

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

... Could it be that the computer is the last technological breakthrough that Satan needs to create his “heaven-on-earth” for man and establish his antichristian kingdom?

Perhaps.

But at least this — it is one more step in that direction. And it is a reminder to us that the Antichrist is coming and one day, perhaps soon, will enthrone himself as king of the earth. Let us beware. Let us not be deceived and drawn away by his enchantments. His salvation is false. His heaven leads to hell. Be faithful and watch unto prayer.

See “The Computer Society” — page 471

CONTENTS:

Meditation —	
God's Just Mercy	458
Editor's Notes	461
Editorial —	
A Surplus of Students for the Ministry?	461
Question Box —	
About Covenant Breakers	
in the New Dispensation	463
Special Report —	
Report of the Sixth General Assembly:	
Presbyterian Church in America	464
Special Article —	
<i>Soli Deo Gloria</i>	466
From Holy Writ —	
Exposition of Galatians	468
Signs of the Times —	
The Computer Society	471
Studies in Isaiah —	
The Sign of Isaiah's Son	473
Guest Article —	
The Pilgrim and Politics	475
Triumph Through Trials —	
Doctors	477
News From Our Churches	480

THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August.

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.
Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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Editorial Policy: Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Question-Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten, and must be signed. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

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P.O. Box 2289
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Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$7.00 per year (\$5.00 for Australasia). Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

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Bound Volumes: The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume; such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume. A limited number of past volumes may be obtained through the Business Office.

MEDITATION

God's Just Mercy

Rev. C. Hanko

Is not God then also merciful?

God is indeed merciful, but also just; therefore his justice requires, that sin which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment of body and soul.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day IV, Question 11.

Unduly harsh?

The mercy of God now enters into the discussion; mercy for the guilty and depraved sinner, lost in sin. One might expect that at this point the song of salvation would burst forth in all its rapture. Yet when we read the answer to the question concerning

God's mercy, we find that our Catechism still speaks almost only of God's justice. We ask, "Is not God then also merciful?"; and the answer we receive is, Yes, but wait a moment, let us not forget God's justice. Is not this unduly harsh?

Imagine, one might argue, that the prodigal son leaves the swine's trough and returns to father's

house, repeating to himself over and over again the confession, "Father, I have sinned. I am not worthy to be called thy son," only to be rebuffed by father's stern rebuke, "Hold on, before you cry on my shoulder, remember that you have squandered my goods, disgraced my name, and have deeply offended me!" Or again, imagine that the Philippian jailer had come to Paul and Silas with the humble plea, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?", and would receive the answer: "Do? You can do nothing. You must understand that God's justice must be satisfied. God has the perfect right to cast you into hell for your sins!" We ask, Did not the repentant publican go home justified after breathing the simple prayer for mercy at the temple door? We all agree, drawing from our own experience, that God never deals with us in that cold manner. Jesus, Who calls the weary and heavy laden to seek their refuge in Him, has never yet turned away one seeking soul; not as much as held him at arm's length.

We must understand that our Catechism is not discussing God's dealings with the repentant sinner. This is a *confession*. You and I are being instructed from the Scriptures in the wonder of our salvation. We are speaking out of the conviction of that instruction concerning our only comfort as we live and when we die. Already we have faced the bitter consequences of our fall in Adam, confessing that we are by nature dead in sin, capable only of sin. Humbly we bow under the burden of our guilt, acknowledging that God is just in demanding that we love Him, even though loving Him is contrary to our depraved nature. With penitent tears we confess that God is just in punishing sin, both in this life and in hell. We say with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Therefore we also approach the subject of God's mercy with humble fear and reverence. We are not belaboring the point of God's justice, but we need a proper perspective in understanding God's mercy. God is merciful; yea, boundless in mercy, yet never at the expense of His justice. That I know. That I must learn ever more fully every day. Perish the thought that our Catechism should be unduly harsh with God or with us at this point.

A Necessary Reminder.

Mercy is always just! An unjust mercy is a contradiction in terms. Injustice is always cruel, no matter who is responsible for it. Justice belongs to the light; injustice belongs to darkness.

Think, for example, of a husband whose wife is unfaithful to him. Imagine that this husband would say out of the generosity of his heart, "I love my wife so much that I want her to enjoy herself." Imagine if this wife were to return to her husband, acting as if nothing had happened, and he were to receive her

with open arms. Would that be love? Would he be showing mercy to her?

Or think of a parent who allows his child to go where he wills, come home when he pleases, eat and sleep when fancy dictates, use foul language, indulge in every sort of sin freely. Does that parent actually love his child? Is he kind, merciful to him? When that child gets himself into serious trouble with the law or finds himself unhappily married, will he thank his parent for his indulgence? When parent and child meet in hell will the child still appreciate the kindness bestowed on him?

Does God look with approval upon the leniency of our courts of law? Is the judge who allows rapists, arsonists, thieves, and murderers to roam our streets a worthy minister of God, carrying out God's justice? Do governors who parole dangerous characters show mercy to the innocent?

All of this applies much more to God, Who is very GOD. The churches of our day lay a strong emphasis upon God's love. They teach that God loves all men, even though these men are sinners who hate God and violate every precept. God seems to ignore their blasphemies, makes light of their sins, allows them to heap insult upon insult against Him. With a brush of the hand He says, as it were, "I love you anyway."

It has been said in times past that Arminians rode into the churches on the wings of song. Such songs as "Jesus is Tenderly Calling You Home," or "Throw out the Life Line" struck a strong appeal without much thought as to the contents. Today it can well be said that the denial of God's justice comes singing into the churches. Many hymns that are sung today lay a strong emphasis upon Jesus, at the expense of God's holiness and righteousness. The impression is left that Jesus is meek and gentle, but God is Someone awesome and fearful. In many circles children are taught to pray to Jesus rather than to God; yet we find very few prayers in Scripture that are addressed directly to Jesus.

God's Mercy.

Mercy is a magnificent virtue, especially when it applies to God. God's mercy is rooted in His eternal goodness. God's eternal goodness, in turn, is rooted in His holiness. Let it be said with fear and adoration, God is good. He is light, in Whom is no darkness whatever. God's holiness is His eternal devotion to Himself as the only Good, the infinite fulness of eternal perfections. This holiness radiates from His divine Being in a dazzling brightness that far surpasses the blinding light of the sun at noonday. God's holiness radiates upon us in righteousness, justice, knowledge, wisdom, truth, power, grace, love, mercy, long suffering, and endless compassion.

Truly God is good to Israel. In sovereign good pleasure God has chosen unto Himself a people in Christ Jesus, to show forth the praises of His glorious Name. God predestinates this people unto heavenly perfection in the new creation, to bear His image and likeness as sons and daughters, that they may live with Him in intimate fellowship of love forever. On the dark background of a history of sin, curse, and death for the workers of iniquity, God reveals the glorious light of salvation for the objects of His love in Christ. Or, we can express it this way, all things are rapidly working toward the final theodicy, the final revelation of the justice of God in punishing the wicked with eternal damnation, and redeeming His people unto heavenly glory. The eternal God declares: "For I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

Mercy is God's love to the wretched, the miserable. Mercy implies need for help in distress, need to be delivered from that distress and to be brought into covenant fellowship with the living God. God sent His Son into the world to save sinners. The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. He is the good Shepherd Who committed Himself to torments of hell, that out of the depths of hell He might raise the cry, "Behold, I have found My sheep." He enters the desert waste of this world by His Spirit to draw His sheep to Himself, gathers them in His arms, and carries them to the sheepfold above. Mercy is, therefore, that attribute of God's goodness, whereby He delivers the guilty, lost sinner from sin and death, and brings him into covenant fellowship with Himself in His glory! That is God's mercy, full and free!

A Just Mercy.

Our Book of Instruction teaches us, that "God's justice requires, that sin against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment of body and soul."

If this were not the case, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ would be a horrible travesty. My God informs me, that Zion must be redeemed with justice. My sin, your sin, even the smallest sin is committed against our God. We dishonor His glorious name, we squander His gifts, we transgress the very precepts that are for our life. Sin is sin against the most high majesty of our God. Each sin of each one of us, even a countless number of sins had to be punished with the extreme penalty of God's eternal "Depart from Me, thou worker of iniquity." Christ bore that penalty on the cross under the righteous wrath of the Holy One. He bore it, and bore it away, forever. God gave His Son. God's Son, the Good Shepherd, laid down His life for His sheep. God wounded Him for

our transgressions, bruised Him for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. Truly Justice and Mercy kiss each other at the cross by the wonder of God's grace. Stand in awe, and marvel!

As if that were a small thing, God's justice and mercy still meet in the exalted Christ every day, as long as the world continues. In that familiar Song of Triumph in Romans 8, we join with the apostle to cry out: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Our Mediator and Advocate is now in the sanctuary interceding for us. How would we ever dare to pray, ever dare to ask for the smallest benefit of God, or ask for mercy, if it were not for the confidence that we have access to the throne of mercy through our merciful Highpriest, Jesus Christ, the Righteous, Who pleads that we be heard on the basis of His merit? He prays the Father to bless us out of heaven, and He is heard. It is His intercession that brings streams of blessings, like a mighty river, bestowing upon us far more than we can ask or think.

We need only consider our personal experience. No sinner has ever been saved by the unscriptural, deceptive lie: God loves all men. God loves you as a sinner. The sweet singer of old speaks from his own experience in the oft-repeated Psalm 116, as also in Psalm 130, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice. . . . If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. . . . Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption."

One might ask: Why does this world continue to exist year after year, even while wickedness abounds? The answer is, that God is long-suffering toward His people. Not one of them must perish. The end comes when the last elect is prepared for glory.

Therefore we have this confidence, that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad. (II Corinthians 5:10). All human works will be burned like straw and stubble, but Christ, the righteous Judge, will see His own work in His people, and reward each one of them accordingly, in strictest justice and wondrous mercy.

