. C. Hanko read the Form of Ordination for the two chosen elders and one deacon.

"Our services are held at 10:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. in the Legion Hall on North 8th Street, Prospect Park, N.J. On Wednesday night we have a mid-week meeting, at which we have been studying the Canons of Dordrecht. In addition to our four families, we have several regular visitors at our services and catechism classes and mid-week meeting."

After I received the above account, I had the privilege of spending some ten days in Prospect Park and of ministering to them on two Lord's Days, on the second of which I had the honor of leading them in their first communion service as a congregation. Hence, I am in a position to add a few words from personal experience and observation.

The flock with which I became acquainted, I believe, is a devoted and enthusiastic little band. They eagerly drink in the pure preaching of the Word as it has been brought to them by our Protestant Reformed ministers. Of their delight in the preaching and of the times of refreshment which the Lord has sent them they testified to me on several occasions. And they are determined, by God's grace, to persevere as a Protestant Reformed congregation in that area. Happy though they are with the regular

pulpit supply which is being sent them, they greatly desire to have their own pastor, who may teach and preach to them and their children, but who may also labor in a community which, I am convinced, holds promise of numerical growth for the congregation. May the Lord soon grant them this wish!

Both to encourage them and to encourage other readers of the *Standard Bearer* in that area, as well as in other areas where there is interest, I want to emphasize that, small though they may be, the Protestant Reformed Church of Prospect Park, New Jersey, is a viable congregation. They have a congregational existence and fellowship. They have the preaching of the Word. They have the sacraments. They have catechism classes. They have a consistory. They have the help and support of our churches. And above all, they have and rejoice in the truth of our Reformed confessions. And they are there to stay, by God's grace!

May others have the courage of faith to join them. They will not be disappointed. And they will find for themselves and their children spiritual food and nourishment as nowhere else in that community.

And may those in other areas who love the Reformed faith and who long for sound preaching learn from this concrete example that our Protestant Reformed Churches are indeed ready to answer a call for help and to give freely of that which the Lord has so freely given to us.

God bless our Prospect Park congregation!

## Things I Never Knew

One of our contacts with the Netherlands is *Reformatisch Dagblad*, a rather new Christian daily newspaper, whose Church News Editor, Mr. H. H. J. van As, receives our *Standard Bearer* and from time to time sends me the Church News section of his paper. Not long ago I received several issues, among which was that of November 28, 1973, which carried an interview with Prof. John Stek, of Calvin Seminary.

In a wide-ranging interview, Prof. Stek was also asked about the Protestant Reformed Churches. And from his response to this inquiry, as reported by *Reformatisch Dagblad*, I learned some amazing things about the Protestant Reformed Churches, things which I never knew before.

*Item.* In commenting on Rev. Herman Hoeksema's denial of the well-meant offer of grace, Prof. Stek and Dr. Paul Schrotenboer are reported to have said that Hoeksema denied that in the preaching of the gospel he had a word for the non-elect. Amazing! I was raised and instructed in home and church and theological school in the Protestant Reformed Churches, but I never heard anything like that. I did indeed hear that for the reprobate the preaching of the gospel is a savor of death unto death. I did hear frequently — and still preach: "For the wicked, saith my God, there is no peace." Isaiah 57:21.

*Item.* In commenting on the De Wolf schism in 1953, Prof. Stek is reported to have said: "The breach also had a pastoral background; may the

ministers warn the congregation in their preaching against apostasy? Hoeksema posited over against this: there is no apostasy (or: falling away). A number of ministers of his church were of the opinion that then preaching became impossible. Therewith there came a new investigation by these ministers (or does the report intend to say: a new investigation of these ministers?) with the result that an estimated two-thirds broke with the Protestant Reformed Church. Now is that not amazing! I lived through the controversy of 1953; in fact, because of my place as pastor of Doon, Iowa and in Classis West, I played a rather active role in the controversy. As I recall the controversy, it centered on the fundamental question whether the promise of the covenant is conditional or unconditional, with the former position being taken by those who left us and who were pro-Liberated, and the latter position representing what had always been the position of the Protestant Reformed Churches. In fact, I think I can still quote from memory the two heretical statements upon which the controversy finally centered. They were: 1. "God promises every one of you that if you believe, you shall be saved." 2. "Our act of conversion is a prerequisite for entrance into the kingdom of God." But however that may be, this is the first time I ever heard the presentation of Prof. Stek. It is one of those things that I never knew. And I still do not know it. And I here and now state publicly that it is a bald-faced and ridiculous lie!

*Item.* Prof. Stek is reported to have given the following description and evaluation of the Protestant Reformed Churches: "In these churches there is no theological development to be found whatsoever; they continue to maintain the old unchanged; theirs is a theology of maintaining and defending positions. The only reason for existence is that they form a Reformed communion on the basis of protest and setting themselves apart over against others. That is a negative ground! What the future of this small church group will be is not predictable, but cooperation, or agreement (*samengaan*) with another church appears to be excluded beforehand."

And here are some more things I never knew. I never knew that it was Christian deliberately and dishonestly to belittle churches who are far and away more Reformed than one's own. The Bible has a word for that: slander! Secondly, although I have had five years of theological training at our own seminary, though from my youth up I have been thoroughly immersed in Protestant Reformed teaching and instruction, though I am rather thoroughly acquainted with all our Protestant Reformed literature, though I teach theology and Old

Testament in our Protestant Reformed Theological School, for the first time in my life I learn from Prof. Stek (who must be having dreams and visions in far away Amsterdam!) that there has never been any theological development in our churches. Further, that our only basis of existence is negative! Now, really, Prof. Stek! If you had only weighed your words more carefully, you would not have said this. For you began by stating, though in a belittling fashion, that we continue to maintain the old unchanged. And that is at least positive, is it not? But besides, I dare to say that from the Protestant Reformed Churches there has come forth more positive development of sound Reformed theology, covenantal theology, sovereign grace theology – and that, too, in the form of published works, such as *The Triple Knowledge* and *Reformed Dogmatics*, not to mention hundreds and thousands of pages in other publications – than Prof. Stek will ever see from Calvin Seminary, much less from his own pen.

Yes, there was one item which I knew before. Prof. Stek presents our future as doubtful. Well, from Christian Reformed quarters they have been saying things like this for years. It used to be: when Hoeksema and Ophoff die, the Protestant Reformed Churches will fall apart. There were those who looked for our denominational death after the De Wolf schism of 1953. Other such whisperings there have been from time to time. But thanks to God's grace, we are quite alive and well today. We are about to dedicate a new seminary building. We are active in home missions. We are active in Christian education. We are active in all our congregations with sound and edifying preaching; and our people do not have to sit in the pews wondering what new heresy or liturgical oddity they will have to stomach on Sunday. We have no theistic evolutionists and other deniers of the historicity of Genesis among our teachers and preachers. We have no teachers of universal atonement in our Seminary, like Prof. Stek's colleague, Prof. Harold Dekker. We have none in our midst who publicly admit to signing the Formula of Subscription with mental reservations. We have none among us who publicly express agreement with men like Harry Kuitert, as does the Christian Reformed Church. Thanks be to God's grace alone, we are Reformed. By that same grace we intend to remain Reformed. And by that same grace, we will continue to develop in the Reformed line.

Moreover, we have sought and we continue to seek contact with all who with us love the Reformed faith.

I respectfully suggest to Prof. Stek that he clean his own house before he eyes ours. I also respectfully urge that he learn not to slander.

## QUESTION BOX

## As To Bible Study Groups

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

## Question

From a Grand Rapids reader I received the following question of a practical nature: "Would you please comment on neighborhood prayer groups and 'Bible study groups' held in various homes, involving so-called Bible study, discussion of personal experiences and discussion of personal problems. Thank-you."

## Reply

My questioner does not furnish me with a great deal of information, nor do I personally have any experience with these groups. But after inquiring a bit, I think I have the picture.

Apparently there are such groups of ladies from a given neighborhood, who meet at homes, ostensibly for Bible study, for prayer, for personal testimony concerning their "experiences," etc. As I understand it, this kind of meeting is conducted on an inter- or non-denominational basis. There seems to be no kind of formal organization involved. And apparently there is no prior agreement as to the basis on which these groups are called together, the basis on which they operate, etc.

What do I think about this?

In the first place, one can only oppose something of this kind at the risk of being called impious for discouraging Bible study, at the risk of being "against Christian witnessing" and at the risk of being "against personal testimony." Well, I will accept that risk. I am opposed, strongly opposed, to this sort of thing.

