

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Should OPs and RPs Unite? (3)

A Continuing Presbyterian Church

Billy Graham On Original Sin

Covenant Confidence

The Home Library

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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Editorials

Editor's Notes

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

IT ISN'T THAT WE DON'T TRY. But our plans and instructions are not always carried out by our typesetting service, Photo Composition; and this can be very frustrating for the one who gives the instructions. Please turn to your last *Standard Bearer*, and write, Volume XLIX, Number 5, December 1, 1972" in the lower right-hand corner of the cover. Our apologies, too, to Rev. Kortering for the "goof" in his department. There could at least have been a colon between "Article 14" and "Pre-Adamite Man?"

PUBLICATION NEWS. The RFPA Publications Committee has had its first sell-out. The first printing of *Reformed Dogmatics* is now completely sold out. Hopefully, our second, corrected, printing will be

available by about February 1. And here is good news: the second edition will sell for only \$9.95. How's that for inflation-fighting? We are passing on to you the savings realized through elimination of typesetting costs on this second edition. The "Dogmatics" was our first and most expensive publication venture; to come out even, we had to sell it for \$14.95. But we are happy to pass on to you this \$5.00 saving. Incidentally, for those who are interested in statistics, *Behold He Cometh* is our best seller. We are nearing the 2,000 mark on it. And it has gone all over the world, too!

FOR YOUR HOME LIBRARIES. The Rev. Kuiper's article in this issue reminded me to inform you that

our seminary has a good many mimeographed publications. In many instances these would be useful not only to ministers and students, but to all our people. Even in those which may have some Greek and Hebrew in them you will find much helpful instruction; but many also do not contain any foreign languages which you have to skip. If you are on our *Theological Journal* mailing list, you will automatically receive a complete listing with the next issue of the *Journal*. For the time being, I will list just a few titles and prices in which you might be interested. These are all mimeographed, paper covers, and bound with plastic ring-binders. You can obtain them by writing to Mr. Arie den Hartog, our seminary Bookstore Manager, c/o Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches, 1145 Franklin St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507. To save book-keeping, please enclose payment with your order. Here are a few of our titles:

Chapel Talks on the Parables in Matthew (Rev. H. Hoeksema), \$3.00

Epistle to the Romans, Chapters 1-3 (Rev. H. Hoeksema), \$2.50

Ancient Church History (Rev. G.M. Ophoff), \$1.50

Ancient Church History (Prof. H. Hanko), \$2.00

Medieval Church History (Prof. H. Hanko), \$2.50

The Canons of Dordrecht, Outlines (Rev. H. Hoeksema), \$1.50

OT History: The Prediluvian Period (Prof. H.C. Hoeksema), \$2.50

OT History: The Bondage and Exodus (Prof. H.C. Hoeksema), \$2.50

Some of our syllabi are currently in low supply and about to be reprinted; we will list them later. We also have a few new ones in the process of preparation; these, too, will be announced when ready.

Should OPs and RPs Unite? (3)

In connection with the Rev. John J. Mitchell's reply to our first editorial on this subject, we promised to write further on both the subject of premillennialism and the subject of Arminianism. In the present editorial we devote our attention to the matter of premillennialism.

It may be well, first of all, to review the positions taken.

1. In my first editorial on this subject I pointed out that the matter of premillennialism is apparently left an open question in the "Proposed Basis of Union" between the two denominations. It is proposed that among the doctrinal standards be included "The text of the Westminster Larger Catechism in its original form, with the amendments adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod in reference to answers 86-89 which seek to ensure neutrality in regard to the eschatological sequence . . ." At that time I pointed out that this does not adopt premillennialism, but opens the door for it. I suggested: 1) That confessional neutrality on such an important matter is wrong; means that in effect the church has NO confession about this. 2) That premillennialism is not consistent Presbyterianism, and that if it also involves dispensationalism, there is much more involved than Answers 86-89 of the Larger Catechism. 3) That the OP Church should be careful about this, in view of the fact that an earlier attempt at neutrality on premillennialism failed.

2. The Rev. Mitchell replied: 1) That neither the OP nor the RO has an official position; that he, however,

preferred to speak of freedom rather than of neutrality. 2) That dispensationalism is another matter; neither church allows for it officially. 3) That "few if any of us are concerned about the millennial question, so long as no one is agitating for his view to be the only tolerated one.

3. To this I replied briefly in the Nov. 15 issue that I do not believe that there is room under the Presbyterian confessions for premillennialism, not even for the non-dispensationalist type, and that especially in our times there should be unity in faith on the matter of eschatology (the doctrine of the last things.)

WHAT IS HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM?

It is well that we try to answer this question first, so that we may all know what is under discussion.

There is a difference between what is called "historic premillennialism" and "dispensationalist premillennialism." The latter maintains a hard-and-fast separation between the old and new dispensations, between the Jews as the "kingdom people" and the church as the body of Christ. Moreover, it denies the kingship of Christ over His church, maintaining that Christ is King of the Jews, but head of the church. Historic premillennialism is supposed to hold to a premillennial view of the coming of Christ, but not to include the above dispensationalist elements which are traceable chiefly to Darby and Scofield.

For the purposes of this discussion I had really wanted to find a concise presentation of this historic premillennialism from the pen of a representative of

the RP Church. I turned to the *Systematic Theology* of Dr. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., who for many years taught at Covenant Seminary of the RPC. And while he has a very lengthy and detailed (and to my mind, very unsystematic) explanation of his premillennial eschatology, I failed to find such a concise presentation. I therefore turned to Loraine Boettner's *The Millennium*, a worthwhile study on this subject, though Boettner himself is a postmillennial. In this book I find the following summary, pp. 141-143:

The premillennial system is considerably more complicated than either the post- or amillennial system and, consequently, it has also been attended with greater diversity of opinion among its advocates. But despite these differences it has been characteristic of both schools of Premillennialism to hold:

1. That the Kingdom of God is not now in the world, and that it will not be instituted until Christ returns.

2. That it is not the purpose of the present gospel age to convert the world to Christianity, but rather to preach the gospel as a witness to the nations and so to warn them of and make them justly subject to judgment; also to gather out of all nations God's elect, the Church saints.

3. That the world is growing worse and will continue to grow worse until Christ comes to establish His Kingdom.

4. That immediately preceding the return of Christ there is to be a period of general apostasy and wickedness.

5. That we are now in the latter stages of the Church age and that the return of Christ is near, probably to occur within the lifetime of the present generation.

6. That at Christ's coming the righteous dead of all ages are to be raised in the "first resurrection."

7. That the resurrected dead together with the transfigured living saints who are then on the earth are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

8. That the judgment of all the righteous then takes place, which judgment consists primarily in the assignment of rewards.

9. That before and during the tribulation period the Jews are to be restored to the Land of Palestine.

10. That at the mere sight of their Messiah the Jews are to turn to Him in a national conversion and true repentance.

11. That Christ at His coming destroys the Antichrist and all his forces in the battle of Armageddon.

12. That after the battle of Armageddon Christ establishes a world-wide Kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital, in which He and the resurrected and transfigured saints rule for a thousand years in righteousness, peace and prosperity.

13. That during this reign the city of Jerusalem and the temple are to be rebuilt, the feasts and fasts and the priesthood, ritual and sacrificial system reinstituted, though performed in a Christian spirit and by Christian worshippers.

14. That the golden age also is to be characterized by the removal of the curse from nature so that the desert shall blossom as the rose and the wild ferocious nature of the beasts shall be changed.

15. That during the Millennium great numbers of the Gentiles will turn to God and be incorporated into the Kingdom.

16. That while many remain unconverted and rebellious at heart they are not destroyed, but are held in check by the rod-of-iron rule of Christ.

17. That during the Millennium Satan is to be bound, cast into the abyss, and so shut away from the earth.

18. That at the close of the Millennium Satan is to be loosed for a short time.

19. That the Millennium is to be followed by a short but violent outbreak of wickedness and rebellion headed by Satan which all but overwhelms the saints and the holy city of Jerusalem.

20. That the forces of wickedness are to be destroyed by fire which is cast down upon them from heaven.

21. That the wicked dead of all ages are then to be raised in the "second resurrection," judged, and with the Devil and the wicked angels cast into hell.

22. That heaven and hell are then introduced in their fullness, with the new heavens and the new earth as the future home of the redeemed, which will constitute the eternal state.

Historic Premillennialism holds that the coming of Christ will be preceded by certain recognizable signs, such as the preaching of the Gospel to all the nations, the apostasy, wars, famines, earthquakes the appearance of the Antichrist or Man of Sin, and the Great Tribulation. Many think that they see some of these signs at the present time. Dispensationalists, on the other hand, hold that there will be no further signs, all the prophecies relating to events before the coming of Christ having now been fulfilled, and that the return of Christ therefore may occur literally at "any moment" — even for the righteous their heavenward movement being the first indication they have that Christ has come.

Now I am not saying that the premillennialists in either the Reformed Presbyterian Church or in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church agree with all of the above points. As Boettner also points out, there is wide variation among premillennialists. Nor do I say that a theologian like Dr. Buswell agrees in his *Systematic Theology* with all of the above; in fact, I would say he does not. But the above is a generally accurate description. And having made a comparison, my judgment is that in the main it is also a fairly accurate description of the line followed by Dr. Buswell.

I also want to point out that the distinction between historic and dispensationalist premillennialism is a rather fluid one, and that the danger, both doctrinally and historically, of the former developing into and giving way to the latter is by no means imaginary. Historic premillennialism, at best, is inconsistent

Presbyterianism not only; but it is also *inconsistent premillennialism*. If one follows its emphasis on a literalistic interpretation of Scripture and its emphasis on a special place and special treatment of the Jews in the economy of salvation to their logical consequences, one must needs end in dispensationalism. In other words, the seeds of dispensationalism are present in historic premillennialism.

Nor am I alone in this opinion. Dr. Boettner writes in the work cited above, p. 158:

It is important to keep in mind that Premillennialism and Dispensationalism are not synonymous terms. Premillennialism is the broader term, and includes all those who believe that Christ returns *before* the millennium and that He will rule personally on earth for a thousand years. Dispensationalism on the other hand includes only those Premillennialists who follow Darby and Scofield in dividing the divine plan into dispensations during each of which God deals with the human race on the basis of some specific principle. Thus all Dispensationalists are Premillennialists, but not all Premillennialists are Dispensationalists. At the present time, however, the great majority of Premillennialists, particularly in the United States, are Dispensationalists. Most of the Bible institutes, as well as the minority of theological seminaries that teach Premillennialism, are dispensational. *There is a logical connection between Premillennialism and Dispensationalism. Most of those who take Premillennialism seriously and become enthusiastic about it go on to adopt Dispensationalism.* (italics added, HCH) But, conversely, we believe that most of those who become convinced of the errors of Dispensationalism proceed to throw Premillennialism overboard too.

