

The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

How little we really think of what we are doing to ourselves and our families when television is used — sometimes without any discrimination! . . . What is all of this doing to our own families? Is the world using this instrument to instruct our children far more than we ourselves do? Is it detracting from our society life, from our reading of Scripture and from prayer, from our “family altars”? Is this inculcating into our lives a materialism and an insensitivity towards sin that is so common with the world generally?

And could you turn it off—completely—for one month? I’d almost “dare” you to try it—and to find a proper spiritual alternative for the benefit of the whole family.

See “Life Without Television” — page 331

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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MEDITATION

Our Appointment to Salvation

Rev. M. Schipper

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another even as also ye do."

I Thessalonians 5: 9-11.

Spiritual vigilance!

That is the watchword to which the church of Christ is exhorted in the immediate context.

Vigilant, especially with a view to Christ's coming!
As a thief in the night, so shall He come; that is,

with respect to the ungodly. When Christ comes again on the clouds of heaven with His holy angels, they will not be expecting Him, neither will they be prepared. Such is the implication of His coming as a thief in the night.

But the believing church is not in darkness that that coming of Christ shall overtake her as a thief. For, the apostle explains, we are all the sons (not children) of light, and sons (not children) of the day. With respect to Christ's coming, therefore, we will not be sleeping, as is characteristic of those who are of the night, nor will we be drunken, as those who are of the night, but we who live in hope will be expecting Him, and therefore will be vigilant.

That we are nevertheless exhorted to this spiritual vigilance is explained by the fact that we, who are sons of light and of the day, are still in the darkness of this present time. The night that descended upon the world of creation simultaneously with the fall of man at the beginning is still with us. Though we begin to see the first streaks of the dawn flash in prophetic fulfillment across the firmament as harbingers of the day, it is still night. Though we are the sons of light and of the day, we still live in the flesh which belongs to the darkness of the night. And because that flesh is no different from the flesh of the children of darkness, it is inclined to sleep and to drunkenness. And so we are called to let the light that is in us shine, and to put on those spiritual armaments, mentioned in verse 8, namely, those protective armaments, the breastplate of faith and love, and for the helmet the hope of salvation. Being properly clothed with defensive armaments we will be able to withstand the onslaughts of spiritual drowsiness and spiritual drunkenness, and remain spiritually alert. So will we remain vigilant, preserved unto the coming of the day.

Our text is intended to explain further how God prepares His people for the coming of Christ.

We have a date (an appointment) with Christ in Whom is all our salvation. His work of salvation which is already begun in us, reaches unto eternal life; and because this is what we expect from Him in His coming, we comfort and edify one another unto spiritual vigilance.

We have been appointed unto the attainment of salvation. That is, we have been set apart with design, foreordained, predestined according to the election of grace to enter into the fulness of salvation.

The subject of this appointment, of course, is God: the triune, eternal, covenant God. In His all-wise, eternal counsel He has chosen His people in love. He has set them apart, in distinction from all the peoples of the world. They are the chosen possession, the holy nation, which He has given to Christ, and which must be brought to Him through the way of sin and grace, through the way of the fall and redemption through the cross. For the realization, the final salvation of that people in the day of Christ at His coming, all other things are also ordained and appointed: the world of creation, the world under the

curse, the angels and devils, the world of the ungodly, the bondage of sin and death, the incarnation of the Son of God, the cross and the resurrection, the ascension of Christ into heaven, the dispensation of the Spirit of Pentecost, the preaching of the gospel in all nations, the gathering of the church from all nations, the coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven, the final judgment at the end of the age.

The object of the appointment is we, the elect of God in Christ, Who must dwell with God in the house of His eternal covenant.

He hath appointed us not to wrath. This He has done unto all the ungodly, the children of darkness. Awful truth! Through the way of their sin and wilful disobedience, He has appointed them to be the objects of His holy wrath. His wrath is His constant and holy displeasure with all the workers of iniquity. And this eternal manifestation of His holy Self-love abides on them, the fullest display of which they shall experience in the eternal desolation of hell, where the fire is not quenched and the worm dieth not, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

That the apostle says we have not been appointed to wrath has a two-fold purpose. It magnifies the awful condemnation of the wicked. It also magnifies the glorious purpose God has in mind for all His people.

He hath appointed us unto the obtaining of salvation. And this means not only that we were appointed to be saved (which is true, of course). We were appointed to be delivered from the wrath to come. We were appointed to experience His saving grace now in principle—now, while we are still in the darkness of this present time, and presently in heavenly perfection. But the apostle says much more than this. The obtaining of that final and glorious salvation He also appointed. Should He have appointed our salvation for us, but somehow we failed to attain to that salvation, it would avail us nothing. No, He appointed us to obtain it.

The Mediator through Whom this appointment is realized is our Lord Jesus Christ.

And this implies that He also was appointed, and that with design. And notice how the apostle mentions Him in all the significance of His Names. The complete Mediator is designated. He is our Lord, that is, the One Who possesses us because we were given to Him of the Father. He rules over us, delivers and defends us, and preserves us unto everlasting salvation. He is Jesus, that is, the God of our salvation manifested in the flesh, Who saves His people from their sins. He is Christ, that is, the anointed, appointed, and qualified One, Who as the Servant of God can function as our Prophet, Priest, and King, to bring us to glory.

The apostle, so it appears in the text, is not satisfied merely to inform us how or through whom God's appointment of us to salvation is realized but also he gives us the ground upon which our appointment rests.

Our Lord Jesus Christ!

Who died for us!

Here we must not forget that we of ourselves have no right to that salvation to which we are appointed. We are by nature no different from the children of darkness who are appointed unto wrath. As we are of ourselves, we deserve as they to experience eternally the wrath of God. God would have done not unjustly to have cast us also into the fire of eternal hell; for this is precisely what we deserved. Nor should we forget that, when God appoints us unto eternal salvation, this appointment also in its final realization must be accomplished in the way of strictest justice. And that means that all our sin, both original and actual, must be atoned for. All the vials of God's holy wrath must be poured out also over our sin. And that means the cross. That means that on the cross our Lord Jesus Christ, our complete Mediator, suffers in our stead the pains of hell, the being forsaken of God. He is the covering upon whom the righteous wrath of God descended in all its fury, and He died the atoning death, so that all His own escape. O, yes, while we escape, God's holy justice is satisfied. All our sins are paid for in Christ, and His righteousness is imputed to us which He prepared. But there is more.

He also rose again from the dead! That sets the seal on our justification. For had He remained in death, there would be no assurance that His death was atoning. But thanks be to God, God raised Him, our complete Mediator, from the dead. Striking it is that the text does not literally mention His resurrection. But it is certainly implied, for the text does say, "whether we wake or sleep, we should *live* together with Him." That means, whether we die or remain alive unto Christ's coming, we are united unto a living Mediator, and with Him we are forever to live. But there is still more.

He is the Mediator Who is coming again!

He is coming again to realize in its finality our appointment. And that means we have a date with Him. And it means, too, that He keeps that appointment. But it also means that until that date is kept He works salvation in us, and by His Spirit sanctifies us and applies His saving grace to us.

In the completed work of our Lord Jesus Christ is the absolute ground and therefore the assurance of our appointment unto salvation.

Whether we are awake, that is, alive, and therefore watching for His coming; or whether we sleep, that is,

enter into physical death before His coming (it really makes no difference), we must live together with Him. That is the significance of our appointment as it is grounded in the perfect work of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The perfection of our salvation, that is, the bringing of our salvation to its eternal completion, awaits the coming of the Lord. For that completed salvation we are now being prepared. That is the significance of the operation of the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. That is the significance of the preaching of the gospel. That is the significance of the dispensation of the means of grace — that we may be prepared for the coming of the Lord. So that when He shall appear we may be like Him, and appear with Him in the assembly of the elect, and enter with Him into the glory of our everlasting salvation.

No wonder the apostle adds: "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."

We may note here that there is absolutely no comfort for the ungodly. O, indeed, they also are appointed, but they are appointed unto wrath. And that means they have no hope, but only despair. They have no salvation, but only condemnation. They have nothing glorious to look forward to, but only the awful out-pouring of the anger of a holy God. That means, too, that in this life there is no working of salvation in them; only the wrath of God abides on them. And this explains also how in this present world they are not looking for the coming of Christ, how they are spiritually asleep in the night, how that even in their drunken sleep they talk and say: "Peace and safety" (vs. 3), until suddenly, being wholly unexpectant and unprepared, they are overtaken by the coming of Christ as a thief in the night. They have no comfort now, and in the day of His coming they will have no comfort. That is why, when He comes, they will cry to rocks and mountains to cover them. In vain they hope for annihilation, that they may be wiped out of existence. But their prayer is not heard, for they must all appear before the righteous Judge, Who shall sentence them to the eternal dispensation of wrath. Indeed, the Word of God has absolutely no word of comfort for them.

Comfort is only for the people of God!

And comfort, according to the Scriptures, is always that consideration of the sanctified mind and heart that contemplates a great good over against the present experience of evil, while it also understands how that present evil we experience must be subservient, must lead us to the attainment of that great good.

Comforted they are with knowledge of God's truth and promise that the good work He has begun in

them He will also finish unto the day of Christ. Comforted they are with the assurance that the present evils they suffer in this night of sin and death are not really evils working against them at all, but really servants of God molding and fashioning them after His will, and getting them ready for glory.

And this comfort is not something which they keep to themselves, but of which they speak to others, especially to the household of faith. They call attention of the saints to it, and as they speak of this comfort to others, it is with the intention to build them up, to encourage them to stand together, and to

watch in spiritual soberness for the coming of the Lord.

Urgent the exhortation is to comfort one another, because the longer the Lord tarries, the more susceptible we are to become spiritually lethargic. To be constantly vigilant it is necessary that we be redeeming the time, and be observant of the precursory signs of Christ's coming. And we build one another up when we remind one another constantly to look for these signs.

For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh!

Editor's Notes

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

RFP Book Club. Membership cards are merely dribbling in. Our Business Manager informed me recently that we now have a total of 214. That's good, but not good enough. If you have lost the letter and membership card sent to you, don't let that bother you. Simply send in your membership by letter, assuring us that you agree to the terms of membership: 1) You are entitled to a 20% discount on *any* RFP publication. 2) You obligate yourself to accept every *new* publication (with the exception of educational manuals) at the same discount of 20%. Memberships, by the way, are not limited to one per family. You young people, for example, could take advantage of this offer to begin building your personal library of Protestant Reformed literature.