Here are my reasons:

1. There is, of course, nothing wrong — in fact, everything right — about studying God's Word, whether privately or in a group. But if this is to be done profitably and correctly, there must be some fundamental unity in the group, some basis on which those involved are agreed, and some prior agreement as to precisely how the meeting is to be led, etc. How, for example, am I to study the Bible (unless I am in control of the study) with someone who is not

wholly committed to Scripture's infallibility, or with an Arminian, or a Baptist, or with anyone with whom I am not in agreement as to the fundamentals of the Reformed faith?

2. In this day of rampant subjectivism and mysticism of all kinds, including neo-Pentecostalism, I see a very grave danger in this sort of thing. And when my questioner adds that there is discussion of "personal experiences and problems," my radar begins to send signals, frankly. There have been other times in church history when such "cells" have been formed. Usually they have been characterized by sickly mysticism — the same sort of thing which is rampant today, only in a very superficial, glory-hallelujah, praise-the-Lord form. And they have been characterized inevitably by pride and self-exaltation; these people begin to class themselves as the spiritually elite, the real kernel of the church. Reformed Christians should be on their guard against this sort of thing. I have read enough about the current neo-Pentecostal movement that I believe it is to be avoided like the plague; and any sickly subjectivism which smacks of it or might lead up to it should be avoided. Keep your feet squarely on the ground of God's Word and our Reformed confessions, and do not allow yourself to be tempted by these apparently pious movements: before you know it, you will be led astray and trapped. And then, if you have any Christian sensitivity, you will find yourself having problems such as those mentioned in the quotation below.

3. Our ladies can far better spend their time in their own Ladies' Societies and in preparation — good, careful, thorough, sober preparation — for their society meetings. My experience in the past has been that there has never been too much of the latter; and the most common excuse given is "lack of time."

4. For the rest, I would like to quote an article which came from the pen of the Rev. G. I. Williamson, of the Reformed Church of Silverstream, New Zealand. The article has appeared in this country in both the *Presbyterian Guardian* and *Christian News*.

### Are You On Cloud Nine?

By. G. I. Williamson

One of the pastoral problems that I have met more and more frequently in recent years is suggested by the title above. Let me explain.

My wife began to attend some women's meetings with others in our church, when I noticed that she sometimes came home rather discouraged and downhearted. In talking it over I discovered this was the reason: The study material used at these meetings was often some recent evangelical publication that had become popular in the wider circle of readers. And it was usually a sort of romantic account of the way in which the writer found in Jesus the answer to all manner of problems. Suddenly they were on cloud nine, as it were, and everything was just wonderful.

#### Is the Christian life a high?

The trouble was that my wife hadn't reached cloud nine. No, for her there was still a daily struggle with the flesh, the world, and the devil. Prayer was still an effort. And troubles and trials still came. As she compared her experience, then, with these wonderful and romantic stories that others related, she began to wonder about herself. "I just don't know," she would say. "Maybe I don't really know what it is to be a Christian at all."

Well, we talked this over at some length. And I urged her to put these modern evangelical books out of mind for a while, in order to think about the Scripture. I asked her to tell me of just one person in the Bible who lived on cloud number nine! I asked her to name just one who rose above the strife of battle to bask in the sunshine of perfect tranquility and peace!

And then we sat down and read some of the Psalms of the Bible — the divinely inspired directory for true Christian experience. Again and again she would say, "Well, that sounds just like me! That's the way it really is." So the powerful truth of the Word of God was all the answer that was needed.

She went back, next time, to that women's meeting and spoke about these things. Suddenly there were others who spoke up expressing their profound relief! Yes, they too had had precisely the same experience. They had heard these all too wonderful

stories and then had looked at themselves! And they too had begun to say, "Well, it's not like that with me. It's not cloud nine at all. It's still a daily struggle with many discouragements and trials." Imagine what a relief it was, then, to get back to the solid truth.

#### The Christian life is a battle

Now I do not want to condemn every evangelical book that tells of the wonder-working power of Christ. I myself could write one too — and it would have much the same effect, if I only told one side of the story! Any true believer can tell these things, and should tell them too. But not in such a way as to give a distorted view of the matter. And this is all too often what happens.

That is one reason why it is so very helpful to go back and read the biographies of some of the great men of God. Yes, we often find those elements in their lives that humble us, and make us ashamed — things that make us cry out to God for more grace to walk closely with him. But they also have an abundance of trial and tribulation with the weakness of the flesh! And precisely because we see their discouragement — and weakness — and tribulations, we find the encouragement to press on with our own good fight of the faith.

Let me urge you then, if you have this problem, to turn from fiction to truth. The fact is that much of this modern evangelical material is rubbish of the worst sort precisely because it draws a pietistic picture of life — the Christian life — that never has been true in this world.

No, the true Christian life is not easy — and it is not "cloud nine" — a sort of perpetual ecstasy that lifts us "above all the din." It is rather a battle all the way, and the whole armor of God is required.

For only those who endure to the end are going to be saved in that day. Let us give special heed to the inspired words of the Psalms, then, and take heart and encouragement when we see ourselves herein. For in this — rather than in a kind of imaginary heaven on earth — we shall find our encouragement. And the very fact that we are fighting the good fight will become, as it should, a comfort to us rather than a discouragement because we don't find it so easy.

You see, there is no "cloud nine" in the Christian life. We're in a battle all the way to the end. To be misled into thinking otherwise is just another clever trick of Satan to discourage us.

**Know the standard and follow it. Read THE STANDARD BEARER!**

# About the Use of Cosmetics

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

## Question

From a west coast reader I received the following:

In the *Standard Bearer* of December 1, 1973, under Question Box, page 104, we read, "A question has been bothering me for a long time." We also have a question that is bothering us. And that is "the painting of their face, and lips, and eyes by our ladies," as well in our home church of X and here in Y.

We call that "wereldgelijkvormigheid" (world-conformity, HCH), and we as Christians should stay away from that. It is of the devil, and we see it as sin.

We read in II Kings 9:30 that the wicked Jezebel painted her face, but should Christians not stay away from this? This way we are no different from the world.

## Reply

First of all, I should point out that the designations "X" and "Y" for the two churches mentioned in the above letter are mine. This change was made for reasons which should be obvious.

In the second place, I cannot escape the impression that this is more of a statement of position than a question on the part of my correspondent. My

correspondent seems to have his mind made up.

In the third place, I will not condemn the use of cosmetics wholesale. For one thing, I believe that this is another case of sin not residing in things, but in the abuse of things. For another, such wholesale condemnation of the use of cosmetics will involve one in endless (and useless) questions as to what is proper and what is improper. May milady powder her nose and use a little perfume, or not? And may a gentleman use some hair tonic or a bit of after-shave lotion?

In the fourth place, there is indeed an abuse in this regard. There are some who make themselves look like Jezebel, others who make themselves look like cheap whores, and still others who make themselves look a great deal like clowns. Motives have a great deal to do with this question, too. Some, there are, who imitate every fad that comes along, no matter how ugly it makes them look, simply in order to be "with it," I guess.

Hence, let each one use sanctified liberty, be properly modest and judicious in this regard, and beware of following the world in the abuse mentioned. And let mothers in Israel teach their adolescent daughters in this regard by word and example.

**Gift idea? Gift subscription!**

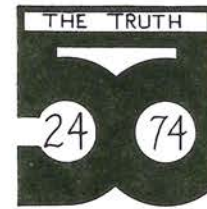
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**Write our Business Office.**

## FROM HOLY WRIT

# 1945-1974 -- Luctor Et Emergo

Rev. G. Lubbers



It was with great wrestlings that our *Standard Bearer* came into being and continued to exist by the grace and tender mercies of our God. In this wrestling, conflict and labor and trials the Lord gave His blessing. It was ever a rising in and above the conflict in faith; it was indeed luctor et emergo (I struggle and I emerge). Did not Jacob cry, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me"? Thus it was also with our paper during these fifty years of its existence!

In the first place, the *Standard Bearer* began with mighty power of faith, but there were few laborers who could write. Soon even one of the pillars (?) who helped to begin our paper deserted the ranks of the writers. Then the ranks were made smaller, till, after not many years, there were two writers besides the late Reverends Wm. Verhil and Gerrit Vos. These two were the Reverends H. Hoeksema and G. M. Ophoff. The latter were busy men, who had to burn the night oil to finish their work and had to cut their sleep short. But they were in the strength of their years and were steeled to the battle.