"Of mercy and of justice my thankful song shall be:

O Lord, in joyful praises my song shall rise to Thee."

Editor's Notes

We trust that our readers know the difference between a meditation and a lecture, and that they understood that Prof. Hanko's lecture was mistakenly printed under the caption "Meditation" in the August 1 issue. The error is not to be charged to the staff, but to the printer. Another error appeared in my book review of *Promise and Deliverance*. The words "a big extravagant" — lest any misunderstood — were not intended to be "a big extravagance," but "a bit extravagant."

* * * * *

An interesting Special Report appears in this issue; be sure to read it. We thank Pastor Eugene C. Case, of the Presbyterian Church of Woodville, Mississippi, for his report on the General Assembly of the Pres-

byterian Church in America.

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Were you wondering about the outcome of the drive for RFPA Book Club members? Our Business Manager reports that we fell far short of the goal of 400 members. Only 257 have signed up. Our thanks to those 257!

* * * * *

As most of our readers are aware, four of our ministers have retired over the course of the past year. Synod of 1978 wished to take cognizance of this and commissioned Prof. Decker to write an article of appreciation and commemoration in this connection. This article appears in the current issue.

EDITORIAL

A Surplus of Students for the Ministry?

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Recently one of the better known religious magazines dealt with the question which forms the title of this editorial. I do not have the article at hand as I write this, but I recall that it made the point that some denominations are troubled by such a surplus and that in some cases there is even a glut of potential ministers. Statistical projections were made which pointed to the possibility in one of the major denominations that in process of time there might be a minister for every five or six people if present trends continue.

It is not my purpose, however, to discuss this question with respect to other denominations. Nor do I purpose to analyze possible reasons why other denominations may or may not have a surplus of potential ministers.

My concern is with our own Protestant Reformed Churches.

Do we have a surplus of potential ministers?

I raise this question for more than one reason. In the first place, I have heard the suggestion made from time to time that we have such a surplus. The question has been raised: what are we going to do with all those students in the seminary and in the pre-seminary department? In the second place, the churches ought to be aware of the situation in their

Theological School. If there is a surplus of students for the ministry, this might prove to be somewhat of a problem, even a somewhat embarrassing problem. But then that problem will have to be faced. Perhaps a surplus is not a bad problem to face; in some cases, at least, a surplus is a rather nice problem to have, much nicer than a shortage. But it is a matter to be faced. If, on the other hand, the supply is normal or nearly so, that is, if there is a rather close balance between supply and demand, the churches should be aware of this, too. Then the task is, if possible, to maintain that balance. And if there is a potential shortage, then this problem must be faced by the churches also, so that if possible it may be remedied.

First of all, a little background information is necessary. Not many years ago, there was a rather severe shortage. It was not at all unusual, when I first took up my labors at our school, that we had a student body of one or two students, so that our seminary had a faculty larger than the student body. There were churches without pastors. There was need for mission work; but because of the shortage of ministers there was undoubtedly a reluctance to leave the congregational ministry for the home mission field. Besides, what hope could we give to any newly organized congregation when we suffered from a shortage of ministers? In addition, looming large on

the horizon was the fact that in the not too distant future some of our older ministers would be retiring. At that time our churches were much in prayer that the Lord would raise up young men to be prepared for the gospel ministry, and pastors and elders counselled more than one young man to consider seriously whether the Lord called him to the ministry. And the Lord heard our prayers. He gave us several young men. The shortage was so severe, however, that in the late 1960s, about the time when our pre-seminary program was revived, we even instituted a speed-up program for several of our present ministers, so that they might graduate a year earlier than normally.

About that time our pre-seminary program was approved and given permanent status in our school. Then our seminary building program was begun and was completed in early 1974. Through all of these circumstances and by the Lord's gracious guidance our student body grew in number to a level which it had not known since our early years as churches. And our churches rejoiced at this. Once again the Lord had provided and made all things well with us. This year it appears that when our three candidates eventually have a place, there will be one vacant congregation. And while no one wishes that a congregation be without a pastor, the situation is rather normal and healthy as far as supply and demand are concerned.

In the second place, what is the present status of our student body in both the seminary and pre-seminary departments? In my Rector's Report to the 1978 Synod I furnished a brief survey of this; but this report usually receives but brief attention at Synod and then gets lost in the dust of the archives. The following is the situation as reported to Synod:

- 1) In our seminary department:
 - a) There are 5 potential graduates for 1979.
 - b) There is no class of 1980 in the seminary.
 - c) There are at present 2 students in the class of 1981. Hence, for the next three years, the Lord willing, there is a possible total of 7 graduates.
- 2) In our pre-seminary department (a four-year program):
 - a) There is no class of 1979, and therefore no potential seminary graduates in 1982.
 - b) There are three students in the class of 1980, and therefore three potential seminary graduates in 1983.
 - c) There is no class of 1981, and therefore no potential seminary graduates in 1984.
 - d) There is no class of 1982, and therefore no potential seminary class of 1985.

Now admittedly this picture could change somewhat. For example, there may be applicants who have

had part or all of their pre-seminary work elsewhere and who apply for seminary entrance during the coming years. But taking the above figures, we conclude that between now and 1985 there is a possibility of 10 graduates to become candidates for the ministry in our churches. While we also note that the present picture is of a rather sporadic supply rather than a steady stream, let us notice that this is an average of far less than 2 graduates per year. Study of past years will also show that such an average supply is less than adequate to meet the needs of our churches.

On the basis of the above statistics, I propose:

- 1) That our churches certainly should not cease to pray that the Lord raise up young men for the ministry of the Word among us. On the contrary, they should continue to pray for this.
- 2) That parents, pastors, and elders should by all means not *discourage* potential students for the ministry in our congregations. On the contrary, they should *encourage* them. They should certainly not say things like, "Why do you want to study for the ministry? We already have too many students, and there won't be a place for you." But they should tell them: "If you believe that the Lord wants you to study for the ministry, by all means go ahead. Our churches will need ministers. Besides, if the Lord calls you to prepare for the ministry, He will also provide a place of labor for you."

And may I add — especially for the sake of any young men who are considering the ministry — that I speak from personal experience? When I graduated from our seminary in 1947, I was one of three graduates; but there was only one pastorless congregation, and it was a time of brewing strife in our churches. If I recall correctly, that was the only time in our history that such a situation of "surplus" prevailed. Furthermore, the one pastorless congregation did not call me. Yet the Lord provided me a place in His time and manner, and today by His grace I have a place while the other two graduates have since forsaken us.

But I hear someone suggest that I am not facing the reality that we have a potential surplus in 1979, when possibly there will be five candidates. Now far be it from me to try to lift the veil on the future. And anyone who knows me also knows that I am by no means a mystic. But I have always maintained — and maintain today — that the Lord did not give us all these students for naught: He had a reason and a purpose in giving them to us. On this subject also I have some thoughts: for apart from the matter of averages and average supply and demand, I am not convinced that we have a real surplus — surely, not a surplus that can be wasted or cast aside. But on this subject I will submit some thoughts at a future date.

QUESTION BOX

About Covenant Breakers in the New Dispensation

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

From the same West Coast reader who has asked questions about the subject of covenant breakers a couple of times before, I received some further questions. He writes: "In Old Testament times the Word of God speaks about covenant breakers. Can we also speak in the new dispensation about covenant breakers in the same sense of the word, with respect to those born of believing parents but who have turned their back on the church or who live an unruly and irregular church life? My question is not about the term itself, but rather about the idea of this expression. In my opinion it sounds like a contradiction of the true meaning of God's covenant. Who can break God's covenant? It seems to me that if we use the term *covenant-breaker*, then the subjective view overrules the objective covenant idea."

Reply

Evidently my correspondent has been having a rather extended discussion about questions related to covenant-breaking. I first answered some questions about this subject some three years ago (cf. Vol. 51, pp. 368, 369). Then I answered some questions about the Old Testament use of the expression "to break God's covenant" in Vol. 52, p. 847. And apparently the discussion is not yet ended. I cannot fault my correspondent for this, because I frequently say, "Call again" at the conclusion of my answers. Hence, I will try again to shed some light on the subject.

First of all, I am not sure what my correspondent means when he suggests that if we use the term *covenant-breaker*, "then the subjective view overrules the objective covenant idea." However, if he means to suggest that then man's action overrules the objective surety of God's covenant, then I agree that there is a very real danger of this. That leads me to say that in this entire discussion about covenant breaking there

are two crucial questions. The first is: what do you understand by the covenant of grace? As I stated in my reply three years ago, "If you define the covenant, as we do, as the eternal relationship of friendship between God and His elect people in Christ Jesus, then it certainly follows, too, that that covenant cannot be broken. It is eternal, and it is an everlasting covenant. And it lies in the very nature of the case, therefore, that an *eternal* and an everlasting covenant is unbreakable." If, however, you understand the covenant as consisting in some kind of contract or agreement or in a general, conditional promise, then you also open the door to the possibility that such a covenant can be broken. In fact, you open the door to the certainty that such a covenant will be broken. But as I pointed out in my earlier answer, both Scripture and our Baptism Form emphasize that God's covenant is eternal and unbreakable. In fact, the Baptism Form makes plain that this very truth is of tremendous significance for our faith and for the assurance of faith — if you want to talk about the subjective aspect. "And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sin, we must not therefore despair of God's mercy, nor continue in sin, since baptism is a seal and undoubted testimony, that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God." That, by the way, is one of the most beautiful and comforting expressions in our liturgical literature.