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Publication News. Newly available in paperback editions are Rev. D. Engelsma's *Marriage, The Mystery of Christ and the Church*, and H. Hoeksema's *Believers And Their Seed*. These paperback editions will cost you \$1.95 (minus 20% if you're a Book Club member). The hard cover edition of Rev. Engelsma's book is no longer available. We have a very limited supply of hard cover copies of *Believers And Their Seed*, at

\$2.95 per copy. But hurry if you want one of the hard cover copies; they'll soon be sold out.

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Theological Journal. If you wish to get on the mailing list for our *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* (free) in time to receive the spring issue, write in soon. We have been experiencing a spurt of interest in the *Journal* which has resulted in the quick depletion of the surplus copies of each issue. One of the reasons for this interest is Prof. Hanko's series on The Reformed Doctrine of Infant Baptism and his critique of David Kingdon's book, *Children of Abraham*, a defense of the Reformed Baptist position. Our next issue will also carry the conference papers of the recent conference on Postmillennialism. To get the spring issue, write to: Prof. H. Hanko, Prot. Ref. Theological School, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., S.W., Grandville, Michigan 49418.

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After having written several book reviews (which may or may not appear in this issue), and after having penned these notes, and after having considered the fact that there is a slight surplus of copy, your editor's pen ran dry for this issue. Hence, the editorial space will be devoted to said surplus.

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

The Government of the Church

Prof. Robert D. Decker

"We believe, that this true Church must be governed by that spiritual policy which our Lord taught us in his Word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God, and to administer the

sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the council of the Church: that by these means the true religion may be preserved, and the true doctrine everywhere propagated, likewise transgressors punished and restrained by spiritual means: also that the poor and distressed may be relieved and comforted, according to their necessities. By these means everything will be carried on in the Church with good order and decency, when faithful men are chosen, according to the rule prescribed by St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy."

In this and the next two articles the *Confession* sets forth the fundamental principles of the government of the Church before treating the subject of the sacraments. Obviously, and following the emphasis of Articles XXVIII and XXIX, these articles speak of the institute of the Church in distinction from the Church as organism. According to the *Confession* the foundational principle upon which the government of the Church rests is that: "this true Church must be governed by that spiritual policy which our Lord taught us in his Word." The term "policy" here evidently means "system of rules" or "principles of government." Negatively, what the *Confession* means is that the Church is the spiritual body of Christ and therefore has a constitution so to speak which radically differs from any other system of government. The Church is not a democratic society where the majority rules, or where the power is vested in the membership. The power of the Church is not the power of the sword, either to enforce its laws or to wage war. Positively, this means that the Church's power is spiritual and is limited (if indeed this can be called a limitation) to the exercise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The principles of the government of the Church are to be found in the Word of God. Scripture prescribes that "spiritual policy" by which the Church is governed.

Before discussing the *Confession's* treatment of this subject we do well to review briefly several systems of Church government which have developed over the centuries. There is the Congregational or Independentistic system. In a sense this is the simplest form of Church government which has been advocated. Often, arguing that in the apostolic churches we do not read of classes or synods or councils or hierarchy, advocates of this system claim that governing power rests not with the officebearers or clergy but with the entire congregation. Membership is attained by voluntary association and the individual is left completely free to belong or not to belong at will. Officers are representatives who derive their authority from the body of believers. Although associating together in councils and assemblies the churches are at liberty to accept or reject the decisions made by such bodies. The most serious objection to this view is that, with its emphasis on the voluntary choice of the individual, it fails to root the authority of the Church in Christ. It fails also to do justice to the church's calling to manifest the unity of the Body of Christ.

Article XXX, *The Belgic Confession*

At the opposite end of the spectrum we find the Episcopal system. This view insists that the unity of the church must come to expression in bishops who are the legitimate successors of the apostles. Believers have no share in the government of the Church. Scripture, however, nowhere teaches a self-perpetuating office of apostle. Indeed the Apostles preached, established congregations, and ordained elders and deacons.

The Episcopal system has been carried to its logical conclusion by Rome with its pope and hierarchy. The pope is the vicar of Christ and is infallible when he speaks "ex cathedra" or in his official capacity. Under him is a hierarchy of bishops and priests to whom special graces are given and whose task it is to rule the church in obedience to the pope.

Two rather closely related systems are the Erastian and the Collegial or National-Church systems. Both, with some differences, teach state control of the Church.

Against this background we can appreciate the Confessional or Reformed system which has come to be called the Presbyterian form of Church government. This Scripturally-grounded position recognizes the sole authority of Christ in the Church as vested in the three offices of minister, elder, and deacon. The basic unit of ecclesiastical life is the congregation which is a complete manifestation of the Body of Christ. Its officebearers derive their authority from Christ. These congregations band together in order to manifest the unity of the Body of Christ, for mutual supervision, and to assist one another in the carrying out of the work of Christ.

Concerning the government of the Church there is one fundamental principle which must be understood, viz., Christ Himself is the chief and only officebearer in the Church. No pope or bishop, no priest or pastor, no synod or church committee, or even the congregation may rob Him of His authority as King of the Church. Christ is the Head of the Church. (Eph. 5:23) He is its prophet, priest, and king. He suffered and died for that Church and it belongs to Him. Christ is given the right and the authority to save that Church and to rule over it and to preserve the Church and bring it to glory with Him. But Christ is exalted at God's right hand in glory where we cannot see Him. It pleases Christ, therefore, to exercise that authority over the Church through men, the officebearers whom He appoints

and qualifies in order to rule in His name. Through these Christ exercises His gracious rule in the Church. John Calvin explains: "For although he alone (i.e. Christ) ought to rule and reign in the Church, and to have all preeminence in it, and this government ought to be exercised and administered solely by his word — yet, as he dwells not among us by a visible presence, so as to make an audible declaration of his will to us, we have stated, that for this purpose he uses the ministry of men whom he employs as his delegates, not to transfer his right and honor to them, but only that he may himself do his work by their lips; just as an artificer makes use of an instrument in the performance of his work." (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV, iii, 1) The rule of Jesus Christ over His people while they are in this life is through the offices He has instituted in the Church.

These offices are three: that of pastor, elder, and deacon. The Church Order, on the basis of an incorrect exegesis of Ephesians 4:11, speaks of four offices, adding that of Professor. This was also the position of John Calvin, who distinguished between the office of pastor and that of teacher, both of which he regarded as permanent offices in the Church: "The difference between them I apprehend to be this — that the teachers have no official concern with the discipline, or the administration of the sacraments, or with admonitions and exhortations, but only with the interpretation of Scripture, that pure and sound doctrine may be retained among believers; whereas the pastoral office includes all these things" (*Institutes*, IV, iii, 4) Apart from the reference in the Church Order this has not been the position of the Reformed Churches. We recognize only three offices and regard the Professor as a minister of the Word. Through the office of the minister or pastor-teacher Christ speaks His Word to His people. (Romans 10:13-17) That is the wonder of preaching! By means of it Christ Himself is heard and thus through that means the Church is built up in the knowledge of the Son of God. (Cf. Ephesians 4:11ff.)

In addition the Church must have elders and deacons. Concerning the elders Calvin writes that they are: "... persons of advanced years, selected from the people, to unite with the bishops in giving admonitions and exercising discipline. For no other interpretation can be given of that injunction, 'He that

ruleth, let him do it with diligence.' (Rom. 12:8) Therefore, from the beginning, every Church has had its senate or council, composed of pious, grave and holy men, who were invested with that jurisdiction in the correction of vices, of which we shall now treat." Through the office of elder, Christ, the King of the Church, graciously rules and governs His people. Through the office of deacon Christ, the merciful High Priest, relieves (provides for their material need) and comforts (provides comfort from the Word of God) the needy and distressed. These, the minister, elders and deacons constitute the "council of the Church." This is in distinction from the Church Order. (Cf. Articles 23-26, 37, 40)

The purpose of the institution of these offices is: "that the true religion may be preserved." This belongs especially to the office of the ministry. The Word must be preached in order that the true religion may be preserved. That, no doubt, is the greatest evil in the Churches in our day. The pulpit has failed and the Word is not being preached as it should be. There is preaching but not sound exegetical preaching of the doctrines of the Word. The result is that God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. (Cf. Hosea 4:6) Moreover, the purpose of the office of the ministry is that "the true doctrine may be everywhere propagated." This is the missionary task of the Church. In obedience to the command of Christ Who told the Church to go into all nations preaching and baptizing, the Church must be zealous for mission work. The Church must be concerned that the true doctrine be propagated as widely as possible and the Church must send preachers without hesitation wherever Christ opens the way. Finally, the purpose of these offices is that "transgressors may be punished and restrained." This refers to the work of Church discipline, primarily the work of the elders. They must in the name of Christ exercise the keys of the kingdom of heaven lest the Word of God be profaned. Likewise must the deacons care for the poor both materially and spiritually.

Where these offices are maintained according to the Scriptures, where there are faithful ministers, elders, and deacons, there one finds the Church of Jesus Christ. To that Church one is bound to join himself.

STUDIES IN ISAIAH

The Wicked Nation Warned of Invasion

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

That wicked nation, of course, was Judah, which we saw in the previous article had come under: I. *The*

Threatened Great Judgment of God (v. 17). Now we come to: II. *The Instrument of This Judgment*

(18-20). "And it shall be in that day Jehovah will whistle for the fly which (is) in the extremity of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee which (is) in the land of Assyria" (v. 18). Evil times are destined to come on evil men. "Yet He . . . will bring evil . . . against the house of the evildoers" (Isa. 31:2). In Isaiah's day, the evil that God brought on Judah came by means of Egypt and Assyria who were rival powers which kicked Israel about as their football, so disrupting the peace of Western Asia. The Lord has only to whistle or hiss for the enemy and they will come. So Israel was pestered and festered with the fly of Egypt and stung by the bee of Assyria. "Egypt," said E. J. Young, "is a land filled with flies." Notice that: "Egypt *is*." For up to this very day, Egypt remains a fly-infested country. In a striking way this was recently brought to our attention by the news media. The Egyptians were, last December, preparing insecticide vapor machines with massive fog-spray apparatus. These would be utilized just prior to the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem (the name means, Heb., *Comforter*) Begin, so that not one fly would touch his bald head. In Isaiah's day the Egyptian enemy was thought of as multitudinous as swarms of flies.

The Lord arouses enemy nations as easily as a bee-keeper can call swarming bees. This is a fact and principle validly deduced from God's providence as revealed in Scripture. A sharp whistle and mighty Egypt and Assyria obey His will. There is no power but of God. No nation can come against another unless the Lord so ordain and direct. Then they become the instrument of His hand which no one can escape or elude.