And again, on p. 375 Boettner writes:

On the other hand we believe that the principle of literal interpretation which characterizes all types of Premillennialism leads to serious error in that it fails to recognize the truly spiritual nature of the Kingdom in this world as manifested in the Church and sets forth instead an earthly, political kingdom; that it promotes a superficial method of Bible interpretation; and that it is seriously handicapped by its pessimistic view of the future. (Boettner's postmillennialism shines through in that last charge, of course. HCH) In its radical form it divides the plan of salvation into mutually exclusive and even conflicting dispensations, sets law over against grace and the Church over against the Kingdom, speaks disparagingly of the Church, and teaches a restoration of Judaism during the time of the millennial kingdom. While Historic Premillennialism is a much less erroneous system than is Dispensationalism, *it is only wishful thinking which assumes that the two can be logically separated and kept in watertight compartments. The two systems are basically the same and must stand or fall together.* (italics added, HCH) We believe that we have shown that the Scriptures not only fail to teach the premillennial

system, but that they definitely exclude it as a possible interpretation.

Even from this point of view, in our opinion, the OPC would do well to think hard and long before consummating a marriage with the RPC. Part of the problem, however, is that the OPC itself seems to be open to premillennialism. And this is bad!

THE AMENDMENTS TO THE LARGER CATECHISM

The Proposed Basis of Union, we have seen, will include the (Westminster) Larger Catechism as amended in Answers 86-89 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, in 1964. At the time of my first editorial on this subject I somehow had the impression that these were amendments which were added by synodical decision by way of footnotes. Now, however, I have received from the Rev. Mitchell a transcript of these amendments; and I find that they are actually changes made in the text of the Larger Catechism itself. This, I believe, is more serious than the addition of some kind of footnotes or declaratory statements.

But before I comment further on this, let me quote these amendments. I will first quote the original, italicizing the part which is omitted or changed. Immediately following each clause or sentence which is changed the amended version will appear in brackets.

Q. 86. What is the communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?

A. The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the *last day* [till at the return of Christ] they be again united to their souls. (Etc., without change.)

Q. 87. What are we to believe concerning the resurrection?

A. We are to believe, that at the *last day* [last time] there shall be a *general* resurrection [there shall be a resurrection] of the dead, both of the just and unjust: (etc., without further modification).

Q. 88. What shall *immediately* follow after the resurrection? [What shall follow after the resurrection?]

A. *Immediately after the resurrection shall follow the general and final judgment of angels and men; the day and hour whereof no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord.* [After the resurrection of the just and the unjust shall follow the final judgment of angels and men. That all may watch and pray and be ready for the coming of the Lord, the day and hour whereof no man knoweth.]

Q. 89. What shall be done to the wicked *at the day of judgment*? [What shall be done to the wicked when they are judged?]

A. *At the day of judgment*, [When they are judged, the righteous having been caught up to Christ,] the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand, (etc., without further change).

It should be kept in mind that the intent of these amendments was not to endorse a premillennial view, but to change the wording so as to permit it, that is, to ensure neutrality, or freedom.

In a letter accompanying the above transcript, the Rev. Mitchell wrote to me: "So far as I know, Orthodox Presbyterian feeling is that these changes are not endangering to the basic doctrines of the faith and are acceptable on that ground. The OPC has not required its office-bearers to subscribe to any particular millennial position, but has permitted freedom in this area. (Our subscription to the Westminster Standards permits of some exceptions on the part of office-bearers, such exceptions to be permitted according to the judgment of the ordaining body.)"

EVALUATION

There are, it seems to me, several aspects to this proposal which merit consideration. Now that I have complete information, it appears to me that this is an extremely serious matter — much more serious than I had first thought. And I believe that Orthodox Presbyterians ought to view this proposal with extreme seriousness, if not alarm.

Here are my reasons.

In the first place, I believe it is a serious mistake to make and to allow changes in a confession unilaterally, i.e., by one denomination in the Presbyterian family. Footnotes or declaratory statements are one thing. Even editing the language or improving the translation may be permitted. And a single denomination could conceivably even write a *new* confession. But I believe that no single denomination may tamper with the Westminster Larger Catechism, or any confession for that matter, all by itself. The Westminster Confession and Catechisms are the heritage of *all* (true) Presbyterians the world over. If they are to be changed, the Reformed Presbyterians cannot do this by themselves. And if they do change the Larger Catechism, then they no more have the right to call it the Westminster Larger Catechism. It has become a different document. To me this is not a matter of indifference, especially not in our day of decreasing respect for the Reformed confessions.

On the other hand I cannot appreciate the Orthodox Presbyterian attitude as described in Editor Mitchell's letter. I do not have in my possession the OPC form of subscription. But it seems to me that if it be true, as Mr. Mitchell writes, that the OPC has not required its office-bearers to subscribe to any particular millennial

position, but has permitted freedom in this area, this betrays a looseness with regard to the confessions. For it is clear to me that the Westminster Confession and the Larger Catechism definitely shut out the premillennial view, do not allow neutrality or freedom. And if there is liberty on this important matter, is there not liberty on other confessional matters? And then, finally what do the confessions mean?

In the second place, looking now at the nature and content of these amendments, it seems to me that the confession of the church as to what constitutes the truth of Holy Scripture is very vitally at stake here. First of all, it seems evident that the amendments to the Larger Catechism involve a change from a narrower, stricter view to a broader, more inclusive view. For admittedly the purpose is to provide for freedom, or neutrality, as to the eschatological sequence. In other words, it is to allow something which was not allowed by the original Westminster Larger Catechism. This in itself is not good. It constitutes retrogression, rather than development and progress in the expression of the truth of the Word of God. It constitutes broadening rather than refinement. Secondly, in close connection with the preceding, this would seem to imply that the church is less able to understand the truth of the Word of God and to declare what Scripture means today than in the seventeenth century, when the Westminster creeds were written. *Then* they were able to state that truth so specifically that it excluded the premillennial view; *today*, according to these RPC amendments they are no longer able to be so specific. This, to my mind, is an unrealistic view of the progress of dogma as well as of the perspicuity of Scripture. Thirdly, this calls in question the perspicuity of Scripture. Are the Scriptures so vague, so lacking in clarity, so difficult to understand that it is not possible to distinguish from them whether Christ's coming is premillennial or not? Are they so vague that we cannot discern clearly from them whether there is one, general resurrection of the dead or two; whether there is one final judgment of all men, or two? And, finally, this entire attempt at "neutrality" simply means that the churches who adopt this position say, in effect, "We have no confession on these matters. We are not able to say what the truth of the Word of God is on these matters." In other words, it is contrary to the church's calling to be a *confessing* church.

In the third place, it seems to me that these amendments go beyond the ensuring of neutrality. I say this not only because as *changes* from the more specific to the less specific they practically *invite* premillennialism. But in my opinion the change in Question and Answer 89 definitely *adopts* an aspect of the premillennial view. It certainly means that the "rapture" has already taken place *prior* to the judgment of the wicked, while it does not mention the

separate judgment of the righteous and the separate resurrection of the wicked. Notice: "When they are judged, the righteous *having been* caught up to Christ, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand . . ." This not only makes room for the premillennial sequence, it introduces that sequence itself into this Answer. If this is not true, then this answer is certainly in need of further clarification before it is accepted as being merely "neutral."

Finally, let no one say that the matter is not of great importance or that it does not concern the faith. This is never true, of course, of *any* aspect of the truth which can be determined in the light of Scripture. But let us, in this specific instance, take careful note of what is involved. I ask the reader to turn back to the summary of premillennialism which I quoted from Loraine Boettner. Notice that these amendments to the Larger Catechism obviously make room for all that is included between item 6 and item 22. They make room for a thousand years more of history that is full of significant events. And they make room for an altogether different sequence of events. Mind you, these are events which very directly concern the hope and the expectation of God's people. Can you imagine the disappointment, the disillusionment, the temptation to depart from the faith on the part of those who have been led to have premillennial expectations when it shall become evident in the

course of history that these premillennial expectations were false? Mark you well, I say without hesitation "when," not "if." For this shall surely happen! The premillennial sequence is not that of Scripture. And the Scriptures shall certainly be fulfilled! And this means that premillennialism will be concretely proved false!

But if this be true — and it is — then how great is the responsibility of the church which allows these premillennial teachings and which allows the sheep of Christ to be wrongly instructed and misled! And do not forget: the elders of the church will have to give account for the souls of the sheep left in their charge!

For all these reasons, I would suggest:

1. That the Orthodox Presbyterian Brethren ought not to approve a merger which will give official license to premillennialism and which will undoubtedly lead to a large influx of those committed to premillennialist teachings.

2. That it would be better far that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church take cognizance of the seriousness of this premillennialist error and of the fact that the heritage of Westminster allows no room for it, and that they then would insist that subscription to the subordinate standards does not allow for premillennialism. This would be consistent Presbyterianism.

All Around Us

A Continuing Presbyterian Church

Prof. H. Hanks

We have reported in this column from time to time developments in the Southern Presbyterian Church in which, while the denomination as a whole continues on its increasingly liberal course, conservatives make preparations to preserve a denomination which is loyal to the Westminster Confessions. These matters have also been discussed in the columns of the *Standard Bearer* by John Richard De Witt, a minister in that denomination.

Because all these matters will continue to be discussed in the future, also by the editor of this paper, we shall not enter into detail concerning recent developments. However, there are two matters which ought to be mentioned to keep our readers up to date.

The one is the appearance of a new confession. In 1969, the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church commissioned a committee to prepare such a new confession. The draft has now been

published and will be submitted to the General Assembly in 1975 for adoption. The entire confession has appeared in the pages of the *Presbyterian Journal* and is being discussed in a series of articles.

We cannot enter into a detailed discussion of the proposed new confession in these columns, nor is that important. It is sufficient to observe that, should the new confession be adopted, the entire confessional basis of the Southern Presbyterian Church will be so completely altered that the entire confessional character of the denomination will be in keeping with the liberal and modernistic trends so much in vogue in our day.