The second crucial question is this: who do you understand as being included in God's covenant? Does God's covenant embrace only the elect, that is, believers and their seed? Then again you cannot very well speak of that covenant being broken in the sense that the relation of friendship is severed. If, however, you include *all* children of believers, head for head and soul for soul, you also necessarily open the door to the idea of that covenant being broken through the unbelief and impenitence of the reprobate children,

who fail to fulfill the conditions of that covenant. But then again you come face to face with the problem of what becomes of the Scriptural idea of an eternal covenant of grace.

In the second place, as I also pointed out earlier, Reformed people have sometimes spoken rather loosely and inaccurately, in connection with the sins of those who are born and brought up and live in the historical sphere of God's covenant, of covenant-breakers. This language is not accurate and precise. We must certainly not forget that in the sphere of the covenant all sin — whether of elect or reprobate — is more emphatically sinful. Moreover, the sin of the unbelieving and impenitent in the sphere of the covenant is aggravated; and they shall be beaten with double stripes in the judgment. These truths must be emphasized, too. But it is neither necessary nor helpful

to speak in this connection of covenant breaking; it is only confusing.

Finally, let me point out that in the New Testament the expression is not found. I pointed out earlier that the Old Testament usage of this terminology stands connected undoubtedly with the fact that at Sinai the law was imposed upon the promise. But in the new dispensation we are not under the law, but under grace. Only once is the expression "covenant breakers" found in the New Testament, in Romans 1:31. But there the expression has nothing to do with the covenant of grace between God and His people, but rather with man-to-man relationships.

I hope the above comments will help my questioner.

SPECIAL REPORT

Report of the Sixth General Assembly: Presbyterian Church in America

Pastor E. C. Case

By the time this report is printed in the pages of the *STANDARD BEARER* many of the readers will have no doubt heard something of the grand and gala assembly of the NAPaRC (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council) denominations which took place on the campus of Calvin College during the third week of June. Among those denominations was, of course, the Presbyterian Church in America, the second largest of the NAPaRC group in membership, but the one having the greatest number of commissioners in its Assembly — something over 500 — which was, nonetheless, several fewer than are ordinarily present when the PCA Assembly meets closer to the demographic center of its constituency which would mean meeting somewhere in the Southeastern United States rather than in Grand Rapids where there is not even a single PCA congregation. The last time so many Southerners

went North, as a group, was probably in July of 1863, when General Lee's Army invaded Pennsylvania. That excursion wound up with the confusion of Gettysburg. This latest invasion ended with the confusion of Grand Rapids, or what one commissioner referred to as the Presbyterian "Circus" in America. If that seems a rather undignified way of describing a court of the Church, it is nevertheless, one which, at times, seemed appropriate. The Assembly was more than ordinarily plagued this year with parliamentary wrangles, so that we often spent more time talking about how we were going to debate something than we did in actual debate. There was also a recurring problem of applause sometimes breaking out on the floor — an indecorous business to say the least. To sum up the problems of the Assembly, it would probably be best to say that we had come too far to do too much in too little time.

As far as this observer was concerned, the gloom set in early with the election of Dr. G. Aiken Taylor to the post of Moderator. Dr. Taylor is the editor of the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL who has, in recent years, guided that periodical to a position which stands, more and more, over against the pure Reformed truth, and on the side of such aberrations of the truth as the charismatic movement. If his election is any indication of the feeling of the Assembly for the positions Dr. Taylor has taken, then it must be said that the PCA is in even worse shape than the most pessimistic among us had thought. Of course, Dr. Taylor was also a moving force behind the business of meeting in Grand Rapids. It will be interesting to see how Dr. Taylor conducts himself in the office of Moderator between meetings of the Assembly. The retiring Moderator, Mr. John Clark, a ruling elder from Macon, Ga., was very careful not to abuse his office in any way. Dr. Taylor, on the other hand, during the Assembly, conducted business in a most arrogant manner, attempting to intimidate certain commissioners, while allowing others to speak almost at will, and trying to push through votes on questions while commissioners were trying to get the floor to speak. One hopes that this is not an indication that Dr. Taylor intends to be an "activist" Moderator after the fashion of some that we have seen in other churches in recent years, who assume to themselves the prerogative of speaking for the whole church.

Among the major items of business handled by the Assembly was a report on the matter of abortion. After considerable debate, a statement was adopted which condemned as a "clear" violation of the sixth commandment "the intentional killing of an unborn child between conception and birth, for any reason at any time." This represented the sentiments of a majority of the Assembly, but there was also a significant minority who did not see the matter as being quite so "clear." Some evidently felt that there should have been some allowance for abortion in extreme circumstances where the life of the mother is in immediate danger. Their arguments were based on the concept of self-defense. It should be pointed out that probably no one in the PCA Assembly believes that abortion should be carried on as it is presently in the United States. But there was enough opposition to the absolutist statement which was adopted to make it a bit hollow-sounding. The whole controversy points up the problems of bringing up such matters "out of the blue," so to speak. There was no case of discipline involving abortion before the Assembly. This was strictly the product of those in the Assembly who feel the need to speak out on social issues. The adopted report also included a provision for informing the governing authorities of

the PCA position on abortion; something else which this observer regards as highly objectionable.

The question of the number of offices in the Church — a matter which has been before the PCA since the Second Assembly, which met in 1974, and which will also be before the Seventh Assembly — came nearer to resolution this time than ever before. The Assembly at least went so far as to adopt the view which holds that there are two ordinary and perpetual offices in the Church — elder and deacon — with a distinction in function in the office of elder so that there are those elders who both rule and teach and those whose principal function is to rule only. At bottom, this is the view which has been historically held by the Presbyterian Church in the South. It involves no major change from the present situation. As we say, the matter is still not completely resolved. It will be before the next Assembly, too. But the overwhelming sentiment in the Church seems to favour this modified two-office view and it is unlikely that the next Assembly, in (hopefully) completing action on this question, will make any substantial changes. With this action of the Assembly, this observer was much pleased.

Amidst much debate, the Assembly voted to enter into an arrangement with Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Tn., which will increase PCA representation on Covenant's board as there is corresponding increase in support of the college from the PCA. There was some rather strong opposition to the Assembly getting formally involved in sponsorship of a college, but this opposition, which has prevailed in past years, was finally overcome, whether for better or for worse.

A report was adopted which basically concluded that union among brethren is biblically mandated, to the point, even, of organic union. As far as implementation of this was concerned, however, the Assembly moved very cautiously (thankfully), agreeing only to talk about the possibility of merger with the Orthodox Presbyterians and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, understanding, in all of this, that these talks in no way imply commitment to ultimate merger. Even this cautious move was opposed by some, though, (including this writer) for a variety of reasons, ranging all the way from fear of merger in general to fear of merger with one, or the other, or both of the above mentioned groups.

The reports of the committees on Mission to the World and Mission to the United States were relatively non-controversial this year, in spite of extreme financial difficulties experienced over the past year by the latter. Since a review of the MTW Missions Manual comes next year, that report should generate

some excitement.

In other action, the Assembly:

- Declared dispensationalism incompatible with Reformed Theology and directed the Christian Education committee to prepare and make available a study of modern dispensationalism in the light of our standards.

- Directed the C.E. committee to define “theonomy” and make recommendations concerning this matter. This is a hot issue in certain quarters of the Church owing to the influence of R.J. Rushdooney and other of his post-millennial disciples, especially at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Ms.

- Decided to set up a chaplains commission in cooperation with the OPC and RPCES in order to get PCA chaplains out of the present arrangement with the National Association of Evangelicals.

- Adopted a resolution condemning Communism, thereby making the PCA every bit as distinctive as the John Birch Society, the Ku Klux Klan, the United States Congress, the Republican Party, and any of several hundred other political organizations who don’t like Communists and Communism either.

- Adopted, in the face of information that the PCA has not fully subscribed any budget in any year of its existence, a budget of over \$4 million – just a bit larger than last year.

- Defeated the perennial attempt to allow men to immediately succeed themselves on permanent committees of the Assembly.

- Agreed to meet closer to home next year – Charlotte, N.C.

- Divided Carolina Presbytery into two, Eastern Carolina and Central Carolina, and incorporated into the boundaries of Pacific Presbytery the states of Arizona, Hawaii, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, and all of California not presently included.

One of the purposes of meeting in Grand Rapids, and concurrently with the Synods of the other NAPaRC churches was in order to promote interdenominational fellowship. In the opinion of this writer, it was a farce. We didn’t have time to be worrying about ecumenical relations; there was too much other business needing our attention. Yet, on Monday night, the first day of our Assembly, when we could have been tending to business, we were listening to Dr. Joel Nederhood exhort us to social activism, (if his speech becomes the program of the PCA, then this writer will not any more be in the PCA) and, on Wednesday night, when we should have been tending to business, we were out on the lawn attending an ice cream social.

Lest any think that our trip to Grand Rapids was a total failure, however, let it be known that this writer did, at least, enjoy the fellowship he had with some of the Protestant Reformed folks, including a visit with Prof. Hanko and his family and Sunday worship in the morning at First Church and in the evening at Southeast. We also enjoyed seeing those brethren of our own and other denominations whom we get to see only infrequently. And, we enjoyed visiting with some other personal friends in the Grand Rapids area. So, on that positive note, let this report be ended.

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Soli Deo Gloria

Prof. Robert D. Decker

Yes! To God Alone The Glory! That is our response as we review the ministries of our recently retired ministers: the Revs. Cornelius Hanko, George C. Lubbers, Marinus Schipper, and Herman Veldman.

That these men have become emeritus evokes a feeling of sadness among us of the Protestant Reformed Churches. The lives of almost every one of our members have been touched either directly or

indirectly by these men through their preaching, teaching, and writing. Now they are retiring from the active ministry of the Gospel. Careers of over forty years each in the ministry of the Word of God and Sacraments are ending. Four faithful ministers will no longer be active among us. We are going to miss that, and it will seem strange. There's something very sad about all that.