"And they shall come, and shall rest, all of them, in the brooks (valleys) of desolation, and in the clefts of the rocks, and in all the thorn thickets, and in all the (bushes: KJV) pastures" (v. 19, Heb.). They shall come, not by chance, but as directed by the control of God. Wicked men may rage, but their torrent of anger, so Scripture teaches in II Samuel 16:10 and Proverbs 21:1, is ordered and disposed of by God. Rabble-rousers, rioters, and revolutionists do as they please, throwing everything into disorder. Yet all their violent actions, according to Acts 4:27-28, are under God's control, and come to pass as He fore-ordained. In our day, murdering terrorists kidnap whole trainloads or airplanes full of people whom they hold for ransom in the millions of dollars. Mad bombers terrorize our cities with simultaneous explosions in different parts of the same metropolitan area. In fact, these things are getting to be so common that we almost expect them as part of a "normal" day. The world has never more appeared to be in a hopeless state of utter confusion. Yet although these mad dogs foam out their vicious hate and vile rage to their own destruction and the ruin of

civilization as we knew it but a few years ago, the Lord snaps on their obstinate necks an invisible leash by which He determines the limits they shall go (Dan. 6:22, 24). This truth the great Reformers always emphasized. All the wicked, indeed, "all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move" (Heidelberg Catechism, A. 28). No more can the ax or saw boast of chopping or sawing against the hand that wields these tools (Isa. 10:15). The devil himself, and all his minions, are at His beck and behest, doing nothing that is not according to the counsel of His will. (See Job 1:12; 2:6; Matt. 8:31; Eph. 1:11). The Lord will yet, and is already beginning to, stir up the heathen Gog and Magog nations against the nations of Christendom, that is, the nations purporting to be Christian. We see this today in the African nations pressuring Rhodesia and South Africa. Here Psalm 46:6 and 47:8 apply. The hand of God is the prime mover in the affairs of men and in the conflicts of nations. (See Lam 3:37f). The Lord stirs up the spirit of the heathen nations and their rulers to chastise His people (II Chron. 21:16, I Chron. 5:26). God moves man's heart as He will. He stirs up an adversary against a man (I Kings 11:14, 23). When there is no adversary, it is His doing (5:4). God directs the perverse actions of Men by His secret providence, and His sovereign power holds sway over the motions and fomentings of men's hearts (Psalm 65:7; Prov. 16:1).

As flies contaminate everything they touch, and the sting of bees can poison and kill, so wicked men of the world consume and corrupt everything. They corrupt and ruin with their fly-blown, maggoty greed. They crush and destroy with their rage and bloodlust. They become God's wrecking crew to topple tottering, tainted regimes. Whether lions (II Kings 17:25) or bees (Josh. 24:12), it makes no difference to Him, the Lord has an armory (Jer. 50:25) of instruments to do His will. Then hordes of adversaries "shall come, and rest, all of them, in the desolate valleys," made so by war and rapine. They will be everywhere, in the clefts of the rocks, in all thickets and fields. There will be no place clear of them, no escape, no place to hide. So it will be for mere Christendom and its embrace of nations. Then the liberal politicians of the nations will cease their hypocritical attack on the so called "apartheid" policy. For when the swarming gaggles of Gog and Magog goyim surge into and overthrow these nations, then will be that which shall be worse than iron furnace Egyptian bondage.

"In that day, Adonai will shave with the hired razor by the regions beyond the River (Euphrates), by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet, and also the beard it shall take off" (v. 20). Then the nations which have apostatized from Christianity, like a "collaborator" in World War II, shall be insulted, disgraced, and shamed by being shaved and

shorn, as a razor might shave off every hair of the body. Here the shaving is done by a hired razor, the king of Assyria. Ahaz had hired this foreign razor to shave off Syria and Israel. He had hired this "razor" by profaning and robbing God's temple in order to come up with the price of hire. He hired a *Murder, Incorporated* out of the treasury of God's Church. But God would use that same razor to scrape down Judah, denuding it of its population and wealth. This is the Lord's doing. Assyria is a razor in God's hand, a battle-ax with which He destroyed kingdoms. (See Jer. 51:20). So God still has his end-time battle-ax, the final Antichrist, with whom He will deceive and destroy the end-time nations.

III. *The Consequences of This Judgment* (21-25). "And it shall be in that day (that) a man shall preserve alive (rescue) a heifer cow and two sheep. And it shall be (that from) the abundance of the making of milk, he shall eat curds; for curds and honey (no longer Canaan's corn and wine) shall everyone eat that is left in the midst of the land" (vv. 21-22). The depopulated people will not be farmers, but shepherds, there being not enough of a population to till the land. Because the land for the greater extent lies uncultivated, its main produce, milk and honey, will be plentiful because of the so decimated population. After the taking of the people away into captivity, there are but few cattle left, but what they produce is abundance compared to the few people left behind in the land to consume it. There are no farmers and no government, also no employment, other than herding a few cattle per individual. These cattle provide no meat for the people, only milk products. The Lord controls the economy of the nations of the world (Rev. 6:6). Surpluses and shortages are the work of His providences. Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

"And it shall be in that day (that) every place where there shall be a thousand (wild) vine(s) at a thousand (in) silver, it shall become the thorn and become the thistle. Archers shall go there with the arrows and with the bow. For all the land shall become thorn and thistle. And (on) all the mountains which shall be raked with the rake, thou shalt not come there (for) fear of thorns and thistles; and it shall be for the sending forth of oxen and for a treading down (place) of sheep" (vv. 23-25). Vineyards, an indicator of economy, will not have much value, in fact, will have no existence. They will be choked out by thorns and thistles, making a former agricultural area a place where now men will be afraid to go since it has become a place for wolves, bears, boars, panthers, snakes, and robber bands. (The KJV is incorrect here.) There only brave men will seldom go, mainly to hunt, and where, consequently, they must protect themselves in those dangerous solitudes. For food, beyond the meagre milk products, they must hunt, and to hunt they must be armed. The land has become a Big Thicket Wilderness. Tillage has fallen into neglect.

Even the mountainsides, cultivated with rake and hoe, because the plow is impractical there, shall be desolated with thorns and thistles, to become fit only for range land and trampling spots for cattle. The covenant kingdom falls into ruin under the curse. Now no part of the country is safe. What Ahaz had so confidently expected in anticipated help and deliverance from Assyria is totally disappointed and turned to destruction and resultant wretchedness. Where the wicked look for preservation, destruction shall leap out on them and overcome them. Judah is taught to learn a very painfully expensive lesson that there was and is no help but from God.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

April 15, 1978

Dear Timothy,

We must resume the discussion of our last letter which was concerned about the relation between the office of believers and the special offices in the Church. You will recall that I called this relationship both the anomaly and the genius of Reformed Church Polity. It is the anomaly of Reformed Church Polity because believers both exercise the duties of the special offices in the Church through their offices bearers — they preach, exercise discipline, and give to the needy —; and they are called to submit to those whom Christ has placed over them in the Church of which Christ is the Head. This relationship is the genius of Reformed Church Polity because it is a relationship which is unique to the Church of Christ

and stands at the very heart of all Reformed Church Polity.

We discussed last time some of the principles which were involved in this relationship; and we left for this letter some practical illustrations of how this works out in the Church.

Let us take a look first of all at the office of the ministry of the Word and its relationship to the office of believers. We said that the congregation as assembled actually preaches. At the same time, the congregation also must submit to that preaching and submit to the authority of the minister who brings that Word to the congregation. How can this be? And what is the meaning of this?

The point which needs to be made here is that the office of minister arises out of the Church itself. This is true in more than one sense of the word. We have noticed in earlier letters that this was true of the origin of this office, for it arose organically out of the life of the New Testament Church as it was established by the apostles. The Church was there first. Without the existence of such a Church there could be no office of the ministry of the Word. It is dependent upon the Church for its very existence. All this does not mean, however, that the Church can exist as institute without the office of minister. A given congregation may be vacant for a while; but this is an abnormal situation which the Church attempts to correct as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, the minister is himself a part of the Church, lives in the Church, receives his office as a member of the Church.

Our Form for the Ordination of Ministers emphasizes this very strongly. The question is put to a minister at the time of Ordination: "I ask thee, whether thou feelest in thy heart that thou art lawfully called of God's Church, and therefore of God himself, to this holy ministry?" The calling of God to the office of minister is therefore through the Church itself. Only through that Church does a minister come to his office, and only in that Church does he hold that office.

Nor must it escape our attention that the Church here is the whole Church including the office of believers. It is for this reason that the male members of the congregation come together at a congregational meeting to *call* a minister. They have a voice in the matter of the call. In a way they have a decisive voice. The man who is elected by majority vote within the congregational meeting is the man to whom the call is extended.

The implications of this are clear. The congregation receives from Christ the command to preach the Word. The congregation is responsible for the fact that that Word is preached from Sabbath to Sabbath. The congregation must be in obedience to this command of Christ so that that Word goes forth to the gathering and preservation of the Church. And, at the same time, the congregation is responsible for the fact that that Word is preached in purity of doctrine and according to the Scriptures. It is certainly true that a minister preaches with the authority of his own office. It is also true that he is the one who spends the week in prayerful meditation upon the Scriptures and in prayerful preparation of the sermon. It is further true that when he preaches, he preaches out of his own conviction — what he believes to be the truth of the Word of God. But he is not in any sense isolated from the congregation; he is a living member of it. He works in the exegesis of Scripture and in the preparation of a sermon as a member and part of the

congregation over which the Lord has placed him. His convictions, therefore, are the convictions of the Church of which he is a part.

But, at the same time, it is the congregation which has assumed the responsibility for that preaching. The congregation must faithfully exercise that responsibility as well. When a minister no longer brings the truth of the Word of God, and when the people languish under preaching which is not Biblical and which cannot feed their souls, the congregation have none to blame but themselves. And they bear the responsibility for this, for they are failing in their God-given task.

To use an extreme example: It may be that a group of believers finds itself alone in a given place for whatever reason that may be. As this group comes together to discuss its obligations before God, the individual members will certainly begin to realize that they have a responsibility to preach the gospel. But they cannot do this in such a way that every man simply begins preaching willy-nilly and on his own. This is confusion and disorder. Nor can there be any real preaching (which is official) in such a situation. So they must come together for purposes of calling a minister so that they can fulfill this calling. Even if they have to call a minister from their own group, they must do this, for they cannot be a Church unless they do.