It is not surprising therefore that the conservatives oppose this confession and see it as an attempt to steer the denomination away from her historical confessional position.

The second development of note is the formation of

a new presbytery (approximately equal to our classis) called the Vanguard Presbytery. On September 7 six ministers and ten elders signed a resolution agreeing to "covenant together to form an association to be known as Vanguard Presbytery, a Provisional Presbytery for Southern Presbyterian and Reformed Churches Uniting."

What is striking about this development is that this "covenant" was signed by men who belong to congregations which have already withdrawn from the denomination.

The movement reveals a division of sorts within the conservative element in the Southern Presbyterian Church. While many are alarmed at the liberal trends within the denomination, these same conservatives are divided over precisely how to proceed. Many, including

the *Presbyterian Journal's* editor, advocate remaining within the denomination until the merger with the Northern Presbyterian Church actually is consummated. One of the reasons why these choose to remain within the denomination for the time being is because they see greater hope of keeping their property when finally they leave. This hope is based upon the so-called "escape clause" in the present plan of union which gives opportunity for congregations to withdraw without penalty within a certain time after the merger is consummated. But those who have formed the Vanguard Presbytery believe that the time has come now to sever ties since it has become obvious that there is no hope of restoring the denomination as a whole to her historical confessional basis.

A Victory For The Amish

The Amish have been in trouble with the courts for a long time. Their troubles revolved around the question whether Amish children should be made to go to school beyond the eighth grade. The laws in the country generally require that all children are required to attend school through age fifteen. The Amish did not keep these laws and Amish children discontinued school upon completion of the eighth grade. Their claim was that further education would harm the religious training of their children, for it would tend to wean them away from the religious beliefs of the community. The issue therefore became one of freedom of religion. While some Amish had already moved out of the country to seek religious freedom in South America, others stayed here and fought to battle through the courts.

Last summer the Supreme Court handed down a decision in which the Amish won a very notable victory. The Court upheld their contention that

education beyond the eighth grade was a serious threat to their religious beliefs. While the Court did not strike down as being unconstitutional present laws which require a child to go to school until he is sixteen years old, the Court did make an exception in the case of the Amish and spoke of the fact that a balance had to be sought between these state laws and the religious convictions of the Amish.

This is a significant victory and it will, no doubt, have implications for others who have established their own school systems for the religious training of children. Specifically it means that, at least for the time being, there is less threat of government control of our own schools. How long this will last is another question, of course. But in the meantime we can be thankful for such a decision; and it ought to be added incentive to pursue our calling to instruct our children with diligence and faithfulness.

The Problem Of Death

Death has always been a grim spectre for men. There is something ambiguous about man's attitude towards death. On the one hand, he considers death as being normal. Especially from the evolutionary viewpoint, death is the normal end of all living things. And he accepts it as such. So normal does he consider death to be that he will, when he is filled with despair seek death actively by taking his own life. He tries to believe that death is the end of existence and that, in the evolutionary process, death fits somehow into the great scheme of things. On the other hand however, he cannot escape a certain fear of death. He tries desperately to avoid it as long as possible. He tries to still any voices which speak of the fact that death is

not the end of existence, but that "something" exists beyond death. He may, as some philosopher once said, describe death as a leap into the great unknown. Yet the fact is that he knows, from the voice of God which cannot be stilled, that death is abnormal. He knows that death is part of the punishment for sin. He knows with a conviction that will not be put down that death ushers him into the presence of the Judge of heaven and earth. Yet, for the sake of the semblance of peace which he must maintain, he cannot admit this.

Two very striking evidences of this have recently come to my attention.

The one concerns some comments made on the subject by a columnist who is, at present, waging a

lonely war against a rare form of leukemia. In a recent column he discussed with the public his views on the matter. Asking the question what it is like to live with this disease, he writes:

Oddly enough, it hasn't been as bad as it sounds. There have been some moments of fear, and some pain (a marrow test is not fun). There have been a few times when I felt very sick, and when my blood was so thin as to put my life at risk. But when you feel sick enough, you don't much fear death, and even half-welcome it. In such ways, God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

...I wish I could claim that the past year has given me profound spiritual insights, but it hasn't. I was an agnostic before I got sick, and I am an agnostic still. . . .

If there is a God, why did He choose them (children who have the disease)? Mind you, I am an agnostic, not an atheist. But if there is a God, He surely "moves in a mysterious way."

It may seem a bit fatuous to say so, but what has surprised me most about this experience is how nice people are. Most of us live out our lives behind a thick outer tegument (covering), or carapace (shield or shell), that separates us from other people. The threat of death breaks the carapace. It makes you deeply dependent on other people — in my case, my wife, my family, my doctor, my friends and colleagues, above all my wife. Once the carapace is broken, you realize how amazingly nice — there is really no other word for it — most people are.

When I first got sick, I came across a sentence in an old piece by Winston Churchill: "For the rest, live dangerously; take life as it comes; dread nought; all will be well." I repeat it like a talisman. . . .

In another magazine appeared an article which discussed the recent introduction into the curriculum of a college course labelled Health 476, but which is

more commonly known as "Death Education and Suicidal Behavior." The purpose for this course is to aid students in understanding death so that they will be able to face the reality of death squarely and live happier lives without the threat of death hanging over the heads. From the fact that this course is the second most popular course in the curriculum (sex education is first), the conclusion is made that the fear of death is more general and more deeply seated in people than is often supposed.

Death is the one reality that even the most optimistic scientist and the staunchest believer in evolution cannot explain away. It is always the ringing of the death-knell which smashes the optimism of the unbeliever to pieces.

The Christian alone is able to face death squarely because he knows and receives by faith the truth concerning death. It is, according to the Scriptures, not normal, but horribly abnormal, for it is the judgment of God upon sinful man. God, in fierce anger against the sinner who seeks to set himself up in God's world as lord and master, drives wicked and rebellious man out of the world through the door of death into everlasting destruction in hell. This is the truth concerning death — a truth which, ultimately, not even the unbeliever can successfully evade.

But the believing child of God hides himself beneath the shadow of the cross of Calvary, for he knows that in that cross is the victory over death. His Lord Who conquered death, rose again mighty and triumphant. The believer alone of all men can sing: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I Cor. 15:55-57.

Billy Graham On Original Sin

We quote from a brief news item in a recent issue of *Christian News*:

Innocent children are not sinners according to Billy Graham and some other new evangelists.

Graham wrote in a recent column published in newspapers throughout the nation: "Innocent children have not wilfully sinned, and therefore, are not 'transgressors of the law' or sinners. True, they have the capacity to sin, and when, of age, will inevitably sin. But, until they do sin, they do not come under the judgment of the law. The whole trend of Scripture teaches that the innocents who are too young to accept Christ intelligently, are safe in the arms of a just and holy God."

Christian News adds:

The Bible however, teaches that all men are born in sin and are sinners. Graham rejects the Scriptural doctrine of original sin and the Scriptural doctrine

that man is totally depraved and cannot will on his own accord to believe Christ. He agrees with Erasmus and takes issue with Luther on this important doctrine. (See "Of Free Will, Or Human Powers," pp. 6-8.)

We might add a couple of comments of our own.

Billy Graham not only agrees with Erasmus overagainst Luther, but he also agrees with Pelagius overagainst St. Augustine. It was Pelagius who first introduced the idea that all children are born as a "tabula rosa"; i.e., in a morally neutral condition. There sin, when it appeared, was not due to any defect in their nature, but to evil habits learned from others. The Arminian always essentially adopts this position. Once he denies the total depravity of man, he must sooner or later go all the way. He must sooner or later take the position that sin is not in the nature, but in

the act only. Thus, denying a sinful and corrupt nature, he can never take sin seriously. And hence, more and more, drifts into the position of modernism which teaches the essential goodness of man. Arminianism is always incipient modernism.

There is a note of warning here also. It is very easy for all of us to forget that fundamental truth that sin is always in the nature. I mean now, not so much in our theology as in our own daily walk and confession of sin. We so easily fall into the trap of considering sin to

be in the act only. We do not often take seriously the words of our own Heidelberg Catechism when it, in discussing what we believe concerning the forgiveness of sins, remarks: "That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins, *neither my corrupt nature*, against which I have to struggle all my life long. . . ." The implication is that my corrupt nature is my responsibility for which I must seek forgiveness every day — as the publican did in Jesus' parable: "God, be merciful to me, a *sinner*."

Meditation

The Saint's Personal Testimony

Rev. M. Schipper

"Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."

Psalm 66:16

It is getting to be that time of the year again when inventory is taken. Everyone who is in business knows what that entails. It is the time when you go through your stock to determine precisely how much you have on hand. And after this has been ascertained, you can proceed to discover how much you gained or lost during the course of the year. It is the time of reckoning, of a giving account. If the business has conducted a perpetual inventory, such an accounting is not difficult to produce. Whether you like or don't like it, this procedure is inevitable, and absolutely necessary at the end of the year.

And as we are in the providence of God brought to the end of another year, it is well that we also take an accounting of our spiritual status. O, surely, also here there would be nothing wrong with the taking of a perpetual inventory. If all is as it should be, we will be prepared to give a correct assessment of our spiritual stock at any moment. This would, indeed, have a salutary effect on our lives each day of our earthly existence. But somehow, as the years of our life go by, and as each year comes to its end, we have a special occasion for taking such a spiritual accounting. It is then, perhaps more than at any other time, that we realize how fast we are running to the end of our time, when the final reckoning will take place. We suggest that you and I do exactly that as the seconds tick away that bring to an end this year of our Lord 1972.

It appears that the psalmist, according to the words of our text, had done precisely that. Not only did he make an accounting of all that God had done for his soul; so that he knew exactly what constituted the substance of his spiritual status, and how he stood

before his God. But he is also prepared to tell all of God's people what that accounting was. He calls to all the children of God to hear him as he counts and recounts in detail what his God has done to his soul. Here we have a saint's personal testimony of his spiritual status.

I will declare what He hath done!

When the psalmist gives his account, he has nothing to say of himself.

How contrary is the word of God here to the attempts of natural, sinful man to exalt himself!

It is universally characteristic of men, of the men of the world the world over, and especially at this time of the year, to make great boast of their own accomplishments. They even make plans to do greater things. If their business has suffered losses, they will call in their efficiency men to discover the cause, and seek their advice as to how to overcome them. If they have made great gains, they will encourage themselves to do even better.