Yet it is a time for rejoicing, rejoicing in the Lord; a time for praise and thanks! It is not a time for praising men. The emeriti ministers must not be praised. We must never praise men. The emeriti ministers would not want that either. And certainly God does not want us to do that. It is a time to praise and thank God. It is a time to say: *Soli Deo Gloria!* There are many reasons for this. God raised up these four men; God called them to the ministry; and God equipped them to serve in the ministry. God gave them to our Churches and for over forty years God used them for the preaching of the Word. God worked His own work among us through these servants. Thus we have abundant reason for rejoicing upon the occasion of the retirement of these servants of God and of His Christ. We may and indeed ought to rejoice in the work which God accomplished through them the past forty years or so.

All four of these men were young men at the time of the formation of our churches in 1924. All four received their pre-seminary and seminary instruction at the feet of Herman Hoeksema and George Ophoff. They belong to the first generation of Protestant Reformed ministers and the last generation to have had personal contact with 1924. These men were in the prime of their ministerial careers during the difficult years surrounding the tragic split in our churches in 1953. Along with Hoeksema and Ophoff and others they stood in the vanguard of the battle for the defense of the truth of the Covenant of grace and the unconditional promise. They were the leaders of the minority which remained faithful to the Protestant Reformed truth.

Rev. Hanko was born in Grand Rapids and ordained in September of 1929. In a career spanning some forty-eight years he faithfully served six congregations: Hull, Iowa; Oaklawn, Illinois; Manhatten, Montana; First, Grand Rapids; Redlands, California; and Hudsonville, Michigan. Rev. Hanko served the longest (sixteen years) at First Grand Rapids. For the first five of those sixteen years (1948-1953) First numbered approximately five hundred families.

Rev. Lubbers was born in Beaver Dam, Michigan and ordained in September of 1934. His career numbers some forty-four years during which time he served six congregations by the grace of God. Twice during his ministry Rev. Lubbers served as a missionary. For ten years (1954-1964) he served as

Home Missionary. The fruit upon these labors as missionary was the organization of Loveland, Colorado and Forbes and Isabel, South Dakota into Protestant Reformed congregations. During the years 1970-1974 Rev. Lubbers served as Missionary to the Island of Jamaica. His last pastorate was at Pella, Iowa.

Rev. Schipper was born at Holland, Michigan. His first contact with Rev. Herman Hoeksema came when as a boy he was a member of the Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church of which Hoeksema was pastor. Rev. Schipper was ordained in January of 1937 and during the forty-one years of his ministry he served five congregations: Grand Haven, Michigan; Second (now Southwest), Grand Rapids; South Holland, Illinois; Southwest, Wyoming, Michigan; and Southeast, Grand Rapids. His longest pastorate, some sixteen years, was his last at Southeast.

Rev. Veldman was born on Chicago's West side and was ordained in September of 1932. During a forty-six year career in the ministry Rev. Veldman diligently served nine congregations: Pella, Iowa; Creston, Grand Rapids; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; Edgerton, Minnesota; Redlands, California; Hope, Walker, Michigan; Hudsonville, Michigan; and Southwest, Wyoming. While pastoring Hamilton, Canada Rev. Veldman was ousted from office because that congregation refused to be a Protestant Reformed Church. He taught Bible at Adams Street Protestant Reformed Christian School until the Lord called him to labor in Edgerton, Minnesota.

These four by the grace of God, sometimes at personal sacrifice, performed a good work among the Protestant Reformed Churches. Truly it may be said they were good and faithful servants of their Lord. That good work includes primarily the thousands of sermons they preached in the churches and on the mission fields. How many saints were brought to repentance by that preaching? No one can count them! How many people of God were instructed and built up in the faith and love and knowledge of God? Are you and I able to count how many were encouraged along their earthly pilgrimages by their preaching? A significant part of that good work is the countless catechism classes they were privileged to teach. Again, how many children of God's covenant were nourished in God's fear by that teaching? How many children of the covenant were led to the consciousness of their faith and confessed their faith under that instruction? These men by God's grace performed a good work as pastors of God's flock. They edified countless families on Family Visitation. They encouraged the saints in their afflictions and troubles and sicknesses from the Word of God. They brought the comfort of the hope of the resurrection

to the dying and sorrowing among God's children. That good work includes the labors they performed for the Churches in common. They gave good and wise guidance at many classes. They provided strong and faithful leadership at many Synods especially during the difficult years preceding and following 1953. Untiring efforts were put forth by them on Synodical Committees, especially the Mission and Theological School Committees. For many years they faithfully submitted articles for the *Standard Bearer*, instructing our people on a variety of subjects. That is the good work which they performed by the grace of God: the preaching and teaching, the leading of Bible-study Societies, caring for the flock of Christ.

Reviewing the ministries of these men of God we and they may well pray with the Psalmist: "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." (Psalm 90:16, 17) Establish that work, Lord, is our prayer. Confirm and maintain it. Let it not have been in vain! We may be sure that God hears and answers that prayer. The work of the ministry of

these servants of God shall not be in vain because God shall surely establish it. And God shall establish it because it is His own work through them.

Therefore, while we are saddened because the work of these spiritual leaders has come to an end in our churches, we may look back over the years of their ministries with joy and thanksgiving. Through that work, God's work in and through them, the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ has been gathered, built up in the faith and love of God, preserved against the winds of false doctrine, and blessed with the blessings of salvation. It is a work that shall stand into eternity. It is and it shall forever be established because it is God's work of grace. The labor of these men is not in vain in the Lord.

Beloved brethren: Revs. Hanko, Lubbers, Schipper, and Veldman; rejoice in that! May God bless you richly in your retirement years. When those years are over you may by His mercy look forward to glory when you shall hear from the Savior Himself: "Well done, Good and Faithful Servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Soli Deo Gloria!

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Galations 4:8-11

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE BEGGARLY PRINCIPLES OF LAW (Gal. 4:9b)

Paul has really finished the great argument for salvation by true faith apart from law-works of mere man. The keystone of the argument we saw in the foregoing verses: we are now sons, and not at all servants. If sons, heirs through God we are! (Gal. 4:6, 7)

Paul is now in a position to capitalize on this basic argument which he has given and to make an appeal to the Galatians to come to their spiritual senses, and to stand in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free! (Gal. 5:1) He will do so by pointing out to

them that returning to "weak and beggarly principles" is not standing unmoved in the hope of the Gospel of liberty in Christ's blood.

Let us attempt to see this together.

To what does Paul refer when he speaks of "weak" and "beggarly" principles, "elements"?

The term "elements" in the Greek means in non-Bible Greek: a little step. Figuratively this means: an element, elementary sound, a letter in the alphabet. And thus it is used by philosophers of first principles

from which we can learn more and greater things concerning the entire field of learning. In Biblical Greek the term has a variety of usages. It is used in II Peter 3:10 of the elements of the world, the smallest elements of being in nature, the component parts of the physical world. That is the application of the term in the view of physics. The term is also employed in the first a-b-c of the instruction in the church: the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:2) Here the KJV translates: first *principles*.

In this passage of Paul in Gal. 4:9b the term refers to the basic elements which form the teaching of all work-religions, whether this be outright Paganism or Jewish legalism. All teach and live by the rule: the man that doeth the law (whether the law as understood by the Pagans or by the Jews), shall live by it. That is the blessed life which gives peace to the conscience. That is the "elements" here referred to by Paul. This is clear from the entire context here in Galatians. He is speaking here of the rudiments of the world! A comparison with what Paul writes in Colossians 2:20 will bear this out. The term "rudiments" (elements=principles) has reference to the teaching and the instruction of the world apart from Christ, His revelation, His Cross and resurrection. (Col. 2:10-15) It is a denial and a letting go of Christ as the head of the church and of all things. Yes, it dealt with the great question of what is good for man: what constitutes blessedness, happiness, salvation. And it consisted in works: touch not, taste not, handle not. Salvation lies in escape from the world of reality. The physical world is evil. This too is the "principles" of this world. It is not Christianity but moralism, asceticism! In Colossians, we are told that we have tied unto this principle, this rudiment of the world!

Now all these world-rudiments stand on the rock of impotence!

Paul calls them "weak" and "poor=beggarly." Indeed they are weak. They are not able to help us, lift us up, make us alive. They are such that Paul says "if there had been a law given which could make us alive, verily righteousness would have been by law." (Gal. 3:21) This is true of every Levitical ordinance, every civil law in Israel. It is also true of the several commandments of the Decalogue. As "law" they are weak. Why? Because of sin! (Rom. 8:3) In our flesh dwells no good thing. And so the law cannot make the unwilling sinner willing. The law, in the church, makes the willing people of God walk in healthy piety. But that is because we are "under grace" and not "under law." (Rom. 6:1-23) It is the gift of God which is eternal life. But, all that is not within this gift, is weak and beggarly. Yes, it is not only weak, but it is also beggarly. It is poor. It cannot make the

poor sinner rich. It cannot give tried gold in the fire, white raiment to clothe the shame of our nakedness and eye-salve so that we may receive our sight. The law can not cleanse the lepers and grant forgiveness to the poor and needy, and cannot open the doors of the prison of our spiritual captivity.

The law is poor and beggarly!

And now the Galatians return from riches to rags. Yes, that is what they were doing in very deed. Their riches was that they were sons of God, the Father. They were sons by adoption in Christ's coming in this world, made from a woman and made under law. What a riches and honor! They are heirs of God, heirs of the world in Christ. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Abraham is heir of the world in Christ by promise; and as sons of Abraham, belonging to Christ, we too are heirs through God's marvelous wonder of grace. (Rom. 4:13) The Galatians have the right to sit at the table of the Lord and to have a place in the Father's house with its many mansions. Yes, they have the right to all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places, even as they were elected in him from before the foundation of the world.

From such riches they now are enticed to return to rags by evil and corrupt preachers!