However, gradually the time came when the question was raised whether there should not be more writers. Other young ministers had been trained in the seminary, and gradually were desirous, too, of aiding a bit in writing in the *Standard Bearer*. The matter went through a period of discussion; it was a sort of *Sturm und drang*. For the paper, a time of crisis. The question was raised whether the *Standard Bearer* had served its purpose as a free paper under the RFPA and should now become a denominational paper, a "*kerkelijk blad*." It was opined that the *Standard Bearer* was too much for many people to digest. There were some strong voices raised against such a suggested change; the editor-in-chief, Rev. H. Hoeksema, would go along with this change, whereas it would afford him opportunity to write in the English language (he was writing predominantly in the Holland language) concerning many subjects in a

permanent form. He could then write his dogmatic studies in book form. However, that change of the *Standard Bearer* into a church paper somewhat like *De Wachter* (Christian Reformed church paper in the Holland language) was not to be.

Instead there was the guidance of the Spirit which led in the direction of having our paper divided into definite rubrics. Rev. H. Hoeksema suggested the following rubrics: Meditation, Editorials, Doctrine, In the Churches, Biblical History, History of Dogma, Social Topics, Political Conditions, Missions, Education, Press Reviews, Question Box, Book Review. Truly, an impressive array of subjects. These would, of course, not all appear in each issue; but these would be interchanged in the various issues. There was one condition upon which Rev. Hoeksema would favor and would cooperate with such a rubrication of the *Standard Bearer*. He writes in italics as follows: "... that each and every editor or co-worker would be held absolutely responsible, during the time that he was appointed for a certain rubric, to fill his space with material concerning the subject assigned to him, and no one else, not even the editor-in-chief, may fill that space." The truth of the matter was that those who had to write not infrequently let the editor down in the past, and then he would, with Rev. Ophoff, need to write some more in haste to meet the copy deadlines with the printer, and the printer's devil!

It was then suggested that it would facilitate matters if all the co-laborers were put "under law." It would be somewhat the law of the school-master in the Seminary once more. It would be like assigning term papers. Each would be assigned certain subjects. This would in effect be a kind of systematizing of the work, although it was short of rubricating the paper. In the September 1, 1942 issue, on pp. 468-469, we have such a schedule for the year 1942-1943. Undersigned also was given certain subjects on which to write. He well remembers that at that time he was

taking a few courses at Central College, Pella, Iowa, while he was minister in the church there. He was greatly interested in the philosophical presuppositions of common grace and related subjects, and took courses there in philosophy which had not been offered in our Seminary when he attended. The editor-in-chief assigned him and also others such subjects as: The Shaking of All Things, Rationalism and Christian Logic, Dewey and Christian Education, Election and Foreordination, The Concept Person in Scripture, The Value of Apologetics, The Dangers of Early Adolescence, Barth's Conception of Predestination, etc. This array of subjects was perhaps indicative of a need of some basic study and research on the part of the young men in the ministry.

Evidently this assigning of subjects was not to the taste of the associate editors. The pages of the *Standard Bearer* indicate that some three years later, 1945, under an article "Cleanings From Twenty Years," a speech delivered by one of the ministers then with us, the matter of rubrics was brought up once more; and the list which we enumerated above from the pen of Rev. H. Hoeksema was again submitted for consideration.

It was at this point that a new and different schedule for the *Standard Bearer* was printed by "H.H." It was indeed, *lector et emergo*! Finally, the rubrication of the paper emerged in definite rubrics which were to be written by men to whom these were assigned for one year. Thus the writers became definite co-editors and had a voice in the annual meetings of the editorial staff. It was in the year 1945, in the October 1 issue, that the first contribution appeared in the rubric *From Holy Writ*, from the hand of Rev. H. Veldman on Matthew 7:13, 14. After a few issues the undersigned started writing on Ephesians 1. Incidentally, undersigned has written in the rubric *From Holy Writ* continuously ever since that time, being exclusively responsible for it, with the exception of the year 1948-49 when he was ill. It was the Rev. C. Hanko who then wrote in this department on such subjects as: Mouth of the Lord, The Hand of the Lord, Beholding God's Face, The Hope of the Covenant Mother in the Old Dispensation, The Multifority of the Church, The Offices in the Church. I must not omit that Prof. R. Decker has also recently given me a much needed lift when he wrote in this department on the Epistle of James.

When I read this rubric, *From Holy Writ*, as it has appeared now for some twenty-eight years it reads like a chronicle of my life. It was the good pleasure of the Lord that my life should be so very much taken up also in our paper, be it then in a limited and more or less subordinate role. No one is more conscious of the shortcomings and weaknesses of my writings than

I am. Yet, I read these articles once more, and I see that, although here and there they react to the controversies which shook the foundations of our churches, they are in the main an attempt to give serious and basic exegesis of many passages of Scripture in popular language, although one not-too-kind critic once castigated me for having written in five different languages in one article. Happily, that was the exception.

Also in these articles in the rubric *From Holy Writ* it was often *Luctor Et Emergo*! Many of these essays were written while I was travelling as home missionary. Of the twenty-eight years that *From Holy Writ* appears, some thirteen years the articles were written in many parts of the United States, in motels, hotels, private homes. The latest were written from the Island of Jamaica. Many times copy was sent in with the feeling of the imperfection of the copy as to form and content.

It is a rather happy and blessed experience to have one's youthful colleagues in the ministry come and tell you and write you of the blessing and help they received from some of my strugglings to put on paper the meaning and sense of the Holy Spirit. It indicates that the Lord was willing to use the efforts of *From Holy Writ* in the service of His ministry in the church. For this the writer is deeply and humbly grateful.

*From Holy Writ* has covered many chapters of the Bible and even some complete Bible books. To mention just a few, which my perusal of past volumes of the *Standard Bearer* reminded me of, I will call attention to the following: Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38, 39), the Book of Malachi, sections of I Corinthians, the First Epistle to Timothy. Hebrews hopefully will be finished; studies in I and II Peter, and studies on Paul's great addresses in the Book of Acts, and many other Scripture passages.

It is now some forty-six years ago that I entered the seminary of our churches. Without the *Standard Bearer* the life of me and our churches would not have had their healthy existence under God. Without my own small contribution to *From Holy Writ*, my life would have lost much of the actual *Luctor Et Emergo*. It has been my privilege, together with my colleagues of many years, to have labored in this kingdom work.

Looking back over the years, I know they join with me in the prayer of Moses, the man of God, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." Psalm 90:16, 17.

It is an awesome thought that one day our work shall be tried by the Lord Himself. In the knowledge

that we only plant and water, that neither Paul nor Apollos is anything, that God only gives the increase, we listen to God's Word; the day will come when our work shall be tried as by fire.

*From Holy Writ* has devoutly and seriously always attempted to write accurately according to the sense of the Scriptures. This column has never knowingly tried to foist its opinion on the Scriptures, but has always allowed the Scriptures to speak. And so we commit the many pages over many months and years into the hand of the Lord. Ever the rule has been "Scripture interprets Scripture." May this rubric

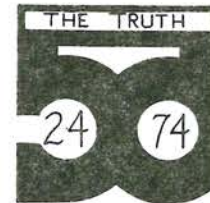
continue to hew the line of proper exegesis in these days when the so-called "new hermeneutics" is more and more taught in the schools of the entire world.

God keep our *Standard Bearer*, and our editors to write along pure paths, adding nothing to nor detracting anything from the Book of Prophecy, the revealed counsel of God. May the *Standard Bearer* keep the banner aloft till Jesus comes. Amen! Even should our heads be gory with the blood of the righteous, may we stand! Struggling against all the hosts of hell, may we emerge in the final victory, according to God's sure and faithful promise.

## The Standard Bearer in Retrospect

WEGLOPENDE PROTESTANTEN

Rev. H. Hoeksema



(The above title appeared in the *Standard Bearer* of February 1, 1936, Vol. 12, pages 198 and 199. The Dutch title can be translated: "Deserting Protestants" or, "Protestants Who Run Away". The article, of course, was also Dutch — as were many others in early volumes of the *Standard Bearer*. But the editorial is very pertinent to any age of the church; it speaks to us yet today. The subject touches upon a situation which we have observed repeatedly in the history of the Protestant Reformed Churches — and doubtlessly a situation which exists in other denominations as well. Read it then for instruction and warning for our own day.)

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A great grief in the life of the church is what we might call: deserting protestants.