This is true of men even in the religious sense. Churches and church-related organizations, and religious organizations not related to the church, make great boasts of their expansion, their missionary programs, "the large number of souls they have won for the Lord." Men are conceived of as co-workers with God. God, so they say, does His part; and we do our part. And, no doubt, if there still are churches which assemble on a New Year's Eve, they will not fail to tell the Lord about all their accomplishments during the year that has passed by.

If there is room for man to boast, I suppose the psalmist could have done a little boasting too. Had he

not faithfully gone up with the worshippers to the house of God? Had he not without fail presented to the priests his sacrifices and offerings to pay his vows which he made when he was in trouble? O, indeed, he had not failed to offer bullocks upon the altar! But when it came to the actual accounting, there was nothing in it that moved him to exalt himself.

It is all what his God has done!

This is the tenor of the entire psalm. Listen to him in the first part of the psalm: "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious. . . Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men." And again in the middle of the psalm, "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved." He has in mind some of the trials and afflictions whereby the Lord had tried and proved His people, in which trials He was always motivated by His great love for them, and out of which trials the Lord had always delivered them. Whatever the works of the Lord were, they were very great. Not only to His people in general, but also to the psalmist in particular.

Hence in the accounting, he exclaims: I will declare what He has done for my soul!

Evidently the psalmist is not thinking merely of that aspect of his nature which animates the body, and constitutes the seat of his earthly mental, physical existence, though this was not to be excluded. Rather, he had in mind his soul from its spiritual point of view. It is possible, of course, to distinguish the soul of man two-fold: from its physical, but also from its spiritual aspects. For when God made man out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul, he was made by this divine act at the same time both a physical, psychical, as well as a spiritual being. As such he was able to be in distinction from the animal, an image-bearer who reflected in a creaturely way the very image of God. The soul of man, therefore, is that part of man's nature which is the seat of his life; which animates his body and mind, as well as his spiritual being. When God does something for the soul, as He did for the soul of the psalmist, He not only provides for that soul in its physical, psychical aspect, so that the psalmist may continue to live in the body on the earth; but He also provides for that soul from the point of view of its spiritual aspect. And as we said, undoubtedly it is this that the psalmist had chiefly in mind. The Lord had given to that soul the life of regeneration, had given unto that soul a new obedience, had given unto it to taste His saving grace. In one word, the Lord had given to that soul all the saving benefits of Christ Jesus. It could rejoice in the forgiveness of sins, in its justification before God, in the knowledge of His

elective love and mercy, in the hope of eternal life and glory.

O, indeed, what an amazing work of God had been performed upon the soul of the psalmist!

What amazing work of grace is it which He performs upon the soul of every child of God!

That soul He sprinkles with the blood of atonement which speaketh of better things than the blood of bullocks. That soul He sanctifies by the Spirit of Christ, that it once more finds delight in the service of God, and a walk of new obedience. That soul now lives in the consciousness that it shall never die, though the physical, psychical aspect of it perishes with the body in the grave. That soul is so full of grace of God in Christ Jesus, that it cannot constrain itself, — it must speak!

I will declare what God hath done unto me!

How God-honoring is the personal expression of that soul!

That soul which has been so operated upon by the grace of God moves the tongue to speak of its personal experience. The psalmist is over-whelmed, and ecstatically he calls out, Come and hear: and I will declare what God hath done unto me! The tongue of such as with the psalmist have experienced in the soul the work of grace, cannot be silent.

In this season of accounting, what have you to say, my reader, of what the Lord has done for your soul?

What is your testimony?

You understand, of course, that when God showed unto your soul His lovingkindness, when He poured into it all the graces of Christ Jesus, He did not do all that simply to redeem you and make you to share in all the blessings of salvation. Rather, His work upon your soul was done with a view to His own glory and praise. Does not the Word of God throughout make plain that all the work of salvation which God performs must end in His praise? Indeed, it does. Isaiah expresses it well: "This people have I formed for myself: they shall shew forth my praise."

He who has truly been touched by the hand of God, who has tasted of His saving grace, has nothing whereof to boast in self. Fact is, it lies in the very nature of the work of God in us that it makes us very small in our own eyes. It humbles us into the dust. When it is finished, this work of God's grace in us deprives of all our vain glory. All you can see is the work of God. At the same time that work of God's grace in us loosens our tongue, so that it must declare only what God has done to your soul.

And do not misunderstand the psalmist. His was not an attempt to give vent to a sickly, mystical experience of which he wants to tell, an experience which came to him at a certain hour, and under peculiar circumstances, an experience which he insists you must have like him, or you cannot be saved. Nay, rather, here is a child of God who is so overwhelmed

by the sovereign, saving grace of God that he cries out: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what that great God did for my soul."

Come and hear!

All ye that fear God!

O, indeed, this testimony is not directed to every man, and all men. All men are not able to understand such a testimony. Wicked men, like swine, would trample such testimony in the mire. Jesus said, "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them and turn again and rend you."

But the intended audience of this blessed testimony is all those who fear God. You know who these are, don't you? They are they who also experienced the work of God's grace upon their souls. They are they

who, by the grace of God, have come to love and serve Him.

A most fit audience!

Which will come and hear!

And with the psalmist will take up the refrain! Not only will they say to the psalmist, yea, God has indeed been gracious to your soul; but they will say with the psalmist, Come, all ye that fear God, and we will declare together what God hath done unto us.

When we gather at the end of the year in our houses of prayer, and as this year 1972 breathes out its last moments, let us all say it together before the face of our covenant God: How great, O God, is the work of Thy grace which Thou hast performed upon our souls!

And God shall be glorified!

Amen!

The Day of Shadows

Covenant Confidence

Rev. John A. Heys

Why did it have to happen?

Many a parent has asked that question, if not audibly, then in his soul, "Why did it have to happen to my child?"

And try once to imagine the grief, and the deep despair that would have filled the souls of Adam and Eve, were it not for the grace of God, to learn not only of the murder of their second son by the firstborn, but also of his thoroughly ungodly attitude, utter contempt for all the things of God, and complete separation from the sphere of the church of that day!

Indeed, God gave them another son in the place of Abel. But why did it have to go this way? Why could Abel not have lived, even if Cain would show his depravity and would depart from the presence of God?

But is this not a time when the church ought to be growing instead of the world? The seed of the serpent has a tremendous advantage here already. God did not give to Adam and Eve another son until Adam was one hundred thirty years old. And when Seth is born Cain already has grandchildren. In the world there is a population explosion, that is, in comparison with what is taking place in the church.

Daughters were born to Adam and Eve without a doubt, even though no literal mention is made of this fact. Cain got his wife that way. He married, and had to marry, his sister in order to have a wife. And through his sister-wife he begins a city of unbelievers that develops in sin to produce the arrogance and

murder of Lamech, and the progress in sin of the sons of Lamech that furthers the quest of man for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, the things in the world, which John speaks of in I John 2:15 and which he warns us not to love. The world has a big "jump" on the church numerically at the very dawn of history.

It would seem with the eyes of unbelief that God is always a step behind the devil. O, it would probably be conceded that in the long run God is still going to win out, since He is mightier and wiser than the devil. But without that faith that sees God as the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, Who does all His own good pleasure, without faith in God as the ALMIGHTY Who has the devil completely and entirely in His control, Who alone is God so that Satan is no little god besides Him, it would look to be all wrong. This forward leap of the world while the church receives no seed to replace Abel seems to predict defeat for the church, or at least a desperate struggle to survive and to overcome.

Again we ask the question, "Why did it have to happen?"

In answer we may point out that Adam and Eve — and we, as we give serious consideration to this history which God preserved for us — must learn certain truths. First of all, the awfulness of their own sin must be impressed upon their minds. It was but a simple act of eating a piece of forbidden fruit, as far as its

outward aspects were concerned. But it was the deed of an inner rebellious heart of hatred against the living God. It was an act of idolatry in that it was, as Paul writes to the Ephesians, 5:5, an act of coveting God's position. And now they see the awfulness of the rebellion that came to dwell in their hearts, when they see the murder and wholly unspiritual attitude of their firstborn over against all his evil way. They learned their own misery by what they saw in the development of their sin in the life of their firstborn. They learned the doctrine of total depravity without going to a theological school. They began to understand the spiritual death into which they had fallen the day that they ate of the forbidden fruit. They learned to understand what that seed of sin sown in paradise by their act of rebellion can and will produce.

They had, also to learn — as well as we do still today — to trust God's promises and to wait patiently for Him to execute His own good counsel. It must have been trying for them. For they had the promise from no one less than the Almighty God that they would have a seed that would destroy the seed of the serpent. They were looking squarely at that seed of the serpent with heavy hearts. For he was their flesh and blood, and these were their grandchildren. Nothing can change that! And let us not be so foolish as to think that grandparents today are more human than Adam and Eve. They were the first human beings, and everything that we find in ourselves, we got from them, also our grandfatherly and grandmotherly "pride" and concern.

And after God gave them two seeds — although at first they had no way of knowing which was the seed of the woman and which was the seed of the serpent, nor even whether both were not the seed of the woman — and the seed of the serpent kills the seed of the woman, God gave them nothing but daughters! Frustrating? Discouraging? Well, what do you think?

For one hundred thirty years, and certainly for a considerable period of time that began with the murder of Abel, Adam and Eve longed for a son for the sake of that covenant promise. They rejoiced when daughters were born. They did not despise or resent them. Their disappointment since Abel's murder was not a hatred or resentment against those daughters. It was not resentment against God either. It was disappointment that as yet they did not receive that seed of the woman.

Their faith did not leave them, though at times it was sorely tried, and doubts arose and controlled them for periods of time. They still looked for the Christ by looking and waiting for that male child to be born who would take Abel's place. But doubts did arise. Impatience did trouble them. Their wicked son begat sons, and these begat more wicked sons. The Antichristian kingdom of that day prospers while the covenant community seems stopped. You could almost

hear Goliath's cry come up out of the land of Nod, "Give me a man that we may fight together. I bruised the heel of Abel. Give me another of those religious fanatics that we may see what will come to pass of that promise of bruising my head!" And Adam and Eve had to answer, "As of the moment we have no man to fight God's cause." Yes, that is what they would have said. It would not have been, "We have no man." It would be, "*As yet, as of the moment*, we have not been given a man, but we expect one!"

And the proof of this is in that name which Eve gave to this son who finally appeared on the scene, when they were one hundred thirty years old. For she called him Seth, which means "appointed." And she explains that name as meaning that "God had appointed her another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew."