What a riches to have the Spirit of Christ crying in their hearts: Abba, Father! No, they have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. They are now not filled with dread of God's avenging wrath; nay, now we have the courage, the joyful certainty of the full assurance of faith, that we have a high priest in heaven, Who ever lives to intercede for us. (Heb. 7:27; Rom. 8:34) And now nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord!

Yes, it was a turning from riches to rags. It was a turning to that which Paul accounts to be but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord. (Phil. 3:7, 8)

THE HORRIBLE INCONSISTENCY OF THE GALATIANS (Galatians 4:9a)

There is such a thing as the "logic" of folly. We see this in the conduct of these Galatians, who seem verily to have been bewitched. Their return from riches to rags, from the glory and riches of the grace in Christ Jesus, defies all wisdom and understanding. And we should notice that Paul speaks of their "turning again=back" (*palin*) to weak and beggarly principles of Jewry. This might seem to be an error. How could these Gentile Christians, who have never been in the Jews' religion as had been a Paul and Peter (Gal. 2:15), turn back to these Jewish principles? The solution is easy, as Calvin would say. Paul is not speaking of the particular ritual of the Jews and of the Pagans which they had in common, but he is

speaking of their common beggarly principles, which is such when viewed in the light of the Gospel. Jew and Greek both have a bankrupt religion. They both operate under the principle of "law," if you will, *under law-principle*.

There is a meeting point of the law-principle of the Jewish and of the Pagan religion. Writes Lightfoot on this interesting question:

"... The Mosaic dispensation was a foreshadowing, a germ of the Gospel; and thus, when Christ came, its spiritual element was of necessity extinguished or absorbed by its successor. Deprived of this it was a mere mass of lifeless ordinances, differing only in degree, not in kind, from any other ritualistic system."

"Thus the *ritualistic* element alone remains to be considered, and here is the meeting point of Judaism and Heathenism. In Judaism this was as much lower as its spiritual element, as in Heathenism it was higher. Hence the two systems approach within such a distance to each other that they can under certain limitations be classed together. They have at least so much in common that a lapse into Judaism can be regarded as a relapse to the position of unconverted Heathenism. Judaism was a system of bondage like Heathenism. Heathenism had been a disciplinary training like Judaism.

"It is a fair inference, I think, from St. Paul's language here, that he does place Heathenism in the same category with Judaism in this last respect. . . ." (Lightfoot, Page 172-173)

Apart from the view of Lightfoot concerning Heathenism being "disciplinary training like Judaism," we believe that what he writes is very helpful and enlightening. If we take "Judaism" in its most technical sense, it could only gender to bondage of Phariseeism, and that was equally true of the moralism of the Heathen religions and philosophies. Plato and Gamaliel are on the same line! Neither one brings us to the Cross.

And so, when these Galatians now turn to Judaism and once more are "under law," they return to their old and forsaken position of the Pagan and Heathen religion. Both are enemies of the Cross of Christ and they are the wisdom of men which God puts to

nought at Calvary.

Now the walk and confession of these Galatians was very understandable when aforetime they "did not know God." They were walking in the blindness of Heathendom, where God had left them walk in their own ways. (Acts 14:15, 16; Rom. 1:21-23) Thus were these Galatians once as were all we of the Gentiles who were brought to the faith. Then they were under the law principle and that because they had never heard of the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ, God's Son. But now, all is different! He that knoweth to believe and believeth not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17) Such shall be beaten with many stripes. The unenlightened Pagan unbeliever shall be beaten with fewer stripes than the informed and instructed unbeliever. (Luke 12:47, 48)

Riches for rags! Yes, and that after having heard the One who called them unto faith and life. Look at their ritualistic form of religion. They have become faddists in days, months, years, and times. Very scrupulously they keep these days now. The term "*parateereisthe*" means to watch very narrowly. These Judaizers were very "narrow" in their own way, without walking in the straight and narrow way that leads to life. Interesting it is to note that the verb here is also used of the scrutiny whereby the Jews watched Jesus in his words and work. (Mark 3:2) They watched him closely whether he would heal a man on the Sabbath. (Luke 14:1) And so these Galatians very measurely and very minutely and exactly went back to the observance of the Old Testament Levitical days. Each Weekly was closely and minutely observed. They had to keep totally the "day." The monthly new moon sabbaths too were again kept. The special times were observed such as the Passover feasts, the feast of the first fruits of the full harvest, and the sacred years, such as the year of Jubilee. And there was a just reward that in so doing they would have an added advantage toward being just before God. It was a basis for salvation. And it was a tacit denial that Jesus had died as the great Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. It was once more willing to be *under law*. Resurrection Sunday was really denied as the fulfilment of all the promises of God, which He made to the fathers.

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



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Computer Society

Rev. J. Slopsema

Revelation 13 speaks of two beasts: one out of the sea and another out of the earth. The first beast out of the sea represents the Antichrist from the point of view of his political power. In the last days the Antichrist will establish a world-wide kingdom embracing all the nations and peoples of the earth. The second beast out of the earth also represents the Antichrist but from a little different point of view. This beast represents the power of persuasion that the Antichrist will exert over mankind. The Antichrist will not establish his world-wide empire through main force or through marching armies that subject an unwilling populace to his rule. He will rather persuade the nations to give their allegiance to him. He will charm and enchant them so that they willingly submit to his rule.

In general we may say that the Antichrist will gain the loyalty and support of the nations by his ability to create a utopia for man — a virtual heaven on earth. Revelation 13 speaks of the great wonders and miracles that the second beast will perform. These undoubtedly refer to advancements in science and technology that will enable the Antichrist to harness the various powers of God's creation and press them into the service of man. Through scientific advancement the Antichrist will possess the means virtually to eradicate sickness and disease, hunger and famine, poverty and want. Through technology he will solve many of the problems that have plagued mankind since the fall. He will fill man's life with luxury, ease, prosperity, and comfort. And the result will be that all kindreds, tongues, and nations shall herald him as their savior. They shall willingly bow before his rule and authority, that they may benefit from his "miracles." And they shall worship him as their god.

Such is the picture that we receive of Antichrist in Revelation 13.

In the February 20, 1978 issue of *Time* magazine there appears a special section entitled "The Computer Society" in which several articles are devoted to the impact that computers are having on our life and that they will continue to have in the future. Upon reading these articles one can not help but think of the "miracles" that the beast of Revelation 13 will perform.

Imagine once living in this type of world. We

quote:

"It is 7:30 a.m. As the alarm clock burrs, the bedroom curtains swing silently apart, the Venetian blinds snap up and the thermostat boosts the heat to a cozy 70 degrees. The percolator in the kitchen starts burbling; the back door opens to let out the dog. The TV set blinks on with the day's first newscast: not your *Today* show humph-humph, but a selective rundown (ordered up the night before) of all the latest worldwide events affecting the economy — legislative, political, monetary. After the news on TV comes the morning mail, from correspondents who have dictated their messages into the computer network. The latter-day Aladdin, still snugly abed, then presses a button on a bedside box and issues a string of business and personal memos, which appear instantly on the genie screen. After his shower, which has turned itself on at exactly the right temperature at the right minute, Mr. A. is alerted by a buzzer and a blue light on the screen. His boss, the company president, is on his way to the office. A. dresses and saunters out to the car. The engine, of course, is running. . . .

"After her husband has kissed her goodbye, Alice A. concentrates on the screen for a read-out of comparative prices at the local merchants' and markets. Following eyeball-to-eyeball consultations with the butcher and the baker and the grocer on the tube, she hits a button to commandeer supplies for tonight's dinner party. Pressing a couple of keys on the kitchen terminal, she orders from the memory bank here favorite recipes for oysters Rockefeller, boeuf a la bourguignonne and chocolate souffle, tells the machine to compute the ingredients for six servings, and directs the ovens to reach the correct temperature for each dish according to the recipe, starting at 7:15 p.m. Alice then joins a televised discussion of Byzantine art (which she has studied by computer). Later she wanders into the computer room where Al ('Laddy') Jr. has just learned from his headset that his drill in Latin verb conjugation was 'groovy'."

Quite different from our present day life, even with all the modern conveniences! But this reportedly is what we may expect in the future with the tremendous advancements that have been made in computer technology. In fact, the basic technology for everything mentioned here is already in existence.

Since 1946, when the first computer was assembled, computer technology has grown by leaps and bounds. Computers have become smaller, more

convenient to use, less expensive to produce, yet more versatile and powerful. The latest development has been the "computer on a chip" such as is found in the pocket calculators that have become so popular today. We are told that a single silicon chip, no more than a quarter of an inch square, has the same calculating capabilities of a room-size computer of 25 years ago. Amazing!

And as computer technology advances, so also do computers play a more important role in our life. Computers have become essential, for example, to modern communications. It is estimated that it would require the entire US female population between the ages of 18 and 25 to run the nation's telephone system if it were not computerized. Computers are also playing an important role in business and industry, in commerce, in medicine, in scientific research, and in education, to mention but a few. A certain Professor Joseph Weizenbaum of M.I.T.'s Laboratory for Computer Science is even quoted as saying that human dependence on computers has already become irreversible. Computers, in other words, have become a way of life for America.

And computers have also raised our standard of living considerably. Computers, for example, have enabled business and industry to operate more efficiently, with the result that products can be produced with less expense and the consumer has more for less. Computers are also a factor in the invention of many new products and gadgets that not only save time and energy but also add to the convenience of life. In addition to this, computers are responsible for better medical care, better communications, better transportation, better police protection, etc. In short, computer technology has provided us with many goods and services that were unheard of only a few years ago.

And this is only a beginning. There seems to be no end in sight. It is estimated that with the introduction of the computer chip (also called rather significantly the "miracle chip") there are at least 25,000 applications of the computer that await discovery. Computers are expected to be as common a household item as our present day radio and television. And this will revolutionize our life. Computers will shoulder many of the tedious, routine chores of life and perform them with astonishing speed and efficiency. They will provide us with more leisure time (as though we do not already have enough) and many physical comforts. Writes *Time* magazine, "The microelectronic revolution promises to ease, enhance and simplify life in ways undreamed of even by the utopians."