And often there are also a great evil.

Who, having a little experience in ecclesiastical spheres, does not know them?

In the short period of our existence as churches, we have oftentimes met them. They are people who protest first and then desert us; or who protest while

deserting; or who first desert and then protest. Sometimes their desertion consists merely in this that they stay away from church; sometimes also (usually even; such is often the result anyhow) in this: that they demand a certificate of dismissal and affiliate themselves with another church.

The deserting protestant has a "cause".

He is not in agreement with his minister. The minister preaches too subjectively or too objectively (usually the latter); he is too dogmatical or too practical (usually the former); he caters too much to the emotions or vice versa (usually the latter); he does not preach election or he does not sufficiently call unto repentance (usually for the others); he is too deep or too superficial (I have known a hardened sleeper-during-the-service who complained that the sermon was too deep). At any rate, he has a "cause" with his minister. And he talks much about that cause for a longer or a shorter period of time (but not with the minister), until finally the minister also observes that the man has such a grievance. Then the matter is broached on the occasion of family visitation and the minister in all kindness does his utmost to convince

the brother that his "cause" is groundless, or is no "matter of principle", or he promises the brother that he shall profit from the observations made by him. But it is to no avail. Finally the man with his "cause" proceeds to protest — that is, if he does not desert at an earlier time. In the meantime, he continues to stir up unrest in the congregation and endeavors also to win others for his "cause".

Or the deserting protestant has a cause of practical importance.

The minister has not acted correctly. Or, the consistory has committed an injustice. Or, some bad thing was decided on the congregational meeting. Or, as is often the case, he is himself under censure, and of course, very unjustly. So he protests against the minister, or against the "godless" treatment by the consistory, or against the decision of the congregational meeting which was "contrary to correct church polity". In the meantime, he talks much about the sins of the minister, or about the unjust acts of the consistory wherever he can find a listening ear — and where the minister or the consistory or the members of the congregation who are better acquainted with the matter cannot hear him. And sometimes he does that in a "pious" manner. He sorrows because of the injustice for the sake of the congregation. Or: "What will become of God's Church when such godless injustice is committed!" Or: "Blessing will never rest on such (acts)!"

And he feels himself "constrained" to protest.

But, behold, he deserts before he has walked the way of protest to the very end!

If it concerned his own "cause" and he was under censure, he asks for his "papers" before the way of censure can be followed with him to the very end.

If it concerned a matter against the minister or the consistory, and he did not receive satisfaction with the consistory, he does not have the courage to bring his "cause" to classis.

It is impossible anyhow to find justice!

The consistory knows how to present its case in such a way that he has no chance whatsoever to win his cause!

Moreover, the classis will see to it that the minister or the consistory are protected.

Hence, he will demand his papers!

And then, when he has received his certificate of membership, and therefore has lost all right of protest, he still goes about among "friend" and foe in order to complain about the injustice he suffered and

about that "godless" consistory. And, sad to say, but a fact nevertheless, there are always sufficient simple souls who lend their ear — who do not understand that such a man's "cause" is good for nothing; who lament over him and with him proceed to weep for the "apostasy" of the church.

Such deserters or their friends even write letters to east and west concerning their "cause".

Now and again I even receive articles wherein the deserters or their partisans purpose to unburden their hearts in rather severe language in the *Standard Bearer*. Articles such as these the *Standard Bearer* does not publish, of course; both because it would place such authors themselves in a bad light, and also because it would reduce the *Standard Bearer* to a garbage container.

A protesting deserter is good for nothing!

Anyone who really has a "cause", who is convinced in his conscience before God that he is not dominated by sinful motives, that he champions the truth, loves the brethren, loves Zion, and who carries God's cause in his heart, never becomes a deserter! Indeed, he is not concerned whether or not he will win *his* cause; he fights for God's cause. And if that is his aim, how then could he become a deserter? He will protest in the right way as long as the possibility of protest exists. Others may heap injustice upon him; some may refuse to take to heart what is to him the cause of God; yea, he may finally even perish himself in an ecclesiastical sense — but he will never become a deserter.

The deserter has no spiritual "backbone".

He really knows in the depth of his heart that his "cause" is no good; that it is not love for God and His cause; nor is it a love for the church and the brethren which constrains him.

He cannot get *his* way. Therefore he deserts.

This man rather employs backbiting and slander in order to cast a blot on Zion's name before friend and foe.

The deserting protestant is a spiritual coward.

Over against him we have but one calling. That calling is not that we should receive him kindly in order to listen to his "whispering" and to become guilty with him in the casting of a blot on Zion's name; but that we point out to him his sin against the ninth commandment, and to admonish him to walk in the correct way if he really thinks that he has a "cause".

But this is certain: the deserting protestant is good for nothing!

## JAMAICAN MISSION NEWS

### “What went ye out for to see?”

Tongues are wagging, ears are tingling and credibility is being tried. The “citizen’s band radio” is so very busy these days that it is becoming more and more difficult to sort out the rumor-news from the true-news. The Mission Committee thought it expedient to tune up the “official band radio” to give you more of the Jamaican mission news — hence this installment that had been promised you. Some of which you heard on the citizen’s band was true, of course, but the deductions and analyses are being stretched to the “I can’t believe it” stage. Were you tuned in when it was deduced that all Jamaicans are “grabbers” and infected with a severe case of the “gimmies”? Attend to the following request found in a letter to Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers: “. . . although I have never gotten a personal gift from any one of you, I am asking you for one now: a photograph of both of you, one that can be framed.” Now that “gimme” came not from a “grabber” but from a good friend who wanted a picture by which to remember them.

The Mission Committee, in its monthly meetings, is deeply concerned about the spiritual welfare of the brethren and sisters in the faith on the Island of Jamaica, those whose hearts the Lord has touched through the faithful ministration of our missionary, Rev. G. Lubbers. They are a matter of our official and personal prayers. They are the faithful “remnant” with whom the King of His Church is ever concerned. They are among the innumerable throng of redeemed which shall eat and drink at the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Yes, the Mission Committee has decided to suspend the labor of Rev. Lubbers there until Synod meets in June. Yes, he has shipped all his personal belongings back home to Terrace Ave. in Jenison. Yes, *his* work is finished in Jamaica. But *all* work is not finished on that island. Just as in a local congregation whose pastor has left them, taking a call from another church, *his* work is finished in their congregation, but *all* work is not finished. Their catechism teaching goes on; their elders and deacons are still functioning; their Sunday School is still instructing the little children in the way of

sanctification; their men’s society and ladies’ society and young people’s society are in session. No, no, *all* work is not finished in a vacant church! So in Jamaica. Two ministers, four students and various elders and deacons are still preaching, teaching and exhorting the membership in a concerted effort to face the world under the banner of the Truth. Yes, the Mission Committee has appointed Revs. Hanko and Heys to visit Jamaica in April to “evaluate” the field; come with propositions to the Committee and then to Synod whether or not to continue laboring there; to suggest the calling of a missionary or missionaries; to assist them in other ways by magazines, pamphlets, personal letter writing, etc. The Mission Committee is leaving that up to the sanctified judgment of the emissaries. Revs. Hanko and Heys. Now come with us on a little flight of imagination. Can we hear Him asking:

*“What went ye out for to see? A people firmly established as Protestant Reformed Churches, fully settled in the faith of the Fathers? Hardly. “But what went ye out for to see? A people who are so advanced on the way of sanctification that they are no longer interested in earthly goods, earthly goals and earthly gold?” Hardly. “But what went ye out for to see?” A people who are like you in that they are poor, miserable lost sinners in need of cleansing and forgiveness of sins; in need of comforting words from the Scriptures; in need of instruction and nourishment derived only from the Word of God; a people who must daily struggle with the onslaughts of the world, the devil and their own sinful flesh; who daily must confess that they have fallen far short of subduing that three-headed enemy; a people who are just like you, sin accepted!*

Now of course our missionaries and emissaries did not see *only* that sort of people as described in our imaginary questioning, no more than our own pastors see only that kind in our congregations. All the citizens of the U.S. do not fit that description; all the citizens of Grand Rapids are not sin-burdened and longing for deliverance; and just possibly not *all* of those on the membership rolls of the Protestant

Reformed Churches of America consciously echo the complaint of Paul as recorded in Romans 7:24. Yes, we still desire earthly good, and pursue earthly goals and save earthly gold. We have not yet arrived at the pearly gates, divested of our earthly house, desiring to be clothed upon with the white robes of the righteousness of Christ.