It is well to stress this point, Timothy. It is well for congregations to be reminded of the fact that the responsibility for the preaching finally rests upon them. It is well that they remember this so that they may gladly assume that responsibility, so that they may pray for their pastor, encourage him in his work, give him the support that he needs when he functions as the minister through whom they do the preaching. It is well too that ministers remember this. For the consciousness of this will serve as a remarkably powerful deterrent to any ambitions they may have to set themselves up above the congregation as someone superior to the flock over which they have the rule. And, in passing, we may note that it is for this reason that we think the presbyterian idea wrong that the membership and office of the minister resides in the presbytery (classis) and not in the local congregation.

At the same time, even though the congregation is responsible for the preaching, and actually preaches through her minister, this same congregation submits and must submit to that preaching because of the authority of the minister whom Christ has set over her. In a sense, the congregation preaches to itself. If you find this difficult to imagine, just remember that this is also true of the minister. You know from your own experience that when you preach, Timothy, you preach to yourself. This is, in fact, so true that you often feel, after a service, that if the congregation has

been half as inspired and edified as you were, that that would be a wonderful thing. But the congregation preaches to itself and the minister preaches to himself only because Christ is speaking through that Word.

It is because of this truth that the congregation stands organically connected to the preaching in its own witnessing in the world. We have talked about this before; but it must be remembered that the witnessing of the saints, as it stands connected to the preaching in the Church, is an effective witnessing — always. That Word too, never returns void as the Lord sends it out.

If therefore, theoretically now, a minister becomes unfaithful in his preaching, and if the elders will not do anything about it but rather side with the minister, then it remains for the congregation to exercise effectively the office of believers and reconstitute the Church of Christ in that place by seeing to it that a minister is once again lawfully called to minister the Word. In this way the office of believers preaches once again the pure doctrine of Scripture through the special office of the minister.

The same thing is true of the offices of elder and deacon. There is this same balance. On the one hand, the office of believers is exercised in various ways. The office of believers is exercised when elders and deacons are chosen at a legally constituted congregational meeting. And the same question is put to them which is put to ministers, i.e., whether elders and deacons believe that they are called by God's Church and therefore by God Himself to their offices. When elders engage in the work of discipline, the congregation has a voice in this, for at each step of the way the Consistory informs the congregation of what is being done. And this is not merely in order that the congregation may know what is going on; rather, this is done in order that the congregation may approve of the work, for it is very really the work of the congregation which the elders are doing. And the same is true of the deacons. The congregation is exercising the office of believers, particularly the

office of priest, when the deacons give of the alms to the poor in the Church. Every step of the way it is very really the congregation which functions.

This is so true that, to give an extreme example, if officebearers are unfaithful in a given place, the congregation would have the right to exercise discipline itself, depose the officebearers and reconstitute the Church of Christ.

But it must not be forgotten that, at the same time, the officebearers exercise the rule over the Church. A minister is called from a trio or duo proposed by the *Consistory*. Elders and deacons are chosen from a nomination submitted to the congregation by the *Consistory*. And, in order to preserve this balance, we have articles in our Church Order which, e.g., make it mandatory that no matters may come to the congregation except they first be submitted to the Consistory. And there are other instances of this control and direction which the officebearers themselves exercise. And all this is because, in a very important sense, the officebearers have authority in the congregation which authority they have received from Christ.

I am not surprised that wordly people have difficulty understanding these things. Yet, if you stop to think about them, they constitute the genius of Reformed Church Polity. It always amazes me that, on the whole, the Reformed Churches have succeeded so well in maintaining this balance. But it is also important that this balance be maintained, and we must ever be on our guard against anything which would destroy it. We must guard, on the one hand, lest the office of believers is forgotten and shoved aside by hierarchical officebearers who do in the Church of Christ what they please without any consideration of the people of God. And we must guard, on the other hand, against a loss of authority so that the officebearers are considered little else than the minions of the congregation. The balance is Reformed. Nothing else will do.

Fraternally in Christ,
H. Hanko

TRANSLATED TREASURES

Pamphlet on the Reformation of the Church

Dr. A. Kuyper

10. How this kingly authority of Christ works on earth through the instrumentality of human persons.

In order to be able to exercise this kingly authority over His church, Christ had to ascend to heaven. On

earth He bore the form of a servant; for the first time in heaven He was clothed with royal majesty; and He revealed that majesty not according to His human nature, but in that human nature through the power of His godhead which enables Him "by His grace, majesty and Spirit" to be present at all times in all places in His church. "Where two or three are gathered in my name," i.e., the church in her smallest conceivable dimension, "there am I in the midst of you." "See, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." "It is for your benefit that I go away."

Let no one say that Christ reigns in a proper sense only in the heavenly church as king, and in the earthly church only in a metaphorical sense. All such expressions deny and oppose His godhead. Christ is indeed present in His church on earth; present in the proper sense of the word. Where He Himself is not present, there a robed man can be standing and talking, but there is no ministry of the Word. There water can be sprinkled and bread broken, but there is no sacrament. There with closed eyes one can mutter and one can sing at the top of his voice, but there is neither prayer nor song of praise. And, finally, just as there can be pompous gentlemen sitting on green pillows, yet there is not necessarily a consistory or council or synod which possesses power in His name.¹

Only the presence of Christ in His church makes holy things real. Without that presence of Christ they are empty forms, idle shams stripped of all essence and usefulness.

This presence of Christ is "not with external observation, but is within you." Thus it does not rest in the institutions or ceremonies, but exclusively in the people. This is not to be understood to mean that the presence of Christ is manifested only in those brought into the church. There are many elect who are not yet brought in, and also in these is the presence of the Lord. Yes, even in the chaff which is still mixed with the corn, the breath of His lips blows. It may be with a savor of death unto death, not for the purpose of resurrection but for destruction; or still stronger, what must never be lost from sight is the fact that the presence of Christ may jump over sometimes two or three generations, then to make to shoot out again His elect from an apparently lost branch.

This presence of Christ in His church, although continuously inhering in the persons and not in the institutions, is nevertheless bound to those institutions. First, under and through those institutions, the sense of the communion of the church comes to consciousness, and through the act of obedience to the King, that glorious consciousness is exalted to greater clarity. Hence, under the real administration of word and sacraments, there is the awareness of the

otherwise unknown presence of the Lord, the knowledge that He, the Lord, is in their midst, and a delightful consciousness which is then only enjoyed in so far as it is the presence of Christ Himself Who speaks through the minister and Who Himself baptizes, Himself distributes bread and wine, leads us in prayer so that we repeat prayer after Him, gives to us so that we may give alms, and sings His song of praise before the Father in the sound of our own voice. "I," the Messiah said, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, oh Lord, thou knowest." Psalm 40:9 "My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation." Psalm 22:25 "The good pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Isaiah 53:10¹

However, in no way does it follow from this that there is in the exercise of Jesus' royal rule over His church no instrumental use of human persons in the institution. Such use there certainly is, in so far as the church on earth is visible, shows itself externally, and reveals itself in perceptible forms. Then the royal rule of Christ must extend to that visible, external, and perceptible form; but this is unthinkable without the instrumental use of human persons. Only, two undeniable facts must be maintained. In the first place, this instrumental use of human persons is not and cannot be unless the action of the present Christ is in it and with it. And, in the second place, the use never is nor can be anything else than instrumental. Christ is and remains in everything the only and irresistible worker, and the human person is never anything else than an instrument whom the King uses for His own royal majesty.

This instrumental use of human persons is distinguished according to whether the purpose is to bring the church in the world to fuller manifestation, or to maintain in that world church itself the rule of King Jesus. The first intended use, continuing up to the demise of the apostolate, bore a continuous fruit through which the instrumental use of the apostles and prophets had, among many others, this consequence, that an abiding, committed-to-the-written-Scriptures Word of God came into being. This Word is the abiding Word of the King of the church to which, in the fullest sense the expression of the proverb writer applies: "Where the word of the king is, there is power." Thus, if it should please the Lord in His anger against the sins of His people or for the trying of their faith to make cease for a time the public ministry of the Word and to bend His church under the cross of persecution, yet the King is never silent. He speaks and continues to speak each morning and each evening in each church, in each household, to every heart among His chosen people by His abiding Word preserved in Scripture.

Therefore, among all instrumental uses of human

persons, the service of prophets and apostles stands on the foreground. Now yet, even as for 18 centuries, these apostles and prophets, who through all ages served their purpose, are instruments through whom King Jesus addresses His church and speaks in His church and to His elect all the day and all the night.

But alongside of this extraordinary use of prophets and apostles stands, irrevocably bound to the fruit of their work, the ordinary instrumental use of persons in the fixed and ordinary office of the church. The purpose, scope, calling of this office is to verify the Word of God, the Word of the King, and to accomplish and realize it with irresistible power.

The emphasis falls strongly on that addition. The office has the power of keys. There is no office without the institution of the King and the laying on of His royal authority. Without this authority there might be a relationship, a human activity, a commission, but the office is missing. The office is the organ or help for sovereign power. A king on earth would actually have to do everything himself. But he cannot. For that purpose he lacks the one thousand arms with which the Indians portray their gods. And therefore he sets up offices and clothes persons with these offices, who, as the arms of his power, carry out the task at his command, for him, and to his honor. That official labor is either a work which is directed

towards the king or proceeds from the king. It is directed to the king when information must be obtained for the purpose of enlightening the king; and it goes out from the king when it serves to gain obedience to his command. It is directed to the king when custom and tribute is brought to the treasury of the king, and it proceeds from him when the favor of the king returns upon his people. It also goes to the king when the homage of his people arises before him, and, on the other hand, it proceeds from him when he grants his gifts to his subjects.

It is in this same sense that also our Lord and King, our Messiah and Immanuel, has set up an office for the visible manifestation of His church on earth as bearer of His royal authority and as the revelation of His royal majesty.

¹We have here a nice illustration of Kuyper's expressive Dutch. For those who can still read and appreciate the Dutch we include the original here. "en waar hij niet zelf present is, daar moge een getabberd mensch staan te redeneeren, maar daar is geen bediening des Woords; daar moge water gesprenkeld en brood gebroken worden, maar daar is geen sacrament; daar moge met gesloten oogen gepreveld en luidkeels gezongen worden, maar daar is zoomin gebed als lofzang; en eindelijk evenzoo daar mogen kerkelijke heeren op groene kussens zetelen, maar daar is geen kerkeraad noch concilie noch synode machthebbende in zijn naam."

¹If the people of God were always conscious of the truth of what Kuyper here expresses, how much richer our worship would be.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

That We May Be Healed

Rev. John A. Heys

A shadow requires light, and is in fact the evidence that light is present.