In the vision of some, the computer is even destined to become the next major development in the so-called evolutionary process. Even now the

most advanced computers are able to learn by experience, to follow an argument, to write poetry and music, and to carry on conversations with humans. Computer technologists like to speak of computer "generations." Each "generation" is marked by a major break-through in computer technology. There have been four such "generations" since 1946. It is predicted that in two more computer generations, which would bring us into the 1990's, computers will begin to match the human brain in reasoning power and ability. After that, computers will emerge as a higher form of life. It is only the "carbon-chemistry chauvinist" who assumes that the new species of the evolutionary process will be flesh-and-blood descendant of man. And concerning man's relationship with this new form of life, Robert Jastrow, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, writes:

"The computer . . . will be taken care of by its human partners, who will minister to its bodily needs with electricity and spare parts. Man will also provide for computer reproduction, as he does today. In return, the computer will minister to our social and economic needs. Child of man's brain rather than his loins, it will become his salvation in a world of crushing complexity."

This, of course, is nothing but the foolishness and nonsense of the godless. It is only the fool that believes evolution; and he is twice the fool if he believes this.

But, nevertheless, we are able to see in this the coming of the Antichrist. There can be no question that computers will revolutionize our life. If we are left breathless at the tremendous changes that have taken place in the past 70 or 80 years, we will be stunned by the change that awaits us in the future. And computers will undoubtedly play a significant role in this. Without any stretch of the imagination one can easily see that the amazing feats that will be performed by future computer technology could very well be the "miracles" of the second beast of Revelation 13. Even now the "computer on a chip" is being heralded as the "miracle chip." Computers are expected to be man's "salvation in a world of crushing complexity." Could it be that the computer is the last technological breakthrough that Satan needs to create his "heaven-on-earth" for man and establish his anti-christian kingdom?

Perhaps.

But at least this — it is one more step in that direction. And it is a reminder to us that the Antichrist is coming and one day, perhaps soon, will enthrone himself as king of the earth. Let us beware. Let us not be deceived and drawn away by his enchantments. His salvation is false. His heaven leads to hell. Be faithful and watch unto prayer.

STUDIES IN ISAIAH

The Sign of Isaiah's Son

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

Isaiah 8:1-6

In this section of Isaiah's prophecy extending down to chapter twelve, we have discourse concerning the Messiah:

A. Foretelling Destruction of Confederated Syria and Israel by Assyria (8:1-4).

1. *The Command to Write this Prophecy.* "Then Jehovah said unto me, 'Take to thee a great tablet (one with plenty of room for writing large letters), and write upon it with a style of a man: To Mahershalalhashbaz.'" The private prophecy of the defeat of Syria and Israel in 7:8-9 is now publicly confirmed and demonstrated by the divine bestowal of a symbolical name. For the writing on the tablet is what became the longest name in the Bible. Its meaning is, Speed to Spoil! Haste to Prey! This is God's command to the Assyrians to hasten to the spoil of Damascus (Syria) and Samaria (Israel). It was to be written with a man's pen, not written with the finger of God, nor in the tongues of angels, nor with any other miracle handwriting, as that on the wall, pronouncing Belshazzar's doom. It would not be esoteric or cryptic writing, but would be a Hebrew vulgate, published in a popular edition, so that it might be read easily by the most inexperienced reader. The Bible is not written in the technical language of scholars, but in the language of the people.

The prophecy informs that a Maher-shalal-hash-baz is to be looked for, and when he appears the prophecy shall have been fulfilled. There are but four words. They will imbed in the memory of those concerned their wrathful import that God is speeding in judgment against them. They will be as moved by this writing and symbolical figure as if it were written with the finger of God. They are frightening words, and need only be flashed before them to remind them of impending destruction. But the comfort to the elect remnant in all this is that the destroyer shall be destroyed. Do not fear him. He shall pass away. He can destroy, but cannot save. Look at the higher prophetic sign, Immanuel. *He* will save!

The prophecy of Isaiah is the Book of Immanuel. All things point to Him, even the judgments. He and His preached word have a two-fold effect on men. His proclamations of judgment are despised by some, heeded by others. He was set for the fall and rising of many in Israel. To those who refuse the divine warnings, He is a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. To the remnant of Israel, who prepare to meet their God, He is a glory and a defence. His gospel is a savor of death unto death, as well as a savor of life unto life, both in the congregation and on the mission field. The reprobation of foreordained wrath, as well as the election of grace, are always working out, and working through the generations of men. This separating process has continued, does and will continue, until God's eternal good pleasure for reprobate and elect has been completely fulfilled. Reading the name Maher, the chosen will be moved from the path of the destroyer by the drawing power of Immanuel. (John 6:44). Others, sovereignly blinded and hardened, wilfully and wickedly stop their ears against His voice to become the spoil of the spoiler.

2. *The Care Taken to Attest the Prophetic Record.* "And I will take as a witness for Me faithful witnesses, namely Urijah the priest, and Zechariah, the son of Jeberechiah." (v. 2). The Lord says He will do this in order to ensure the validity of true prophecy as genuinely made before the event, and to uphold His own honor. With the fulfilment of the prophecy, these witnesses could then come forward and testify that Isaiah had already predicted it. That neither this Urijah, nor this Zechariah can be conclusively identified matters little. They were well-known, reputable men, and sworn witnesses are needed when you have such unbelievers as Ahaz in the kingdom. But then, the Word of God always comes well attested (Acts 14:17). That divine attestation will leave some men sovereignly hardened, as the prophet was informed (6:9-10). The outside world and the reprobate in the church reject the witness of God. They prefer their own thoughts and opinions, their own schemes for

peace, their own alliances as far more workable and pleasant. But God's own Shearjashubs (a remnant shall return) prize His witness, tremble at His warnings, and preserve His holy doctrine. They see the divine seal of truth upon the gospel. They set it to their seal that God is true. They receive the religion of Jehovah and the gospel of Immanuel as the very truth.

3. *The Prophecy Titled with the Symbolical Name of His Child.* "And I came near to the prophetess, and she became pregnant, and bore a son. Then Jehovah said to me, Call his name Maher-shal-hash-baz." (v. 3). The symbolic name is now given the prophet's new born son, making him a living reminder of the prophecy. For prophetic names given three children of another prophet, see chapter one of Hosea. The prophetess is not ha-alma of 7:14, but Isaiah's wife. She may herself have prophesied as did Philip the evangelist's daughters. Certainly her whole family prophesied publicly just by appearing in public. Their very names were sermons. Isaiah and his sons in their own persons were, visibly and bodily, walking sermons. They were audio-video displays of the impending ruin of some, and of the gracious deliverance of others in complete salvation. As they went along the streets, they were a gazingstock, like men from Mars, like the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things. Probably they provided ridicule and banter for profane scoffers. But leaving them without excuse, they were friends and beacons to the righteous.

4. *The Prophecy an Exposition of the Name.* "For before the boy shall know to cry, 'My father!' and 'My mother!,' the strength (riches) of Damascus (Syria) and the spoil of Samaria (Israel) shall be lifted up before the king of Assyria" (for him to take away, v. 4). The time of the prophecy's fulfilment shall be when the child is old enough to say *papa* and *mama*, that is, in infancy. Since the prophecy concerning Isaiah's son would be actually witnessed by the people and by official, well accredited witnesses, it would be a pledge also of the prophecy concerning the virgin's Son. The contemporary prophecy sanctions the future prophecy of Immanuel. Ahaz will refuse this sign, of Isaiah's son, to his everlasting embarrassment. In fact, this prophecy heaps divine scorn upon his faithless fear of man. For two years from the making of it Tiglath-pileser plundered Damascus, and twelve years later Samaria fell. But then, the spoiler must always expect to be spoiled (Isa. 33:1). Also deniers and mockers of eternal judgment must expect to be judged. They have had prophecies and warnings substantiated by faithful witnesses. It is all left standing on sure record. Many judgments and overthrows have already come to pass, and soon enough. God's counsels in their fulfilment do not tarry. They speed to full realization. Men like Ahaz wish the divine judgments would never come.

They try to persuade themselves they never will happen. They not only deny there is a coming judgment, but they laugh in the face of judgment. Ours is a mocking age which would have but mock punishment; a cursing age, damning everything in sight and out of sight, but would have no damnation, and with *hell* on the tip of the tongue it would have no hell. Many ministers of the gospel flinch from their duty to declare the day of wrath, not wanting to be criticized or labelled as preachers of hell-fire and brimstone. Many pulpits weakly spout little spurts of "love, love, love," as though God not only intends to, but will save everybody. Rarely is reprobation preached, or the doom of the wicked.

B. Revealing Desolations Made by Assyria in Israel and Judah (5-8).

1. *The Sin of Distrust and Misplaced Trust on the Part of Judah (5-6).* "Also Jehovah added to speak to me again, saying, 'Because this people rejected the waters of Shiloah, the ones going, flowing gently, and rejoice (exult) in (the retreat of) Rezin and the son of Remaliah' " because the people had distrusted God's protection and had relied on the success of their application for help from their (and everyone's) enemies, then, behold, (and here read v. 7), a flood of God's judgment would come upon them. "And Jehovah added to speak to me." Jehovah here is distinguished from Immanuel (v. 8). In the Godhead, one person is distinguished from the others. "This people" is the same "this people" of 6:9f, referring to Judah. That they had rejected the waters of Shiloah means that they despised the land of Judah, their own country, and especially the Davidic monarchy, representing the protection of God and the royal promise. They despised the still small voice in the prophets. So they then really despised Jehovah. They rejoiced in respect to Rezin and Remaliah's son, that is, they exulted in the taking off of the pressure of these two kings, of Syria and Israel.