No, our emissaries do not have their heads in the clouds. They are practical men with years of experience in pastoral work. They are eminently qualified to "evaluate" the field. They will do so taking upon themselves to learn if the door is open, if it is closing, or if it is closed. Next they will try to advise the Committee if men are trying to close the door which the Lord has opened for us, or if the Lord Jesus Himself has closed it. Woe be to us if we cease laboring in a field which the King of His Church has not closed to us!

At this writing the Mission Committee believes that God has His dear children on that island. It does so on many items of interest. This one from the missionary-helper: "But the situation must be kept in perspective. Though most seem to be fools, there are wise men. The students . . . have shown wisdom. There are elders who are wise, and there are people there who have shown wisdom." He called them the "minority." Don't you see the word "remnant" in that word? They are the faithful few that are genuinely interested in the Reformed Faith. The Missionary wrote, "Now it is my earnest prayer to God for these churches that they prosper well. I do not believe that our leaving here will or can shorten the hand of the Lord. I commend these churches, ministers and students unto the hand of the Lord, Who is able to keep them and give them a place among all the sanctified." And lastly, an excerpt from a letter Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers received from a family from one of the churches:

. . . Please let me say that you both will dwell long in our hearts and your memory will never fade from our hearts. God bless you as you prepare for home and loved ones, those you left behind to

come to teach us things we did not know before, not knowing what kind of time you would have, and yet you came. The Lord, to Whom you gave your time and talents so willingly, keep His Love and Grace shining in your lives; may He give you abundant joy for all the sorrows and pains you have experienced here, as He gave you strength for the many bumpy roads you traveled so faithfully for three long years to bring us the Word and many gifts. You have left many examples behind. You have made deep impressions upon our hearts. You were so loving to us. You showed no racial pride, not puffed up, two grand people. From the bottom of our hearts we thank you for everything you so faithfully and lovingly did for us. Some of our own natives would have long time worn out their welcome because of pride. You came preaching Christ and living Christ. You gave us something to think about constantly. Please believe me that I have learned much more from you than what you preached. . . . The Lord that made white and black give you His choicest blessings; may He pilot you safely home. . . . Your humble children, . . .

Yes, we are in contact with children who are hungering and thirsting for the Bread and Water of Life. No, our efforts have not all gone "down the drain"; much of it just may have gone *up* "Jacob's Ladder" instead. Probably the Lord has other of his children there who have not yet been reached with the preaching of the Word. *We do not know.*

Brethren and sisters of our constituency, pray for the cause of missions in Jamaica; pray for the faithful ministers and students; pray for the faithful elders and deacons; pray for the wandering sheep; pray for the Revs. Hanko and Heys as they carry the responsibility of "evaluating the field" seeking the Lord's will for us in our mission work. Only then, walking in the Light of the favor of God, can they see to come to a sanctified judgment of the situation of our mission field.

J.M. Faber,  
Sec'y. of the Mission Committee

*"It is a sad discovery to find the woeful ignorance which prevails in congregations to-day of the great basic truths of religion, which should underpin the Christian experience." —F.B. Meyer*

## NEWS FEATURE

## From Our Foreign Missions Committee

*Rev. R. G. Moore*

By now most of our readers are aware that our churches have adopted, at the Synod of 1973, a limited budget for foreign missions. This limited budget has come into being as a result of a limited activity in the field of foreign missions. For many years we have not had the opportunity to labor in this field because of our limitations of size and priority of activity. However, it has pleased God to give to our churches the opportunity to conduct a limited labor in the field of "foreign" missions. Thus the Synod of 1972 gave the Foreign Mission Committee the mandate to investigate a labor in the field of Indonesia, and to carry on a limited labor there, if it were deemed advisable. This decision followed upon some labor in this field by our Lynden, Washington Church. Under the direction of Rev. Woudenberg the Lynden Church had a series of the "Bible Study Pamphlets," written by Rev. Woudenberg, translated into the Indonesian language and distributed there in the format of a Bible Correspondence Course. However the expense of such a venture was really more than one church was able to carry, and at Lynden's suggestion the Foreign Mission Committee suggested that we continue this labor as churches under the direction of their committee.

Our committee is presently engaged in this labor, having a second set of 50,000 correspondence courses translated for distribution in Indonesia. These courses are translated in the United States for us by the Evangelical Scripture Mission located in Monroe, Washington. Then they are printed in Indonesia by a native firm at a much cheaper rate than they could be printed in the States. Through the Evangelical Scripture Mission we have engaged a native Indonesian to act as a correspondence secretary. His

task is to distribute the correspondence lessons, receive them back, correct them, and return them to the persons taking the courses. In this way Christians of Indonesia are given instruction in the truths of the gospel of Christ. This instruction is basically an expression of the wondrous doctrines of salvation in the Protestant Reformed tradition.

Indonesia is a country of 126 million inhabitants, with 13,000 islands which are an archipelago, stretching over 3,000 miles along the equator. There are five main islands: Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and West Irian. And while composed of almost 300 ethnic groups, it is to be noted that there is one basic language called the Indonesian language. It is in this language that our correspondence courses are printed.

The reports from Indonesia are that these correspondence courses are greatly appreciated and needed. The testimony is that these courses have helped many to a truer understanding of the gospel of Christ. People from all levels of life have enrolled in these courses and have been strengthened in faith. Further, it is reported that the need far surpasses the quantity we have been able to send.

Our committee feels that though this is a very limited labor in such a vast land, nevertheless it is a way that we as churches are able to bring the message of the gospel to God's sheep in this foreign land. It is our hope and prayer that God will use this labor unto the upbuilding of His people, the ingathering of His sheep, and the glory of His Name.

Our Committee is continuing an investigation into other fields of labor in this same way or with other means. May we remember this work of our churches in our prayers.

## FEATURE

# The Organism of the Truth

*Rev. Ronald J. Van Overloop*

Believing that the Scriptures are the infallible Word of God, given by divine inspiration, one must come to the conclusion that they alone serve as the sole standard for what is truth. For something to be true it must have its basis and its source in God's Word. When we speak of the organism of the truth, then we refer to doctrines or dogmas which are elicited out of that Word of God by the Church. The Church then develops and organizes those truths into a systematic form.

At present it is our purpose to show that the truth which proceeds out of the Word of God and is defined by the church is an organic unity. At a later date we shall attempt to show that the organic unity of the truth as it is adopted by churches or denominations has important practical implications as to the life and walk of the individual and of the church or denomination which holds to that body of truth. Also we shall carefully examine the spectrum of churches as they range from the true church to the false church. This examination of churches is possible because this organic unity of the truth serves as the basis and the heart of the church.

To discuss the idea of the organic unity of the truth we must know what an organism is. An organism is a unity which, in contrast to a mechanism which has no life, lives. Our physical bodies are living organisms. The Church, as the Body of Christ, is also an organism. According to I Cor. 12:12-27 the Church is made up of many members, yet there is but one body. The same is true of the organism of the truth. It is made up of many members, which are all inter-related one to another, so that all together they make up one living body of truth. Now then how does that come about?

To the church and to the individuals within the church God has given His infallible Word, the holy Scriptures. The canon of Scripture is closed. No longer can anyone add to or take away from the Scriptures. For the child of God to learn the will of God, to learn what is true, he must turn to God's Word. Out of and on the basis of the Word of God,

the Church develops the truth. This is possible because the Scriptures are the revelation of God or, to put it more precisely, they are the fulness of the revelation of God. It is incorrect to say that the Scriptures contain the fulness of God. That cannot be, for the Scriptures are a creature of God and no creature can contain the fulness of God. To say that they do not contain the fulness of God does not mean that they are incomplete. They are complete, lacking nothing, and that is true because the Scriptures are the fulness of the REVELATION of God. Therefore the whole of God is revealed. Yet there are infinite depths to God which are not known here on this earth. We can see the whole God, but only in a glass darkly. Therefore because Scripture does contain the fulness of the revelation of God, all of the individual truths or dogmas find their basis or source in it. Every dogma or doctrine exists in seed-form in the Bible. Just as the whole oak tree is contained in the acorn, so all truth is in the Word of God.

The truth of the Word of God reflects itself on the consciousness of the church. Faith as it is given to God's people by grace is the bond which unites them to Christ. That bond is a bond which is worked by God in such a way that it is a CONSCIOUS bond. Because faith carries with it the idea of consciousness, the child of God is very much aware of that fact that he is bound to Christ. Therefore he is able to know with his intellect that truth of the Word of God.