Deep in the bowels of the earth, hundreds of feet below the surface in a coal mine, there are no shadows until one strikes a match or switches on a light of one kind or another. There may be a host of objects whose shadows could be cast, but not until light is introduced will there be as much as one shadow.

What is more, a shadow always is light. It is diminished light, but it certainly is light. The amount of light in the shadow may be so small that you have to come very close to an object in the shade to see even the largest detail. Yet we insist that not only does a shadow require light, but it is light.

Thus when treating *The Day of Shadows*, or, if you will, those days when God revealed the gospel

through types and shadows, we are dealing with a period of time when there was light. The believers in that period did have knowledge. They did have the truth even though they did not have it as richly and clearly as we do today. They did have knowledge of Christ and of His cross. They did have both intellectual light and spiritual light in those days. And it may be added that the shadows continued even after Christ came in our flesh and walked among us with a sin-weakened body. There was much more light when He came in our flesh. But until the veil of the temple was rent in twain and God did away with all the types and shadows, and until the day of Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out to lead into all the truth, there still were shadows. And Jesus Himself went to the temple and kept the Passover Feast.

We take, therefore, the liberty this one time to call attention to shadows that were still there when our Saviour walked this earth. And we depart for a moment from treating the O.T. line we were following in this department. We do this because of an amazing coincidence which the sovereign and eternal good counsel and providence of our God brought into being.

For the last eight years and more the God of our salvation made me and kept me painfully aware of a troublesome disease. I say troublesome because I, following the improper example of Paul, ignored the truth that His grace is sufficient, and foolishly thought that if only the "thorn in my flesh" would be removed, I could serve my congregation and our churches better, and—or so I thought—could do the things which plainly He did not want me to do. Committee work, speeches, lectures, and helping out in the Seminary in a time of emergency had to be turned down or be done on a very limited basis. And when this past year there was an aggravation of the condition that led to test after test and consultations, a well-kept family secret had to be made known, namely, that my heart might have to go under the surgeon's knife. And the time had now come for this, and my name was placed on a long list of scheduled by-pass surgery.

Meanwhile the work in the congregation went on and we approached the season when in a special way we call attention to the suffering and death of our Saviour. I told the congregation that, because of all the uncertainties, I did not complete the preparation of a series of seven sermons on the passion and death of Christ. Instead I chose to call their attention as often as I could to the amazing and beautiful contrasts—not contradictions—in the life of Christ. I was sure that I could figure on four or five of them; and to begin a series of seven and then leave the last two hanging in the air, as it were, would not be the best thing to do. I could stop any time in calling attention to these contrasts.

There is the fact that He is the Son of God and truly God. And yet He is also the Son of Man and very truly man. He is the High Priest Who brought the sacrifice that atoned for our sins. And yet He is also the Lamb of God that was sacrificed to make this atonement. He knew no sin. And yet He was made to be sin for us. He is the Captain of our salvation, and as such He came to destroy all His and our enemies. And yet He voluntarily became defenseless and surrendered to the enemy.

These contrasts and others I planned to treat chronologically. So first of all I called attention to the overall, general picture Paul gives us in Philip-
pians 2:6-8, that, being in the form of God, and thus Lord over all, He took upon Himself the form of a

servant. Then I pointed out the next week that early in His ministry He revealed that He is the Great Physician, the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings, with power to heal the sick, raise the dead and lift the curse from off His people. And yet He contracted our diseases and died under our curse; and He Who came to bring us everlasting life died!

This became the last sermon that I preached to this very moment. For although I was told that I would have to wait at least three weeks for surgery, and expected to preach at least two more sermons on these contrasts, I received word after only one week to come to the hospital Monday! Having preached the truth that Christ is the Physician Who contracted our diseases as my last sermon—although I did not plan it that way—the providence and good counsel of God sent me to seek healing, or at least help, that would negate the disease to a degree. And for all those who face serious surgery (and all surgery is), for all those afflicted with diseases, for all in pain and misery, and for all of us who have loved ones in these miseries, I would like to pen down a few thoughts out of that sermon that we may begin to look at our diseases in the proper light, and so that our longing for and seeking of healing may be controlled by the Word of God.

This truth that Jesus is the Great Physician Who contracted our diseases is taught already in the Old Testament in such a passage as Isaiah 53:4: "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Matthew makes a beautiful paraphrase and interpretation of this when in Matthew 8:17 he quotes Isaiah as saying, "Himself took our infirmities and carried our sorrows." But, even before that, we read in Matthew 4:24 that men brought "sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those who were lunatics, and those that had palsy: and He healed them."

We may note that this covers all our diseases and miseries both physical and mental, both of body and soul, both our mental retardations and our "nervous breakdowns"; and our spiritual woes are also included, for He cast out evil spirits. But the point we wish to make is that when people with all these diseases were brought to Jesus, the diseases were brought to Him; and He contracted them. He "caught" them. He did not simply take them away from men, but He took them on Himself. That is what Isaiah said as explained by Matthew.

No, we never read of Jesus being sick. We never read even that He had a headache or head cold. Yet He took these diseases on Himself in that He took upon Himself the curse. *Our* curse He took on Himself. And He did die under that curse. Death, you know, is the state unto which all our diseases point and lead; and they are aspects of that death. We do

not state it incorrectly when we say that He contracted our diseases, caught our sicknesses. Instead the truth is even more powerful: He took upon Himself our death!

Now where will you find a physician among men, or a surgeon no matter how skilled, who heals by taking the sicknesses and diseases of the patient upon himself? What good can a physician do in a flu epidemic when he comes down with the flu? He cannot thereby take it from his patient. And he is hindered in his works of healing. What physician will cure your broken arm by breaking his own? Will that heal yours? Will that help him to set yours? Yet, you name it, whatever misery in your home or body, whatever disease, affliction or pain therein, Christ contracted it, went to the cross with it, took it upon Himself to take it away from us.

To understand and appreciate this we must bear in mind that He, by taking our place under the curse, took away the *cause* of all our diseases. We often speak loosely—and even atheistically—as though an earthly physician has removed the cause of our sickness; and we go to him to get to the root of the matter and take away the cause of our discomforts. Then when we feel better we say that by his antibiotics he has killed the bacteria, germ, virus that laid us low, and that he cured us by taking these causes away and ridding us of that which made us sick. The surgeon cuts out the malignant tumor, and a good deal of healthy tissue as well. Then we rejoice and say that he got it all. He removed the cause of our misery. No he did not! The cause is SIN! And no man can take that cause away from us.

Did God not tell Adam that if he sinned he would die? And does not the psalmist in Psalm 103:3 teach us that we are to bless the Lord and not forget all His benefits, because it is He, “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases”? Take note here of the order. The iniquity must be taken away before there can be any healing of our diseases. No surgeon’s scalpel can cut the smallest part of it out of our bodies and souls. No physician can say, “I got it all.” No surgeon can even say, “I got a little bit of it out.” Christ does that by His work of contracting our diseases and taking them to His cross.

We may say, therefore, even of the healings mentioned in Matthew 4:24, that they were shadows of a more wonderful healing. These who were healed still died. And Lazarus, though raised from the dead, went back into death and the grave at a later date. The healing we have is in the new Jerusalem wherein we will walk with bodies which, though they were sown in corruption, are raised in incorruption, completely and forever beyond all sickness, disease, and pain. And this is so, and can be so, exactly because He is the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. He makes us *righteous* and on that basis removes the cause of our diseases as well as the diseases themselves.

When then your body is full of pain, when you are sick and miserable, when you suffer discomforts and weaknesses of the body, mind, or soul, go to your physician for the relief that God enables him to give you. Do not despise the relief that our heavenly Father has led men to be able to give us. All things — medical advancements and new surgical techniques as well — are for your sake. All here below is for the good of God’s Church. But do not go to these men looking for the cure. There is no cure to enjoy in this life. There is relief, that is, one that is a temporary relief. But through the death and resurrection of Christ, and through our death and resurrection in His day, we receive bodies completely freed from diseases and death. For temporary relief go to your physician; but go to Christ for healing and the cure. Give Christ the glory, and never ascribe to men the power to cure and heal. Go to the doctor’s office and to the hospital for the temporary relief God is willing to give through men, but for healing and the cure go to Calvary. Go to Christ the Crucified and Risen Lord.

And then sing of Him as that Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. Sing of the truth that with His stripes — not antibiotics and scalpel — we are healed. Sing the glorious truth that the way of escape from the curse is the cross. And bless the Lord with all your soul for the forgiveness of your iniquities, which makes it possible that you may have the healing of all your diseases in His day.

GUEST ARTICLE

Limited Inerrancy: Right or Wrong

Rev. M. Kamps

Introduction:

The topic we wish to discuss with you in these

articles concerns the nature of the Holy Scriptures. Many questions are being asked and many assertions

made concerning the nature of Scripture. All these questions ultimately reveal the presuppositions the persons asking the questions and making the assertions hold with respect to the Bible: is it or is it not the Word of God?

Our subject, therefore, is of great significance. For our answer to the question as presented will determine the character and content of our preaching and teaching. The position we take will affect our homes and our children. Is the assertion that the Bible possesses only "Limited Inerrancy" right or wrong? You must and you will give your answer. The position you take will determine your spiritual life for good or evil. Principles, whether they be correct principles or wrong principles, do work through to permeate and determine the ethical and spiritual character of our homes and our churches.

The Bible declares Who God is. The Scriptures testify that God is our Savior through our Lord Jesus Christ. In inseparable connection with the above the written record of revelation also points us to our calling in the world. What is the effect of denying that the Bible is the infallible record of God's revelation? In the first place, there is then principally no gospel and no gospel preaching where this denial is found. Further, there is not then found in the church and home the only valid objective authority for our moral life. To reject the Light is to walk in darkness and in unbelief, along the broad way of worldly-mindedness to Hell.

Christian be careful! We believe, and we desire that you with us continue to believe, that the Bible in its entirety is the infallibly inspired record of the self revelation of our God, which God has in love preserved for thousands of years, because it is His Word, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Our prayer for God's people everywhere is identical in content with the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has taught us how to pray for ourselves and for all the saints: "keep them from the evil. They are not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (Jn. 17:15-17)

This prayer of Jesus, offered just before His death, must become the constant prayer of each of us for ourselves and for our brethren in the world till Christ returns in the final great manifestation of His victory over sin and Satan.