These waters of Shiloah are said to issue forth from between Mts. Moriah and Zion. They are then a fitting symbol of the decree or word issuing from God's temple and kingdom in Zion, as over against the kingdom of this world represented by the overflowing Euphrates. Israel was the least of the nations (Dt. 7:7), Bethlehem the least of the cities of Judah, David the least in his family, the coming Messiah to be a root out of a dry ground, despised and rejected of men because He was a Man of sorrows, meek and lowly in heart. They despised all these things; they despised the day of small things. They claimed they had no king but Caesar. They wanted to be a reckoned with world-power along with all the other nations. Now see what they come to.

It is no different with our own nation. Our country

is guilty of alliance and dalliance with our enemies who spy on our embassies, spy on us through the United Nations facility and subversively and submersibly invade our seas. We support their communist regimes with our capitalistic wealth. We allow ourselves to be "contained" by their policies and strength. We are embarrassedly silent as to their short-wave radio propaganda attacks. With our techniques we further their technological advance. We seem more pleased with their success than we are concerned with solution to our own moral and economic problems. We are the scorners of our friends and the sycophants of our enemies. In the interest of international peace, we are all but ready to

surrender to them. For we hear that soon upon us will be, on our part, the last of navy yards, the last of nuclear bomb testing, the last of the arms race, as we become more and more akin to our enemies, philosophically and politically. As for the church world, it has almost entirely already defected to the enemy.

All the more reason why we, as Christians and churches, must be different, must hold fast that which we have (and we have so much of pure gospel preaching and glorious Reformed truth); for to him that hath shall be given, but to him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have!

GUEST ARTICLE

The Pilgrim and Politics

Rev. Wayne Bekkering

The proper attitude toward politics has always been a concern for God's people in the midst of the world, but more so as we see the day approaching. The "day," of course, refers to the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We must not overlook the fact that connected with that day is politics.

The Word of God always pictures a conflict between the kings of the earth and the Lord and His Christ. The kings of the earth set themselves against God and rage. They take counsel together saying, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." (Ps. 2:3) The fury of the earth's kings is not satiated; and finally they rage out their own destruction when they compass the camp of the saints, and the fire of God comes down from heaven and devours them. They believe that finally they stand before victory when actually the Lord has them in derision.

The Scripture shows us that government and politics are not in and of themselves evil and corrupt, but they become so when wicked and rebellious men pervert them from their proper purpose. The proper purpose of government and politics is, of course, the glory of God. God created man in such a way that he

could rule over the creation so as to direct all things to the glory of the Creator. Man was created a king. Not a king supreme but a king servant. That is the original principle of government and politics. Man, however, by the instigation of the devil rebelled against his position as king servant and sought to be king supreme. Ever since the fall, natural man used his ruling office and ability to establish his own kingdom and achieve his own glory. This does not mean now that all government and politics are so hopelessly corrupt and perverted that the child of God must reject them as inherently anti-God and anti-Christ. But this does mean that the child of God must carefully analyze the principles, purposes, and the methods of the existing government and politics to determine what his attitude will be toward them and how he will glorify God in the political aspect of his life.

To glorify God is the calling of the pilgrim saint. He must do that in all his life, also with respect to government and politics. The pilgrim has a political calling. We must make no mistake about that. We can not hide behind the supposition that we are politically neutral. There is no such thing as neutrality. Christ teaches that whoever is not for Him is against Him.

This makes the matter of government and politics important for the pilgrim. Often we find the pilgrim simply ignoring the whole matter, rather than trying to pick out of the whole maze a God-honoring course.

To help us find the pilgrim way in politics, let us consider the relation between government and politics. We must distinguish between them. They are not identical. The one serves the other. Government is an institution ordained by God for the fulfillment of His purpose and the glory of His name.

What is politics? The word politics comes from the Greek word, the root meaning of which is "city." Hence the word politics means, literally, that which pertains to the city, particularly with a view to the government of the city. Politics is the practical science that concerns itself with the institution of government. As the science of government it includes within its scope: 1. Principles of government, with a view to the internal affairs of the city, state, or nation, and also all things that pertain to international affairs, i.e. the relation of one nation with another. 2. Methods of government, e.g. specific policy of managing public affairs. 3. The propagation of principles, i.e., putting principles into effect through the application of its methods in actual operation, appointment of officers, etc.

Although government and politics are not identical, they are however practically inseparable. Especially is that true in a system of rule such as we have in the U.S. Politics determine the course of the government, and not vice versa as it ought to be. Not only is the fundamental order of things turned around, but politics, for the most part, is dominated by the ungodly principles and methods of the world and worldly men. The pilgrim cannot simply embrace the politics of the world, but rather finds himself diametrically opposed to it.

The principle of the pilgrim's life is that all things be done in obedience to the Word of God with the purpose that God be glorified. His methods will always be in harmony with the Bible as the only standard for his life.

The principle of the politics of the world involves an attempt to throw off the yoke of God's righteous requirements and follows as its sole purpose the ease, welfare, and glory of man. Its methods will be whatever accomplishes that end: lies, deceit, stealing, and even murder.

Recognizing this to be true, what must the pilgrim do? Must he simply flee the whole business of politics as being hopelessly corrupt and forget about it? Will he leave the making of laws, laws which become binding upon him and affect the course of his whole life, to the ungodly politician with never so much as a

word? To do so would be foolish and irresponsible! The pilgrim ought to use every good means at his disposal to influence legislation to the end that God-honoring laws prevail and that the Word of God have free course.

To be able to have a voice in political affairs and legislation is a privilege afforded to citizens of this land, and that privilege ought to be used to the glory of God. The apostle Paul did not hesitate to appeal to privileges that were his as a citizen of Rome so that he be not hindered in the work of the gospel (Acts 16 & 22).

What can the pilgrim do? He can vote in the election of officials and on other matters referred to the electorate for approval or disapproval. He can write to his legislators at the various levels of government. In writing to his legislators he must not simply add his opinion to the thousands of others, but he must give reasons out of the Word of God for his conviction. Then the Word of God's righteousness is made known and His name is glorified.

It is not always so easy for the pilgrim to see his proper function, especially in the area where worldly politics and God-ordained government practically merge. The Word of God, in Romans 13, calls us to be subject unto the higher powers. No distinction is made, in this passage, between good and gentle rulers and wicked, forward tyrants who rule as dictators. The only conclusion that we can come to is that we must obey both righteous rulers and wicked ones. We obey not for the sake of the man, whether he be evil or good, but principally because God binds that duty upon our conscience.

The pilgrim sees clearly the calling of the Word to submit to the higher powers. The problem comes in when he sees the higher powers following principles and practices diametrically opposed to the Word of God. The pilgrim must understand that submission does not imply approval. It is possible and necessary often times to submit disapprovingly. Disapproval of the principles, purposes, and methods of government and politics does not necessarily constitute rebellion. How can the pilgrim let his light shine to the glory of God except he speaks a word of righteousness over-against the wicked practices of ungodly rulers. The statement of God's righteous requirements does not constitute rebellion. Such a testimony may not be favorably received by ungodly rulers. In fact, such a testimony may bring persecution, suffering, or even death, but we ought not think that some strange thing has happened to us, for all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

We have an example in the Bible of such a testimony. According to Matthew 14 Herod had taken his brother Philip's wife as his own, and John

the Baptist said unto him, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." (vs. 4) For this reason Herod laid hold on John and bound him, and put him in prison. And there John lost his head for the sake of God's righteousness and truth. John was not rebellious. He was submissive even unto death.

There is a right and wrong way to disapprove the wicked actions and demands of ungodly rulers. One can begin a full scale public protest and raise discord and mutiny in the state, rebelliously seeking to throw off the yoke of such rulers. We have no calling to disapprove in that way. John the Baptist did not shout in the market place concerning Herod's sinful marriage but said it unto him. There are proper channels and ways to make our righteous disapproval known, if conscience requires.

We must not be cowed by public opinion or by the wrath of rulers in standing for the truth of God. Sometimes I fear we are afraid of being called unpatriotic or disloyal if we righteously disapprove of government and politics. There certainly is a matter of loyalty and patriotism involved. The question is, "Ought we render loyalty and patriotism first of all to God or man?" Our calling is not blindly to obey the higher powers but to obey them in all things lawful. But if they require of us things contrary to the Scripture then we ought to obey God rather than man. But understand that even this does not give us

license to rebel. To disobey and still submit is to stand for God's sake and truth, and to be prepared to bear the consequence of such a course even if it requires death as in John's case.

I do not believe that it is necessary for us to speak specific disapproval of every unrighteousness we behold in government and politics. I fear we would have time for little else and would even be remiss in fulfilling our principal calling. But know that such a course is open when circumstances and/or conscience demand.

What will the pilgrim hope to accomplish in his political activities? Will he expect to transform the whole system of worldly politics? That would be a vain dream. On the other hand the pilgrim may not assume a defeatist attitude. He must confidently stand in the service of the cause of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He must be sure that the cause of Christ has the victory over the kings of the earth with their corrupt politics. Even though now the cause of the pilgrim may be condemned by many judges and magistrates as heretical and impious, as the Belgic Confession article 37 points out, yet when Christ comes as the Judge from heaven he shall be completely vindicated. His cause will then be known to be the cause of the Son of God, whose glory he sought in all his life.

TRIUMPH THROUGH TRIALS

Doctors

Rev. J. Kortering

There is something mystifying about the men in white.

Step into their office, and the smell makes you "heady" before you ever reach the inner sanctum.

The paraphernalia for examination gives you goose bumps just to look at, to say nothing of having them attached or inserted. Before long the light waves flow, the magical pen scratches strange lines, a soft hum may be heard, a bell rings.