That faith is worked by the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. In the church and in the individuals within that church the Spirit has dwelt since Pentecost. The Spirit leads and guides the church into all the truth because He is the Spirit of truth. He is the Spirit of Him Who is the way, the truth and the life. Therefore it can be said that the church does not determine what the Scriptures say, but the church says what Scripture and the Spirit have taught her to say. That Spirit opens to the children of God the whole body of the beautiful truths of the Word of God.

The appropriation and the systematization of the truth as it is revealed to the church by the Spirit is not piecemeal. The Holy Spirit gives to each individual child of God and to the entire church from Pentecost on the whole truth. It was a spontaneous appropriation of the truth. The New Testament church, immediately at the outset, had for itself the whole truth. However, that spontaneous appropriation of the whole truth was also only a principle appropriation of the truth. For example, the New Testament church knew about Jesus, but if you would ask them whether Christ had two natures in one Person, they would not have known of what you were talking. If you would question them concerning the Deity of the Third Person of the Trinity, the early church would have not known of what you were talking, though they certainly would have confessed that God is God. They had a grasp of only the beginning principle of all the truth and did not know all the implications and developments of that truth. Nonetheless it cannot be denied that the church has always possessed the whole truth. The New Testament church itself was like a sapling as it just began to grow. It could not be called a weed or a blade of grass; it was a tree. But it certainly is not like that great tree it will be in a hundred years. Just as the church was beginning its development, so was the truth. The truth is a living organism given spontaneously to the church, but yet it is only a principle of what it would be in time.

The development of those dogmas and doctrines took place under certain circumstances. The first necessary circumstance for the truth to be developed is under the incentive and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is not enough to have just the Bible. It is also necessary to have the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit as He dwells within the church. "In the end, only the Holy Spirit from heaven above can create listeners and pupils who accept this doctrine and believe that the Word is God, that God's Son is the Word, and that the Word became flesh, that He is also the Light who can illumine all men who come into the world and that without this light all is darkness."<sup>1</sup> The promise of the Holy Spirit means that when the church humbly allows the Spirit to guide her accurately in the truth, this guidance of the Spirit is always in connection with the Scriptures.

Secondly, the development of dogmas takes place because of the thirst of the regenerated heart for the knowledge of God in Christ. The regenerated heart possesses the principle of eternal life and therefore it longs for more of that eternal life. It expresses that longing in a thirsting for knowledge of God, Whom to know is life eternal. Also, the regenerated heart is filled with a love of God. One who loves another

wants to know all he can about that person. So with the child of God: he wants to know all he can about God. There is always a thirst and a longing which leads the child of God into the truth.

Thirdly, the development of the truth takes place in the sphere of and by the mutual operation of believers. The communion of saints is essential because only within the sphere of the communion of saints is the Word of God preached. It is through the preaching principally that the church is gathered and that the church proclaims the truth. It is the preaching which stimulates and arouses the faith of the child of God. Because the church itself is an organism in which the Spirit of Christ dwells, the appropriation of the truth by the church is a mutual endeavor in which all the saints cooperate, each contributing something.

Fourthly, the development and appropriation of the truth takes place because of the logicalness of the human mind. The human mind tends to systematize the truths of Scripture to understand them better. The child of God is a rational-moral creature, possessing the ability to reason. This does not mean that reason reigns supreme, for we are referring to the believer as he has the Holy Spirit and is regenerated and as he dwells within the sphere of the communion of saints. This systematization of Scripture is necessary because Scripture is not systematized, for it is the record of the historical revelation of God to His people.

Finally the development of the truth takes place under the influence of the necessity to defend and formulate carefully the truth. There are all kinds of influences which bring the church to clarify and crystalize the truth in her consciousness. Historically, heresy is the greatest stimulus. When heresy arose concerning the Being of God, then the church began consciously to formulate the truth that God is three Persons in one Being. When heretics denied that Christ was God, then the church was forced to examine God's Word and on the basis of that Word derived the truth that Christ is both God and man.

Therefore each child of God works with the dogmas of the Church universal and with those of his own particular church or denomination. He critically compares those dogmas with Scripture, thereby to establish their authority.

Now then, why is it that the truth which the Church derives out of God's Word is an organic unity? Why is it that within that organic unity all of the individual doctrines are inter-related one with another? The answer must be found in the fact that the Scriptures are one. That the Scriptures are one is because they are the revelation of God, Who Himself

1. A. Skevington Wood, *Captive to the Word*, p. 161.

is one. Therefore much of what is characteristic of the Word of God is equally characteristic of the body of truth which is derived out of it.

That Scripture is one and unified in all its parts implies that there is no possible contradiction between one part of God's Word and another. Then what seem to be discrepancies are capable of resolution; if not now in time, then in eternity. Scripture has perfect inner harmony, always in agreement with itself. The fact that Scripture is one also implies that it is its own interpreter. One passage of God's Word interprets another. To interpret Scripture with Scripture is to let the Holy Spirit do His own work. The church does not interpret Scripture. I do not interpret Scripture and you do not interpret Scripture. Scripture interprets Scripture. One takes clear and lucid passages and with them sheds light on the obscure and difficult passages. Thus Scripture stands in its own light and explains itself. The reformer Martin Luther agrees with that when he says, "It is impossible that Scripture should contradict itself; it only seems so to foolish, coarse, and hardened hypocrites."<sup>2</sup> When Scripture is allowed to interpret Scripture one does not run the risk of being what Luther calls an ostrich. "Well known is the stupidity of the ostrich, which thinks it is totally covered when its head is covered with some branch. Thus a godless teacher seizes upon one particular saying of Scripture and thinks his notion is fine, not noticing that he is maintaining his position as one who is bare and unarmed on every side."<sup>3</sup>

Proof for the fact that the Scriptures are one is seen from I John 4:1-3. There John gives a confession which serves as a test as to whether a spirit was of God or not. John sets forth a simple and general, though fundamental confession. That confession is: "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." At first glance this looks very simple and we would question how we can test every spirit on the basis of this brief little phrase. But a close examination reveals the opposite to be true. Examine the word "Jesus", first of all. Our catechism tells us that Jesus means Saviour, Who is our complete and absolute and only Saviour, so that one cannot and may not find help for his salvation in himself or in saints or anywhere else. That, of course, immediately eliminates all Arminianism. And so one could continue to examine every word in this confession. The point of this confession is that the truth of this confession pervades and permeates the whole body of truth. This confession limits and determines all the truth. You confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh and you confess that the Word of Christ is the Word of God. You make this confession and you confess the cross to be the

bearing away of the curse due to God's people. You make this confession and you confess that the death of the Son of God was an atonement for sin. You confess that Jesus Christ is come into the flesh and you must confess His resurrection and His exaltation. You confess He is come in the flesh and you confess the application of all the blessings of salvation by the Holy Spirit to the individual child of God by irresistible grace. You make this confession and you must also confess that the reason why confession and you must also confess that the reason why is because of total depravity. Also the reason why is the sovereign love of God, the election of God to make Him come into the flesh. You make this confession and you say that He has come into the flesh for those given Him of the Father before the foundations of the world. Thus we can see that John means to set forth a confession which serves as the foundation of the whole body of truth.

Thus when we speak of the organism of the truth, it can be said that Christ crucified is the center and heart of that body of truth. Once again, turning to Martin Luther, we can see that he agrees with this idea when he describes Christ as the Sun which is the source of all light. "All Holy Writ points to the fact that Moses must proclaim the law, but that Christ will abolish and obscure the message of the law, just as the sun dims the light of the moon and stars. You can see that the stars are not shining during the day, though they are fixed in the heavens before your very eyes. The sun deprives them of their light. When the big light vanishes, the lesser lights begin to shine and gleam. But if Christ, the Sun, should go down, then may God help us!"<sup>4</sup> Christ is the perfect revelation of God. He is Himself the Word, the speech of God. He is the essential content of all Scripture.

The truth is an organism that implies that the logical system is not only in the mind of the child of God, but also in the truth itself. What we mean when we say that is this. When God reveals Himself as the God of our salvation in Christ and by grace we embrace Christ by faith, our embracing of the truth is not piecemeal. Rather we receive the whole Christ and then in Him we receive at once all the blessings of salvation. The systematization of those truths into a dogmatics occurs when the child of God enters into those riches of the whole Christ, piece by piece, step by step so that he may apprehend the depths of those riches. Objectively, that means that because the truth is organically one, all the aspects, all the sub-truths, are in their relation to the one truth inter-related with each other. Therefore it is so horrible to delete any part of God's Word, eg. the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Subjectively it means that God has given us

2. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 162, 163.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

minds and reason which enable us to apprehend that truth and the riches of that truth in their inter-relations, and not as a conglomeration of individual facts.