As we approach our subject I would remind you of two great Reformation principles with regard to the doctrine of Scripture — principles which Rome has always denied and which today men in the Reformed community of churches deny. The first is that Scripture

alone is authoritative for doctrine and life. Scripture has exclusive authority. The second principle which Luther taught us is that Scripture is its own interpreter. The individual may not speak to Scripture or impose presumptuously his ideas upon Scripture. Nor does the individual man have a right before God to his own opinion. God will damn those who out of fear of losing a reputation for scholarship minimize and despise the significance and exclusive authority of the Bible. The individual and the church must listen to Scripture as hearing the very Word of God. He that in humility is willing to be taught by the Spirit through the means of the Scriptures is one that has been drawn unto Christ. These principles of the Reformation have always been the strength of the faith of Presbyterian and Reformed churches.

However, a line of demarcation is rapidly forming today in the Reformed community of churches. This line is formed by the question: Where do you stand in regard to the assertion that the Bible possesses only limited inerrancy? Is that position right or wrong? Dr. H. Lindsell, in his book *The Battle For The Bible*, echoed the conviction of the late Edward J. Young who warned us that it is unbelief to deny the infallibility or inerrancy of Scripture.

Thus we are faced with a fundamental question—Limited Inerrancy: Right or Wrong? Remember that this question does not raise merely an intellectual matter but a spiritual matter of faith. It concerns the basic principles of our lives. Men offer us and encourage us to take to ourselves the idea that the Bible possesses only a limited inerrancy. Are we going to purge our souls of the age-old conviction that the Bible is in its entirety the infallibly inspired Word of God? We must be clear as to where we stand as churches and as mothers and fathers responsible for the instruction of our children.

Where are you going? What you believe with the heart will determine your confession and walk. Principles work through!

* * * * *

What is Limited Inerrancy?

We should have clearly before our minds the central idea of this theory before we proceed to evaluate it. What is meant, first of all, by the term inerrancy? Inerrancy is a noun which means to be free of error. The term is synonymous with infallibility. Limited inerrancy is then the same as limited infallibility. Thus Scripture does speak infallibly or inerrantly. But this inerrancy is qualified by the adjective "limited." The Bible is inerrant with respect to some things only. What are these things about which the Bible speaks infallibly or inerrantly? In general, these things are the spiritual and eternal truths of God's word. Specifically, the Bible is infallible when it speaks about God, Christ, and about the benefits of Christ's

redemptive work. Scripture is accurate or errorless when discussing the subjects of man's salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection and life eternal. Concerning all these spiritual matters the Bible speaks with absolute authority, because it speaks inerrantly. Therefore, with respect to the "important" matters the Bible's message is inerrant. This inerrant message of the Bible is the all important thing.

Thus the term inerrant is limited in scope to include something and to exclude other things both of which Sacred Scripture speaks.

There are, therefore, portions of Scripture that are errant or fallible. With respect to many historical, geographical, scientific, and chronological matters the testimony of the Bible is, of course, erroneous. The narrative of Scripture concerning the person of Adam, the fall of Adam, and the report that the snake spoke are erroneous. The prophecy of Isaiah concerning Cyrus King of the Medes and Persians in Is.45 is not prophecy but after the fact reporting and recording. The creation narrative is fallible, for it does not harmonize with the facts as we know them. The report of Joshua 10:13-14 that the sun stood still for about a whole day is, of course, erroneous . . . for it is not in harmony with the evidence of science. The report of Scripture that the first world perished in the great flood of Noah's day is ridiculed as unworthy of acceptance. The biblical picture of the earth as having four corners is obviously, according to the proponents of the theory of limited inerrancy, out of keeping with our illuminated understanding of the universe. There are, of course, many other aspects or portions of the biblical narrative that are to be rejected. Nothing of an historical, geographical, scientific, and chronological character is per se infallible.

The Bible speaks inerrantly about spiritual things; but its testimony with respect to these other matters is fallible and untrustworthy. One need not believe all that the Bible says.

What, now, supposedly accounts for this "limited inerrancy" of the Bible? There are two related ideas which account for the fact that the Bible is both errant and inerrant, fallible and infallible.

First of all, the composition of the Bible is attributable to both a divine factor and a human factor. God gave us by inspiration the inerrant part of Scripture, the "spiritual things." This aspect of the message of Scripture is God's Word. This we must believe. But there is also the human factor to which is attributable the composition and content of Scripture. Man's contribution to the "sacred record" accounts for the errors, distortions, discrepancies, inaccuracies, and contradictions in the Bible.

Secondly, we must remember, the proponents of the theory of "limited inerrancy" tell us, that these

human authors were "time bound" and "culturally conditioned." By the expression "time bound" is meant that the human authors were bound or limited in their knowledge and understanding of history, science, geography, and chronology. This limitation, of course, characterized all those who lived in that time period. They were men with very limited intellectual horizons. In addition to this, the human authors were also "culturally conditioned." Every person of any age and culture is affected and influenced by his culture and by the society in which he lives. Specifically with respect to ethical matters is this very important to remember. With respect to the ethical aspects of marriage, divorce and remarriage, homosexuality, the role of women in society and the church, and many other ethical matters, the human writers were conditioned by their culture to think in a specific way. Therefore, the Bible reflects the foibles of the culture which conditioned the human authors of Scripture. The opinions and foibles of the human authors are, therefore, not necessarily normative for us. Because every culture in its ethical convictions reflects the scope of its knowledge and understanding of the universe, of human nature, and of the nature of the interpersonal relationships of life, what was good for one culture is not necessarily well suited, it would seem, for another culture.

Thus the Bible in some things is not authoritative for us. The Bible has only a limited authority, because it possesses only a limited inerrancy and inspiration.

The motivation of those who favor this position of limited inerrancy is not always clear, but we have gained the following. The theory of limited inerrancy makes possible a compromise with the scientific community and secular historians concerning their alleged discoveries which contradict the testimony of the Bible. Their motivation is to save the church embarrassment before the learned world. By relinquishing the authoritative position of Scripture concerning historical, scientific, geographical, and chronological matters we make the true message of the Bible and the church respectable and inoffensive and palatable to a secular world . . . hopefully. The Church must preach the infallible message of God that there is salvation in Christ Jesus, but avoid disgracing this great message by claiming infallibility or inerrancy for those obviously erroneous assertions of Scripture.

* * * * *

A Warning

This theory may appeal to the *unwary* believer! For, he reasons, we can still know God in Christ as the God of our salvation; because the Bible is inerrant on these matters. We still have the infallible testimony of the Bible concerning the *all important*

things. Secondly, this theory is appealing to the unwary believer because it frees us from all conflict and tension about the so-called historical and scientific matters. For a theory of "limited inerrancy" allows for errors on all these matters. They are, after all, unimportant and inconsequential.

But this conclusion made by the unwary in the church is wrong and deadly. We cannot have our cake and eat it too. That is, we cannot cast away or minimize the historical or consider it errant and still have the revelation of God concerning our salvation and calling. More about that later.

We must remember that there is a great deal of evidence of commitment to the theory of limited inerrancy in the church. You are probably familiar with the names of leading advocates of this position in Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Reformed Churches. But do not overlook that there are many who support these vocal leaders from their pulpits, in the consistory room, and in all their teaching and pastoral work. Thus we must be alert to the dangers close to home. There is abundant indirect evidence of a de-

parture from the confessional doctrine of infallibility and the embracing of the theory of limited inerrancy. There is a clamor for new interpretations of the Bible with respect to Sabbath observance, women in ecclesiastical office, marriage, morality, and the remarriage of divorced persons. A commitment to the theory of limited inerrancy is evidenced too by a lack of respect for and confidence in the authority of the Word . . . in the pulpit. Further, churches more and more fail to discipline for deviation in doctrine and walk. Consistories have lost confidence in the authority of the Bible. Oftentimes we stare ourselves blind at the names of persons who espouse a wrong view of Scripture, but we overlook the fact that churches evidence a commitment to a wrong view of the Bible in other ways.

Unwary believer, listen to the apostle Paul: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. . . . Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. . . . For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Thess. 5:4-9)

ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

The Revolt Grows

There are repeated attempts made to gain government support for private and parochial schools. And such support appears ever more appealing and desirable. The cost of education continually goes up. Taxes paid by all for the support of public education are rapidly increasing. Christian parents, caught in the bind between high taxes, growing tuition requirements, and inflation are tempted to gain some sort of relief — especially governmental relief. We pay — so why not gain assistance from that which is ours anyway? There is that real temptation to take whatever government has to offer. Perhaps we have already done that far too much. Government is making the people, and Christians, increasingly dependent upon it. Editorials in recent *Standard Bearers* have been dealing with the issue. Yet we are inclined to ask: "Is there any real danger?" Or ought we to ask: are we being enticed as "flies" into the house of the "spider"?

The *Presbyterian Journal* of Feb. 22, 1978 reports editorially concerning some of the difficulty colleges are having with the federal government in connection with support they have received in the past. Some colleges have been fighting government edicts — but in each case, government officials base their restrictive regulations against colleges on the fact that they

have received, directly or indirectly, government assistance. One case concerned Covenant College on Lookout Mountain:

This is what happened in the case of Covenant College, an excellent Presbyterian school located on Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga. The knight-errant from the Atlanta office of HEW saw a plaque on the door of a building — partially funded with federal money — which read, "To the glory of God. . . ." That did it. He (and the Atlanta office he represented) decided the plaque violated that phrase in the law originally passed by Congress which specified there would be no "discrimination based on . . . religion." So the plaque must come off, the Atlanta office said.

In the Covenant College matter — and in increasing numbers of other situations — school officials decided that enough was enough. The plaque stays — they said in effect. And the Atlanta office backed down.

Another reported case is that of Hillsdale College in Michigan. In this instance it was not even a matter of the college receiving any sort of direct aid. Only because individuals attending the school had received governmental assistance, the government determined that it had the right to demand of that college conformity to certain regulations. The college refused

on principle. The outcome is still uncertain — and the real danger is clearly evident.

(The) latest school to get its back up against HEW's unfair practices is little Hillsdale College in southern Michigan. Hillsdale has been informed by HEW that it will get no federal funds in any form because it is in violation of the law. What is the issue? Hillsdale has refused to sign a statement saying it will not discriminate on the basis of sex.

Mind you, Hillsdale does not now discriminate on the basis of sex. Some 45 per cent of its students are women. But as a matter of principle, the school refuses to swear in writing that it will not do what it never has done. And it has received no federal funds *except* in the form of government aid to students, as *individuals*.

The outcome of the Hillsdale affair remains in doubt. . . .