The verdict is given in language that itself is scary whether it is good or bad. If the good doctor wants to do further testing, he kindly advises the hospital. And that is something else. What a technology, equipment, lab work, diagnosis, and treatment!

One is inclined just to give himself over to the doctor. It's way over our heads. If he doesn't know what to do, who does? If he can't help, who will? We sigh and take the pricks, the jabs, and softly say, "Go to it, doc!"

In all of this it is very easy to let the doctor "play god." There are many physicians who eagerly do this. They like to have people consider them so powerful that they possess the gifts of healing. One reads of leaders in the medical profession determining life and death. They claim the medical knowledge to clone and to abort. They are now putting this into practice. How "godlike" they appear! If they possess this knowledge, surely they are able to perform the healing arts. Their equipment, their medicine, their surgical technique give them that power. How easy it is for us just to place our life in their hands and trust in mighty man!

As children of God we are thankful for this knowledge God has given to man. It is truly amazing. The fact nevertheless remains, that no *man* can heal.

One of the few references to doctors in the New Testament is given in Luke 8:43, "And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind him and touched the border of his garment; and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd." Mark adds concerning this same event, "And had suffered many things of many physicians and had spent all that she had and was nothing bettered, *but rather grew worse*," Mark 5:26.

By making reference to this instance, we do not intend to belittle the merciful labors of doctors, especially of Christian doctors. Rather in this reference we see two things. First, Luke mentions this, though he was himself a doctor. That's good. A doctor must recognize his own limitations. Let every Christian doctor read this passage before entering his office each morning: "And she suffered many things of many physicians and had spent all that she had and was nothing bettered, *but rather grew worse*." People often do suffer at the hands of doctors; that is, doctors even contribute to their worse condition. Recognizing this, a Christian doctor won't try to play god, nor project that image, but recognize his limitation. Secondly, the patient will not expect him to be

god either. Doctors are human, they have all the limitations of frail man. They have a vast amount of knowledge at their disposal, they have much technology which they can use. Yet, it all has limitations. It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment. Disease will continue; man will always get sick; there will be need for medical attention; and all this notwithstanding, we will die.

By referring to this instance, Jesus did not mean that doctors are no good. Remember, Jesus also said, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," Luke 5:31. Notice, they that are sick *need* a physician. We must seek medical help. The poor woman did not do wrong seeking help and spending all her money with doctors. Jesus only wanted to demonstrate that all this has limitations.

Jesus teaches us in this event that healing comes from Himself. He is the Lord of life and death. Through faith, this poor woman turned to the "Great Physician" and touched the border of his garment and was healed.

What must we learn from this?

Doctors and patients must turn to the Lord for healing. Jesus is not telling us that if we have faith we will have no disease or be cured by Him. Jesus does not say ignore doctors, just come to me directly for healing. The sick need physicians, but *physicians* cannot heal, healing is an act of God. He uses the means of doctors and medicine. Without that faith in God, even the healing granted can avail nothing.

With this knowledge we will not fall into the sin of idolatry when we deal with medicine.

We will recognize that God is the Healer of broken bodies and troubled hearts through Jesus Christ.

In Christ, doctors are a great blessing.

We need them.

God uses them.

Give honor to God alone.

Book Review

Commentary on Romans, Frederic Louis Godet; Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 531 pp., \$12.95 (hard cover). (Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema)

This is another worthwhile volume in the Kregel Reprint Library. This volume is very attractively and neatly published, and, taking into consideration today's inflation, the price is not exorbitant for a book of this size.

Godet's commentaries are numbered by many among those that are considered "standard," and rightly so. Generally speaking, they are orthodox and conservative, though by no means consistently Reformed.

This is also true of this exposition of the Epistle to the Romans. When one reviews a commentary, of course, he usually does not peruse the entire commentary. Personally, I check it here and there to get a

general impression of it; and then I make it a point to check it at some crucial passages. In this case, as you might expect, I especially checked up on Godet's commentary on Romans 9: 10-13, a good passage for testing purposes with respect to the truth of sovereign predestination. Godet fails the test, as also the editor of the first American edition, Talbot W. Chambers, points out in his critical notes which are in this edition printed at the conclusion of the book.

The fact that a commentary is not dependable and correct throughout, however, does not totally negate its value. In that case, one would have very few commentaries on his library shelf. As the editor of this

new edition states, "Even if the reader does not agree, Godet will inspire him to dig out the truth which will lead to the bedrock of conviction." Surely, there are many helpful comments in this volume, and many worthwhile insights. The size of the volume is in itself an indication that Godet was not superficial in his work.

Often I am asked whether a commentary is suitable for the general public. I think this volume qualifies. You will find some Greek in it; but this should not bother, seeing that the English translation is consistently furnished with the Greek. Recommended.

SCHOOL OPENING

The 1978-79 term of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches will begin, D.V., on Wednesday, September 6. All students should be present for registration at 9:00 A.M. We commend our school and its labors to the prayers of our churches and people.

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, Rector

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association will be held on Thursday evening at 8 P.M., September 21, 1978 at Hope Protestant Reformed Church.

Nominees for this year's board, out of which three are to be chosen, are John Cleveland, John N. Dykstra, Phil Dykstra, Robert Garvelink, George Haveman and Neal Pastoor. Rev. G. Lubbers will speak to us on the topic "Mighty Weapons of our Warfare." Mark your calendar now and plan to attend this important meeting.

Your Brethren in the Lord
THE BOARD OF THE R.F.P.A.
David M. Harbach, Secretary

NOTICE

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 13, 1978 at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Material for this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least ten days prior to the convening of this meeting.

Jon J. Huiskens
Stated Clerk

ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet at Doon, Iowa on September 6 at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. Delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should inform the clerk of Doon's Consistory of their need.

Rev. David Engelsma,
Stated Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 17, 1978, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. CORNELIUS KAMPS, celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. We are grateful to our heavenly Father for keeping them for each other and for us, their children. We are thankful for the Christian love, guidance and instruction they, with God's help, worked so diligently to provide for us. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless and keep them in His care.

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." (Psalm 146:5).

Their grateful children
Mr. and Mrs. Carey Kamps
Matthew and Timothy
Mr. and Mrs. David Kamps
Mr. and Mrs. Terry Kooienga
Jared
Sandra Kamps
Ruth Kamps
Lynn Kamps
Jonathon Kamps

THE STANDARD BEARER

is a thoughtful gift
for a "Shut-in".

News From Our Churches

Our three Seminary professors, the three June graduates of our seminary who are now candidates for the ministry, and the seminarians have had many preaching assignments this summer. These men have filled in for vacationing ministers and have filled the pulpits of those of our churches which are vacant at this time. In the Grand Rapids area, Faith, Southeast, and Southwest Churches are without a pastor, while the congregation of Hope Church looks forward with no little anticipation to the return of their pastor, Rev. Van Overloop, on August 27. Rev. Van Overloop has been serving in Christchurch, New Zealand for the past nine months.

Rev. James Slopsema declined the call he received from our Southeast congregation. Southeast Council has scheduled a congregational meeting for August 21 with the purpose of extending a call from the trio of Candidate Wilbur Bruinsma, Rev. Ronald Van Overloop, and Professor Herman Hanko.

Southwest Church expects to hear from Rev. David Engelsma on August 20 as to whether he will accept their call to become their new pastor. The Southwest trio also included Candidate Richard Flikkema and Rev. Arie den Hartog.

Rev. Engelsma recently declined a call from Faith Church. The new trio from Faith includes Candidate Wilbur Bruinsma, Rev. Arie den Hartog, and Professor Herman Hanko. Faith consistory has scheduled a congregational meeting for August 15 with the purpose of choosing one of these brethren to receive a call.

Southwest Church has tentative plans to occupy their new church building on August 27. These plans hinge on whether or not the parking lot is ready. The men of the congregation have been busy in "work bees" taking care of the many tasks necessary to complete the building. The ladies are poised and ready with mop and cleanser to make the new building "spic and span." Several weeks ago the new building was vandalized. Nearly all the windows on the south and west sides of the auditorium were broken.

Those of our churches which are separated by many miles from other of our congregations must often have reading services in the absence of their pastors. This was the case for our congregation in Redlands, California, when their pastor and his family

were on vacation the Sundays of August 13, 20, and 27. Attempts to secure pulpit supply from one of our other ministers or professors were unsuccessful.

Rev. C. Hanko underwent surgery on his hip in July. At last report he has made a good recovery — so much so that he was able to lead a "Mini Course" for Protestant Reformed school teachers on August 10-12.

Another of our "retired" ministers, Rev. H. Veldman, has not exactly been sitting in his rocking chair of late. Rev. Veldman's reported travels and preaching included stops in Minnesota, Iowa, Maine, and Michigan.

The deacons in our churches have been providing an opportunity for our congregations to contribute to the newly formed Covenant Christian School in Lynden, Washington. This newest Protestant Reformed Christian School plans to begin classes this fall.

Many of our churches schedule church picnics on the 4th of July holiday. Randolph met at the Randolph Park for a pot-luck. Doon, Hull, and Edgerton held their annual combined church picnic in the East Hull Park. Rev. Kamps was to speak at a short program. Loveland held theirs at the Fort Collins City Park. The program included games for children and adults.

The young people of our Redlands congregation gave a breakfast for the senior members of the congregation on Saturday morning, June 24. They have also sponsored a weekly volleyball get together for fellowship and to raise funds for the 1979 Young People's Convention.

The Young People's Society of Hull, Iowa, decided to schedule some summer activities in order to preserve contact and maintain fellowship while society does not meet. Four committees were formed, each of which was responsible for an activity — May through August.

The Federation Board planned an outing for Michigan area young people on August 12 at P. J. Hoffmaster State Park on Lake Michigan. The 1978 Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention is scheduled for South Holland, Illinois, and Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, August 21-25.

K.G.V.