Actually the word Seth comes from a verb which means *to place* or *to put*. Now this can be explained as a replacement, and Seth was Abel's replacement; but the beauty of the truth here is not to be missed. Adam's and Eve's disappointment in the death and murder of Abel, in the wicked walk of Cain, and in the fact that God gave them but daughters when the whole covenant promise demanded a son, is over. And they are no longer *disappointed* because God has *appointed* a son in Abel's place.

Covenant confidence is what explains this name. Covenant confidence is what Adam and Eve retained all through these years. But they also learned to be patient. For our covenant God cannot be hurried, has His own schedule, and will keep it to the minute.

Let childless covenant husbands and wives take heart. The child they desire and for which they pray may not come for many years. It may not come at all. We have no promise that all believing husbands and wives are going to be blessed with children. But we have no word of God either to childless parents who pray for such a child that God is not going to put the wisdom of learned men to naught; and we have seen it happen time and again that those told that they would have no children received them at the moment that God saw fit to give them to them. And if He does not give them children, let them take heart in the truth that He gave us His Son, and rejoice in that truth that, Unto *us* a child is born, unto *us* a Son is given (Isaiah 9:6) Who is THE SEED of the Woman Who gives us the victory over Cain and his whole brood of evil doers, including the Antichrist and Cain's spiritual father, the devil, the serpent himself.

And in the light of this birth of Seth unto Adam and Eve we can understand that statement that follows — and is added immediately after the recording of the birth of Seth's son for that very reason — that "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."

The nucleus of the church is now established in the human race. To it Adam and Eve belonged together with their believing daughters — one of whom had to

be Seth's wife — but now we have a third generation of believers, a father, son and grandchild in the sphere of the church. And even though the godless community in the land of Nod was far greater in its numerical strength, here is the little flock of God's church, the handful of believers that stand as a witness over against the whole world.

They began to manifest themselves also as a church, and as a band of believers. They called upon the name of the Lord. This does not mean that now men began to pray to God. Adam and Eve had done that from the day of their expulsion from Paradise. Cain and Abel did that; only, as Solomon points out, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is His delight." But even Cain called upon the name of the Lord in an outward, formal sense.

No, they began to assemble on the Sabbath, to meet together, to live in the exercise of the communion of saints. And God had made this possible by giving to Adam and Eve another believing son, and to this son a believing son. Now they could hold religious services with their families. Now they could meet together and speak with one another about the truth that God had revealed to them concerning Himself, for that, after all is His name. They called on His name.

Adam could not do that with Cain, for he went out from the presence of the Lord and was through with Him, because He would not accept His sacrifice. But

now, although it is such a very small church, it is the church of God of that day, and it begins to manifest itself as such before the world of unbelievers.

The antithesis that became evident in the two sacrifices of Cain and Abel, took on a sharper focus, and revealed an ever widening, spiritual generation gap between Adam and Cain that now becomes even more distinct in Cain's going out from the presence of God to begin to establish the kingdoms of this world, and in the little band of believing seed of Adam and Eve meeting to call upon the name of the Lord. World and Church are becoming quite distinct.

And do not forget that it all began with one family, with two people, a husband and a wife. Out from them issued these two seeds; and out from God came the Spirit to put enmity in the hearts of some to be haters of the serpent and his brood and to be lovers of God. That, and that only explains that in Adam and Eve, and down to this day in their spiritual seed, there is covenant confidence. Dark as the days ahead may be when the seed of the serpent will do all the violence he can against the seed of the woman that calls upon the name of the Lord, that Spirit of God, because of the obedience and death of THE SEED of the woman, will keep covenant confidence in the church until Christ returns.

Christ is actually the Seth that replaced Abel. And He is the one Who presently brings all the spiritual seed of Adam to live with Abel in the glory of God's kingdom.

Studies in Election

Its Resistance

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

Another objection to the truth of predestination is that it precludes the use of God-ordained means. The objection arises from a wrong inference, inferring that predestination means that something is bound to happen entirely apart from any means. Some, then, think that there are people who will be saved although remaining utterly ignorant of the gospel, never see a Bible, never hear a preacher of the Word, nor ever hear the name of Christ. The objection would be to the point if it were made, not to the Reformed doctrine of predestination, but to that strange conception of predestination which ordains ends without any regard to means. Then the objection would be legitimately leveled against a Mohammedanized predestination, which would be fatalistic and Deistic. For this strange

predestination assumes that God fulfils His purposes without the use of instrumental means and secondary agencies. God, indeed, has chosen His elect, not on the foresight of their faith, but *to* faith, *to* salvation, and *to* every saving good. But it still remains that God from the beginning hath so chosen you "*through* (and not apart from) sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thess. 2:13). So that sanctification of life and faith are not conditions to be met for the realization of salvation, but are a very part of the chosen-to salvation. Salvation has its beginning in regeneration, its continuance in faith and sanctification of life, and its end in glorification.

God ordained to save His people by means of faith and sanctification. To say that the elect will be saved

absolutely without the use of means is absurdly impossible. We are not thinking of man's means, but God's means, the means He has ordained and commanded to be used. Abraham was ordained to be the father of many nations. Was he so ordained without the use of means? To say so, would be like saying he would be, even if he had died in infancy. Hezekiah was ordained to live fifteen extra years, but could he have so lived without food or sleep? The decree of God was revealed to Joshua that he would conquer Jericho, but could this have been realized if Israel had sat down under their own fig tree with folded arms? God had also ordained *how* the city was to be taken.

There are the heathen. Some of them God has ordained from all eternity to life and salvation. He has ordained that some of them shall call upon the name of the Lord. They have never heard the name of the Lord. But they shall hear it and call upon His name, and "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13). They really cannot call on one they do not know or believe. For "how . . . shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (10:14f, ASV). God does deign to use the agency of human instruments, as preachers, and the preaching of the gospel, unto the salvation of His elect people. Does this make salvation dependent upon man? Not when it is all dependent upon *His* furnishing, setting forth, using and blessing, the means!

Arminian resistance to this truth appeals to certain Scripture passages which are imagined to be opposed to it, passages such as, Prov. 1:24,25; Isa. 65:2 and Matt. 23:37. The last mentioned reads, "O Jerusalem!

Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" This outcry of Christ's is said to be incompatible with Calvinism's (and therefore Scripture's) irresistible grace, since it teaches plainly that the will of God can be resisted and the desire of Christ (God!) can be frustrated. Such reasoning flies in the face of what is the heart of Scripture truth, that God is God. Prove that the decrees of God can fail, and there is proof that God is not God. There you have the central error of Arminian thinking. On this passage John Gill wrote, "... this Scripture . . . they are ready to produce on every occasion against the doctrines of election and reprobation, particular redemption, and the irresistible power of God in conversion; and in favor of sufficient grace and of free will and power in man . . ." Notice what Christ in these words does not say. He does not say, How often I would have gathered *you*, and ye would not. Nor, I would have gathered thy children, and *they* would not. He said, "I would have gathered thy *children*, and *ye* would not." The Lord does not teach here that it was His purpose to gather all mankind without exception, nor that He wanted to convert persons who would not be converted. We have here two wills, the will of Christ and the will of man. Christ wills *Yes*. Man wills *No*. Christ says, I would. Man says, I would not. The question is, which of these two wills shall have its way? for one or the other must be sovereign. Either "I would" must win out, and then "thy children" must be gathered, or "ye would not" must win out, and then they cannot be gathered. When the Lord says, "I would," can man's "I will not" stop Him? "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He!"

Its Proclamation

Doctrinal preaching has all but died out in this generation. Even where the Heidelberg Catechism is still read from the pulpit, it is often used only as a springboard to digress into anecdotal orations. The Word of God, by its very nature, demands preaching that is both doctrinal and practical. The Belgic Confession is doctrinal in emphasis. The Heidelberg Catechism is personal and practical in emphasis. Where the Heidelberg Catechism is still faithfully studied and used there can really be no valid claim that we need more experiential preaching, and not so much dry doctrine. Sometimes you hear it said, "More of Christ, not theology," which presents, really, a foolish, dangerous outlook. There is no way to test practical preaching, as to whether it is sound, if it be divorced from the doctrine contained in Scripture. Without *that*

doctrine, where is the standard of judgment? The "Christ,-not-doctrine" philosophy is impossible. Christ cannot be known, understood, recognized nor received unless He is preached. Without doctrine He cannot be preached.

Why is the great truth of election almost exclusively omitted from the pulpits in the land? One reason is because of ministerial laziness. Most ministers do not care to spend much time in the study. When you discover the long list of Communist-front connections some "ministers" have had, you know they rarely, if ever, made use of the study in the work of the church and of the gospel. Real study is physically and mentally taxing. It takes much more painful effort to prepare a series of sermons on the doctrine of the church than to present addresses on prayer, missions,

and ecumenism. Sound expositional preaching requires intensive study of Scripture and hours of perusal of the older biblical works. Many ministers, if they do put in as much as eight hours a day of work, spend it in visiting, in laboring for the advancement of Socialism, and in "concentrating" — on the golf course. They know nothing of "Give attendance to reading . . . take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine: continue in them" (I Tim. 4:13, 16).

Another reason why predestination, and preaching in harmony with this great heart-truth, is absent from so many pulpits is because of a love for popularity. A preacher, so enamored, aims to please his auditors. He will preach only to crowded audiences. He intends to conform to public opinion, because he would rather hear, "Welcome to the club!" than to overhear the remark after sermon, "What can he possibly be *talking* about?" To borrow from Bunyan: although he goes by another name, he is a Rev. By-Ends. He is from the town of Fair-Speech, a pagan cultural center. The two-faced Janus is worshipped there. His family tree bears such twigs as Mr. Smoothsayer and Mr. Anything. He is a favorite with the young people, somewhat of a sportsman, a sculler, proficient at looking one way and rowing another. The minister in his hometown was a Dr. Two-Tongues. From him he soon learned the art of using two tongues with one mouth. He made a fortune as a result of his socially acceptable marriage into the long-standing family of the Feignings. Before every church service he dials the weather bureau. He must always know which way the wind is blowing. For he never preaches against wind and tide. He always sculls with the current and down

the center channel. He is a very warm pulpit orator whenever Religion goes in his silver slippers. He is often seen walking with Religion on the avenue when the sun is shining, and, during parade, riding his float, when the people are applauding him. He was able to build a struggling church into a thriving cathedral with a great following, because, as he humbly puts it, he always had the luck to jump in with the present way of the times, whatever it was, took his chances, and came out tops. Ask him why he never finds time to preach the truth of election, and he will inform you that he could easily prepare a sermon on the subject fifteen minutes before retiring on Saturday night, but that at the only, and eleven o'clock, service his people would not know what he was talking about. Besides, he adds, "I shall never desert my old principles, since they are harmless and profitable." By this he means that for the question posed he cannot stand the sight of you, and must hurry off to those who will be honored by his presence and glad of his company. If you should call after him the word of the inspired apostle, "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10), he will retort, quickening his pace, that he is used to all manner of evil speaking against him falsely, for Christ's sake. One thing he never learned, either from his finished education or his fashionable connections, — the difference between suffering as a Christian and being a scandal to the very name of Christianity! Nor can he honestly say, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God . . . Wherefore . . . I am pure from the blood of all men" (Acts 20:20, 27, 26).