The truth is one because it is based upon the Word of God, which itself is one because it is the revelation of the one God. This has rich implications for the child of God. It means that in the development of the truth and in the explanation of God's Word, he does not need reason or science. Neither is going to help him, but on the contrary, they will lead him astray.

Applicable here is the idea that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Leaven is a small lump of sour dough similar to our yeast. This sour dough, through fermentation, gradually works its way through the entire mixture of batter until the whole lump of dough is leavened. The woman who put this lump of leaven into the dough would be confident that, given time, the yeast would effect every particle of bread dough. Paul uses this phrase in I Cor. 5:6, 7 where he is admonishing the Corinthians for allowing a man who had committed fornication to remain with them. The individual congregation is an organic unity also, and Paul is telling the Corinthians that a rotten apple will destroy the whole bushel. That fornicator allowed to remain in that congregation is going to affect the whole church, unless he is disciplined. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Paul says this also to the Galatians in Gal. 5:9. In his commentary on this text, John Calvin says, "I refer this to doctrine, not to men. It warns them how mischievous is the corruption of doctrine, so that they may not overlook it (as is common) as something of little or no danger. Satan goes to work with cunning and does not obviously destroy the whole Gospel, but taints its purity with false and corrupt opinions. Many do not consider the seriousness of evil and therefore make a less determined resistance. The apostle therefore protests that once the truth of God is corrupted, nothing remains sound. He uses the metaphor of leaven, which however small in quantity, transmits its sourness to the whole mass. We must be careful not to allow anything to be added to the pure doctrine of the Gospel."<sup>5</sup> The point is that if false teachers succeed in making even a small beginning in the work of imparting to us erroneous doctrines or false principles, this will develop itself into the corruption of our whole Christian faith and life. As Calvin pointed out, this does not happen overnight. The devil is much wiser than that. He is not going to enter into a church or the body of truth and make it all false at once. He is going to start in a little,

inconspicuous, hidden corner. There he is going to take a lie and he is going to paint it so it looks good. And once it is incorporated into that organic whole, so it is part of the organic unity, it will begin its work. Slowly but surely it will work its destructive work of destroying and discarding one doctrine after another.

This work can begin with the subtle lie that the Scriptures are not one. Again let us turn to Luther. "At first they deny only one article, but afterwards all must be denied. It is as with a ring; if it has only one defect, it can no longer be used. And if a bell cracks in only one place it does not sound any longer and is useless."<sup>6</sup> "When the devil has succeeded in bringing matters so far that we surrender one article to him, he is victorious, and it is just as bad as though all of them and Christ Himself were already lost. Afterwards he can unsettle and withdraw others because they are all intertwined and bound together like a golden chain, so that if one link be broken, the whole chain is broken, and it pulls apart."<sup>7</sup> The same idea Luther brought out when he explained Matthew 4:4. There Christ says to the devil that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. "But why the phrase 'by every word?' Because by disbelieving one single word you no longer live by the Word of God. For the whole Christ is in every word, and He is wholly in all single words. When, therefore, one denies in one word Him Who is in all words, one denies Him in His totality."<sup>8</sup> Then to settle it once and for all Luther says, "Faith consists of something indivisible: it is either a whole faith and believes all there is to believe, or it is no faith at all if it does not believe one part of what there is to believe. This is why our Lord likens it to one single pearl and one single mustard seed, etc. For Christ is not divided; therefore, one either denies Him in His totality when one denies Him with respect to one point or affirms Him in His totality. But one cannot at the same time deny and confess Him now in this, and then in that, word."<sup>9</sup>

This means that if total depravity is denied it can be shown that this is really a denial of Christ crucified. Deny creation is six literal days and you can very clearly show that to be a denial of Christ. The truth is one.

Therefore we must take heed to God's Word. We must examine every spirit and every wind of doctrine to see whether it is of God. The only test which can be used is God's own Word. If an error is found, it will inevitably affect the whole of the truth as well as the life and walk of him who holds that truth. If error

5. John Calvin, *Commentary on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, p. 97

6. Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 150, 151.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 151

is found, then we must do all that is in our power to rid ourselves of that error, before it is too late. And if all attempts to get rid of that error fail, then we must get out. Then it is time for us to go and find a church home where we can find the whole body of the truth of God's Word.

The truth is an organic unity because the

Scriptures are a unity. Scripture is a unity because it is the revelation of God, Who is One. The organic unity of the truth is very important. The Lord willing, in a later issue we shall attempt to show the importance of that unity as it affects the walk of the individual and of the church which holds it.

## Book Reviews

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

*THE WORLD THAT PERISHED*, by John C. Whitcomb, Jr. (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1973, 155 pp., \$1.95 pb). Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema.

The author of this little book is, perhaps, better known as the co-author, with Dr. Henry M. Morris, of *The Genesis Flood*, published in 1961 (and still one of the best books on the market concerning the Flood and related subjects).

What is the purpose of this book? The author himself states it as follows: "It is the purpose of this study to restate in a more popular form the basic Biblical and scientific evidences for that Flood, as set forth originally in *The Genesis Flood* . . . and to bring up to date the great controversy which that and similar works have stirred up. The author has also attempted to analyze and to answer briefly the published objections that have been leveled against *The Genesis Flood* in the past twelve years."

In attaining the above-stated purpose the author succeeds admirably.

To those of Reformed background, and

particularly to those who have followed developments in the Netherlands, the last chapter will be of special interest. *The Genesis Flood* was severely criticized (a mild word!) by the Dutch Geologist, J. R. van de Fliert, Professor of Historical and Tectonical Geology at the Free University of Amsterdam. This critique appeared in the *International Reformed Bulletin* (Spring, 1968) under the title, "Fundamentalism and the Fundamentals of Geology." Dr. Clarence Menninga of Calvin College (*The Banner*, Nov. 27, 1970) is confident that "the arguments from the fossil record which (Morris and Whitcomb) present have been refuted by J. R. van de Fliert." Other critics of Whitcomb and Morris have also hid behind the skirts of Dr. van de Fliert. In this chapter there is an extensive and competent reply of Dr. Morris to the criticism of van de Fliert.

What is heart-warming about this book is the fact that the author unashamedly takes his stand on the authority and trustworthiness of Scripture. One may not agree with every detail of interpretation, but it is a rarity nowadays to find scholars who stand foursquare on the basis of Scripture.

We highly recommend this little book, especially to

our young people of high school and college age, whose faith is often assaulted exactly on this point of the authority of Holy Scripture. We believe that they may be encouraged and strengthened by such writings as these. The bubble of the conceit of "scholars" who inveigh against the plain teachings of God's Word needs pricking; and it receives such pricking in this book.

*INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGICAL GERMAN*, by J. D. Manton (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1973, \$2.95 pb). Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema.

The purpose of this book is a good one: "This course is intended for those who wish to read theological German, but who have little or no previous knowledge of the language." The criticism directed at ordinary textbooks and courses in German is, I believe, also correct: "Most of the textbooks and language courses available, however, have two major drawbacks from the theologian's point of view: 1. They introduce a wide range of 'everyday' German vocabulary which is not directly relevant to the theologian's needs; 2. they concentrate on promoting oral fluency, which again is not what he is seeking." However this may be, I have yet to see the college course in German which produces students proficient in reading theological German.

I have not tested this little book. It consists of twenty rather detailed lessons, plus grammatical tables, vocabulary, and index. I do not know how many pages this fills; this is the first time in my life that I have seen a book without page numbers! I could conceive of it that through assiduous labor one could profit from this book — if he knew little or no German — to the point that he would not have to skip German quotations in theological works.

Although the book does not aim at oral proficiency, nevertheless a certain amount of this is necessary — no matter how much the aim may be only a private-reading proficiency. To this end, perhaps a set of cassette-tapes to accompany the book might be helpful.

Recommended to those who would like to try a do-it-yourself German course. But please, Mr. Publisher, if you ever reprint this book, add some page numbers!

*EXPOSITORY PREACHING: PLANS AND METHODS*, by F. B. Meyer, with an Introduction by Ralph G. Turnbull. (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., Reprinted 1974, 127 pp., \$1.95 pb). Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema.