— The “Wiersinga Controversy” in the Netherlands —

A certain Dr. Wiersinga in the Reformed Church in the Netherlands has publicly taught views on the atonement which are utterly foreign to Scripture and the Reformed creeds. What to do with such a person is the cause of continuing dispute in the Reformed church. The *Calvinist Contact* of Feb. 3, 1978 reports the following from the *RES News Exchange*:

The consistory of the Reformed Church of Amsterdam has stated its agreement with the pastoral writing on the atonement issued by the last Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in response to Herman Wiersinga's teachings. . . .

Initially the Amsterdam consistory had taken issue with Synod's judgment that Wiersinga's views were inadmissible. The consistory had been charged with the responsibility of seeing that Wiersinga did not push his views in his official capacities.

A synodical committee was appointed to talk with the Amsterdam consistory at the beginning of this year. The consistory explained at the meeting with the committee that it stood wholly behind the view of the atonement as expressed in the synodical report *Verzoening*, what it reacted against was what it took to be the first stages of discipline against the person of Dr. Wiersinga. A conflict was thus averted when the synodical committee explained that Synod had not intended to bring disciplinary procedures to bear on Wiersinga, it only wished to reject his teachings. Like all consistories, the Amsterdam consistory has to guard against the propagation of teachings contrary

to the confessions, and not allow Wiersinga to “push” his views.

Discussion on the floor of Synod centered on what the word “push” meant in the Synod's charge to the consistory: whether it meant that Wiersinga had been completely forbidden to speak on the subject. A deputy explained that Wiersinga had only been forbidden to propagate his ideas in preaching and catechetical instruction. Synod resolved that it is the task of the Amsterdam consistory scrupulously to oversee Dr. Wiersinga in this matter and to continue the discussion with which it has been charged.

The consensus of Synod was that now Dr. Wiersinga and the consistory of Amsterdam be left at peace for awhile. Delegate Rev. H. Borgers added that Wiersinga, then, should cooperate in keeping the peace by not publishing another book on the subject. He felt that the synodical curb on Wiersinga should have been interpreted to apply to his writing also.

So, a heretic remains within that Reformed church — though obviously not the only one. And, so it seems, as long as he does not preach his heresy or teach it in catechism, he is free to do as he pleases. He may publicly teach this heresy, he may still write of it, he may continue to undermine the doctrines of the church openly — just so he does not do this on the pulpit. One wonders how a “confessional” church can long remain such when it plays so fast and loose with Scripture and confessions. If this is the extent of “discipline,” the situation appears hopeless.

— Life Without Television —

Often people will say that they can take it, or leave it — television, that is. But can they? An interesting report and some conclusions are presented in *Calvinist Contact* of March 3, 1978.

A man walks up to your front door, rings the doorbell and smilingly offers you \$500 to keep your television set turned off for one month. You would laughingly accept the offer and wait for the 30 days to end so that you could collect this bit of easy cash.

Seem far-fetched? Not really. The Detroit, Michigan *News* made that offer to 100 families in that city

recently. They told them simply to keep away from television for a month and they would receive \$500 in cold cash.

A few families managed to survive a few days, some a week, and most of them were pulling out their hair in frustration after a couple of weeks. The result? Only five families managed to collect that \$500.

But the worst of it was that most of the families began fighting, bickering and arguing. They simply couldn't take the “pressure” of being together as a family for a month. They presumably watched three

or four hours of television a night. National figures have it as high as six hours a day. But take that away from a teenager or a mother or father and they have to look at other alternatives.

...We are victims of the world and we don't even realize it. It is not surprising that we are concerned about "worldliness". That concern has certainly been expressed in this matter of social dancing at a Christian college. . . . What is really disturbing is that we spend our energy looking at this dancing situation while our very lives are ruled by a force which is much more dangerous — the television.

We need more time for ourselves as families and as husbands and wives. The "Detroit 100" couldn't cope with that family situation. It proves that spouses don't talk to each other any more and that children don't get to know their parents, except during commercials when they all make a mad dash to the kitchen for some potato chips.

...It would prove interesting if a number of households would care to unplug their television set for a month, not even watching the evening news or

the Waltons. The end result? A healthier family life.
(Writer: Keith Knight)

There are some important thoughts in the above. How little we really think of what we are doing to ourselves and our families when television is used — sometimes without any discrimination! It might indeed be well to evaluate, as a family, and in light of the Word of God, our own use of television. Each program must be evaluated: can this be viewed to the glory of God? What is all of this doing to our own families? Is the world using this instrument to instruct our children far more than we ourselves do? Is it detracting from our society life, from our reading of Scripture and from prayer, from our "family altars"? Is this inculcating into our lives a materialism and an insensitivity towards sin that is so common with the world generally?

And could you turn it off — completely — for one month? I'd almost "dare" you to try it — and to find a proper spiritual alternative for the benefit of the whole family.

Book Reviews

ABOVE THE BATTLE? THE BIBLE AND ITS CRITICS, by Harry R. Boer; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977; 109 pp., \$2.95 (paper) [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

Dr. Boer wrote a series of articles in the *Reformed Journal* on the general subject of the inspiration of Scripture. He has reproduced the essence of these articles in this book. Both the articles and this book constitute an attack on the Scriptures. They are intended to prove that there are many errors in the Bible. It is really quite amazing how many errors Boer himself makes as he seeks to establish his point. While we cannot offer extensive critique of the book there are several points which ought to be made.

Boer bases a large part of his argument on a comparison of lower and higher criticism of the Bible. He points out that all conservative people who hold to Scriptural infallibility have permitted lower criticism while they have rejected higher criticism. Boer says that this is inconsistent because both lower and higher criticism are based on the same rational and scientific principles. Both ought therefore to be accepted.

We ought to examine this argument a bit. For the benefit of those who are not acquainted with the terminology Boer uses, we might point out that "lower criticism" deals with an examination of the many manuscripts of the Bible which are extant today. It attempts, by a comparison of these manu-

scripts, to determine what the original manuscripts of the Bible actually contained. High criticism, on the other hand, attempts to explain how the manuscripts of the Bible came into existence as literary works. It inquires concerning questions of date, authorship, historical background, historical purpose, literary value, etc. So-called "lower criticism" is interested in determining what the original manuscripts of the Bible contained by means of a comparison of the available manuscripts and by means of a study of these manuscripts from the viewpoint of style, vocabulary, personality of the writer, etc. The former is called the external evidence of "lower criticism"; the latter is called the internal evidence of "lower criticism."

It is Boer's contention that lower and higher criticism use the same rational and scientific method, and both are legitimate tools in the understanding of Scripture. This is false and misleading. Lower criticism, if done properly, operates on the assumption that the Bible is the infallibly inspired Word of God. It seeks to determine, insofar as that is possible, the original manuscripts because it seeks to know as accurately as possible what that verbally inspired Word of God is. Higher criticism operates on the assumption that there is a human element in Scripture which is so clearly on the foreground that it allowed for all kinds of errors in Scripture. This is, quite obviously, a very basic difference.

It is true that lower criticism is divided into external and internal evidence. It is rather striking that Boer, when speaking of lower criticism, mentions only internal evidence, and says nothing about external evidence. External evidence, however, is the most important, objective, and accurate evidence there is. I always tell my students in school that internal evidence means almost nothing because it is so highly subjective and allows so much room for all sorts of conjecture concerning the reading of the text. Boer is dishonest when he leaves the impression that this internal evidence is the only kind of evidence there is. And Boer is altogether mistaken when he boldly claims that lower and higher criticism are basically the same.

It is, however, in this connection that Boer makes a great deal of the human element in Scripture. On p. 42 he calls the Bible a thoroughly human book. On page 55 he charges the church with being docetic about Scripture; i.e., he charges the church with denying the true humanity of Scripture. (p. 55) He sets verbal inspiration and organic inspiration over against each other on the false assumption that organic inspiration leaves such room for the human authors that their human errors are found in Scripture. (p. 100) He makes, following Bavinck, an analogy between the incarnation of Christ and the giving of the Scriptures. (Whether this analogy is correct or not is one question. But that it is intended to give support for errors in Scripture is quite another. Christ, after all, was the completely sinless One.)

It is this emphasis on the human element which leads to all kinds of trouble. We cannot enter into this question in detail now. The whole question of the organic inspiration of Scripture and the human element in Scripture has been treated in detail by Prof. Hoeksema in a series of articles which appeared a couple of years ago in the *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*. The interested reader can confer them. What needs to be said now is the fact that Boer grossly and crassly corrupts the doctrine of the organic inspiration of Scripture. This truth exactly teaches that inspiration belongs to the wonder of grace, the miracle; that it is, therefore, the wonder of God whereby He made use of human instruments in such a way that through them His Word was infallibly given. God ordained who should be used to write His Word. God prepared these men in time. God worked in such a way that holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. This is the Reformed doctrine of inspiration. Boer sets himself against that doctrine when he sets organic inspiration over against verbal inspiration and insists that Scripture cannot be organically and verbally inspired at the same time.

These fundamental errors in Boer's thinking lead him to his erroneous position. Without any question

Boer accepts the unproved theory that Mark is the original gospel and that the other synoptics (Matthew and Luke) were dependent upon it. He finds all kinds of discrepancies in the synoptics, all kinds of problems in the narrative of the rich young ruler and thinks that these things can only be explained by allowing errors in Scripture.

His denial of infallible inspiration is spoken loudly and clearly in the book. On pp. 81ff. he does this by the same semantic legerdemain that DeKoster used in *The Banner*. He defines infallibility as meaning reliability or trustworthiness, and inerrancy as meaning "the unqualified absence of inconsistency or disparity of any kind whatever with respect to any data found in the Bible." And then he writes: "The Bible is infallible; it is not inerrant in the accepted sense of the word."

Again:

Should we not rather understand the infallibility of Scripture in such a way that it does *not* include the assumption that all data in Scripture are necessarily harmonizable? In looking for such a conception of infallibility we are not concerned simply to obviate a difficulty. The problem is considerably larger and deeper than that of contriving an escape from embarrassment. The problem is basically that of relating, as essential qualities of the Word of God inscripturate, the divine — which is always absolute — and the human — which is always relative. (p. 85)

In Boer's method of harmonizing that which is absolute and that which is relative he destroys Scripture.