In His Fear

The Home Library

Rev. D. H. Kuiper

This article is meant especially for the young man who asked last summer for help in choosing worthwhile books for his bookshelf. Here was a person who had not been overly conscientious in his studies as a youth, nor had he spent much time with books. Now as a husband, father, and office-bearer he felt the need for reading of literature that would provide growth in these various functions, that he might be a workman approved of God. His approach is correct. It is not too much to hope that there are many others who understand this.

Nor, I hope, is it overly optimistic to think that

people still do read. It is certainly the case that we live in perilous times when men are lovers of self and pleasure more than lovers of God. It is true that at the present time as never before, other things clamor for our attention: sporting events, television viewing, endless programs. It is also true, in general, that the membership of our churches is not as well posted in ecclesiastical matters as it was, say, twenty-five years ago. Yet we believe there are still those who read. And perhaps these lines will serve as an inducement for others to forsake less worthwhile activities in order to take up this edifying pastime. Reading is more than

edifying: in this day of ignorance, apostasy, and spiritual decline it is necessary. Besides, once reading is established as a habit, it is a joy!

Writing in the June, 1969 issue of *Banner of Truth*, John F. Murray asks, "Why are so many Christians disinclined to make use of the vast amount of Christian literature that is readily available and at a very reasonable cost?" His answer, in part, is that it has been estimated that only two percent of the population (in England reads any books at all after leaving school. He finds the reason for *Christians* not reading more in the failure of church members to have a real Christian outlook, or as Murray says, "uplook."

Before we offer a concrete suggestion for the building of a home library, two points should be made. First, we ought to be aware that the art of reading, and the art of the *teaching* of reading, have come a long way in the last few years. Programmed reading in the elementary schools, a system which stresses sounds as well as the writing of newly learned words at a rate consistent with the individual child's ability, has resulted in little first-grade students reading several hundred words after as little as two months of instruction. Many are the children who can read intelligently anywhere in the Bible after one year of school! This says much concerning the perspicuity of Scripture, but also tells us we have reading children in our homes. Surely the reading of the Bible and related materials is the basic aim of a Christian school reading program, and therefore is the basic skill to be obtained. Now that our children have made such a rapid departure at the starting gate, shall we allow them to wander aimlessly into that ninety-eight percent of the populace that does not read after schooling is completed? Clearly this advantage ought not to be lost, but every effort should be made in the home to provide our youth with reading material of a Christian content. In the second place, books are meant to be read! It is easy to buy books and place them on a shelf permanently, but what a waste. Interior decorators will provide the pseudo-intellectual with book-binding by the foot, turning the family room into an impressive "library." But we are not interested in that, are we? A few, well-thumbed books are to be preferred over many shelves of shiny volumes. Buy carefully, rotate the switch of the television set to the extreme left position, gather the family together, and read!

The following suggestions are representative, not exhaustive. All the books mentioned are not recommended with equal heartiness. Admittedly, in many cases, preference has been given to those books found on my shelf. It is suggested that a few books in each category be purchased at the outset. Further growth will be determined by an individual's preference.

Also, further recommendations, as well as addresses, prices, etc., can best be obtained from your pastor.* Happy reading!

I. Books that Aid in Studying the Bible. Since the Bible is the ultimate source of all truth in this world, the study of the Word of God itself may not be neglected. In addition to reading at the table and preparing for society, we ought to read from the Bible large sections at a sitting, whole books at a time. A further suggestion is that whenever we begin to read at the table a new book of the Bible, it might be advantageous to first read from an introduction those sections which describe its place and purpose in the Canon. If you are of a mind to study a particular book in depth, or if your society is doing so, you will likely wish to purchase a commentary; by all means consider the commentaries of that "prince of exegetes," John Calvin.

Behold He Cometh, Rev. H. Hoeksema, Reformed Free Publ. Ass'n

Bible Dictionary, M. Unger, Moody Press

Commentaries, (especially John Calvin's) Eerdmans

Cruden's Unabridged Concordance, A. Cruden, Baker

Introduction to the N.T., H.C. Thiessen, Eerdmans

Introduction to the O.T., E.J. Young, Eerdmans

The New Bible Commentary; Revised, Eerdmans

The New Bible Dictionary, J.D. Douglas, Eerdmans

II. Books of a Doctrinal, Confessional Nature.

Although there are many study guides available for the Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster and other confessions, there is a need for a book on the Canons of Dordt. Perhaps the R.F.P.A. could investigate the possibility of putting into book form the thorough analysis given the Canons of Dordt by Prof. Hoeksema about twelve years ago in the *Standard Bearer*. It is assumed that the *Standard Bearer*, *Beacon Lights*, and our Sunday School paper are received.

Absolute Predestination, J. Zanchius, Sovereign Grace Union**

Calvin's Calvinism, John Calvin, Eerdmans

Institutes of the Christian Religion, John Calvin, Eerdmans

The Reformed Confessions, *The Psalter*, Eerdmans

The Triple Knowledge, Rev. H. Hoeksema, R.F.P.A.

Reformed Dogmatics, Rev. H. Hoeksema, R.F.P.A.

III. Books that Reveal God's Hand in History. If the maxim "those that refuse to study history are doomed to repeat it" applies to the arena of wordly affairs, how much the more is it true of the Church as she battles a foe that is common to every age.

A History of the Christian Church, W. Walker, Scribners**

A History of Christian Missions, S. Nerill, Eerdmans

The Church in History, B. K. Kuiper, Eerdmans

The Reformation of the 16th Century, R. Bainton, Beacon Press

The Protestant Reformed Churches in America, Rev. Hoeksema, R.F.P.A.

IV. Books that Aid in the Defense of the Faith. If the city of Athens came daily under the bombardment

of new ideas, the American church scene more. And we must have an answer; not only concerning the hope that is in us, but also concerning false doctrines and heresies that would destroy the Christian's hope.

In the Beginning God, H.C. Hoeksema, R.F.P.A.

Roman Catholicism, L. Boettner, Pres. and Ref. Publ. Co. (Baker)

The Bible, God's Word, T. Van Kootern, Baker

The Bondage of the Will, Martin Luther, Revell

The Flood, A. M. Rehwinkle, Concordia

Thy Word Is Truth, E. J. Young, Eerdmans

The Four Major Cults, A. Hoeksema, Baker

What About Tongue Speaking, A. Hoeksema, Baker

V. **Biographies and Autobiographies.** The reading of this type of material is not done as much in our country as in England and Scotland where the Puritan fathers especially are held in high esteem.

Here I Stand (a life of Luther), R. Bainton, Abingdon Press, (Mentor, ppbks)

The Confessions of St. Augustine, Augustine,***

The Journals of George Whitefield, G. Whitefield, Banner of Truth.

The Man God Mastered (Calvin), J. Cadier, Eerdmans

Therefore Have I Spoken, G. Hoeksema, R.F.P.A.

VI. **Devotional Reading.** There are times when the mind is not up to the rigorous pursuit of some doctrine, but when the soul needs the gentle leading of the Word as it has been explained by some man of

God. There is an abundance of material of this nature, good when Biblical, worse than nothing when not. These can be recommended.

Pilgrim's Progress, J. Bunyan ***

Preaching and Preachers, D. M. Lloyd-Jones, Zondervan

Rejected of Men, Rev. Hoeksema, R.F.P.A.

Ruth, the Satisfied Stranger, P. Mauro, Baker

The Mystery of Bethlehem, Rev. Hoeksema, R.F.P.A.

The Sermon on the Mount, D.M. Lloyd-Jones, Eerdmans

There is another category that ought to be included here, one that would contain books for children. We hesitate to make a listing of children's books because, aside from the *Child's Story Bible* by Catherine Vos (Eerdmans), there is not much that is very good. Let the parent choose wisely at the local library, and let the parent decide the merits of such children's series as *Jungle Doctor Series*, etc. Until the child can discern for himself, we ought to be careful on what we allow him to unleash his reading appetite.

* The Bookstore Manager, Prot. Ref. Seminary, 1145 Franklin S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich, 49507 may also be contacted for many books at various discounts.

** Out of print: used copies available.

***By various publishers: paperbacks available.

Taking Heed To The Doctrine

A Defense of Calvinism

(3)

Rev. David Engelsma

The gospel proclaims the perseverance of the saints. Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (John 10:27-30). Jesus gives eternal life to every one of His sheep, and not one of those saints shall ever perish. It is impossible that anyone could pluck a saint out of God's hand, that is, effect the falling away of a saint. The reason is not the strength of the saints themselves, but the power of the grace of our faithful God ("My Father . . . is greater than all"). The Reformed confession, the Canons of Dordt, expresses the truth this way: "Thus, it is not in consequence of their own merits, or strength, but of

God's free mercy, that they (the saints) do not totally fall from faith and grace, nor continue and perish finally in their backslidings: which, with respect to themselves, is not only possible, but would undoubtedly happen; but with respect to God, it is utterly impossible, since his counsel cannot be changed, nor his promise fail, neither can the call according to his purpose be revoked, nor the merit, intercession and preservation of Christ be rendered ineffectual, nor the sealing of the Holy Spirit be frustrated or obliterated" (V,8). John 10 makes clear that there is a necessary relationship between this doctrine of the perseverance of saints and the doctrines of election, limited atonement, and irresistible grace. The perseverance of saints is the fruit of them. Perseverance depends upon election (there are certain men who are Jesus' *sheep* and they are the sheep, in

distinction from others, because "My Father . . . gave them me" — these are preserved). Perseverance depends upon limited atonement ("I lay down my life for the sheep"). Perseverance depends upon irresistible grace ("I give" — not: "I *try* to give," or, "I offer eternal life, depending on their free will," but: — "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish").