This is one of the Baker series of Notable Books on Preaching. As noted, it is a reprint of a work by

Frederick Brotherton Meyer, 1847-1929, an English Baptist preacher who is perhaps better known for some of his commentaries.

With the main thrust of this book, which is a strong plea for expository preaching, we can agree. We can also agree with many of the suggestions of a practical, homiletical nature which the author makes. What the author means by expository preaching is not merely preaching on isolated and varied texts in an expository, or exegetical, manner. He has in mind what I would call "series preaching" on some book or extended portion of Scripture. And in my opinion, this is the *ideal* for expository preaching. Personally, homiletical ills — and, as a result, create a greater and healthier appetite for the preaching of the Word.

If there is one point on which I would especially criticize this little book, it is this: the examples of expository preaching are disappointing because they are rather poor expositions, but loaded with illustrations and anecdotes.

But students of homiletics and preachers who need a little homiletical refreshment can profitably read this book in a couple of hours.

Here are a couple of quotations to whet the appetite: "We are now able, in the light of these distinctions, to define expository preaching as *the consecutive treatment of some book or extended portion of Scripture* on which the preacher has concentrated head and heart, brain and brawn, over which he has thought and wept and prayed, until it has yielded up its inner secret, and the spirit of it has passed into his spirit." Or again: "The highest point of sermon-utterance is when a preacher is 'possessed,' and certainly, in the judgment of the writer, such possession comes oftenest and easiest to a man who has lived, slept, walked and eaten in fellowship with a passage for the best part of a week."

Or let a preacher take this advice for preparation of an expository series on a certain book: "He will perhaps have made his selection for the coming autumn and winter before he starts on his summer vacation (By all means! HCH). With all his other preparations for golf, or fishing, or camping out, he takes a handy pocket copy of the chosen Scripture. On the moor or in the hammock, within sound of the break of the waves or of the crunching of glaciers, he reads again and again, until the central lesson, the *motif*, begins to reveal itself. The next step is to roughly divide the matter under some general divisions, which will be broken up ultimately into smaller and yet smaller ones, the one condition being that each paragraph or chapter shall contain one complete thought."

Recommended as helpful for students and preachers.

## News From Our Churches

Rev. R. Harbach has received the call to labor in the Houston area, as home missionary of our churches. Rev. J. Kortering is considering a call from Loveland to serve as pastor there. And Rev. R. Moore has declined the call extended to him from our Prospect Park congregation.

Work is continuing, without interruption apparently, in Houston. Rev. Kamps expected to be there during the first three weeks of February. His work followed immediately after that of Rev. Veldman, who spent much of January in Texas. Incidentally, during his absence, his catechism classes were led by Southwest's former pastor, Rev. Lubbers. The work of Rev. Veldman in Houston was preceded by that of Rev. Van Baren, who was there during the time around Christmas and New Year's Day. Since this was a time of vacation for school children, Rev. Van Baren was able to take his family with him. It took a little while, it seems, for them to overcome the language barrier. One of the children of the congregation was overheard remarking to Rev. Van Baren's children that "y'all don't speak the same language that we do here, do you?" Rev. Van Baren, by the way, returned with a good report, as did also other of our ministers. He noted that, though there is a need for instruction, the families of the congregation have a love and concern for Reformed doctrine, and have expressed appreciation for the work of our ministers there. An evidence of that, perhaps, is that several of the members approached Rev. Van Baren with a rather sizable amount of money, and a request that he bring it back with him to Grand Rapids as a contribution for our seminary building fund. The congregation does, in fact, desire to become affiliated with our churches. The suggestion of Rev. Van Baren to his First Church congregation, namely, that we remember this group in our prayers, could well, I think, be repeated here.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Theological School Committee reports that the recent \$10-\$50 drive, for the Seminary Building Fund, brought the grand total (including unpaid

pledges) to \$136,435.30. The enthusiastic support of our people "is certainly," as you may have read also in your own church bulletin, "an occasion for thanksgiving and praise to our Covenant God."

Further occasion for joy was mentioned in that same bulletin of First Church. On Friday, January 25, the professors and students of our seminary moved into their new building. The first classes were held in it on the following Tuesday. The pleasure and understandable pride of professors and students alike was written over every face. One of the former remarked, "I hardly know how to act here." And one of the latter, all in one breath, exclaimed, "This is really different! It's unbelievable! This is so nice!"

On the following day the faculty and students met together for the first chapel exercise held in the new building. Professor Hoeksema brought the message, in what he said was really "a dedication chapel." He began by reading Psalm 75, drawing special attention to verse 1 of that chapter. He pointed out that it was surely correct and appropriate that we rejoice and are happy on this occasion. But, though we rejoice *at the occasion* of things, i.e., of our beautiful new facilities, we do not rejoice *in* them. We may be mindful further, he said, of the fact that our people have given most liberally in order to make this occasion possible, that men of God have long been busy in the work connected with providing this building for us; but the deepest reason for our thankfulness lies in the nearness of the name of our God. In fact, he said, we would do well to make that text (Ps. 75:1) our motto as we take our places in our new building: "Unto thee, O Lord, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare."

Then it was recess time, and the professor treated everyone to a piece of his wife's delicious apple pie, in celebration of his fifty-first birthday! And then, listen to this, his appreciative students and colleagues, sang Happy Birthday . . . a song directed by none other than Mr. Tom Newhof, Sr., coordinator of the building project.

(continued on back page)

### SCHOOL TEACHERS

HOPE Protestant Reformed School of Grand Rapids, Michigan will have two vacancies for the year 1974-1975. Kindergarten will need a teacher 3 days each week and a full time teacher will be needed in the 5th grade. Those who are interested should contact the school office.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Theological School of the Prot. Ref. Churches  
4949 Ivanrest Ave., S.W.  
Grandville, Mich. 49418 Phone (616) 531-1490

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 21, 1974, our parents, MR. AND MRS. GERBEN DE JONG commemorated their 60th wedding anniversary.

We, the children, are thankful to our covenant God for sparing them these many years for each other and us.

It is our sincere prayer that the Lord may continue to sustain them with His grace through their remaining years.

|                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mr. and Mrs. Wm. R. Hulstein  | Mr. and Mrs. Arnold De Jong       |
| Mr. and Mrs. Thomas De Jong   | 17 grandchildren                  |
| Mr. and Mrs. Albertus De Jong | 12 great-grandchildren Hull, Iowa |

\*\*\*\*\*

On Thursday, January 17, in Hope Church, there was held what is surely a well-deserved "Appreciation Night for Rev. and Mrs. George C. Lubbers, Missionary to Jamaica, West Indies." The remarks of appreciation were given by Rev. C. Hanko. He recalled having had "the privilege of leading the ordination" of Rev. Lubbers into the ministry — which event, he added, "happens to be forty years ago this year, in September." He recalled, further, Rev. Lubber's twenty years in the ministry in our churches before he was called, in 1954, to serve as home missionary. During his years as home missionary, Rev. Lubbers saw the organization of Loveland, Isabel, and Forbes Churches. He labored in Houston and "today we are seeing some of the fruits of that labor." Rev. Hanko made mention, also, of his 28 years of writing for the *Standard Bearer*. But, "of all his life, Rev. Lubbers would say that the work in Jamaica has been the most trying." A foreign country . . . a people of another race . . . utter loneliness . . . all the attending problems of a foreign field. In spite of all the difficulties, Rev. Hanko said, "the work in Jamaica has not been a failure." He then produced and read a couple of letters which Rev. Lubbers had received recently from Jamaica. "You came to us," said one of the writers, "preaching Christ and living Christ; you have taught us much." Rev. Hanko noted that he could underscore that observation. "What better proof," he asked, "of the grace of God?"

And Rev. Lubbers, in his response, also emphasized that grace of God. He said, characteristically, "I had one fear concerning this evening — that God would not receive all the glory." Rev. Lubbers acknowledged with obvious appreciation that "the testimony of the churches is that we have been faithful." He gave credit, further, to his wife, whom he had, he said, always appreciated, "but never as much as when we were in Jamaica."

But, he insisted, "whatever we did, we did by the mercies of God." He was happy, therefore, that Rev. Van Baren had read I Cor. 3 at the beginning of the program. "Who is Paul? Who is Apollos?" *God* works His great strength in our weakness. And *God* gives the increase. He called me, Rev. Lubbers said, and He will bless my labors.

D.D.

**THE STANDARD BEARER**

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