It is no different with respect to the objectively existing infallibility of the Word of God. When belief in the gospel opens one's eyes to the eternal God speaking through the Scriptures, those very words which to the unbelieving are simply religious literature (even sublime religious literature) are seen to be the infallible Word of the ever-living God. Such faith overleaps all inadequacies of human expression, all literary, cultural, numerical, geographical disparities, gaps, inconsistencies. (p. 85)

How we may ever be sure that we hear the voice of God in Scripture when we are faced with all kinds of disparities, gaps, and inconsistencies, Boer never pretends to tell us. He cannot, of course, for if Scripture is not without error, then it is not God speaking through it either.

Even Jesus made mistakes. Boer asks the rhetorical question:

Or did, in Jesus' view, the infallibility of Scripture consist in propositional statement couched in the language of faith wherein truth is something more and larger or perhaps even other than mere wording of the proposition that formulates it? (p. 92)

And Boer obviously wants the question answered: Yes, this was Jesus' view of Scripture.

Closely related to this limitation (that Jesus was

not omniscient, H.H.) is the fact that Jesus again and again accommodated himself to existing beliefs which we no longer accept in the then existing form. Notable here is Jesus' accommodation to the popular belief in sheol or hades as the abode of the dead with its two adjoining divisions of gehenna and paradise. Until critical scholarship began to analyze the composition of the books of the Bible it was generally believed that Moses had written the Pentateuch, and Isaiah all of Isaiah. No valid reason can be adduced why Jesus should not have expressed himself in terms of the common deposit of belief in such matters. (pp. 95, 96)

STUDIES IN PHILIPPIANS, STUDIES IN EPHESIANS, STUDIES IN ROMANS, by H.C.G. Moule; Kregel Publications, 1977; Kivar bindings. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

The author of these commentaries lived from 1841-1920. Most of his life was spent as Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge. Kregel has printed several of his studies in its Kregel Popular Commentary Series.

These books are not, strictly speaking, commentaries. They include the text, mostly from the King James Version, and fairly extensive notes on each verse. On the whole, they are not too bad and can well serve a good purpose for society and home study. They are written in a lucid manner and are fairly sound in doctrine. E.g., Moule's discussion of Ephesians 1 and 2 emphasize strongly the doctrines of sovereign grace rooted in eternal election. His discussion of Romans 9-11 is basically sound in most

Boer has made a vicious and unprincipled attack on the integrity of Scripture. That this should come from a man who professes to be Reformed is astounding. That the church of which he is a member allows this sort of thing to go unchallenged is sad beyond description. Boer has joined the enemies of the gospel in this attack. He has moved out of the camp of faith into the ranks of the enemy. But God's Word has survived better formulated attacks and more vicious attacks than that of Boer's book. God's Word will survive this book, too.

parts; there is one serious flaw however: he questions the doctrine of sovereign reprobation and presents a conditional reprobation as his view. He interprets Romans 7:14ff. as referring to Paul in his regenerated state. He explains Romans 5:12ff. as teaching the doctrine of original guilt in Adam. He interprets Ephesians 2:8 as meaning that faith is the gift of God. All of these and many more teachings make the commentaries well worth their rather favorable price.

Each book includes also an introductory section which has a great deal of interesting and important material in it. The prices range from \$3.00 to \$4.00, and are worth the investment. The books must however be read with care. No commentary can ever substitute for a study of the Scriptures themselves. And the purely Reformed line is not always brought out as clearly as it ought to be.

GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, by W.J. Hickie; Baker Book House, 1977; 214 pp., \$2.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

On the back cover of this book appear the words:

This easy-to-use Greek lexicon will enrich exegetical study for pastors, Bible teachers, and students. It is a complete yet concise reference work that lists *koine* Greek words in their various grammatical forms along with their translations and meanings. This is one of the most compact Greek lexicons

in print today, making it more accessible and transportable than bulkier volumes.

While this book can never take the place of more detailed lexicons in the study of the New Testament, it is especially worthwhile because it is so easy to carry about. It is, on the whole, accurate and reliable and it can be of special value to students who must carry many books to school. This book can be tucked easily into a pocket or a corner of a briefcase. It is well worth the rather cheap price.

WHO'S WHO IN CHURCH HISTORY, by William P. Barker; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 319 pages, \$2.95 (paperback). (Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema)

This is supposed to be a handy reference work for those desiring quick and concise information on various important characters in church history. Listed in it are more than 1500 men and women who played some part in church history. The book is a reprint of a book first published as a hardback in 1969. The

author is Director of Continuing Education at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

This reviewer does not find the book to be very valuable. In the first place, it is incomplete. I suppose one might expect to find differences of opinion with respect to the question which persons should be included in a work of this kind, and which should be excluded. Nevertheless, I cannot agree with the author's choices. One finds relatively insignificant and unknown characters included, but not a word about as important a figure as Abraham Kuyper or Hendrik

De Cock. In the second place, the information and evaluation furnished in these brief biographical paragraphs is not dependable. The author is obviously prejudiced against such men as Gottschalk and Gomar and presents them in an unfavorable light; and he is just as biased in favor of a character like Arminius and presents him as a fine man.

In other words, this book cannot be trusted for full

and accurate information; and it is therefore of very limited value.

THE STANDARD BEARER
is a thoughtful gift
for a "Shut-in".

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies' and Men's Societies of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church express their sympathy to fellow-members Mr. and Mrs. Menno Smits, Rev. and Mrs. David Engelsma and Mr. and Mrs. Lammert Lubbers in the death of their brother, brother-in-law and uncle, MR. MELVIN ENGELSMA.

"Blessed be the Lord, that Hath given rest unto His people." (1 Kings 8:56).

Mrs. Pat Haak, Sec'y.
Mr. Art De Jong, Jr., Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of the Hudsonville Ladies Society wish to express their sympathy to Freda (Mrs. Henry) Zwak in the sudden death of her mother, MRS. TED MIEDEMA, SR., whom the Lord called to Him on March 28, 1978.

"The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever." (Psalm 37:18).

Rev. G. Van Baren, Pres.
Mrs. Hib Kuiper, Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 16, 1978, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. BARNEY HAAK, celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to God for the many years of Christian love and instruction they have given us. It is our prayer that God will bless them in the years which lie ahead of them.

their children:
Richard Haak
Ken and Marilyn De Jong
Edward, Sharon and Stephen
Carl Haak

NOTICE!!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 10, 1978 at the Holland Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least ten days prior to the convening of the session.

Jon Huiskens
Stated Clerk

NOTICE!!!!

The Lord willing, on May 15, 1978, there will be a lecture in the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church given by Rev. George Lubbers on the topic "HEALTHY PIETY VS. FALSE MYSTICISM."

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND!!!!

—NOTICE OF LECTURE—

On April 27, 1978, at 8:00 P.M., in the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, our annual SPRING LECTURE will be given. Prof. H. C. Hanko will speak on "THE PLEASURE OF BABYLON IN JERUSALEM." (an analysis of the entertainment problem). We urge you to attend and to encourage and invite others also to hear this informative and timely lecture.

The Lecture Committee

News From Our Churches

First Church in Grand Rapids has scheduled the installation of their new pastor, Rev. Meindert Joostens, for Sunday, April 16. Prof. Robert Decker will conduct the installation during the morning worship service. Rev. Joostens plans to preach his inaugural sermon that evening. Rev. and Mrs. Joostens recently received a precious gift in the form of a baby girl — born on a Sunday morning. The

congregation of our Faith Church has been invited to extend their farewells to Rev. Joostens and his family at an open house on April 12. The congregation of First Church has been invited to a welcome for Rev. Joostens and his family on April 17 with a short program followed by a social hour with refreshments.

Faith Church has extended a call to Rev. James Slopsema of Edgerton, Minnesota. Their trio also included Rev. Arie den Hartog and Rev. David Engelsma.

Rev. Slopsema and Elder D. Engelsma of Hope Church in Walker, Michigan, left for Singapore on March 14. They are taking this long trip at the request of the Foreign Mission Committee, which received a call for assistance from a sizable number of students in the city of Singapore. They expect to be gone for four to eight weeks. During Rev. Slopsema's absence, Rev. Hoeksema from Hull, Iowa, and Rev. Kamps from Doon, Iowa, will help to fill Rev. Slopsema's pulpit once each Sunday.

Rev. Harbach, our home missionary now laboring in Victoria, British Columbia, is expanding his labors to include Abbotsford, B.C. Bible study classes have been scheduled for alternate Monday evenings at the Peace Lutheran Church.

Our church in Pella, Iowa, has a duo consisting of Rev. Rodney Miersma now serving our church in Isabel, South Dakota, and Rev. Slopsema. Pella's present pastor, Rev. George Lubbers, plans to retire from the active ministry on May 1st.

Our Trinity Protestant Reformed Church in Houston, Texas, has purchased a church building and a parsonage. In connection with this purchase, a rather unusual note appeared in the Hull, Iowa, bulletin. They must build an addition to their parsonage. They are in need of an experienced contractor or carpenter to come and help them for a few weeks to guide their willing hands and are seeking this help from a member of another of our churches.

The sale of our Southwest Church building was completed on March 5 to the Wyoming Church of God. The new owners will take possession of the building on April 2. Arrangements are being made to provide a place of worship for the Southwest congregation until their new building is completed.

Rev. den Hartog, pastor of our Covenant Church in Wyckoff, New Jersey, recently sent in some newspaper clippings and a letter giving the good news that Covenant had received final township approval of their proposed church building site plan. Rev. den Hartog writes that "perhaps for those who live in the land of wide open spaces this does not seem of such momentous significance. But we live in the midst of the greatest metropolis in the U.S. And this means that we have been battling for almost two years to get to this point. In recent months the Township of Wyckoff has received national attention and become rather infamous because of resident opposition to the building of houses of worship. Reasons given to oppose churches were: too many churches, lost taxes, detriment to prime residential areas, and too much traffic congestion. In the midst of a town divided and embroiled in bitter discussion and over against several neighbors that vehemently opposed us the Township Board approved our proposed site plan. What can we say to all of this but that it is the Lord's doing for which we give thanks and rejoice." Covenant plans to erect a 30' by 50' church building seating 120 people and provide parking for 43 cars on a five acre land parcel.

Rev. den Hartog also wrote that Covenant has begun a Sunday evening discussion group similar to what some of our other churches have. They meet once per month after the evening worship service to discuss topics of current interest on matters of Christian living. Last time they considered the topic "The Christian and the Women's Liberation Movement."

The young people of our churches in the Grand Rapids area gathered for an Easter Mass Meeting on Easter Sunday afternoon at Southwest Church. Prof. Robert Decker was the speaker.

The annual Spring Lecture sponsored by our Michigan area churches is scheduled for April 27 at our Hudsonville Church. Prof. Herman Hanko will be the speaker.

K.G.V.