The gospel proclaims unconditional, eternal election as the source of all of this salvation in Christ, election of some accompanied by the reprobation of others. This truth is on the very face of the entire Old Testament Bible: God chose Israel unto salvation, rejecting the other nations. Deuteronomy 7:6-8 tells Israel: "... the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you . . ." The New Testament likewise teaches election as "the heart of the Church." In John 6:37, Jesus says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me . . ." Our coming to Jesus, that is, believing, is due to the Father's giving us to Jesus, that is, election. Ephesians 1:3,4 teaches: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." God the Father elected some men ("us") unto holiness and eternal salvation from eternity ("before the foundation of the world") for no other reason than His love and free grace, and this election is the source of every blessing. Romans 8:29,30 asserts God's predestination, or election, of some men as the fountain of all salvation: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Romans 9 goes on more fully to develop election, as well as to teach reprobation.

There can be no ignoring of these doctrines, called "Calvinism"; if they are not preached and confessed, they are denied. Every preacher, every Church, every member of every Church must take a stand regarding them and does take a stand. It is impossible not to. For they are essential elements of the gospel, and the gospel is such that something must be said about it. Whoever rejects Calvinism embraces the only alternative, which is opposed to Calvinism in every point. The only alternative to the doctrine of total depravity is the teaching that there is yet in man, though he be fallen, some good or some ability for good, in and of himself; man apart from the grace of

God is not dead, but merely sick, that is, not dead, but alive. The only alternative to limited atonement is the teaching and belief that Christ died for each and every human being. This fundamentally alters the cross. For that some men do go lost hardly anyone denies. Therefore, if He died for all but some still perish, His death did not atone, but merely made atonement possible; it did not actually satisfy God's righteousness by bearing and bearing *away* all punishment for all the sins of all for whom Christ died, but it merely made satisfaction possible; it did not redeem, but merely made redemption possible. Then this great and terrible question arises: Who now must make atonement, satisfaction, and redemption *actual*? The only alternative to irresistible, or efficacious, grace is the teaching that God's call to salvation and the grace of the Holy Spirit depend upon the free will of man and that they, therefore, can be frustrated and fail. The only alternative to the doctrine of the perseverance of saints is the teaching that the saints can perish, any of them and all of them. The only alternative to the doctrine of election is the teaching that the source and foundation of salvation is *man's* choice, *man's* decision, and that God's choice of a man depends upon man's decision for God.

In the end, there are two, and only two, possible faiths. The one maintains that all mankind lies in death; that God in free and sovereign grace eternally chose some; that God gave Christ to die for those whom He chose: that the Holy Spirit regenerates them and calls them efficaciously to faith; and that the Spirit preserves these elect, redeemed, and reborn sinners unto everlasting glory. This is Calvinism. The other faith maintains that fallen man retains some spiritual ability for good, some life; that God's choice of men depends upon their exercise of the ability for good that is in them; that Christ's death depends upon that good in man; that the work of grace by the Holy Spirit depends upon that good in man; and that the attainment of final glory depends upon that good in man. This is the foe of Calvinism. Calvinism proclaims salvation by grace; the other faith preaches salvation by man's will and works.

Calvinism is the gospel! God's gospel is the message of wholly gracious salvation. This does not mean that Calvinism is not offensive. It is. Calvin took note long ago of the offensiveness of the truth that he taught, with reference specifically to total depravity:

I am not unaware how much more plausible the view is, which invites us rather to ponder on our good qualities than to contemplate what must overwhelm us with shame — our miserable destitution and ignominy. There is nothing more acceptable to the human mind than flattery . . . if a discourse is pronounced which flatters the pride spontaneously springing up in man's inmost heart, nothing seems more delightful. Accordingly, in every age, he who is

most forward in extolling the excellence of human nature, is received with the loudest applause (*Institutes*, II, I, 2).

But the offensiveness of Calvinism to men is nothing other than the offense of the cross of Christ. In Galatians 5:11, Paul speaks of "the offense of the cross," an offense that ceases only in the preaching of a cross-denying heresy. The cross of Christ, which is the very heart of the gospel, is not pleasing to man, or acceptable. "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Corinthians 1:23). The cross of Christ as the cross of the eternal Son of God in our flesh shows the extent of fallen man's misery. His misery is such that he can be saved only by the death of the Son of God. Fallen man is utterly lost, completely ruined, dead in sin. The cross shows that salvation is of the Lord, wholly of divine grace, and that salvation is not due, in whole or in part, to man's work, man's worth, or man's will. The cross as the cross on which the Prince of glory died has power, efficacious power, to

save. Nothing and no one can nullify or defeat the blood and Spirit of Christ crucified. The gospel of the cross is this message: "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Romans 9:16). Because this is the message of Calvinism, Calvinism is offensive to men. It is offensive to proud man to hear that he is spiritually dead, totally devoid of anything pleasing to God, unable at all to save himself, nothing more than a child of wrath. But this is the judgment passed upon him in the gospel — and in Calvinism. It is offensive to proud man to hear that salvation is exclusively God's free gift and sovereign, gracious work. But this is what the gospel — and Calvinism — proclaim. Exactly because of this, Calvinism is good news! It is gospel, glad tidings! As the message of grace, it comforts us and all those who, by the grace of the Spirit, believe in Christ. Only this message provides hope for lost, sinful, and otherwise hopeless men. There is salvation, only because salvation is gracious.

(to be concluded)

Book Reviews

Preaching Yesterday And Today

PREACHING YESTERDAY AND TODAY; Carey Publications Ltd., 5 Fairford Close, Haywards Heath, Sussex RH16 3EF, 1972; 45p, 88pp. (paper). [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

The material of this book contains several of the papers delivered at the first Evangelical and Reformed Conference in South Africa in April, 1971. The Conference dealt with the calling of the Church to preach the gospel.

The first chapter in the book is entitled "Revival, Preaching, and the Doctrines of Grace Illustrated from the life of George Whitefield." It was prepared by Erroll Hulse, minister of the Cuckfield Baptist Church in England and editor of *Reformation Today*.

Whitefield was a great figure in the 18th Century in England, probably preaching to more people than any other minister before the days of modern communications. Although a contemporary of the Wesleys, Whitefield parted ways with them because Whitefield was a Calvinist and could not accept the Arminianism of the Wesleys. Preaching wherever he had opportunity, even often in the open air, Whitefield was the despair of the organized Church, but was also responsible for religious revival in England. Hulse examines in this paper Whitefield's power in preaching

and finds the answer to be the doctrines of grace as taught by the Puritans and as personally experienced by Whitefield himself which formed the content of Whitefield's preaching. Hulse emphasizes that such a return to the Puritans is necessary if preaching today is to regain its power.

The second chapter, written by Jim van Zyl, is entitled "Free Will or God's Grace? Luther's Reformation Conflict With Erasmus."

This is an interesting chapter discussing the whole controversy between Luther and Erasmus on the question of free will vs. the bondage of the will. van Zyl emphatically takes his stand with Luther and discusses the relationship between the doctrine of the bondage of the will and the command of God to all men to repent. He finds here an insoluble problem, but insists that both are taught in God's Word and that both therefore, must be maintained by the evangelical preacher.

He condemns "hyper-Calvinism," but is not clear on what he means by this.

In chapter 3 David Kingdom discusses "God's Church and Scriptural Evangelism." He offers devastating criticism of modern evangelism and gives suggestions for evangelism that are according to the Scriptures.

The same author, in chapter 4, discusses "Secularism and the Gospel." This paper is by far the longest and most technical. The author includes a brief though interesting and accurate history of secularism and discusses the calling of the Church in making the gospel relevant to this secular age. Leaning heavily on Dooyeweerd, he gives a criticism of secularism and presents the gospel as the only cure. There were especially two aspects to this paper with which we found ourselves in disagreement. The first was what in our opinion is a wrong description of the relation between the Renaissance and the Reformation. While the point is not discussed in detail, the author seems to suggest that there were many similarities because the Renaissance greatly influenced the Reformation. (cf. p. 62.) He ends a paragraph on this subject with the words: "Thus though religiously the Reformers turned their backs upon the synergism of Renaissance theology they accepted the Renaissance concern for exact historical scholarship and interest in a rational form of the Church." While, in a limited sense this is true, insufficient attention is given to the deep spiritual difference between the Renaissance and the Reformation. Secondly, in offering suggestions as to how evangelism must attack secularism, the author pays insufficient attention to the very heart of the gospel. Paul, when discussing his approach in Corinth to the secularism of his time, writes: "And I, brethren,

when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." I Cor. 2:1,2. Kingdom makes no mention of this, but rather leaves the impression that our struggle with secularism is purely intellectual.

One of the nicest chapters in the book is the last one, written by Jannie du Preez and entitled "The Implications of Biblical Theology for our Preaching." The author develops the thesis that our view of what the Bible is will also determine our preaching. He takes the position that Scripture is the inspired Word of God, that God has revealed Himself through Christ, that Scripture is the record of this revelation, that salvation history is covenant history which is progressive in nature and which reaches its purpose in the coming of the Kingdom of God, and that this alone gives glory to God. In developing all these ideas, du Preez shows how these truths affect preaching and are related to true preaching of the Gospel. This is a most excellent chapter.

The book as a whole is very worthwhile. We heartily recommend it to our readers and urge them to obtain it. We also commend those involved for what must have been a most interesting conference and wish that such conferences could be held in our own country.

Apocalyptic

APOCALYPTIC, by Leon Morris; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 87pp., \$1.95 (paper). [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

Apocalyptic literature includes ancient writings which deal especially with the subject of the end of the world. Morris has brought together in this book

material which has recently been written on this literature and (most of) which takes the position that this literature is the key to the understanding of the New Testament. Morris disputes this claim although he holds that a study of this literature is important to gain a broader understanding of many passages in Scripture.

Millennial Studies

MILLENNIAL STUDIES, A Search for Truth, by George L. Murray; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1972; 207 pp., \$2.95 (paper). [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

There is today an increasing interest in problems of eschatology. This can be only for the good since Scripture tells us that we live in the era of the Lord's return; and all such studies which are based on the Scriptures cannot but remind the child of God of the final consummation of all things.

In connection with the revival of eschatological studies however, there is an increase in the number of those who hold to premillennial views. This book is intended to be an examination of and Scriptural answer to premillennialism. The book was first printed in 1948 and is now reprinted for the fourth time. It is good that the book has wide distribution, for it is excellent. The author served in various pastorates in the United Presbyterian Church, but taught History of Doctrine for a number of years in Gordon College. He

has made a thorough study of premillennialism, and finds that this view, though so popular, especially among fundamentalists, is entirely lacking in Scriptural support. The author traces premillennialism throughout the history of the Church and observes, correctly in our opinion, that, while Chiliasm was taught by some in the early Church, it never was generally received by the Church and never gained creedal status. He also points out that the Chiliasm of the ancient church was a far cry from the dispensational-premillennialism so rampant today.

The author examines all the various aspects of premillennialism: its dispensationalism and separation between Israel and the Gentiles; its idea of the rapture, of the seven years of persecution, of the earthly millennium established in Canaan for the nation of Israel. He points out by numerous Scriptural quotes that all these ideas are inventions of men and have no Scriptural support.

But of added value to the book is the fact that the author treats the various passages to which premillennialists refer and explains them as they ought

to be explained. These passages discussed include the references to Daniel 7 and Revelation 20 which form the cornerstone of premillennial thought.

We do not always agree with the author's exegesis. This is particularly true of his assertion that all the signs mentioned in Matthew 24 of the return of Christ were fulfilled at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and that they have no reference at all to the end of the world. While we are aware of the problems of interpretation, we cannot understand how it is possible to limit this important chapter to Jerusalem's destruction by the armies of Titus in 70 A.D. This is particularly true of vs. 3 where the disciples specifically ask concerning the Lord's coming and *the end of the world*; of vs. 13, 14; of vss. 29-31, etc.

Nevertheless, we not only recommend this book to our readers, but urge them to purchase it so that they may have the ability to give answer to all premillennialism. The book is eminently readable and is written for all God's people. Even our young people can easily read it and profit from it.

The Westminster Confession And Modern Society

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSIO AND MODERN SOCIETY, by F. N. Lee; Scottish Reformed Fellowship; 16 pp., 8p (pamphlet). [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanks]

The subtitle of the pamphlet which was first presented as an address by the author to the Faculty and students of Faith Theological Seminary in Philadelphia reads: "How May We Confess Christ in a Twentieth-Century Expression of the Westminster Confession of Faith to a Changing Hostile World?" The author has divided his address into three parts. He writes: "Let us then first of all discuss this *twentieth-century society* which is becoming increasingly hostile to the confession of Christ. After that, let us proceed to examine the way in which the *Westminster Confession* confesses Christ, to Whom twentieth-century society is becoming increasingly hostile. And, finally, let us consider whether we as twentieth-century Christians may and should confess Christ today *differently* from the way in which the Westminster Confession did in the seventeenth century."

After describing today's society as "affluent," "highly mechanized," "undisciplined," and "Godless," he goes on to point out specifically how the Westminster Confession can be made relevant. After giving a brief outline of the Confession, the author writes: "Consequently, while upholding the primary

theological and ecclesiastical emphasis of the Westminster Confession, I would also attempt to apprehend twentieth-century man with the non-theological and non-ecclesiastical emphasis of the Westminster Confession and of its sister document, the Westminster Larger Catechism." (p. 5) In this connection he refers to the discussion in the creed of the ten commandments, the teachings on spheres of authority, employer-employee relationships, etc. The reason why all this, as taught in the creed, can be brought to society at large is that "God not only gives a special revelation and special grace to His Church, but He also gives His general revelation and His general, or common, grace to all other societal spheres outside the Church as well." (p. 6)

The author does insist however that the doctrines of the creed are also important; he insists on the maintenance of the Calvinism of the creed overagainst all Arminianism and Amyraldianism. (p. 6) He spends a lot of time discussing the covenant of works and its relevance to modern problems, but the discussion here is not too clear.

In the third part of the pamphlet the author turns to the question of the revision or alteration of the creed as being necessary to make it relevant. He believes that while the Church *may* alter her creed, she should not do this except to "replace certain obsolescent words and phrases in the Confession by more understandable

current terminology." (p. 13). It is in this last part of the book that we find some of the most interesting discussion. The author seems to have come under the influence of those thinkers in this country who, in the name of Calvinism, want to make the Church's Confessions ecclesiastical confessions only. Asserting that the Church has to work for a Christian family, a Christian school, a Christian nation, Christian business, and Christian cultural associations, he writes: "All (of

these spheres of life) are free to form their *own* Christian confessions specifically for their own spheres just as the Church did when it formed the Westminster Confession for the Church sphere." (p. 16).

This last is a key point, of course, for it is the final answer of the author to the question posed in the subtitle. Hence, although there is much worthwhile in the book, we cannot agree with this all-controlling conclusion.

Bible Characters And Doctrines

BIBLE CHARACTERS AND DOCTRINES, Nadab to Boaz & The Character of God, by E.M. Blaiklock and J. Stafford Wright; Elkanah to David/The Holy Trinity by E. M. Blaiklock and Geoffrey Grogan; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972; 128 pp., \$1.50 (paper). [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

These two books are two volumes in a new series of Bible study aids which are intended to be used on a daily basis. The description on the cover reads: "Each volume consists of some 90 articles, half of them focusing on important biblical doctrines, the remainder

providing sketches of Bible characters. Suggested scripture readings, a selection of questions, and themes for further study complete every article. The series will include a total of 16 volumes, each containing material for three months use."

There seems to be no specific plan to the books as far as correlation between the doctrinal sketches and the description of Biblical characters is concerned. And, while they make for some interesting devotional reading, the doctrine is sketchy and the character studies seem often to be psychological descriptions rather than studies of the Biblical data.

In Place Of Sacraments

IN PLACE OF SACRAMENTS, A study of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, by Vernard Eller; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972; 144 pp., \$2.95 (paper). [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

This is a very interestingly written book in which the

author (unsuccessfully) attempts to persuade the Church that she has erred in her traditional celebration of the sacraments and must thoroughly revamp the whole of her celebration, if she is to return to directives of Scripture.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Faculty of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches is happy to announce that Seminarian Arie den Hartog has been licensed to speak a word of edification in our churches.

For the Faculty,
Prof. H.C. Hoeksema, Rector

NOTICE

Classis East will meet, the Lord willing, in regular session on January 3, 1973, in Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated at this session

must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk 10 days prior to the convening of this session.

Jon Huiskens, Stated Clerk.

NOTICE

An Officer Bearers' Conference will be held, the Lord willing, on January 2, 1973, at Hope Protestant Reformed Church at 8:00 PM. Professor H. Hanko will speak on the subject: "What can the Consistories do to promote better Young People's functions, such as spiritual youth activities, societies, conventions, and outings?"

P. Knott, Sec'y.

News From Our Churches

In the November 5 bulletin of Southeast Church appeared the following announcement concerning Rev. Schipper:

"In the evening service today your pastor will be calling to mind ten years of the ministry of the Word in your midst. On November 4th he preached his inaugural sermons, and on November 1st he was installed by the Rev. C. Hanko, who, on that memorable occasion, preached on Colossians 4:17 — 'And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.'"

Our missionary and his wife arrived in Grand Rapids on Tuesday, November 21, the beginning of a short vacation to be spent with family and friends here in the states. They plan to return to their labors in Jamaica soon after the first of the year.

A November bulletin of Loveland's congregation announced that "the pastor speaks this week on 'The Triune God' on our Reformed Witness radio program." That radio program is one of the current projects of Loveland's Church Extension Committee. We say *one* of the projects. According to a recent report from that committee, it (the committee) has "once again completed a full year of service of spreading God's holy word abroad by means of pamphlets, a Reformation Day lecture, and the selling of Reformed books published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association." Further along in that same report we find that, "beginning Sunday, September 24, we are going to sponsor a 15-minute radio program over KLOV. The speeches are to be delivered by Rev. Engelsma. Each speech will be broadcasted two times — once on Sunday at 10:15 A.M., and once on Thursday at 10:15 P.M. on KLOV-FM. It is set up for thirteen weeks."

The distribution of pamphlets is an important part of the work of the committee. Pamphlets sent out during the past year, according to the report, included the following titles: "Resurrection of the Saints," "Final Judgment," "Our Future Glory," and "Children, Heritage of the Lord." To quote a little more from the newsletter, "approximately 550 copies of each are mailed out, most of them locally. We receive these pamphlets from the Edgerton, Doon, and Hull mission committee. They are printed in Hull in large quantities and are also sent to Pella, Redlands, and First Church in Grand Rapids."

For information concerning the printing of those pamphlets we can, conveniently, turn to a November

bulletin from Hull. The printing is handled by what is called the Reformed Witness Committee. "This committee," we read in the bulletin, "is made up of nine members (three from Doon, Edgerton, and Hull churches) with the ministers as advisors. It meets once every other month to conduct the work of witnessing to those in our area. At each meeting, the pamphlet is prepared for mailing. This requires no folding as before, the printer now folds them, only the bundling and addressing."

These committees, along with others in our churches, are obviously diligent in what we consider to be the calling of the church with respect to the work of church extension and church reformation. Perhaps we can conclude with these words from the Loveland Church Extension Committee report: "We are thankful to God for these means and we pray that He will continue to use them toward the glory of His name."

From the Loveland School *Ledger* we learn that our school there has a total enrollment this year of thirty-five children. Miss Beverly Hoekstra and Miss Barb Zandstra still conduct classes in the church basement; but, according to the October *Ledger*, plans to change that are progressing well. Land has already been obtained and leveled, and a building fund has been established with a view to the erection of a new school building.

From Mr. Vander Wal we have received a copy of a letter "re: Introductory Offer of the *Standard Bearer*." News concerning the success of this introductory offer is interesting all by itself; but this letter is even more so, by virtue of the fact that it comes all the way from Johannesburg. We quote:

"Greetings from South Africa. Some time ago I received a copy of the *Standard Bearer* all the way from friends in New Zealand. I liked it very much and would now ask if it is possible for me to accept your introductory offer of ten issues for two dollars. A draft for two dollars is enclosed.

"In passing I must just add how much I have appreciated the writings of the late Herman Hoeksema. To date I have read his commentary on the Book of Revelation — *Behold He Cometh* and the first volume of the *Triple Knowledge*. Real meat indeed. These writings have really been of great encouragement."

And, we might add, a letter such as this is of no small encouragement to us.

D.D.